

A Guide for Engaged Couples

Monumental Arts
Professional Fine Art Photography

Weddings: What to Expect from Your Wedding Photography Experience

I'm sure you've heard it a hundred times already, but congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding – you have some very exciting times ahead!

Whether you plan a simple courthouse elopement or a 400-person wedding, the tasks can be intimidating, and as an experienced professional, I'm here to guide and educate you through the entire professional photography process to ensure you get the best coverage possible!

Your wedding photography experience is split into five parts: Consultation, Pre-Wedding Planning, Engagements or Specialty Sessions, Day of the Wedding, and your Viewing and Ordering Session. Each of these elements are divided up here, with special emphasis on the early decision points like consultations and pre-wedding planning.

About Me & Monumental Arts

K Michael became a professional photographer in 2006, and through the ups and downs of running any business, he continued onward, helping almost 5000 Clients and shooting over 425 weddings in that time. His company, Monumental Arts, offers its Clients professional and affordable photography to make your moment special and unique — whether it's for your wedding or engagement, a child's birthday, family, maternity or newborn sessions, or you are looking for specialty boudoir, modeling or fine art sessions — our goal is to provide top-quality Client service at a price you can afford.

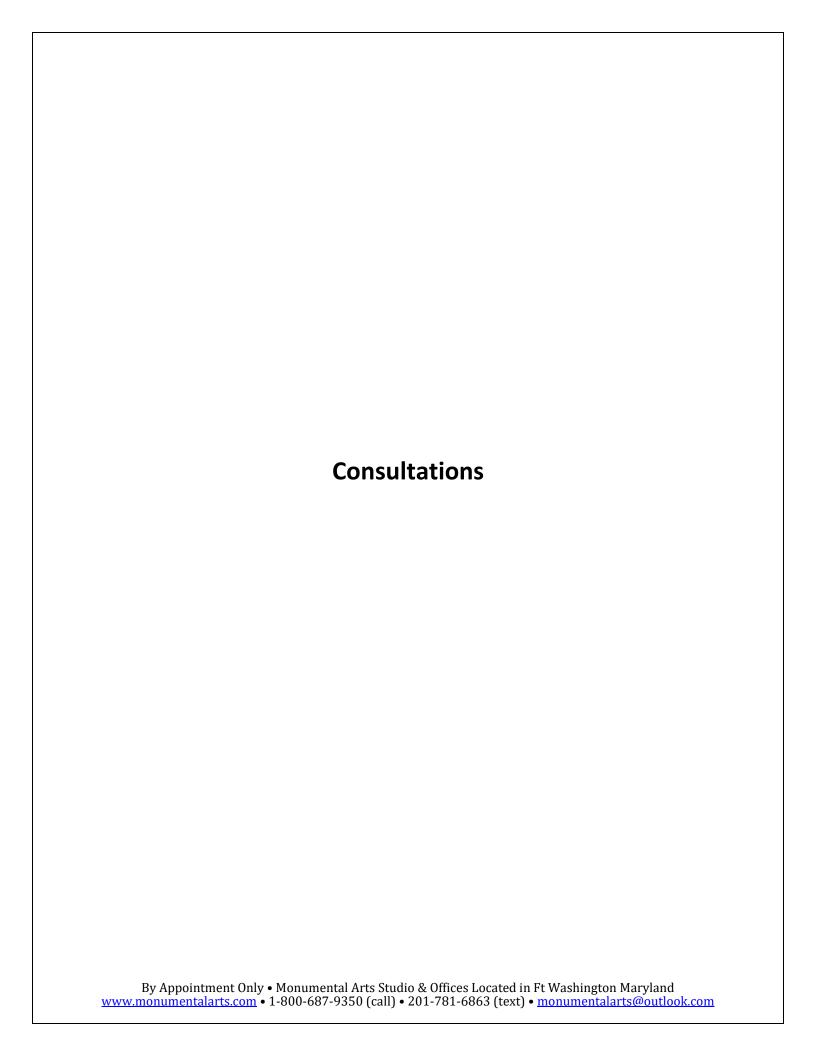


So much of the planning for any session or event can be exhausting and time consuming, but working with a professional photographer doesn't have to be complicated or frustrating. We are full service, start-to-finish photography with edited images, in person and online viewing, and ordering of commercially-printed enlargements and albums, and top-quality service and support every step of the way. We will provide YOU with a professional, detailed and focused approach.

We offer boutique studio and on-site services through Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and any destination beyond. We understand that each person has different needs and budgets - that's why we're more than happy to serve your unique requests – let our experienced photography professionals take the worry out of needs!

Monumental Arts welcomes the opportunity to earn your trust and deliver you the best professional digital and print photography services possible within the Washington, DC Metro and Mid-Atlantic area.

Photography is much more than a full-time profession - it's my lifestyle - my passion - my purpose - and I look forward to getting to know you better!



Weddings: Before your Face-to-Face Consultation - Preparation and Planning

Even if it's a short-notice wedding (which happen more than you would expect), 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 <u>communicate!</u> Discuss your needs and find out if this is a photographer with whom you would <u>feel comfortable</u>. Your wedding day can be one of the most emotional days of your life, and your wedding photographer will see you at your most 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!

Talk to Multiple Photographers

I highly encourage you to meet with several photographers – you will see widely varying prices, options, and skill levels, and it is important to compare what each one offers! The worst thing to find is a cheap photographer with little experience and no

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



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

Ready to book your complementary consultation? I want to meet you for a complementary face to face consultation to show you the high quality and value of working with a professional photographer. I offer in-home or studio consultations with convenient online appointments at www.monumental-arts.genbook.com -> weddings/engagements, or choose a phone consultation if you are so busy you cannot devote an hour to this very important decision.

Guide to Comparing Wedding Photographers

Wedding photography is no simple subject, and interviewing potential wedding photographers can be a daunting task – it is essential you take the time to compare wedding photographers, their skills, their style, and what they offer to every Client. Regardless if you choose Monumental Arts or decide on another studio, I have created a list to help you compare and find the right photographer for *your* wedding day. It offers realistic questions to ask photographers, to give you a sense of their experience and how they can exceed your expectations.

My one piece of advice to you – find the best photographer you can afford, because there is only one shot to capture your wedding day.

	Monumental Arts	Company A	Company B	Company C
Phone Number	1-800-687-9350			
Website	www.monumentalarts			
	<u>.com</u>			
Wedding Experience	425+ Weddings			
Professional	12 years full time –			
Experience	since 2006			
Recent Reviews	See My Reviews			
Studio and Office	Located in			
	Ft Washington, MD			
Online wedding	See My Wedding			
resources &	Resources Page			
information?				
Consultations	Face to Face,			
Available?	Phone, or Skype			
Hourly Rate	30min \$400			
	60min \$600			
	2-4hrs - \$1000-\$2000			
Inclusive Packages	Deluxe Weddings			
	Start at \$3500			
	Premium Weddings			
	Start at \$6500			
How do you accept	Credit Card, Cash,			
payment	Check, PayPal, Money			
	Order – plus payment			
	plans to spread out			
Do you photograph	Only one – yours			
more than one				
wedding per day?	DI 1 1 1 1			
Photography Style	Photojournalist and			
	Traditional, always			
Manua Funarianaa	with an artistic touch			
Venue Experience?	It depends			
Insurance – General	\$5,000,000 *most vanues require			
Business, equipment	*most venues require			
& liability	proof*			
Backup Cameras &	7 Canon cameras, full			
Lighting Equipment	lens set for each			

Contract	Yes		
Retainer	\$400		
Cancellation Fee	Loss of Retainer		
What if my wedding lasts longer than contracted?	**We ALWAYS ask first** Overage Fee starts at \$400		
Second Photographer and/or Assistant	Recommend for 100+ guest weddings or required for weddings over 5hrs		
Total Staff Photographers	3		
Travel Charges	Only if over 75 miles		
Photographer's Attire	Depends on wedding formality & season		
How long until I see my photos?	Your Viewing & Ordering Session is 6 weeks after your wedding		
Retouched Images (edited / Photo Shop)?	Every image you see is retouched		
Albums	Absolutely – choice of many styles and prices		
Prints/Enlargements	Absolutely – choice of many sizes		
Online Download/Ordering	Private Secure Online Gallery		
How long do you keep the images?	They are "forever archived" in a minimum of 3 locations		
We don't want our images online for personal or privacy reasons – is that a problem?	The choice is yours – I offer privacy & confidentiality		

Notes:			

Make sure you also read the <u>Frequently Asked Questions</u> and use the other Wedding Guides to help you best plan for your wedding photography!

10 Questions Every Professional Wedding Photographer Can Answer

Below are 10 questions Monumental Arts' thinks you should ask every photographer you speak with. The most important thing is the trust a bride has that her photographer will be there for her and deliver on promises – if they cannot answer these to your satisfaction, then look elsewhere.

"Will we have a signed contract that lists our price, package, agreed services, and other details for our wedding?"

This is essential. Without a contract and a written agreement, you have no comeback if you don't receive the service or products you were expecting. If you were considering hiring a wedding photographer and find that they will not give you a written & signed contract then walk away and find someone else.

"Do you have insurance?"

Check that your chosen photographer has General Liability & Professional Indemnity insurance. You need to be sure that they can cover the costs if something goes terribly wrong. Also, some wedding venues will actually insist on this and proof may be required.

"What happens in the event of illness or accident?"

Can the photographer offer an adequate replacement if he or she falls ill or breaks a leg before the wedding day? You can simply ask the question and you will know how confident you feel when you get an answer. If they cannot give you a clear and concise answer in response to a very serious question, then you might want to rethink. An unsure reply, full of "um..s" and "err..s" might mean that they have not really given thought to how they would manage the situation - in which case, what else might they have not given thought to?!

"Do you work with an assistant or second shooter and is there a charge for this?"

An assistant can help the photographer by freeing them up with equipment and helping with various little jobs - fetching water, holding second cameras etc. Whilst a second shooter can offer an alternative point of view (literally) it is certainly not essential. Some photographers will bring a second shooter, some will charge for this and some will happily work alone with just an assistant carrying bags. If you would specifically like a second photographer to be present, make sure you find out how much this might cost.

"Do you offer an engagement shoot before the wedding?"

For some couples, an engagement session is essential; for other couples, it's just an extra "thing" they have to worry about and plan for. Although an engagement session gives the photographer and the couple a great opportunity to work together in a relaxed manner with no pressure, there should be no pressure to have an engagement session or any other photography session before your wedding.

"How long will you stay on the day of the wedding and will there be a charge if the event lasts longer than planned?"

This is something that needs discussion well before your wedding day. The last thing you want is for your cake cutting and first dance timing to have overrun by half an hour and for your photographer to tell you that they have finished for the day ... or that if you want them to stay it will cost you an extra \$1000 that you didn't expect. On the other hand, some photographers will not limit the number of hours they stay at all, so this will not be an issue. Whatever the options & possibilities, make sure you understand *exactly* what is and what is not included well in advance – and that it's written in the contract!

"Are you going to be the photographer who attends our wedding?"

Some studios have several photographers who they hire out for weddings. Make sure that the photographer you are meeting and getting to know is the same one who will shoot your wedding. If you have taken the time to go and visit the studio to meet, there's little point having a complete stranger turn up on your wedding day.

"How do you feel about other quests taking photographs at the same time?"

This can be quite a touchy subject. Occasionally, as photographers, we get a guest or family member who is an avid picture taker and who will, seemingly, do their best to get in the way and have a go at being a pro for the day. It's important to remember that you have paid a lot of money to have a competent professional do the job correctly. While we certainly don't mind guests standing beside us for any group shots we are setting up, it's only respectful that the guest photographer stands aside when politely asked (or even better, beforehand) so the professional can get on with their job, unhindered. You would hate for us to miss a shot because Uncle John stepped in front of us at a key moment... and he didn't get the shot either!

"After the wedding, how long will it be before we are able to see the photographs?"

All photographers will manage their workflow differently, and it could be argued that there is no right or wrong way - everybody will do what they think is right. What is important is that your expectations are set, that you are given a realistic idea of how long you will have to wait before you see your proofs after the wedding day and that this promise is met.

"Do you carry backup equipment in case of failure?"

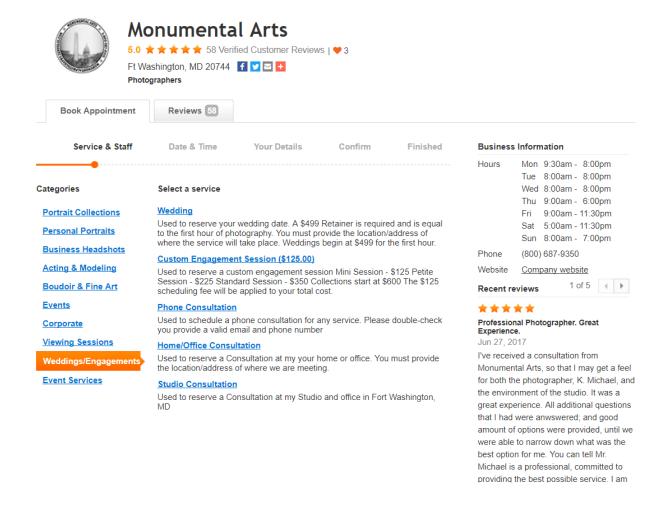
This is one of the main differences between a professional and an amateur. Any photographer worth their salt will always have backup equipment in case their main tools break. We carry two cameras with us (and are able to shoot with just one), and one spare in the boot of the car just in case both camera bodies fail. You'd have to be pretty unlucky for this to occur, but we have heard of this happening, and luckily the photographer was able to use her spare. The same goes for flashguns, batteries, memory cards etc.

Weddings: Once you Decide to Book

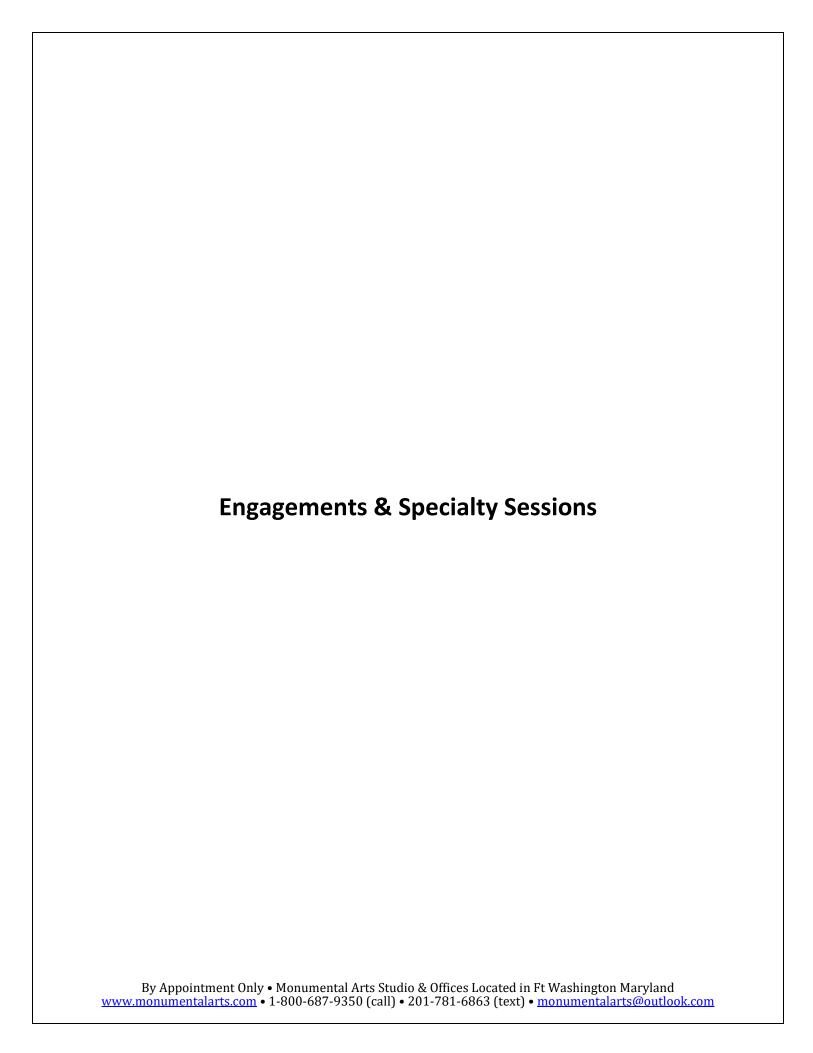
Congratulations – you're ready to book a wedding and/or your engagement – pick the day, the time, and the location, plus what style and products you want!

Online Booking

I offer convenient online booking at www.monumental-arts.genbook.com – 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!



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



Engagements: 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 <u>communicate!</u> Discuss your needs and find out if this is a photographer with whom you would <u>feel comfortable</u>. 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!

Engagements: 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 family 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" engagement session – yours may or may not follow this timeline.

Couple Portraits	Couples with Kids	
	and/or Pets	
Traditional Portraits	Focus on Children first	
Touchy-feely photos –	Focus on Full Family	
hey, you're a couple!		
Casual Portraits and	Focus on mixed photos	
individual/solo portraits	with kids & kids and	
	adults	
Clothing change and/or	Focus on variations of	
location change	adults and individuals	
Repeat every 20-30 min	Clothing change and/or	
	location change	
	Repeat every 20-30 min	

Note: Outfit and/or location changes will impact the overall photography time, which in turn will reduce the number final images you'll see

Engagements: 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

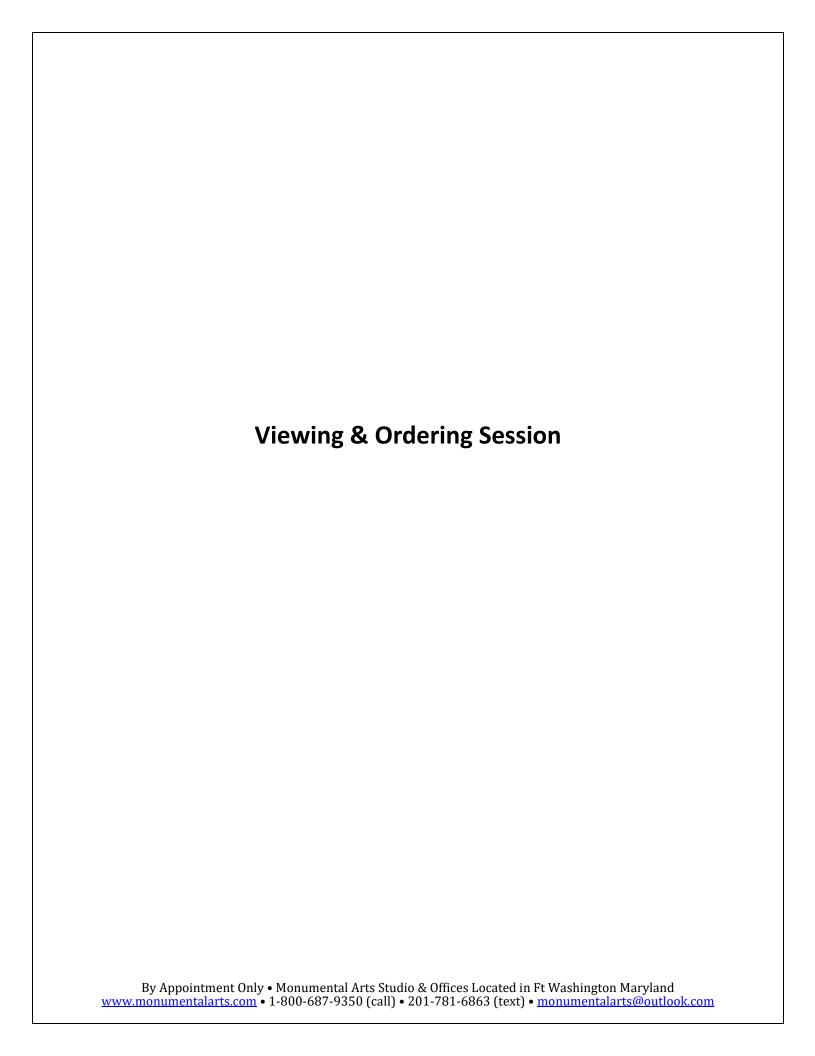
The Mid Atlantic has a wealth of photographic opportunities. Parks, beaches, historic and national monuments, gritty urban areas, farmland, vineyards, and even your own backyard are all great locations for photos. Please see my <u>DC</u>, <u>Maryland</u>, and <u>Virginia</u> guides for ideas and options! 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.



Weddings & Engagements: What to Expect After Your Engagement or Wedding Day

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.

<u>WAIT, I'M NOT LOCAL</u>: 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!