

MASTERING COLOUR BALANCE WITH EASE

\$19.95

ISSUE 100
WINTER 2020

Better Photography

Our 100th Issue
Collector's Edition!



- Art Wolfe's Human Canvas • Murray Fredericks on Art
- Luminosity Masking for Colour • Shooting Butterflies



A FUJIFILM SPECIAL PROMOTION

All photos by Jack Picone. Taken during cremations at Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu.



Fujifilm X-T4, XF23mmF2 R WR, f2.2 @ 1/30 second, ISO 500.



Fujifilm X-T4, XF23mmF2 R WR, f4 @ 1/125 second, ISO 400.

JACK PICONE: FAST, FLUID AND INTUITIVE

Fujifilm's Amazing New X-T4



What does it take to be a successful documentary photographer?

Apart from the skills required to find and capture the images, most of the better-known documentary photographers you'll meet are also deeply-thinking individuals. For them, photography is only a part of their personal involvement with the world – how they interact with their subjects is equally important.

Jack Picone

Australian-born Jack Picone shoots editorial, corporate, architectural and street photography professionally. Over the past three decades, he has covered wars and social issues in Australia, Asia, Africa and Europe and his work has won several international awards, including World Press Awards, the U.S. Photographer of the Year Awards (POY) and the Mother Jones/IFDP Grant for Social Documentary Photography. Professor Picone is also passionate about educating new generation photographers, passing on his

experiences and ideas, but after all this, what continues to drive Jack are his personal projects.

"Generally, my personal work is street photography and currently I'm working on 'The Other Chinatown' in Bangkok and a surreal shopping mall rooftop zoo, also in Bangkok, called 'Pata Zoo.'"

While Jack acknowledges challenges that all documentary photographers face – finding stories, access to subjects, engaging with subjects and obtaining permissions, it's the nature of the interaction that is most important to him.

"I find it challenging to achieve an ethical balance with the people I document in longer-term documentary photography projects." In other words (and at the risk of oversimplifying the issue), a wealthy first-world photographer documenting a poorer or disadvantaged subject creates an immediate bias, no matter how genuine the project is.



Collaboration

"I have partly surmounted this challenge by collaborating with the people I photograph," explained Jack.

"I once read that it is impossible (without getting into the subject's skin) to share an identical purpose. That said, and as Sarah Pink (in *Doing Visual Ethnography*, 2007) observes, working in close parallel can help to offset the

All photos also used the Bleach Bypass film simulation, one of Fujifilm's many strengths.



Fujifilm X-T4, XF23mmF2 R WR, f2 @ 1/250 second, ISO 400.



Fujifilm X-T4, XF23mmF2 R WR, f2 @ 1/250 second, ISO 640.

unequal power relationship that often exists between a subject and a practitioner, resulting in a body of work that is more ethically balanced."

Unobtrusive

Readers looking at Jack's work (and that of other great documentary photographers), often wonder what cameras and techniques were used and while these aspects are important, the strength of the images usually results from addressing other issues, such as ethics.

Having said that, how does Jack work when he's out in the field? Does he walk up to his subjects and shoot with a wide-angle lens, or shoot from an unobserved distance?

"It depends on the genre of photography I am working in," answered Jack. "If it is street photography, I make photographs that avoid 'disrupting' the original moments unfolding. If documentary photography, then I meet people, spend time with them and invite them to have a 'say' in their documentation."

However, whether street or documentary photography, Jack believes the smaller and less obtrusive the camera, the better. "Some people are intimidated by cameras and house-brick size DSLRs only amplify any intrusion or intimidation."

And in a nutshell, Jack is explaining why he is a keen advocate for the Fujifilm X-Series cameras.

"The Fujifilm X-T cameras are small and unobtrusive. Their retro design also

makes them less intimidating and I think it is this combination that creates a potent and positive psychology when photographing people, especially those in fragile situations."

Prior to its release, Jack tested the new Fujifilm X-T4 in Kathmandu, Nepal on an assignment.

"Like Kathmandu itself, the X-T4 has a dual personality: on the outside, it resonates retro with classic design lines not eclipsed by time. On the inside, it is all twenty-first-century space-age technology. It's a compelling combination.

"Nepal is a spiritually multi-dimensional and creative place. Much of its creativity is rooted in Hinduism. In Kathmandu, Hinduism is omnipresent in life and death. In fact, Hinduism is a conversation between life and death and it is reflected in Nepalese culture with its religious iconography, art, writing, graffiti, music and even the cremations on the banks of the sacred Bagmati River."

Extreme Edge

"Unlike most Western countries, the Nepalese people are unconcerned with the documentation of their dead. They are inclusive of it because it is an intrinsic part of the Hindu religion, to share life's experiences and to promote a culture of understanding between people everywhere.

"Hindus believe we are all the same and we are all in this life together. Sharing death is part of that philosophy.

"Even so, photographing the ritual of death is mostly about respect, unobtrusiveness and speed. There can be beauty in pathos and poetic and sorrowful photographs can be made or lost in microseconds.

"I found while documenting the cremations at Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu that the Fujifilm X-T4's fold-away LCD screen, in combination with the large dials and controls on the top deck, allowed me to work fast, stay in the moment and learn about the Nepalese peoples' conversation with death. I can't imagine working with a camera that requires you to scroll through endless menu pages!

"I push my cameras to the extreme edge of their capabilities. Having six and a half stops of image stabilisation, lightning fast autofocus, lots of film simulation modes and extra battery life, keeps me on that 'edge' where most of the potent photographs happen.

"The Fujifilm X-T4 is intuitive, fast, fluid and a natural extension of me and my creativity."

For more information on the Fujifilm X-T4, visit [fujifilm-x.com/en-au/products/cameras/x-t4/](https://www.fujifilm-x.com/en-au/products/cameras/x-t4/)

FUJIFILM





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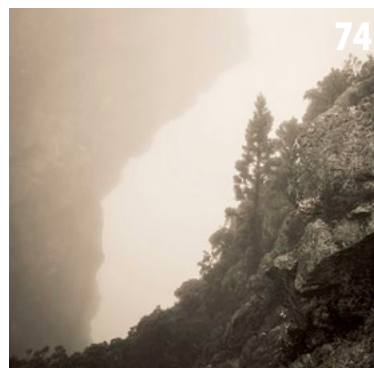
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In this changing world, many of us are finding things closer to home to photograph. Greg Sullivan has some suggestions for capturing ephemeral visitors.

MASTERING COMPOSITION BY EXAMPLE 90

Explaining the vagaries of composition can be challenging, but leading the way by example can make things much clearer. Ignacio Palacios discusses one of his award-winning images.

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In-body image stabilisation and a super fast frame rate are just two improvements, but what do they mean to documentary photographer Jack Picone?

LACIE RUGGED SSD PRO 16

Do you need an external drive with the speed of an internal one? The new LaCie Rugged SSD Pro drives are super fast and have up to 2TB capacity!



PROFESSIONALS

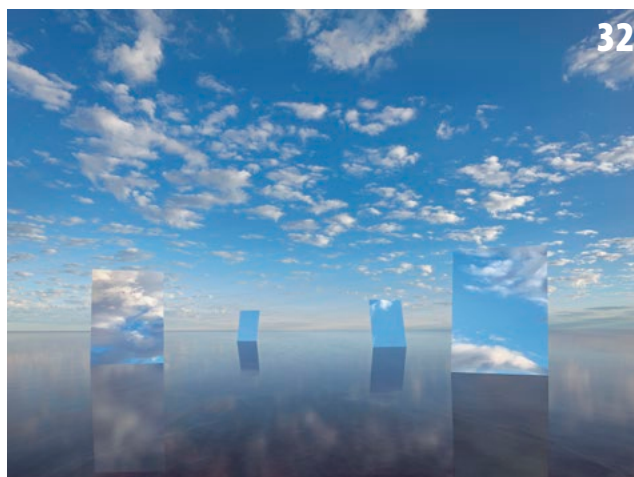
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The remarkable art and photography of Art Wolfe. Peter Eastway chats to one of photography's contemporary legends.



MURRAY FREDERICKS: FROM SALT TO VANITY AND ARRAY 32

Murray Fredericks chats about his approach to photography and what it takes to create work which appeals to the contemporary art market.



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OUR 100th ISSUE



Peter Eastway

Around 26 years ago, I borrowed \$36,000.24 from my grandmother, Kathleen Field. Kathie (my wife) and I had just finished up with Horwitz Grahame, the company that owned *Australian Camera Craft* magazine and a number of other photo-related titles. The new 'manager' of the group had told me I was too expensive, told Kathie I wasn't any good as a photographer, and told an advertiser that I was charging too many expenses on my travel account (I didn't have a travel account).

I wasn't quite sure what we were going to do as we both earned a significant proportion of our income from the magazine – Kathie was the art director and I was the editor. So, between us, we had all the skills necessary to start our own magazine. But not the money. In those days, you needed around \$50k to send a magazine off for printing, hence the loan from my wonderful grandmother. And the 24 cents? Not sure why, but I think I may have offered to repay it over 24 months – it will remain one of life's little mysteries.

So, Kathie and I published the first issue of *Better Photography* magazine and distributed it via the newsagent system. It was very successful and it has given us many wonderful opportunities. Even better, the 'manager' for *Australian Camera Craft* now had an extra competitor for both newsstand sales and advertising revenue, and a year or so later, he was sitting in the audience when I was presented with the 1996 AIPP Australian Professional Photographer of the Year Award. So I guess I was a little better at photography than he thought!

Life has a habit of throwing us curve balls. As I write this, the COVID-19 virus is having a huge impact on everything. Initially, this edition will only be printed for our subscribers (thanks to Memento Pro for coming

to our rescue) and online readers. We'll monitor this to see if we print the larger run and put it out to the newsagencies, but if there's no one at the shops, what's the point? And this also explains our change of format – to better fit the presses at Memento we've reverted to our original A4 format.

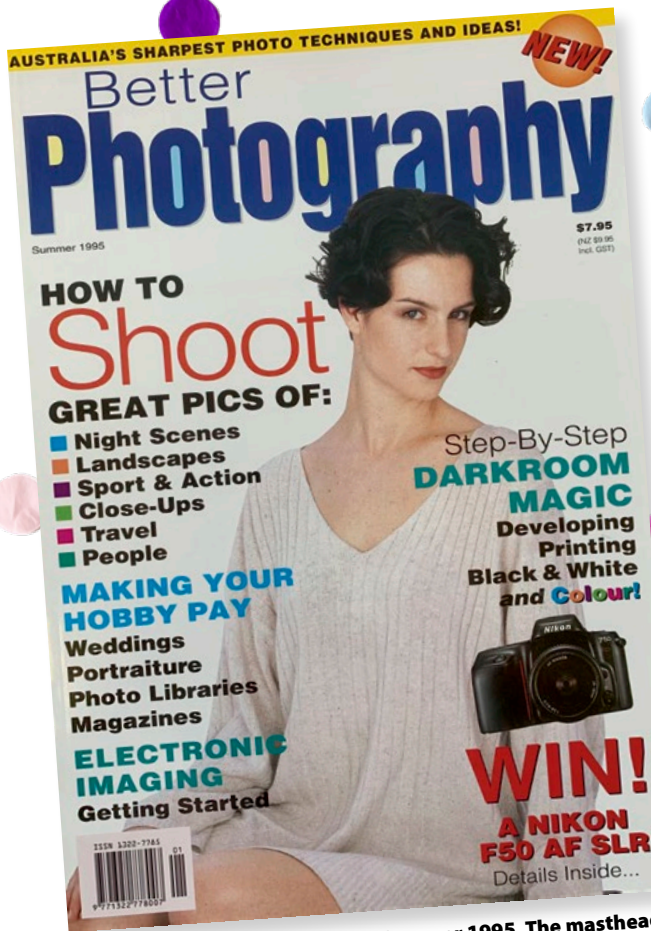
But curve balls are also opportunities and so if we're able to maintain our health, there're lots of things we can do in the future – although I may not be personally writing the magazine for the next 25 years!

My thanks to Kathie who is the world's best magazine and book designer. It's been a wonderful journey and hopefully one that will continue. And thanks also to Kim Valenti, our reader manager, who has worked with me for more years than she cares to remember, I'm sure!

I'd like to thank all our contributors over the years, especially the regulars. As this magazine is being sent off to print, I have received the sad news that our longest contributor Richard White died on 7 May. I hear he was talking all about photography at the time, his great passion. Richard was in every issue from #10 and will be greatly missed. Vale Richard.

Nick Melidonis must be coming up for long service leave as well, plus there's Mike Langford, Jackie Ranken and Len Metcalf who have been with the magazine for the last decade or more. Thank you.

And finally, I'd like to thank you – the reader! I hope you are enjoying the magazine as much as I am putting it together. In a Google world where there is so much opinion and misinformation, I hope there will remain a place for magazines that are both authoritative and respected. This is our point of difference – thank you for being a part of it.



Better Photography – Issue One, Summer 1995. The masthead was copied a few years later by an Indian publishing company, even to the point of the coloured-in letters. Plagiarism is the sincerest form of flattery.



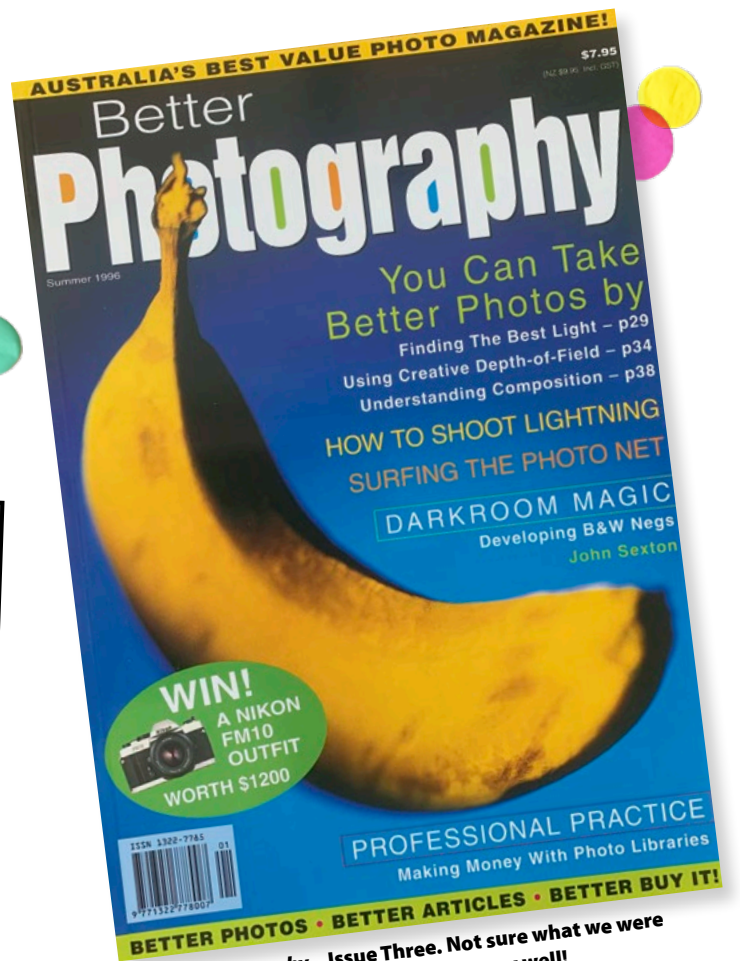
Better Photography – Issue Two. We decided to try covers that were different to the norm.



Kim Valenti



Kathie Eastway



Better Photography – Issue Three. Not sure what we were thinking with this cover – but it sold very well!

Eizo ColorEdge Prominence CG3146

The latest ColorEdge Prominence CG3146 is a 31.1-inch, DCI-4K (4096 x 2160) HDR (high dynamic range) reference monitor designed for professional post-production and colour grading workflows. It is the successor to EIZO's CG3145 and is the first of its kind to incorporate a built-in calibration sensor.

What interests us is that the new CG3146 correctly shows both very bright and very dark areas on the screen without sacrificing the integrity of either – a process which cannot be achieved with SDR (standard dynamic range) monitors. The monitor achieves 1000 cd/m² (typical) high brightness and 1,000,000:1 contrast ratio for true HDR display. It means monitors are becoming even better than the best art prints we can produce, and maybe there's potential for better viewing 16- and 32-bit still images as well.

Like a number of EIZO's other monitors, the CG3146 incorporates a built-in calibration sensor. Hardware calibration ensures the screen stays colour accurate over time and streamlines colour management. Furthermore, with EIZO's ColorNavigator 7 colour management software, users can regularly calibrate and quality control their monitor quickly and reliably.

The ColorEdge Prominence models are the first HDR reference monitors to overcome the severe drawbacks of other HDR technologies available to the market – ABL (Auto Brightness Limiter) and local dimming. They achieve a true HDR visual



experience without the limitations of these technologies to ensure users always see accurate colours and brightness in every pixel. The CG3146 supports HLG (hybrid log-gamma) and the PQ (perceptual quantisation) curve for displaying and editing broadcast, film, and other video content in HDR. The optimised gamma curves render images to appear truer to how the human eye perceives the real world, compared to SDR (standard dynamic range). So, is this a monitor for our readers? With a high price tag expected (TBA), we suggest it's not an essential purchase. However, what we like most about this new HDR technology is that it will eventually trickle down to more affordable EIZO monitors that are more suitable for enthusiast and professional photographers alike.

Fujifilm X100V

It was the X100 which started Fujifilm's now famous X100 Series of cameras. The design approach, it appears, is to provide good-looking and practical models that reflect the ergonomics of film cameras, yet are embodied with all the modern features and technology available.

The fifth iteration in Fujifilm's X100 Series, the X100V, is claimed to be a significant upgrade over previous models. The X100V's body has top and bottom plates milled from single pieces of aluminium, forming a refined and classic camera body



with clean edges. Finished with an aluminite satin coating, slight enhancements have also been made to the camera's grip, ISO dial and lens barrel, making it more comfortable to hold and operate.

The X100V is the first camera in the X100 Series to have weather resistance, when the optional AR-X100 adaptor ring and the PRF-49 protection filter are attached to the camera's lens. Additionally, a new two-way tilting LCD touchscreen sits at the back of the camera and adds another first for the series, providing intuitive touch controls and unlocking even more possibilities for photographers to see, frame and create images.

A new 23mm f2.0 lens is a significant step up from the lenses used on past X100 Series cameras. However, it maintains the same small size and compatibility with legacy wide-angle and telephoto conversion lenses, while adding an internal 4-stop ND filter.

The X100V's 26.1-megapixel sensor uses a back-illuminated design to maximise quality and dynamic range, while Fujifilm's unique colour filter array controls moiré and false colour without the need for an optical low-pass filter. And a vastly improved hybrid viewfinder enables you to quickly and easily choose between the 0.52x magnification optical viewfinder (OVF) and the 3.69M dot OLED electronic viewfinder. The camera also records 4K video up to 30 frames per second or captures 120 frames per second at 1080p, to create super slow motion effects.

X-T4

Photography in motion



Making a camera that is suitable for both photography and videography is no simple task. The X-T4 is Fujifilm's most powerful X Series camera to date with no compromises for stills or video. Using the 4th generation X-Trans CMOS 4 sensor, X-Processor 4, a newly developed compact in-body image stabilisation (IBIS) system, new Film Simulation mode "ETERNA Bleach Bypass" and various other features that have evolved based on user feedback, this camera delivers image quality that can satisfy the demands of professional photographers and videographers.



For more information please visit:
www.fujifilm-x.com/en-au



Available from leading photographic stores and selected retailers

International Landscape Photographer of the Year 2019

Different people have different ideas about what makes a great landscape photograph. For some, it is an authentic capture that reproduces as accurately as possible the experience of the photographer; for others it's an experience of the mind and the imagination. Both approaches have their places in the history of painting and photography and both should be celebrated. Within the International Landscape Photographer of the Year Awards, the most important prize is having one of the Top 101 photographs. Yes, there are also special prize winners, but on a different day or with a different set of judges, those special results could be quite different. This in no way diminishes the winners' accomplishments, rather it acknowledges that any awards system is a matter of opinion.

If we talked things through with our judges, we'd find each has very considered views and reasons for the decisions they made, but is this really the best way to assess photography? It's great to have winners, it helps us hand out the prizes, but we come back to the basic premise that it is better to select the Top 101 landscape photographs as this is the 'opinion' that matters.

It's also true that out of the 3403 from 840 entrants, there are many photographs that just missed out by less than a couple of per cent! The cut-off score this year was 85.2% and once again, there were hundreds of other images scoring above 80% which could happily sit alongside the top 101 photographs in this book.



And landscape photography is best presented as a printed book or printed photograph, hence our association with Momento Pro book printers and Created for Life printer and framer. To see the winning images and learn more about the competition, visit www.internationallandscapephotographer.com. You can download a PDF of the book or purchase a real printed copy via the online shop. It really is worth a look!

Canon EOS R5

It's interesting times when camera companies announce new camera models ahead of release. With so many new cameras on the market and the swing towards mirrorless designs, owners of DSLR cameras may be considering a wholesale switch from one brand to another, especially as all manufacturers are suggesting that the new lenses for their mirrorless cameras will be better than the old ones designed for their DSLRs.

This marketing approach no doubt encourages new purchases, but it also leaves the way open for stalwart brand supporters to switch allegiances and one wonders if Canon with its R5 announcement is assuring its vast user base that new mirrorless models are coming that are fully competitive with everything else out in the market.

For instance, the yet-to-be-released EOS R5 will include a newly developed CMOS sensor with high-speed continuous shooting up to 20 frames per second using an electronic shutter, and up to 12 fps using a mechanical shutter. It will also offer 8K video capture from which you can extract high-resolution still images, as well as process 8K video into higher-quality 4K video.

The new camera will be equipped with a high-performance image stabilisation system that integrates the camera's in-body IS with IS systems on attached RF lenses. The camera will also feature

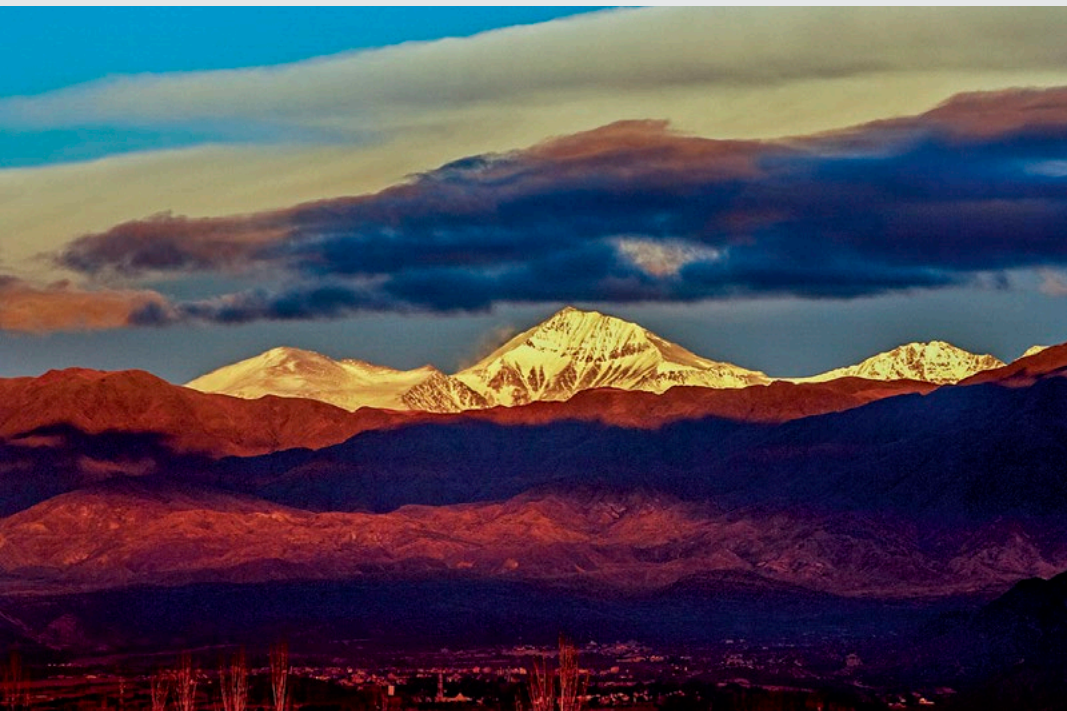


dual media card slots (hooray!) and supports automatic transfer of image files from the camera to the image.canon cloud platform.

Alongside the EOS R5, Canon is developing a total of nine RF lenses scheduled for release during 2020, including an RF 100-500mm f4.5-7.1 L IS USM, Extender RF 1.4x and Extender RF 2x. No doubt this news will keep the Canon crew very happy indeed – and wildlife and sport photographers happier still!

COVID STOP PRESS!

We're still going, but our tour has been postponed until next year – 30 October to 12 November 2021.



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To read the itinerary and full details, visit Michael's website at www.michaelcoyne.com.au, or contact Andrew Denishensky at: andrew@travelcounsellors.com.au



Michael Coyne is not only one of the world's leading documentary photographers, he is incredibly approachable and enjoys teaching others the skills that have kept him at the top of his profession for over 40 years.

Work alongside Michael and be inspired. You'll be given professional tips and feedback to boost your photographic skills.

If you're interested in documentary photography and South American destinations, this is the photo workshop for you.



Photographs by Michael Coyne.

Nikon D6

While DSLR camera manufacturers grapple with the mirrorless invasion, according to both Canon and Nikon there's life in the old DSLR design yet! Both have released new 'flagship' cameras in time for the now postponed Olympics in what has become a bit of a tradition: each company trying to out do the other with increasingly sophisticated features.

Last issue, we reviewed Canon's EOS-1Dx Mark III and this issue, Nikon joins the party with its D6. However, don't necessarily expect all the new features to be what you're looking for as a photographer. These cameras are aimed at professional news, sport and wildlife photographers who have very specific job descriptions and don't need much more than a 20-megapixel sensor.

Two features that have probably not improved are size and weight. Will professional cameras ever be small and lightweight? Maybe not for the foreseeable future because the user base is generally very hardy. Many of them lament the small cameras as being too light or flimsy, whereas the Nikon D6 is built to last and last.

So, what's new in the D6? Like Canon, speed seems to be the key word – speed for autofocus, frame rate and delivering photos to publications and websites.

Let's start with the 105-point autofocus system employing sensitive cross-type sensors in a high density arrangement. In dynamic-area AF and 3D-tracking modes, the D6 maintains focus on your subject and lets you follow the action, thanks to improved tracking performance even at a super fast 14 frames per second. If the subject is moving erratically and swiftly, a 'Wide' selection feature in single-point AF and dynamic-area AF modes will keep the subject in focus and avoid focusing on the background.

The Nikon D6 also offers enhanced subject detection and tracking performance, alongside focus priority on a subject's eye when using auto-area AF or 3D-tracking modes. Nikon's Advanced Scene Recognition System is claimed to be a potent combination

of a 180K-pixel RGB sensor, the EXPEED 6 image-processing engine and the new dedicated AF engine.

Nikon also suggests that whether at a high-stakes global chess competition or observing a moment of silence at a sporting event, a photojournalist's worst nightmare is taking a picture that interrupts the moment because of a loud click. With the Nikon D6, silent photography is available in Live View mode and you can shoot at up to 10.5 frames per second with auto exposure (AE) tracking.

Out in the field, fast image transfer can be essential so a photographer can immediately deliver images of an athlete reaching the finishing line with a new record time or scoring the goal for the decisive penalty shoot-out. With that in mind, the Nikon D6 delivers approximately 15% quicker communication via wired LAN while inheriting the D5's highly acclaimed 1000BASE-T standard, and communication via built-in Wi-Fi and WT-6 is an option for the wireless LAN. Photographers can also prioritise which images to upload and be transferred first, via Wired LAN and WT-6/A/B/C. The camera is further supported by the SnapBridge app to help make transferring raw files to smart devices easier.

Other additions to the D6 design include keeping frequently used settings close and easy with touch operation during playback. The settings are easily applied with a flick operation and options include selecting to send a file or protecting it. Other features that further boost post-shooting operations are playback card slot selection, a playback switch between simultaneously-recorded images, filtered playback and image ratings. And if you need to remove lots of pictures in a hurry, a simultaneous deletion feature allows for multiple images to be deleted in one operation.

Interestingly, simultaneous recording of JPEG+JPEG images is possible, so large JPEG files can be kept for editing and another small or medium JPEG can be recorded as a transfer option. That makes lots of sense if you're shooting for both web and press.





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No Compromise Storage in a Go-Everywhere Package!

Peter Eastway reviews the highly portable Rugged SSD Pro storage solution from LaCie, from the remotest location on Earth – Antarctica!

One of the many fun aspects of writing for a photography magazine are the toys we get to play with. And the most recent toy I have to report on is the LaCie® Rugged® SSD Pro portable storage device.

As its name suggests, the Rugged SSD Pro is designed for life on the road – and the high seas as I recently took it on a voyage to Antarctica.

The Rugged series' well known plastic protective shell in vibrant orange has been replaced by a suave matte black, distinguishing it from the standard Rugged SSD. But, what else makes the

Rugged SSD Pro different?
In a word, speed.

2800MB/s Fast!

The LaCie Rugged SSD Pro has been designed to meet the requirements of both photographers processing large image files and film-makers with their gigabytes of motion – especially out on location.

However, not only does the Rugged SSD Pro provide additional storage space, it can work as a scratch disk with high-speed data transfers and editing power.

For photographers, this means that when you open your image files in Photoshop, Lightroom or Capture One, etc., it doesn't matter whether they're stored on your laptop's internal drive or the Rugged SSD Pro, your software won't hesitate as it opens, edits and saves your work.

Inside the Rugged SSD Pro is a Seagate® FireCuda® NVMe solid state drive offering super fast Thunderbolt 3 speeds up to 2800MB/s (compared to 1000MB/s on the standard Rugged SSD).

The benefit for photographers is that it really is so fast, it's just like working on an internal drive. And if you're into film and video production, then you'll be able to play back 6K, 8K, and super slow motion source files anywhere – without transcoding.



LaCie's Rugged SSD Pro - high performance NVMe SSD with TB3 connectivity. Location shot taken at Danco Harbour, Antarctica Peninsula.

So, what happens if your computer doesn't have Thunderbolt 3 connectivity? No trouble! LaCie has thought about that too!

Previously, Thunderbolt 3 devices would only work with Thunderbolt 3 computers; now, the LaCie Rugged SSD Pro features the latest Thunderbolt 3 controller and is the first Thunderbolt 3 portable storage solution offering USB 3.1 compatibility for seamless plug and play connectivity.

Super Rugged too

Now, I do have a small confession to make. I'm not sure if I came even close to pushing the ruggedness of the Rugged SSD Pro while in Antarctica.

You see, the Rugged SSD Pro has very impressive IP67-rated dust and water resistance, a three-metre drop tolerance and two-ton car crush resistance. And it is the first Thunderbolt

3 storage solution that can be immersed in water down to one metre for up to 30 minutes.

While I tested the Rugged SSD Pro extensively and took it with me when we landed onshore in Antarctica, my test unit spent most of its time inside a comfortable cabin on an expedition ship. Nevertheless, rough seas can see hard drives fall off desks. Our transfer out to the ship was by water and there's a wonderful sense of security knowing that this small, high capacity solid state drive is looking after your images.

Five-Year Warranty

And it's reassuring to know LaCie thinks the same way. Like all LaCie's Rugged range, the SSD Pro comes with a five-year limited warranty protection plan

featuring Rescue Data Recovery Services.

And there's also a one-month complimentary membership to Adobe® Creative Cloud® All Apps Plan for access to awesome photo and video editing apps.

The 140 gram Rugged SSD Pro is compatible with both Mac and Windows computers and comes in 1TB and 2TB configurations.

If you're looking for a small, robust drive for using out on location that can also double as a super-fast scratch disk, the LaCie Rugged SSD Pro has all the answers.

For more information, visit www.lacie.com/as/en/, a specialist photo supplier or better computer suppliers Australia-wide.

Fujifilm

X-T4

Faster frame rate, faster autofocus and improved image stabilisation.

Is the new Fujifilm X-T4 worth the upgrade? By Peter Eastway.

Modern mirrorless cameras are already so good, do we need anything better? It's a rather stupid question and I should know better.

History Lesson?

Perhaps 35 years ago, I was sitting in Paul Burrow's office discussing a new camera. I was editor then of Australian Camera Craft magazine and Paul was the technical editor. We had just received a Minolta 9000, the most advanced professional SLR of the time. I most remember the circular exposure mode dial on the top deck, surrounding a small LCD screen, even more than the revolutionary autofocus system inside. Perhaps the AF wasn't so good, after all! I used Minolta at the time, so no doubt I was a little biased, but as I marvelled at the new camera in my hands, I asked Paul how was it possible for a camera to be any better?

Most of us have probably had similar thoughts about many of the cameras we've owned. It's great to be satisfied with a camera we've just bought, but there are armies of R&D

personnel wanting to create something even better and, step by step, they are leading photography into the future.

And I'm very happy about that! I love new cameras and what they add in terms of our ability to capture new subjects – or capture old subjects in new and different ways.

For instance, in the days of film, shooting in low light was challenging and the results rather grainy. High speed film helped somewhat, but low light was a challenge for autofocus systems, assuming you could see your subject in the dim light. Compare this to shooting with a modern mirrorless camera which amplifies the light in the electronic viewfinder, has no trouble shooting at ISO 12,800 or higher and the image quality is superb! So, yes, I'm very happy that new cameras keep arriving as each one is potentially offering new opportunities out in the field.

15 Frames Per Second

So, what does Fujifilm's X-T4 add to our capabilities? It appears Fujifilm is aiming the X-T4 at sport and wildlife photographers because the new model has faster autofocus, a faster burst rate and better image stabilisation (which translates into improvements for both stills and video production).

One of the drivers behind the extra speed is a new, faster focal plane shutter. Obviously, the shutter speeds it measures for exposures haven't changed, but the time taken to open and close the shutter has been reduced so that, in turn, more exposures can be taken per second – up to 15 frames per second in fact. Fujifilm claims the new shutter is twice as durable as the old one, is quieter and the shutter release lag time is minuscule at just 0.035 second. And each time the shutter is opened, the camera has to focus the lens, so the autofocus system has been beefed up with new algorithms that achieve focus in as little as 0.02 second.

So, is 15 frames per second burst shooting of interest? What does it mean in practice? Writing on my return from Antarctica, I've just been photographing birds on the wing and penguins porpoising through the waves (and I realise penguins are also birds, but they don't fly very well). Using



Rear view of X-T4.

Fujifilm's X-T3, I set the camera to high speed burst mode – around 11 frames per second. Timing the flap of a bird's wings while shooting from a moving Zodiac is not within my skillset, but I can more or less keep the bird within the viewfinder while pressing the shutter release in burst mode. Even so, at 11 frames per second, I can see that a few more frames per second would be even better in order to capture just the right position of the wings during flight.

Of course, shooting like this means hundreds of wasted frames and lots of extra storage space. If your background is in the days of film, this approach might seem like an extravagance. And if you remember the skill needed to follow focus manually, you're already aghast (or in awe) at what technology allows. But I think it's time we all get over these 'traditional' prejudices. If the end objective is to have the best photograph possible, then 'hosing down' your subject with as many frames per second as necessary is good technique. And it doesn't take too long to scroll through a few dozen frames in Lightroom or Capture One to pick out the one where the action and your subject look just right.

So, I can see a 15 frames per second burst rate being of great interest to sport and wildlife photographers alike, but with high-resolution video capture, why not just take a frame grab from video? Frame grabs at 30 or 60 fps are the equivalent of smaller JPEG files, so if your exposure and colour are spot on and you don't need as many pixels, this is a valid solution. On the other hand, we're still photographers (written this way purposely), so let's use the still files that give us our edge where we can.

When capturing full size raw files at 15 fps, the X-T4 will fill its buffer after 38 frames (compressed raw, or 35 frames uncompressed), but it can take up to 110 frames if you save as JPEGs. Generally, we'll want to shoot raw files to maintain maximum image quality, so translated, this means that as your bird flaps its wings, you can shoot raw files for two and a bit seconds before the camera slows down. Is this enough? Most of the time it is more than necessary, but I now know from experience you sometimes want to shoot for a little longer. I guess it's comments like these that will have the R&D staff increasing the storage capacity on the next model! The customer always wants more.

So, what about a faster burst rate? The X-T4 also offers up to 20 frames per second if you use the electronic shutter (and 30 fps if you're happy to work with a cropped image file), which leads to the question, why not just use the electronic shutter all the time?

The main problem with an electronic shutter is the rolling effect, meaning that the frame area is exposed sequentially, which can lead to some weird distortion effects. Now, the faster the shutter speed, the less likely you'll see any problems – and the electronic shutter does allow exposure speeds at up to 1/32,000 second. However, such fast shutter speeds require wide apertures, higher ISO settings or lots of light and that's not always available. Still, I am surprised at just how much an electronic shutter can distort moving subjects (on all cameras), even at very fast shutter speeds. I'm guessing the R&D departments around the world understand this very well



Fujifilm X-T4 in silver.

and that's why the electronic shutter remains one of several options on modern cameras.

I haven't tested this feature on the X-T3/X-T4 sufficiently to say how much use it will be for sport and wildlife photographers. My guess is that if your subject completely fills the frame, then it may not be as useful unless you can really ramp up the shutter speeds to something super fast.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. As a user of the X-T3, I'm definitely interested in the X-T4. The faster frame rate will be very helpful, but it's the associated autofocus speed that will help for everything I shoot, not just wildlife. In addition to speed, there's greater accuracy when focusing on moving subjects, plus face and eye recognition performance has been further refined.

And then there's that mention of the body-integrated image stabilisation system (IBIS).

6.5 Stops Image Stabilisation

There's a part of me that believes image stabilisation is overrated and another part of me that says it is absolutely must-have technology. The main issue I have with image stabilisation is the rhetoric around it. Reading much of the marketing literature, you could be excused for believing that every photo will be sharp, whereas the reality is quite different. Image stabilisation helps keep the camera still during exposure, but it has no known effect on the subject! If you're photographing a race car, it doesn't matter how stable your camera is, that car is going to be blurred if it's moving quickly and your camera is set on a slow shutter speed.

On the other hand, if you're standing on a moving Zodiac photographing a polar bear wandering slowly along the shore,



Fujifilm X-T4 in black.

then image stabilisation is a wonder to behold. It means you can use slower shutter speeds than you might otherwise have needed to eliminate the effect of the moving camera, but once your shutter speed drops below what will freeze the subject's movement, nothing will help.

Used with understanding, image stabilisation is of great benefit, but the longer we can hold our camera still, the more likely our subjects will move. It might be possible with IS to hand-hold a one-second exposure, but did your subject keep still for that long as well?

Don't get me wrong, I love IS. And I see great benefits for sport and wildlife photographers. Even just hand-holding a telephoto lens with image stabilisation turned on makes composing and framing your subject that much easier. And if you're also shooting video, then the stabilisation of the camera from frame to frame is essential (and saves a lot of post-production time as well).

So, I'm a fan of image stabilisation and having in-body image stabilisation (IBIS) as previously seen on the Fujifilm X-H1, is great to now see on the X-T series. A new five-axis IBIS system offers up to 6.5-stops advantage by using gyro sensors that can detect camera shake at an accuracy eight times greater than before, while a shock-absorbing structure further dampens minor shakes when the shutter button is pressed.

In-body image stabilisation means that every photo you take can benefit, not just those where image stabilisation is built into the lens you use, but my understanding is that maximum stabilisation will come when the lens is stabilised as well.

Further Refinements

As a user of the X-T3, I might be a little biased in my reviewing, but I generally enjoy using the X-T3 and find that it does what I need it to do very well. It's great to program buttons to do different tasks and the camera is small and light, which



The X-T4's viewfinder now has three boost modes.



IBIS (In-body image stabilisation) is a big plus for the Fujifilm X-T4.

essentially means I have bought larger and heavier lenses! The net outcome is still a smaller, lighter outfit which makes my back very happy.

One thing that could be improved is battery life and here Fujifilm has some good news. The latest high capacity battery NP-W235 lasts for up to 500 frames per charge in Normal mode, 600 frames per charge in Economy mode and up to 1700 frames per charge if it is combined with the optional vertical battery grip VG-XT4 (because it can hold two NP-W235 batteries).

There are now three boost modes for the electronic viewfinder: a Low Light Priority mode allows you to see the subject clearly, even when shooting in low light; Resolution Priority mode displays the subject in fine detail; and Frame Rate Priority mode shows the motion of a subject smoothly.

In terms of video, the X-T4 can record at 4K/60P 4:2:0 10-bit on an SD card in the camera. However, video output to external storage media via the HDMI port is at 4K/60P 4:2:2 10-bit, which records more colour information. The X-T4 also features a digital image stabilisation (DIS) function, which makes fine adjustments to video framing to compensate for camera shake, producing a smoother result when shooting video hand-held.

And there are now 35 interchangeable lenses for the X-Series cameras, including the large-diameter mid-telephoto prime XF 50mm f1.0 R WR lens to be released by the end of 2020.

It really is a great time for photographers and photography! Check out the details on the X-T4 at www.fujifilm.com.au.

FROZEN IN TIME

An Exhibition of life in the extreme Polar regions
by master photographer and printer
Joshua Holko



Canon



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Location: The Sun-Room, Sun Studios 95 Buckhurst Street South Melbourne

Dates: **3rd September - 18th September 2020**

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With the COVID-19 crisis, many exhibitions are being postponed. To find out the latest details, visit the operator's website.

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2019 Classic Landscape Category Winner: Allen Koppe

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THE YEAR



2019 Revealing Nature Category Winner: Christian Vizl

HOW TO ENTER

1. The **Better Photography Magazine Photo of the Year 2020 Award** is open to all non-professional photographers. A non-professional photographer does not work full-time as a photographer and has earned less than AUS \$10,000 in the past 12 months from photography.

2. You may enter as many times as you wish. The Early Bird entry fee is AUS \$20 per entry up to the closing date, or blocks of five entries for \$80. Entry for one week after the official closing date is still AUS \$20 per entry, but no fifth entry free.

3. There are four categories: Emotive Portraits, Classic Landscapes, Exotic Travel and Revealing Nature. You can enter in one or more categories.

4. The judges are looking for a professional standard of presentation and a highly creative approach or treatment.

5. The images presented for judging must be photographic in origin and any post-production must be the work of the entrant. And to ensure we have

recent work, entries must be from original exposures made on or after 1 January 2019. Please do not remove the EXIF data from your entry files as this may invalidate your entry.

6. Entry is on-line only at www.betterphotography.com.

Follow the links to the competition site.

7. To enter online, you will need to register. Competition winners may be asked to prove their non-professional status.

8. The judges will determine the winning entry in each category. If the organisers cannot contact a winning entrant by email within a reasonable time, the judges may award the prize(s) to another entry.

9. Category Prizes: AUS \$750

10. Overall Winner: In addition, the photo judged to be the best of the four category winners will receive a cash prize of a further AUS \$2000.

11. Photographers retain copyright of their images. However, by entering

this competition, the photographer (or copyright owner) grants to *Better Photography* magazine and associated companies (the 'Organisers') the right to reproduce in print and online any image submitted for publicity or educational purposes in Australia and overseas.

12. Most entrants will own the copyright in their work. However, if necessary, it is the entrant's responsibility to obtain any and all permissions, including the model releases and/or copyright owner's permission if required, to have the images judged and possibly displayed and published.

13. The Organisers will interpret the application of these rules and make decisions on any questions not specifically covered by them. No correspondence will be entered into regarding any decision.

14. Employees of the Organisers and associated companies, and their families, are not able to enter.

15. Entries will be accepted online only from 1 July to 15 August 2020.

16. Enquiries concerning the competition can be directed to kim@betterphotography.com.

17. The results will be published online at www.betterphotography.com on 30 September 2020. Winners will be notified directly by email. Please don't contact the Organisers for information about your entries.

18. This is a summary of the rules. The complete rules can be found with the competition entry details at: www.betterphotography.com.

Note: We are using yet another new judging system, so you will be required to re-register. After the judging, you can log back into your account to see your scores and judge's comments. We will also send you an email notifying you that your results are available for viewing online in your account.

ENTER THE ONLINE COMPETITION NOW!

HUMAN CANVAS







Art Wolfe on location in Ethiopia.

The remarkable art and photography of Art Wolfe. Peter Eastway chats to one of photography's contemporary legends.

American Art Wolfe is known internationally for his nature and environmental photography reproduced in magazines such as *National Geographic*. Since 1988, he has published at least one book a year and has over 100 titles to his name in eight languages, including what is perhaps his best known title, *The Living Wild*, with more than 70,000 copies in distribution.

Books are the key to understanding Art, but he is multifaceted and has featured in film and television documentaries, is in great demand as a keynote speaker and even leads photo tours to a myriad of locations around the globe.

Books are also how I reconnected with Art after the launch of the *Tales by Light* television series, produced by Canon Australia, National Geographic Channel and Untitled Films. Art featured in two episodes, I featured in one and we met on stage with Darren Jew, Krystle Wright and Richard l'Anson for the Australian launch. Then a few years later following the publication of my own book, *The New Tradition*, I sent all the photographers mentioned in the book a copy, as a thank you for their friendship.

And Art being a consummate gentleman, packaged up a copy of his latest book, *Human Canvas*, and sent it to me with a lovely note of thanks and congratulations. It was this reconnection and then turning the pages of his amazing book that initiated this article.



Photo from *Human Canvas* by Art Wolfe.

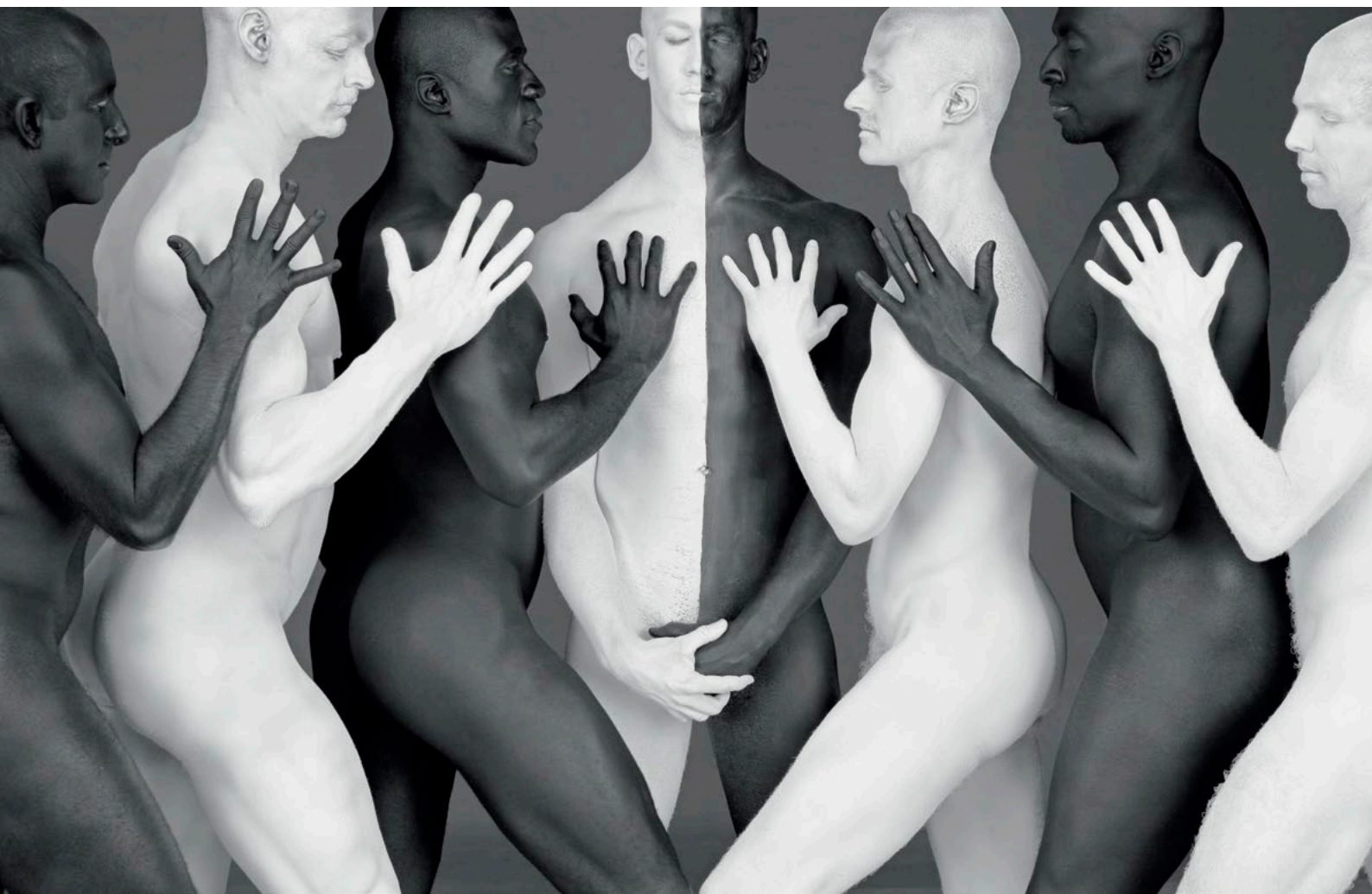


Photo from *Human Canvas* by Art Wolfe.

Insight

Art says he didn't get into photography intentionally. Although as a youth he was at college learning art and design, he loved trekking in the mountains where he'd take a camera along. "I kind of learned photography through trial and error, and rather than sitting and looking at a blank canvas as a painter, trying to conjure up an image, I found I could create compositions based on what was in front of me with a camera."

What used to be a huge divide between painting and photography has closed significantly with the advent of digital photography and post-production. Art was a somewhat controversial early adopter with his book *Migrations* when, in 1994, he used digital retouching to enhance his work.

"Back then, we were scanning transparencies into a digital format which allowed us to change the content. I always felt there was an 'art' side to my photography, but I learned that the line between photography as art compared to photojournalism or natural history is a jagged one.

"In my book *Migrations*, I was inspired by the paintings of the Dutch artist, M. C. Escher and his amazing patterns. So, if you could visualise a flock of flying geese, all identical and evenly positioned, if there were a gap in the pattern of my photograph, I could solve it by taking a bird from another frame and dropping it in. I did that with many of the images in

Migrations, but critics said I was creating false numbers. It was an interesting time!

"In our human history, whenever there has been a change in art, people have criticised it. Back in the 1830s, artists criticised photography and said it would change painting forever – which it never did. When colour photography arrived, people said it was the end of B&W as we knew it, but we know



Migrations was a controversial book – see text for details.

this is not true. So historically, I can understand the hysterical reaction when digital photography arrived, and I believe this was evident even when *Migrations* was published. People were crying foul that digital techniques would end pure photography forever – and it never did!

“I embraced the technology that was available to me and I took the art of the camera to its limits. This was not a moral issue. It was just that in the beginning, we were naive.”

And to be fair to Art, he explained his approach in the introduction to *Migrations*, calling his work digital illustrations, but as photography friend Tom Mangelsen pointed out, no one reads introductions!

Art discovered that if he changed the photos too much, he could lose the core of his audience who wanted to believe that what was depicted in a photograph actually existed.

“That was over 25 years ago and I think things have changed somewhat. As long as people know you’re altering an image, they are okay with it. They can still choose to love it or hate it, but if they understand that the clouds have been replaced because that’s your artistic vision, how can they complain?”

“The crux of the matter is that when people fall in love with a photograph, only to realise later on that it isn’t a real image and there was no explanation, they feel uncomfortable.”

Completely Organised

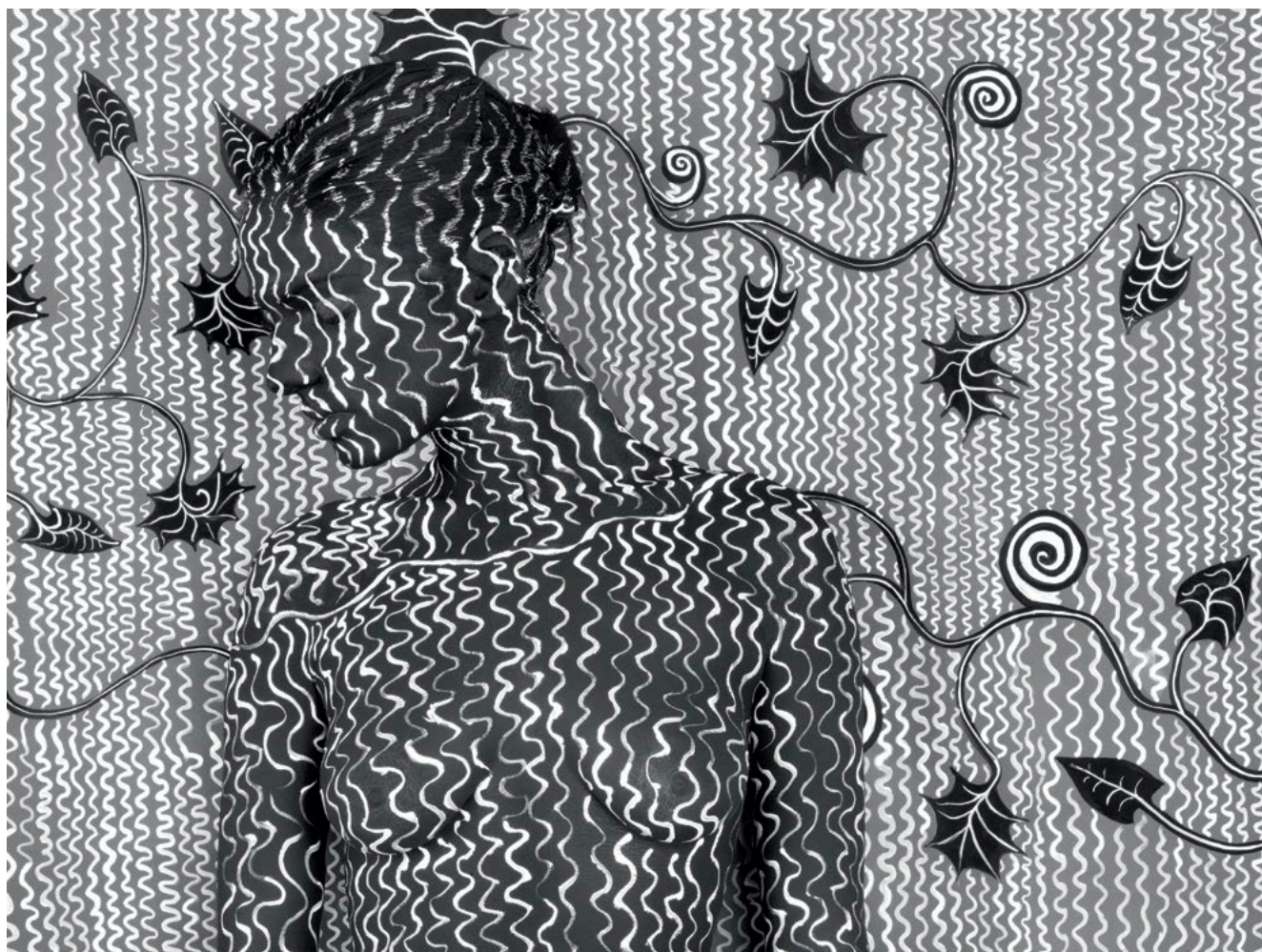
Art says he is driven by a desire to see the world and experience it. “My painting instructors taught me not to sit back and be

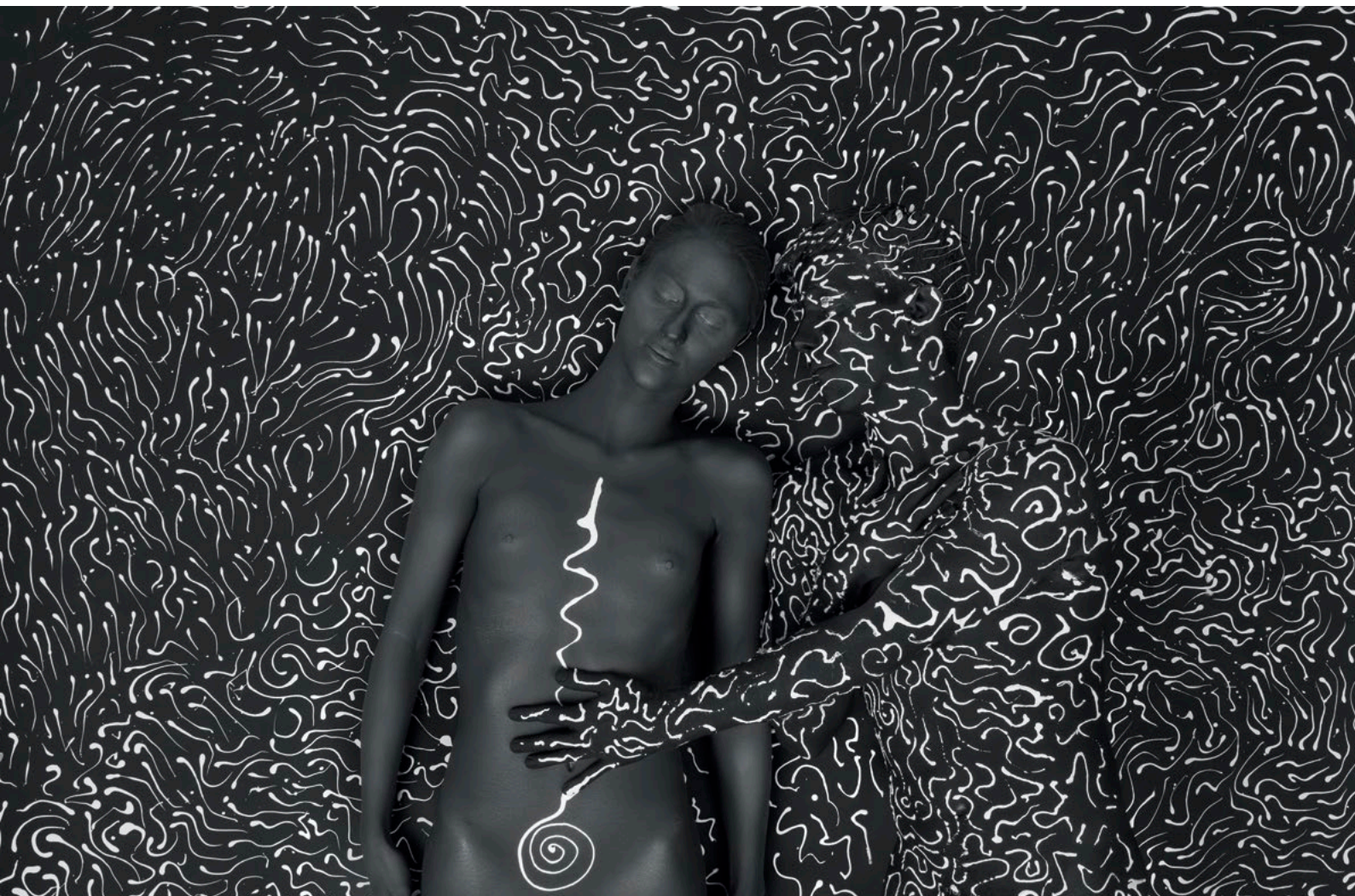
comfortable, so I love working and in fact I’m working more now than ever before. I tell people I’m racing towards my own death. I’m just back from Indonesia and tomorrow I’m off to Easter Island. I have precious little downtime, but I have no family, no pets and so no reason to sit around.”

Art describes himself as ‘completely organised’. He knows where he will be every day for the next year and most of the following year is planned out as well. “I have to be that way because of what I’m photographing. For instance, one of my current projects is called Act of Faith, looking at all the different types of religions, including voodoo and shamanism. To photograph this, there are some hard and fast dates in the many religious calendars, so I can’t arrive a day late because I’ll miss it.

“Then there’s another project, Wildlife in the Age of Man, which is tied to climate change and the increased presence of man in what used to be wilderness areas. If I’m photographing migrating birds, then I have to map my calendar well in advance to be sure I’m there. My whole life is tied to events like this.

“I guess I am left-handed and right-brained. Art comes naturally to me and I have a huge library of books on photographers and painters. I’m like a sponge and love looking at other people’s work, not with the aim of plagiarising, but in drawing inspiration. I’m working on seven different books right now and they can take from five to nine years, so I need to be incredibly organised even though it can drive the people around me a little bit crazy!”





Above and opposite page: Photos from *Human Canvas* by Art Wolfe.

"Friends will call me to go for dinner or away camping, but my diary is already full. I've created a lifestyle based on the psychology in my brain that won't let me sit still – and I'm going with it! I can't sit around wondering what's going to happen next, so I make it happen."

Art is 68 and says that one of the keys to longevity is remaining enthusiastic. "I studied the Impressionist painters of the late 1800s and many of them lived longer lives, I believe, because they were so involved. There's no point sitting around wondering what disease will kill me, so I just put my blinkers on and don't worry too much about 'what ifs.'"

The World of Books

Having published and been involved with so many books, it's not surprising to learn Art remains an avid advocate of the printed form.

"If I didn't have a book to do, I wouldn't get out of bed. I need a project and books are the most obvious ones for me.

"I'm not motivated by money. I hardly find that compelling, although I was fortunate to make money when stock photography was viable. I remodelled my house from it, but stock photography has declined. Today, I have five employees who keep my business going, I teach quite a lot and all that adds up to a lifestyle that keeps us moving forwards.

"But I like books because I can control the process. I work with a publisher who has a shared vision in terms of producing beautiful books – and there's still a market for them. There are enough people who will buy and keep fine art books, so while I could work for an online magazine or run a photo competition, I just love books!

"To produce a book commercially, you need a compelling idea which will lead to book sales. However, you need a pragmatic view of why a book could be successful and it can't be a carbon copy of something that is already out there.

"So, a book compels me to look at a subject and come up with a different view. It's not to say I don't have photos that look like everyone else's, but for me, trying to capture a subject slightly differently is the drive. And if I'm also successful, then that's great for my psychology!

"Just last night, I was giving a presentation about my elephant book with my co-author. In the poaching world, it's really only a few people involved and we're trying to help get them arrested. It's a great story and when you present it to an audience, at the end of the night they're happy to buy a book and take it home because, in an age like this, it's nice to be reminded that there are people out there doing good work.

"So, whatever subject I take on, I try to champion it."

Art says he tries not to micro-manage the publishing process. "I trust that my publisher has the same desire to make the book as strong as possible. I know some photographers who override their publisher and become a pain to deal with, but that approach doesn't work. In the beginning, I make my thoughts known and then I back away and let the publisher and designer do their jobs."

In terms of design, Art says he likes simple, clean layouts that let his photographs 'breathe' on the page. Other than that, he leaves it up to the designer. "If you nitpick things with the designer, he or she loses interest and the book won't succeed as well. The designer and publisher need to have their own impact on the book and besides, when a bunch of people bring their ideas together, you can end up with a much stronger result."

Human Canvas

And Art's book *Human Canvas* is an incredibly strong result.

As Art explained, photography is a matter of inspiration and if you're going to produce a book, you need a different idea. So while many people have painted human bodies before, his latest book is quite different to anything I've seen on the market.

It also reflects how Art has changed and developed photographically over the years because, in many ways, photography has turned full circle. It has reverted to the 'hand-made'. In some areas there is almost a revolt against the digitally perfect photograph, so Art is actually looking for small 'mistakes' or imperfections in his work that show 'the hand of man'. No doubt Art could have created a similar body of work using digital illustration, but rather he hand-painted his subjects before photographing them and it is this interplay between art and photography that gives his images so much visual energy.

"I actually want my images to have small imperfections. If I created something digitally, it would be too perfect.

"My house is full of artworks from primitive cultures around the world – lots of aboriginal paintings and PNG carvings – and it's the imperfections that engage us and give the artwork its life.

"Out in America's West, we see bronze sculptures of people riding horses, but they are lifeless. When a sculpture is perfect, it doesn't allow much room for imagination. In comparison, primitive art is more participatory and so similarly, the photos in *Human Canvas* have lots of imperfections which give it a value you wouldn't get from something created completely digitally. A perfect image wouldn't be nearly as engaging."



Art Wolfe at work – look closely and you'll see his human subject lying next to him!

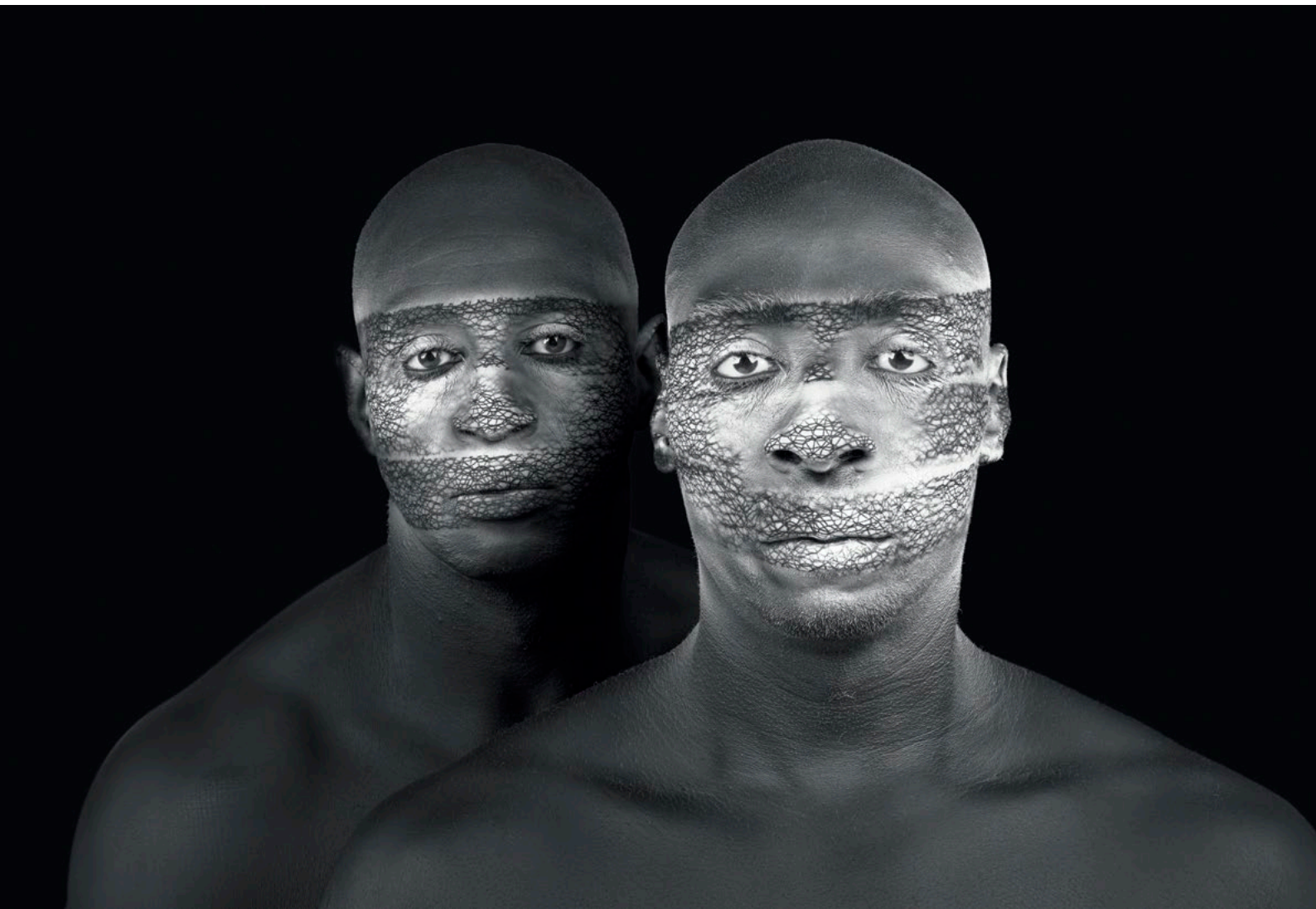
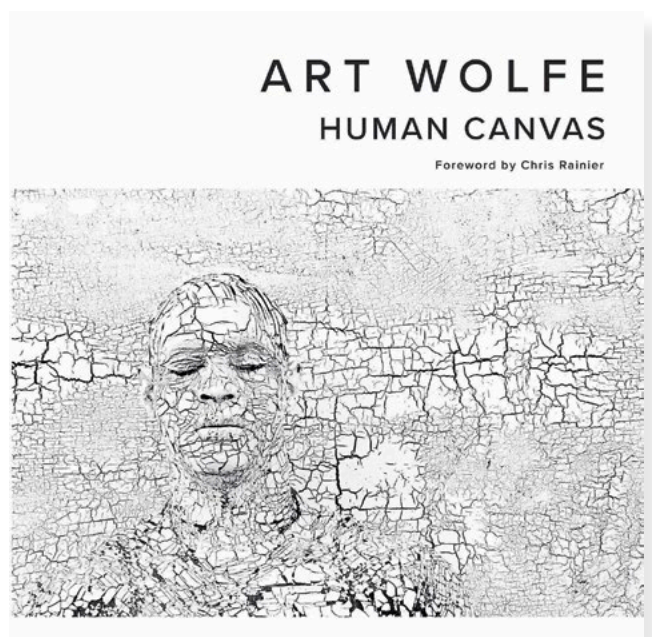


Photo from *Human Canvas* by Art Wolfe.

Interestingly, one of Art's favourite portraits in the book is of Thomas Knoll, the inventor of Photoshop. Thomas and his wife are good friends and they hired Art to photograph them as part of the *Human Canvas* project. "They were lying on their back for hours", laughed Art, reminiscing about the shoot. Despite Thomas's involvement in digital technology, there was Art on his knees, painting his subjects by hand!

"My religion is science and evolution, so the theme behind *Human Canvas* is to bring humans out of the earth. I dedicated the book to Thomas because he underwrote a return trip to Ethiopia, where we visited the tribes who initially inspired the work. I took some of my original images along to show them. Then we made a studio out of tree branches and tarps and showed the Surma tribesmen what I wanted them to do. It was really just like orchestrating a studio shoot in Seattle, with everything created and designed with sketches, except I was working out in the field."

Human Canvas is a wonderful combination of art and photography, studio and location work, stitched together by the remarkable creativity of Art Wolfe. To see more of the images and to purchase a book, visit the dedicated website: <https://humancanvasproject.com/>.

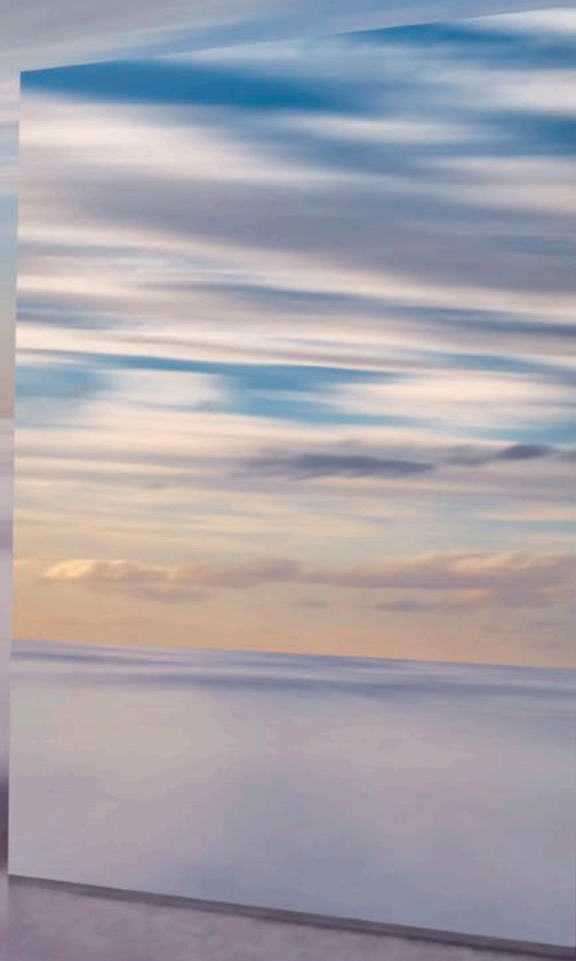


The cover of *Human Canvas* by Art Wolfe.

Murray Fredericks



From Salt to Vanity and Array





Murray Fredericks chats about his approach to photography and what it takes to create work which

appeals to the contemporary art market.

The 'typical' professional photographer of last century hardly exists today. Instead of sitting in a studio, today's professionals have various hats that allow them to eke out a living doing what they are passionate about.

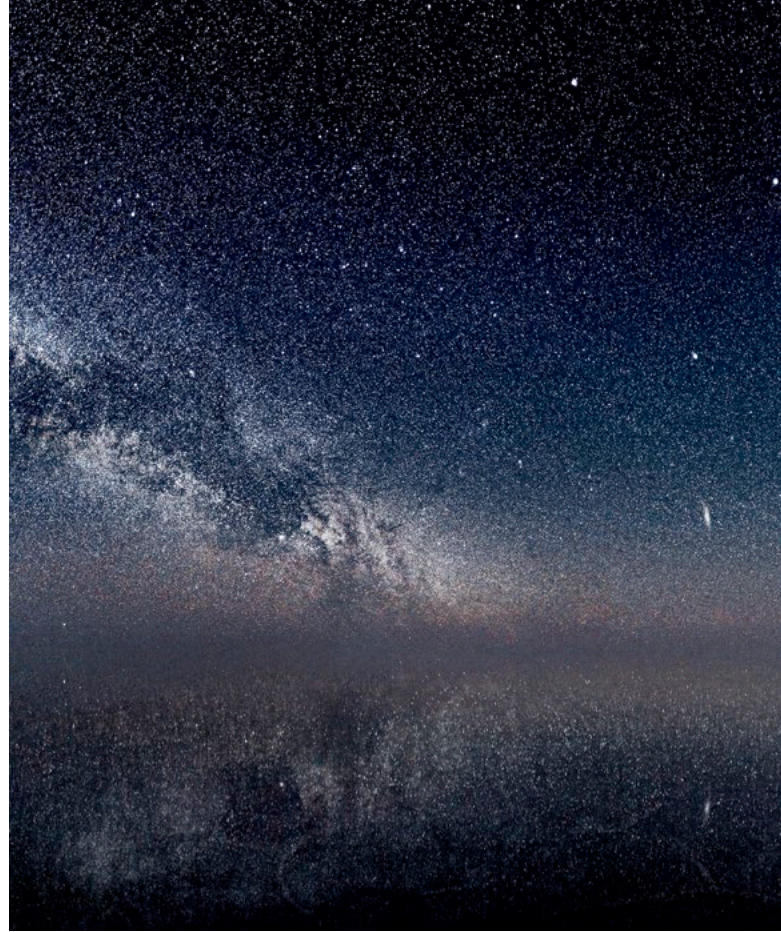
Insight

So it is for Murray Fredericks who is very definitely a passionate photographer, but finds himself doing all types of related work. So, how does he describe himself?

"It depends on whom I am talking to," laughed Murray, "and if I'm trying to impress them! Over the last five or six years, work has been beautifully varied. I have commercial jobs coming in from all over the world, for different media and in different locations. I've also done a lot of film and television work, including drama series and documentaries. I worked on a David Attenborough series for the BBC and I've done a number of long-term time-lapse projects.

"However, the link has always been the landscape, whether urban or natural, and from there the next step is architecture. I've become known as a bit of a specialist for time-lapse and that's where some of the best jobs are. I can find myself on location for three or four weeks working on some very specific briefs for a film director – lots of second unit work. And after a career as a photographer, I'm being picked up not so much to shoot videos as direct them.

"So, when people ask me what I do, that's a bit of a mouthful!



"Our job as a photographer is rearranging the three dimensional world into two dimensions. I'm unfamiliar in a studio environment, starting with a blank canvas, so I like to work in the opposite direction by having a subject that already exists and then communicating that subject to the viewer."

Perhaps Murray's most visible photographs are his large format landscapes from exhibitions such as *Salt*, *Hector*, *Vanity* and *Array*, photographed in inaccessible locations like the humid tropics, frozen Greenland and the middle of Lake Eyre in Australia. He is often described as an art photographer or a contemporary artist, but Murray prefers the single word, 'photographer'.

"Even Andreas Gursky didn't call his photography art, he'd leave that for someone else to say."

Starting with the *Salt* exhibition, which was featured in *Better Photography* over five years ago, Murray has now made 25 trips to Lake Eyre over a period of 17 years.

"I tried to leave it alone a while ago, just for the sake of forcing myself to move on, but then I had the idea of working with mirrors and so I started again! However, I feel that I have now exhausted those possibilities and so I'm now saying it is enough."

Inspiration

It's refreshing to learn that not every idea Murray has bears fruit. In this way, he's just like most of us. For instance, on his website you'll see a lone tree on a salt pan, engulfed in flames. It's a powerful image and one that is quite unlike his other work. Why just the one?

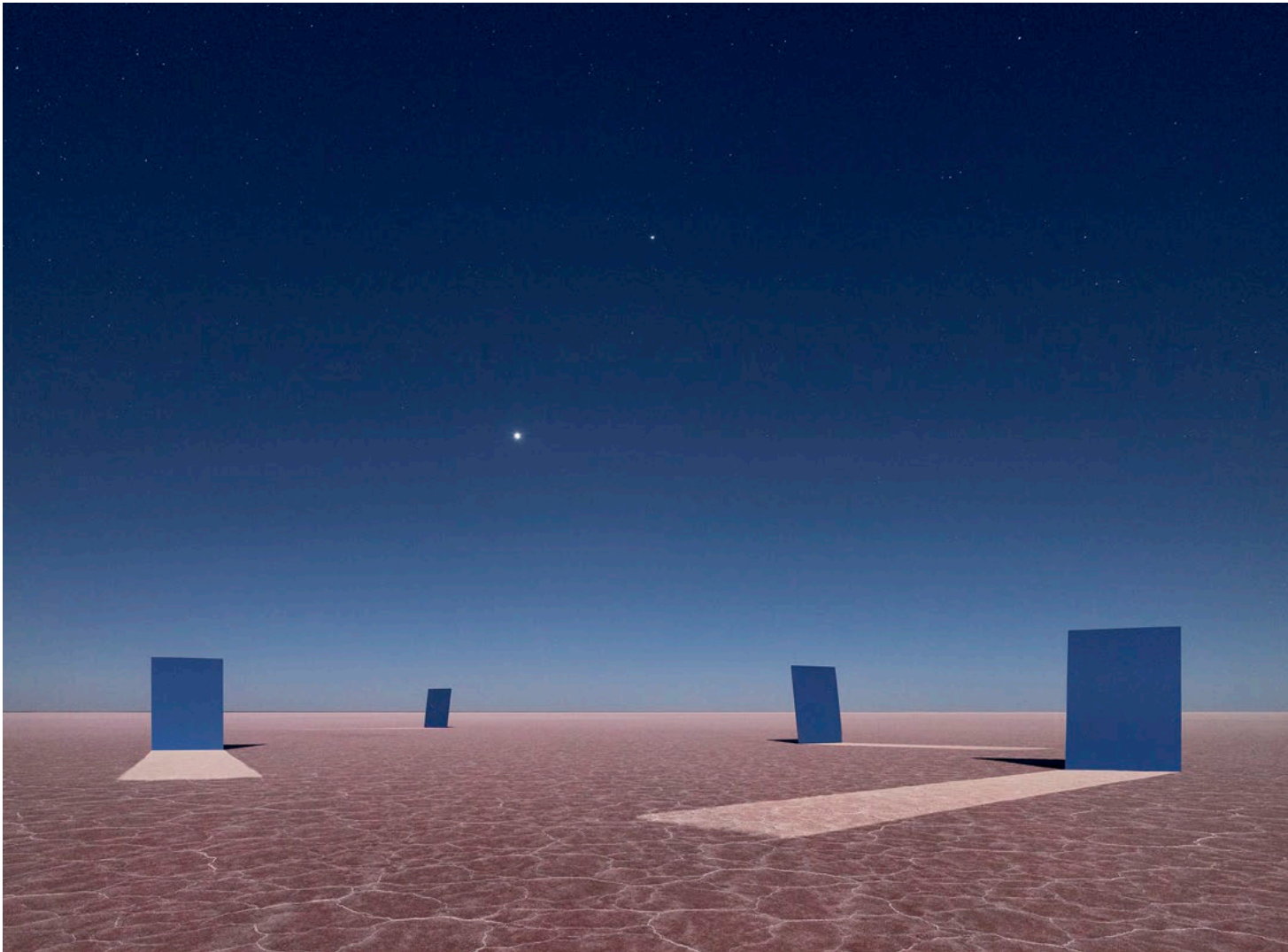
"The idea to work with fire began on North Stradbroke Island. At the end of 2015, around 90 per cent of the island was burnt just after New Year. Full of campers and 4WDs, we were camping in the north where it was quite safe. One evening, I photographed a massive shelf cloud mixing with the smoke and this gave me the idea of working more extensively with fire.



Mirror 7, Vanity series



Above: Array 1



Array 11

"I investigated the work of Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky, looked at the paintings of artist Tim Storrier and many other references to collect my ideas. I had lots of different angles, including working with indigenous groups up in Arnhem Land and flying over the fires. However, despite all my work, there was only a single photo that I was happy with – the tree on the salt pan.

"We didn't actually burn trees for this shot! Special effects products from the film industry that burnt out in 30 seconds and left no residue were used to create the effect.

"I try a lot of different ideas, but only a fraction of what I shoot ever makes it into an exhibition or onto a website - and that's a huge part of working as a photographer. You have to fail 1000 times to get that one great shot.

"For me, a photograph has to be more than a record of a landscape. I want people to see a message in my work, not just the literal message of, 'This is the landscape.' It might be something as simple as the power inherent in nature or our response to that power.

"Many times with the mirror set-ups [for the Vanity and Array images], we took the photographs but got nothing. It was just a mirror in a salt lake. In comparison, the photos that made the exhibition are the ones which have something subconsciously engaging that holds people to the image.

"So, why was the tree so successful for me? I don't know if I can explain it. While it burnt, I shot over 20 frames, but there



North Stradbroke. This is the storm referenced in the article.



Salt 500 (Muybridge). This is the burning tree referenced in the article.



was only one where the flames had the shape and texture to make everything work. There was only one that looked more than just a tree, but I'd need a psychoanalyst to explain why.

"I like Les Walking's analogy of photographing on both sides of the camera. It's a lovely way to put it.

"I gave a student talk in New York and was asked how do I decide upon the composition – what works and what doesn't? Personally, I've always had a very clear sense of what looks right. I feel it in my stomach – it's a sense that says yes or no and I follow it. So whether it's setting up a photograph or editing it for an exhibition, I try to make the process as emotional as possible. So, why is my stomach saying yes or no? I think that's me working on both sides of the camera."

Body of Work

As social media proves, most people are capable of capturing a great photograph from time to time. What separates the more serious workers is the ability to produce more than one – a series of images or a body of work - and this comes from dedicating a life to photography.

"I became a commercial photographer really early in my career because I never wanted the pressure of having to earn a living out of my artwork (although I have ended up very fortunate in that regard). I spent my first four or five years exhibiting my work before doing a commercial assignment. In fact, I was intent on never working commercially, so I worked in restaurants and bars, but that kills you long term! So, I took a job as an architectural photographer and earned as much money in one shoot as I did working for a month in a restaurant - and that freed up my time to be an artist.

"Personal works comes first. I'm very clear about that, but you never know where a good idea can come from. It could

be a conversation or while having a shower after a big night out. I don't put any pressure on the process and when I start something new, I call it a 'test' until it's finished and on the gallery wall. It's a form of protection, so if it fails, I can always walk away because it was only a test!

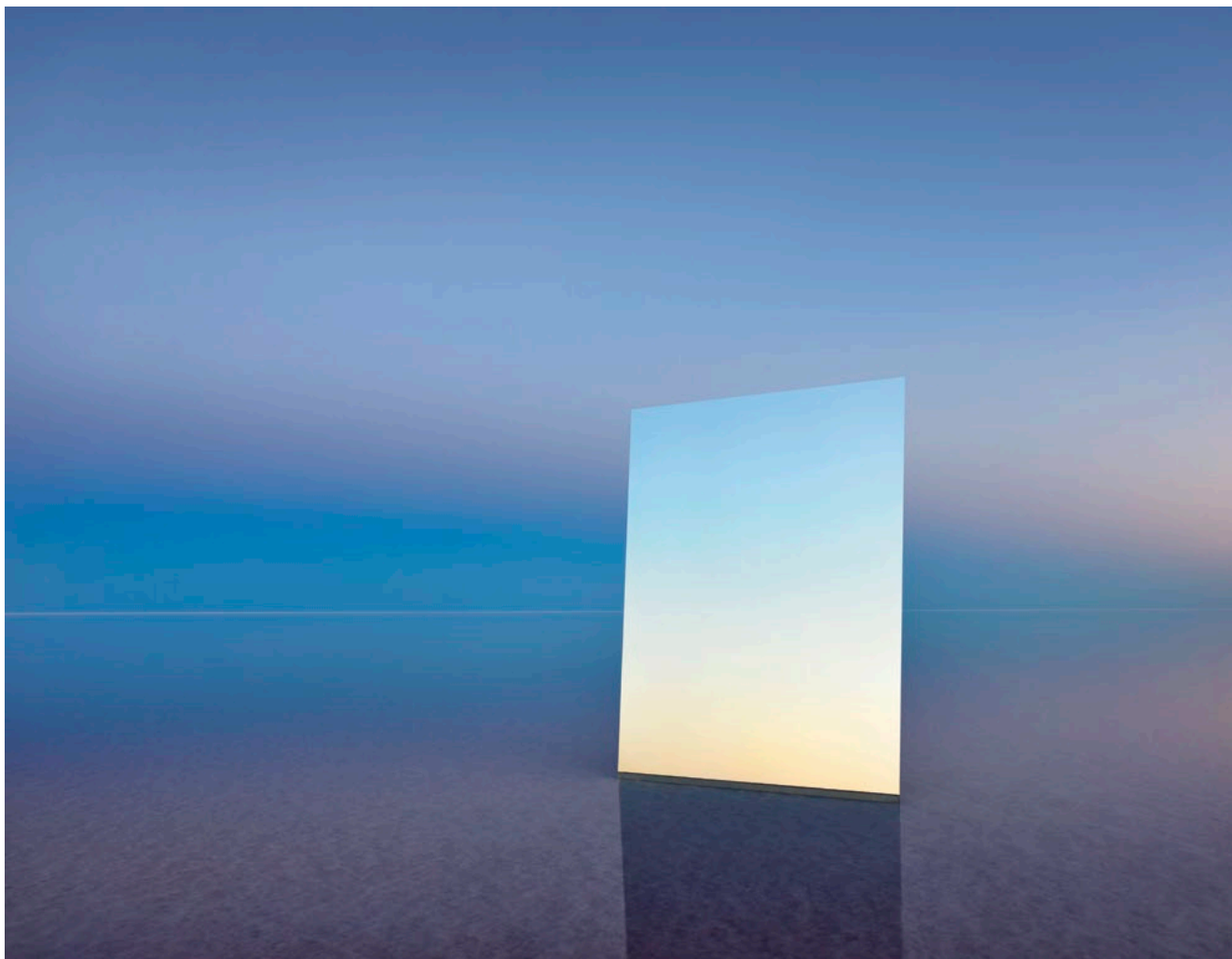
"If you fail enough times and test enough ideas, eventually you'll produce a body of work. Once you get the idea right, the rest of it can just be lots of grunt work. However, once I have the idea, I can't let it go. It becomes my whole life. I live it, walk it, talk to my wife about it. However, I'm careful who I talk to in the initial stages as that can somehow 'dilute' an idea. Talking about an unresolved idea puts unwanted and unnecessary pressure on the process! I try to avoid that."

Murray references his *Vanity* series, suggesting one can only take the concept [of dropping a couple of mirrors into an inch of water, which is itself a mirror] so far. "I imagined I'd be reflecting mirrors into mirrors, but many of the shots just looked like a gimmick that didn't work. It was only when I pulled most of the mirrors away that I discovered I was left with a rhombus set against the perfect line of the horizon and felt I'd discovered something of value in the pure geometry of the scene. That arrangement of the mirror formed the basis of two years' work – and after that the *Array* project introducing five mirrors into the scene, led to a further two years' work.

Straight Captures

So, why go to all the effort of travelling down to Lake Eyre and camping out for days on end in unpleasant conditions, just to take a photograph? Wouldn't compositing the images work just as well or do people like the back story?

"There is definitely no compositing in my work and every element is real, but of course we put each image through an



Mirror 24, Vanity series

editing and printing process that involves adjustments and retouching. At the time I take the photo, I have a good idea of what I am trying to do, but you know what it's like when you open the file. You might be photographing a blue sky and in your mind it is a constant blue from one side to the other. However, invariably you'll find that the blue on the left is a different colour temperature to the blue on the right, especially if you're using a wide-angle lens. So a lot of my printing processes would involve unifying the blue back to how I remember it.

"However, the whole point of creating these abstract images is that they aren't created by a graphic designer. They are not created in Illustrator or comped together in Photoshop and these days, that's a part of the interest factor. It's what holds people to them, knowing that they are real and wondering how the scene can even exist. If I can create ten images like this, then I have a show.

"Photographers will know I have refined the work in the printing process and I'll see people at the exhibitions (usually photographers) walking up to the print, searching for holes, looking for a potential conceit. Some will say they can see a different level of grain and so I must have comped it, but I explain that, no, that's just the difference between noise in highlights and shadows.

"But," Murray laughed, "we don't need to worry about this because no one other than a photographer gets this close to a print.

"So, yes they are real photographs, but if things go wrong, I have no problem fixing them in post-production. For instance, in the Array series where I was working with five mirrors, there were some tiny cracks in the mirror surface which we cleaned up digitally. That's something we also would have done if we'd shot the work on film."

Murray suggests that the way photographs are put together is really a personal choice. Different galleries and different artists all pursue different avenues. "It really is open slather, but the galleries I show in and the people who collect my work appreciate that everything I do is real.

"In fact, we are very careful in how we release my work to the world. For the last few exhibitions, we have made a little video of me working in the field, dragging the mirrors across the salt flat, showing the set-ups and then the final images at the end.

"One of the videos got 95,000 views on Facebook the day it was released. There was one negative comment from someone who obviously hadn't watched the video, saying he could do it all in Photoshop, but then ten other people jumped in and made the correction without any input from me – which was great!

"People are sensitive about the 'perceived truth' of a photograph. They don't like lies in general, so it's only the photographers who pretend their work is something it is not who get in trouble. If you comp your work, that's absolutely fine,



Array 15

but if you claim it's not comped and people find out that it is, then you have a problem. On the other hand, if you don't hide it, then people can view the work in the correct context.

"I don't have an ideological approach to anything creative, but you do need to be aware of the base assumptions people have around photography – assumptions they may not even be aware of! For instance, when I first sent the Array work to my London gallery, they didn't even respond. Usually, if they like the work, no matter how busy they are, I will get a call instantly. I was sure they'd love the Vanity work because I felt I'd cracked something special, but there was only silence.

"It was around two months after I'd exhibited the work in Melbourne that I received a call from London about another matter, so I took a deep breath and asked why they didn't like my latest work. 'I only like your real photos, not your design work', I was told. I said I'd flick him the video to look at and within five minutes I received an email back saying my show would open in one month.

"The London gallery, Hamiltons, also represents great photographers like Herb Ritts, Irving Penn and Robert Mapplethorpe, so its clientele expects it to reflect that lineage in the work it shows, whereas other galleries may have a name for being more avante garde. It's not that one approach or the other is right, but being transparent about can be very important."

Murray's large format prints are photographed with a Phase One IQ3 100-megapixel sensor on an Alpa SWA. He

also uses an Alpa FPS which allows him to attach almost any lens to his Phase One back. For instance, his star photos were taken with a Canon 35mm f1.4 lens and while the lens's image circle doesn't cover the whole of the medium format sensor, the 16-bit file is second to none for working with the blacks of a night sky.

So, what is Murray working on next?

"Well, I'm still in the testing phase! However, for the exhibition phase, I'm really pleased to have had Array #1 hanging with Richard Avedon's space portraits at Paris Photo this year.

"That image and exhibition was a lovely end to the Lake Eyre project and now I'm at the stage where I'm starting again."



Murray Fredericks on location.

Getting your Colour Right

By Peter Eastway

Does the colour look approximately correct in the photograph opposite? We can see it's early or late in the day because there's some colour in the sky along the horizon, but overall, the colour palette is based on blues and greens. It's a cold photograph, perhaps well suited to the subject matter – Antarctica.

But is it accurate? And should it be accurate?

Scientists and technicians may suggest that colour should be accurate because changing colours can affect viewers' emotive responses. On the other hand, photographers and artists would suggest controlling the colour is an essential part of what we do.

And so it is that very often, the colours we use in our photographs are technically incorrect, but they can still look pretty damn good!

For instance, your camera uses its white balance system to set a 'correct' colour balance, but since the camera doesn't know what the light is actually like, it can only adjust the white balance to a theoretical 'zero' or 'correct' position.

Turn the page and look at the three different renditions of this same photograph, before the colour was edited. The image in the middle is the 'technically correct' colour rendition, but it is neutral and says nothing about the feeling or emotion of being in such a cold, remote place. Whether you like the warmer or cooler renditions either side, at least they could say something about what you feel as the photographer.

It can also be very helpful to be aware of how your viewers feel about certain colours. For instance, technically speaking, snow in the shadows is blue, but if it looks too blue in a photograph, it can look unnatural to many people. For this reason, snow photos can benefit from a slightly warmer colour balance, even though this is technically incorrect.

So, if a technically correct colour balance isn't necessarily the best, why do our cameras try to set it?

Whether we end up using a technically correct colour balance in our final edit is one matter; starting our photographic editing with a technically correct colour balance within our image file is another.

Many photographers find it very useful to start with a correctly colour balanced file. It helps ground their creative process and it also gives them a place to return if colours go awry.

So, unless you are sure about the colour balance you want in the final image, good camera practice dictates that we aim to produce image files which can produce a neutral or natural white balance. This is one of the reasons shooting raw files is so important because you can always reset the white balance within a raw file; something that can be very difficult if not impossible with a JPEG file.

There are two steps to producing a correct colour balance. The first step is how we capture our image files. The second is how those image files are processed. We'll take a look at both on the following pages.

White or Colour?

White balance is often the term used for getting the colour cast correct at the point of capture, or when processing the raw file. It uses a temperature (yellow/blue) and tint (magenta/green) colour model to make colour adjustments.

Colour balance is the term usually used when we change the colour cast while editing the file. The colour balance dialog uses the three red/cyan, green/magenta and blue/yellow channels.

Both achieve similar results and are sometimes referred to interchangeably. This can be an important distinction, but not for the purposes of this article.

Islets, Bismark Strait, Antarctica, photographed with a 240mm telephoto (equivalent to a 150mm on a full-frame DSLR) on a Phase One XF 150MP. Are the colours 'correct', true to life or true to experience? A number of colour adjustments were made to this file, but they all began with setting an appropriate 'white balance' and then tweaking the 'colour balance', both globally and selectively in post-production.



CAPTURE: Camera White Balance Control

There are a number of issues to consider when capturing your image files, but the truth is that most photographers simply point their cameras and shoot, worrying about colour issues later on.

Suggestion 1

If this is you, then you really should shoot raw files. If you want or prefer to use JPEGs, then consider setting your camera to capture both JPEG and raw files. Then, if you have a colour problem later on, you can refer to the raw file.

One thing that a JPEG has difficulty with is resetting the white balance in an image. Admittedly, this doesn't apply to all JPEG images, but if you have a problem with the colour in a file, chances are it's because it is a difficult subject. And if you have only captured a JPEG, you may not be able to correct the colour shifts in a satisfactory manner.

On the other hand, when you capture a raw file, no white balance setting has been applied. The raw file might record the white balance setting suggested by the camera and this setting might be used by your raw processing software (such as Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom) as a starting point for processing your file, but in all other respects, the raw file remains untouched.

You can change the white and/or colour balance when you process the raw file.

Suggestion 2

This can be relatively easy to do – you decide not to worry about white balance at the time of capture, trusting you can fix it up in post-production! For instance, the white balance tool in Photoshop or your raw processing software (e.g., Lightroom and Capture One), is designed so you can click on a neutral area in the photo and the software sets the white balance based on this point (discussed more fully later).

The result works brilliantly if you indeed have a neutral area in your photograph, but if you don't, working out what the colour of the light really was at the time of capture can be problematic, if not impossible.

The second suggestion is to look around where you are shooting and take an extra frame which includes a neutral grey subject. This grey subject should be under the same lighting conditions as your main subject. White walls, white clouds and grey roads can be quite useful, although you have to be careful with some whites because if they contain optical brighteners, they won't be of much use for setting a good white balance when processing the raw file.

With this extra frame, you can use the white balance picker to set a neutral white balance which is then copied for processing your main raw file. All the image colours should fall into place.

Suggestion 3

What happens if you can't find a neutral subject in your scene or nearby? To solve this problem, many professionals use a grey card or a colour chart which they place into the scene. They take a test shot, and then remove it for the rest



Above: Instead of a grey card which is only a single neutral tone, some photographers put colour charts into the test images for measurement. This is the SpyderCheckr which comes with a helpful app. Right:

The Expodisc attaches to the lens like a filter and an exposure is made. This 'grey' photo can then be used in processing to produce a correct colour balance. See how on the following pages.



of the shoot (or the rest of the shoot under the same lighting conditions).

Now, when processing the raw files, you have a neutral subject in the frame which can be used to determine a neutral white balance setting.

This approach works very well in a controlled situation where you can take multiple images of the one subject, but it might not work for street or travel photography when your first shot might be your only shot.

It can also be problematic if you're standing on the edge of a cliff and you can't place a grey card into the scene!

Suggestion 4

Another option is to take a test frame or two with a neutral white translucent filter, such as an Expodisc. Because the filter is neutral in colour, it absorbs the colour in the light and the resulting 'grey' image has a colour cast to it.

Then, when processing the raw files, this test frame is used with the white balance picker to determine a neutral setting and the same setting is applied to all the other images taken under the same lighting conditions.

In all four scenarios, the images you capture in-camera can be further adjusted during raw processing or later in Photoshop. Sometimes the camera has got the white balance exactly right and you won't see any change between 'As Shot' and your custom setting. On other occasions, you'll wonder how the camera got it so wrong!



Which white balance setting is best? Your choice, of course!

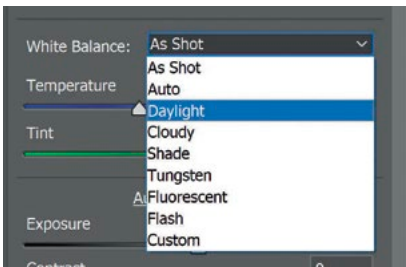
PROCESS: Raw White Balance Control



On the assumption you have captured a raw file and you're opening it in Adobe Camera Raw (through Photoshop) or Lightroom, how do you set the correct white balance?

Funnily enough, a good place to start is with the Auto white balance setting.

From the White Balance drop down menu in the Basic panel (for Adobe Camera Raw), select Auto. If the result looks better on-screen, keep it!



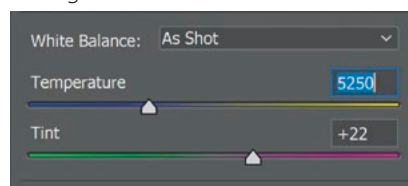
While you have this drop down menu open, it's worth looking at the other options. For instance, in late afternoon you may choose the Daylight setting, rather than Auto. Auto tends to remove any colour casts, even those we generally like to keep, such as the yellows and oranges of sunset. To avoid this happening, a preset other than Auto can be a good place to start.

If neither of these approaches works, it's time to click on the White Balance Tool (see top screen shot – tool is circled) and use it to click on a neutral area.

In this photograph, the snow-covered islands are ideal, although you would find a difference depending on whether you clicked on the sunlit or

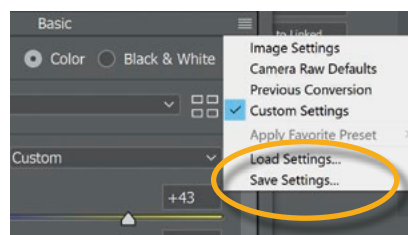
shadow side. This is no big deal – try both and choose the one you prefer.

Usually, there are several areas in the image to test. In this example, you could also try clicking on the grey of the clouds or on the grey of the rocks on the foreshore. Both of these produce a pleasing albeit different white balance setting.



Finally, assuming you have a correctly calibrated and profiled monitor, you can try adjusting the temperature and tint sliders in the white balance section manually.

While big temperature shifts can work wonders, usually only small shifts of tint are required. This manual approach is often used after one of the other techniques has given you a starting point.

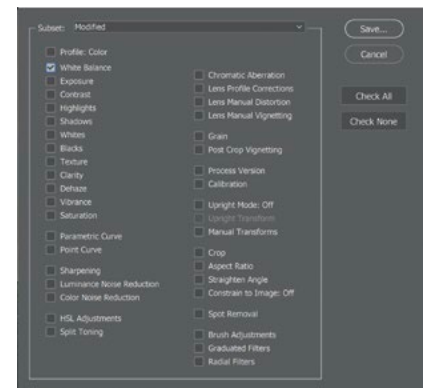


Copying the Settings

Once you have a correct colour setting in Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom for one file, how do you apply it to other photographs taken under the same lighting?

You can save your white balance setting and then load it into the other files.

Here's the long way: In ACR, the little three-bar icon on the top right of the Basic panel opens up a sub-menu which allows you to save the settings.



Next, a dialog opens up. Click the Check None button and then tick the White Balance box (assuming you only want to copy the white balance setting – you can copy all sorts of settings across if you wish to). The white balance setting is saved – and you're prompted to give the setting file a name. As you probably don't want hundreds of these settings files on your computer, you could give it a standard name, like Colour Settings and reuse it.

Now, open the file you want to copy the white balance setting to and using the same three-bar menu, select Load Settings, select the setting and press OK. The colour settings will be applied.

Two other options. One is to read the temperature and tint settings and copy them across manually (it might be quicker!)

The second is to open all the files you want to adjust in ACR at the same time. By processing multiple files, all the files are listed in a panel on the left of ACR. Above this panel, click the Select All button, then the Synchronise button. A dialog will open, listing all the adjustments (the same dialog is used in the Save settings above). Use the drop down menu to select White Balance and click OK. All the open files will have the same white balance applied.

Copying settings in Lightroom and Capture One work in a similar way as the principle is exactly the same.

PROCESS: Correcting Colour With Curves

If you bring your file into Photoshop with a white balance you're not completely happy with, the Curves dialog may help you remedy the situation.

In the Curves dialog, you'll see three eye-dropper symbols on the left of the graph. These are the black point, grey point and white points, respectively.

To use them, you click on one of them in the Curves dialog and then click on an area in the photograph.

If you select the white point, the area you select in the photo will be considered white and all the other tones and colours adjusted accordingly. Of course, any areas which are actually lighter than the point you selected will also be turned to white, so if you are inaccurate with your selection, some rather adverse results can occur. The same applies to the black point, with the point you select (and any darker areas in the image) being set to black. You might already be using these tools (or similar) to set the tonal range for your photos.

In comparison, the grey picker won't move your tones around, but it will certainly change colour values. For example, click on the white snow of the island (top), the clouds above the island (middle) or the blue iceberg away in the distance (bottom) and you can see the different colour results – whatever pixel you select is considered a neutral grey and all the other colours in the image are adjusted.

Generally, what you want to do is find a neutral tone in the image and click on that. With a bit of practice, this technique will be producing a very usable colour balance for your files.

Top:

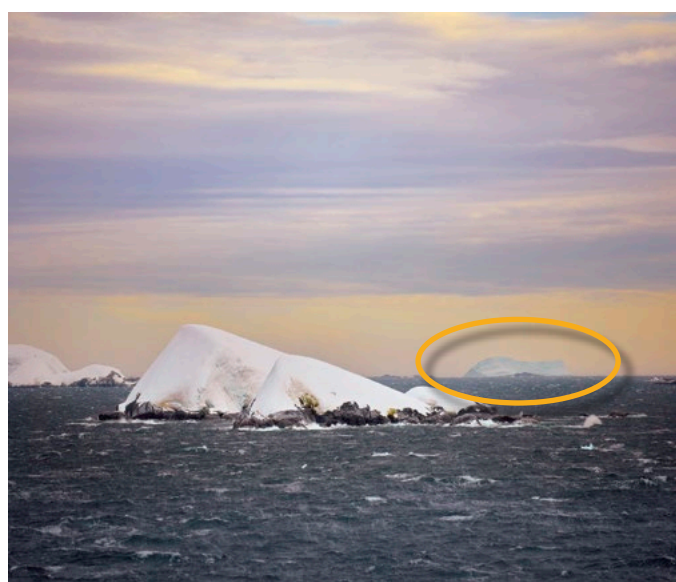
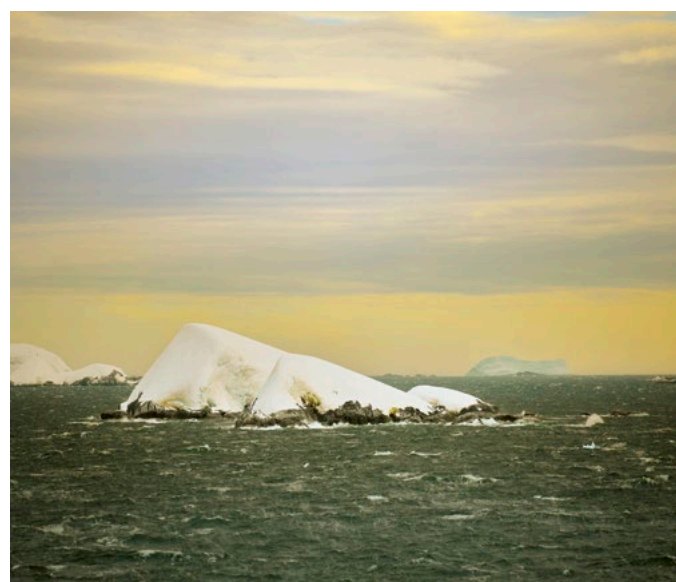
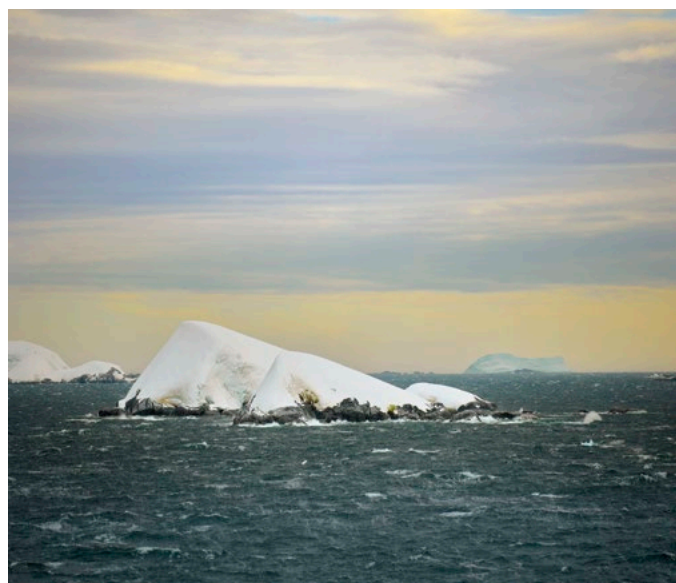
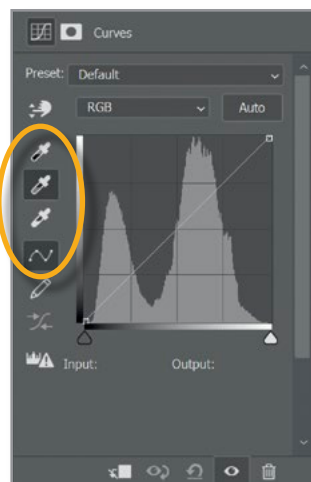
The top image has used the grey picker on what we'd all consider neutral in a photo – the snow on the islands. Of course, in reality the snow reflects the colours of the sky and sea, but as humans, we expect snow to be white and so we're often happy with this neutral result.

Middle:

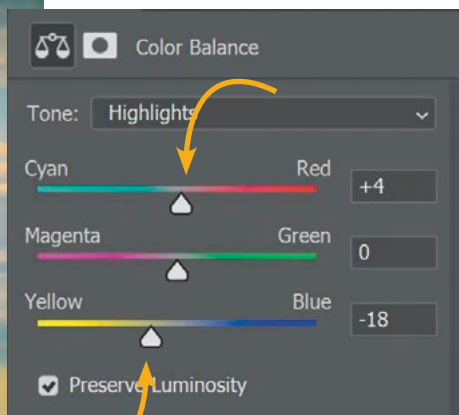
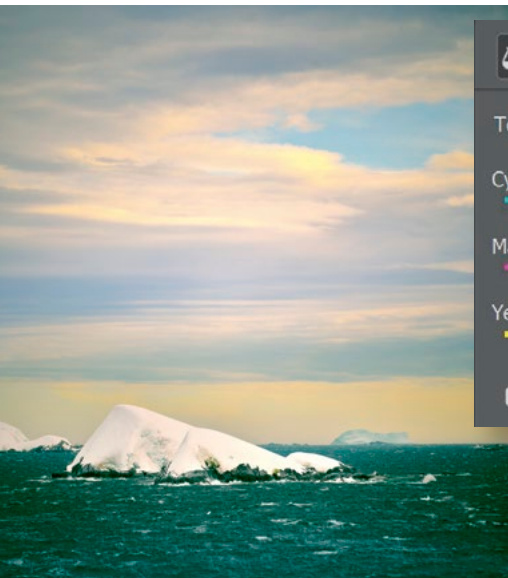
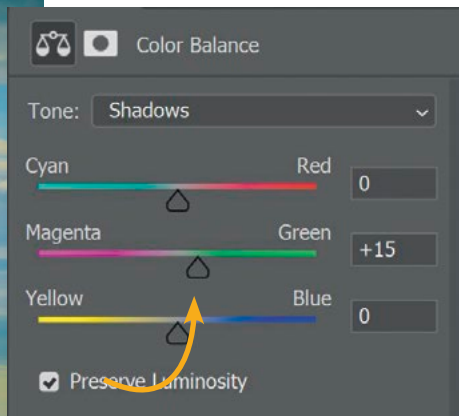
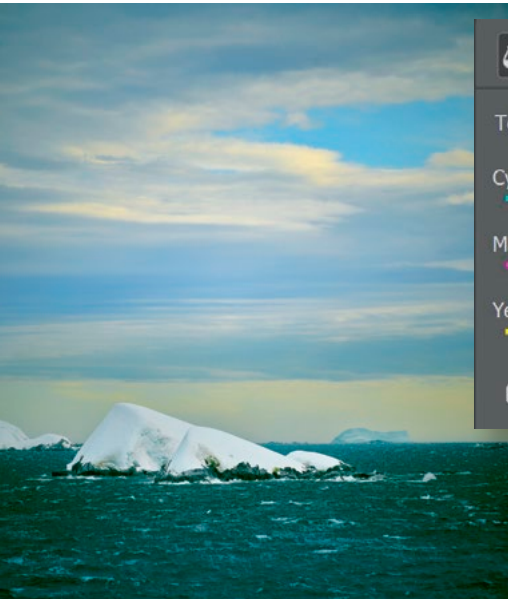
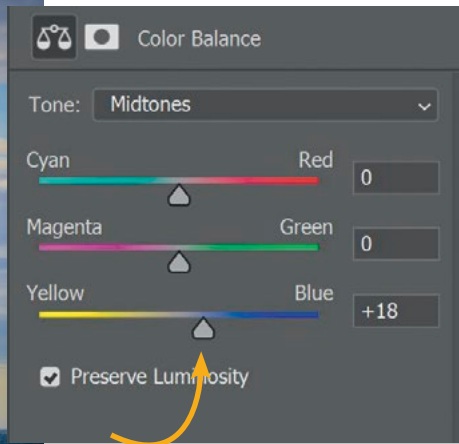
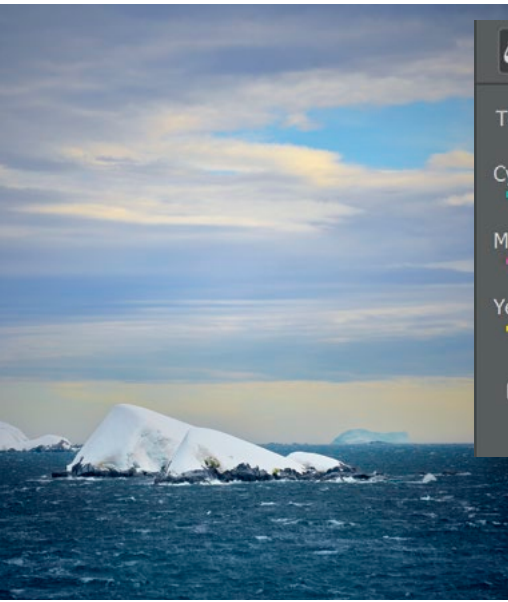
The middle image has used the cloud above. Clouds are not always neutral grey, of course, and in fact these were probably quite blue. However, by using the grey picker, the blue clouds have been set to a neutral grey, resulting in most of the other colours in the image being warmed up – turned yellow and orange. It's quite a different result which may better suit your emotional response.

Bottom:

Of course, the grey picker can also be used for great evil! The blue iceberg in the distance was used as a reference source and now all the colours have an unnatural magenta cast to them. Be careful what you wish for. To fix, just click on something else until you find a result that you like.



PROCESS: Photoshop's Colour Balance



The Color Balance tool and adjustment layer in Photoshop give you a lot of power to adjust the overall colour balance of your image, or selective areas if you wish.

Note how you can choose whether to adjust the Shadows, Midtones or Highlights under the Tones drop-down box. Often you'll only adjust the mid tones, sometimes you'll adjust all three.

Below are the sliders based on red, green, blue and their opposites, cyan, magenta and yellow.

Generally you'll leave the Preserve Luminosity box ticked.

Let's agree that our starting point was a little 'normal' and that we wanted to enhance the 'coldness' of the Antarctic location. How could we do it?

And let's also start with the Midtones selected (top image) and adjust the Blue slider, giving the overall image a much cooler colour balance. It's now very blue.

You'll find the controls in the Colour Balance dialog very sensitive – you only need to make small movements to make big changes in your photograph.

Some knowledge of colour theory helps, but basically you can just shunt the sliders around until you see what you like.

Now, let's see if we can make the sea a little greener, without overly affecting the rest of the image. The sea is full of darker tones, so choose the Shadows tone from the drop-down box and adjust the Green slider.

How about a slightly warmer sky, just to mix things up a bit? The sky comprises mainly lighter tones, so choose the Highlights tones in the top drop-down box and adjust the Reds and Yellows with the sliders.

Note, this isn't a perfect solution because there is a lot of tonal overlap in the various areas (light tones in the sea, mid tones in the sky, etc.), but it gives you an idea of the power you have over colour – and the power colour has over the final rendition of your photographs.



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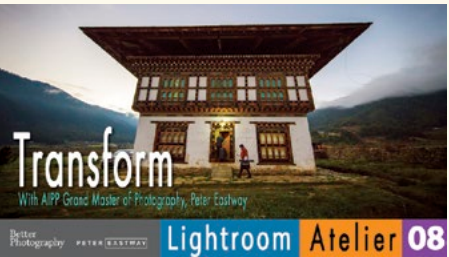
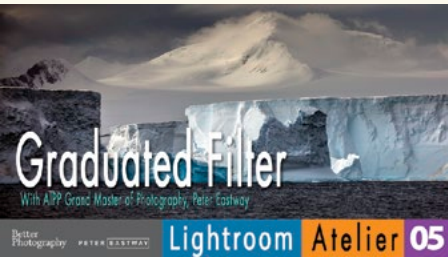
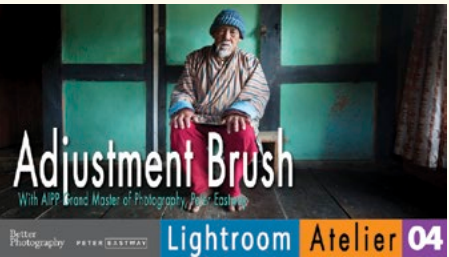
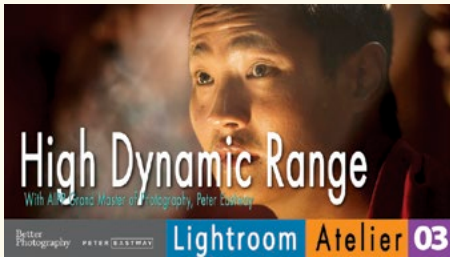
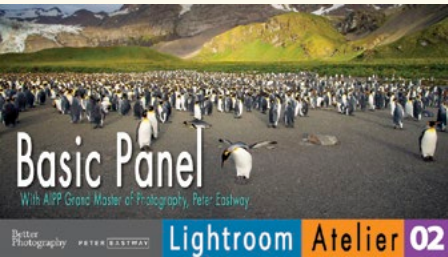
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Lightroom Atelier – some of the techniques you will learn



Colour Schemes

And what you should know about them

There's a little more to colour than you think. Jackie Ranken explains the power of colour in photography.

Photography is a two-dimensional medium. We generally see it on a flat surface, just like a painting or a drawing. Photographic colour theory concepts are aligned to the visual arts, ideas like: warm colours come forward and cold colours recede; and contrasting bold prime colours demand attention while soft hues are calm and relaxing. In effect, the use of colour to express emotion is just as profound in photography as it is in art and if we can work out how it works, we can create photographs that are stronger and more compelling.



This image of a Japanese bamboo forest has a dominant analogous colour scheme of green hues. What makes it more interesting is the rhythm and pattern of vertical green lines contrasting with the white horizontal white lines. Notice how the warm tones on the ground and the lighter toned bamboo vertical shapes move forward towards the viewer and the dark green tones move backwards. All photos by Jackie Ranken.

Background

The sensation of colour is created by our minds' response (via the eyes) to various wavelengths of light. We can see these colours in a rainbow, ranging from a red at approximately 700 nm, through to violet at around 400 nm.

Simplistically speaking, digital cameras record light when photons pass through a lens and onto a light sensitive sensor that records the light. This light is converted into an RGB (Red/Green/Blue) colour space through the use of colour filters.

This image data is saved as a raw file and/or a JPEG file, which is then processed with software to interpret or reinterpret the RGB colour information that has been captured. Most of us are using Lightroom, Photoshop or Capture One and the most common software controls that manipulate these files are curves, levels, contrast, vibrance, saturation and colour balance. To make changes, sliders within the software program move left and right. The process of adjusting colours is very straightforward.

And the options that exist to change the RGB colour are limitless, so having a basic understanding of how colours interact with one another will help us when making decisions about changing or enhancing the colours in our images.

In effect, understanding why a photograph that you have made is more effective than another, makes the selection process easier.

Colour Categories

Categorising and using colour can be confusing at first. For instance, in addition to RGB colour, there's also CMYK (Cyan/Magenta/Yellow/Black). RGB is called an 'additive' colour model because it describes the colours being emitted (from a computer monitor or LCD screen), while CMYK is a 'subtractive' colour model because it describes the colours being reflected by ink on a page. Both colour models can produce all the colours of the rainbow, just in a different way.

Where colour gets a little confusing is when we compare the RGB model used in photography with the painting classes most of us had when we were young. At school, we were told

that red, yellow and blue paints were the primary colours with which any colour could be created.

Both these models are correct, but RGB describes an 'additive' model and describes a 'subtractive' or reflective model for paint on paper. However, as photographers, we don't really care – we just want to know what colours to use when.

So, accepting the differences in the colour models above, I'd like to suggest the following approach to colour that may resonate better with the less scientifically-minded.

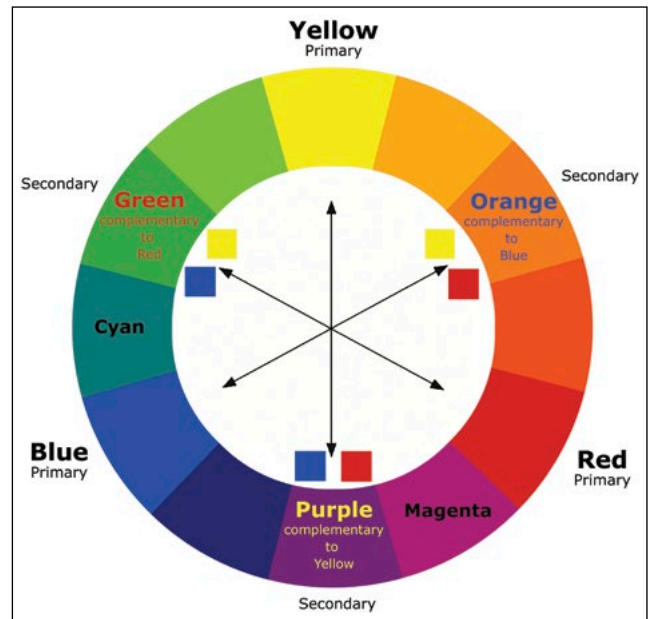
There are three orders of colours:

- Primary colours, red, yellow and blue, are the colours that all the other colours are derived from.
- Secondary colours are made from two of the Primary colours in equal proportions (50:50), so red + blue = purple, yellow + blue = green and yellow + red = orange.
- Tertiary colours are made from one primary and one secondary colour. So, blue + green = cyan, red + purple = magenta, etc.

Hue is another word for colour. It's the name of the colour, ignoring how light or saturated it is. Moving the hue slider changes the colour from its origin to other colours that sit alongside it on the colour wheel.

Adding saturation exaggerates the colours that are present, making them more intense and eye-catching.

Luminance is the perceived brightness or lightness of that colour.



Jackie's colour wheel.

Tones

Adding black or white to a colour makes what I describe as a tone. Tones can have varying amounts of white and black, creating much more complex combinations of hues (colours). You can often adjust the tone of a colour (hue)



Why does the orange clothing stand out so strongly? Working back through our colour theory, we can see that the colour is highly saturated, but more importantly, the colours surrounding it are generally complementary – meaning the orange is surrounded by blue. Understanding how colour theory works can help us analyse photos that we enjoy, so we can apply a similar approach in the future.



When complementary colours of the same intensity are viewed alongside one another they tend to vibrate. This can also be referred to as 'discordant' colours. Strong complementary colours include red colours over a green background, or in this case, the green pine tree seen against the rich autumnal red and orange maple leaves. Notice how the green hues seem so much greener and fight for attention with the warm, rich coloured background.

by adjusting the luminance or lightness slider in your editing software.

As it happens, most photographs of the natural world are made up of tones, compared to man-made objects and urban landscapes which tend to be made of primary and secondary colours.

Adding white to a colour creates a tint and makes that colour less intense and gentler to the eye (think of pastels).



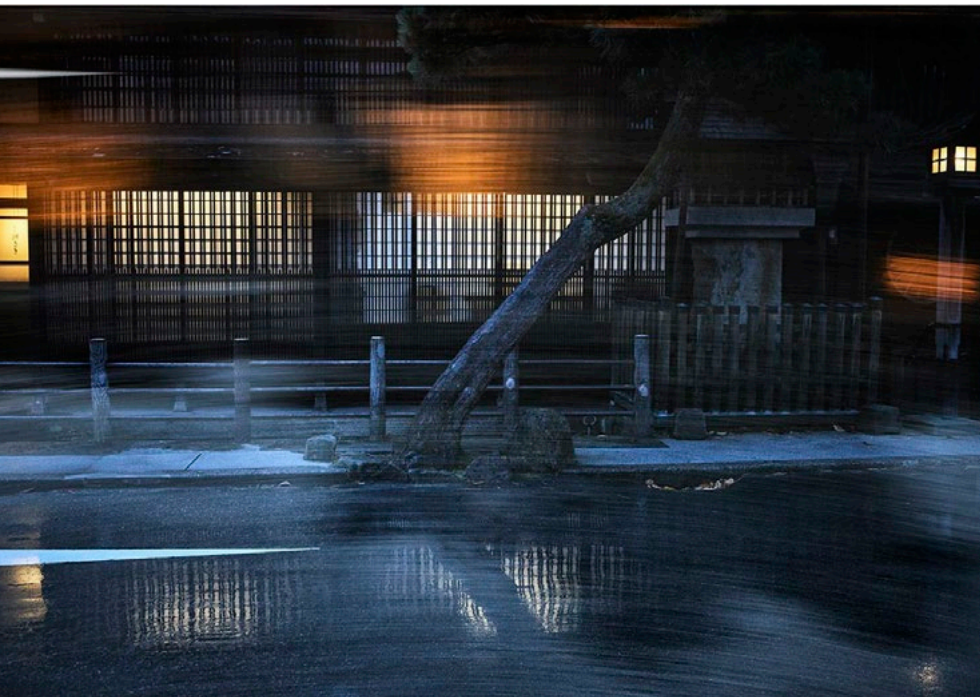
Early evening or predawn can be a great time to explore the blue and orange complementary colour scheme. Note how the warm oranges speak of hospitality and comfort, while the blues of the sky represent the cold, unknown of the approaching night.

These lighter tones attract the eye too, so this could be a tool to attract attention when editing.

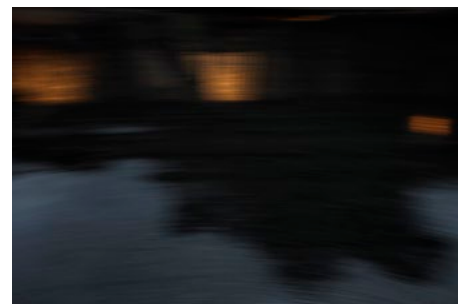
Adding black to a colour creates a shade and has the opposite effect to tint.

So, now that we've described colour and the various ways we can alter it, how does this help us as photographers?

Although photography is a two-dimensional medium, successful photographs can often appear three-dimensional. We say there is a 'depth' to the image because it looks 'real'.



The first exposure.



The second exposure.

The dominant colour is blue and so the feeling is cold. However, the orange blur, which is a complementary colour, adds energy and a little mystery to a scene that otherwise was needing an extra element to create interest. The first exposure was of a night street scene, controlling the exposure to record the details in the shadowed areas (f9 @ 1/8 second, ISO 1600). The second exposure was one stop darker of the same scene and captured with a slower shutter speed while moving the camera from left to right. This exposure also made the colour in the windows orange (f9 @ 1/15 second, ISO 1600). Then, using the Additive double exposure mode in my Canon EOS R, the exposures are combined together to make a lighter or correct exposure.



An achromatic colour palette is a fancy way of describing a black and white! Note how the absence of colour allows us to concentrate on the shapes and patterns within the composition.

Visual depth can be enhanced by controlling the light, the direction of the light, its intensity, its darkness and lightness and its colour temperature (or colour balance).

Colour Schemes

We can approach the use of colour by thinking of different colour schemes. Just as an interior designer uses colour schemes to decorate a house, so photographers can use simple colour schemes to interpret or inform their images. Different colour schemes can have different emotional effects on our viewers, so we should aim to use a colour scheme that suits our purposes.

For instance, an analogous colour scheme is when an image is made of similar colours with slight variations. These colours can be found side by side on the colour wheel and can also include the addition of white and black.

Remember, adding white makes a tint from the original colour while adding black makes a shade of the original colour.

Think of a field of golden grasses, a close-up of an autumn tree and its leaves or perhaps a telephoto image of an early morning photograph in the mist. These colours will harmonise together, particularly when one of the colours is more obvious. The emotive response is to relax. What you are seeing is easy to look at, like soft harmonising music that is easy to listen to.

However, images like this can also be forgettable, unless the emotion or composition within the frame is strong enough to carry it.

Complementary Colours

Complementary colours are quite different to each other (don't let the word confuse you because they are complementary, not complimentary). Instead of being close in hue, complementary colours are on opposite sides of the colour wheel. For example: yellow vs purple, blue vs orange and red vs green.

These combinations jump out at you and are designed to be seen. They are active, vibrant combinations that demand attention. If you create photographs with complementary colours, especially where the subject's colour is complementary to that of the background, you can create a high degree of colour impact.



Is this colour treatment analogous or monochrome – and does it matter? The idea behind colour theory is to understand what works, not to worry about the terminology. Here we can see the dominant orange and brown colours with their range of tones have created an interesting and emotive urban study.

Monochrome

Monochrome refers to a colour scheme of varying tones based on one colour (this includes black and white).

Technically, black and white are not colours, as they do not have specific wavelengths.

White light is all light together and black is the absence of visible light. However, in photography and the visual arts, black and white are often called colours and are certainly of huge importance.

So, black is the darkest colour and white is the lightest colour. And adding black and white to colours creates the shades and tints that we need as visual artists to communicate depth, volume and emotion.

Really effective monochrome images will generally have a white point and a black point and display a range of tones in-between. Then, to further enhance a subject, a master photographer will use shape, line, contrast and texture to direct the eye of the viewer and make a visual statement.

In design, an achromatic colour scheme is black, white and grey and can be clean, simplistic and artistic.

Final thoughts

Great photographs are often the result of KIS (keep it simple), meaning one dominant colour, one main direction of light and one ruling idea. In other words, use colour judiciously to help with your communication.

The colour wheel can be used as a guide to help pick colours for designs with more confidence. And never forget that the camera is only a tool. It's the person behind the camera who has control over the framing, focus, exposure, white balance and picture style that makes the image.

Finally, understanding why your eye will go to certain spots within the frame, because of your use of colour and tone, and then controlling their 'pull' by enhancing, changing and editing the colour and tone, will help you to become better at editing and presenting your images.

Colour Grading with Luminosity Masks

Luminosity expert Aaron Dowling explains how you can control the colour in selected parts of your image in Photoshop – easily!

Don't let the term 'colour grading' deter you. It's just a fancy way of saying you're modifying the colours in your image. Generally, colour grading refers to cinematic processing, but it has snuck its way into the vernacular of photographers as well. It's something that we already do every day in our image editing.

Working with colour in images can be quite challenging and difficult to get right. And it seems that everything we do to our images also affects the colour. This means that we need to keep a close eye on everything we do, to ensure that the colours remain true, or at least true to us. Although I'd love to cover everything about colour, in this tutorial I am going to share with you some of my favourite tools for colour grading in Photoshop.

I'll also combine my favourite colour adjustment layers with luminosity masks for ultimate control. A luminosity mask is a selection of a specific tonal range in an image, allowing you to target specific tones with extreme accuracy. The benefit is that you can make adjustments, knowing exactly what is going to be affected. I use a Photoshop plug-in that I have developed, called ADP LumiFlow, to make the luminosity selections I used for this tutorial.

Following is a brief description of the Photoshop adjustment layers used in this tutorial and each of their advantages.

Colour Balance

The Colour Balance adjustment layer allows you to work within three different tonal ranges (highlights, mid-tones and shadows). So, it gives you some inbuilt control over the tones being affected. Like the red, green and blue channels in Curves or Levels, you have the ability to manipulate the full colour spectrum. However, the tonal ranges are preset, so if you want complete control, you'll need to use Luminosity masks, as I do in this tutorial.

Selective Colour

The Selective Colour adjustment layer works a little like an offset printing press operator does. It provides you with all the main colour channels, similar to the Hue and Saturation adjustment layer. The difference is you can manipulate the amount of cyan, magenta, yellow or black in each of those colours. This is exactly like mixing ink as an offset printer – you can change any colour into any other, with fine control.

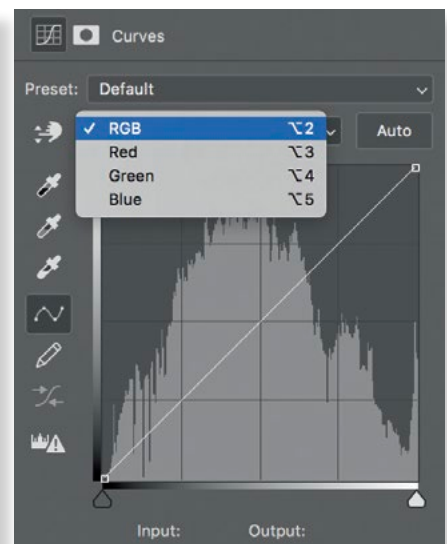
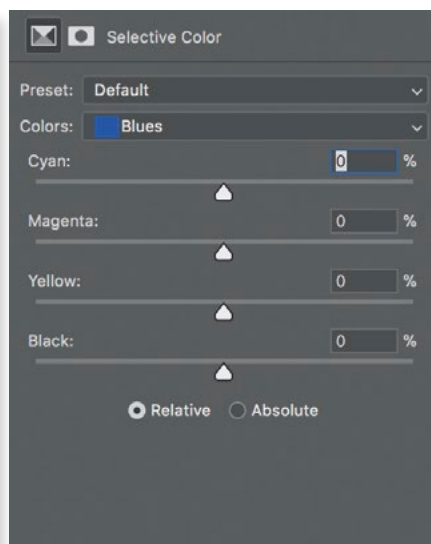
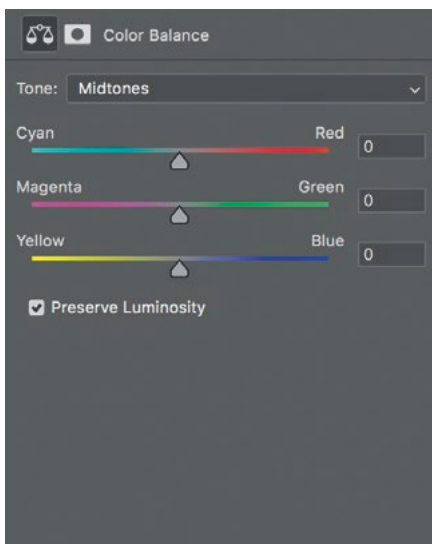




Image before colour adjustments.

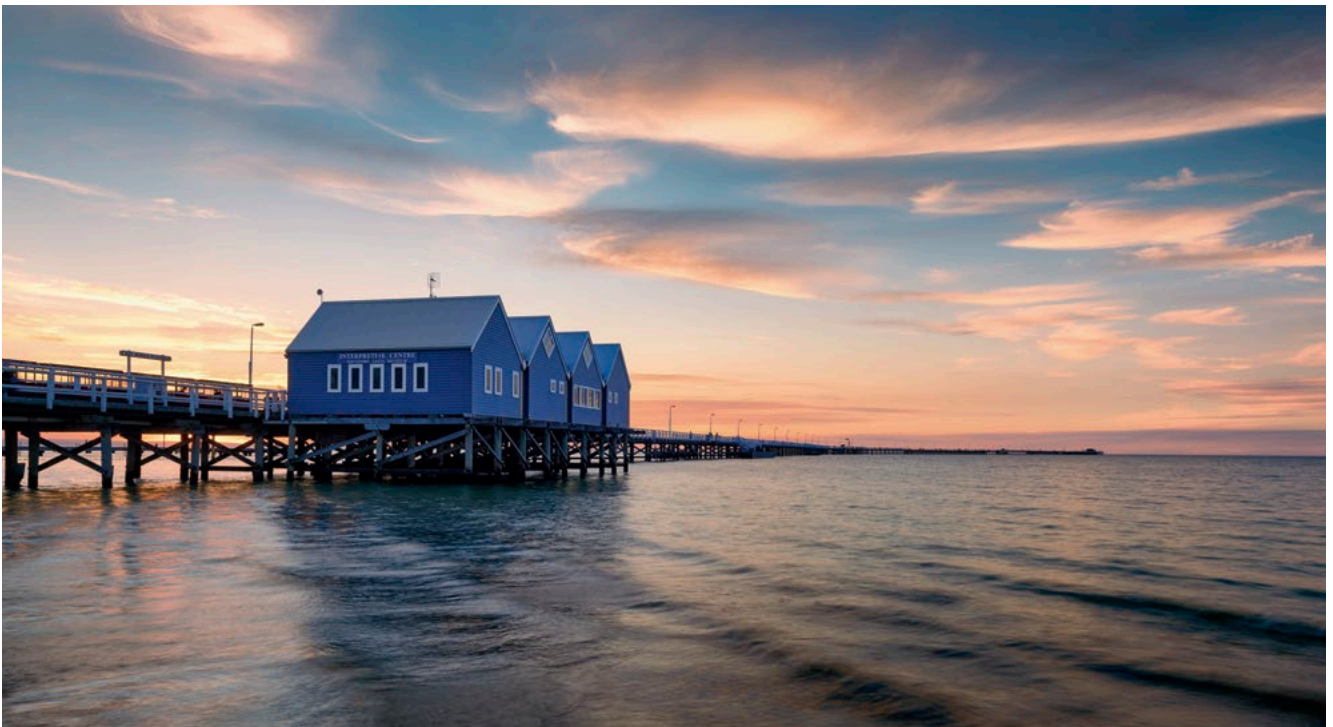


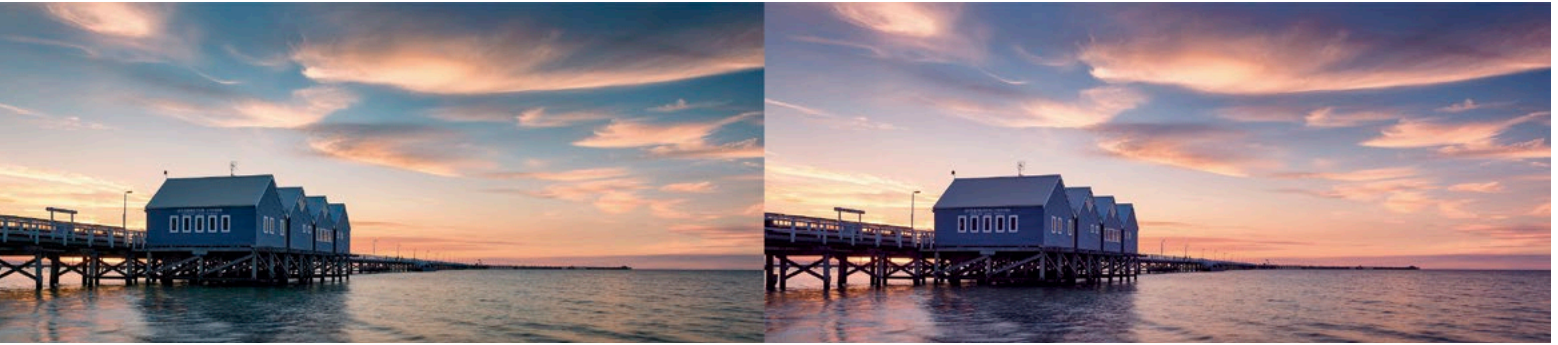
Image after colour adjustments using luminosity masks for precise control.

Curves

Curves is mostly used as a luminance or contrast adjustment tool. Also built into Curves are the individual red, green, and blue channels. These channels allow you fantastic control over the colours in an image. You can also choose the tones the colours are added to with some control, by the placement of points on the curve. Another benefit is that Curves is the only tool that also allows us to add contrast at the same time.

The Example

For our example, I want to enhance the warm sunset colours in the clouds, but without adversely affecting the colour of the blue sky behind. Using a Colour Balance adjustment layer, I will be able to easily enhance the colour in the sky and also in the highlights of the water. It's important that you consider the reflections when you're making adjustments, to keep the image looking realistic. However, before making these adjustments, I want to restrict the adjustments to work only



The image on the left is how I wanted to warm up the clouds – just the clouds are warmer, but the sky is not. I used luminosity masks to achieve this result. The image on the right shows what happens when we just warm up the warm colours without a selective mask – the blues are also warmed up and the whole colour balance of the image is changed. This was not the outcome I wanted.

in the areas (the tonal ranges) I want affected. I do this with a mask – specifically, a luminosity mask.

Luminosity masks are easy to make with the press of a couple of buttons in ADP LumiFlow. Using the ‘luminosity masks with layers’ function in ADP LumiFlow, I make a selection of the ‘lights’ in the image. In other words, I’m picking all the light tones, but not the darker tones. I then use the colour adjustment sliders to remove the blue tones from this selection. I also reduce the tonal range of the selection, to ensure I’m working just in the brighter highlights. I also want to ensure that the reflection stays in the selection to keep the adjustments natural. I then choose a Colour Balance adjustment layer in the panel, and the mask is automatically applied to the layer.

Here, the clouds are light light grey and white, so any colour adjustment will affect them. In comparison, the sky is almost black, so very little adjustment will be seen here. I have also used a B&W adjustment layer on the mask to give even further control to how the mask is created.

Colour Balance Adjustments

Even though the luminosity mask is applied to the layer, you still need to choose the tonal zone you want to adjust within the colour balance menu as well. The tonal ranges in the

colour balance tool are so broad, that I have made adjustments in both the highlight and mid tone ranges.

In this adjustment, I have added some red and blue to the highlights. I find combining blue with the reds creates a richness in colour. It’s like a combination of the warm highlights from direct sun and the cool warmth when the sun is below the horizon. Adding magentas can also work well in some situations.

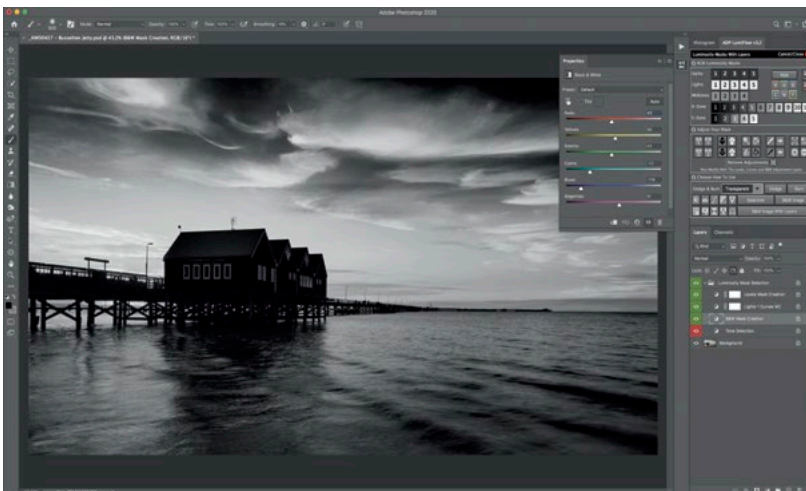
- Highlights: Red +18, Blue +11
- Mid tones: Red +13, Blue +13

In the images accompanying the article, you can see what the adjustments look like with (above left) and without luminosity masks (above right). Without the luminosity mask, the colour bleeds heavily into the mid tones and shadows, while also affecting all the colours throughout the image.

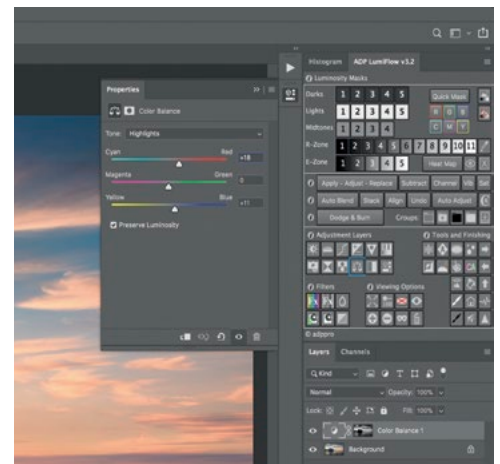
Adjusting Colour in the Shadows

In the shadows of this image, I predominantly work on the blue in the building on the jetty and a little in the water. I’m looking to enhance the blue colour and pop a little contrast in at the same time, to bring them to life.

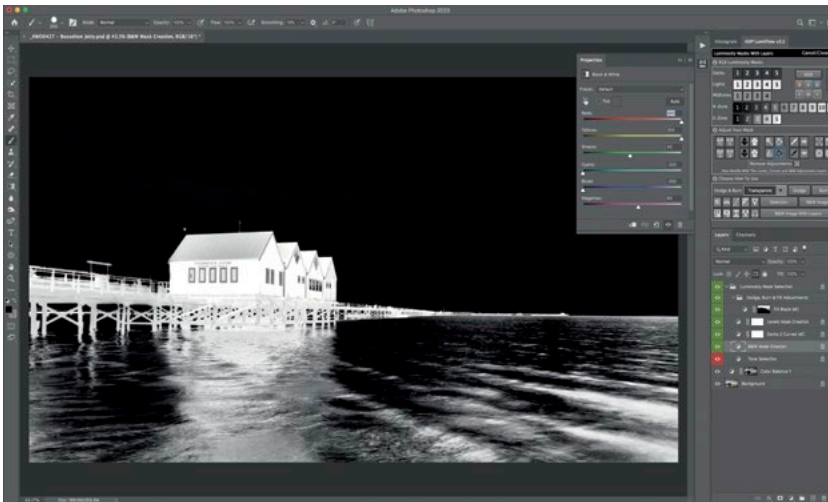
Working with colour in the shadows of an image can be a little trickier. The reason for this is there is far less colour



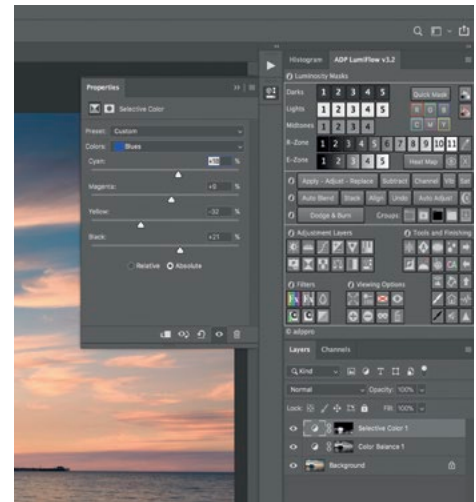
The ADP LumiFlow panel shows the mask you have created over the image itself – it is based exactly on the image. However, it’s a mask, so the dark (black) areas mean no adjustment is made, while the white (light) areas, show the adjustment.



Note the ADP LumiFlow panel automatically adds the luminosity mask to the adjustment layer (colour balance in this case) – see the layers panel. From here the colour balance menu is used to adjust the colour, as explained in the article.



A second luminosity mask is created, this time selecting just the shadows as can be seen here. The black area in the mask (the sky and clouds), will not be affected by the adjustment, but the white areas (the shadow areas on the buildings) will be.



The Selective Colour adjustment layer is used to lighten the blues and produce a little more richness.

information in the shadows. In the case of this image, the blues in the building are strong enough, but there may be cases when they are not. In those cases, you'll need to use other techniques, such as lightening them, then introducing colour through vibrance/saturation or painting colour into the image.

Again, using the 'luminosity masks with layers' function in ADP LumiFlow, I make a new 'darks 2' selection. This selection removes the highlights from the selection. I then adjust the colour slider to brighten the blue in the buildings and remove the warm colours in the sky and water. Then, with a black brush, I easily paint away the small amounts of the sky that are left behind. In these adjustments, I only wanted the blues in foreground to be affected.

A second luminosity mask is created, this time selecting just the shadows as can be seen above. The black area in the mask (the sky and clouds), will not be affected by the adjustment, but the white areas (the shadow areas on the buildings) will be.

With my selection complete, I select a Selective Colour adjustment layer from within the ADP LumiFlow menu and both the adjustment layer with the luminosity mask is automatically applied.

It can be tricky sometimes knowing which colour to work with in the Selective Colour menu. A colour can appear one way to our eyes, but be a different colour for a Photoshop adjustment. The easiest way is to select the colour you believe it is, then grab the black slider and slide it up and down. If the colour you want affected changes significantly, you're on the right one. I always work with Selective Colour in absolute mode as well, to ensure the greatest adjustment capability.

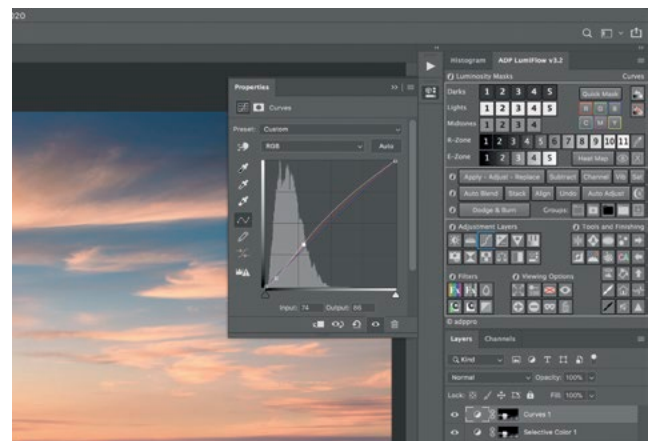
For this adjustment, I wanted to remove some of the warmth in the blues of the building and also lighten them a little, giving a richer blue. With Selective Colour, play around and be creative.

Blue Colour: Cyan +18, Magenta +9
 Yellow: -32
 Black: +21

Curves Adjustments

The curves adjustment gives us great flexibility in making colour and contrast adjustments on the same layer. With this adjustment, I created a little more contrast between the light and dark side of the buildings. I also went into the colour channels and played around a little more with the blues and reds, to bring the blue in the buildings to life.

The luminosity masks applied to the Selective Colour and Curves adjustment layers, allowed me to work on the buildings without having to worry about the rest of the image being adversely affected.



The final adjustment uses the same shadows mask, but a curve layer instead. See text for details.

The options for manipulating colour in our images is limitless. When we combine them with luminosity masks, the sky is the limit when it comes to our control. This tutorial has covered some aspects of three tools available in Photoshop, but there are many more.

And if you'd like to see more about ADP LumiFlow, the tools used to create the luminosity masks, or read more tutorials, visit us at the website below. I also hold photography workshops around Australia and overseas. To join me on an adventure, visit my photography website: adplumiflow.com or aarondowlingphotography.com.

Greater visual depth in-camera with

Multiple Exposures

By Mike Langford

The idea of making multiple exposures in-camera was first shown to me by my wife Jackie Ranken, who is a true master and creative exponent of this technique, especially when using the higher end Canon camera bodies.

However, not all cameras let you do this technique and of those that do, some are better than others. With many of the Canon EOS camera bodies when shooting multiple exposures, you can see the position of the first image on the back screen in Live View, or in the case of the mirrorless models, in the viewfinder, which is a great help when positioning the second image. This makes it very easy to line up the elements of both images at the time of shooting.

Wanting More

Even though I really enjoy applying this technique to some of my travel images, I kept wanting more visual depth

in them. Strangely enough, just a straight single shot wasn't dynamic enough anymore, especially in silhouette situations where the shapes were strong, but there wasn't enough of an idea underpinning the shot to make it interesting enough.

Here's how I approached the Bagan temple images accompanying this article. Using the camera's multiple exposure mode, I selected two exposures and the additive style. Then, knowing that the two images together would slightly overexpose the final image, I purposefully underexposed each image by one stop (EV), so that when they were combined, the exposure would be correct for the aesthetic I was after.

I used my 100-400mm lens, shooting the first image at 164mm (or thereabouts), followed by a second at 400mm (maximum telephoto). I simply zoomed my lens in for the second exposure with the camera mounted on a tripod. I also made sure that my image stabiliser was turned off so that the



One of Mike's early career photos of Professor Harry Messels, where he used flash with different coloured filters to produce a similar split-colour result. This isn't a double exposure, but it uses two flashguns to produce the split colour effect.



Another of Mike's early career shots taken for Otis Elevators, again using different colour temperatures or white balances. This isn't a double exposure, but it uses two flashguns to produce the split colour effect.



The Wild Goose Pagoda in Xian, China was shot using the white balance double exposure technique outlined in this article. Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon EF 24-105mm f4 L IS USM, 56mm and 85mm, f11 @ 1/250 second, ISO 3200, Daylight and Florescence white balances.



Standard Double Exposure Technique: Using a Canon EOS 5D Mark IV with a Canon EF 100-400mm, the first frame (left) is shot at 400mm, f11 @ 1/640 second, ISO 100 and daylight white balance. The second shot (right) is taken at 158mm and the large image is the resulting double exposure. Note both exposures were taken at the same white balance setting.

action of the gyro in the lens didn't cause the lens to vibrate and make it look out-of-focus!

The white balance for both shots was on daylight and the picture style on Landscape.

The first of the Bagan temple photos came together once the sun had started to set and I had moved myself into a position so that the sun was directly over the temple. I thought this was much more interesting than just the straight single shot of the silhouette, but it still seemed to lack a visual depth to me.

As another idea, I tried changing my picture style between the two exposures, but unfortunately this capability wasn't available. This is something that you could do in

post-production if that's what you like doing, but for me, I like the challenge of doing everything in-camera. I also like to see if the idea connects with what I'm feeling and thinking at the time of the exposure, as opposed to playing with things later in post-production. It's a me thing!

Using Colour

Having not been able to change the picture style, I tried changing the white balance between the two exposures. I hadn't seen this done before in-camera, so I was very excited when I saw that I could.

This concept wasn't new to me, as it was one that I used to use in my industrial/corporate shooting days



White Balance Double Exposure: Using the same camera and lens set-up, but later in the evening, the white balance was changed between exposures. The first, wider image (left) is shot at 176mm, f11 @ 1/15 second, ISO 100 with the white balance set for daylight. This produces a standard colour rendition. The second, more telephoto image at 330mm, uses the same exposure except the white balance is switched to fluorescent to produce a much bluer, colder result (right). The larger image shows the result with a much more interesting mix of colours.

when everything was done in pre-production. Back then, I achieved the look by lighting with different colour filters, making the background recede by lighting it with a strobe covered with a blue filter and then lighting the subject with another strobe covered with an amber coloured filter to make it project forward.

As a result, I changed my white balance from daylight to fluorescent between the two exposures in-camera. Visually this gave me one warm exposure overlapped by a cold exposure. It was exactly what I was looking for.

The cold colour receded in the frame while the warm colour advanced.

This increased the visual depth of the image, which is what I was looking for.

I also moved my tripod up a little higher in-between the two shots, which visually separated the subject between the two exposures.

The result is a stronger composition for both shape and colour, all within the multiple exposure!

This isn't a technique I use very often. Like any technique, it needs to be appropriate to the subject as well as the emotional interpretation of it. In fact, it was a full year before I used the technique again, shooting the Big Goose Pagoda in Xian China.

Take photos that

Win

Photo Comps

Part 5 by Peter Eastway

I hope you are enjoying this series of articles and suggestions on winning photo competitions. I sincerely feel that the information in here is of great use to aspiring photographers, whether they want to enter photo competitions or not.

Getting Attention

It's true that competition entries have to be a little bolder and more obvious than, say, more reflective photos that may appear in a book or an exhibition.

In a photo competition environment, the judges are usually dealing with thousands and sometimes tens of thousands of entries. If you want a chance of standing out, your entries need to be bold. They need to shout, 'Look at me!'

This extrovert approach to photography isn't for everyone and so some photographers choose not to enter competitions. On the other hand, many photographers are starved of honest feedback. Posting a photo on social media and receiving lots of love is great, but photos of fluffy puppies and orange sunsets get much more attention, no matter the photographic acumen!

This is why the *Better Photography* competition gives every entry some feedback. I realise it's just a short comment, but when you associate that comment with the background information provided in these articles, hopefully it will help you improve.

Unlike social media, it's considered feedback.

And you shouldn't take the feedback without questioning it. The longer I'm a photographer and a photographic judge, the more I realise there are many different roads to successful photography.

A photo that wins one photo competition is not guaranteed to win another – for many reasons. Competitions may have different requirements, judges have different opinions and you have no control over what other photographs are entered.

But for me, that's not the purpose of entering a photo competition. I get the most out of the entering process itself – choosing my best images and presenting them as perfectly as possible. It's this process that has made me a better photographer.

And so it doesn't really matter whether you read these suggestions to win a competition or just to make better photographs.

Opposite: Near Antwerp Island, Antarctica. Phase One XF 150MP, 55mm Schneider lens, f2.8 @ 1/400 second, ISO 800. This quiet landscape might not win first prize in a photo competition, but who cares? If it's a photo you love, learning how to edit and present it as best you can is a great outcome.





There are a number of reasons why the subject appears too close to the frame. First, the head is very close to the right edge and the direction in which it is facing. Second, there is so much space behind the head that the result appears unbalanced.

Note how the photo can be strengthened by adding in a little more space around the head. There is no mathematical rule, indeed some people might prefer the first version. However, we hope you understand what we mean when we say the framing is too close to the edge.

FRAMING: Too Close to the Edge?

Comment

Overall, the framing is pretty good, but there are one or more elements within the frame that we feel are a little too close to the edge, and perhaps unbalanced with the rest of the composition.

Explanation

Sometimes we become so obsessed with the subject in our photograph, we forget about the frame around it and other objects near the edges.

If we want to concentrate the viewer's attention on our subject, it's important for the subject to be well within the photo frame.

We're unlikely to have half the subject sitting outside the frame (although sometimes this technique can be used to good effect).

If we position the subject too close to the edge of the frame, we're potentially telling our viewer that our subject is leaving the photograph, or that it isn't important enough to be further in the middle of the frame.

The solution is to leave sufficient space between the subject and the edges of the photo.

This doesn't mean you can't have the subject close to the edge, but if you do, it needs to be balanced with other elements in the frame, perhaps equally close to the edge.

Having correctly positioned the main subject within the frame, take a look around the edges and see if there are other objects that could be distracting because they are too close to the edge?

If an object on the left has a 20% margin between it and

the frame, it can be odd for a similar object on the right to have only a 5% margin.

Chances are the object on the right would look better if there were a 10 - 20% margin, thus being in balance (or more closely balanced) with the object on the other side.

Technique 1

At the time you take your photograph, take an extra frame or two with a wider angle-of-view.

This will allow you to change your framing later on during editing.

Technique 2

When cropping your work, keep in mind how close different objects in the frame are to the edge.

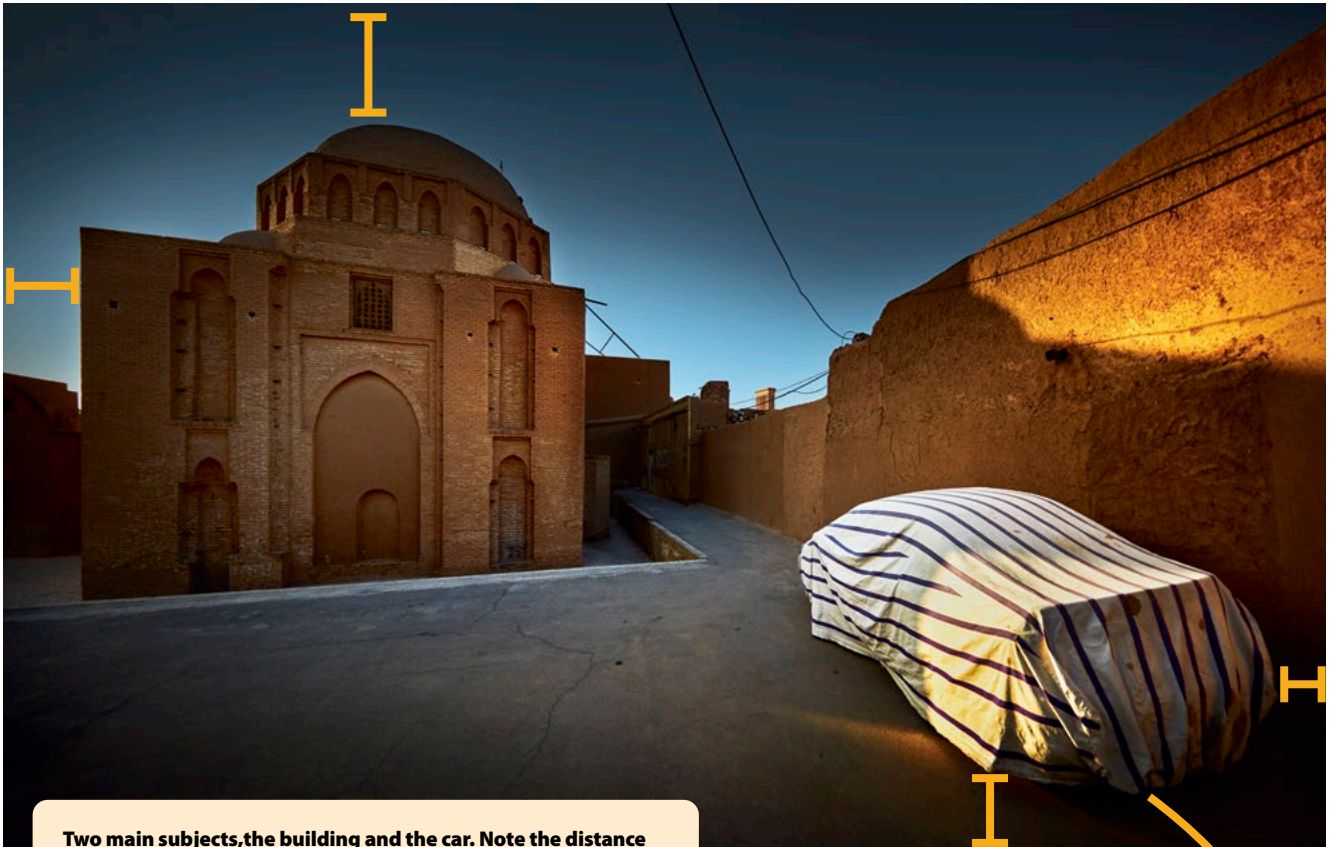
Try to crop in a way that produces a more balanced result and one where objects within the frame are not awkwardly cut off at the bottom or on the side. You may need to change the shape or ratio of your frame to suit the content.

Technique 3

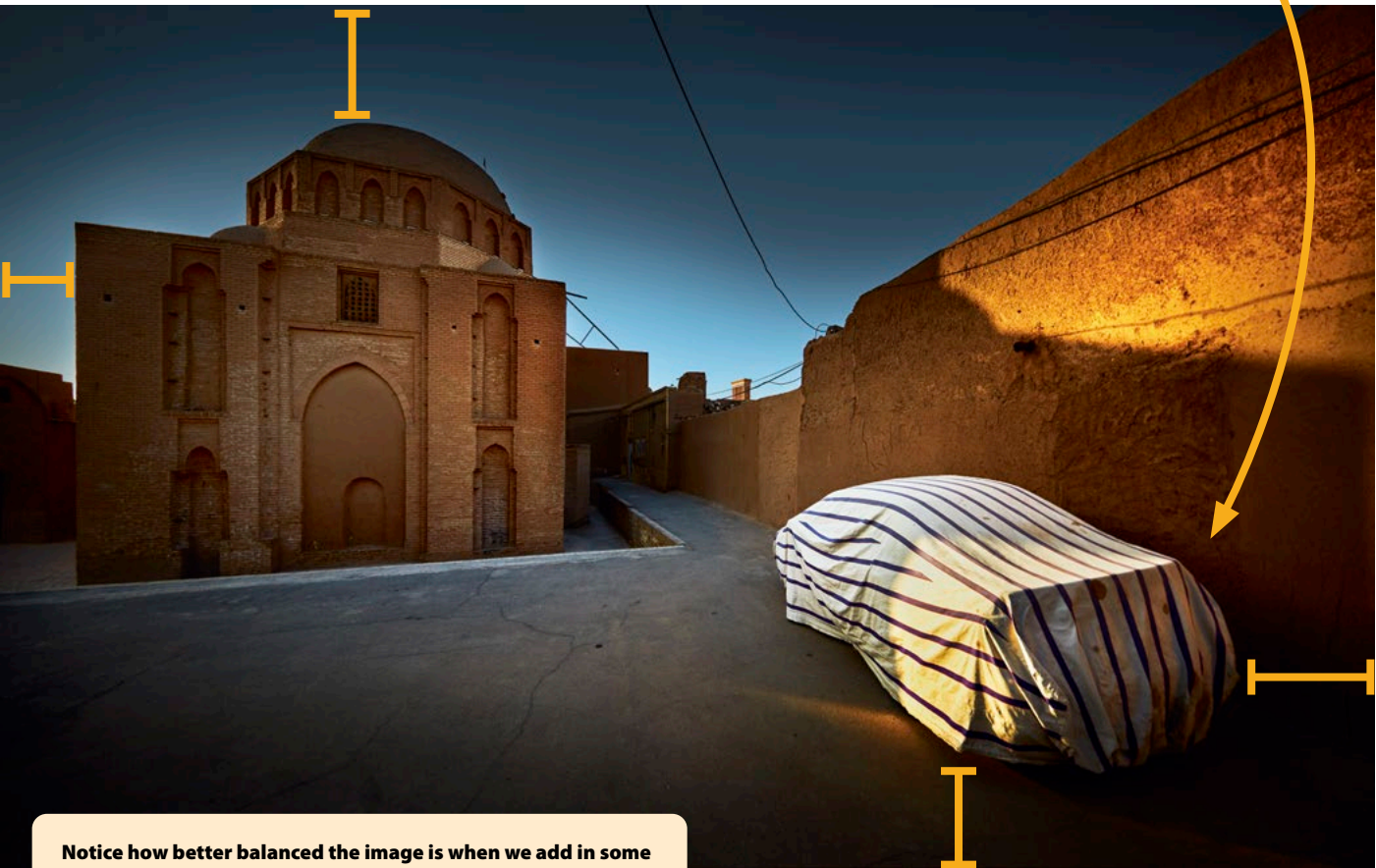
What happens if you need to add some space around an object near the edge of the frame, but there's nothing more in your raw file?

You could enlarge the canvas and stretch or clone surrounding areas to produce more space. This is something you'd need to do in Photoshop as programs like Lightroom and Capture One don't allow compositing.

Of course, it's much easier to take a photo with a wider angle-of-view in the first place, hence Technique 1.



Two main subjects, the building and the car. Note the distance between the building and the edge of the frame. Now, compare it with the distance between the car and the frame – the car is much closer and hence appears 'squished' into the frame.



Notice how better balanced the image is when we add in some space around the car, so it is closer to the space around the building. The spaces don't have to be precisely the same to produce a stronger composition.



This is a rather obvious example of poor brush work or poor masking (depending on the software and technique you're using). When lightening the face of the father and child, we have also lightened the background, creating an unnatural result. Judges are looking for errors far less obvious than this.

The finished result shouldn't have any telltale areas, but look as though the image were exposed directly with the camera. Looking at the image above, there's no way an average observer would know this image had been edited – in which case, that's mission accomplished!

TECHNIQUE: Refine Your Post-Production

Comment

It's great to edit your images in Photoshop, Lightroom or Capture One, etc., but your 'craft' should be invisible. The judges (and your viewers) shouldn't be able to see where your brushstrokes, your vignetting or masking start and finish.

Similarly, keep an eye on highlights (don't let them burn out), and don't have too many dark murky shadows (unless this adds to the mood). Your image shows some great potential, you just need to refine your editing skills a tad more!

Explanation

Modern editing apps are incredibly sophisticated and there are many techniques and approaches available.

However, if they are not applied correctly, the results can look awkward. It's a bit like reading a magazine or a book and seeing lots of grammatical and typographical errors. If we want to communicate clearly with our viewers (including the very critical judges), then we need to ensure there are no 'errors' in the processing of the image.

One common example is lightening up the face in a portrait. If the brush overlaps the face too much, then the background is lightened as well and the result is considered an error.

On the other hand, if the brush doesn't go far enough, meaning the lightening effect stops before the edge of the face, then that looks equally odd and unfinished.

The principle applies to all genres of photography – if you are making selective adjustments, make sure the brush or the mask used produces an invisible result.

Technique 1

Making masks and selections to edit your images is fundamental to the post-production process, so take the time to learn how to make effective masks.

Often, a precise mask is not required and you are better off changing the surroundings at the same time. However, if a precise mask is used, make sure no one can see where your editing starts and finishes.

Spend the time to refine your masks and selections.

Technique 2

When photographers add layers or adjustment brushes to their work, there can be a tendency to build up contrast. The result can be unwanted areas of black and white that contain no detail.

While some black and white can be considered desirable, large areas are generally an indication of inappropriate technique.

Technique 3

When darkening the edges of a photograph, or just darkening a sky above a landscape, the transition between the edited area and the rest of the photograph can be too abrupt – meaning you can see a line where the adjustment has been made.

Our aim with all our editing is to produce 'invisible post-production'. If you can see an edge, soften it down with a larger brush or one with less opacity.



A common error in post-production is using the vignette tool too heavily. It's true that some photographs can work very well with a heavy vignette, especially if they are dark and moody. However, heavy vignettes applied to most images simply look clumsy – and are marked down by most judges.



However, the concept behind vignettes is sound – to subtly darken the edges of the frame to keep the viewer's (and judge's) eye within the composition. While you might be able to see that an image has been vignettted, you should not be able to see the edges of the vignette itself. Subtle is best!



One of the most common errors judges see is the entrant using too much contrast, which in turn results in areas of pure white and/or pure black without detail. Sometimes this is an appropriate technique, but most of the time it is seen as an error or a lack of control over the post-production process.



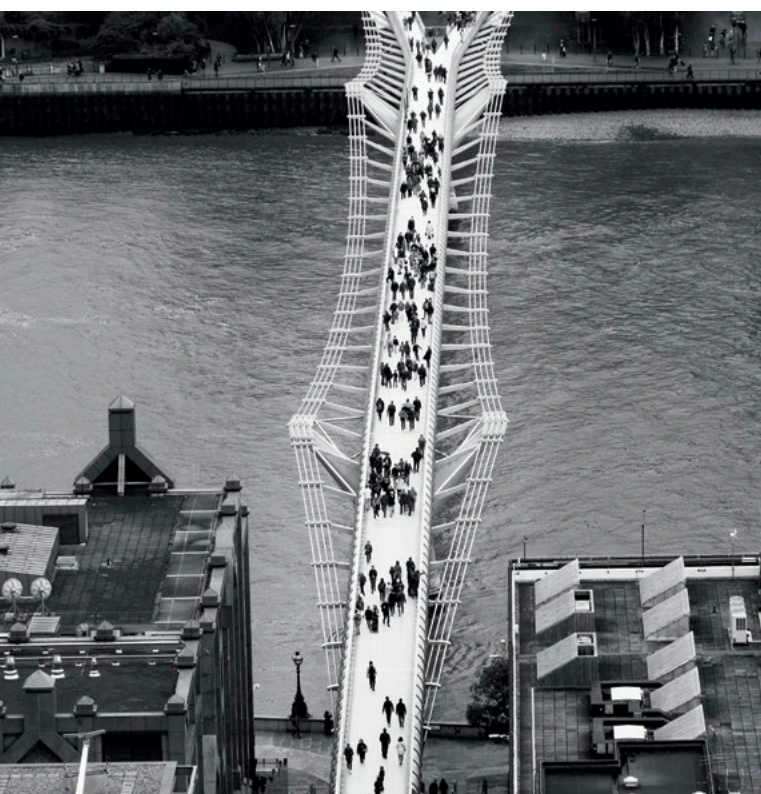
Before entering your photos, check that there is tone and/or detail in both the highlights and shadows. Very small areas of pure white and black may be acceptable, but larger areas will usually lose marks. In the above example, the water highlights include pure white, but otherwise show full details.

Reflections

Reflections



Richard White looks back on photography and its recent transitions into a communication means of the masses.



The Millennium Bridge from the top of St Paul's Cathedral in London. When I was there, the bridge looked as though it were suspended in mid-air. However, the two dimensional print for me makes it look like it has been stuck on the page.

As this is the 100th edition of this magazine, I thought it might be appropriate to reflect on photography in general and how I see the industry now as opposed to some years ago. But then again, maybe you're not that interested in reflections, so turn the page now if you want to move on.

We all know that technology is a wonderful thing. It has freed people up with regard to what they produce, especially with imagery. Technology has also killed the profession from what used to be an appreciation of great, visionary photography. Today, we are all photographers and we are inundated with a plethora of images from every angle of society. The exceptional, truly great pictures just get swallowed up in the mire.

With mobile phone manufacturers promoting the cameras on their phones, rather than the phone's capabilities, what is the general public to think of imagery that is produced by DSLRs or even old film cameras? I use film as well as digital and I also get some folk, not many, expressing a concern for my mental well-being.

In the Good Old Days

This kind of thinking I just don't get. When you turned the page and saw the three photographs that accompany this article, firstly you made up your mind whether or not you liked them and, second, you read the byline to see who they were from. Your mind never questioned are they film or digital and most likely you didn't care. You judged them on their aesthetic content and, more than likely, the composition and my vision. And yes, I am due for a visit to the optometrist if you are wondering.

Prior to my first optometric visit many a year ago, that is, when I started in photography, a professional photographer

was the guy who had the bigger camera or perhaps a medium format camera, as opposed to a 35mm SLR. We were sought out because, from the public's view, we knew what we were doing and as a rule, we produced images that were quite exceptional and better than the rest.

The reason we could do this was because we studied our craft, we learned our trade, we practised and we worked exceptionally hard. We were dedicated. If we did none of these things, we did not succeed. If you are an amateur photographer, do you know as much about photography as you do about the business you work in to make a living? I'll let you ponder on that thought for a few years.

Many amateurs who dabbled on the fringes of the profession relied on the one-hour photo shops for their colour pictures or if they were black and white aficionados, then they struggled on in the darkroom. Most, from what I gather, didn't study or take any courses to improve their cognitive ability in the medium. The result of this was that people's interest fell away, mainly because it was just too hard and really, you had to be dedicated if you wanted to have ongoing and sustained success.

Then, as we all know, along came the technological revolution in photography where everything was made easy and straightforward. People flocked back to it in droves. Because of the ease in exposing a picture and making prints yourself, the appreciation for great pictures was thrown out, along with those poorly exposed, poorly printed pictures from yesteryear that were the reason that people gave up in the first place.

Now that we are 20 years into digital photography, when most people who photograph use a digital camera, what is or will be the future for photography, not only for the professionals, but for amateurs as well? Please don't think I can offer any insights. My crystal ball broke many a year ago, so I now rely on Captain Hindsight for my information.

The New Era

I can tell you that new camera models have slowed down, thank goodness. Megapixels are close to reaching their capacity, hopefully. Film sales are back on the increase (bought mainly by the younger generation) and view cameras have in the last five years had their biggest increase in sales compared with the preceding five years.

It's nigh on impossible to sell a used digital camera that is three years old or older. We all want the latest and the greatest. It seems that people forget it's what you produce with the equipment that counts. And what is produced in general is pretty bloody ordinary. For me, photography is not Facebook or Instagram. That's communication or keeping in touch - and also a fair bit of 'look at me, look at me'!

To enter competitions now, many shy away from putting in traditional style photographs. Judges want more than that and that is where composites and a lot of skullduggery comes in, especially in the landscape area. Even photojournalism has had its colours lowered by some who are happy to change or alter a realistic scene.

I have not been too concerned about people who alter photographs because it can come under the category of digital art. It's when composite images are presented as



The Paternoster Square, also taken from the top of St Paul's, was a picture of line and form. The centre column is the focal point. It's almost as though the buildings are facing the column, hoping for some guidance. Or it's just buildings situated around an open space. Whatever you like. It was a very monochromatic scene and easily lent itself to a black and white picture.

real that I have spoken out. Photography, for me, is about capturing a moment in time, not making it up because you have failed in your vision.

That is why success in competitions now has such a plethora of made up pictures. Where are the photographers who emulate the likes of Cartier-Bresson, Brett Weston and David Bailey gone? Probably silently doing their own thing, rather than pursuing the lure of a headline and monetary prize.

On A Positive Note

Now that I've had my cathartic moment in relation to this wonderful medium, let's look at the bright side of photography and how to rise above the doldrums if you were to find yourself surrounded by that feeling.

Camera clubs are thriving again, mainly those who used to belong 'back in them film days'! However, I sometimes wonder if it's more of a social event than a real love of photography. Most likely a bit of both.

Visual communication between families is at an all-time high and photography, certainly in the West, is voted the number one hobby above anything else. There is more online instruction to help people with their imagery than ever before and it seems there is a photo workshop for anyone in their field of interest.

A note of caution here: many workshops are run by people with little experience and who have been in the medium for only a short time. Recently in the UK, I met a lady photographer who was almost three years into the



The Royal Tweed and Royal Border Bridges are always good to photograph. I photographed them about four years ago and thought I would endeavour to make another on this trip. Although it was raining at the time, it still didn't deter me from getting out my camera.

profession, advertising workshops. She also used the worn out line, 'award-winning photographer'. Reading on, I learned that the award won was for business acumen. So please do your homework.

If you feel that you are lost or not appreciated with what you are doing, which I do sometimes, I think the best solution is to forget all the garbage advertising you read, forget all the back-slapping articles that are pumped out in their hundreds and just do what you love to do. Try not to compare. Stop looking over your shoulder. Put your head in the sand if you like and enjoy your own approach to the medium.

This reminds me of a Leunig cartoon from many a year ago where one person is reading the paper and looking miserable, and three people are engrossed in their hobby looking happy. The caption reads, "You people should really keep up with the news. It says here that one in four people suffer from depression." I saw this back in 2001, cut it out of the paper and pinned it up in my darkroom, mainly to remind me not to read the paper. It's still there and as a rule, I try not to read the papers as I feel they have become more opinion pieces than news, but that's another article in another magazine which I'll never write.

Making the Most of it

Okay, if you have read this far with the article, then you're either interested or you're just filling in time in a library somewhere. So what can I suggest? Well, it depends on what you like to photograph, what success you've had in

the past and whether or not you want to carry on in the same way.

If you feel a bit unsure (and I meet many who are in the same boat), then try a project. Try photographing things that interest you. Set yourself a time limit, just to get you started. If a project is open-ended, then you will start and it will drag on for ages.

Set yourself a discipline of, say, only two photographs a day or four per week. Don't bracket the shot, take one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Think before you trip the shutter. Is it really a good image? How will it translate into a two dimensional scene? Are you going to change it to black and white? How will the colours translate into shades of grey?

If it's a colour photograph, is it about the colour or about the content? If using black and white film, when you process, have you given enough exposure to the shadow areas? Do you know how to control the development so you don't overdevelop the film? Do you know about or have you learnt the Zone System?

Back to digital. Can you read the histogram? Do you know how to control the histogram? You see, you thought all you had to do was point your camera at the subject and, presto, it's done. That's what the advertising will tell you. That's what all those people who make the cameras will tell you. What they haven't told you is how you use the camera to your advantage – and that's important.

Visiting a new location can fill you with optimism about getting a good picture, whereas revisiting an old place doesn't seem to provide the same degree of optimism, but there's more security.

Another tip which you'll probably ignore is don't enter competitions. Most are just moneymaking businesses. Submit online, pay your \$25 only to be discarded in the first round. No refund. Thank you. Car-ching! Next! [Of course, Richard couldn't be referring to the *Better Photography* competition advertised in this issue, where every entry receives a thoughtful judge's comment, thus giving you something of value. Ed.]

And if you still photograph real events, then forget competitions. Traditional photographs are just not appreciated in competitions any more. Judges are looking for something different and so, many highly manipulated images are entered and usually win. Why not have two categories for entry, digital art and pure photography. I can tell you why, but choose to keep it to myself.

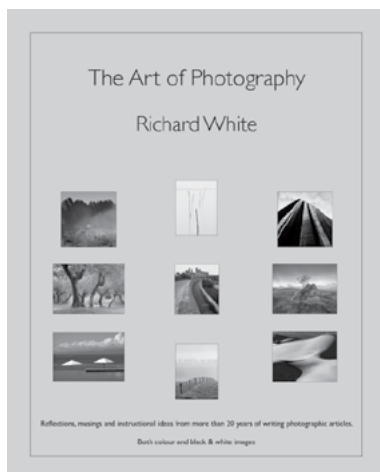
Okay that's enough. It looks as though I have had another cathartic moment. What am I going to do, you may wonder? Well, I am going to retire soon and build myself a huge sandpit.

Richard White lives in the North East of Victoria. A Fellow and Master of Photography with the AIPP, he is the author of The High Country calendar and Trees – And Where They Live calendar. He has self-published three books on photography, The High Country of Australia, Places I've Been – A Journey Through Photography and The Art of Photography. He teaches workshops around Australia and overseas. For more information please contact Richard at richard@richardwhite.com.au. His website is www.richardwhite.com.au.

The Art of Photography Workshops / Calendar / Books

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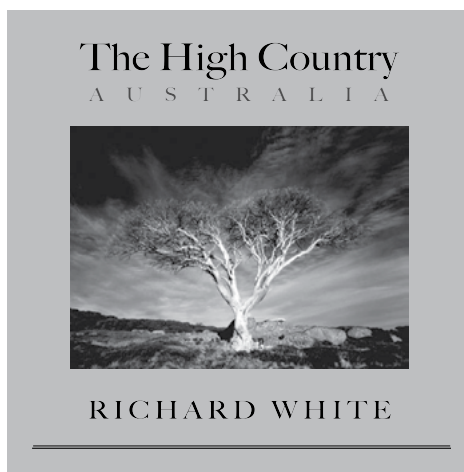


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is a collection of more than 25 of Richard's writings over the last 20 years from both this magazine and his newsletter. Updated and revised for today's photographic climate.

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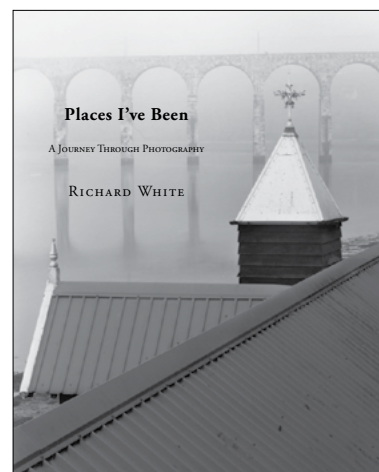
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see website for workshops, calendar and book information richard@richardwhite.com.au www.richardwhite.com.au

COVID STOP PRESS

With the COVID-19 crisis, many photo tours are being postponed. To find out the latest details, visit the operator's website.

Still time to Photograph the **Circus** of **Dreams**



Roby Lazar looks at one of photography's most popular photojournalism subjects, the 'big top'.

"Final day sirs. Last chance to see the marvels and miracles before we strike tent and move on. You won't regret it, sir. Matinee or evening, the show's a wonder. You'll never see the like. Never mind you won't believe your eyes – you won't believe any of your sensors[sic]". So said the young circus roustabout to Dr John Watson on entering the tent to see the matinee performance while on the latest Sherlock Holmes case, with a slight adjustment for photographers!

The key to successful low light photography, such as is required at the circus, is a good camera, appropriate exposure settings and a willingness to experiment. Shooting the action of the performers will fully test your camera's settings, but it also gives you the opportunity to capture the excitement of your visit to the big top. My images were taken from the perspective of a member of the audience, so there was no special access. Instead, it allowed me to photograph the action as it happened, capturing the feeling of anticipation that thrilled the audience as the show unfolded.

The Audience View

There are no unbreakable rules for circus photography, just guidelines. However, each event will challenge you to assess the lighting conditions. What are the appropriate aperture and shutter speed settings to follow the continuous movement of the performers as they interact with the audience and complete their routines?

One major advantage you will have over a paid professional photographer is the freedom to photograph what you like, so you can tell your own story as it develops. However, it is good practice to confirm that the circus allows you to take



All photos by Roby Lazar.

photographs during the performance and, if so, you should still ensure that your presence is as unobtrusive as possible.

As you want your images to relive the spirit of the day, I think it is acceptable for the performers to be slightly blurred in some of the images. The twists and turns of the performers do not all need to be frozen in time, but rather, you could allow your images to flow. You can create a sense of movement for the viewer by selectively using slowish shutter speeds to enhance the movement and the magic of the performance.

However, you don't need very long shutter speeds to create a little bit of blur. The speeds I most used were between 1/80 to 1/250 second. Of course, there were numerous exposures that didn't work out, but by watching most of the show through the viewfinder, I was able to capture enough of the action to produce a usable record of the afternoon.

Invariably you're shooting in low light, although you may be surprised at just how bright it is under the spotlights! I suggest using a camera that performs well at ISO settings up to 6400 as this will ensure you can set sufficiently fast shutter speeds to freeze as much of the action as you require. Many of the latest DSLR and mirrorless cameras can shoot at a much higher ISO settings and show very little noise in the final image.

For the best quality result in post-production, you may wish to minimise 'noise' created by higher ISO settings, so the solution is to use the lowest ISO setting you can, without having a shutter speed that blurs the subject too much. However, reducing noise may not be that important and in fact, some noise can be acceptable as a part of the composition or style of your work, presenting a slightly different interpretation of the events to the viewer.

However, if the circus is very dark, then it is better to set a higher ISO to ensure you get the shot – because unless you do, you might walk away with nothing at all! A sharp grainy photo may be much better than a blurred, grainless shot.

At the circus, set your ISO first and then you can concentrate on the shutter speed and aperture settings, depending on how sharp or blurred you want the subject. Another option is to use Auto ISO, in which case set the highest ISO setting you're prepared to accept (e.g. ISO 6400) and then set the minimum shutter speed (e.g. 1/60 second or 1/250 second). The camera will do a lot of the work for you, but beware you're now using the camera in an automatic mode and this may or may not suit you.

With the ISO set, I often use manual exposure mode so I can quickly adjust for changes in the light on my subject. Sometimes the automatic exposure modes are fooled by the



large expanses of darkness in the background or the very bright light on the subjects, so you may find manual works the best. Take several practice shots when the lights are dimmed to gauge suitable settings for the background, but then remember to adjust the exposure for the performers when they return under lights.

Early in the performance, take a few shots under typical lighting conditions and check that your exposures are correct by looking at the histogram on your camera.

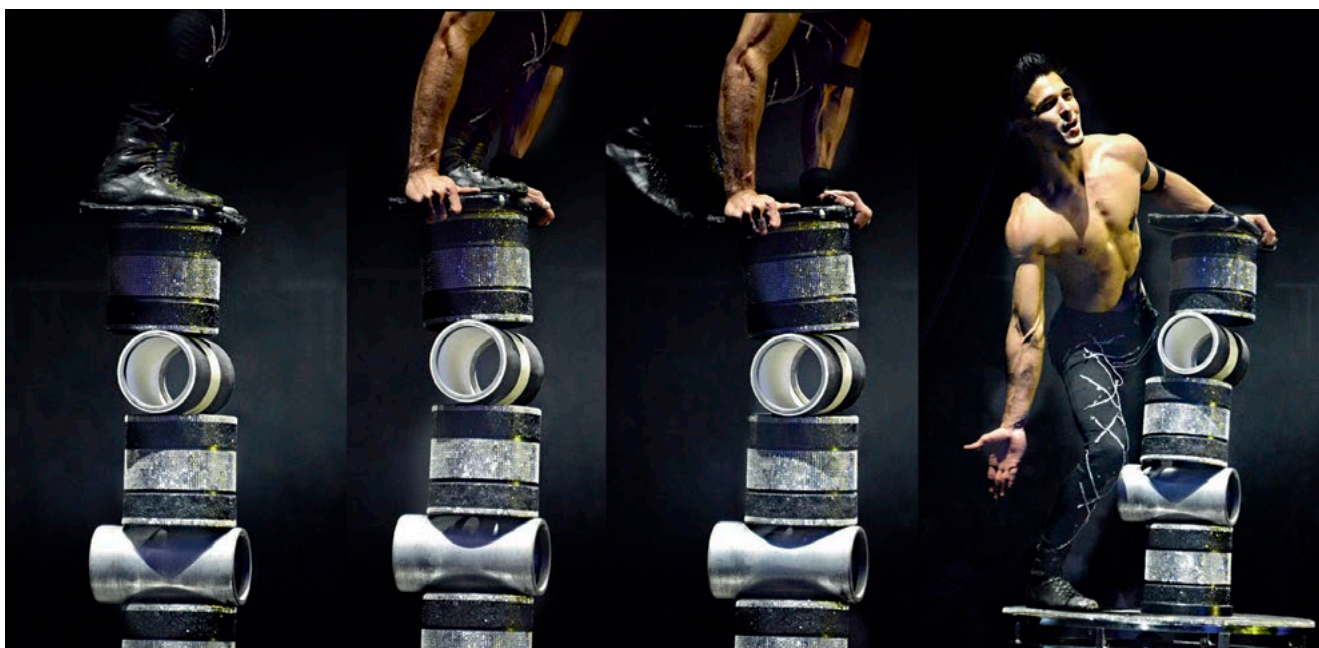
Once you've worked out the exposures, you'll find you don't need to be constantly fiddling with your camera settings. And if you feel threatened by manual exposure control, then use an automatic mode by all means, along with exposure compensation as required. The important thing to remember is that there are no fixed rules: if it works and you understand why, then use those settings.



Important Emotion

When shooting at the circus, it is the emotion and fun of the performers that is a priority, rather than an image that is technically perfect, but possibly static and without emotion.

To show the movement of the performances, perhaps with a slight flow of colour, use a slower shutter speed that will allow the viewer to identify the action as an intentional blur. Aim to take many photos using the slow shutter speed settings because not all of them will work out. There's a bit of hit-and-miss with this technique, so shoot away and let the story unfold through a series of photos. By capturing the action with the background, you will also give some context to the scene which will assist the viewer to identify more readily with your composition.





On my visit, I used a 28-300mm zoom lens. There was a frequent need to zoom into and out of the action, especially as the stage lighting changed and the performers spread themselves around much of the circus ring. Changing lenses is certainly possible, but you may miss half of the action if you're changing lenses too often.

I suggest you avoid using long lenses as these are conspicuous and if there are many people in the audience, you may not be very popular if you start knocking or bumping them! You will also need to shoot hand-held as a tripod is impractical in a packed audience.

I avoided using flash towards the stage during the acts out of consideration for the performers' safety.



Experiment with Creativity

Rather than presenting your images as conventional, one-off moments in time, why not emphasise the excitement and fast pace of the acts by combining several aspects of each performer into a single composition? In this way, the viewer can follow a short sequence of actions in the one frame.

It's also a good idea to take some general shots of the audience that can be used later as a background for the combined action shots, giving context and a feeling of location to the composition. In some of my images, I have superimposed the performers onto a background containing the audience, and I have also repeated the performers in different positions as well.

When combining images, a useful hint is to use the opacity slider on the layers when blending the images together, so you can see how they sit together before masking them out. I also use the clone stamp tool with a soft brush and low percentage setting to soften the outlines of the figures that are superimposed onto another background.

By combining several images, my aim was to depict the flow of the action for the viewer, perhaps capturing the feeling of being in the audience – and of the magic of the performance, which is what a circus means for most people – a magic escape.

In the Footsteps of Others



**What is the difference between inspiration and plagiarism?
Len Metcalf looks at the difference between being original
and being a copycat.**

***“The only art I’ll ever study is the
stuff I can steal from.”***

– David Bowie

Last month, I decided to walk the Western Arthurs Traverse with my fourteen-year-old son. We had previously tried to walk the Overland Track in winter, but were thwarted by the worsening forecast of snow. It turned out to be a very good decision, not to start the Overland Track, as many walkers were trapped in huts for days, waiting for the snow levels to drop again so they could walk out. In the end, they had to drop food into them so they could extend their walks. Instead, we walked the Three Capes Track in Tasmania. A short luxury walk, with beds, heaters and cooking facilities at each hut. One I can wholeheartedly recommend. But that walk was not the adventure that pushed our limits that we had hoped for.

We did walk the Western Arthurs this year. We had a fabulous trip with some amazing photographs that I have included in this article. Yet, while I walked I was thinking over and over about why I had come here. I was literally following in the footsteps of others. Many a photographer had walked to these places, including our ever prolific and accomplished editor Peter Eastway. Was I motivated to see Mount Oberon that his enhancement and stretching had caused so much of an uproar in his ‘New Tradition’? Was I following in his footsteps, just to see what the fuss was about?

Was I following in the footsteps of Peter Dombrovskis too? His photograph of Mount Oberon is considered a masterpiece, as is his work of Mount Hayes. Peter Eastway talked about how, by visiting the area, he was in fact creating a homage to the Australian master of wilderness photography. Peter studied Peter’s photograph and actively alluded to it by including visual references. He discussed why he was doing it in depth in his blog and in this magazine, a few issues ago.

Whilst doing research for this article, I stumbled upon the fact that Peter Dombrovskis died whilst photographing in the Western Arthurs. He died of a heart attack out photographing in the wilderness. His last photograph is of some twisted roots on a rock, that spells out his second wife’s name, ‘Liz’. I wonder if knowing that while I was there would have affected me in another way? Would I have spent the trip looking for names in twisted roots? Would I have spent more time on the trip thinking about my first photographic hero’s last days?

The idea to walk the Western Arthur Traverse with my son came from a dear friend and an ex-outdoor recreation student of mine, Sarah, who had just completed the walk with her son. In an earlier incarnation, I used to teach outdoor skills to guides and educators (bushwalking, camping, rock climbing, canoeing, ski touring, navigation, leadership, facilitation etc.). I later mentioned the Western Arthurs Traverse to Graham, another serious bushwalker (and photography student) after a brief discussion with my son, who had indicated his interest. He thought it would suit us well and that if my son was motivated, then I should jump at the chance before he grows up and loses interest.



All Photographs Western Arthurs, Tasmania

***“Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take,
and good poets intuit something better, or at least something different.
The good poet welds his theft into a whole feeling which is unique,
utterly different from which it was torn.”***

– T.S. Eliot



“There is nothing new under the sun.”
– Ecclesiastes 1.9

A few weeks later, my son and I were camped a day’s walk into the Walls of Jerusalem and another bushwalker started raving about the Western Arthurs walk. It was his absolute favourite walk, spectacular and that we should definitely do it, with the promise not to tell the world about it. Hmm... a sudden pang of feeling guilty as I write about it now.

I wonder how many of the *Better Photography* readers would consider such a strenuous trip and add to the other estimated 500 who do the walk annually? I think that number over-estimates those who do the whole traverse and includes the many who do the easier return trip to Lake Oberon. While we were there, I observed that for every one who walked the whole traverse, one to two were doing the return trip to Lake Oberon.

So, was my walk with my son a homage to the two Peters? What would happen if I tried to combine pandani (*Richea pandanifolia*) and Mount Oberon? Was it just some personal time with my son, pushing ourselves to do something hard and challenging? It is described as one of the most spectacular, exposed and difficult multi-day bushwalks in Australia. Actually, to only describe it as a bushwalk is misleading, as it involves rock climbing and some very scary exposed scrambling.

To be honest, I was really appreciative of those who had walked the walk before me. With every nerve-racking climb and descent under my breath, I thanked the first people who pioneered the route. To those who had worked on the track to minimise the erosion and to those who had marked it.

You may ask, what’s the point of all this rambling story, Len? Well, I am glad you asked and pulled me away from reminiscing about the amazing experience I had with my son.

The point is that it is impossible to live in the world as a creative, as a photographer, artist or even as a human and not be influenced and steered by those who have gone before you. To be influenced by the things that you see, read and experience. That following in someone else’s footsteps is to be celebrated and applauded. That there is great good in doing so.

Neither Peter nor I stole the idea from someone else. Nor did we steal the ideas for the photographs that resulted. However, we referenced back to those before. Did you know that Eliot Porter was one of Peter Dombrovskis’s heroes? A quick look through “In wildness lies the preservation of the world”, a stunning work of art that is a homage and tribute to Henry David Thoreau’s ‘Walden’, will confirm this visually to you and it is something that I have been able to confirm with his photography buddy, Chris Bell. It was Eliot Porter’s use of large format that inspired Peter to leave smaller cameras behind for his earlier work. They both loved to use the vertical format of 4 by 5 for stunning colour wilderness photography.

I studied both Eliot and Peter and when I first touched a view camera in 1985, it was love. Love at first touch. I immediately turned the rear standard to vertical and started photographing in vivid colour. You see, I wanted to be like Peter and Eliot. I had been studying their work for years in jaw-dropping admiration. Fifteen years later, when I opened my gallery in The Blue Mountains, it was full of vertical colour wilderness photographs that had been inspired by them both.

Connections, you see. We all steal from each other. We follow in the footsteps of others. We let people influence us, those whose work we adore. We take a little from each to figure out who we are.

I have been pulled up in class for using the word ‘steal’. I stole the word from the book, ‘Steal like an artist’ by Austin Kleon, who argues that not much is really original. He states that nine out of ten people who claim originality actually just don’t know the references to the original or even the original idea.

“We don’t know where we get our ideas from. What we do know is that we don’t get them from our laptops.”
– John Cleese

In all honesty, it is not a good word to use in this context. Kleon uses it for dramatic impact, no doubt. In the same way, I do now. Plagiarism is a form of stealing that we all frown upon as morally wrong. Unfortunately, it is saddening how regularly it shows up in photography. Many photographers are caught lifting other people’s work, presenting it as their own to advertise for business, even entering it in competitions. Unbelievable, yet it continues to happen regularly.

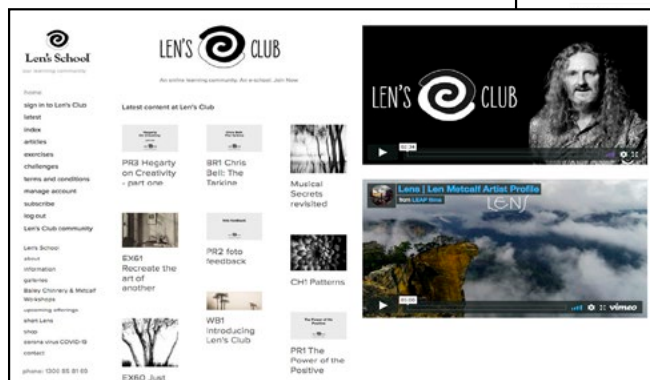
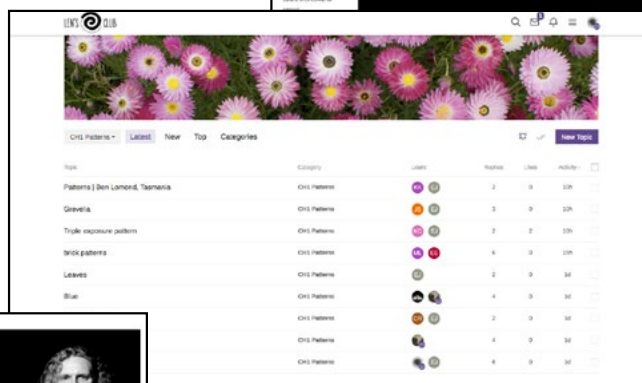
But this article is about the positives of following our influences, not about using other people’s work as our own, which is what plagiarism is. Did you know that according to the European Commission, approximately 10% of global commerce is made up of copied work? Enough about plagiarism.



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“What is originality? Undetected plagiarism.”
– William Ralph Inge

We are much better off thinking about inspirations, influences and what works (visually) for us.

So, the question I really want to highlight is, ‘How do you effectively see and listen to those who influence us, and use this influence to create more meaningful work for ourselves?’ In some ways, it is a pretty easy answer. Figure out what is attracting you to their influence, play with it, push it, see where you can take it and, finally, modify it to make it your own.

Interestingly, as artists we are told to actively copy the work of others as a learning experience. We do this to learn to see what they were seeing, to mimic the light, the framing, the compositions. We may also do this to make a statement about the original artwork, like in the case of Andy Earl’s photograph that recreates Manet’s ‘Luncheon on the Grass’ that is used on the Bow Wow album cover. This photograph is also controversial because it used Annabella Lwin, who was only 14, to pose for the nude figure. Interestingly, these days, this is considered an art parody. Manet’s painting has inspired many an artist to pay homage to it, including Picasso who did many variations of this famous composition and story.

The most famous photographic art parody I can think of is the overuse of the pose in Lewis Morely’s photograph of Christine Keeler, where she straddles a wooden chair. The photograph became his most famous one. I remember discussing this with him and in many ways he thought that the photograph’s popularity was a curse against the rest of his work. We discussed this in his flat in Petersham, above a second-hand camera shop, when I asked him to

open my first gallery in Katoomba. He said he was tired of reprinting it.

We discussed how galleries wanted him to do limited edition sets so they could inflate the price, despite how many prints were already in circulation. Once you learn to recognise the pose and the chair, you can see it used by so many others. One notable reference is in the Simpsons where Homer is seen in this pose, naked on the same chair; another is the use by the Spice Girls. The question one has to ask, is a homage or a parody plagiarism? When Lewis himself uses the same pose and chair to photograph himself, Dame Edna, Edina Ronay, Joe Orton or even David Frost, is he playing with his own art parody?

***“All mankind is of one author,
and is one volume.”***
– John Donne

I sit at my desk and look over at my library of photography books. They include so many images that I have spent so much time contemplating. My subconscious can remember so much that my conscious mind forgets. Often you don’t realise you are referencing someone else’s work.

What is important, is that you create work for yourself that you love and that makes you happy. Well, if you are a professional or are taking photographs for others, then perhaps it is a different story, as you are creating photographs very purposefully for your clients.

I love to let other people’s work influence me, stimulate me and inspire me. It takes me to new places, different environments and helps me create work that I love.

Let the work of other artists that you love inspire you. Study them and play with ideas. Peter Eastway’s example of paying homage to one of his heroes is a great example of letting inspiration, study, contemplation, transformation and remixing make something of your own.

In the end, I spent some time on that hill overlooking the lake and the mountain, playing with pandani plants. My own homage to the two Peters.

I’d like to take a moment to thank Peter, in this his 100th issue of *Better Photography*. Back issues sit proudly in my library and go back to Issue 15 in 1999. I don’t know where the earlier ones are. Peter, I owe so much for my development as a photographer and as a writer. I am so proud to be a regular contributor to your wonderfully stimulating magazine. Oh, and thanks for helping with the inspiration to go to the Western Arthurs, a trip my son and I will both remember for many years to come.

Len Metcalf is a photographic educator based in Sydney. He is widely known for his inspirational teaching, with photographers travelling the globe to learn from him. Len has recently announced an online photographic community where photographers can study under his encouraging and supportive style from home, through videos, writing and active participation. Len writes his daily musings in an almost daily blog that is illustrated with his photographs. <http://lenmetcalf.com>, <http://lensschool.com>



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Searching for the Motif

Are you struggling to find great photographs, even in amazing locations? Relax! It's a common problem, but as Roger Skinner suggests, looking for motifs could be the solution! Read this new way of looking at a landscape.

Garry Foye, an artist friend, said that when he ventures into a landscape, he searches for a motif. A motif, he suggests, is an abstract shape that can be found in a scene. Decide on a motif and then, when you re-examine the landscape before you, it will begin to fill your eyes.

The first time I tried this method of making images was on Orpheus Island, attending one of Les Walkling's wonderful workshops. I began my search for motifs on day one and found an almost perfect circle, formed by an underwater creature building its hidey hole in the sand below my feet.

So, with the circle as my motif established, I began searching the landscape for more circles and they just rushed at me. The landscape was full of them, from rusting infrastructure to natural forms and sometimes both. In fact, the circle motif became all-consuming and I set about

not making images of anything else. This was challenging because I love shooting landscapes and, initially, I had wanted to convey Orpheus's landscape to my viewers.

But no, I maintained the core discipline of searching for my motif and, I believe, I reaped its rich reward. The circle motif may be broken, it may be turned into an ellipse, it may be inferred via empty bounded space, it may be a fragment juxtaposed next to another shape, it may be implied, but it will be there! It even manifested itself as a depression in the sand.



Motif Found – circle. See text for details.



Above: Coil Foil.

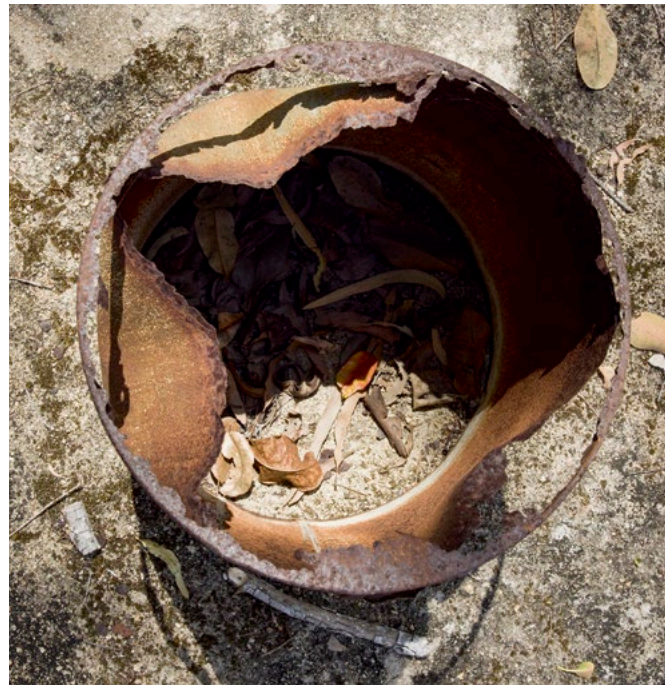
Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Bullet hole heart and opening, Fantome Island. Trust me, the bullet hole is there. Amazingly, it fractured the enamel in a heart shape – marvellous! Iconic mangrove, Orpheus Island. See text to explain how I see the circle in this image.

Rusted drum, Fantome Island.

Depression, Fantome Island.

Mangrove roots, Orpheus Island.

Dead lepers, Fantome Island.





The Double Bell, Bhutan. The diagonal motifs are everywhere in the mountains.

“Just because you’re looking for motifs doesn’t mean you have to ignore the majestic scenes and landmarks – you should photograph them too. However, if you keep looking for your chosen motif, it’s amazing how it opens up your visual possibilities.”

So, while the little round hole in the sand clearly represents my motif, like all things, I like to push myself as to what I will consider accepting as the chosen motif. As far as I’m concerned, it can break, fall apart, be squeezed and knocked about. And in the case of the two depressions, they were roughly circular around the edges, but then also circular in depth as well. I like the less obvious representations, hence there was no shot of the lifebuoy on the jetty because that’s ‘the bleedin’ obvious’.

How you find your motif is a matter of wandering about, as I did on Orpheus. I was photographing in my usual way and then I looked down at the little hole under the water in the sand and went.. bingo! That was it. So I began looking around for other circles, and they were everywhere, albeit not perfect, but what is?

For example, I used the curved mangrove roots, where the other half of the circle is invisible. The mangrove sits in the ocean, so I imagine a circle being drawn around it and its reflection, as if you put a compass in the middle and then draw a circle around it. Perhaps the oddest subject for me was the graves on Fantome Island. There were circles

of stones around graves, completely contrary to the usual gravesite linings.

So, why do motifs work? Motifs help you view the landscape differently because you are looking for your motif. Now, just because you’re looking for motifs doesn’t mean you have to ignore the majestic scenes and landmarks – you should photograph them too. However, if you keep looking for your chosen motif, it’s amazing how it opens up your visual possibilities.

Different Motifs

Since my first application of this technique on Orpheus Island, I have applied it again and again, from Kakadu to Bhutan. In Bhutan, my motif was ‘diagonal construction’, beginning with the steeply sloped valleys surrounding the airport where we first landed.

However, in Bhutan I was also presented with a novelty index – local folk in national dress and the old architecture displayed in every dzong [fortified monastery]. I couldn’t follow just a single motif, so I didn’t! I enjoyed various aspects at the same time.

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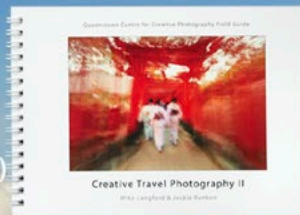
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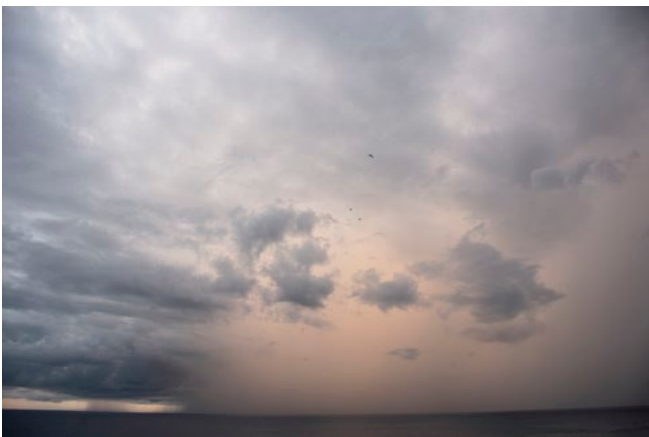


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With the COVID-19 crisis, many photo tours are being postponed. To find out the latest details, visit the operators website.



Top: Approaching Scud, Christmas Island, Indian Ocean.

Above left: Into the Storm, Christmas Island, Indian Ocean. Above right: Birds in Scuds, Christmas Island, Indian Ocean.

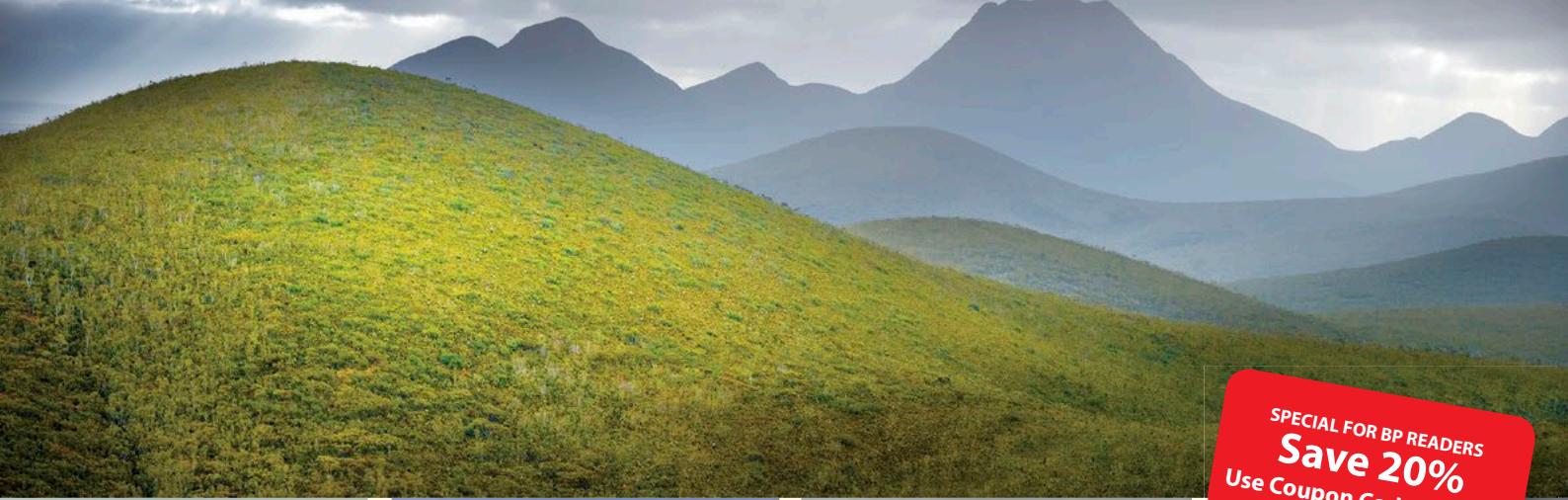
Accordingly, the resulting artist books from the trip were broken into several genres, but in the landscape book, the motif of diagonal construction lines are dominant, for as strongly as the book conveys a culture in nature, the pervasive, rumbling diagonal lines find their way into the images all the way through the book. The diagonal motif rules.

On Christmas Island, a challenging landscape was presented to me: from shattered forests, where guano is still mined in a very careless way, to our accommodation at Swell Lodge in the national park. Then there was a complex and dizzying rainforest, perched three metres from the edge of a 20-metre cliff, above the pounding surf and surrounded by thousands of red crabs.

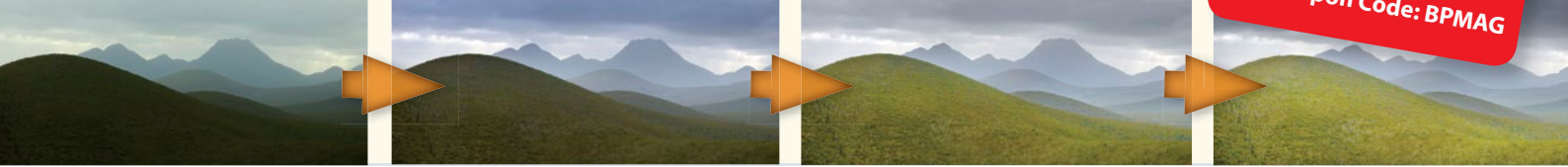
The vast variations in the landscape really set a challenge,

especially as the monsoon broke late over the island. Then it occurred to me, as I gazed into the constant scuds of the pouring rain, there was my motif, right in front of the verandah: the rain. So I began photographing the constant scuds of torrential rain and then, as I noticed the birds wheeling through the sodden sky, birds in scuds and so another motif was found.

This method of working applies itself to travel photography as well as wandering around at home and I run with it. The images are perhaps not spectacular, but I have shunned (or perhaps held at arm's length) that type of image making, looking for the satisfaction within. The seeking of a motif is a great way to make a steep change to your image making and offers a rich mine of invention.



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Landscape Photography MasterClass - Contents



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Chasing Butterflies

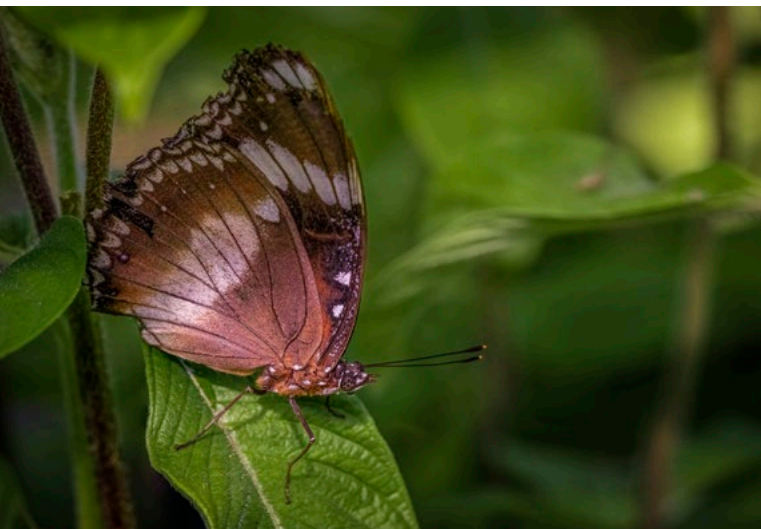
In this changing world, many of us are finding things closer to home to photograph.

Greg Sullavan has some suggestions for capturing ephemeral visitors.

A well-known nature photographer once told me, “If you like bird photography, it’s only a matter of time before you start chasing butterflies. They are perfect little creatures with a delicate beauty, vibrant colours and an unpredictable flight path. It seems as if they exist to bring happiness to the world.”

Early 2020 produced a bumper butterfly season in some parts of Australia with high rainfall and a long summer. Conditions have been perfect. And there is a multitude of butterflies for you to chase.

So how do you get started photographing butterflies? The good news is that you only need a backyard and camera equipment that you probably already own. Butterflies are attracted to colourful flowers that are rich in nectar. They are most active in the morning and will land to feed in full sunlight, before settling down in the late afternoon. Butterflies are usually attracted to pink – flowers and shirts. Make sure you wear a dull-coloured shirt if you don’t want the butterflies to land on you.



EF100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM, 1/200 second @ f8, ISO 1600.

Be sure to keep plenty of water around for the butterflies to drink. And they love to fly through a light misting of water.

The secret to amazing butterfly photography is speed – and knowing how your camera is going to react in the split second you have to get the shot. This is all part of the fun and it will test your skill as a photographer.

The images in this article feature butterflies that have landed because chasing the perfect butterfly shot in flight is a whole extra level of expertise!

Lens Selection

The two lenses that I have featured in this article are the Canon EF100mm f2.8L Macro lens and the EF100-400 f4.5-5.6L lens, a macro lens and a telephoto lens.

The macro lens’ job is to make a small object look bigger and fill the frame by minimising the focusing distance between the subject and the lens. The benefits are outstanding detail and image quality, with a lovely shallow depth-of-field.

Alternatively, the telephoto lens will allow the photographer to stand a distance away from the subject, potentially avoiding the risk of scaring the subject away. Accurate focus will also be challenging as any movement in the camera will be accentuated by the length of the lens. The perspective and depth-of-field compression will drop the background away like magic. The bokeh will be stunning.

Exposure

A great place to start is with the TV (time value setting or shutter-priority exposure mode) and the auto ISO settings. In this mode, one corner of the exposure triangle is locked in (the shutter speed), allowing the camera to select the best aperture and ISO in the lighting available, based on your metering selection.

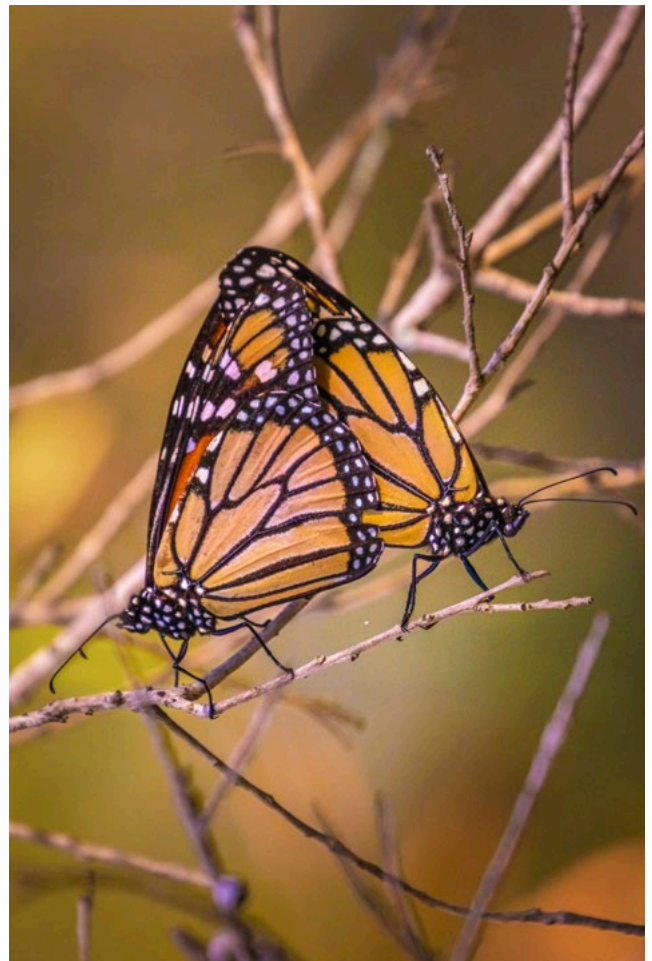
The shutter controls the amount of movement in the resulting photograph. A fast shutter speed will freeze the movement in the butterfly’s wings – this is preferable to motion blur. My suggestion for a good starting point is 1/400 second.



Canon EF100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM +1.4x III, 1/400 second @ f8, ISO 1000. All photos by Greg Sullivan.



Canon EF100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM +1.4x III, 1/400 second @ f8, ISO 1600.



Canon EF100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM +1.4x III, 1/640 second @ f8, ISO 1000.



EF100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM, 1/320 second @ f8, ISO 800.



EF100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM, 1/320 second @ f8, ISO 1600.



EF100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM, 1/320 second @ f8, ISO 1600.



EF100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM, 1/200 second @ f8, ISO 1600.

You will need to become a 'master of exposure compensation' when you use a fast shutter speed as your starting point because you will need to make decisions that will affect the resulting brightness or darkness of the photograph. Most digital cameras have a very good Live View mode that lets you preview the photograph's exposure before you take the shot. You may need to use exposure compensation to get the perfect exposure. Mirrorless cameras have an electronic viewfinder that you can use to preview the exposure on the photograph. You would then use exposure compensation in the same manner to achieve perfect (appropriate) exposure for your photograph.

As you become more confident with exposure, you might consider switching to the camera's manual mode so that you can also set your aperture to take control of depth-of-field. Now you will have taken control of two corners of the exposure triangle and you will be starting to lock in your artistic choices. An aperture of f11 is an excellent starting point for the macro lens, as this provides some much needed depth-of-field, while the maximum aperture on the telephoto (between f4.5 – f5.6, depending on the focal length used) will throw the background out-of-focus as much as possible, isolating the subject against a beautiful blur.

The ISO will move up and down automatically, based on the camera's metering selection. You can still use exposure compensation to adjust the exposure.

The Highlight Tone Priority function, a feature of all Canon EOS cameras, is a useful but often misunderstood feature. It is designed to protect details in the highlights of the

photograph. The feature is located in the camera's shooting menu and shifts some of the dynamic range away from the mid tones to the highlights, providing more detail in the raw file. However, you will lose ISO 100 from your camera's ISO speed range.

Focusing Technique

Our butterfly friends are unpredictable and will move in unexpected ways. Focusing can be a challenge. The 'Servo' focus mode on Canon cameras (continuous autofocus on other cameras) is the perfect choice for chasing butterflies because the focus constantly updates. Anything that moves inside the focusing point selected, will stay in focus.

The camera's focusing points are scanning for the dominant contrast in the image and a single focusing point or small cluster of focal points will minimise the potential for error. Moving the focal point quickly around the composition is critical to ensure you have control over the section of the photograph you want to keep in sharp focus. With butterflies, you will normally want to keep the head and eyes in sharp focus.

Keep in mind that there is nothing wrong with moving the focusing point away from the centre of the image.

Metering

Understanding your camera's metering modes and how they observe light is the key to unlocking the automatic modes and the exposure compensation methods that come with your camera. Some professional photographers rely on this system in difficult and changing lighting conditions



EF100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM, 1/200 second @ f5.6, ISO 1600.

where speed is required. For example, wedding photography is a continuing challenge where members of the bridal party and guests move from indoors to outdoors. As a reformed 'manual snob' myself, I choose the spot metering mode for butterfly photography for its accuracy (spot metering uses only 3% of the central focusing area). The camera returns an exposure based on the light reflecting back from the centre of the frame, calculating a measurement based on 18% grey, or the halfway point between black and white. Keep in mind that if the subject is black, then your exposure will be overexposed, as the camera is making the exposure mid-grey, turning the black in your photograph to 18% grey. The opposite applies for a white subject, the exposure will be underexposed. You will need to move your camera's exposure compensation up or down to achieve the desired exposure.

Flash

Similarly, understanding the way light affects photographs is an art in its own right. In dark settings, we may need to throw in a little extra light to illuminate the subject.

A Speedlite flash is a perfect addition to your camera bag. Its job is to throw some additional light into the scene, to assist the photographer to correctly expose the subject. In the automatic E TTL mode, the Speedlite emits two flashes when you press the shutter button. The pre-flash is used by the camera to perform a reflective light meter reading for the amount of light bouncing back from the subject to the camera. With through-the-lens (TTL) mode, the Speedlite

adjusts its output to achieve an 18% grey exposure. Use flash exposure compensation to adjust the output from the flash, to create a natural looking result. The idea is to use the flash as a 'fill light' source, rather than the main light source (meaning the flash illumination doesn't overpower the subject, but 'fills in' the shadows).

The next level of mastery is changing your Speedlite's settings to the manual mode, where you control the output of the flash and override the automatic settings, regardless of the camera's exposure. Flash settings start at 1/1 (full output) and drop to 1/2 output (half output), to 1/4, 1/8 and so on. Just keep in mind that the distance you are from the subject will affect the result. For example, if you are closer to the subject, the flash will appear brighter on your subject. The good thing is you can practise your technique on flowers first before moving to the more dynamic butterflies.

One final thought: aim for a composition that doesn't reveal anything 'man-made' in the photograph. Try for a natural look that has greenery in the background, rather than the clothesline or barbecue!

With all the time we now have working from home, I hope this is an enjoyable distraction that will help fill your creative needs.

Greg Sullavan is a Queensland-based photographer who is an ambassador for the Canon Collective. You can check out the Collective workshops at www.canon.com.au/collective or join the Facebook community at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1089022764457509>.

Mastering Composition

by example

Explaining the vagaries of composition can be challenging, but leading the way by example can make things much clearer.

Ignacio Palacios discusses one of his award-winning images.

The ice hole photograph of the black sand beach is a composite image created from two images taken in areas very close to one another geographically. It is also one of my favourite examples of how blending two scenes together can create an image far more engaging and impactful as a result.

The iceberg was photographed at Black Sand Beach near Jökulsárlón and the 'ice hole' that frames the subject was photographed just outside an ice cave, similarly near Jökulsárlón.

For me, photography is largely a two-step process – firstly the capture and then the post-processing. Manipulating an image after its capture is a practice almost as old as photography itself. Before the digital age arrived, this was achieved with a range of techniques such as retouching with ink or paint, double-exposures, piecing photos or negatives together in the darkroom, scratching Polaroids – and the list goes on.

Similarly, the debate around image manipulation has been a topic of discussion since photography was born in the 1830s and the history of composite photographic images and image manipulation goes back to the methods of Pictorialism (1885–1915).

In the current realm of digital photography, Photoshop is my tool of choice for post-processing. It is the most effective instrument for allowing me to develop an image from what I had previously captured into what I felt or pre-visualised. There are other tools available, and more being created every day, but Photoshop still remains the original and current benchmark for unlimited creative potential. It has the range and power to refine, design, control and finesse an image in almost any way you can think of. Your level of imagination really is its only limitation!

Pre-Visualisation

The concept of pre-visualisation in photography refers to when the photographer can perceive the final image before it has actually been captured. This approach can be of high value for photographers of all kinds, as it has the potential to unlock greater creative vision.

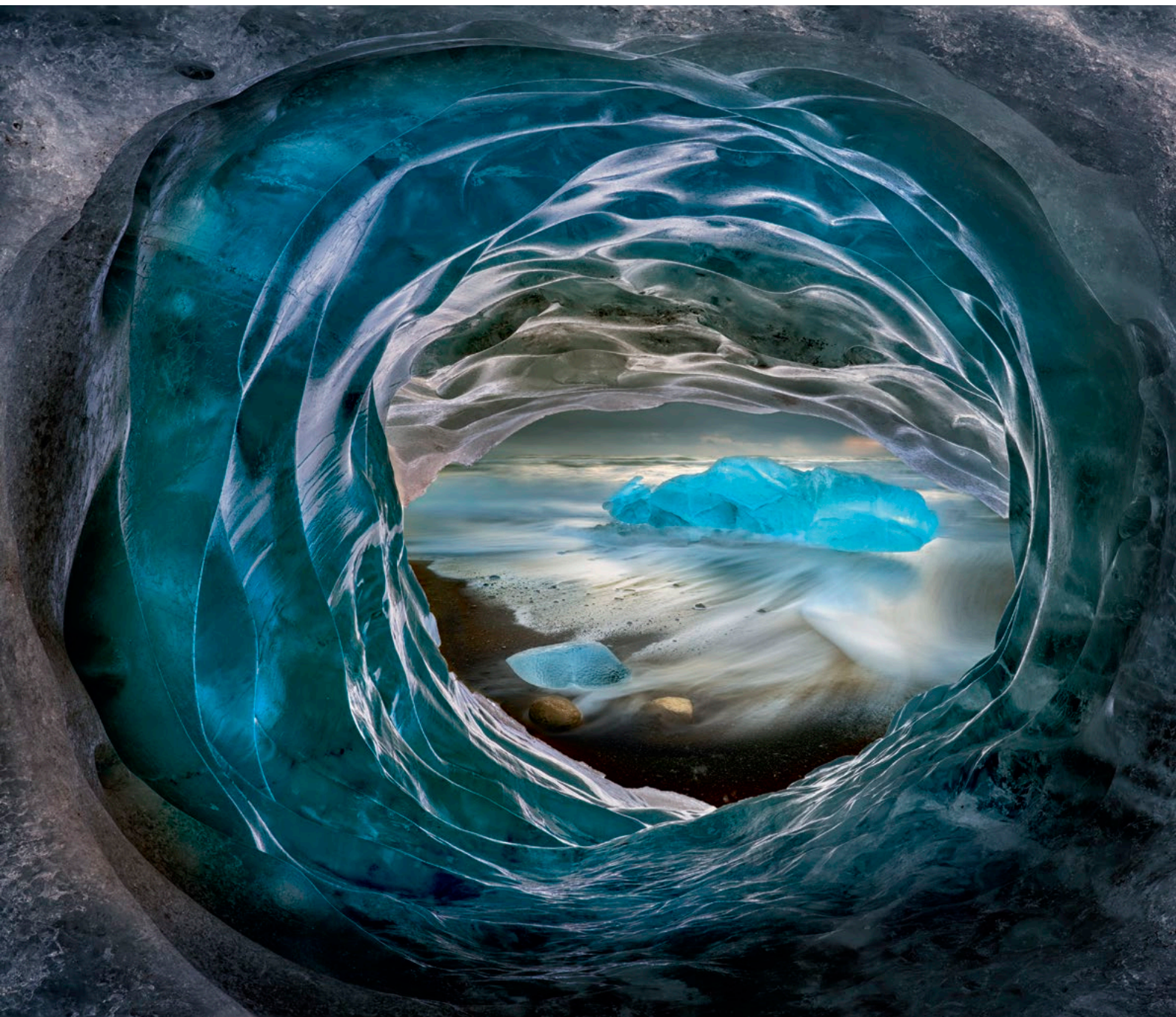
Even before flying to Iceland, I had been exploring a range of ideas in my mind. Iceland has been heavily photographed in recent years, so I really wanted to create something original and unique, beyond what I had seen before. It was not an easy task perhaps, but a motivating one! One of my ideas was to photograph some of the most recognised and iconic locations, but present them framed inside ice and this image was created from that idea.

My first attempt to frame an icon within ice was at Kirkjufell Mountain, framing the peak with a sheet of ice (see images on the following pages). However, while the technique worked, the resulting image didn't have the impact I had in mind. And shooting an image like the one I had in mind in-camera was going to be challenging.

Compositional Tools

The ice hole with the black sand, in comparison to the two-layered photo taken at Kirkjufell, has lots of rich texture and form to explore, providing interest in every part of the frame. The circular framing creates a clear and controlled sense of direction and movement and then there's a beautiful reward for walking inwards, held in the flowing movement and sumptuous colour deeper within. Ultimately, it is a fairly unique image with a great sense of sensuality and depth.

I think the success of this image comes from how well the shape, colour and content relationships between the two



Ice hole, Black Sand Beach near Jökulsárlón, Iceland, February 2016.

frames tie together. Let's start with a view of the two original raw files and I will take you through some of the thought processes and techniques for blending the final piece together.

Framing is a compositional tool where elements in the image are used to outline or enclose another feature within its boundaries. In this case, the ice hole is used to encase and frame a background that features the icebergs and the sea. It creates a frame within a frame, if you like, and in this case, it works particularly well because the iceberg is framed by an element that complements its own story and physical structure. Essentially there are two slightly differing forms of the same element, ice, tied together by design.

The original photo of the iceberg within the hole was too tightly framed and it didn't work compositionally. The iceberg needed more space around it, so I used the warp tool in Photoshop to open up the area around the iceberg, to give it more breathing room and to create a better balance between the two main areas of visual interest.

The iceberg in the background was first given more breathing room and then edited to attract the viewer's attention with exposure, contrast and colour.

Circles and ellipses have a special place in composition. Unlike triangles, vectors and lines, they are not so easy to imply because they need to be complete and have a precise, recognisable shape. The circular and elliptical elements in this image have an enclosing effect. They contain what's placed within and draw the eye inward; in this case creating the tunnel-like effect.

On a purely graphic level, the ice hole helps focus the attention of the viewer by establishing a clear direction for the eye to move, from the outer frame inwards through a visual passageway.

Light and Colour

Selective dodging and burning has accentuated much of the shape and form of the ice features and aided in directing the light down into the deeper parts of the image. The eye almost



The first test of Kirkjufell Mountain with a sheet of ice, showing full-frame (top right) and then with the image cropped (right).

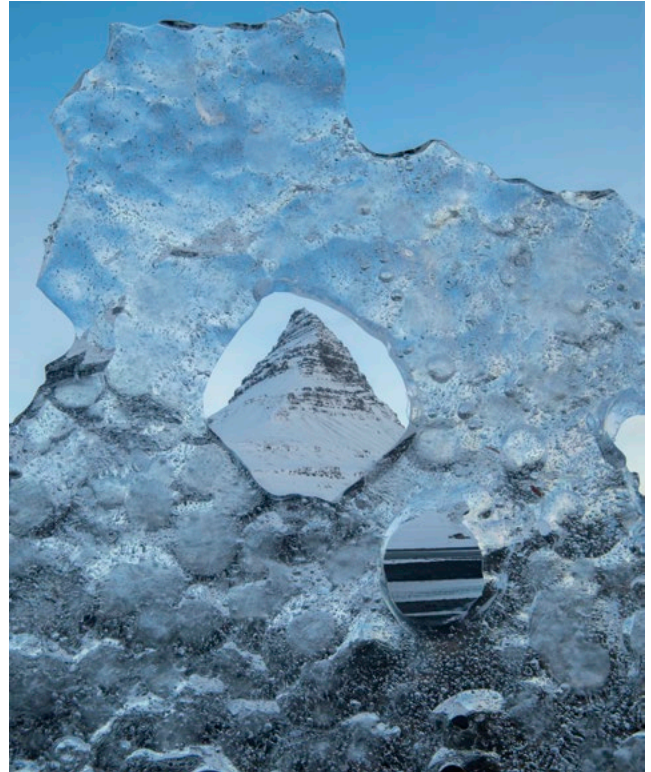
always travels through an image to rest on its brightest point. I brightened and increased the contrast of the icebergs in the background to grab the viewers' attention and help pull the eye through the frame.

I also darkened down the outside of the image to add to the sense of framing (a form of vignetting), to prevent any brightness on the outer part of the image competing with the elements inside. The lighting was handled with enough delicacy that you are invited to gently meander through the frame, rather than be pulled through it by any overly bright features.

Many hours went in to developing and finessing this image, particularly with the colour and several different versions were created. Ultimately, this final version rose to the fore because the blues were saturated similarly enough throughout the frame and this helps to tie the two parts of the image together.

Warmer orange hues (a beautiful colour complement to the blues) were added to the flowing water and horizon, as well as to their 'reflections' inside the ice hole. This added a touch more complexity to the overall colour palette, but it's the use of colour in this way that really helps bring the two separate images together, making the result more believable and introducing a greater level of emotion into the image.

Movement has also been considered. The front of the image is very static and solid, while the background, created with a long exposure, brings in an alluring sense of flow and movement. These two qualities in juxtaposition add a level of



dynamism and interest and add another level of separation between the foreground and background for the viewer to reflect on.

Tonal Range

The histogram gives you an excellent view of where all the tones lie within an image. The range from 0 to 255 represents all the values from complete black to pure white. I rarely adjust the exposure of my images to go all the way to the edges,



Original Ice Hole image



Original Iceberg Image



Above and above left: Iceberg Image after editing



particularly when preparing a file for printing, as it usually means the brightest and darkest areas will not print with any detail (which is a common criticism made by judges). And while it's crucial to capture a raw file with all this information contained within the exposure's tonal range, there remains room to interpret how it is used and distributed throughout the final image during post-production.

Maximising the full range at your disposal and within that boundary (I often aim for 10-245), allows you to take full advantage of the contrast, sense of luminosity and overall punch and impact for many images – with this being an excellent example.

If you compare the original raw capture of the icebergs, the tonal range is very limited with low contrast. Consequently, it's arguably a fairly lacklustre image in terms of impact. The final version is quite the opposite, largely through extending the tones out into a much fuller tonal range. This is the power of raw processing and post-production. The whites can be whiter, the blacks blacker and there is a greatly increased sense of luminance, form and energy brought into the image as a result.

Focus stacking

Capturing a good file is very important, so I would be remiss not to mention that the ice hole was created using a photographic technique called 'focus stacking'.

Eight shots of the ice hole were taken, focusing manually at different positions in sequence from the foreground to the background using an aperture of f11. The eight images were then merged using the specialist software Helicon Focus.

This technique generally requires the use of a tripod to prevent 'ghosting' or the overlap of images during the blending process and to provide enough control to select the various focal points. Mirror lock-up and a cable release are recommended to avoid any unnecessary vibrations of the camera caused by manually touching the shutter-release button.

When out in the field, take the time to be present with your visualised ideas and concepts, both before and during the capture process. Then allow them some breathing time to guide you in the right direction. And don't be afraid to really reach deeply into a file and make full use of the tonal range. You may be surprised at what greater potential lies inside!

Time and Motion



Nick Melidonis provides a series of techniques for painting with light and artistic blur.

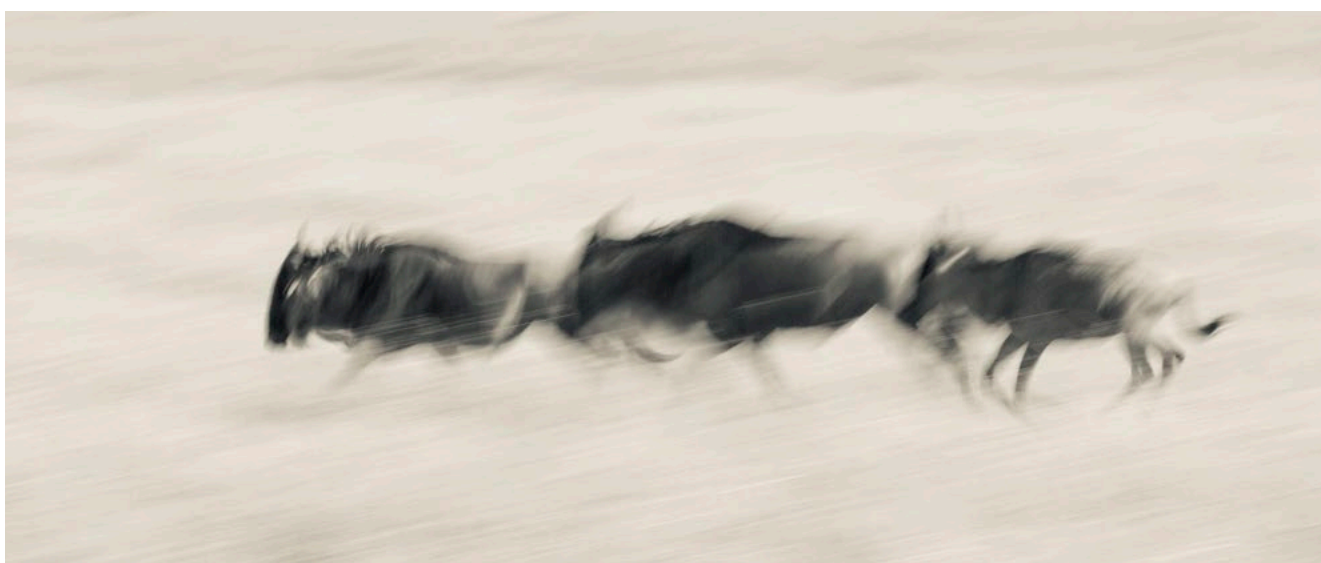
Roughly 10 years ago, I wrote an article in *Better Photography* about the joy of taking painterly, slow shutter speed photos. I now find I'm including a bundle of deliberately blurred images with a slow shutter on nearly every major shoot, whether I'm taking a tour or shooting for fun. On looking at many of my recent images, the information I provided back then is still very relevant today.

Making the Change

When I was first interested in photography as a uni student, I was inspired by the world's great landscape photographers and was amazed at the sharpness and clarity in their beautifully crafted black and white prints. I spent a lot of my hard earned money purchasing the very best lenses I could afford, to capture images with the sharpest negatives as my outcome. I took great pains to ensure that my camera was securely fastened to a heavy Manfrotto tripod (carbon fibre

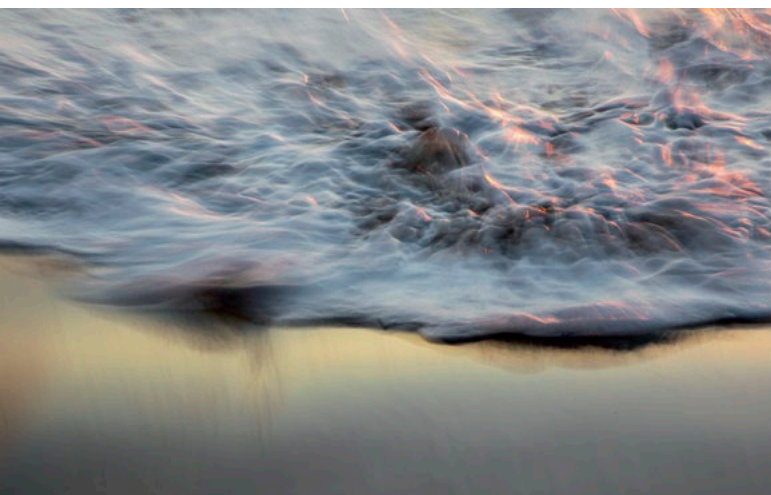
was worth a fortune in those days) and I used a cable release. The resulting images were as sharp as the 35 mm film format could produce and this practice was continued with my first mid-format camera, a 645 Pentax.

During an early trip to Spain, I photographed a flamenco show in the historic city of Herez and again ensured the tripod-mounted camera and flash gear produced crisp images of the dancers and guitarists. Near the end of a roll of film, I removed the camera from the tripod and, finding I had one frame left, fired a hand-held shot (no flash) at the principal dancer. When the slides were processed, I was blown away at the painterly effect of that last frame, the swirling movement and blend of colours from the hand-held image. In fact, when printed on watercolour inkjet paper, it sold very well compared to other 'more controlled' images and was even used as a front cover in the travel section of a major newspaper.



Photographing the migration in Kenya, I panned with some running wildebeest, producing a pleasing, cave-painting feeling.

ISO 100, 250mm focal length, f22 @ 1/20 second, Canon EOS 5D Mk III, 100-400mm lens.



Breaking waves on Cable Beach in Broome, W.A. at sunset. Printed on watercolour textured paper, they look very attractive. Both images were taken with a Canon EOS 5D Mk IV with a 24-105mm lens. (Left) ISO 100, 105mm focal length, f 18 @ 1/5 second. (Right) ISO 100, 105mm focal length, f16 @ 1/4 second.

Although I experimented a bit with the effect on other subjects, the number of shots required to produce one good image was so high that it wasn't cost-effective when using slide film. Then along came digital photography, with the option of shooting hundreds of frames on the same card and the ability to preview each shot within seconds of taking it. The experimental techniques for using creative blur were made that much easier.

My main aim for taking up photography has always remained the same: to approach landscapes and travel with wonder and passion, and to engage the viewer and share the feelings I had at the moment of capture. The 'creative blur' images described in this article help to convey those feelings.

Great photographers such as Ernst Hass (Wild Horses, Nevada; Bronco Riders, California and Bullfight Pamplona Spain), Henri Cartier-Bresson (Queen Charlottes Ball) and Man Ray (Femme en Mouvement) were already mastering these techniques in the fifties and even Alexey Brodovitch published a book called 'Ballet' in 1945. This was not a conventional ballet book because the intention was to capture movement. If the reader has time, find the images on the internet from these photographers who left us such a great legacy in this genre.



Long exposures of architecture in black and white is a popular genre. This shot was taken at one of Singapore's iconic buildings. It's a 90 second exposure using B+W ND filters (16 stops) at f18, using a Sony A7R II, Zeiss 16mm lens and a Gitzo tripod.

My fascination with artistic blur and motion arose from a desire to create images that did not conform to the standard practice of composition. Very simply, the blending and fusion of colours and shapes that result from motion and blur means that I can create a composition purely with colour.

The technique also works well with black and white and there are many fine-art proponents around the world running workshops on how to master long exposure images, especially architecture with streaking clouds.

With these images, shapes blend together and are often indiscernible, so what attracts the viewer to the image is the synthesis of colour and the resulting, pleasing patterns. What I also found interesting was the fact that the control one strives for when setting up a landscape is totally given over to chance, a sense of playfulness and 'allowing the accident to happen'.

I've mentioned before an old Japanese saying when referring to art: "An individual who has complete control of his medium is not quite a master. The true master is one who has total control and then lets go and allows the accident to happen." Zen talks about painting with 'mu-shin', which means 'no - mind'. This is not 'thoughtless' painting, but letting go of forcing the result. This approach would have been used by the famous painting, 'Blue Poles' by Jackson Pollock.

Basic Colour

Although a pleasing blending of colour or tones is important, so is the choice and placement of elements so the lines that are created in the motion give structure to the fusion of colours. When searching for subject matter, look for bold



On a recent trip to the Kimberley region of WA, we camped in the evenings and often encountered large flocks of Corellas darting in and out of the trees. I was using a Canon EOS 5D Mk IV camera with a 70-300mm Canon zoom. The first image tracked a bird through the trees (ISO 100, 182mm focal length, f22 @ 1/15 second). The second image tracked a bird against a clear blue sky and I later added a texture I call 'scrunchy paper' to the sky for effect (ISO 100, 120mm focal length, f22 @ 1/40 second). I particularly like the abstract forms of the birds with this technique.

colours, often complementary and objects that will provide strong lines in the direction of the camera's movement. The technique is almost a 'no-brainer'. Firstly, decide how much of the scene you want in the photograph for your choice of lens, hold the camera (horizontally or vertically) around eye or waist level and move it in the direction you feel would work with the flow of colours while pressing the shutter. The movement can be up or down, sideways or you can even describe a circle or other shapes, whatever works as an image. Check the result on the rear LCD screen, make any adjustments to the shutter speed or direction of motion and shoot again. You will find, as I did, that it takes quite a few attempts and plenty of experimentation to finish up with a 'hero' image, but when you do, it is fantastic.

A variation to this technique is to keep the camera still, also with a slow shutter, but let the moving subject provide the movement.

To get a slow enough shutter speed in the middle of the day, you need to use the lowest ISO setting you can (some cameras like a Sony have ISO 50 as an option), very small apertures (it's not unusual for me to dial in f22 or f32) and if you still can't get a slow enough shutter speed, you may need to use a neutral density (ND) filter. Good ND filters are expensive as they use optically ground glass and are colour neutral. Examples are B+W and Singh Ray. Mid-priced filters are pretty good as well, such as the top range Hoyas.

I don't often crop my images since the composition is not dependent on shapes and elements in sharp focus, but if there are bright elements on the edges of the frame, cropping may be essential. All of my images are single capture, but you can also get great results by blending two or more images.

For many of my flower, trees and close-up images, I use a mid-telephoto lens (from 85mm to 200mm). With landscape images, a mid-range or wide-angle lens is fine.

When you choose a subject, the first couple of images will quickly tell you if the colours are a good blend and whether you have a pleasing pattern. If it doesn't work at that juncture, experience has taught me to move onto the next subject. In other words, it either works or it doesn't, although photographing birds in flight is a different matter (see image examples in this article) as I can happily stalk and photograph flocks of birds for hours.

Ghostly Humanity

An important element for success in this style of photography is the quality of light. My best images have been achieved in light shade or overcast conditions, providing soft light with saturated colour. Early morning or late evening which often produce saturated, warm colours, also work well.

When I tried this technique under contrasty or harsh light conditions, I often found that the mixture of dark shadows and bright highlights all blended together, producing an unpleasant jumble of blotchy colours. In comparison, if the light is fairly even in the initial capture, the options for post-production enhancement and creative variations are maximised.

There is a sub genre of long exposure photography which takes images in crowded malls and buildings. Set up a tripod near lifts or building entrances and use a wireless cable release, fired from your hand. As a surge of humanity goes in and out of an entrance, you will have a sharp image of the surrounds and 'ghostly' blurs of colour created by the people. Try around one second exposures to start with.

Be aware that if you are conspicuous with a large tripod in major buildings, you will probably be 'frogmarched' off the premises by security guards. I often carry a small 'Gorilla pod' capable of holding a full-frame camera. I set the small camera and pod in-between my legs, so it's not very obvious, and sit down in a corner somewhere and look disinterested. When I see a crowd moving around the camera, I fire several shots, anywhere between 0.5 to 4 seconds and see what happens.



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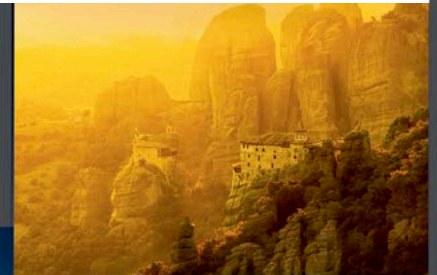
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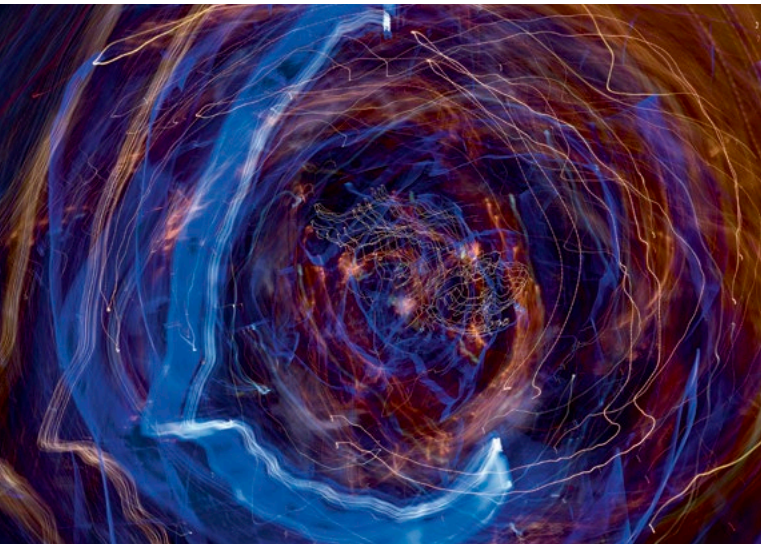
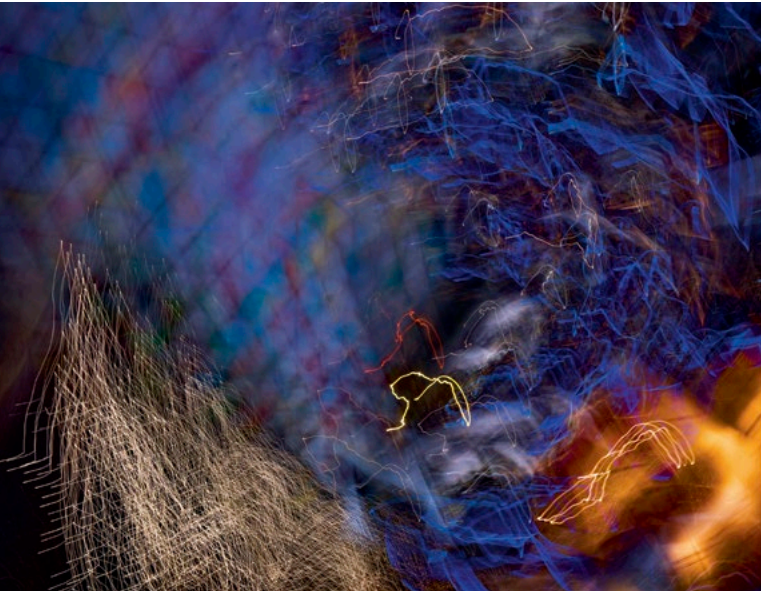


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Places with numerous coloured lights, such as shopping malls and festive decorations, can make interesting graphic images. Hand-hold the camera and simply move it around. Check the results as you keep tweaking the shutter speed for variations. These images were taken with a Sony A7 R II and a 24-105mm Zeiss lens at 24mm. Top: ISO 100, f11 @ 4 second. Bottom: ISO 100, f8 @ 1.6 seconds.

A variation is a hand-held shot of people or lights inside atriums or malls, where you simply point the camera at the lights and start to wave it about. Around 4 seconds is a good starting point and you will now have blurs and movement of everything.

Post Capture Enhancement

Shooting raw files to capture the maximum amount of information, use your favourite software, be it Lightroom, Photoshop or Capture One. For simplicity, I'll describe the development mode in Lightroom here, which I use to initially process the images to see if they are going to make the cut.

Set the white and black points to bring out the colours and initial contrast. One way you can do this is to click on the 'auto' button in Lightroom. I personally prefer to adjust

the image manually with the sliders. Tweak the brightness and contrast sliders to taste, then adjust the highlights and shadows.

The new 'texture' slider in Lightroom is great for adding some punch to the streaks of colour and bringing out detail in the shapes. I find this step is crucial to the success of most images. I also use saturation or vibrance (see what suits the colours of the image) to really accent the colours and give the image a surreal, painterly look.

Vibrance is a non-linear saturation control and saturates low saturation colours more than high saturation colours. It is often referred to as the thinking person's saturation tool! Saturation, on the other hand, saturates all colours in a linear fashion, resulting in images that may be oversaturated, either globally or locally.

The HSL tab in Lightroom (Hue, Saturation, Luminance), can be used with the Saturation Targeted Adjustment Tool (found top left of the HSL Tab). Place it on the particular colour you wish to enhance to give you more control over the final look of the image.

By switching to the hue controls in the HSL tab, you can use the Targeted Adjustment Tool again if you wish, to tweak the colours themselves into something else. You can also use the luminance controls to lighten or darken a specific colour. I find the Targeted Adjustment Tool is a very valuable control in Lightroom.

Finally, I tend to sharpen the image as it brings definition and detail to the image. The blurred lines appear to be sharper and more clearly defined. The feedback I get from people that view the sharpened file is that it makes for a stronger image with a higher impression of detail and they tend to spend more time savouring the final result. Sharpening especially provides more interesting detail in blurred water shots.

Image sharpening is very much applied to taste and Lightroom again allows you to choose where you want to sharpen edge detail, without sharpening the very blurred areas. Go to the Detail tab in Lightroom and the sharpening section. Simply hold down the alt/option key and move the Masking slider in that Tab to the right. The resulting white areas will sharpen while the black areas will not.

Take a look at the sample images accompanying this article for suggestions on shutter times for different subject matter. The great thing about this style of shooting is there are no rules.

Nick Melidonis has been taking photographs as long as he can remember. He has had his share of awards and accolades, including 2016 finalist in National Geographic Travel Photographer of the year and 2016 silver medallist in the World Photographic Cup. His passion for landscapes resulted in being named AIPP Australian Landscape Photographer of the Year three times. Nick is conducting his 'Hidden Jewels of Greece' tour to his popular secluded Greek Islands in Sept 2020. In June 2020, Nick and Peter Eastway are combining to offer a boutique tour to stunning Cambodia. In June 2021, Nick is offering a new tour, 'Iconic Greece, Monasteries, Kings and Castles.' Give Nick a ring on 0418 912156 or email at nick@nickmelidonis.com or try his website www.nickmelidonis.com.

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