

**Portrait Photography:  
Capturing the Memories to Last a Lifetime**

**A Guide for Modern Portraiture**

**Solo, Couples, Families, Maternity, Newborn, Kids & Pets**

**Monumental Arts**

**Professional Fine Art Photography**

## Portraits: What to Expect from Your Personal Portrait Session

Whether you want a solo portrait, a couples session, a family photo session with the kids and grandparents, a senior photo, pet photography, or a large family reunion, your photo session should be relaxed, fun and enjoyable for everyone.



Depending on your tastes, we can schedule a *lifestyle/candid* session, a *semi-formal session*, or a *traditional/formal session*. And of course, whether you want a studio, outdoor, or an in-home session, we will work out the best place to schedule your session. Not sure? I offer lots of options to choose from, and I'm always open for your ideas! Planning is key, and we'll communicate regularly before your session!

I love to capture how families and couples naturally interact and enjoy each other. During a typical session, we spend an hour or so taking photos, and allow breaks for kids to have snacks, rest, or whatever it takes. Portrait sessions are *never* rushed, and each one should be planned out to make the best use of your time!

I hope this guide will help you make the best decision for your portrait photography session. Of course, I want you to hire Monumental Arts, but if you choose another professional photographer, I want to make sure you make that choice based on quality information and options.



## Portraits: Before your Session – Preparation and Planning

Even if it's a short-notice portrait session (which happen regularly), *please take the time to communicate!* Visit any photographer's website immediately to see their work, then call them to talk, or email. If you also can, meet with your photographer ahead of time – *consultations are ALWAYS FREE with Monumental Arts.*

### Setting Expectations

The important thing is to communicate! Discuss your needs and find out if this is a photographer with whom you would feel comfortable. A session can be a very revealing process in which you might feel vulnerable. When communicating with your photographer, be sure to express your desires and expectations – while we as photographers can read faces, I can't read minds, and if I don't know what you expect, then I can't exceed those expectations!



Bottom line: If you aren't comfortable while having a cup of coffee with a prospective photographer, keep looking!

### Style and Types of Sessions



When it comes to photography style, I always focus on an artistic view, and listen to you to ensure I capture every shot and every look you want! I offer *traditional/classic portraits*, where everyone is looking directly at the camera – *semi-formal/casual portraits*, where everyone is looking at the camera but with more casual interactions – and *lifestyle/candid portraits*, where we take photographs capturing the moment with a semi-formal setup, often in an outdoor setting.

If you are looking for a formal, posed look, go for a *classic portrait session*; if you want a casual, informal look, go for a *casual portrait session*; if you want a total interaction in your photos “doing something”, go for a *lifestyle portrait session*. Finally choose a location that best brings out those qualities you want to highlight during the photo session. Shooting outside of a studio allows for more spontaneity and variety in photos, definitely better for a lifestyle session, while studio sessions allow for the very classic look of traditional portrait sessions.

### Ready to book your portrait session?

I offer convenient online scheduling at <http://www.monumental-arts.genbook.com> and of course that also means daytime, evening, and weekend session!

## Portraits: Once you Decide to Book

Congratulations – you’re ready to book a session – pick the day, the time, and the location, plus what style and products you want!

### Online Booking

I offer convenient online booking at [www.monumental-arts.genbook.com](http://www.monumental-arts.genbook.com) – this online booking platform lets you look at my availability and choose the best date and time for your session. It also gives you an opportunity to see the options I offer for different types of sessions, as well as reviews from recent Clients!



## Monumental Arts

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Used to reserve a session at your choice of location. Includes a selection of retouched images plus all 4x6 prints PLUS - Choice of 5x7 mounted print of each person - Choice of 8x10 mounted print of each person - Choice of 11x14 & 16x20 canvas print

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Used to reserve a session at your choice of location. Includes a selection of retouched images plus all 4x6 prints PLUS - Choice of 5x7 mounted print of each person - Choice of 8x10 of entire family

Hours	Mon 9:30am - 8:00pm
	Tue 8:00am - 8:00pm
	Wed 8:00am - 8:00pm
	Thu 9:00am - 6:00pm
	Fri 9:00am - 11:30pm
	Sat 5:00am - 11:30pm
	Sun 8:00am - 7:00pm

Phone (800) 687-9350

Website [Company website](#)

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★★★★★

**Professional Photographer. Great Experience.**

Jun 27, 2017

I've received a consultation from Monumental Arts, so that I may get a feel for both the photographer, K. Michael, and the environment of the studio. It was a great experience. All additional questions that I had were answered; and good

24-48 hours before your scheduled session, I'll call you with a reminder about our appointment

Of course, I will be in communications with you "early and often" via email or phone, if we have the time!

By Appointment Only • Monumental Arts Studio & Offices Located in Ft Washington Maryland  
[www.monumentalarts.com](http://www.monumentalarts.com) • 1-800-687-9350 (call) • 201-781-6863 (text) • [monumentalarts@outlook.com](mailto:monumentalarts@outlook.com)

## Portraits: What to Wear and How to Prepare

There are plenty of things you can do ahead of time to make sure your session goes well. The most important advice I can give is this – it is YOUR photo session, wear what you like, what feels comfortable, and what you know makes you look good. Confidence is everything, so make it show!

### Decide on a theme – or not:

Questions to ask yourself - Do you want to have dressy formal session, traditional photos? Do you want to capture your casual, playful side? Are you looking for something stylized, vintage, or edgy? Don't forget, you can always bring a change of clothes.

It's always best to think color. Most often if you have light hair, complimentary colors are light blues and dark blues, lilac and plum, maroons, light greens and dark greens (red is powerful so be careful). Browns and warm colors are excellent with light and dark brown hair. With jet black hair, think winter colors with brilliancy. Saturated colors (green, blue, red, purple, orange, yellow) really pop in your photos. I don't recommend too much white - it just doesn't do much for most people.

When trying to put together outfits for larger groups, *try to coordinate, not match*. Khaki pants and blue shirts, cream shirts with jeans. Matching jackets. Avoid pastels, they are like white. Feel free to mix and match stripes and small patterns, but checks, large stripes, herringbone, little checks, and loud patterns are a no-no. Pick 3-4 colors and mix them all in.

Layers are always a good idea (unless it's 100 degrees) and provide a lot of interesting options. Layers make it easy to remove an article of clothing and have a totally different look. Hats, scarves, jackets, boots, etc. All accessories are welcome.

### Maternity Sessions & Announcement Sessions

Location & Best Time: I love to photograph expecting mothers. I think that it is an amazingly beautiful time that is meant to be cherished. Studio sessions are great for this type of session. We can take the photos in your home, where I create the illusion of a studio, or we can go outdoors. The best time for a maternity session is the 31-38 week timeframe (though I have had one woman that didn't realize she was having contractions during her session – she gave birth the next day!). With that timeframe, your belly is nice and full, without you being uncomfortable.

Outfits: When choosing an outfit for your maternity photos, look for clothes that will accentuate your belly. While you might find baby doll dresses or loose clothing to be more comfortable and flattering, when you look back, you will appreciate your curvy belly in all of its glory! Maternity sessions can focus on a traditional portrait look or more of a maternity boudoir look.

Additional Props: Bring signs, fun cards, baby shoes, the ultrasound pictures, stuffed animals! If you have a theme for you child, bring an example to work it into the photos (Snoopy, Star Wars, etc).

## **Newborn Sessions**

Location & Best Time: Newborn sessions take place in the convenience of your own home, or at my studio. Babies often sleep best in a familiar environment. It is best to photograph newborns during the first four weeks because they are more likely to sleep through different settings, and they take well to being positioned. During your newborn session, I will set up my portable studio and take a combination of studio and lifestyle pictures. If conditions are ideal, we can also take some outdoor newborn portraits.

Outfits: Newborns look beautiful in their birthday suits. They are so pure and lovely that a simple onesie is all you need. However, if you'd like to do more, cute knit caps, headbands for girls and little baby tutus are always adorable.

Additional Props: I have a limited number of newborn outfits at the studio ready for your use. I also have baskets, blankets, newborn bags, and many other items. However, this is your newborn's session, so be creative. Bring signs, fun cards, baby shoes, the ultrasound pictures, stuffed animals! If you have a theme for you newborn, bring an example to work it into the photos (Snoopy, Star Wars, etc).

## **Babies to Toddlers to Tweens**

Location & Best Time: After the five to ten week point for *most* babies, they start to lose that "newborn" look, and so sessions at this time morph into baby portraits. For babies, the best time for photos is when they first start sitting by themselves. At this point, babies usual smile more and react to their environment. That is usually the time when babies start to get those chubby little cheeks, and who doesn't love that? Don't forget about the first birthday cake smash!

Outfits: Kids look great in bright colors, stripes and polka dots. Cute hats, shoes, and small props from their rooms are great. A little color is always welcome. If you don't enjoy very colorful clothing, a flower or cute hat can be just that splash of color that makes a photo really pop. I would avoid large logos and writing on clothing. If you're not sure what to wear, you can always start with simple jeans and a shirt, and we can add from there.

Additional Props: I also recommend you bring a few items to keep your kids entertained – bubbles, their favorite toy or blanket, themed item(s)

## **Young Adults**

My advice – let them wear what they want! You know your teen best – my goal is to capture them at their best.

## **Senior Portraits and Graduation Sessions**

Senior Portraits often show the pinnacle of a student's personal and high school achievements – musician, athlete, cheer, academic, scouting, publishing, volunteering, activism – the list goes on. It also shows off whatever the senior (or rising senior) wants. Often there are multiple changes of clothes, or the senior prefers two sessions that focus on different aspects of the senior's life. There is also the

option to have a senior session with the family, or even a multi-senior session with two or more friends taking individual and group shots.

Graduation Sessions are designed more for the up-and-coming professional before they graduate university, or the professional obtaining an advanced degree. A combination of traditional headshots and lifestyle portraits are included, and these sessions often have both “civilian” dress as well as cap-and-gown-and-hood. Think of it as a portrait session “plus” with one of your outfits as your cap-and-gown.

### **Pets**

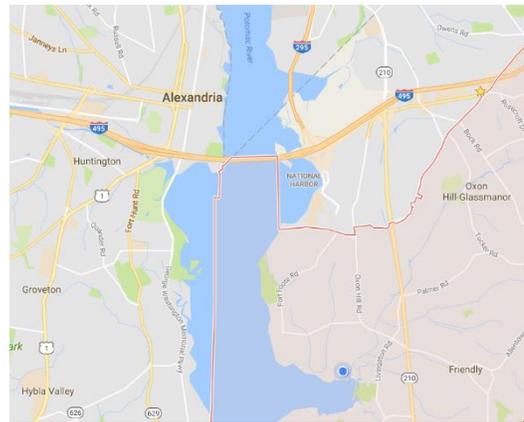
Pets are a member of many families, and as such, they are often portrayed in many photos. Bring treats and for your pet so they can share in the fun as well.

## Portraits: Session Location

Location, location, location! Monumental Arts offers both On-Site and Studio sessions – our studio is located near National Harbor, just 2 miles south of the Beltway. If you do not have a location in mind when booking your photo session, I can recommend a few places in the region and make sure we choose the perfect spot for you. It is far better to select locations that add meaning and impact to your session than just picking some random place!

### Studio Sessions

My unique [specialty portrait studio](#) is located in Ft Washington, MD near National Harbor, just 2 miles south of the Beltway. The Studio has everything you need for a session, and most importantly, it's family-friendly! Within the studio, you'll have access to a makeup table, bathroom, changing room, and secure storage for your personal items. There is a small area for children to play with supervision, but other limitations may impact your use of the studio. Studio sessions use flash and constant light to develop the ideal photo lighting for your session.



### Outdoor Sessions

The Mid Atlantic has a wealth of photographic opportunities. Parks, beaches, historic and national monuments, gritty urban areas, farmland, vineyards, and even your own backyard are all great locations for photos. Please see my [DC](#), [Maryland](#), and [Virginia](#) guides for ideas and options! Outdoor sessions use the natural backdrop of the location and on/off camera flash to produce the desired lighting effect.

### On Site Sessions – Home or Office

Sometimes, an on-site session is best. On-site sessions, whether they are in your office or home, involve a fully-portable studio setup, and include white or black backdrops, lighting, and any other equipment needed. Other items can be provided with prior coordination. Other indoor locations, such as a hotel lobby or hotel room, use the natural backdrop of the location and on/off camera flash to produce the desired lighting effect.

### On Site Sessions – Other Indoor Location

Other indoor locations, such as a hotel lobby or hotel room, use the natural backdrop of the location and on/off camera flash to produce the desired lighting effect. In addition, there are often limitations regarding other locations that may impact your planned session.

## Portraits: Style and Types of Sessions

We recommend you select one style for a Petite Session, or no more than two styles for a Standard Session, and if you have a specialty session, narrow down your specialty style

<b>Portrait Styles</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Recommended For</b>
<i>Traditional Formal Portraiture</i>	A formal portrait is a carefully arranged pose under effective lighting conditions	<b>Studio Formal Portraits: solo, family portraits &amp; multi-generational portraits</b>
<i>Semi-Formal &amp; Casual Portraits</i>	A semi-formal portrait is similar to a formal portrait but more relaxed and fun	<b>“Anywhere” Portraits: solo, family, couples, engagements, pets, children, maternity, newborn &amp; multi-generational portraits</b>
<i>Candid/Lifestyle Portraits</i>	A candid photograph is captured without creating a posed appearance; shows off a lifestyle look	<b>“Anywhere” Portraits: solo, family, couples, engagements, senior, pets, children, maternity, newborn</b>

<b>Specialty Styles</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Session Length</b>
<b>Maternity</b>	<b>Ideal between 12-20 weeks for announcements &amp; 33-38 weeks for traditional maternity</b>	
<i>Mother Only</i>	Session focuses on the mother and her unborn child only	30 – 60 min
<i>Couple</i>	Session focuses on the couple and their unborn child	30 – 60 min
<i>Family &amp; Multi-Generational</i>	Session mixes the multi-generational family together with the mother; a mixture of family portraits and maternity	60 – 90 min
<i>Boudoir-Style Solo or Couple</i>	A specialty maternity session considered a “Fine Art” session; no children allowed	30 – 90 min
<b>Newborn</b>	<b>Ideal between 1-5 weeks after birth</b>	
<i>Newborn Only</i>	Session focuses on the newborn only	30 – 60 min
<i>Couple</i>	Session focuses on the couple and their newborn	30 – 60 min
<i>Family &amp; Multi-Generational</i>	Session mixes the multi-generational family together with the newborn; a mixture of semi-formal portraits	60 – 90 min
<i>Boudoir-Style Solo or Couple</i>	A specialty newborn session considered a “Fine Art” session; no children allowed other than the newborn	30 – 60 min
<b>Baby, Children &amp; Young Adult Portraits</b>	<b>Focuses on the baby, child, or young adult rather than the family</b>	
<i>First Birthday</i>	Solo portraits & cake smash focusing on the 1 year old	30 – 60 min
<i>Cake Smash</i>	Family celebration & cake smash	60 – 90 min
<i>Tween &amp; Young Adult</i>	Best for themed sessions: sports, music, activities	30 – 60 min
<i>Senior Portraits</i>	Solo session focusing on the rising senior or graduate; mix of candid themed and semi-formal portraits	30 – 120 min

**Other styles are available – please just ask**

**\*\*headshots, modeling, bridal & boudoir styles listed separately\*\***

## Portraits: During Your Session

I shoot a mix of both candid and posed photos. When we meet for your session, we'll chat first, then dive right in to your session. I'll probably make a fool of myself trying to make you feel comfortable in front of the camera. I will boss you around and tell you how to pose. I'll tell you to "turn slightly right" when I mean my right (your left) and confuse everyone. These are just things I do – but we'll laugh the entire time!

The first half of the session, I we'll try to get more posed shots (the one your grandmother wants). If your session allows for an outfit change, you'll change outfits and we'll begin again with more candid, natural shots. If your session allows for multiple locations, we'll drive to the new location, and repeat it all again!

Always know that if the session goes into overtime for delays that are my fault, there is no cost to you. All I ask is that you are *on time and ready to go*. Being late will cut into our valuable shooting time and cut down on your final selection of images.

Although every session is unique based on your plans, below is a typical timeline for an "average" session – yours may or may not follow this timeline, but if 12 years of photography has taught me anything, it's focus on the children together first, then the youngest to oldest, then mixing it up from there.

Solo Portraits	Couple Portraits	Family with Kids and/or Pets	Newborn Only
Traditional Portraits	Traditional Portraits	Focus on Children first	Focus on Newborn
Casual Portraits	Touchy-feely photos – <i>hey, you're a couple!</i>	Focus on Full Family	Clothing change or location change
Clothing change and/or location change	Casual Portraits and individual/solo portraits	Focus on mixed photos with kids & kids and adults	Repeat every 10-15 min
Repeat every 10-15 min	Clothing change and/or location change	Focus on variations of adults and individuals	<b>Newborn &amp; Parents/Family</b>
	Repeat every 20-30 min	Clothing change and/or location change	Focus on Newborn first
		Repeat every 25-30 min	Focus on Newborn & Siblings
			Focus on Newborn & Parents/Extended Family
			Clothing change or location change
Note: Outfit and/or location changes will impact the overall photography time, which in turn will reduce the number final images you'll see			Repeat every 20-30 min

## Portraits: What to Expect After Your Photography Session

As a full service photographer, I don't ever want you to just get your images and "I'm done with you." My goal is to provide top-quality Client service at a price you can afford.

### Your Viewing Session:

Monumental Arts is extremely excited to provide you with a truly luxurious experience - your first opportunity to see your photos and a delightful time planning interior decor. I want to grace your walls with the most meaningful, brilliantly beautiful artwork you've ever seen.

I can't wait to share my passion with you for creating custom works of art telling your story! You can come to my studio, or I will bring a proof gallery directly to your home, carefully helping you to select your favorite images you can't live without!

I will also help you imagine different prints in different locations on your walls and atop surfaces. I'll keep notes on what you love, offer decoration advice, and guide you through this process step-by-step.

There is no time limit for the Viewing session. We will match any pace that is most comfortable for you and your family. I'm happy to work with your schedule to make our time together convenient and relaxing. At the end, we'll review notes together and make decisions on what images to order and choose gift prints for family members. Oh, it will be so fun!

Just like your photography session was "distraction-free," so should your Viewing Session! If you have young children, have a plan so you can focus entirely on the beautiful images. And although it might be hard, no need for your cell phone! Be empowered - make sure every "decision-maker" is available for the Viewing Session. Have a "gift list" in mind for family members! Finally, have your credit card or checkbook handy - the last thing you want to do is search!

Of course, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me!

### Your Gallery:

You'll receive an email with information and instructions for your secure online Gallery. This Gallery can be shared if you wish. For an additional charge, USB/CD/DVD options are available.

WAIT, I'M NOT LOCAL: Even if you're not local (or maybe you don't have time to schedule a Viewing Session), no problem! I'm used to working with Clients entirely over the internet. Your retouched images will go onto your secure Gallery, and you'll receive instructions via email on choosing and downloading your images, and selecting prints and enlargements.

Finally, in the weeks and months after your session, you'll receive the occasional email with discounts and specials for prints and additional images. Plus, you'll always receive a 10% discount on future sessions!