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Animal attraction

An exploration of our fascination with wildlife photography



Natural talent

Prize-winning nature photographer Csaba Daróczi shares his secrets

Women's work

Julia Margaret Cameron and Francesca Woodman share an exhibition at the NPG



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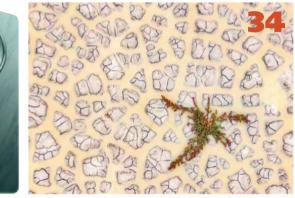


Used Fujifilm XF 18-55mm f/2.8-4 R LM OIS

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THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS



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AP's chief reviewer gives his verdict on Sigma's affordable 10-18mm F2.8 DC DN lens



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Features Editor

Our resident phone

expert reviews the

latest flagship

smartphone from

OnePlus

JOSHUA WALLER Online Editor

AP's experienced kit tester reviews a tough, waterproof, compact camera from OM System





Sometimes it's good to step back and consider our motivations for photography, and what we hope to

achieve. So why do we photograph animals, for example? Huw Lewis-Jones, the author of Why We Photograph Animals, discusses this fascinating topic on page 10. Another highlight is our feature on the major exhibition featuring the work of two great women photographers, Julia Margaret Cameron (who needs no introduction), and Francesca Woodman, who died tragically young in 1981. There's also a diverse mix of in-depth reviews, including the latest OM System Tough camera and the Sigma 10-18mm lens. while macro fans won't want to miss the feature on the current Close-up Photographer of the Year winner.

Geoff Harris, Deputy Editor



Our cover photo of honeybees was taken by Ingo Arndt. See our feature on page 10, about why we photograph animals

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Sigma unveils f/1.2 fab fifty at great price

DECIDING on a 'fab fifty' lens has just got throughout the focusing range. For video that much harder, with Sigma announcing the 50mm F1.2 DG DN | Art for full-frame Sony E and L mount at a very keen price -£1,299. Price-wise, its nearest competitor is the Sonv FE 50mm F1.2 GM (£2.099), with comparably fast glass from Canon, Nikon and Panasonic costing significantly over £2,000.

This is also the first Sigma lens with a 13 rounded diaphragm blade design. The aperture maintains its circular shape when shooting wide open at f/1.2, which delivers impressive background separation and 'pleasingly round bokeh balls,' according to the company. A floating focus system is also said to improve the lens's short-range performance and deliver high optical quality

shooters, focus shift has been minimised for more natural-looking footage.

In addition, the lens is relatively compact, being 108mm long and weighing 745g. The floating focusing system uses dual HLA (High-response Linear Actuator) motors, which reduce its size without compromising performance. Each glass element has been made smaller, too, and all this adds up to a 30% reduction in weight compared to the Sigma 35mm F1.2 DG DN | Art. In addition to a dust- and splash-resistant structure, the front element of the lens features a waterand oil-repellent coating.

The Sigma 50mm F1.2 DG DN | Art is available from 18 April. See sigmauk.com



Unique chance to show your work in London

LIGHT and Land, a photography tour company set up by veteran landscape shooter Charlie Waite, is marking its 30th anniversary by giving any photographer who signs up in time the opportunity to exhibit their work in London's Mall Gallery.

Depending on the space, the cost ranges from £375 to £595, but Charlie stresses this is good value for a London gallery and not a profit-making exercise. 'There are shamefully few galleries exhibiting photography in the UK, so I want to get people exhibiting their best work, rather than it sitting on hard drives,' Charlie told AP. 'We aren't curating the images, within reason, and the only other provisos are that the images were taken outside and that you frame them.' There is no obligation to sign up for a Light and Land tour, either. Space is limited, with room for 50-60 photographers, according to Charlie, so the

project is run on a strictly first come, first served basis. Light & Land on the Mall, in association with CEWE, will run from 2-7 September, with more information at lightandland.co.uk/exhibition



Jan Bowen is one of the photographers already signed up for the show



The 645 sensor is bigger than those in Fuiifilm's medium-format GFX series

247MP sensor, anyone?

SONY has announced a 247MP medium format sensor, though it's not yet clear if this is destined for Sony's regular cameras as well as industrial use.

The chip is described as a diagonal 64.84mm (Type 4.1) CMOS active pixel type image sensor with a square pixel array that incorporates maximum 24 dB PGA circuit and 16-bit A/D converter. The 16-bit digital output is said to make it possible to readout the signals of 247.04 million effective pixels at high-speed of 5.3 fps in all-pixel readout mode, which is fast considering the size and resolution of the sensor. It comes in both colour and monochrome versions.



Yvonne C Krystovsky's winning image

Black and white thinking

BLACK & White Minimalism magazine has announced the winners of its eponymous photography prize. Yvonne C Krystovsky took home the grand prize and \$1,000 with a beautiful image entitled 'In Great-Grandpa's hands.' This vear's competition attracted 1.300 submissions, 'showcasing the enduring appeal of minimalism in black & white photography,' said the organisers. All of the competition winners can be seen at minimalismmag.com/winners-2024

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Viewpoint Nigel Atherton

So The Photography Show will be moving to London next year. Bring it on, says AP Editor Nigel Atherton

ews that The Photography Show (aka The Photography & Video Show) is moving from its long-time home at Birmingham NEC to London's ExCeL exhibition centre next year has had mixed reactions, and I'm guessing that where you sit on the enthusiasm scale depends largely on where you live.

I think it's a smart move, and I'll explain why. Firstly, I'm going to put my cards on the table and admit that though TPS has its detractors, I'm not one of them. It is one of my highlights of the photography calendar and I believe it makes an enormous contribution to the health and well-being of the UK photo industry by bringing the creative community and the trade together. Yes, buying stuff is part of the show's draw but it's also about the friends and acquaintances that you bump into in the aisles, and the new connections and future friends you make.

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TPS may be run by a rival publisher to AP but credit where it's due. In the past few years the organisers have done a fantastic job in transforming it from the male-centric, hardware-focused show targeted at professionals that was Focus on Imaging into a vibrant, diverse consumer event that's as much about inspiration as selling hardware. They've attracted a younger, more diverse crowd and significantly more women, which can only be a good thing. This year there seemed to be many people visiting for the first time, which is great.

But the data doesn't lie, and the one demographic that has stubbornly refused to engage with the show in significant numbers are those living in London and the south-east. Birmingham is only about a 90-minute train ride away but the fact is that for many Londoners the map of Britain extends only to the borders of the M25, beyond which is just a blank space



Location location: TPS

and the words 'Here be dragons.' Yes it's ridiculous, but we are where we are.

In order for a show like TPS to survive and thrive they need to attract new blood. London is the engine of the creative industry in the UK, and arguably the world. Among the 8 million people who live in the capital are thousands of photographers, filmmakers, production houses, art directors, designers, students, social media influencers and many others with a direct or indirect interest in the photo industry. They are, on average, younger, more affluent, more diverse and more international than the rest of the UK. (These are indisputable statistical facts.)

If this demographic mountain won't come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. Admittedly, there aren't many mountains in Docklands.

The good news for those battling dragons in the frozen north (note, for the purposes of this discussion anything north of London is 'north') is that TPS will return to the NEC in 2026 and will alternate with London thereafter. We have already had an 18-month gap since the last TPS in 2022, after switching from September to March, and I don't recall many people getting hot under the collar about that. Indeed this year's show was packed like it hasn't been since before Covid, so perhaps absence does make the heart grow fonder after all.

Nigel Atherton is Editor of Amateur Photographer.

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Photo City: How Images Shape the Urban World

Until 29 October, V&A Dundee, 1 Riverside Esplanade, Dundee DD1 4EZ. Open daily except Tuesday, 10am to 5pm

Photography and cities have long had something of a symbiotic relationship, as this exhibition explores. **Ailsa McWhinnie** finds out more

To mark ten years since Dundee was given the designation of UNESCO City of Design, the city's V&A museum has launched an exhibition that celebrates the parallel evolutions of photography and cities – demonstrating how, as one advanced, so did the other. With more than 150 photographs, films and installations on show, it also takes a view that might come as something of a surprise, because not only does it chart how cities have influenced photography but also how photography has played its part in the development of urban society and architecture. This is explained in the works of photographers such as Thomas Annan who, in 1866, was commissioned by the Glasgow City Improvement Trust to document run-down districts, barely fit for human habitation. This type of record contributed to the improvement in living standards in the more modern developments that followed.

Elsewhere, works by Margaret Bourke-White

and Fred Zinnemann explore how aerial photography changed our perception of cities and their landmarks, with their iconic images of New York's Statue of Liberty and Rockefeller Center.

Bringing things up to date, the exhibition also explores drone photography, GPS technology and gaming, and there's an aerial view of Dundee by Japanese photographer Sohei Nishino – made up of thousands of collaged photographs – commissioned specially for the show.

Brendan Cormier, curator, V&A East, said, 'There have been thousands of exhibitions on photography and cities before. Where Photo City is different, however, is in its emphasis on photography as an active agent, a technology that doesn't just reflect the changing nature of cities but is a powerful force in shaping cities.'



Memories of Green from Tokyo Nights (TO:KY:00), 2019, by Liam Wong

Building the Rockefeller Center, 1932, by Fred Zinnemann



Old Vennel off High Street, 1868, from The Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow, by Thomas Annan



Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica, 1966, by Denise Scott Brown

Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography



Liverpool Through the Lens Until 16 June

Museum of Liverpool, Pier Head

Leroy Cooper's images of Liverpool, shot over four decades, form the inaugural exhibition in the Museum of Liverpool's redeveloped Skylight Gallery. Shot in the Liverpool 8 community, and dating from the 1980s, Cooper's drive to document the people of Toxteth was born from his arrest in 1981 which, he says, 'was the final spark that ignited the 1981 uprising where residents fought back in civil disturbances that lasted nine days'. The fightback was against racism, inequality, long-term unemployment, poor housing and police harassment.

His work now totals some 250,000 images, and a selection of these forms the exhibition. He says: 'In the city that played a leading role in the enslavement of Black people through the transatlantic slave trade, I wanted to play a part in the healing process. Capturing these images celebrates the positive aspects of my diverse community. My photography is a love letter to the city of Liverpool.' **Ailsa McWhinnie**

The Art of Climbing By Simon Carter

£30, Thames & Hudson, hardback, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-0500-025970



Rock-climbing, in Simon Carter's words, 'combines the majesty of nature with some of the most positive aspects of the human spirit: imagination, determination and the ability to deal

with risk.' Simon is an Australian rock-climbing photographer and his images in this book show spectacular locations from which climbers are somehow hanging from or clinging to, often at perilously high altitudes. The book's chapters include Formations, focusing on amazing rock formations, and Intensity, which looks at particularly hair-raising climbs. The text is written by leading rock-climbers and for those aspiring to follow in their footsteps there's a section on the routes Simon used to tackle some of the featured locations. For the less intrepid, just looking at these awe-inspiring photos is probably enough to bring on an attack of vertigo. **David Clark**



Images to Inspire action

Why is animal photography so popular and can photographs help to save species from decline or extinction? Huw Lewis-Jones, author of a new book on animal photography, talks to **David Clark**

ildlife photography is one of the medium's most popular genres. In fact, we're fascinated by images of animals of all kinds: from cute pet cats and dogs to the most extraordinary and exotic creatures found on Earth. Wildlife photography attracts big audiences, both online and in exhibitions, to marvel at both the animals themselves and the photographic skill, patience and natural history knowledge needed to capture visually spectacular images.

One high-profile example of the genre is the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, which

Above: Flora Aiken, of the Iñupiaq, gives thanks to the first bowhead whale of the spring season, from the series People of the Whale, 2017, by Kiliii Yuyan celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2024. It now receives around 50,000 entries every year and the resulting exhibition is seen by millions of people as it tours the world. In parallel with our insatiable hunger for still images of wildlife, television documentaries such as the recent *Planet Earth III* and *Blue Planet II* are flourishing and reach vast audiences.

Paradoxically, our fascination for animals comes at a time when the world's wildlife is under threat as never before, from a range of issues including deforestation and destruction of natural habitats, global warming and pollution. As Huw Lewis-Jones says in his new book, Why We Photograph Animals, 'The desire to keep looking at animals is strong, even as they are disappearing in the wild... We are making more and more images of animals every year and yet animals are suffering on our planet as never before in human history.'

Huw is a historian and Associate Professor of Environment and Culture based in the Institute of Photography at Falmouth University. Previous jobs have included being a curator both at the Scott Polar Research Institute and the National Maritime Museum in London. Aside from his day jobs, he has written around 20 books and leads expeditions to Antarctica and to the Arctic, which also involves working alongside wildlife photographers.

Why We Photograph Animals is an exploration of wildlife photography in all its forms and is illustrated with a plethora of extraordinary images, from key historical images to the best of contemporary animal photography.

For Huw, the key motivation to write the book was to examine what makes us photograph animals and what we hope to achieve by doing it. He says, 'The starting point was to say that there are lots of amazing wildlife photography books out there, as well as plenty of useful technique books on how to photograph wildlife. But instead of asking how, I wanted to create a book that asks why, which I think is more important.'

Historical images of animals Animal photography, as Huw points out in his book, goes back to the

Below: Tree swallow, Grand **Teton National** Park, 2019, by Xavi Bou



beginnings of the medium and has developed in tandem with photography's technical advances. In photography's early years in the mid-19th century, long exposure times made capturing images of living, moving animals difficult. The only sharp photographs showed animals that were asleep or had been hunted and killed, and photographers were known to resort to posing stuffed animals in woodland to simulate an authentic natural scene.

As camera technology developed, it became possible to make sharp photos of living animals. Some of the first shots of animals in action were made by the

Right: Honeybees colonise a black

cavity, Germany,

2019, by Ingo

Arndt



German inventor and photographer Ottomar Anshütz, who, in the 1880s, experimented with a focal-plane shutter and more sensitive photographic emulsion to record images of flying storks and horses in motion. Later, in 1895, British naturalists Richard and Cherry Kearton published the first book of photographs made entirely in the wild. Thereafter, the development of smaller, easier-to-operate cameras and longer lenses made wildlife increasingly accessible as a subject for photographers.

'There's a long and interesting history in terms of how our desire to look at animals and the evolving technology of photography cross over in many ways,' comments Huw. 'One influences the other and sometimes a development in photography allowed a new kind of picture to be created.

'Photographers like Eric Hosking, who was a pioneer in bird photography, or underwater specialist David Doubilet developed the technology themselves while attempting to capture specific images. Often, the desire to do things, such as getting closer to a subject or staying underwater for longer, has actually led to an innovation that filtered out to the industry more generally.'

Animal photography today However, Huw's main interest is contemporary animal photography and the bulk of his book is divided into sections devoted to the work of individual photographers. They include those who work exclusively in the wild, such as Wildlife Photographer of the Year winner Sergey Gorshkov, as well as photographers such as Tim Flach, whose extraordinary images of animals are often shot in a studio.

Also included are photographers whose exacting dedication to a particular subject or technique has resulted in unique bodies of work. Examples are Levon Biss, who creates extraordinary macro images of insects, and Xavi Bou, who makes abstract, composite images of birds in flight.

'I started out with a wish-list and reached out to all the photographers I definitely wanted to include, and it grew from there,' says Huw. 'I chose photographers for certain reasons to get a certain range of





content. I was particularly mindful of demographics, and aimed to get a good balance of male and female photographers.'

The selection gives a good representation of the range of animal photography being done today. Huw continues, 'On one side there's wildlife photojournalist Jo-Anne McArthur, who goes to difficult places such as factory farms and slaughterhouses and is really at the leading edge of animal advocacy with her photography. She does tremendous work with the photographic image on behalf of animals or the animal causes she cares about.'

Other photographers have a completely different approach and motivation, but still have animals at the heart of their work. 'One

Top: Children with orangutans, Denmark, 2016, by Jo-Anne McArthur

Above: A seven-month-old cheetah in the back of an SUV hisses at a rescuer's outstretched hand, western Somaliland, 2020, by Nichole Sobecki

example would be Leila Jeffreys, who brings a fine art sensibility to her work,' says Huw. 'She has worked alongside conservationists, ornithologists and bird sanctuaries and is famous for a portrait series of Australian birds that draws our attention to the beauty in the everyday, highlighting humble subjects like pigeons, and changes the way we view animal images.'

Celebrating beauty and documenting destruction Most animal photographs we see celebrate the beauty and unique qualities of animals and, by doing that, encourage us to conserve them. However, a more photojournalistic approach involves documenting the destruction we cause, in the hope that it will reduce it happening in the future. Which approach does Huw think is more effective in encouraging people to protect wildlife?

'It all depends on the context,' he says. 'Beauty absolutely is a way into difficult subjects. We need beautiful images to talk about landscapes worth protecting or to encourage people to care for animals that perhaps they have negative opinions about.

'At the same time, we also need unflinching, truthful photographs that show the reality and the ugliness, the entanglement of human-animal relations. For example, Brent Stirton's famous picture of a silverback gorilla that has been killed by poachers, is a beautiful image of a terrible subject. Another famous example, that's both beautiful and desperately ugly is Daniel Beltrá's photograph of pelicans covered in crude oil. These images are harrowing and challenging, but also important for us to see.'

So, in Huw's view, why do we photograph animals? 'We do it because we love them, but also because we destroy them,' he says. 'I think in a funny way there's this kind of guilt offset; the Right: The Tweets, a trio of budgerigars, Canberra, Australia, 2018, by Leila Jeffries



Below: Park ranger and a school of bigeye trevally, Cabo Pulmo, Mexico, 2015, by Anuar Patjane Floriuk





more we're killing animals, the more it seems that wildlife documentaries and massive wildlife photography exhibitions are flourishing. We're creating images of a world that is very beautiful, almost to turn our attention away from the reality of the world.

'That said, there are so many wildlife photographers who are compelled to take their images precisely because of the environmental destruction they witness - it's created to have an impact, to make us care. So many photographers feel compelled to create great images to remind the world of the beauty that's still here, the things we should be fighting for. Increasingly, we're also seeing wildlife or conventional animal photographs accepted in the fine art photography world, because there's an importance and a compelling urgency to them.'

But in a world where, as Huw says in his book, 'mammals, birds, plants and insects are vanishing in staggering numbers', can and does photography make a difference? 'It's a question I ask many photographers Above: Tiger rangers study photos to identify individuals for conservation efforts and to combat wildlife crime, Thailand, 2010, by Steve Winter

Right: Arctic fox stealing a snow goose egg, Wrangel Island, 2011, by Sergey Gorshkov



in my book, and overwhelmingly, the vast majority of them seem to be quite optimistic about the value and role of photography,' he says.

'There's a huge similarity in many of the responses because most of the photographers who are in this industry photographing animals really do want to use their skills to improve things and raise awareness about animal issues. It seems to be a strong motivation for them to do their work, whereas to be a photographer in other genres it's perhaps less of a burning motivation beyond the artistic.'

Even though the current situation

Right: Dalmatian puppies, from the series Dog Gods, 2010, by Tim Flach

Below: African elephant at the edge of Victoria Falls, Zambia, 2007, by Marsel van Oosten





for animals is far from good, Huw says photography has 'dramatically changed the way we understand and value animals' and things could have been a lot worse without photography inspiring positive action to be taken. 'Photography was absolutely involved at the beginnings of activism and has been at the forefront of campaigning for animals,' he continues. 'There are many examples of photographs that have changed people's opinions, or for example leading to a national park being established, or single-use plastic being banned.'

It took Huw six years to write and edit his book, in between teaching at Falmouth and travelling on expeditions. After spending so much time on it, what are the main things he wants people to take away from it? 'I would hope a book like this helps people appreciate animals more, but in new ways,' he says.

'For my students I hope it encourages them to think more deeply about the animal subject, so they're not just walking down a path taking pictures of a squirrel or bird, however lovely that is, but actually thinking how they can use their skills to shape new kinds of stories for animals that matter to them and the animals. And in that way, you can sort of change the world, one photograph at a time.

'The aim for a book like this is not to dwell too much on the doom but to embrace it – to be aware of the problems we're facing, but to be active in our hope. And photography and creativity in all its forms is one way of doing something positive.'

Why We Photograph Animals, by Huw Lewis-Jones, is published by Thames & Hudson, £36 hardback.

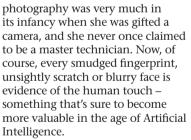


The dream team

Julia Margaret Cameron and Francesca Woodman pushed the boundaries of photography, and have been paired up in a major new exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. **Tracy Calder** takes a look



n 1868 a reviewer for *The Photographic News* (the forerunner to this magazine) described a set of exhibition prints made by Julia Margaret Cameron as 'altogether repulsive'. It seems laughable now, knowing what we do about Cameron's influence on the medium, but back then her 'wilfully imperfect photography' caused some critics to get seriously fired up. In her defence,



The photograph as a physical object has long fascinated artists, academics and historians, so it's great to see more than 160 vintage prints from Cameron and Francesca Woodman on display at the National Portrait Gallery in London. Pairing artists who never actually met and who worked more than a century apart is not without its risks (we are constantly being asked to 'explore the parallel paths of great artists' or 'consider the open-ended dialogue' between individuals). Sometimes, the pairing falls flat: the link between styles is tenuous, the premise for the show is weak, or the notoriety of one artist threatens to overshadow the other, for example.

Above: Polka Dots #5 by Francesca Woodman, 1976, Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation

Left: Untitled, 1979 by Francesca Woodman. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation

Thankfully, curator Magdalene Keaney and her team were willing to take this risk when they paired Cameron and Woodman up for Portraits to Dream In. The result is a well-balanced, thoroughly researched show that manages to celebrate the shared passions of two artists, while acknowledging their fundamental differences. Visitors to the exhibition are encouraged to bounce backwards and forwards through time without getting too bogged down in biography. To achieve this, the pictures are arranged by theme, rather than a strict timeline. In some ways this makes it harder to trace developments in each artist's work, but it's a small price to pay for the clarity and sense of purpose it gives the show.

To Ka Soty

Biography vs creativity There are other reasons why biography has been played down, as Keaney explains in the book that accompanies the show. 'At times an emphasis on

biography has obscured and constricted rather than revealed or expanded ways of experiencing and understanding both artists' work,' she argues. In the past, some critics have focused on Cameron's social standing, her famous circle of friends and the age at which she took up photography (48), rather than her creative abilities. Likewise, many stories about Woodman have centred around her vouth. her semi-nude models and her suicide at the age of 22. 'Woodman and Cameron were artists who consciously pushed the boundaries of their medium, in some cases operating both technically and conceptually outside the realm of what was, and is, expected, conventional and acceptable in photographic picture-making and portraiture,' argues Nicholas Cullinan (director of the NPG) in his introduction to the book. And yet both artists have historically been viewed from a biographical perspective.

Cameron and Woodman shared many interests. Commonalities include a love of literature (Woodman particularly enjoyed the work of surrealist writer André Breton, while Cameron often turned to Victorian literature and the Bible for inspiration); frequent use of symbolism (flowers, wings and mirrors were used by both artists to express ideas and suggest states of mind); and a passion for storytelling (most of their pictures were meticulously planned). They also had a keen interest in dreams (or the dream state), regularly exploring visions, fantasies and the

subconscious in their work. Of course, the most important link between these artists is their love of portraiture, in all its guises.

When you consider the variety, quality and exploratory nature of the prints on display, it's hard to believe that neither Cameron nor Woodman worked in photography for more than 15 years. It's also hard to believe that while expressing a desire to live and work as artists – producing exhibition prints, albums and, in Woodman's case, installations – neither artist received the recognition they deserved in their lifetime.

Since its makeover, the National Portrait Gallery has strengthened its commitment to representing and celebrating women artists in its exhibitions and collection. and Portraits to Dream In is evidence this is more than just talk. Here, the work of two wonderful artists is given room to breathe. Without the distraction of too much biographical history, viewers are free to make associations and bring their own thoughts and feelings to the conversation. In a sense, they are given space to dream in. Thanks to Keaney's expert eye, knowledge and sensitive handling of the subject matter, the risk of pairing up Cameron and Woodman has definitely paid off.

The National Portrait Gallery's exhibition, Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron: Portraits to Dream In, is on show at the National Portrait Gallery in London until 16 June. A book of the same name featuring essays by, among others, lead curator Magdalene Keaney, accompanies the exhibition. For more details visit **www.npg.org.uk**







Above: Untitled, from the Caryatid series by Francesca Woodman, 1980. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation

Far left: Pomona (Alice Liddell) by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1872. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The subject was the real-life Alice on whom Lewis Carroll based his book, Alice in Wonderland

Left: Sadness (Ellen Terry) by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1864



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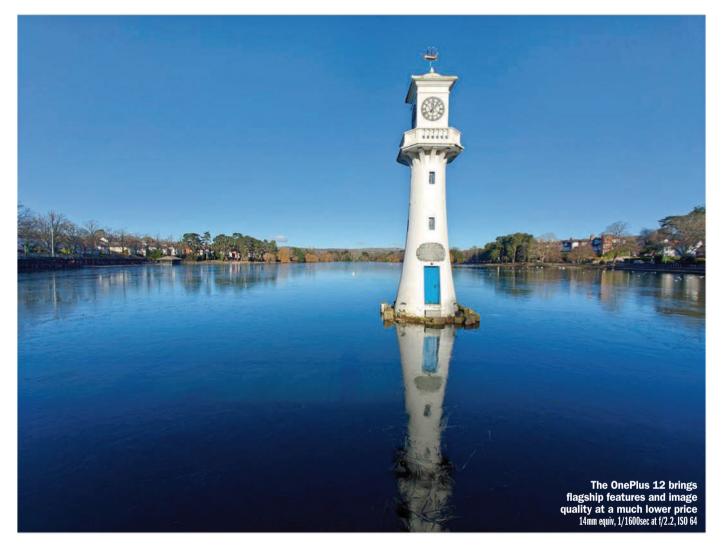




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SMARTPHONE TEST Testbench



OnePlus 12

This latest flagship model boasts high-end specifications beyond its price. **Amy Davies** discovers more

nePlus has long been a fantastic option for mid-price flagship smartphones, and the OnePlus 12 sits right at the top of its line-up. The company likes to boast of its high-end specs for less than high-end prices. As such, we get a superb triplecamera array, industry-leading screen, and 8K video, all for a significantly lower price than equivalent models from the likes of Apple and Samsung. It's even better priced than the latest Google phones, which also trade

on their lower price points.

That's not to say that the OnePlus 12 is cheap, starting at £849 for the 256GB version and rising up to £999 for the 512GB version. But when you consider that even the 128GB Google 8 Pro will set you back £999, the savings are quite clear.

Features

With a camera system created in collaboration with Hasselblad, this phone is designed to appeal to those for whom photography is the most important aspect.

At a glance

- 50MP, 23mm equiv f/1.6 main
- 48MP, 14mm equiv f/2.2 ultra-wide
- 64MP, 70mm equiv f/2.6 telephoto
- 32MP f/2.7 selfie camera
- 8K video up to 24fps; 4K 60fps
- 6.2in, 3168x1440 screen
- Android 14

Its main camera combines a 50MP 1/1.4in sensor with a 23mm equivalent f/1.6 optically stabilised lens. Two further cameras comprise a 48MP 1/2in sensor with a 14mm f/2.2 equivalent ultra-wide lens, plus a 64MP 1/2in sensor with a 70mm f/2.6 equivalent lens. The latter is longer than the 2x lens on the previous OnePlus 11, but it's still shorter than the 5x zooms found on both the iPhone 15 Pro and the Google Pixel 8 Pro.

OnePlus says the screen is the brightest OLED on the







This comparison illustrates the angles of view of the three lenses, along with the 6x 'in-sensor' zoom (140mm equivalent view)

market, with 4,500 nits peak brightness, or 1,600 nits in 'High Brightness Mode' which kicks in outdoors. A new 'Aqua Touch' feature means you can use it normally when it's damp.

There's a 5500 mAh battery onboard, which can now be charged wirelessly. Superfast

wired charging gives the ability to reach 100% charge in just 26 minutes, using the 100W charger included in the box. You get four years of software updates and five years of security updates. That's fairly standard, but other flagships now promise up to seven years of updates.



Design and handling As seems to be the norm for flagship models, the OnePlus 12 is on the large side with its 6.8in screen. It's impressively bright and smooth, displaying photos and videos with great quality. Everything looks very crisp and clear, while Aqua Touch is genuinely useful in inclement weather. Corning Gorilla Glass 5 for the back, and Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2 for the screen, mean that the phone should withstand some knocking around.

The design is very sleek, with nicely rounded corners. I've been using the 'Flowy Emerald' version, which is green with a pattern on it. You can also pick it up in a more staid silky black.

Camera app

The native camera app can be launched directly from the lock screen, via a long tap of the icon on the bottom right of the screen. Alternatively, you can doublepress the button on the side of

n equivalent view)

the phone. As with many Android models, the app is well-featured, with a variety of different modes.

By default, the camera app launches into the 'Photo' mode. Here you can shoot with the three different lenses, as well as digital zoom. You can also adjust exposure compensation, aspect ratio and a timer, etc. It's not possible to shoot in raw format here, which is a shame.

Different digital filters can be added, including several labelled 'Master' which are designed to emulate classic Hasselblad film looks. Other options include black & white filters. But if you shoot with these enabled, you can't remove them after the fact.

If the phone detects low light, it will automatically switch to night mode, but you can also manually engage night mode under the 'more' tab. If you bring the phone very close to a subject, then macro mode will activate automatically.

To take further control, you can

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use Pro mode, with parameters including ISO, shutter speed, and white balance. You can shoot in DNG raw, but disappointingly not in raw and JPEG together.

As you'd expect, there's also a Portrait mode for shallow depth-of-field effects. This is designed to recreate the effect of using certain Hasselblad lenses. You can shoot at 1x, 2x or 3x zoom, and adjust the simulated aperture to give a shallower or greater depth of field. You can adjust this when editing, too, but it's not possible to change the focus point. This is a shame compared to other models on the market.

You can record video by long pressing the shutter button in photo mode for quick grabs, but there's also a dedicated video mode. Here you can select between resolutions and frame rates up to 8K at 24fps. You can also switch on HDR recording, but note you'll be limited to 1080p at 30fps. Ultra Steady image stabilisation can also be activated, but again, this is limited to 1080p at 60fps.

Performance

As we've seen with previous OnePlus phones, the quality of the onboard camera is fantastic. The best images are taken with

the main camera, where colours are nicely vibrant and show a good level of detail. But the other two lenses also produce excellent results. However, there are still occasions where the colours aren't uniform between the lenses, which is a shame.

Distortion wise, the ultra-wide lens isn't too bad, while the 3x telephoto lens is a good option for getting closer to the subject. It's certainly an improvement on the more limited 2x option found in the OnePlus 11, 'In-sensor' 6x zoom, where the phone uses the central portion of the sensor, also produces good results. Moving beyond that into digital zoom is less impressive, but you can get some workable results.

There were a couple of occasions when shooting in very bright conditions when I noticed some lens flare appearing. But low winter sun is a challenge for even the best lenses, so that's not particularly worrying.

Macro mode allows you to get nice and close to a subject and produces detailed shots. It's good to have this option on a mid-priced phone.

Night mode is also pretty impressive. Again, the best results can be seen with the main sensor, but the ultrawideangle lens doesn't fare too badly either. For the zoomed-in options, the phone crops from the main lens when it's dark: the results are still reasonable at 2x and 3x. There are better models out there for low light. notably the Samsung S23 Ultra, but this is still pretty good.

Portrait mode works well with both human and non-human subjects, although it can produce visibly obvious outlines with fine hair. The selfie camera is fixed focus, but does a pretty good iob. You can also use Portrait mode when shooting selfies.

Creative options can be found in the different digital filters. The results are mixed, but are worth experimenting with. I quite like the black & white options, but as you can't remove them after the fact, I'd still probably shoot in colour and then convert afterwards. A fun 'tilt-shift' mode gives the impression of shooting a miniature, but again, you can't remove this later.

Video results are also pretty good, producing smooth and detailed footage. The Super-Steady option is useful if you want to shoot videos with lots of movement, such as walking and talking in a vlog style. 8K is likely to be overkill for almost everybody, but still it's nice to have.

Verdict

ONEPLUS has been producing well-performing smartphone cameras for some time now, and the OnePlus 12 builds on that to create excellent results. While I'm not sure it's the revolution the company's marketing promises, there are some improvements to the camera compared to the previous model, most notably in the lengthier third lens. On the whole you get excellent image quality across various conditions, and a range of good shooting options. But most of the device's improvements come elsewhere - such as the new brighter screen, wireless charging, and so on.

The native camera app gives a reasonably comprehensive set of controls, though there are some niggles – such as only being able to shoot in raw format in Pro mode, and when you do, not getting a corresponding JPEG file. We'd also like to see more options for adjusting photos after the fact. Apple, Samsung and Google offer more in that respect.

Overall, we've got another very well-performing model from a company which is not one of the 'big three'. As such, you don't have to pay a premium to get flagship performance, but it's probably less good at holding its value. This is something to think about when spending over £800 for a smartphone.

Specifications

Ultra-wide camera sensor, 21mm 1/2in 48MP sensor, 14mm equiv, f/2.2 Wide camera 1/1.4in 50MP sensor, 23mm equiv, f/1.6 **Telephoto camera** 1/2in 64MP sensor, 70mm equiv, f/2.6 Selfie camera 1/2.7in 32MP







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This landscape was shot in raw and edited to maximise the dynamic range 25mm equivalent, 1/160sec at f/2.8, ISO 100



OM System Tough TG-7

Joshua Waller reviews one of the few tough, waterproof, compact cameras left on the market

here aren't many compact cameras available to buy new any more, and what's left are usually high-end, largesensor cameras, or waterproof compact cameras with smaller sensors. The OM System Tough TG-7 falls into the latter category, and is the seventh iteration in a line of tough cameras first from Olympus, and now OM System.

The firm is quite serious about this tough compact camera. It has numerous controls and specialised shooting modes, and a wide range of accessories is available, too. You can shoot raw and adjust manual controls. To capture as much light as possible, there's an f/2.0 aperture at the wideangle end of the lens.

While the TG-7's sensor is small compared to Micro Four Thirds, APS-C, full-frame or 1-inch sensor cameras, it'll withstand conditions that would destroy other models. It's waterproof down to 15 metres, drop-proof, crush-proof, dustproof, and freezeproof. And whilst it may look very similar to previous versions, this has advantages in the range of accessories available that work interchangeably between the models.

Compared to the previous Olympus TG-6, the TG-7 differs in the following ways. It has a USB Type-C connection for data transfer and battery charging, and is compatible with the MR-WR1 remote control. It also supports both vertical video recording, and time-lapse movie creation. There's even a construction mode for use on building sites.

Features The lens on the OM System

At a glance

£599

- 12MP 1/1.7in BSI CMOS sensor, 6.2x4.6mm
- 4x optical zoom lens, 24-100mm equivalent, f/2.0-4.9
- In-body image stabilisation (sensor shift, up to 2.5 stops)
 ISO 100–12,800
- 4K video recording
- 3-in, 1.04m-dot fixed screen
- 15m waterproof
- Drop, shock, dust and freezeproof
- Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
- GPS, elevation, and temperature sensors
- 113.9x65.8x32.7mm
- 249g



TG-7 is a 4x optical zoom lens, starting at the wideangle equivalent of 25mm, zooming to 100mm (equivalent). It also starts with an f/2.0 aperture, which is quite bright, although this reduces down when using the zoom, dropping down to f/4.9 at the telephoto end.

There's a 12MP BSI CMOS 1/1.7in-type sensor, which measures approximately 6.2x4.6mm. This means it's smaller than those in most other compact cameras. In fact, it's even smaller than many of the latest flagship smartphones. Continuous shooting is available at 5fps with the mechanical shutter, or 20fps when using the electronic shutter, both with fixed focus.

However, the smaller size means that the camera can easily fit into a pocket, and thanks to its tough and waterproof credentials, it can be attached to a float or wristband, and be carried anywhere your adventures take you.

There is a wide range of accessories available that can extend its usefulness, including a float as mentioned, as well as flash accessories for macro work, or even an additional PT-059 underwater case to extend its depth range to 45m.



In terms of photography features, there is a range of shooting modes, including an incredibly impressive set of macro features that lets you get extremely close to your subject for larger than life-size magnification.

Handling and design

On the back of the camera you'll find the 3in screen, which isn't a touchscreen. However, a touchscreen isn't going to be the most useful thing on a waterproof camera. The screen gives good colour, and has a reasonable resolution of 1.04 million dots.

There's a mode dial, which has a number of settings, including P (Program Auto), and A (Aperture priority), but there isn't a dedicated M/Manual mode. There's a range of other modes that are designed to make the camera easy to use including Auto, Scene, Macro modes, Underwater (5 modes), Video, and two custom settings.

All the dedicated macro modes can be found under the Macro setting. This includes Macro – Microscope, Focus stacking (combined in-camera), and Focus bracketing. A further microscope control lets you use from 2.9x to 11.1x magnification.

Focus stacking lets you stack photos in-camera, with no further editing required. If you do want to use other software for stacking (such as Helicon Focus) then you can shoot a range of images using the focus bracketing mode, for even more control over the process.

The menus are fairly straightforward to use, but could be improved with a little bit of colour coding. Thankfully quite a lot of the main controls can be operated using the buttons on the camera, so I managed to avoid having to dive into the menus too much.

Turning on the Construction menu enables an extra set of specialised Scene modes. For example, there are options to reduce the appearance of dust and rain, reduce camera shake, or boost detail in dark areas of the image. There's even a document reproduction mode.

Performance

Dynamic range is generally okay, but nothing spectacular, and if

CAMERATEST Testbench



you're used to the auto-HDR shots you get with a smartphone, then you may be disappointed by the apparent lack of dynamic range. However, if you're used to how compact cameras perform and like the look of images from digital cameras, then the results should please. It's mostly about managing your expectations.

The TG-7 can't compete with cameras that have larger sensors in terms of detail, noise, or dynamic range. It's difficult to avoid the laws of physics. The camera has a smaller sensor than most cameras available, and this helps to keep its size down. If the sensor was larger, then most likely the camera would also be much larger, or have to compromise on the lens used.

Considering all of this, I got some nice-looking photos, with reasonable levels of detail and some good colour reproduction. The design of the camera meant I was happy taking this camera with me to places where I didn't want to risk my smartphone, including in caves.

Noise can be an issue, but by shooting raw images, you can take advantage of the latest Al noise-reduction features found on popular photo-editing software. Slow sync flash is something that makes compact cameras a great choice for low-light at parties and gigs. This is available on the TG-7 and works well, with well-judged flash exposures giving plenty of impact. However, focus can struggle in low light, for example, in a dark cave.

Overall, JPEG results straight from the camera give the impression of a compact camera from a few years back, with fairly low dynamic range. Whilst the TG-7 does feature a selectable HDR mode, this is relatively slow while you wait for the photos to be taken, and then wait again for the images to be combined in-camera. To avoid this feature, I shot almost all my images in JPEG+raw.

Being able to shoot raw (and raw+JPEG) means you're able to take single shots and then recover highlight and shadow detail at a later date, rather than having to try and remember to shoot using the HDR mode. Naturally, it's not always possible to recover all of the highlight detail. If you do process the raw files you also get the benefit of being in control of the noisereduction levels, and if done carefully this can result in increased levels of detail. The camera comes with a range of processing settings and options, including the ability to customise the colour profiles (adjusting sharpness, contrast, saturation, gradation). Beyond this you can even adjust the noise-reduction settings to reduce, or increase, the effect.

Close-up photos taken with zoom mean you can get really close to the subject, and this can give you some nice blurred backgrounds.

Value for money

In terms of value for money, the TG-7 comes up as quite expensive for a compact camera, at £499. However, there are very few alternatives available, with the only other company still playing in the compact waterproof camera market, being Ricoh/ Pentax, with the WG-90. While this is cheaper than the OM System camera at £399, it offers very little in comparison. It only has a 2.7in screen, as well as Full HD video recording, making it a camera that is long overdue a proper update. Other than these models, you're looking at dipping into the second-hand market, or getting a third-party waterproof case for a camera with a larger sensor.

Verdict



THERE'S not been a massive update with the release of the new OM System Tough TG-7, but the addition of USB-C keeps it up-to-date with other cameras. For those who don't want to invest in larger cameras and cases, or don't want to risk damaging a waterproof smartphone, this is a great choice.

There are some useful computational photography features, but we'd like to see more added. For example, instant HDR photography would be a nice feature to help match the smartphone experience.

If you're a more traditional camera shooter, then the ability to shoot and edit raw images can help massively with tweaking photos to your own personal preferences, as well as seek out a little bit more dynamic range from your files.

For those who want an easy-to-use, but tough point-and-shoot camera, then the OM-System Tough TG-7 would make a great choice, particularly if you need something that can survive all types of adventure, wet or dry.



For and against

- + Compact, tough, and waterproof
- + Large-aperture 4x zoom lens
- + GPS, Wi-Fi, and Bluetooth built-in
- + Wide range of accessories
- + Impressive macro performance
- Raw shooting available
- Small sensor
- Price increase vs Olympus TG-6
- Raw needed to get the best results





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LENS TEST Testbench



Sigma 10-18mm F2.8 DC DN Contemporary

Andy Westlake assesses a compact, affordable, large-aperture wideangle zoom for APS-C cameras

've been reviewing lenses for over 16 years now, so it's not often that I'm surprised when a new optic shows up for testing. But the Sigma 10-18mm F2.8 DC DN is an exception. It's an ultrawideangle zoom for APS-C mirrorless cameras with a bright maximum aperture, and it's tiny. In fact, it measures just 62mm long and weighs only 260g. What's more, at £649, it's one of the most affordable lenses of its type. It's available for Fujifilm X, Sony E, and L-mount cameras.

To put these diminutive dimensions into context, we just have to look at other autofocus ultra-wide zooms available in these mounts. Perhaps its closest competitor is the Tamron 11-20mm F/2.8 Di III-A RXD, which is 24mm longer, 75g heavier, and costs \pounds 50 more. This Sigma 10-18mm f/2.8 is

also considerably smaller than Fujifilm's XF 10-24mm F4 R OIS WR, which retails for £949. Only the Sony E PZ 10-20mm F4 G is smaller and lighter, but it's a stop slower and you can expect to pay £100 more for it.

Further perspective is provided by the older Sigma 10-20mm F3.5 EX DC HSM for APS-C DSLRs. This lens was 26mm longer and precisely double the weight, despite gathering two-thirds of a stop less light. This portability makes the Sigma 10-18 mm f/2.8 an extremely tempting proposition, but is it all just a bit too good to be true?

Features

With its 10-18mm range, this lens provides an ultra-wideangle view that's equivalent to using a 15-27mm lens on full-frame. As a result, it should be attractive to photographers shooting subjects such as landscapes, architecture, and interiors. Its f/2.8 maximum aperture should also make it handy for low-light



photography. However, there's no optical stabilisation on board.

Looking at the optical design, Sigma has employed 13 elements in 10 groups. This includes 4 aspherical elements to maintain sharpness from corner to corner, along with 1 element crafted from super-low dispersion glass and 3 from 'F' low dispersion glass, which together suppress colour fringing. The firm is entirely open that it employs a mix of optical and software corrections to deliver geometrically correct images, in which straight lines at the edges of the image are rendered as such, and not curved.

Autofocus is driven by a stepping motor, promising fast, quiet and accurate focusing. The minimum focus distance is just 11.6cm at the widest zoom setting, which equates to 0.25x magnification. However, that provides just a couple of centimetres working distance from the lens to the subject.



A relatively simple 7-blade diaphragm forms the aperture, with curved blades in a bid to deliver attractive blur to out-offocus backgrounds. It's capable of stopping all the way down to f/22 for extended depth of field. Filter users will find a 67mm thread, and a petal-type hood is provided in the box.

Build and handling

Like most of Sigma's lenses, the barrel is constructed from the firm's TSC (Thermally Stable Composite) material, which combines light weight with high strength. It certainly feels nicely made, with an attractive cosmetic finish. There's a seal around the mount to help protect the camera from dust and splashes, but it's worth knowing that aside from that, Sigma doesn't describe the lens as weather-sealed.

Operationally, this is a very simple lens. There's just a zoom ring at the front, and a manual focus ring towards the back, both of which rotate very smoothly. But that's your lot in terms of physical controls. Fujifilm users in particular should be aware that there's no aperture ring, which means this setting has to be controlled using a dial on the camera.

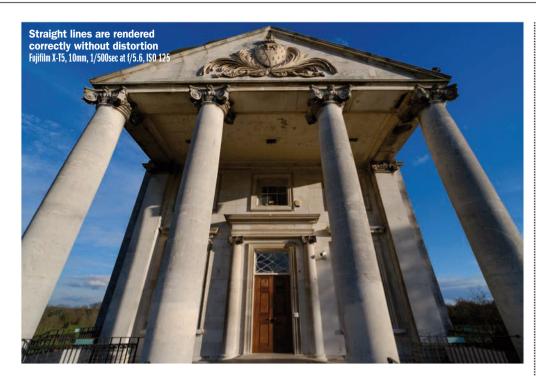
I tested the X-mount version using the Fujifilm X-T5 camera, on which it feels very nicely balanced. But its petite dimensions mean it should be equally at home on smaller bodies, including Sony's A6000series models. The lens is physically at its shortest at the 18mm position, extending by 9mm on zooming out to 10mm. However, this isn't enough to change the balance significantly.

One neat feature is that thanks to a newly designed attachment mechanism, the hood simply pushes directly into place, and is then removed by a slight twisting motion. Once you get used to this, it's a clever design that works very well.

Autofocus

When it comes to autofocus, it's generally fair to say that ultra-wide lenses aren't especially demanding. The focus movements required are usually quite small, and there's often plenty of depth of field to mask slight inaccuracies. They don't tend to be the first choice for photographing fast-moving

LENS TEST Testbench



subjects, either.

That said, in my testing the Sigma 10-18mm f/2.8 behaved impressively well. Autofocus is rapid and near-silent, and I saw no problems with missed or inaccurate focus. If you ever need to work in manual focus, this operates flawlessly too.

Performance

It's easy to assume that such a compact and relatively inexpensive large-aperture zoom will come with significant optical compromises. But in real-world use, that's not actually the case, even with the X-T5's demanding 40MP sensor. Instead, I found the lens delivers consistently sharp images practically regardless of focal length and aperture. Technically there are some flaws if you go looking for them, but they're unlikely to spoil your photos.

Indeed in terms of sharpness, the only real issue worth noting is that there's some radial smearing of fine detail in the corners of the frame at larger apertures. But that's common with ultra-wide zooms, and it only affects a small region of your images. This blurring also reduces considerably on stopping down to f/5.6 or f/8, which are the apertures I'd use most of the time, anyway.

It's also worth noting that while

'Fujifilm users in particular should be aware that there's no aperture ring'

the lens can be stopped down to f/22, you'll end up with extremely soft-looking images at this setting due to diffraction. This isn't really a flaw with the lens; instead, it's just unavoidable optical physics. Wideangle lenses inherently deliver extensive depth of field, so it's unlikely you'll need to use such small apertures anyway. As a general rule, I'd avoid settings beyond f/11 on APS-C cameras, regardless of the lens.

Thanks to Sigma's well-judged combination of optical and software distortion correction, straight lines towards the edges of the frame are rendered correctly, both when composing your shots in the viewfinder, and in the final processed images. If for some reason you disable software compensation in raw processing, you'll see barrel distortion at wideangle and pincushion distortion at 18mm, with a neutral point at about 14mm. But this isn't much different to what we used to see with ultra-wide zooms for SLRs.

I did occasionally observe a little colour fringing along high-contrast edges towards the edges of the frame due to chromatic aberration. But it's not very intrusive, and will usually be suppressed during raw processing. Unsurprisingly there's some underlying vignetting, too, but this will generally be suppressed both in-camera and during raw processing. In fact, I often preferred to feed a little corner darkening back in, by setting the Vignette slider in Adobe Camera Raw to around 50.

I also found that the lens generally fared well in terms of flare, either when shooting into the light during the daytime, or with bright lights in the frame at night. This is a welcome characteristic for such a wideangle zoom. On the other hand, I struggled to induce well-defined sunstars, even when stopping the lens right down. Some landscape photographers may find this disappointing.

While the lens isn't optically stabilised, I found it played very nicely with the X-T5's in-body stabilisation. Set to its 18mm position, I got sharp handheld shots at shutter speeds as slow as a second, and sometimes even slightly longer. That makes it a great choice for low-light shooting if you have an IBIS-equipped camera.

Verdict



AFTER using the Sigma 10-18mm F2.8 DG DN for a few weeks, I'm struggling to find much to criticise. It's impressively small and lightweight, despite its large maximum aperture, and it delivers consistently good-looking images. This makes it an extremely tempting option for Fujifilm and Sony APS-C mirrorless shooters, especially if they're on a budget or wish to travel light.

One possible drawback for some users will be the absence of optical stabilisation, especially as relatively few APS-C cameras include in-body stabilisation. Likewise, the lack of full weathersealing could be problematic for landscape photographers. Fujifilm owners might also lament the fact that it doesn't have an aperture ring. These are all valid concerns, but I don't think they're necessarily deal-breakers.

Aside from that, though, this is an attractive lens that I really enjoyed using. For Fujifilm and Sony APS-C users looking to complement their standard zoom

with a wider option, it certainly deserves a place towards the top of the shortlist.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended

Data file

Price £649 Filter diameter 67mm Lens elements 13 Groups 10 Diaphragm blades 7 (rounded) Aperture f/2.8 - f/22 Minimum focus 11.6-19.1cm Length 62mm Diameter 72.2mm Weight 260g Lens mounts Fujifilm X, Sony E, L Mount Included accessories Caps, hood

Vanguard Alta Pro 3VRL 303CV 18

A quick-release head system makes this an excellent option for photos and videos. **Richard Sibley** tests it out

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Vanguard's latest Alta Pro 3VRL range of tripods aims to bridge the gap between photo and video. The series employs a removable levelling base, named the Alta Pro 3VRL LVL, onto which the head is mounted. It mounts in a bowl on the top of the tripod, with a handle underneath to reposition it and set everything level. This approach is typical of a traditional video tripod. The kit has a VEO PV-18 pan-and-tilt fluid head included, so you have all you need to start shooting video.

When you want to change cameras and shoot photos, you can swap out the base and replace it with the included 3VRL Platform 30. This is a simple flat base onto which you can put a more suitable photo head. Vanguard describes it as a 'quick release system for tripod heads.'

You could always just use a quick-release plate system to swap cameras. But sometimes, you want to use a specific tripod head for a particular task, such as a ball head, a set of macro rails, or a nodal point panning head. With the Platform 30, you can switch heads in a few seconds. There is also a weight saving, with the 3VRL Platform 30 weighing 80g versus 420g for the Alta Pro 3VRL LVL. However, any levelling then needs to be done either with a ball head, or by awkwardly adjusting the legs if shooting video.

Speaking of the legs, the Alta Pro 3VRL 303CV 18 is an extremely tall carbon fibre tripod. Fully extended, the legs are 180cm, and when the legs are spread and the 3VRL LVL and VEO PV-18 head both fitted, the height is again about 180cm. So even extremely tall photographers can shoot using a viewfinder. Although the height makes up for the lack of a centre column, having one can still be more comfortable if you make minor height adjustments. With this design, you need to adjust each leg instead, if you want to change the height.

I found the twist-lock legs solid, with the large rubber ball feet stable on hard surfaces. On softer ground, the feet can be twisted to reveal spikes.

Verdict

The Vanguard Alta Pro 3VRL 303CV 18 is a solid tripod for creators. It has enough weight behind it to keep filming smooth and steady, but it is light enough to make it a good everyday support. It also has some excellent features, complemented by the high-quality construction we have come to expect from Vanguard.

Head

The included VEO PV-18 head is a fairly standard video head with dual adjustable handles, friction control, and panning.

Leg strap

A simple Velcro strap enables users to strap the legs to prevent them from flailing when being transported.



A button press releases the leg angle catch. There are three settings: 23°, 50° and 80°.

Grip

To save frozen hands in the cold, there is a textured rubber grip on one of the legs.

> Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD * * * * * *

Accessories

A 3/8in and 1/4in socket allows users to add an arm to hold additional accessories such as monitors or mics.

The head platforms are swappable

At a glance

- 180cm max height
- 86.5cm folded length
 3.26kg weight (with head
- and level base)
 15kg max load: (legs 25kg,
- head 15kg)
- Shoulder case included

ALSO IN THE RANGE

The Alta Pro 3VRL range includes two tripod leg-sets, the 303AT (\pounds 299) and 303CT (\pounds 399), which are aluminium and carbon

fibre versions respectively. Then the 303AV 18 (£399) and 303CV 18 (£499) variations denote kits that come with the VEO PV-18 video head, as we have reviewed here.



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IAN SPANIER

WESTCOTT TOP PRO & AWARD WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER

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Technique NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

The gift of **nature**

Hungarian photographer Csaba Daróczi has enjoyed great success in a number of high-profile photography competitions. **Tracy Calder** talks to him about fresh challenges, originality, and what constitutes a prize-winning picture



Csaba Daróczi

Csaba Daróczi is a geography and PE teacher by trade. His passion for photography began in the 1990s and has been steadily growing ever since. He lives in Soltvadkert (a small town in Hungary) and likes to take pictures close to home. His main area of interest is nature, but he also shoots portraits, landscapes and aerial views, among other things. To find out more visit **www.daroczicsaba.hu** or follow him on Instagram **@daroczics**.

n order to chat with Hungarian photographer Csaba Daróczi I had to wait for a starless sky. Daróczi has been observing a pine marten in the forest for some months now and he has a particular picture in mind. 'I want an image of the pine marten under a starry sky, jumping,' he smiles. Csaba isn't afraid to put the hours in: he once spent two years trying to capture a picture of some deer on a hilltop with a full moon. 'I got it in the end,' he says, fist pumping the air. It takes patience, persistence and fieldcraft to fully realise a picture you have in your mind's eye, and thankfully Csaba has all three.

The power of observation

We begin our conversation by discussing his early background in sports and geography – two subjects that Csaba studied at university. 'We used to go on field exercises to the hills and coast, and this is when I started taking pictures,' he recalls. At this point the images he made were mainly record shots, but they encouraged him to take a closer look at the world around him. 'I've always been an observer,' he explains. 'I love watching animals and trying to work out why they behave in a certain way.' Csaba treats every encounter as a puzzle. 'As a photographer you must be a problem solver,' he says.

Finding a mentor

In 1992 a friend invited Csaba to visit an exhibition of nature photography by Alajos Hencz, and it was here that he experienced an epiphany. 'Seeing the pictures on the wall, studying the animals and soaking up the mood made me want to become a nature photographer,' he says, his face lighting up. After seeing the exhibition, Csaba contacted Hencz and asked for his advice. 'Hencz said, "Come to me. I will show you what I do, and we will be friends,"' recalls Csaba. True to his word, Hencz shared both his photography skills and his fieldcraft knowledge, and the pair enjoyed many nature trips together. (Sadly, Hencz died in 2010.)

Developing a style

While he might have been taken under Hencz's wing, Csaba quickly developed his own style. Each photograph is a blend of hard-won insight, technical mastery and clear vision. Whether he's capturing a flock of birds, a herd of deer or an aerial shot of farmland, Csaba manages to produce images that are as original as they are emotive. 'Some of it is down to luck,' he suggests, rather modestly. 'But I always try to take something original, a picture or a moment that I have never seen before.' In terms of inspiration, Csaba Csaba was preparing to photograph a flower in the marsh near Kiskorös when he spotted this composition. The spider allowed a few pictures, then disappeared into the vegetation Nikon D800, 180mm, 1/80sec at f/14, ISO 400





KIT LIST

GoPro Hero11

Csaba bought his first GoPro camera in 2020, and now takes nearly 50% of his pictures with one. His favourite model is the GoPro Hero11. 'I just love the perspective and the depth of field you can get,' he explains.

Olympus OM-1 The Olympus OM-1 is much loved by nature photographers due to its speed, portability and excellent weather-sealing. Csaba pairs his with a 150-400mm lens. 'It's still my favourite combination,' he says.

DJI Mavic 2 Zoom

Aerial photography is just one of the genres Csaba enjoys. He has a fondness for the DJI Mavic 2 Zoom drone, which has a 24mm-48mm focal length and is capable of 2x zoom.



Once he has an image in mind, Csaba can spend many months returning to the same spot until the conditions are just right, as was the case here Nikon Z 6, 24mm, 0.3sec at f/1.4, ISO 8000



Technique

doesn't really follow the big names in photography – he prefers to take his cues from classical music by the likes of Weiner, Mozart and Beethoven. 'I believe there's a harmony between music and nature,' he says, 'something about the composition and the moods.'

Switching between genres Csaba is very comfortable switching between genres. 'I'm always searching for new challenges and experiences.' he reveals. 'For me, the experience comes first. and the picture comes second.' One day Csaba will be shooting a close-up of a mite and another he will be capturing a wider shot of fish underwater. While some of his pictures are planned, others are the result of chance. 'I'm open to both kinds of opportunity: planned and found,' he explains. When he has no set agenda, Csaba will head to a local forest and soak up the atmosphere. 'There's always something interesting to see,' he says. 'Nature always offers up a gift, but we won't find it sitting in front of a computer.'

Reaching an understanding Working as a teacher, Csaba uses the hours before and after school to pursue his passion. For him, the rewards far outweigh any discomfort he experiences rising early or getting home late. 'Photography changed my life,' he says. From the moment he picked up a camera, Csaba became more observant, and appreciative, of his surroundings. 'I was born in a lowland area and there were no mountains or trees, only grass,' he says. 'I read poetry that spoke deeply about the Hungarian landscape, but I didn't understand it.' That all changed when he started taking pictures, 'I finally understood,' he says.



TOP TIPS FOR PRIZE-WINNING PICTURES

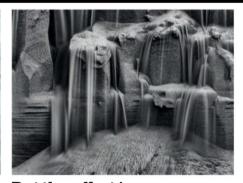


Get out there

If you're patient and spend time observing an animal's behaviour, you're much more likely to capture a moment that nobody has seen before. Sitting in front of the computer will not make you a better nature photographer.



Stay open to opportunities Previsualising a picture is all very well, but you still need to be open to 'found' photo opportunities. Try to remain flexible. Good photographers are constantly renewing and reinventing themselves.



Put the effort in Photography is an art form and to excel at it takes study and practice. Luck occasionally plays a part, but it's never the sole driver. Sport and art are similar in that what you put in is reflected in the results.



Top: Barn swallows were nesting under a bridge. Csaba waited till the sun shone in such a way that part of the bridge pillar created a shadow Lumix G9, 1/6400sec, f/8, ISO 1600

Bottom left: Ice on the lake, Soltvadkert. Csaba found a spot where the trees were reflected, and rotated the image **180°** DJI Maric 2, 1/20sec, i/3.4, ISO 100

Below: Hungarian saltbushes in the dried bed of a salt lake. Csaba didn't want to disturb the composition by approaching on foot so he used a drone DJI Maric 2, 1/50sec, f/3.1, ISO 200







Check the small print

Read the rules! Pay attention to image copyright – there are many 'rip-off' contests where participants unwittingly waive the right to their images. Make a note of any deadlines and allow plenty of time to meet them.



Be a good loser

Be realistic with your expectations. If you don't win, try to celebrate the success of others. It can be hard but being genuinely happy for your fellow competitors is far better than sitting around feeling bitter.



Don't share

In the run up to entering a competition, don't publish the pictures you are going to submit on social media. If you do, the power of novelty will be diminished. Also, somebody might copy your idea!

Technique NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Capturing prize-winning pictures

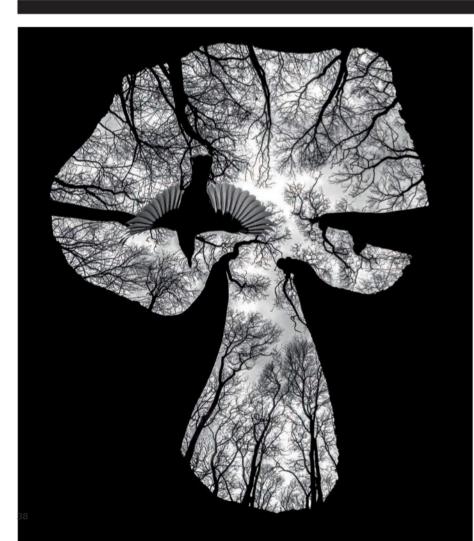
Over the years Csaba has enjoyed great success in a number of high-profile photography competitions: he took the top spot and won three categories in Close-up Photographer of the Year 5 and recently won the Birds category in GDT European Wildlife Photographer of the Year, for example. 'I've been entering nature photography competitions for almost 30 years,' he explains. 'When I was younger, coming first was very important to me, but now I mainly do it for fun.'

While there is no formula for success, Csaba does have a few words of wisdom. 'Try to be realistic with your expectations. If you don't win, accept it and try not to be disappointed.'

For Csaba, being out in nature is the big prize – watching a pine marten perform acrobatics under a starry sky, or a bird catching insects as it swoops under a bridge. Taking a picture is to notice something fully and intensely and, more often than not, to communicate what you notice to others. Csaba knows he's been given a gift, and he's wise enough to know it's his duty to share it.



Csaba flew a drone over a frozen lake, capturing the beautiful patterns on the surface and the evening light illuminating a clump of reeds DJI Mavic 2, 24-48mm, 1/160sec at f/2.8, ISO 200



Why it works

'In the winter of 2023, I took a lot of photographs in a forest close to my home in Hungary. I found something new to photograph almost every week, and I spent several days exploring ideas and perfecting techniques. Staying curious and open-minded led me to this hollowed-out tree stump, which measured around half a metre in diameter. I carefully positioned my GoPro camera inside the trunk and took a few shots. I was amazed by the results. After a few days, however, I decided the composition might be improved if I included an animal in the frame. So, I returned to the spot and placed a sunflower near the hole, which the mice and birds soon found.' (Csaba won the title Close-up Photographer of the Year 5 with this image.) GoPro Hero 11, 2.7mm, 1/5800sec at f/2.5, ISO 800

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Technique **PHOTOSHOP**

Using artificial intelligence **ethically**

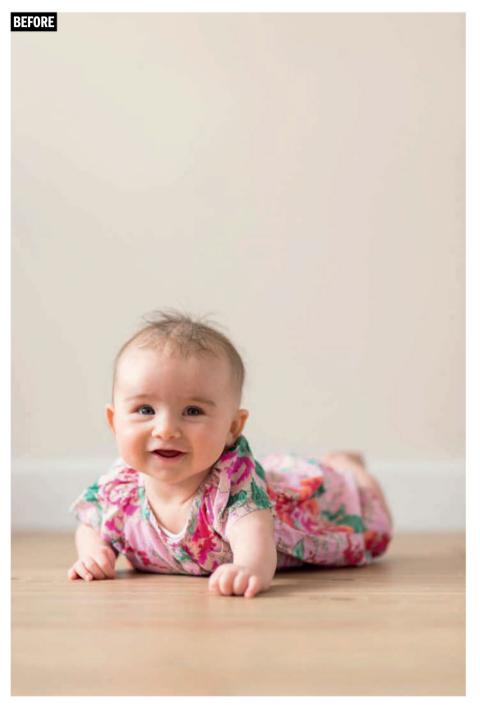
AI-powered tools in photo-editing software can be a blessing to photographers. **James Abbott** demonstrates a more ethical approach to AI to save time and to simplify complex manual tasks

he use of artificial intelligence in photo editing may be a contentious issue, but it's safe to say that it's here to stay. While most ethical questions surrounding the use of AI in photography centre on the creation of entire images, most of the AI-powered tools available in photo editing software are pretty much benign when it comes to the question of ethics and authenticity.

At this point, you may be wondering where we're heading because surely any use of AI goes against the veracity of photography, but there's an extremely simple argument here. Not to mention, one that includes the use of Photoshop's Generative Fill feature in a specific way. I don't want to get bogged down in the AI debate so we can cast that aside, and some of this was covered in an interview in the Christmas issue of AP with the Italian photographer Andrea Pizzini who creates incredible images of Sony cameras using AI.

The majority of AI-powered tools in editing software are designed to save time and typically make complex tasks easier to achieve. They're not there to trick, cheat or anything else, they're both practical and powerful in equal measure. Photoshop has been gradually growing in this area with many tools now at the disposal of photographers, ranging from intelligent selection refinement to special effects to cloning and much more. Most, if not all of the results of these tools can be achieved in more manual time-consuming ways, so I would argue that taking advantage of them is most often a wise decision.

Photoshop is an AI powerhouse This is far from a definitive list of Photoshop's AI-powered features, but some that you can take advantage of include Neural Filters, Generative Fill, Generative Expand, Sky Replacement, Subject Selection, Sky Selection, Intelligent Refine Edge and the Remove Tool. Of course, Generative Fill and Generative Expand are by far the most contentious options





This portrait of a baby was shot in portrait format which limits its use editorially. Using Generative Expand, the simple defocused background has been successfully expanded in less than 30 seconds to make it a landscape-format image, perfect to use over a magazine spread

available, but even these can be used in ways that don't detract from a photo's authenticity when used outside of a news or reportage context.

Our focus here is going to be using

Photoshop's AI-powered features for cloning in different situations as well as expanding a simple background to change a photo from portrait to landscape format. Everything can be achieved manually, and

these changes are frequently made to images for personal, editorial and advertising use, but what's most important is that the essence of the image ultimately isn't changed.

HOW TO USE GENERATIVE EXPAND



1 Set the crop

Select the Crop Tool and set the Ratio to the desired setting and make sure that Fill is set to Generative Expand. Next, drag the Crop Guide over the image so it covers the area surrounding the image that needs to be increased. Here, it was set to convert the portrait format image with a simple background to landscape format.



2 Generate the expansion

Hit Enter and the Generative Fill Crop will begin, and after roughly 20-30 seconds you'll be presented with three fill options to choose from. Simply left mouse click on each to see what looks best. If you're happy with one of the options presented, then close the dialogue and the Fill will be applied to a New Layer, but if not move on to the next step.



3 More expand options

If you're unhappy with the Fill options presented, simply press the Generate button in the dialogue box to generate three more options. You can continue pressing the button to add more Fill options until you find an option that you're happy with. Each option presented will have subtle or significant differences to offer choice.

Technique **PHOTOSHOP**

Use AI for fast and seamless cloning

Remove complex elements in seconds using the Remove Tool and Generative Fill



Cloning and Healing can be laborious tasks; they're rarely enjoyable, always a chore, but they can admittedly be rewarding when you finish. One of the great things about some of Photoshop's AI-powered tools is that they can make light work of more complex cloning work, saving huge amounts of time and sometimes even frustration. You just have to know what to use and when to use it.

Minor jobs like spotting and removing simple elements are still best worked

on with tools such as the Healing Brush. But depending on the task at hand, the Remove Tool and in certain cases, Generative Fill can make light work of what needs to be done to produce a seamless result in seconds rather than minutes. What's more, if you don't have the skills to perform these tasks manually, AI can help you get to where you want to be.

TRY THE REMOVE TOOL



1 Paint over the object

Select the Removal Tool which is within the Healing Tool menu on the Tool panel. Paint over the object to be removed, making sure you overlap the surrounding area because this will help to facilitate a more effective removal. It takes a few seconds for the object removal to render.



2 Assess the removal

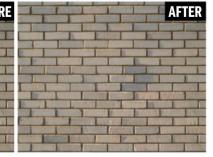
Check the area where the object has been removed to make sure it looks natural. Here, you can see that the left edge of the bush and the reeds look fake, so we'll need to run some additional passes of the Removal Tool over these areas. Areas like this take a little more work because of the fine detail.



3 Run more passes

The Removal Tool can be applied to the same area as many times as you like, so you can keep painting over this until you're happy. A good way to work is to create an empty New Layer in Step 1 and make sure Sample all layers is checked so you can delete the Layer if necessary and start again.

.....



Using Generative Fill to remove elements

Generative Fill is best known for adding elements into images, but it can also be used to remove them. To do this, simply draw a selection around the object that needs to be removed, with space around it included, and then click the Generative Fill button on the Contextual Task Bar. This press of the button opens the prompt box for typing in word prompts, but leaving this empty and then pressing the Generate button forces the tool to remove or change the selected area. For this example, the Remove Tool was unable to fill the uniform brickwork effectively, but Generative Fill was able to remove the sign in a matter of seconds while maintaining the texture and lighting present.





Photocrowd

THE EISA PHOTOGRAPHY MAESTRO CONTEST 2024

This year's theme: Sports and Games

Scope and Contest Rules:

Entrants should provide 5-8 photographs on the theme of 'Sports and Games'. Your subject matter may include professional and amateur sports as well as games. All entries must be in digital format (camera or scanned film originals) and must be taken by you between 1 May 2023 and 30 April 2024 (EXIF data will be checked as proof). Older portfolios and Al-generated images are excluded.

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National Maestro winners will also be published on Facebook at the end of June 2024 for the EISA Public's Choice competition. Prize for the winner: €1000.



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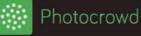
The winning entries from all 16 participating EISA countries will be judged together at the Association's General Meeting in June 2024. The International results will be celebrated at the EISA Awards Gala in Sept 2024 and revealed, online, alongside the EISA product Awards on 15 August 2024.

Don't forget to visit **bit.ly/eisa-maestro** for tips on creating a successful portfolio. The winning International photos will be published in the Sept/Oct issues of all 16 EISA photo magazines/websites. For details, terms & conditions, see **www.eisa.eu/maestro**

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ETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG

Half truths

As I worked in the

photographic retail trade

in the 1960s, your article

could touch the Olympus

Pen F with its lenses and

accessories. But the one

that amused us most was

the Yashica Rapide, which,

as we might say today,

'channelled' a very

different camera, its

on half-frame cameras

brought back a lot of

memories. For build quality and versatility little

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Joy of a toy

The Lego Polaroid OneStep SX-70 camera was given to me as a birthday present from my daughters, and my experience of building the camera mirrored the recent excellent review by Amy Davies. I could relate to her experience of putting it all together, including the intricate but successful film release.

Amv's review also contained interesting information behind the development of the camera. Indeed, this Lego 'toy' has become a well-loved item by my grandchildren. We are always re-assembling the camera after hours of pretend play. The completed camera also provides much fun with selfie photographs. I may well have to buy my grandchildren the real one that does take pictures! After initial scepticism about building a camera that does not produce actual pictures, the Lego Polaroid OneStep SX-70



SX-70: Damien sent in this picture

camera is now a firm favourite in the family and proudly on display. I understand that it is now listed as 'difficult to find' so you do need to act fast to get one.

Damien Walmsley

Good to hear that you and your family are enjoying the Lego Polaroid camera. Anything that gets young kids interested in photography has to be encouraged.

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contemporary, the medium

format Linhof Technika

Press 70, right down to a

cheeky Linhof-style badge.

I never managed to put a

I am sure that there are

many amateur/camera

will have genuine

club photographers, who

sympathy for the Princess

of Wales. As they too have

the experience of thinking

film through either!

John S Ross

Final word

SAMSUNG Ultimate 蹙, ③ A2 √30

they have done their very best, only to be humiliated by the competition judge. who points out all sorts of little errors. At least we can be grateful that our images are not likely to be torn apart by The Media. I agree with many of the points made in Geoff Harris's Viewpoint. Let us hope she is able to dust herself off, then continue to enjoy her hobby. Yes, an edited image is not necessarily newsworthy, but at least the systems which try to prevent faked images from spreading appear to be working. As this is especially important in a time of increasing international tension, where faked news could touch off yet another war.

David Price

Your last points are very salient. The Princess of Wales's recent health news has now overshadowed this story. and as you say, let's hope the fuss hasn't put her off sharing her images.

Photo show memories

Here is one of my photographs of the AP stand at The Photography Show (below). It was good to meet the team. John Hevwood

Thanks John, it was good to meet you in person, along with all the other readers who dropped by. We look forward to next year's show in London (if this is news to you, see Editor Nigel Atherton's Viewpoint on page six).





It's good

Our favourite photos posted by readers on our social media channels this week

AP picture of the week

The Phone Booth by Ronel Khan

Leica Q2, Summilux 28mm F1.7 ASPH, 1/2500sec at f/1.7, ISO 100

'Amidst the clamour of a busy Sunday morning in London's Primrose Hill, silently stood two iconic red phone boxes. And in the quiet of the phone boxes, art was to be found.'

Instagram: @leicacharm Model: @anjleebathia

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Bridging Horizons by Usama Kayani

Fujifilm X-S10, Fujinon 50-230mm f/4.5-6.7, 1/1250sec at f/4.5, ISO 250

'I had this idea for a while to frame Tower Bridge between two red buses with a sunrise in the background. I wanted to create a dramatic juxtaposition between the stillness of London's monuments and the constant motion of the city.' Instagram: @usamakayani01



We also liked...



Spotted Beauty by Amit Jariwala

Nikon D500, 200-500mm f/5.6, 1/13sec at f/5.6, ISO 635

'In Velavadar, Gujarat, at the Blackbuck National Park, I found an owl hidden in a wall. It was a quiet, special moment. The owl, usually hard to see, looked right at me. Taking its picture felt like finding a treasure, a beautiful secret of nature just for me.'

Instagram : aj_photo._

Want to see your pictures here? Simply share them with our Flickr, Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook communities using the hashtag #appicoftheweek. Or you can email your best shot to us at **ap.ed@ kelsey.co.uk**. See page 3 for how to find us.

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photographic





1 Abstract Bulb by Debbie Phillips A colourful and intriguing close-up shot, beautifully executed by Debbie **2 Sea Rescue by David Kennedy** David has got close to the action here and captured a clear and tightly framed helicopter image



Clu

This club is a new and

growing group of photo

5 Siberica iris 1 by Viv Jambors The wonderful colours, patterns and petal shapes of this Siberica iris are clearly shown in this striking flower image

6 Flying without Wings

by Keith Harris A low shooting angle, a magnificent leap by the dancer, an interesting cloudy sky and a fast shutter speed have combined to create this joyful image



When was the club founded?

August 2022. The club came into existence after lockdown, to bring people together with similar interests and to make friends.

What does your club offer new members?

We are a very welcoming club. There are always coffee and biscuits and you will soon feel comfortable and become an integral part of our extended family. Representing an even gender split, and with member ages ranging from 13 years upwards, we pride ourselves on inclusivity. As one of the few photographic clubs which actively shuns the competition circuit, we prefer to promote friendships and concentrate on advancing practical photographic skills. Members have varied photographic experience from beginners to retired professionals. Everyone helps each other during sessions and we also offer 1-2-1 mentoring before our main sessions. We are lucky to have several very experienced members who can offer advanced support.

Describe a typical club meeting

The majority of meetings are practical, studiobased or on location. Feedback sessions are also held, being invaluable for members' photographic development. We have a lively schedule of activities, published in January. In 2023 we hosted professional character models such as the Riddler, Peaky Blinders and ballet dancers. We've also experimented with lightbulb abstracts, bubbles, animals, ice and had fun bursting water balloons adorned with sunglasses. Activities are created to support members to try techniques and genres they might not normally have the opportunity to try. Members are happy to share advice, equipment and set-ups.

50

enthusiasts





3 Dalehead Tarn by Neil Marsh Neil's image encapsulates the rugged landscape at Dalehead Tarn in the north-western region of the Lake District

4 Winning Try by Mark Gambles Mark has filled the frame with these mud-covered rugby players, who look like they're enjoying themselves

7 Harry Mountain 1 by Eileen Tickle A characterful and

nicely lit portrait, shot against an undistracting background of a perfect colour to highlight the subject

8 Mantis by Graham Whitehead A sharp, clear macro shot that captures lots of detail in the mantis, including its texture, pale blue colour and seemingly quizzical expression

Do you invite guest speakers?

The club has welcomed presentations from established wildlife and landscape photographers who have generously shared their tips and techniques. We have also thoroughly enjoyed demonstrations by stylists, professional photographers and look forward to inviting more guest speakers in future.

Do members take part in competitions?

Our club does not actively enter competitions as that is against our club's main philosophy. Members who wish to enter competitions tend to also be members of other more traditional photography clubs. Our experienced mentors are available to support members with their competition entries or portfolios.

How many members do you have?

In August 2022, we had one founding

member. Subsequently the club has grown in popularity. Currently we have 39 members and still growing.

Are any trips or outings planned?

8

During the summer, we have at least one event on location per month. In addition, members are invited to organise country walks, model or wildlife shoots on days outside our normal meetups.

What are the club's goals for the future?

Our club already feels a part of the thriving Shevington Village community. We receive and extend regular invitations to other clubs' talks and meetings and are liaising with other photographic clubs. We enjoy participating in village events and currently we have our annual exhibition in the local library. We look forward to continue working with local residents/groups and providing a regular space for fellow photographers to come together, have a good laugh and learn a bit more about photography.

Club essentials

Shevington Photographic Social Club

Shevington Youth Club, Highfield Avenue, Shevington, Wigan WN6 8HB

Meets Wednesdays at 8pm until 10pm

 $\begin{array}{l} \textbf{Membership} \text{ Annual Subscription } \pounds 25 \text{ per person,} \\ \pounds 10 \text{ Juniors. Session attendance fee } \pounds 3 \text{ per person,} \\ \pounds 1 \text{ Juniors} \end{array}$

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DSLR Lenses

Interchangeable lenses come in a huge array of types for shooting different kinds of subjects

IN GENERAL, the easiest way to expand the kinds of pictures you can take is by buying different types of lenses. For example, telephoto lenses let vou zoom in on distant subjects, while macro lenses enable close-ups of small objects. Large-aperture lenses allow you to isolate subjects against blurred backgrounds, or shoot in low light without having to raise the ISO too high. Meanwhile, all-in-one superzooms cover a wide range of subjects, but usually with rather lower optical quality.

Lens mounts

Each manufacturer has its own lens mount and most aren't compatible with one another. For example, a Canon DSLR can't use Nikon lenses, although you can use independent brands if you get them with the right mount.

Built-in focus motor

Most lenses now incorporate an internal motor to drive the autofocus, although some are still driven from the camera body. DSLR lenses often use ultrasonictype motors for fast focusing, but some now have video-friendly stepper motors as widely used in mirrorless systems.

Filter thread

A thread at the front of the camera will have a diameter, in mm, which will allow you to attach a variety of filters or adapters to the lens.

Maximum aperture

Wider apertures mean you can use faster. motion-stopping shutter speeds.

OUR GUIDE TO THE SUFFIXES USED BY LENS MANUFACTURERS

- Nikon AF lenses driven from camera ΔF AF-S Nikon lenses with Silent Wave Motor AF-P Nikon lenses with stepper motors AL Pentax lenses with aspheric elements APD Fujifilm lenses with apodisation elements APO Sigma Apochromatic lenses **ASPH** Aspherical elements Pentax all-weather lenses AW Samyang lenses for APS-C cropped sensors CS Nikon lenses that communicate distance info D DA Pentax lenses ontimised for APS-C-sized sensors DC Nikon defocus-control portrait lenses
- DC Sigma's lenses for APS-C digital DG Sigma's designation for full-frame lenses Di
 - Tamron lenses for full-frame sensors Di-II Tamron lenses designed for APS-C DSLRs
 - Di-III Tamron lenses for mirrorless cameras
 - DN Sigma's lenses for mirrorless cameras
 - Canon diffractive optical element lenses Sony lenses for APS-C-sized sensors
 - Nikon's lenses for DX-format digital

DO

DT

DX

DS

Е

- Canon's Defocus Smoothing technology
- Nikon lenses with electronic anertures
- Sony lenses for APS-C mirrorless

- ED Extra-low Dispersion elements
- EF Canon's lenses for full-frame DSLRs
- EF-S Canon's lenses for APS-C DSLRs EF-M Canon's lenses for APS-C mirrorless
- EX Sigma's 'Excellent' range
- FA Pentax full-frame lenses
- FE Sony lenses for full-frame mirrorless
- Nikon lenses without an aperture ring G
- HSM Sigma's Hypersonic Motor Canon's Image-Stabilised lenses IS
- Canon's 'Luxury' range of high-end lenses L LD
 - Low-Dispersion glass

- LM Fujifilm Linear Motor
- MP-E Canon's high-magnification macro lens
- **OIS** Optical Image Stabilisation
- 05 Sigma's Optically Stabilised lenses PC-E Nikon tilt-and-shift lenses
- PF Nikon Phase Fresnel ontics
- PZD Tamron Piezo Drive focus motor
- Canon full-frame mirrorless lenses RF
- Nikon's premium lenses for mirrorless
- SAM Sony Smooth Autofocus Motor SDM Pentax's Sonic Direct Drive Motor
- SMC Pentax Super Multi Coating

- SP Tamron's Super Performance range
- SSM Sony Supersonic Motor lenses STF Sony and Laowa Smooth Trans Focus
- STM Canon lenses with stepper motor
- TS-E Canon Tilt-and-Shift lens
- UMC Ultra Multi Coated
- USM Canon lenses with an Ultrasonic Motor USD Tamron Ultrasonic Drive motor
- Tamron's Vibration Compensation VC
- Nikon's Vibration Reduction feature VR
- WR Weather Resistant Ζ
- Nikon's lenses for mirrorless cameras

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DSLR Lens	es	5		IMAGE Stabilisation	SONY ALPHA	CANON FOLID TUIDAG	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA FILLERAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	(WW) HEDRET	WEIGHT (G)
LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY				MOU	NT				DI	MENSIO	NS
CANON DSLR		v			99.4									
EF-S 10-18mm f/4.5-5.6 IS STM	£299	4★	A superb ultra-wideangle that's a must-have for anyone shooting landscapes and cityscapes							22	67	74.6	72	240
EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 USM	£990	4★	A good performer, with solid MTF curves and minimal chromatic aberration							24	77	83.5	89.8	385
EF-S 17-55mm f/2.8 IS USM	£795	4★	Very capable lens with three-stop image stabilisation, Super Spectra coating and a circular aperture							35	77	83.5	110.6	645
EF-S 18-55mm f/4-5.6 IS STM	£220		Latest standard zoom for Canon's APS-C EOS DSLRs, with compact design and updated optics							25	58	66.5	61.8	215
EF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM	£500		Versatile zoom with new Nano USM focus technology and optional power zoom adapter							39	67	77.4	96	515
EF-S 24mm f/2.8 STM	£165	4★	Bargain price, tiny carry-everywhere size and a highly competent imaging performance							16	52	68.2	22.8	125
EF-S 55-250mm f/4-5.6 IS STM	£265		A compact telephoto lens featuring smooth, quiet STM focusing when shooting movies							110	58	70	111.2	375
EF 8-15mm f/4 L USM	£1499		Impressive-looking fisheye zoom lens from Canon	_						15	n/a	78.5	83	540
EF 11-24mm f/4 L USM	£2799	5★	Long-awaited by Canon full-frame users, this is the world's widest-angle rectilinear zoom lens							28	n/a	108	132	1180
EF 16-35mm f/2.8 L III USM	£2150		Revamped wideangle zoom includes new optics in a weather-sealed lens barrel							28	82	89.5	127.5	790
EF 16-35mm f/4 L IS USM	£1199	4★	Versatile and with a useful IS system, this is a very good ultra-wideangle zoom for full-frame cameras							28	77	82.6	112.8	615
EF 17-40mm f/4 L USM	£940	4★	Designed to match the needs of demanding professionals – and does so with ease							28	77	83.5	96.8	500
EF 24mm f/1.4 L II USM	£2010		Subwavelength structure coating, together with UD and aspherical elements							25	77	83.5	86.9	650
EF 24-70mm f/2.8 L II USM	£2300	5★	Professional-guality standard zoom lens with a fast aperture							38	82	88.5	113	805
EF 24-105mm f/4 L IS II USM	£1129	4★	Reworked workhorse zoom for full-frame cameras uses an all-new optical design							45	77	83.5	118	795
EF 35mm f/2 IS USM	£799		First 35mm prime from Canon to feature an optical stabilisation system							24	67	62.6	77.9	335
EF 35mm f/1.4 L II USM	£1799	5★	An outstanding addition to the L-series line-up							28	72	80.4	104.4	760
EF 50mm f/1.2 L USM	£1910		Very wide maximum aperture and Super Spectra coatings, and a circular aperture							45	72	85.8	65.5	580
EF 50mm f/1.4 USM	£450	5★	Brilliant performer, with a highly consistent set of MTF curves. AF motor is a tad noisy, though							45	58	73.8	50.5	290
EF 50mm f/1.8 STM	£130	5★	Lightest EF lens in the range, with wide maximum aperture and a Micro Motor							35	49	69.2	39.3	130
EF 70-200mm f/2.8 L USM	£1540		Non-stabilised L-series optic, with rear focusing and four UD elements							150	77	84.6	193.6	1310
EF 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS III USM	£2150		Updates Canon's excellent pro workhorse zoom with water-repellent fluorine coatings							120		88.8	199	1480
EF 70-200mm f/4L IS II USM	£1300		Upgraded premium telephoto zoom promises five stops of image stabilisation							100		80	176	780
EF 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 IS II USM	£499	4.5★	Mid-range telephoto zoom offers really good optics and fast, silent autofocus							120	67	80	145.5	710
EF 75-300mm f/4-5.6 III	£300		Essentially the same lens as the 75-300mm f/4-5.6 III USM but with no USM							150		71	122	480
EF 85mm f/1.4L IS USM	£1570	5★	Sublime, highly desirable portrait lens combines large aperture and optical image stabilisation							85	77	88.6	105.4	950
EF 85mm f/1.8 USM	£470	5★	Non-rotating front ring thanks to rear-focusing system, as well as USM							85	58	75	71.5	425
EF 100mm f/2.8 L Macro IS USM	£1060	5★	Stunning MTF figures from this pro-grade macro optic							30	67	77.7	123	625
EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 L IS II USM	£1999		L-series construction and optics, including fluorite and Super UD elements							98	77	94	193	1640
EF 135mm f/2 L USM	£1360		L-series construction with two UD elements and wide maximum aperture							90	72		112	750
MP-E 65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro	£1250		Macro lens designed to achieve a magnification greater than 1x without accessories							24	58	81	98	710
TS-E 17mm f/4 L	£2920		Ultra-wideangle tilt-and-shift optic with independent rotation of the tilt and shift movements								77	88.9	106.9	820
TS-E 24mm f/3.5 L II	£2550		Tilt-and-shift optic with independent tilt-and-shift rotation and redesigned coatings							21	82	88.5	106.9	780
TS-E 50mm f/2.8L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1:2 magnification							21	77		114.9	945
TS-E 90mm f/2.8L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1.2 magnification							39	77	86.9	114.5	915
TS-E 135mm f/4L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1:2 magnification								82	88.5		1110

We've tried our hardest to ensure that the information in this guide is as complete and accurate as possible. However, some errors will inevitably have crept in along the way: if you spot one, please let us know by emailing ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk. Unfortunately we don't have space to list every single product on the market, so we don't include the most expensive speciality items. **Before making a purchase we advise you to check prices, along with any crucial specifications or requirements, with either a reputable retailer or the manufacturer's website.**

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DSLR Lens	65			IMAGE Stariisation	VHd.		HIRDS				KAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	(MN)	(9)
				IMAGE	S ONY A	CANON	FOUR THI RDS	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA	rull FKAME	MIN FOC	FILTER	DIANET	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY				M	OUN	IT					DI	MENSIO	NS
LAOWA DSLR																
12mm f/2.8 Zero D	£899		Ultra-wideangle lens for full-frame DSLRs that exhibits minimal distortion									18	77	74.8	82.8	609
•			-									18 15	67	74.8		320
14mm f/4 Zero-D DSLR 15mm f/4 1:1 Macro	£499 £449	4★	Relatively compact and lightweight ultra-wideangle manual focus prime that promises low distortion									15 12	67 77	72.5 83.8	75 64.7	320 410
15mm f/4 1:1 Macro			Unusual wideangle lens that offers 1:1 Macro together with vertical shift movements on APS-C cameras						·			_				
15mm f/4.5 Zero-D Shift	£1249	4★	The world's widest-angle shift lens offers +/-11mm movement in any direction			•		•				_	n/a on	79	103	597
20mm f/4 Zero-D Shift	£1139		Wideangle shift lens that offers +/-11mm movement and promises zero distortion									25	82	91	95	747
24mm f/14 2x Macro Probe	£1599		Unique specialist macro lens with submersible front barrel and built-in LED lights			•		•			•	47	n/a	38	408	474
24mm f/14 2x Peri Probe	£2449		Development of macro probe design with swappable straight and 90° periscopic front sections					•				7.0	n/a	61.3	408	770
25mm f/2.8 Ultra Macro 2.5x - 5x	£399	25.4	Unusual lens designed solely for ultra-close-up shooting, with magnification from 2.5x to 5x			•		•	•			_	n/a	65	82	400
60mm f/2.8 2X Ultra Macro	£319	3.5★	With 2:1 Macro, an all-in-one option for normal portrait photography as well as ultra-macro					÷	·			8.5	62	95	70	503
100mm f/2.8 2:1 Ultra Macro APO	£469		Full-frame macro lens with twice-life-size magnification and apochromatic design			•		•	•			4.7	67	125	72	638
105mm f/2 (T3.2) STF	£649	4★	Designed for full-frame DSLRS, and features an apodisation element that renders lovely bokeh		•	•		•	•			90	67	98.9	76	745
NIKON DSLR																
10-20mm f/4.5-5.6 G VR AF-P DX	£330	3.5★	Inexpensive wide zoom for DX DSLRs has effective image stabilisation but rather average optics	·				·				22	72	77	73	230
10-24mm f/3.5-4.5 G ED AF-S DX	£834	4★	MTF performance is good from wide open to f/11, only breaking down past f/22					÷			1	24	77	82.5	87	460
18-140mm f/3.5-5.6 G ED VR AF-S DX	£579		A compact and lightweight DX-format zoom, this lens is a great all-rounder	·				÷			-	45	67	78	97	490
18-300mm f/3.5-6.3 G ED VR	£849		New DX-format 16.7x zoom with super-telephoto reach - a compact walk-around lens	•				•				48	67	78.5	99	550
35mm f/1.8 G AF-S DX	£208	5★	Designed for DX-format DSLRs, a great standard prime lens					·				30	52	70	52.5	200
40mm f/2.8 G AF-S DX Micro	£250	5★	A budget-priced macro lens that delivers the goods on multiple fronts					÷				20	52	68.5	64.5	235
85mm f/3.5 G ED AF-S DX VR	£522		DX-format Micro lens with a 1:1 reproduction ratio, VR II system and ED glass									28	52	73	98.5	355
8-15mm f/3.5-4.5 E ED Fisheye AF-S	£1299		Fisheye zoom for full-frame DSLRs that gives a circular view at 8mm and full-frame coverage at 15mm					•				16	n/a	77.5	83	485
14-24mm f/2.8 G ED AF-S	£1670	5★	A remarkable piece of kit, producing sharp images with little chromatic aberration					•				28	n/a	98	131.5	970
16-35mm f/4 G ED AF-S VR	£1072	5★	A fantastic lens that deserves to be taken seriously, with very little CA throughout					•				28	77	82.5	125	685
20mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£679		A fast FX-format prime lens that's compact and lightweight									20	77	82.5	80.5	335
24mm f/1.4 G ED AF-S	£1990	5★	Nothing short of stunning. Aside from its high price, there is very little to dislike about this optic					•				25	77	83	88.5	620
24mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£629		Fast FX-format lens that aims to appeal to landscape, interior, architecture and street photographers									23	72	77.5	83	355
24-70mm f/2.8 E ED VR	£1849	5★	Nikon's latest pro-spec standard zoom looks like its best lens yet					•				38	82	88	154.5	1070
24-85mm f/3.5-4.5 G ED VR	£520	5★	FX-format standard zoom with Auto Tripod detection and VR									38	72	78	82	465
24-120mm f/4 G ED AF-S VR	£1072	5★	Constant maximum aperture of f/4 and the addition of VR makes this a superb lens	•								45	77	84	103	710
28mm f/1.4 E ED AF-S	£2080		Boasts a dust- and drip-resistant build for reliable shooting in challenging weather conditions									28	77	83	100.5	645
28mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£619	5★	If you crave a wide aperture and prefer a single focal length then this Nikon prime delivers									25	67	73	80	330
35mm f/1.4 G ED AF-S	£1735	5★	A Nano Crystal-coated lens designed for the FX range									30	67	83	89.5	600
35mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£479		Fast FX-format prime lens with bright f/1.8 aperture. Versatile and lightweight									25	58	72	71.5	305
50mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£376	5★	Internal focusing and superior AF drive makes this a good alternative to the D-series 50mm f/1.4		Г							45	58	73.5	54	280
50mm f/1.8 D AF	£135		Compact, lightweight, affordable prime, will stop down to f/22									45	52	63	39	160
50mm f/1.8 G AF-S	£200	5★	A cut-price standard lens for FX shooters or a short telephoto on DX-format DSLRs									45	58	72	52.5	185
58mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£1599		FX-format full-frame premium prime lens with large f/1.4 aperture										72	85	70	385
70-200mm f/2.8 E FL ED VR AF-S	£2650		Latest update to Nikon's pro workhorse fast telephoto zoom brings electronic aperture control									10		88.5	202.5	1430
70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 E ED VR AF-P	£750		Nikon's first full-frame lens to feature a stepper motor for autofocus								1	200		80.5	146	680
80-400mm f/4.5-5.6 G ED VR AF-P	£1899	5★	Successor to the 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6D ED VR, focusing is excellent at tracking fast-moving subjects									_	07 77	95.5	203	1570
85mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£1532		Fast mid-tele lens with an internal focusing system and rounded diaphragm										77	86.5	84	595
85mm f/1.8 G AF-S	£470	5×	Rear-focusing system and distance window in this medium telephoto lens									80	67	80.5	73	350
	£2049	J	A 105mm FX-format prime lens with bright f/1.4 aperture, ideal for portraiture								_	_				985
105mm f/1.4 E ED AF-S 200-500mm f/5.6 E ED VR AF-S	£2049 £1179												82 05	94.5 108	106	985 2300
,		E .4	A super-telephoto zoom lens compatible with Nikon FX-format DSLR cameras									220	95 77		267.5	
300mm f/4 E PF ED VR AF-S	£1230	5★	Light, compact AF-S full-frame telephoto lens with ED glass elements									_	77	89	147.5	755
19mm f/4 E ED PC	£3300		Super-wideangle tilt-and-shift lens for architecture and landscape photography					•					n/a	89	124	885
24mm f/3.5 D ED PC-E	£1774		Perspective Control lens with Nano Crystal Coating and electronic control over aperture					÷					77	82.5	108	730
45mm f/2.8 D ED PC-E Micro	£1393		Perspective Control (PC-E) standard lens used in specialised fields such as studio and architecture					÷		•			77	82.5	112	740
85mm f/2.8D PC-E Micro	£1299		Perspective Control (PC-E) telephoto, designed to be ideal for portraits and product photography					•				39	77	83.5	107	635

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DSLR Lens	es	5		ITABILI SATION	ONY ALPHA	ANON	OUR THI RDS	IKON	PENTAX	SIGMA FIILL FRAME	MIN FOCIS (CN)	FILTER THREAD (M M)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	~~~	S	3		DUN		S			-	MENSIO	
PENTAX DSLR															
DA 10-17mm f/3.5-4.5 HD Fisheye ED	£499		Updated fisheye zoom lens gains refreshed cosmetic design, new optical coatings and removable hood								14	n/a	70	67.5	317
DA* 11-18mmF2.8 ED DC AW HD	£1399		Premium fast ultra-wideangle zoom, includes all-weather construction and innovative focus clamp						•		30	82	90	100	704
DA 15mm f/4 smc ED AL Limited	£820		Limited-edition lens with hybrid aspherical and extra-low-dispersion elements						•		18	49	39.5	63	212
FA 15-30mm f/2.8 ED SM WR HD DA* 16-50mm f/2.8 smc ED AL IF SDM	£1500 £950	3.5★	Weather-resistant ultra-wideangle zoom with fast maximum aperture and fixed petal-type hood A nice balance and robust feel, but poor sharpness at f/2.8 (which significantly improves from f/4 onwards)								28 30	n/a 77	98.5 84	143.5 98.5	1040 600
DA* 16-50mm f/2.8 ED PLM AW HD	£1500	J.J 👗	All-new premium large-aperture standard zoom with updated optics and electromagnetic aperture control								30	77	84	117	712
DA 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6 ED DC WR	£600		Weather-resistant, this zoom features a round-shaped diaphragm to produce beautiful bokeh						·		35	72	78	94	488
DA 18-50mm f/4-5.6 DC WR RE	£230		Super-thin standard zoom that's weather-resistant and features a round-shaped diaphragm						·		30	58	71	41	158
DA 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 smc AL WR	£229		A weather-resistant construction and an aspherical element, as well as SP coating						÷		25	52	68.5	67.5	230
DA 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 DA ED DC WR DA 18-270mm f/3.5-6.3 smc ED SDM	£600 £699	3.5★	A weather-resistant mid-range zoom lens 15x superzoom for company's K-mount DSLRs featuring two extra-low-dispersion (ED) elements						•		40 49	62 62	73 76	76 89	405 453
DA 20-40mm f/2.8-4 ED Limited DC WR	£829		With state-of-the-art HD coating, a completely round-shaped diaphragm, and weather resistant								28	55	68.5	71	283
HD-FA 21mm f/2.4 ED Limited DC WR	£1499		Ultra-wide addition to the premium Limited line-up, with aluminium barrel and electromagnetic aperture motor								18	67	74	89	416
DA 21mm f/3.2 smc AL Limited	£600		This limited-edition optic offers a floating element for extra-close focusing						•		20	49	63	25	140
FA 24-70mm f/2.8 ED SDM WR	£1149		Full-frame-compatible premium standard zoom - includes a HD coating to minimise flare and ghosting						·	·	38	82	109.5	88.5	787
FA 28-105mm f/3.5-5.6 ED DC HD	£549		Standard zoom lens for the K-1 full-frame DSLR that's much more affordable than the 24-70mm f/2.8						·	•	50	62	73	86.5	440
HD-FA 31mm f/1.8 Limited	£1100		Premium aluminium-bodied wideangle prime boasts an aperture ring plus HD and fluorine coatings						·		30	58	69	65	341
FA 35mm f/2 HD DA 35mm f/2.4 smc DS AL	£399 £180	5★	Latest version of venerable Pentax fast prime features a multi-layer HD coating A budget-priced prime lens for beginners								30 30	49 49	64 63	44.5 45	193 124
DA 35mm f/2.4 smc D3 AL DA 35mm f/2.8 smc Macro	£640	4.5★	Despite slight edge softness, this lens performs excellently and is a pleasure to use								14	49	46.5	40 63	215
DA 40mm f/2.8 smc Limited	£450		Pancake lens with SMC coating and Quick Shift focusing system						•		40	49	63	15	90
HD-FA 43mm f/1.9 Limited	£650		Classic full-frame fast prime with perfect focal length for everyday use						•	•	45	49	64	27	155
FA* 50mm f/1.4 SDM AW HD	£1200		Premium fast prime with dustproof, weather-resistant design and electromagnetic aperture						·		40	72	80	106	910
HD-FA 50mm f/1.4	£399		Updated large-aperture prime with HD coatings and refreshed cosmetic design						·	•	45	49	65	40.5	223
FA 50mm f/1.4 smc Classic	£449		Compact fast prime with film-era optics, aperture ring, and coatings designed to give 'rainbow flare'						•	•	45	49	65	37	216
DA 50mm f/1.8 smc DA D-FA 50mm f/2.8 smc Macro	£249 £550	4★	Affordable short telephoto lens ideal for portraits Macro lens capable of 1:1 reproduction and with a Quick Shift focus mechanism								45 19	52 49	38.5 60	63 67.5	122 265
DA* 50-135mm f/2.8 smc ED IF SDM	£1200	4★	Constant f/2.8 aperture; well suited to portraiture and mid-range action subjects								100		76.5	136	765
DA 50-200mm f/4-5.6 smc ED WR	£210		Weather-resistant construction, Quick Shift focus system and an SP coating								n/a		69	79.5	285
DA* 55mm f/1.4 smc SDM	£800	4.5★	Despite questions about the particular sample tested, this lens scores highly						÷		45	58	70.5	66	375
DA 55-300mm f/4.5-6.3 ED PLM WR RE	£400		Compact weather resistant telephoto zoom has video-friendly fast and silent autofocus motor						÷		95	58	76.5	89	442
DA 60-250mm f/4 smc ED IF SDM	£1450	4.5★	With a constant f/4 aperture and an ultrasonic motor for speedy focusing						·		110		167.5	82	1040
DA 70mm f/2.4 smc AL Limited D-FA* 70-200mm f/2.8 ED DC AW	£600 £1850		Medium telephoto lens with an aluminium construction and a Super Protect coating Fast telephoto zoom in Pentax's high-performance Star (*) series developed for best image rendition								70	49 77	63 91.5	26 203	130 1755
D-FA 70-200mm F4 ED SDM WR	£1050		Compact telephoto zoom with constant f/4 maximum aperture and weather-resistant construction								95	67	78.5	175	819
HD-FA 77mm f/1.8 Limited	£800		Renewed version of short telephoto portrait prime that features a traditional aperture ring								70	49	48	64	270
D FA* 85mm f/1.4 SDM AW	£1999		Upcoming large-aperture short telephoto prime promises premium optics and weather-sealing						÷		85	82	95	123.5	1255
D-FA 100mm f/2.8 Macro WR	£680	5★	Street price makes this something of a bargain for a true macro offering full-frame coverage						·	•	30	49	65	80.5	340
HD-FA 100mm f/2.8 ED AW Macro	£699		Updated 1:1 macro lens boasts improved optical formula and all-weather construction						÷	•	30	49	65	80.5	348
FA 150-450mm f/4.5-5.6 ED DC AW	£2000	45.4	Super-telephoto lens with weather resistance, designed to produce extra-sharp, high-contrast images						•	•	200		241.5	95	2000
DA* 200mm f/2.8 smc ED IF SDM DA* 300mm f/4 smc ED IF SDM	£1000 £1300	4.5★	SDM focusing system on the inside, and dirtproof and splashproof on the outside This tele optic promises ultrasonic focus and high image quality thanks to ED glass							_	120		83 83	134 184	825 1070
SAMYANG DSLR			, F								- 10			201	
8mm f/3.5 UMC Fisheye CS II	£274		Wideangle fisheye lens designed for digital reflex cameras with APS-C sensors								30	n/a	75	77.8	417
10mm f/3.5 XP MF	£950		World's widest-angle rectilinear lens promises 130° field of view with minimal distortion			•					26	n/a	95	98.1	731
10mm f/2.8 ED AS NCS CS	£429		Features a nano crystal anti-reflection coating system and embedded lens hood		÷	·	•	·	·		24	n/a	86	77	580
12mm f/2.8 ED AS NCS Fisheye	£430		Fisheye ultra wideangle prime lens for full-frame DSLRs		÷	·	·	·	·	•	20	n/a	77.3	70.2	500
14mm f/2.4 XP MF	£899		High-end ultra-wideangle prime with premium optics and large maximum aperture			·		·		•	28	n/a	95	109.4	791
AF 14mm f/2.8	£649	4.5★	Samyang's first AF SLR lens features very decent image quality and weather-sealed construction			•		•		•	20	n/a	90.5	95.6	485
14mm f/2.8 MF Mk II 16mm f/2.0 ED AS UMC CS	£439 £389		Ultra-wideangle manual-focus prime with weather-sealing and de-clickable aperture ring Fast wideangle lens for digital reflex cameras fitted with APS-C sensors			•					28 20	n/a n/a	87 89.4	96.3 83	641 583
20mm f/1.8 ED AS UMC	£430		Large-aperture manual focus wideangle lens for full-frame DSLRs								20	77	83	113.2	520
24mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£499		Fast ultra-wideangle manual-focus lens comprising 13 elements arranged in 12 groups		•	·		•	•		25	77	95	116	680
24mm f/3.5 ED AS UMS TS	£949	3★	Tilt-and-shift wideangle lens for a fraction of the price of Canon and Nikon's offerings		÷	·	·	·	•	·	20	82	86	110.5	680
35mm f/1.2 XP MF	£719		Ultra-large aperture, manual focus prime with premium optics			·				•	34	86	93	117.4	1106
35mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£369	4.5★	While manual focus only, this prime impressed us in real-world use, making it something of a bargain		÷	·	·	·	÷	·	30	77	83	111	660
50mm f/1.2 XP MF 50mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£639 £299		Large aperture manual-focus prime promises 50MP resolution			•					45	86 77	93 74.7	117.4 91.6	1200
50mm f/1.4 AS UMC 85mm f/1.2 XP MF	£299 £899		Manual-focus fast standard prime for full-frame DSLRs High-end manual focus lens sports an impressively fast maximum aperture								45 80	86	93	81.6 98.4	575 1050g
AF 85mm f/1.4	£599	3★	Autofocus fast short telephoto portrait lens for use on Canon or Nikon full-frame DSLRs								90	77	88	72	485
85mm f/1.4 MF Mk II	£389		Large-aperture short telephoto manual-focus prime is weather-sealed and the aperture can be de-clicked			·		·		•			78	72.2	541
100mm f/2.8 ED UMC Macro	£389		Full-frame compatible, the Samyang 100mm is a true Macro lens offering 1:1 magnification		÷	·	·	÷	·	·	30	67	72.5	123.1	720
135mm f/2 ED UMC	£399		Manual focus portrait prime has fast aperture for subject isolation and background blur		÷	·	·	·	·	•	80	77	82	122	830

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

BUYING GUIDE

DSLR Lens	ses	5		I IMA GE Stabilisation	ONY ALPHA	CANON	OUR THI RDS	PFNTAX	SIGMA	FULLFRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	<u>s =</u>	S	3	MOL		S	-				IENSIO	
SIGMA DSLR															
12-24mm f/4 DG HSM A	£1649	5★	Dramium full frame widesandie seem decidend to have minimal distortion in its widesandle imagery								24	n/a	101	132	115
12-24mm f/1.8 DG HSM A	£1679	5 🗶	Premium full-frame wideangle zoom designed to have minimal distortion in its wideangle imagery										95.4	132	115
14-24mm f/2.8 DG HSM A	£1399	5★	World's first f/1.8 ultra-wideangle prime lens for full-frame DSLRs Pro-specification fast ultra-wide prime for full-frame DSLRs includes weather-sealed construction					Т				n/a n/a	96.4	135.1	115
14-24mm f/1.8 DC HSM A	£799	5★	Said to be the world's first constant f/1.8 zoom; DoF equivalent of constant f/2.7 on full frame	-							20	72	78	121	810
20mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	An outstanding wideangle fixed-focal-length lens					Т				n/a	90.7	121	950
24mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	The latest addition to Sigma's 'Art' line of high-quality fast primes									77	85	90.2	665
24-70mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM A	£1399	5★	Latest premium fast standard zoom for full frame includes optical image stabilisation					Т			37	82	88	107.6	102
24-105mm f/4 DG OS HSM A	£849	4.5★	Serious full-frame alternative to own-brand lenses at a lower price, with no compromises in the build								45	82	89	101.0	885
28mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1099	4.5★	High-quality, weathersealed fast wideangle prime for full-frame DSLRs					Т			28	77	82.8	107.1	86
35mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	Superb large-aperture prime; first lens in company's 'Art' series								30	67	77	94	66!
40mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1100		Large and heavy prime promising natural-looking perspective and top-quality optics					Т			40	82	87.8	131	120
50mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£849	5★	This lens has a unique design that pays off in truly excellent image quality								40	77	85.4	100	81
50-100mm f/1.8 DC HSM A	£829	5★	This APS-C-format lens aims to cover the focal lengths of three prime lenses in one					Т			40 37.4	82	93.5	170.7	149
60-600mm f/4.5-6.3 DG OS HSM S	£1899	JX	Weathersealed 10x zoom encompasses huge range from standard to super-telephoto										120.4	268.9	270
	£499										26	49	71	106	51
70mm f/2.8 DG Macro A		5.4	The first macro lens in Sigma's Art line-up features an extending-barrel focus-by-wire design												180
70-200mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM S	£1349	5★	Superb large-aperture telephoto zoom shows high sharpness and minimal chromatic aberration									82	94.2	202.9	
85mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1199	5★	Optically stunning fast short telephoto prime is the ultimate portrait lens for DSLR users			•				·	85	86	95	126	113
100-400mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM C	£799	4.5★	Relatively lightweight telezoom comes with weather-sealing and choice of push-pull or twist zoom			•						67	86.4	182.3	116
105mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1499	4.5★	Sigma's 'bokeh monster' super-fast portrait lens is weathersealed and comes with a tripod foot			·							115.9	131.5	164
LO5mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM Macro	£649	4.5★	An optically stabilised macro lens, this super-sharp lens is one of our favourites	•		·	•				-	62	78	126.4	72
120-300mm f/2.8 DG HSM S	£3599		First lens in company's 'Sports' series; switch enables adjustment of both focus speed and focus limiter		÷.	·		·	·			105	124	291	33
135mm f/1.8 DG HSM A	£1399	5★	Super-fast portrait prime designed to provide sufficient resolution for 50MP DSLRs			·			•		87.5		91.4	114.9	113
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM C	£1199		Budget 'Contemporary' version of Sigma's long-range telephoto zoom is smaller and lighter			·			·			95	105	260.1	193
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM S	£1599		This portable, high-performance telephoto zoom from Sigma's Sports line is dust and splashproof	•		·			·	•	260	105	121	290.2	280
TAMRON DSLR															
18-400mm f/3.5-6.3 Di II VC HLD	£650	4★	The longest-ranging telephoto zoom yet made turns in a surprisingly decent performance	•		·	•				45	72	79	123.9	71
24-70mm f/2.8 SP Di VC USD G2	£1249		Upgraded fast zoom with improved image stabilisation and moisture-resistant construction	•		·	•			÷	38	82	88.4	111	90
35mm f/1.4 SP Di USD	£930		Premium large-aperture prime with moisture-resistant construction, billed as Tamron's best-ever lens			·	•			÷	30	72	80.9	104.8	81
35mm f/1.8 SP Di VC USD	£580	4.5★	Moderately wide prime combines ultrasonic focusing, image stabilisation and a fast aperture	•	•	·	•			÷	20	67	80.4	80.8	48
70-200mm f/2.8 SP Di VC USD G2	£1350	5★	Excellent telephoto zoom with updated autofocus and image stabilisation plus sealed construction	•		·	•			·	95	77	88	193.8	150
70-210mm f/4 Di VC USD	£699	4.5★	Lightweight telezoom promises high optical performance, image stabilisation and weather-sealing	•		·	•			÷	95	67	76	176.5	86
100-400mm f/4.5-6.3 Di VC USD	£789	5★	Relatively compact and lightweight telephoto zoom with moisture-resistant construction	•		•				·	150	67	199	86.2	113
150-600mm f/5-6.3 SP Di VC USD G2	£1340		Popular long telephoto zoom that produces excellent results	•	·	·	•			÷	220	95	108.4	260.2	201
VOIGTLANDER DSLR															
28mm f/2.8 Aspherical SL II-S Color-Skopar	£499		Manual-focus wideangle prime for Nikon F-mount SLRs boasts high-quality metal construction								15	52	66.3	32.8	20
58mm f/1.4 SL II-S Nokton	£518		Large-aperture manual focus standard prime for Nikon SLRs, inlcuding classic film cameras							•	45	52	67.6	45.5	32
90mm f/2.8 APO-Skopar SL II-S	£529		Remarkably small and lightweight manual-focus short telephoto portrait prime					Т			90	52	66.3	41	26
ZEISS DSLR															
	£2329		This super-wideangle lens has an angle of view of 110° and uses an advanced retrofocus design								25	95	102.3	100.2	94
15mm f/2.8 Milvus														_	
18mm f/2.8 Milvus	£1999		Compact super-wideangle lens with premium optics including a floating focus system for close-ups			•	•			•		77	90 05 5	93	72
21mm f/2.8 Milvus	£1299		Premium wideangle lens with complex optics designed to be free of distortion			•					22	82	95.5	95	85
25mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1999	5★	Optically excellent, large-aperture manual focus wideangle lens with weather-sealed construction			·				•	25	82	95.2	123	12:
35mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1699		Large aperture, premium-quality manual-focus prime with weather-sealed construction			·				•	30	72	84.8	124.8	11
35mm f/2 Milvus	£829		Compact, moderate wideangle manual focus prime			·	•	F		•	30	58	77	83	70
50mm f/1.4 Planar T*	£559		Classic double-Gauss design manual focus standard prime for full-frame SLRs			·				·	45	58	71	71	38
50mm f/1.4 Milvus	£949	5★	An exceptionally good lens offering sharpness, detail, clean edges and a great user experience			·	•			·	45	67	82.5	94	92
50mm f/2 Milvus Macro	£949		Manual-focus macro lens with half-life-size magnification and stunning optics			·	·			·	24	67	81	75.3	73
35mm f/1.4 Planar T*	£989		Classic portrait prime designed to give smooth, rounded bokeh effects			·	•			÷	100	72	78	88	67
35mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1379	5★	Fast 85mm manual-focus prime lens that's perfect for portraiture			·	·			·	80	77	90	113	12
LOOmm f/2 Milvus Macro	£1299		A manual-focus macro lens with absolutely superb optics and half-life-size reproduction			·	•			÷	88	67	80.5	104	84
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n September 1992. Mark Power opened a kitchen drawer and pulled out a tea towel. On it was a map of the 31 sea areas covered by the Shipping Forecast. He'd bought it in the RNLI gift shop in Great Yarmouth in 1990 and had been musing on it a lot during those two years. He says: 'And then I just had this revelation, just go there, just go to the 31 areas and see what you find... it was like a bolt of lightning that just said, this is what you need to do.'

It's exactly 100 years since the Shipping Forecast was first broadcast, and seasoned BBC Radio 4 listeners will be familiar with its daily soundscape of humdrum tones. Names like Dogger, Fisher, German Bight, drifting in and out of radio consciousness, often late at night. Mark describes it as a wallpaper backdrop to his life.

For most of us, this acoustic seascape remains confined to our imagination. A geographical fiction floating somewhere beyond the radio waves. But Mark was young, he wanted to travel and the idea of physically visiting each of the 31 zones made perfect sense to him.

Imaginary worlds

Mark describes himself as a documentary photographer, but not in a literal sense. He explains photography is the ideal medium for the Shipping Forecast because it is good at dealing with abstract ideas. He wasn't interested in simply photographing significant points at each of the sea zones, he was curious about what might happen when the imaginary worlds of the radio seascapes he'd grown up with came face-to-face with the real geographical ones.

'And the best pictures were made in that first hour or two when I arrived somewhere because it was a bit of a shock that it was like it was, and it wasn't like I thought it would be,' says Mark. From this no-man's land of rich potential came this enigmatic picture, conflating fact and fiction in a way

'A vertical line separates the cold hard stone from the pale amorphous ocean'



Cromarty. Wednesday 18 August 1993. Variable 3 or less, becoming southwesterly 3 or 4, occasionally 5. Occasional rain later. Mainly good.

that photography does so well. Loaded with questions, it reveals very little yet offers so much, if you care to look.

A clear vertical line separates the cold hard stone from the pale amorphous ocean, one solid and stable, the other vaporous, unworldly. A horizontal gesture, echoed in rock, spans the two states. Is the boy poised to jump, or fly? Perhaps he is simply daydreaming, staring out to sea while his ghostly accomplice on his T-shirt challenges our gaze. Doubly framed, the two faces unnervingly collude, betraying a moment betwixt and between what is, and what might be. Fantasy 4 to 6

becoming variable. Reality otherwise moderate or rough.

The text, while informative, offers scant explanation. A label, a poem, words with meaning beyond what they say. Meanwhile, the rectangular frame of black & white evidence is fleetingly caught off guard. From sound waves to light waves, this nautical harbinger haunts and provokes.

The new re-edited version of The Shipping Forecast by Mark Power, published by GOST Books, contains an additional 103 images. Signed copies are available from Mark's website, www.markpower.co.uk

Maria Falconer MA, MSc., FRPS, is a photographic practitioner, teacher and writer. A Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, Maria runs various photography workshops across the UK and in Europe. For more on her latest workshops and to book your place, visit www.mariafalconer.co.uk





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