

EXPLORING PHOTOGRAPHIC ANOMALIES

ORBS

Many spirit photographers claim to have captured true spirit orbs. While some of these are true spirit energy captured on film, most are not. Many are dust particles, pollen spores, flash reflections, water droplets or moisture picked up from your camera's flash or from the IR emitter on your night shot video camera. This presentation is designed to help you determine true spirit orbs from naturally occurring orbs. Most investigators now agree that 98% of orbs photographed are false. That is not to say there are real spirit orbs photographed, there are many examples of these that cannot be explained by airborne particles.

Orbs are one of the most hotly disputed topics in the paranormal investigative community. In terms of energy and physics, a circle is the shape which takes the least amount of energy to form. A more defined form, such as a full-body apparition, would take vastly more energy. Most paranormal researchers now believe that orbs are energy being transferred from another source such as a power line or even a person, to a spirit so it can manifest in the physical world. This theory links the presence of orbs to the EMF readings taken during paranormal events.

LIGHT WAVES

The human eye can only distinguish minute wavelengths of light. Looking through an infrared lens, thermal lens, or night shot increases your ability to view wavelengths and as a result, more orbs. Diffraction is the spreading of light around a barrier, forming diffraction rings, as light behaves like ripples from a drop of water hitting a pond. Dust orbs possess these diffraction rings. If the dust orb is in the camera lens focus, you will clearly see these rings, but as dust particles move further away from the lens, they become blurry and more opaque and harder to differentiate.

When light interferes, the light waves produce alternating bright and dark bands of colors (interference fringes); nodal lines appear as dark bands and anti nodal lines appear as bright bands. Violet light (with the shortest wavelength) is the least diffracted and red light (with the longest wavelength) is the most diffracted. Generally speaking, if you see diffraction rings in an orb, it is definitely dust as this phenomena occurs (in a photographic sense) only in very small and microscopic objects. There are other signs to look for as well. A corona is produced by diffraction of light by small particles. Every point on the illuminated surface is a source of scattered outgoing spherical waves (Huygens-Fresnel Principle).

Some photographs show geometric shapes, such as diamonds and octagons. This is caused by a lens curvature error known as "Coma". Cameras with very small lenses and short focal lengths (such as digital cameras) are more prone to coma than other cameras with longer focal length lenses, such as SLR cameras. When an object with a similar shape as the aperture of the camera lens is brought out-of-focus, the object will begin to take the shape of the aperture. In other words, if the aperture of the camera is an octagon, an out-of-focus dust orb will begin to take the shape of an octagon, particularly towards the center of the image.

LENS FLARE

Camera lenses are coated with anti-reflective material to help reduce secondary reflections. When bright lights are facing the lens, the coating is not as effective and lens flares can occur.

DUST

One way to determine if you are getting dust particles is if you have many orbs in a single shot. Be aware of your surroundings, if it is windy, someone is smoking, car exhaust, cold air (human breath), a lot of people are traipsing around the area, or you are in an area that is just plain dusty, you will pick up many airborne particles. Unfortunately, spirits tend to favor dusty areas such as abandoned buildings, basements and unless you photograph only directly in front of you all the time, you are bound to pick up airborne particles just from walking around. When investigating a haunted area, the first person to enter will have the best photo opportunity.

Clean rooms are used for testing purposes where dust must be monitored to ensure that no data is contaminated. They have classifications that are standardized classes based on airborne particle counts. For example, a class 100 clean room can have 750 particles per cubic foot that measure 0.2 μm , 300 at 0.3 μm and so on. If clean rooms can have that many particles in the air, think of what a typical living area may have.

Dust particles tend to have rough edges, "face" reflections in them, or have lots of little circles or particles in them. Pollen particles are yellow or light orange in color. The truth is, no matter where you are or what the environment, there are ALWAYS airborne particles floating in the air (except in a vacuum). Distinguishing false orbs from spirit orbs has become a science and any ghost investigator needs to determine the difference between the two in order to achieve credibility. There are far too many false orbs posted as spirits on internet ghost hunting web sites. Web sites that post false pictures from viewers lack credibility.

SPIRIT ORBS

True orb photos have the following qualities: They are bright and glowing, cast their own shadows, are obscured by another object (meaning they are in focus) or tend to have a "vibrating" effect and/or a contrail following behind them showing movement. Using an EMF meter has been shown to greatly increase your chances of getting spirit orbs on film.

TYPES OF CAMERAS

Digital cameras pick up lots more dust orbs than 35 mm cameras. The higher the digital camera quality, the less pixel orbs will occur. For example, an inexpensive 2.0 pixel digital camera is much more likely to pick up pixel orbs than a more expensive 5.0 pixel camera. Digital cameras are more UV and infrared-sensitive than film cameras and orbs are, too - this is the reason more orbs are picked up using digital versus film cameras. Infrared-sensitive digital cameras are just as likely to pick up orbs as night-vision cameras. The Sony Technical Department has stated that orbs and ectoplasm are NOT caused by digital camera defects.

35 mm film cameras using high-speed film (such as 800 speed) are also likely to pick up orbs. Enlarged, 35 mm film pictures are not as grainy as most digital ones, although digital cameras have vastly improved and the better quality ones are not grainy. Infrared film also picks up orbs and anomalies, although this film is tricky to use and process.

Thermal cameras are relatively new in the ghost hunting world and have not proven very effective. Heat radiates from living people and reflects off of objects, creating false apparitions. Since heat is also generated by many physical objects, it is hard to differentiate spirit photography using thermal cameras and they have not proven worthy of their high price tag. When using both thermal cameras and digital cameras at the same time, investigators have found more spirits are photographed with the digital cameras.

Shutter speed also causes anomalies. Slow shutter speed can cause blurry streaks and auras around moving objects.

TESTING YOUR CAMERA

Do several tests with each of your cameras at different times of day and night. Go outside, pick up a handful of dirt or dust, throw it in at least four inches in front of your camera and take both flash and non-flash daylight and nighttime pictures. Also take a water spray bottle and spray it in front of your camera, then take both flash and non-flash pictures. You can also take photos in the rain. Try photographing pollen, sawdust and your own hair. These developed pictures will give you something to compare to your spirit photos. Since every camera varies, this is a good procedure to follow.

The closer your flash is to your lens, the more dust and water particle orbs you will see. False orbs occur floating in the air within about six inches of your camera lens. They are not on the lens itself.

Photograph a beam of light from a lamp or flashlight. This can cause an effect that looks like a row of orbs overlapping that get larger as they get closer to the camera lens.

FURTHER RESEARCH TOPICS

Some have speculated that most spirits photograph to the right of center, or seem to be moving from left to right. Does this mean Australian photographs would appear to the left of center and move from right to left? Many theories such as this one need to be researched further.

Kirlian photographs are made by placing a high voltage, low amperage current through an object placed on a photographic plate. The electricity passing through the negative creates the photographic image. Kirlian photographers discovered the "phantom leaf phenomenon", which occurs when the tip of a leaf is cut off and the leaf is Kirlian photographed, then the whole leaf sometimes still appears in the photo. This shows that the energy of the leaf remains and can be photographed, although the living body of the leaf is gone.

Chad brought up an interesting idea that furthered my research into orb photography. He noticed that particles that look like dust, including multiple particles, seem to be photographed more often in haunted places and in the presence of spirits. After researching his idea, I noticed this also. This led to my theory that if spirits are magnetic energy, then wouldn't they attract dust and pollen? If they can move objects and cause breezes, shouldn't they then also stir up dust? This theory blows apart the false orb theory but cannot be researched, as we know dust is attracted to magnetized objects such as televisions and computer screens and we cannot prove an area is magnetized by a spirit. This is an area where only psychics can help identify orbs. Virginia has been extremely helpful in this presentation, I could not have done it without her help.

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