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Issue 276

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“As photographers, we are responsible for how future generations interpret our subject’s character”



Photography is a critical method of recording moments in history that will never happen again. This could be world history or somebody’s personal history, either way, as photographers, we are responsible for how future generations of viewers will interpret our subject’s character.

This issue, we gained an exclusive insight into the work of renowned music photographer, Jill Furmanovsky, from the perspective of the top-tier London photo gallery curating an exciting new exhibition of her images. From p14, find out how Proud Galleries designs and hosts a major exhibition that communicates a photographer’s brand and discover how working with a gallery can be your route to worldwide recognition.

Next up, explore the genre most commonly associated with capturing people’s everyday lives, street photography. From p36, delve into the practical techniques you need to faithfully record those random moments that come together perfectly. And if you’re going to document the world for posterity, the quality of your images is paramount. From p24, don’t miss our guide to improving the quality of your shots, reducing aberrations and squeezing every ounce of detail from any camera and lens.

Finally, networking with other creatives is essential for your progress as a visual storyteller, so we’re excited to be back hosting The Photography Show at the NEC, Birmingham on 16-19 March. All the main brands and top photographers will be there. Will you?

Peter Fenech, Editor
peter.fenech@futurenet.com



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© Bella Kotak

Digital Photographer

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Editorial

Editor **Peter Fenech**
peter.fenech@futurenet.com

Art Editor **Ben Smith**

Production Editor **Jon Crampin**

Technique Editor **Kim Bunermann**

Head of Art **Dean Usher**

Content Director **Chris George**

Contributors

Angela Nicholson, Claire Gillo, James Abbott, Matthew Richards, Gareth Bevan, James Artaius, Dan Mold, Ben Puletz, Jamie Canning, Jeremy Flint

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Advertising

Media packs are available on request

Head of Market, Advertising **Matthew Johnston**

mattjohnston@futurenet.com

Account Manager **Matt Bailey**

matt.bailey@futurenet.com +44 (0)330 390 6272

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Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw** licensing@futurenet.com

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Group Marketing Director **Sharon Todd**

Circulation

Newstrade & Retail Category Director **Ben Oakden**

Production

Head of Production **Mark Constance**

Senior Ad Production Manager **Jo Crosby**

Ad Production Coordinator **Chloe Whating**

Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**

Production Manager **Vivienne Calvert**

Management

Managing Director **Stuart Williams**

Global Head of Design **Rodney Dive**

Senior Vice President **Kevin Addley**

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For enquiries, please email: mfcommunications@futurenet.com

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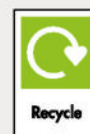
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Chief Financial and Strategy Officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244



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Our contributors



KIM BUNERMANN
As *Digital Photographer's* technique editor, Kim is well-versed in many photo topics. This

month, she explores the exciting genre of street photography and on p36, explains how to get amazing shots while remaining respectful. Kim has also written a silhouette shooting tutorial on p56 of the magazine.

Website: digitalcameraworld.com



SCOTT KELBY
Scott is a legend in photography education and a best-selling author of books on the topic.

In our Photo CV feature this issue, Scott talks about how he got started in the industry and gives us a sneak preview of what he's looking forward to seeing at The Photography and Video Show. Find his story on p70.

Website: lightroomkillertips.com



BELLA KOTAK
Her fairytale images are instantly recognisable for their beauty and delicate colours.

In this month's Interview spot, starting on p76 of the magazine, Bella gives us a fascinating glimpse into her creative process and the background motivation behind her signature photographic style.

Website: bellakotak.com



DIVYANSHU VERMA
India-based photographer, Divyanshu is self-taught but has grown to appreciate the

subtle interactions of light and how to capture the atmosphere of a moment. Discover the story behind his monochrome image in our Pro Analysis feature on p74, to see how he composed his minimalist shot.

Website: divyanshuverma.net



RYAN O'DONOGHUE
For something a little different this month, in our Pro Column on p114, Ryan takes us behind the scenes

of his fun toy photo project, Plastic Heads. He explains the background behind the series, how it got off the ground and why shooting macro portraits of plastic superheroes helps him rediscover the joy of childhood.

Website: ryanodonoghuephotographer.co.uk



JILL FURMANOVSKY
For over five decades, music photographer Jill has captured the biggest bands

on the planet. In our Shoot Like a Pro feature on p14, she gives an exclusive insight into her exhibition at **Proud Galleries**, whose team also provide vital advice on getting your work seen worldwide.

Website: jillfurmanovsky.com



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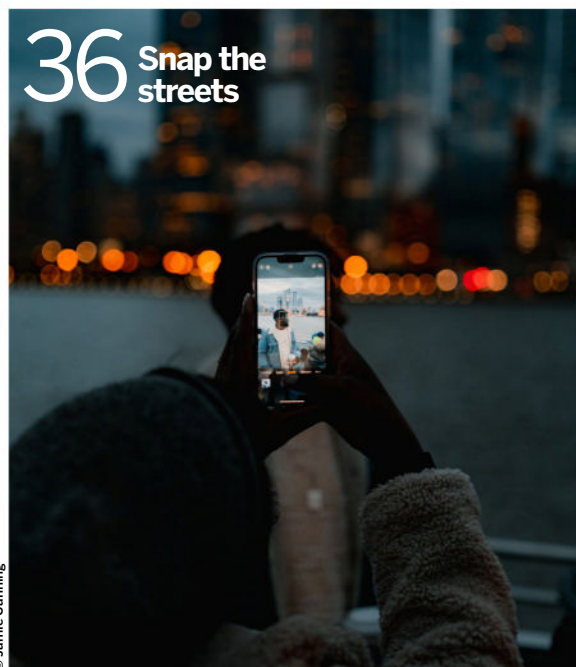
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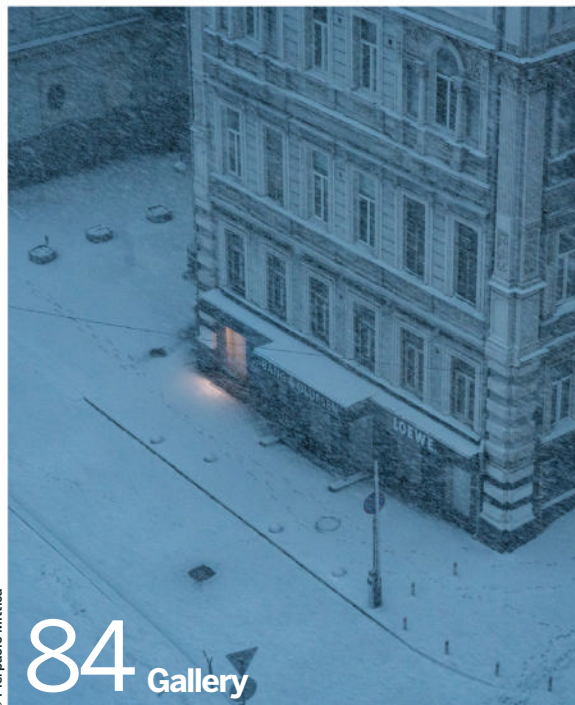


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© Peter Fenech

Gifts & giveaways

Free ebook to download Creative sport and action

Sports photography is infuriating, stressful, exhausting – and addictively good fun. Its ultra-fast-paced nature means a great deal of camera skill is required. The main challenges relate to correct exposure, shutter speeds, composition and accurate focusing. In this guide, we'll walk through the best techniques for capturing creative and innovative action images, with advice from some of the industry's leading sports photographers.

To claim your free ebook, visit <https://bit.ly/DPH276>



Enter our Photocrowd contests online to win Affinity prizes

Every month, we team up with Photocrowd – the world's leading photography competition platform – to offer you the chance to win an Affinity Photo editing software licence (worth £60 for Mac or Windows) and have your images printed in *Digital Photographer*. Affinity Photo is a toolset engineered for modern photography professionals. Whether you're editing and retouching images or creating full-blown multi-layered compositions, it has all the power and performance you'll need. For a chance to win, go to Photocrowd and discover our latest contest. It's easy, free and fun – we love seeing your entries!

Visit: www.photocrowd.com/digitalphotographer

Review test shots

We think test shots are important when it comes to reviewing and comparing the latest kit, but we know it's hard to tell the difference between test images when they are printed in the magazine. You can open, view and compare test shots from our kit reviews anywhere you see the download icon, pictured on the right.



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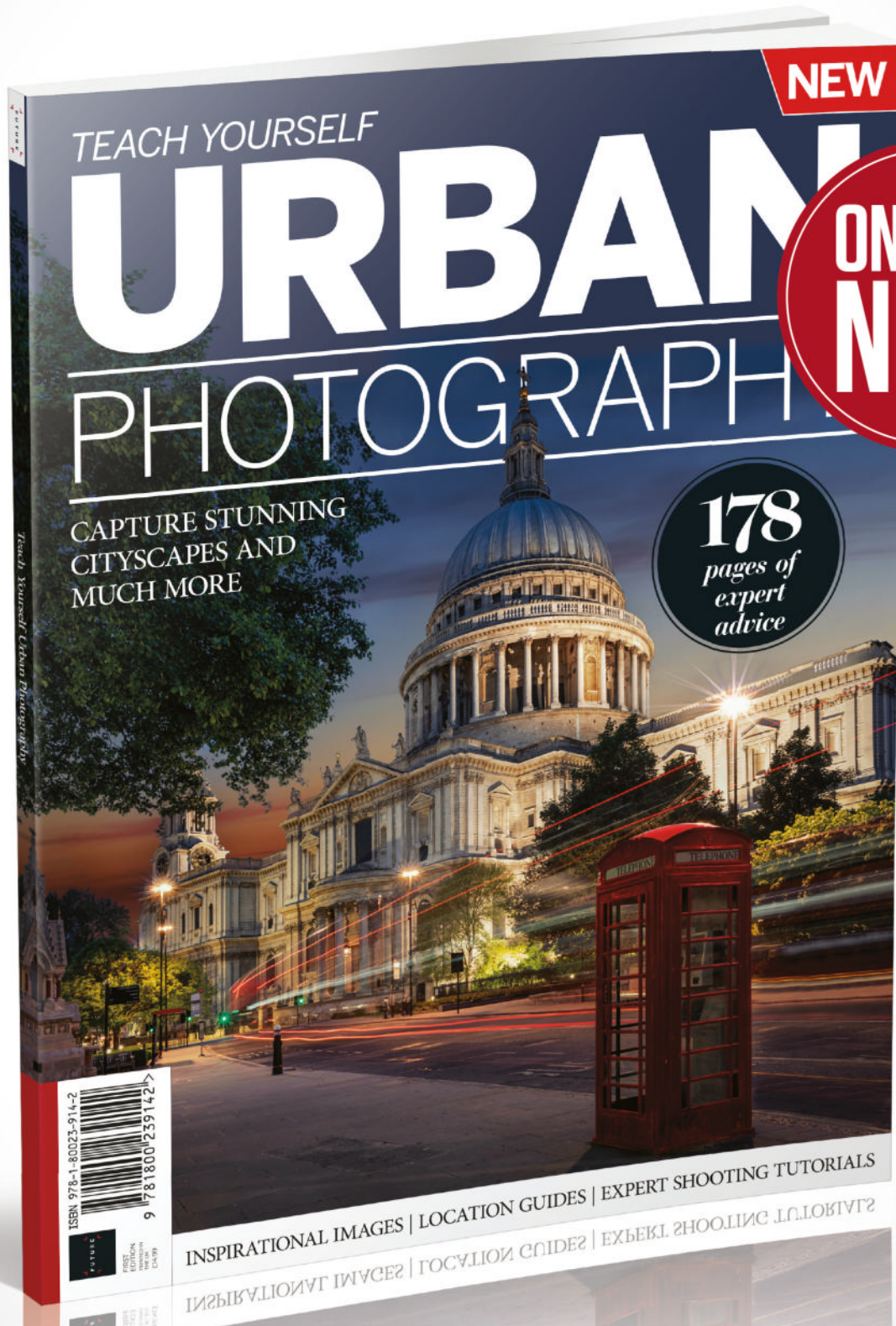
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PANASONIC LUMIX G100D SET TO HIT UK AFTER LOW-KEY JAPANESE LAUNCH

The 'new' Panasonic Lumix G100D offers a couple of minor updates for content creation, including a new electronic viewfinder and USB-C port

 In early December last year, Panasonic confirmed that its new Lumix G100D would build on the existing Lumix G100 (G110) model in Japan and it has now confirmed that the camera will also be released in the United Kingdom. Before you get too excited, updates are fairly minimal and the G100D is more of an evolution rather than a revolution: it is cosmetically identical to its predecessor, apart from a new EVF and USB-C connection.

The new EVF is a slightly lower resolution than the G100, featuring a 2.36-million-dot screen, although will be an OLED panel with

0.74x magnification, this is changed from the 3.6m dot LCD viewfinder with 0.73x magnification in the Lumix G100. The other significant change is an upgrade from the older micro-USB port to a newer and more modern USB Type-C USB 2.0 port, which should allow for faster data transfer and the use of more of the cables already used with other modern devices.


The G100 is a small and compact camera with a Micro Four Thirds sensor, it is one of the best cameras for vlogging and a top travel camera too. The G100 packs in Panasonic's renowned 4K video, as

well as interchangeable lenses for a more professional look to your footage. With its entry-level price tag and easy-to-use controls, the camera is also ideal for photo and video beginners – Panasonic claims that it offers the perfect body to learn and grow with.

The Lumix G100D was released in Japan on 26th January and we expect the UK release to follow shortly after. The Panasonic Lumix G100D will be launched in a few different kits, including a Lumix DC-G100DW double lens kit and the Lumix DC-G100DV kit, which comes with a lens and tripod.

panasonic.com/uk

Laowa launches its first autofocus optic with the 10mm f/2.8 Zero-D FF

 Laowa has launched its first lens with autofocus in the form of the Laowa 10mm f/2.8 Zero-D FF.

It's set to be available in Sony E, Nikon Z, Canon RF and L mounts, with the Sony E and Nikon Z featuring autofocus. Laowa describes the new optic as a 'game-changer' with a weight of just 420g and an ultra-wide viewing angle of 130.4°.

The autofocus performance of this lens is said to be nothing short of superb, rivalling some of the best on the market. With features like the signature Zero-D distortion, an ultra-short 12mm

close focusing distance and versatility for ultra-wide portrait, landscape and astrophotography.


Its wide maximum aperture of f/2.8 will make it ideal for low light, shooting interiors of buildings or astrophotography and can transform street lights into 10-point sun stars when shooting cities at night. Laowa also claims that the optic has been refined for videography and delivers remarkable image quality with 'close-to-zero' distortion. Pricing and availability are yet to be announced. venuslens.net



© Laowa

Epson's new 17-inch printer targets the blues

A2-sized prints, 200ml cartridges and a new violet ink are the key attractions of this new large-format printer

 Epson's SureColor P5300 series inkjet introduces a new high-capacity 10-colour pigmented ink set called UltraChrome PRO10. Known as the SC-P5300 in Europe, the pro printer comes in high-capacity 200ml cartridges and includes a new colour, Violet Ink, designed for a deeper range of blues. There are also dedicated channels for the photo and matte black inks, so there's no need for ink switching, which saves time and reduces ink waste.

The P5300 is a 17-inch format printer, which means that it can print up to A2 size (17x22in) on cut sheets, but it will also accept paper rolls for panoramas.

The printer has an updated version of Epson's 'Micro Piezo AMC' print head, which uses the company's 'Variable Sized Droplet Technology' (VSDT) to give a maximum resolution of 5760x1440dpi. This ensures the finer detailing delivered by the higher-resolution digital camera can be accurately reproduced. Additionally, there's a 'Carbon Black' mode that



© Epson


increases the DMax value, giving richer blacks and enhanced contrast when printing on glossy paper. The print head employs 180 nozzles per colour.

Also on the specs is a large 4.3in colour LCD touchscreen control panel; Ethernet, USB and Wi-Fi connectivity; built-in roll

paper cutter and the Epson Print Layout software for easier and more efficient print production. The Epson SureColor P5300 is available to buy now, priced £2,035, with the 200ml UltraChrome PRO10 inks costing £96 each. epson.co.uk

Godox gets flashy with smart triggers

Say goodbye to bulky flash triggers as Godox drops a small, sleek and extremely powerful touchscreen trigger

 Lighting manufacturer Godox has released a new TTL wireless flash trigger. The Xnano will be available for Canon, Nikon, Sony, Fujifilm and Olympus. The Xnano is small and sleek and looks a bit like an Apple Watch that sits on the hotshoe, perfect for minimising equipment space and improving workflow. It's entirely touchscreen, enabling easy navigation through menus and setting changes. Many flash triggers can take a while to get used to, with buttons often doubling up to offer different functions. The new clear OLED touchscreen option enables the user to simply press or swipe to the desired settings, which also improves workflow speed and efficiency for established shooters.

The Xnano also offers versatile performance benefits from features such as TTL, multiflash mode, HSS, front curtain sync and rear curtain sync. Godox claims that "Xnano's two-way TCM allows for instant and effortless conversion between TTL mode and Manual Mode" for further versatility. Using the 2.4GHz Godox Wireless X system, the Xnano "enables effortless and reliable management of your Godox lighting setup," the company adds. The Godox Xnano is available to pre-order now, priced £83.

godox.com



© Godox

In other news

More snippets of photography news from around the world

TTARTISAN ANNOUNCES A 10MM f/2 ULTRA-WIDE ANGLE LENS FOR JUST £169

TTArtisan has announced an ultra-wide-angle 10mm f/2 ASPH for all APS-C mounts, including Nikon Z and Canon RF, for just £169. The TTArtisan APS-C 10mm f/2 ASPH has been developed for APS-C cameras and is available for Sony E, Fujifilm X, Nikon Z and Canon RF and MFT mounts. The 10mm is a return to the typical manual focus and the f/2 is available to purchase now.

NEW VOIGTLÄNDER RF 40MM f/1.2 NOKTON


Cosina has announced the release of the Voigtlander Nokton 40mm f/1.2 Aspherical for Canon RF-mount cameras – offering a big aperture standard prime for much less than Canon's own version. Voigtlander's second RF mount Nokton boasts eight elements in six groups and has a 10-bladed aperture. The 40mm f/1.2 lens has a planned release date of early 2024, but pricing details have yet to be announced.



STORY
BEHIND
THE STILL



Photographer: Ben Pulletz

 @benpulletz

Website: www.feathersandhills.com

Image location: Glastonbury Tor, Somerset, UK

Type of commission: Personal

Shot details: Canon EOS 5D Mark IV,
Canon EF100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM,
1/100 sec, f/5, ISO 800



About the shot: The beauty of a sunrise has long been a source of inspiration for photographers worldwide – including 21-year-old Ben Pulletz, who has already won many international awards for his work. After discovering a passion for photography just five years ago, Ben has made it his mission to capture the magic of an early morning through his lens. “I believe in spending long hours researching locations, early mornings and a lot of dedication to capturing amazing pictures of nature – no giving up!” he says.

When Ben arrived at the location in Somerset, the first thing he noticed was the soft glow of the dawn sky. The sun had just

Above

A misty sunrise at the Tor

Ben’s image offers a fresh perspective of this well-known scene, but it was the layering that initially drew him in – from the cows in the foreground to the Glastonbury Tor at the back

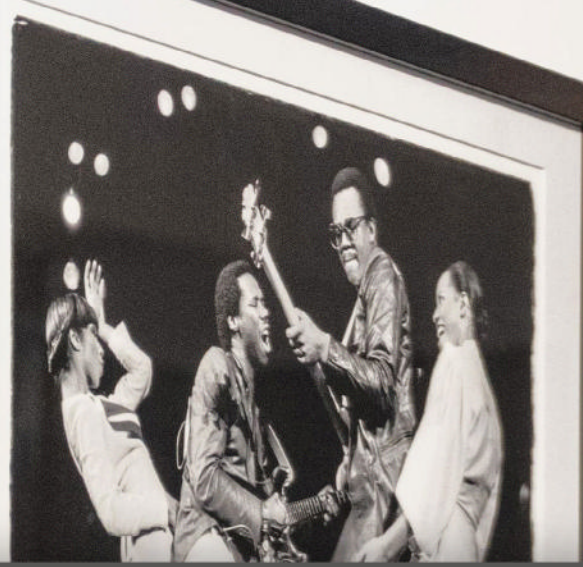
begun to rise behind Glastonbury Tor and the warm light and golden hues were illuminating the landscape. “Just as the colours were starting to get vibrant, I saw the cows walking towards the gate, probably waiting for the farmer to arrive with some hay,” he says.

Ben was attracted by these elements, which compelled him to capture the scene. “There are many pictures of Glastonbury

Tor already out there, so I wanted something different from the usual sun behind the Tor,” he says. “The cows play a big part of the shot but the layering is what drew me in – the bulrushes in front of the mist and the early morning glow firing up the mist. All these elements make this shot come together.”

Despite the strong winds, Ben decided to take the shot handheld, leaning against a car to help avoid camera shake. “I didn’t want to miss that moment before the clouds in the distance had moved on,” he says. Ben captured multiple shots of the scene as the cows moved, ensuring he had an image with them ideally positioned in the frame.

SHOOT LIKE A PRO



DISPLAY COPY

Peter Fenech visits **Proud Galleries** for an exclusive look behind the scenes of a major photo exhibition and to learn how to curate a successful collection





SHOOT LIKE A PRO



“Buying art is special. The experience in a gallery is almost as important as the product”

It is often said that photographers don't print enough of their images in the modern day. With storage solutions allowing tens of thousands of digital files to be archived, recalled and viewed instantly across multiple platforms, there is little motivation for many to commit their photographs to paper. This does raise some serious

questions about the longevity of our current photographic database – will future generations be able to access all of the shots we take today and, if not, how can we generate a future-proof visual time capsule of our age? Thankfully, there are still photographers such as Jill Furmanovsky around, who are dedicated to crafting physical print archives. There are also

businesses like Proud Galleries, whose mission is to curate and present these vital collections in a way that tells a detailed story. I'm on my way to visit the Gallery, to discover what it takes to host a major exhibition and to find out what photographers can do to make their work narratively and commercially successful.

As I approach the charmingly traditional building just a stone's throw from Trafalgar Square, I'm struck by the tranquillity of this central London street, compared to the bustle of the nearby Strand and Charing Cross station. I'm greeted by gallery assistant, Brad, who gives me a quick tour of the main space. I can already see that it is making Jill's images jump off the walls, capturing their energy, so I ask Brad what makes Proud unique in the way they work.

“Proud Galleries is special because it preserves and

celebrates the stories and iconic moments of famous rock and roll and music artists from the past,” he says. “Our mission is to let collectors relive some of these movements through the medium of photography and to create exhibitions that transport visitors into the worlds of these legendary figures. We aim to make these stories accessible and engaging, fostering a connection between the audience and the cultural heritage of music history.”

So, what is the first step in the creation process of an exhibition – does a photographer usually approach the gallery or is there an outreach element from Proud?

“We receive a high number of portfolios from artists interested in exhibiting at Proud Galleries,” says Brad. “Given our business model, it is vital that we select photographers with work that is commercially viable enough

Proud Galleries

Founded in 1988 by Alex Proud, the gallery was originally established in Camden Town at the heart of London's most vibrant artistic and music scenes. In its early years, Proud Galleries gained recognition for its focus on rock and roll photography and continues to play a significant role in the popularisation of pop culture imagery in the contemporary UK market. For more information, visit proudgalleries.com





Common misconceptions

Things you should know before your first exhibition

When asked about the most misunderstood aspects of holding a major photo show, Brad says that it is important to manage expectations.

“The biggest misconception that an artist could have before their first exhibition is the guarantee of success. The art market can be volatile and

there is no way to promise that collectors will want to purchase a new artist’s work as most have their own distinct taste,” Brad explains.

“There is also no guarantee that one exhibition will lead to other opportunities to exhibit or instant industry-wide recognition. Another

thing that artists should know before their first exhibition is the costs that they are expected to cover. For example, at Proud Galleries, we usually cover the promotion, framing and installation but for most shows, we expect the artist to provide prints of their work.”

for us to cover our overheads. As a result, the majority of our exhibitions are proposed by us to the artist, although we are always grateful to receive submissions,” he adds. We head to the back of the gallery, where a video of Jill and her friend Noel Gallagher of Oasis is playing on a screen. I ask what the main criteria for selecting images in the initial stages of curation are – what kinds of images or subject matter are normally preferred?

“This is something that we collaborate with our artists on and so, for most exhibitions, image selection tends to very much be a joint effort,” says Brad. “I often find that selecting artworks is more of an art in itself than a science – it is best judged with the feeling that you get from a photograph and whether it will add to the exhibition aesthetically and thematically,” he adds.



The photographer's view

Jill Furmanovsky on the exhibiting experience



For over 50 years, Jill Furmanovsky has photographed the world's most famous musical artists, documenting the rise of rock legends including Pink Floyd, Bob Marley, Oasis and The Police to name just a few. She founded the Rockarchive photo agency in 1998 and her work has appeared on everything from album covers to music

magazines and books, and is widely recognised all over the world. See more of Jill's work at: jillfurmanovsky.com

Visit the Rockarchive collection: rockarchive.com

What's the most positive aspect of holding your latest exhibition, *No Music No Life*, at Proud Galleries?

Proud is well located in central London and the staff have a lot of experience with rock and roll photography. I'm particular about how I show the work but I like to 'wing it' too and Javier and Brad have been patient and helpful, which meant the whole thing has been really good fun.

What was the thought process behind *No Music No Life*, and how did you, your team and the people at the Gallery make this a reality?

'No Music No Life' is a smaller version of my 50-year retrospective exhibition, *Photographing The Invisible*, which was at Manchester's Central Library. Unbelievably, there is still no decent rock and roll museum in the UK and no touring circuit for this kind of exhibition either.

So I was delighted when Proud offered to step in so London fans could see part of it. Both exhibitions were designed and printed by the inspired team at Rockarchive, the company I founded 26 years ago, to highlight the art of music photography. In Manchester and London, MPB, the camera equipment company, sponsored the printing and framing.

For photographers without experience of holding an exhibition, it can be a daunting idea. What are some of the greatest concerns and how can these be overcome?



It can also be very expensive in time as well as financially. Rockarchive has avoided paying fees to rent exhibition spaces, instead, we have worked with public libraries.

Proud actually has some frames they can provide. Some others do too, but most don't. Printing can be costly but is less expensive than it used to be. Silver gelatin prints are wonderful but cost around £100 each for a 20x16in print. I like good quality paper for digital prints but have also used a thin fabric-like material which goes up like wallpaper. It's good for montages and leaves no trace when removed.

Installation is a cost factor too. Proud's team did the hanging themselves but with Manchester Central Library, we had to get in professionals. Captioning and sign writing are sometimes forgotten in budgeting but they are important. At the curation stage, it helps to have someone with computer-aided design (CAD) skills to plan the layout.

If you don't have much budget, there are other ways. I've seen prints at exhibitions pegged onto washing lines and it can look cool. It's also possible to do great things with digital projection and that may be the way to go in the future.



"However, there are some general points of consideration for image selection: relevance to the exhibition theme, artistic and technical quality, originality, consistency with other displayed artworks, market appeal, a photograph's history and previous exposure, coherence with Proud Galleries' brand and practical limitations – although this isn't usually an issue with photography, as images can be printed in different sizes," he says.

Brad demonstrates the versatility of photographic display opportunities by directing me to 'the pole' – a building support around which is pasted a series of Jill's images, proving you can really push creative boundaries with this type of imagery.

I ask Brad about the typical timeline for planning an exhibition – how long does it take to plan and how long should it run for?

"We're very flexible. We choose a date to work towards but not until we've decided on the photographer. We then work with them and their team. It wouldn't be in our best interests to be overly stubborn about dates because some people just wouldn't be able to meet those deadlines and so couldn't feature," Brad explains.

"Some galleries may feel like they are doing photographers a favour, especially if they are early on in their careers, but we like to be accommodating and tend to work with high-profile people. Usually, we get the date ironed out no later than around six weeks before the show starts so we can market and promote it properly and do all the physical prep. We ask that all the material be here two weeks before the launch so we can quality-check everything and renovate the



Proud Galleries' tips for a successful portfolio

- **The right audience:** Does your work fit the brand of the gallery? It is important that your work fits in with the type of work the gallery usually specialises in so that their client base will be able to engage with your work. Shoot images with this in mind or choose a collection from your portfolio that demonstrates this synergy.
- **Consider flow:** Your shots should have some kind of story and continuity. While part of this depends on gallery space and type, give some thought beforehand to what your images have in common and how you can capitalise on these themes. This will make it easier later in the process when choosing the order of your images and even things like frames and mounts.
- **Sales record:** While some galleries are happy to work with new and emerging artists, photographers would be able to make a much more convincing pitch if it seems likely that your work will maintain or increase their current revenue.
- **Enjoy the whole process:** As previously mentioned, it is unlikely that one exhibition will instantly lead to critical and financial success, so make sure that you have fun with it, be open to feedback and ensure that you display the highest-quality work that you can.



space. The week before opening, we spend hanging and doing last-minute checks," he says.

"Regarding the duration, it varies quite a bit but, next year, I'm hoping to move it so that we're on a two-month cycle. That means we can run about five big shows per year with some time in between, which seems to be the ideal amount for us. This show and our previous Brian May exhibition were planned to be up to three months."

As Brad shows me down to the basement gallery space, I ask him how he plans the layout of the images, for example, whether colour and mono prints should be displayed together.

"Usually, it's fine to mix them together as long as there isn't an obvious clash. If there are six black and white shots and one colour, it could detract from the impact of both," he says. Brad comments on the quality and consistency of the frames, which gets me thinking about the logistics of sharing the costs between all parties concerned.

"As far as exhibition costs go, we do the marketing, printing the posters and labels and the framing and mounting. We only ask the artist to provide the prints. At the end of the show, you can take them all home or leave a few

for us to add to our permanent collection, which can be shown to passing clients," Brad says. We walk past two large prints of the Gallagher brothers, the Rockarchive branding subtly emblazoned on a plaque above.

"We usually work on a 50:50 split, so we have an incentive to sell as much of their work as possible. That might feel rough to a painter, where everything is an original, but with photography, everything is a reproduction, maybe a run





of 50 editions, so that works for everyone," he says. We head back upstairs and as Brad sorts through photography portfolios for some upcoming exhibitions, I ask him for his thoughts on the growing trend of digital or virtual galleries and whether Proud Galleries would consider entering this relatively new arena.

"Absolutely not! While we have seen the march towards digital, NFTs and the like, these things tend to come and go and not amount to much. I don't think it's feasible for us from a sales perspective. People come to the gallery because they want to see artworks up close and buy a physical object. One thing that

could work is adding a bigger online sales platform, which might be good for our international clients who can't visit the gallery. However, 'going digital' would feel like a regressive step." As we do another sweep of the main gallery, I'm struck by the dedication and thought that Brad and the team at Proud Galleries have put

into conveying the artist's story. It's a reminder of why physical collections are vital to preserving the art of photography but, as always, there's the bottom line. "Buying art is special – it's a luxury item," says Brad. "So, the buying experience and customer service in a gallery are almost as important as the product."

Jill's favourite photo gear



1 Leica M10-P "My favourite go-to camera is a Leica M10-P. I was inspired to buy it by the brilliant work of *The Guardian's* maestra, Sarah Lee. I love the feel of it and, being old school, I fully understand how it works because it's simple."



2 Canon EOS R5 "To replace my well-used Canons, I recently bought a mirrorless Canon EOS R5. I'm using it with an adapter so I can use my old lenses. It's still a learning curve for me. I need to watch more tutorials – so many buttons!"



3 Leica Summilux-M 50 f/1.4 ASPH Jill likes to use a 50mm f/1.4 lens with her Leica M10-P. While the manual focus can be frustrating, the wide aperture lets in lots of light for her performance photography and controls the DOF well.



4 Leica 35mm f/2 Summicron-M Jill's second favourite Leica lens is a 35mm, which is ideal for those wider environmental portraits where she needs to get more of a location in for context. It also offers a natural view, with little distortion.



5 Canon EOS 5D Mark III This 22MP DSLR is a classic of the digital age and features an advanced 61-point autofocus and 6fps continuous shooting, which is ideal for Jill's work capturing musicians in challenging lighting conditions.

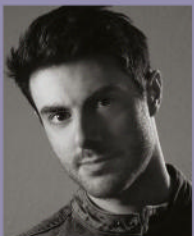


6 Canon EOS 5D Mark IV As a Canon fan, Jill found the Mark IV was a natural successor to the Mk III. Upgrades included a 30.4MP full-frame sensor and 7fps shooting, along with a top native ISO of 32,000. It also added 4K video recording.

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TECHNIQUES

PRO WAYS TO

MAXIMISE

IMAGE QUALITY



Shoot and edit your best-ever digital files by understanding how to make your cameras and lenses perform at their very best

Words © Peter Fenech

The concept of image quality is an abstract one that we have all become accustomed to hearing, without necessarily stopping to consider in detail. We often associate the idea with camera and lens specifications to such an extent that it can feel as if the integrity of our photos is beyond our control, being purely dependent on pixel count, processor type and fancy optical coatings. Of course, the technical

quality of an image file is controlled to some extent by the resolution of the camera's sensor – on some cameras, this is even accessed by a button named 'Image Qual'.

However, it is wrong to assume that upgrading your camera kit will automatically produce higher-quality images – it is better to understand your gear and know how and when it performs at its best. This has never been more true of today's digital cameras. As new features are added to ever-expanding

menu options, it is vital to recognise what each item is designed for and how you can use it to your own advantage.

Quality is in the eye of the beholder but, by exploring all the tools your kit is equipped with and reassessing how you put them to use when shooting, you can reveal a plethora of ways to get the maximum colour, resolution and sharpness from your bodies and lenses. Here are 10 features and techniques you can use to create better RAW files or jpegs today.



Pictured
Pin sharp

Achieving absolute image quality is a two-stage process that involves knowing your camera kit and how to control it in any shooting conditions

© Jeremy Flint

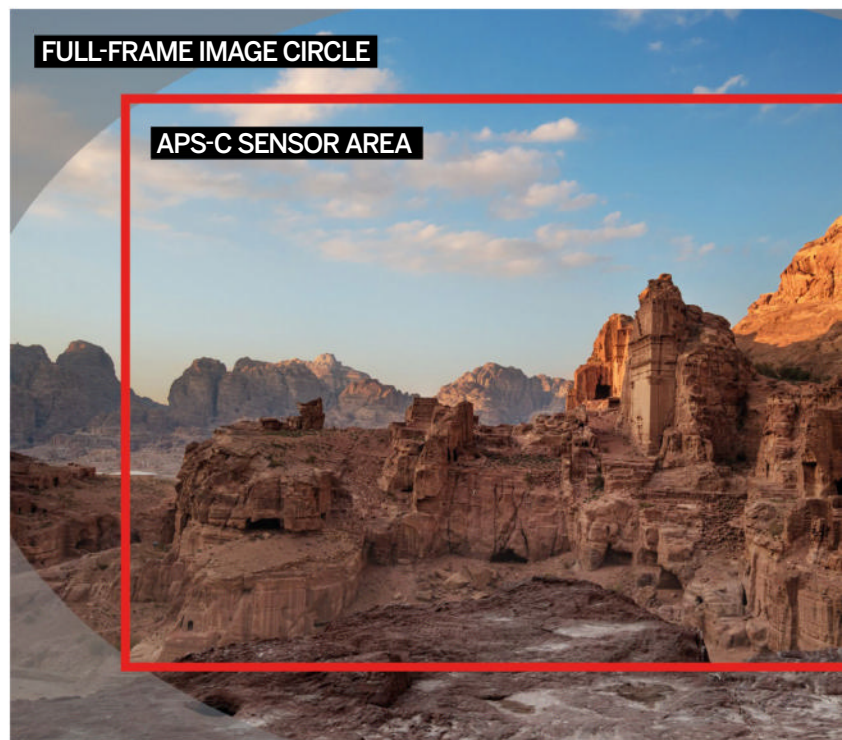


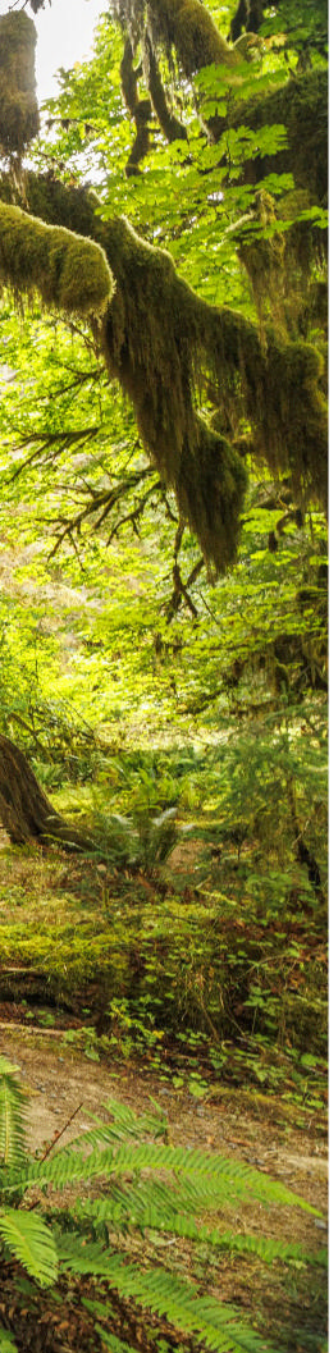
Pictured
Low light dream team
 For the maximum stated image stabilisation (IS) effectiveness, such as up to 8 stops, it is often necessary to pair modern mirrorless lenses with cameras featuring dual IS, with sensor-shift IBIS

1 Cheat the image circle

Sometimes using the 'wrong lens' is the best way to achieve better-quality shots

When deciding to settle on a system, the variety of lens mount types and formats can be overwhelming. However, while having cameras with different-sized sensors can be problematic, it can also be advantageous. Buying a full-frame lens for your APS-C or Micro 4/3 format camera will mean that the image circle is considerably larger than the sensor area. This effectively eliminates the frame edges – where any lens, even a pro model, performs at its weakest. Vignetting is reduced, centre-edge sharpness is more consistent and distortion is minimised. You have the additional weight to contend with and, potentially, adaptors to consider but 'buying bigger' than you need also future-proofs subsequent upgrades to a larger sensor camera. The grey areas in the image show zones of weak sharpness.





© Jeremy Flint



CROP MODES

Many full-frame cameras feature APS-C crop modes, producing greater magnification from the lens in use. While this can be useful for sports, where image turnover is a priority, for longevity it is better to shoot at full resolution and enjoy full, re-editable control of cropping in software

2 Avoid close focusing

Even macro lenses have a hidden weakness at short working distances

Many lenses have a 'macro mode' or can focus down to short working distances from the subject. However, regardless of whether your optic can produce life-size, 1:1 reproductions, 1:2 half-life-size or significantly less, there's a chance the lens won't perform at its best

at the closest focusing distance. Every lens is designed to resolve detail optimally at a set distance and the extremes on either side of this will see sharpness fall off.

The floating element design of newer models goes some way to helping with this but unless

you need to fill the frame with the subject, taking a step back and framing wider, then cropping your shot can improve apparent sharpness. This is a combination of superior lens performance and using only the centre of the frame, similar to technique 1.

3 Drag the shutter

Work flash into your shots for greater sharpness with natural lighting

1 Take a reading Start in Program or Aperture Priority mode, take an exposure reading from the subject and then switch to Manual mode. By entering the measured settings, you'll be able to prevent the exposure from changing as you recompose the shot.

2 Set flash power Activate the flash and set the power just high enough that it begins to fill in some of the shadows on the subject. Start at 1/64 power or lower and only increase this if your subject still appears soft.

3 Control background exposure Since your shutter speed is going to be lower than ideal, your shot may already be balanced. If the flash is still too visible or the background is showing light fall-off, lower the shutter speed until the lighting is even.





© Jeremy Flint

4 Shoot tethered

Get a better insight into the true quality of your exposures

Even when shooting in RAW format, the image you see on your camera's LCD is a jpeg preview and the associated histogram and highlight alerts are readouts from that. Since jpegs have a more limited dynamic range, this is unlikely to be the most accurate assessment of your file quality. Tethering your camera allows you to instantly view the true RAW file in your dedicated RAW software, gaining a valid analysis of clipping and tonal distribution. While this is often impractical when out in the field, for studio work, it is an easy step towards achieving the best possible signal-noise ratio, detail and colour capture your camera and lens combination can output.



© Getty Images

Pictured

Focus hazards

Uniform detail, such as these sand dunes, can confuse AF systems. Make sure your lenses are correctly calibrated, while setting pre-focus to improve accuracy



5 Banish backlighting woes

Reduce flare when shooting towards strong light sources

A popular look in modern lifestyle portrait and wedding photography is to shoot into the light, with the sun or a flash behind the subject. This can introduce significant ghosting and flare effects, even when using lenses equipped with advanced coatings.

One quick solution is to shoot wide open at the lens's maximum aperture. This reduces the flare caused by the diaphragm

to diffused washes of colour that are easier to remove in editing or leave as an attractive glow. For landscape photography, consider shooting two frames at different f/stops – one for a broader depth of field and another with reduced hard flare. The two frames can be combined using layer masking. Alternatively, focus stacking allows a wider aperture setting to be used.



LIGHTING COLOUR

Due to the default pixel bias of most camera sensors, caused by the colour filter array, the blue and red channels are subject to a noise disadvantage. Where practical, avoiding images taken under single-colour blue or red lighting will produce cleaner files at any ISO



© Jeremy Flint

6 Preset focus distance

Quickly nail perfect focus by pre-empting the subject position

Modern AF systems are incredibly accurate, but there are times when your shooting position is sub-optimal, with obstructions between your lens and subject. Vegetation, for example, can cause the focus to slip to foreground elements and the shift might be minor enough that you won't see the subsequent lack of sharpness until post-production. One helpful feature of modern high-end lenses is pre-set distance focusing, allowing you to program a custom distance that the lens shifts to when you press a function button. Take a test shot with focus set at the estimated distance, check sharpness and depth-of-field, then enter that distance as the preset. When the subject arrives, tap the button for superior focus accuracy.



© Getty Images

7 Activate Pre-shooting

This increasingly popular feature can vastly improve your sharpness hit rate

Features we're starting to see more regularly on newer mirrorless cameras are Pre-shooting or RAW burst. With this mode active, the camera starts to record shots to the image buffer when the shutter release is

half-pressed. This means that a series of files can be captured quicker, pre-empting the perfect moment. This is a big deal, as it can capture the subject closer to the instant you recognise a photo opportunity and reduces

the delay caused by your putting your eye to the viewfinder, potentially capturing a sharper view of a rapid subject. Files are then written into a single RAW file, which can be extracted in software.



Pictured

Part of the process

With the latest software, it is possible to take edits further without artefacts developing, so for better results, try re-processing your older RAW files

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Pictured
Full spectrum
 Knowing how your camera responds to individual colours and manages each channel can help target your workflow to protect the most at-risk tones, for example, if it turns lush greens a yellowish colour

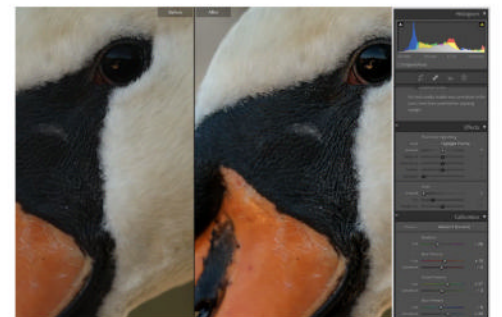
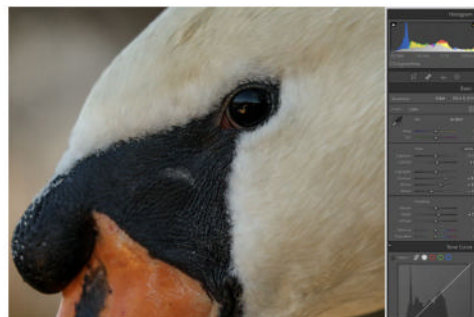
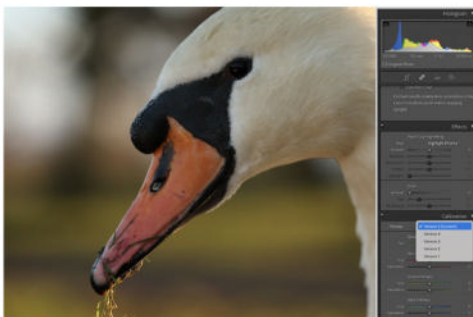
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8 Apply new colour science

Breath new life into your older RAW files with updated algorithms

As editing software is updated, colour and sharpness processing is improved. With the latest versions of the software, it is often possible to take edits further without artefacts developing than in past versions.

The Process Version can have a significant impact on the appearance of your images, so it is a great idea to try re-processing older RAW files to see if you can produce better results.



1 Select Process Version In the software you originally processed the RAW image, ensure you have the latest version then check you have the most recent Process active. In Lightroom, this is found in the Calibration Tab. With other applications, open your RAW and sidecar files in the new software.

2 Tweak the tonality New algorithms also impact the treatment of shadows and highlights. While the dynamic range of a file is decided at capture, improved software tools can extract greater detail without emphasising noise as much, so readjust the tonal range now, before further colour amendments.

3 Adjust Calibration In the Calibration Tab or similar dialogue, experiment with the colour control sliders to adjust how each channel is represented. The updated algorithms improve how saturation increases look, such as under Blue Primary, allowing you to take adjustments further than before.



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9 Sensor-shift supremacy

Maximise resolution when you need it the most while saving on storage

Cameras with pixel counts above 30 million (30MP) are often most at home in the kit bag of a product, commercial or advertising photographer as the file sizes produced are impractical for the majority of use cases. However, there are times when more pixels are essential for a specific shoot and when this happens, sensor-shift high-resolution modes can be just the ticket.

Make sure you mount your camera on a tripod, then activate high-resolution mode from the Custom Function or Image Quality menu. Check your remaining image counter for the memory card in use, as this will drop considerably with this mode engaged. If the file size exceeds the actual remaining number, you could risk corrupting the card and losing all previously saved files.

Left

Cool and crisp

Every lens, including professional models, have an optimal aperture setting. Become familiar with how your optic performs at each focal length and f/stop

Right

Go large

Sometimes ultra-high resolutions are needed for a customer or because you want to print a large image. The sensor-shift mode on many modern cameras can help here

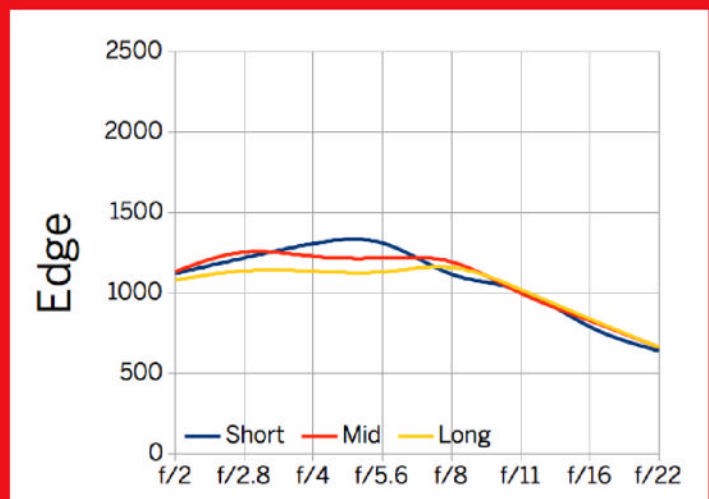
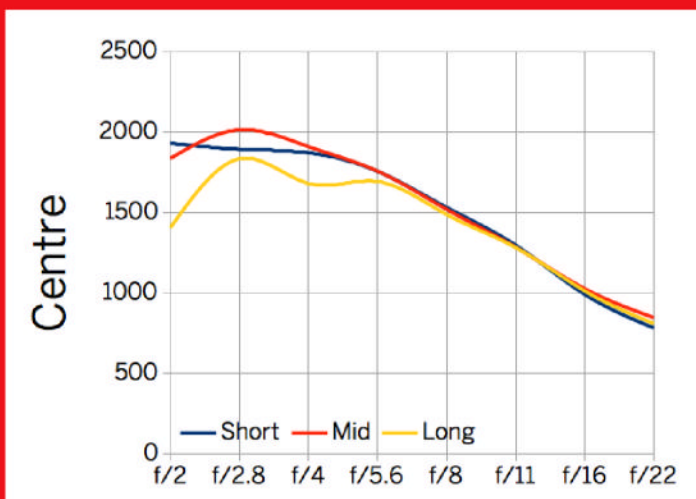
10 Understand lens behaviour

Get to know exactly when your optics perform at their very best

It is fairly well known that each lens has an optimal f/stop for resolution and that neither shooting wide-open or stopped down to f/22 and beyond will produce the best sharpness. While many photographers know that stopping down by around 2EV

will help, you can take this a step further and find your lens's specific sharpness sweet spot. Each model varies in the exact setting that will produce the best combination of sharpness and contrast. Refer to the manufacturer's website and

find the MTF (Modular Transfer Function) chart for your lens. All you have to look for is where the lines representing contrast and resolution are at their peak, which might be a little on either side of 2 stops from the maximum aperture.



BE COOL

A major cause of image noise is the internal components of the sensor and processor heating up and worsening the signal-to-noise ratio. Where time allows, such as between outfit changes on a portrait shoot or location changes at a wedding, switch off your camera to allow it time to cool down.



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Pictured

Light exercise

Natural lighting plays a big role in street photography. Ordinary street corners can be transformed by the changing light

SNAP THE STREETS

Get into position, observe and press the shutter – street photography sounds simple, but there’s an art to capturing images with a lasting impression

Words by Kim Bunermann
All images by Jamie Canning

French photographer Robert Doisneau famously said, “The marvels of daily life are exciting; no movie director can arrange the unexpected that you find in the street.” And nowhere is this more true than in street photography – the streets bring people together who may not otherwise have crossed paths. Indeed, the most thrilling aspect of street photography lies in the unexpected combinations of people and their actions that come together fortuitously for the perfect shot.

Observing the way in which people interact is an important element of street photography, allowing you to capture people off-guard while going about their business. Walking the streets with a camera in hand and watching what’s happening around you is not just the best way to discover the city but also to practice your photographic skills. However, it is important to remain discreet when doing so.

Urban areas offer plenty of opportunities to capture images that celebrate everyday life. However, certain times of the day offer a greater potential for capturing catching situations, such as the end of working hours when people are heading to public transport. Events such as exhibitions,

fashion shows and conventions also offer the opportunity to frame unique characters amid the hustle and bustle of the city.

Over the next few pages, we will cover everything you need to know about street photography. With pro advice from photographer Jamie Canning, we’ll cover everything from choosing the right gear to using your camera’s automatic modes to best effect. We’ll also look at remaining discreet when capturing authentic street scenes and respecting people’s privacy.

Jamie Canning



Jamie Canning is a street photographer from south Wales. His role as a public servant in the UK has finely tuned Jamie’s ability to observe and understand people

in various situations. This experience translates seamlessly into his street photography, allowing him to capture genuine and diverse moments that reflect the rich tapestry of human life.

@j84_streets

TECHNIQUES

Pictured

Make use of modes

It doesn't matter which brand of smartphone you use to capture a scene. Take a look at the modes provided to introduce depth of field and more

SHOOT SMART

Using your smartphone is an excellent idea, particularly in situations where you don't have access to your mirrorless or DSLR camera, or in places where cameras are prohibited. Smartphones have become so advanced that some photographers now specialise in this type of photography. You can also use clip-on accessories like alternative wide-angle lenses or macro lenses to make the most out of your phone's camera.

Don't forget to adjust the camera settings to high-quality jpeg.



Choose the right lens

Find the right lens that helps you to act fast and capture the perfect moment

The lens you choose for street photography should be easy to handle, flexible and have accurate focus so you avoid ending up with blurry subjects. Manual lenses are popular as they don't rely on the camera's autofocus – instead, they achieve accurate focus through focus distance scales, depth-of-field markings and aperture. Although handling manual focus lenses isn't easy at first, with practice, you will be able to use them to their full potential.

A 35mm or 50mm focal length is often the best choice for the streets, with the 35mm being a classic format due to its

natural perspective. "I only shoot with prime lenses," says Jamie. "I tend to gravitate towards 35mm or 50mm lenses as they provide a broader field of view, allowing me to encompass more of the scene and capture larger subjects with clarity. These lenses offer wider apertures, sharper images and better low light performance compared with zoom lenses."

Choosing a prime lens instead of a zoom lens is a smart decision, as it forces you to think with your feet to find the best composition. "A prime lens means you have to move, which encourages you to learn

about composition," Jamie adds. "They also require you to be more confident as you're a lot closer to the action than you would be with an 85mm or a zoom lens."

When it comes to capturing street life, bigger is not always best. Larger zoom lenses can attract attention and disrupt the authenticity of the scene. However, if you only have a zoom – make the most of your equipment but consider investing in a prime. A 35mm lens, in particular, is not only great for street photography but also allows you to create intimate portraits while giving you the option to include context.

Anatomy of a 35mm manual focus lens

BAYONET-FIT HOOD

Unlike other optics, 35mm lenses generally don't come with built-in hoods. Nonetheless, detachable hoods are available and practical to use. Leaving the hood off means that more light can enter the sensor and also makes the lens less noticeable. However, if you are shooting directly into the sun, you can attach the hood quickly to prevent sun flare.

APERTURE RING

With fully manual lenses, there are no electronic components to assist you. Instead of adjusting the aperture via the camera body, you need to use the aperture control ring. As a result, you can only effectively shoot in Manual (M) or Aperture Priority (A/AV) modes, because other modes require automatic aperture adjustment from the camera, which isn't possible without electronic support.

FOCUS RING

Due to the extended rotational travel in their focus rings, this feature provides increased precision in bespoke focus techniques and viewfinder-based focusing, where AF may be unreliable.

FOCUS DISTANCE SCALE

If you want to apply popular street photography focus techniques, such as hyperfocal distance or zone focus, it is useful to have a lens with a focus distance scale. While this isn't necessary, it can save time, especially if your camera doesn't have a focus distance display in the viewfinder or rear screen.

DEPTH-OF-FIELD MARKINGS

The depth-of-field markers for the lens's aperture values. These markings are used in combination with the focus distance scale for focus techniques and allow you to define the depth of field intensity to control sharpness.



Shoot in classic format

Here are three compact and fast street photography optics for different camera sensors

When you are looking to purchase a 35mm lens, it is important to remember that the size of your camera's sensor will affect the optical perspective of a prime lens. You will need to consider the crop factor, which is the ratio of the sensor size to the size of a full-frame sensor. For instance, an APS-C sensor has a crop factor of 1.5x or 1.6x, while a Micro Four Thirds sensor has a crop factor of 2x.

This means that a 35mm lens designed for an APS-C sensor won't provide the same natural perspective as the prime lens would if you are using it on a full-frame camera. To achieve the same effect and maintain the same high quality, you have to use a 24mm lens when shooting with an APS-C format camera and a 17mm lens when working with a Micro Four Thirds camera.

SIGMA 35MM f/1.4 (FULL-FRAME)

One of the best budget lenses on the market. The lightweight, full-frame, manual-focus lens is ideal for street photography and when you set the focus to infinity, you won't miss the shot.



NIKON Z DX 24MM f/1.7 (APS-C FORMAT)

This is the perfect complement to any Nikon Z DX camera, ideal for shooting on foot due to its compact and lightweight design, and an 'effective' 36mm focal length in full-frame terms.



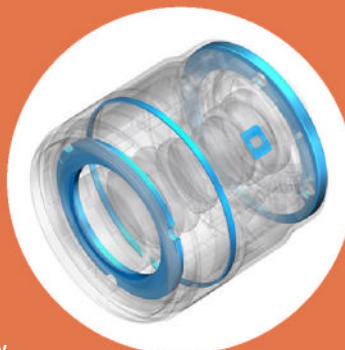
OLYMPUS M.ZUIKO 17MM f/1.8 (MICRO FOUR THIRDS)

This is barely bigger than a pancake lens and lightweight despite featuring a high-quality metal build. Due to the 2x crop factor, it is similar to a 35mm lens on a full-frame camera.



Choose weatherproof kit

When it comes to capturing life on the streets, you need a lens that can perform in any weather conditions. That's why it's important to choose a lens with weather-sealing. Fortunately, many lenses come equipped with a rubber seal on the mounting plate to prevent water or dust from entering the lens. The new Tiny Series lens from Samyang, such as the AF 35mm F1.8 FE, is a good example – it features weather sealing in four spots, providing complete protection against light dust, rain and snow.



© Samyang

Approach the streets

To capture candid shots, remember the 'four P rule': preparation, practice, patience and perseverance

Street photography is all about capturing the essence of everyday life and interactions around us. You may find it challenging to know where to begin, particularly when taking pictures in a large city. To gain experience and build core skills, it is helpful to focus on one subject that interests you. Start by exploring one or two streets instead of a much wider area and focus on a particular time of day.

Returning to the same location over a period of time will help you to become familiar with the scene and develop a better sense of when and what to capture. Predictable factors such as the arrival times of buses, trains and delivery drivers or when people are setting up market stalls can help you anticipate and give you the chance to concentrate on light and image composition.

"When approaching a new environment, I'd start by observing, understanding the vibe, finding interesting elements and gradually blending in, respecting people's space while capturing authentic moments that tell the story of the place," says Jamie. "With street photography, it's important to use your ears as much as your eyes, as you may be looking in one direction but hear laughing in another. Listening to the rhythm of footsteps or the sound of a bustling market can guide you to captivating moments. For instance, distant chatter might signal an upcoming interaction between strangers or the clinking of dishes might hint at a vibrant street food scene."

Pictured

City spotlights

Around midday, when the sun is at its highest, the harsh light creates a mix of shadow and light that highlights the scene



Pictured

The unexpected

You never know what you will capture – don't let one unsuccessful day put you off

Understand local laws

Avoid legal problems by learning about the law before entering the streets

To avoid any legal issues, gather as much information as possible before starting to snap away. Cultural sensitivity is essential and taking pictures of people may not be common in some parts of the world. Also, different rules apply to taking photographs in public places compared to private property. However, these rules differ, and some public places may also have restrictions on photography. When in doubt, it's better to ask for advice beforehand than to get into trouble.



ALWAYS CARRY A CAMERA

Be prepared at all times. Professional street photographers carry their cameras with them wherever they go. That doesn't necessarily mean that you should carry your bulky DSLR or mirrorless camera everywhere, but remember that you always have a camera on the smartphone in your pocket – so get shooting!

Make use of auto

Activate the supporting functions in your camera's settings to help you get the best from your street photography

“Settings play a pivotal role in street photography as they allow us to control the mood, clarity and narrative of captured moments amidst the spontaneity of street life,” says Jamie. It's important to prioritise focus and sharpness when taking photos, even if your goal is to capture a specific mood. This is especially true for beginners. To ensure that you don't miss any candid moments, it's crucial to have the right camera settings for the situation.

While the automatic mode on your camera may seem convenient, it's not ideal for maintaining high quality in terms of sharpness and focus. On the other hand, switching to manual mode (M) gives you full control, but requires quick adjustments when the lighting changes. This means that you could miss out on capturing the scene altogether. This is where aperture priority mode (A/AV) comes in handy. By selecting an aperture value between f/8 and f/11 and a moderate ISO value, your camera automatically adjusts the shutter speed. By selecting auto ISO mode, both ISO and shutter speed settings are chosen by your camera.

But there are other ways to handle it. Jamie is an advanced street shooter with lots of experience, so he tends not to use A/AV mode to control the mode of the scene. “The weather means that the light can change at the drop of a hat. Also moving from indoors to outdoors, the light completely changes,” he explains. “I prefer to set my camera up to shoot between certain ISO points, maybe 100 to 500, and let the camera do the work for me while I focus on shutter speed and aperture. It all comes down to your personal preference.”



Pictured

Be patient

Get in position, observe the scene, and wait for an interesting subject or element to present itself.

APPLY CONCENTRATED COMPOSITION

If you have close-up shots in your portfolio or gallery, they demonstrate the versatility of your work while giving your audience 'room to breathe'. By contrasting busy street scenes with more minimalist shots, you enhance the effect of each image.

REVEAL THE DETAILS

In the hustle and bustle of the city, small details can often get lost. But with a closer perspective, you can offer details that may otherwise be overlooked, allowing the viewer to focus on the essence of the subject.

USE SHALLOW DEPTH OF FIELD

Achieving this requires selecting a small aperture value. This not only allows more light to enter the sensor but also creates a shallow depth of field. The result is a sharp, focused subject with blurred distractions in the background.

Keep it simple

Avoid overcomplicating your composition for more striking street insights

Urban landscapes can be noisy and chaotic so the challenge is to capture this energy and excitement in a balanced and controlled way. By keeping some composition options in mind, you can guide yourself through the environment to create images that celebrate the unexpected.

These could include getting close up for detail or showing the whole cityscape in one image. However, analysing the environment is vital and will give you more ideas. Windows, for example, can be found everywhere in the city and their reflections

captivate the viewer as they show two different street insights in one single frame.

Street scenes are often cluttered, so one technique to balance the elements is to use a shallow depth of field or strong light to focus on specific elements of the scene. The former technique requires getting close to the subject, while the latter offers more visual strategies to captivate the viewer. This is one reason that street images are often converted into black and white. By removing the colour, distractions are minimised, while other elements are

highlighted, including light and shadows. This helps focus on one part of the image, especially when working with strong light.

It is also worth experimenting with black and white to see how it changes the frame's appearance. "When reviewing images, I seek out shots where I feel that by stripping away the colour, the focus shifts to the raw element of the scene," says Jamie. "Contrast, shapes, textures and the interplay of light and shadow all potentially intensify the emotional impact and storytelling within the photo," he adds.

Mix the detail with the surroundings

USE TOTAL SHARPNESS

To achieve this, it's best to use a closed aperture, starting from f/8. This ensures that the overall scene is in sharp focus and that every element within the photo is treated equally, rather than directing the viewer's attention to specific characteristics.

SHOW SURROUNDINGS

By photographing street scenes from a distance, you provide an overview with the focus on the overall impression of the scene. This technique allows the viewer to explore the frame on their own, without being guided by specific details.

BLENDE THE SUBJECTS

Including both architecture and people adds a sense of scale to the building. By combining both elements, you provide a depiction of daily life on the streets to showcase aspects of a city or neighbourhood.



Observe the light

The city streets are in a constant state of change and evolution. Each season and lighting condition presents a unique perspective and composition possibilities that are worth exploring. To discover new aspects of familiar cityscapes, visit them multiple times and observe how external factors impact their appearance.

While the early morning and late evening sunlight can be charming, the midday light offers a plethora of creative possibilities. Shadows obscure or illuminate people

and elements, and the geometric shadows created by the surrounding architecture add a stylish touch to the scene.

By experimenting with harsh lighting, you create frames that focus on the shapes and forms of urban environments and people.



To achieve this, it's vital to change your perspective to be able to control the scene's shadows. Also, consider converting the image into black-and-white as this once more supports the visual language here.

"I absolutely love being in a city and shooting in harsh light," says Jamie. "Having strong shadows with pockets of light to play with is great and it also really tests you to find the right composition."

**JAMIE'S TIPS**

"Flexibility and a keen eye amplify the magic of capturing unscripted urban stories. Focus on compelling subjects, anticipate moments and maintain a steady hand for clarity. Embrace spontaneity, anticipate fleeting moments, adapt swiftly to changing scenes, observe details – and be ready for surprises."

Pictured
London streets

Incorporate recognisable elements of the city, such as London's red buses, to provide the viewer with more info and context

Frame the unexpected

Maximise your chances of capturing the perfect shot by ditching the viewfinder and blending in

As a street photographer, the ultimate goal is to capture candid shots of people who are unaware of your presence. Although this can be challenging, it's not impossible and to achieve this, your camera should not draw attention to you. This is where smartphones come in handy as they don't stand out in the crowd. With almost everyone having a smartphone these days, people around you won't take much notice of this device. There is also a perception that photos taken with a mobile phone are more likely to be used for private purposes and that these devices aren't capable of creating high-quality images – however, that situation is changing, of course.

The exact opposite happens when you start unpacking a larger mirrorless or DSLR camera, so to take successful candid shots without people looking into your lens, it is important to blend in with the environment as much as possible, including by wearing plain-coloured clothing. Additionally, choosing a strategic location can be helpful. For example,

you can sit outdoors in a cafe while enjoying your coffee, and take photos from there.

To capture photos discreetly, it's helpful to avoid using the camera's viewfinder, which makes it obvious you are taking a photo. Of course, not using the viewfinder can make it challenging to take sharp images of people without adjusting the focus. Although some blurry images can be artistic and add a sense of liveliness and speed to the scene, it's not usually what we intend to achieve.

To remain unnoticed, street photographers often use a technique called 'hip shooting'. This involves making technical adjustments to the camera before taking the shot. The popular methods for this are zone focusing, hyperfocal distance focusing, and double distance focusing. All techniques have the benefit of not relying on the speed and accuracy of your camera's autofocus, as you skip the focusing part altogether. This means that the focus is already set when the subject enters your frame.

Stay quiet

Shoot silently to remain fully in the background by activating this camera feature

Even when shooting in a busy environment, you should try to minimise the shutter noise. Some genres, such as wedding photography, benefit from this feature and many photographers leave it enabled.

Mirrorless cameras are known for producing a softer sound compared with DSLRs. This noise reduction feature is named differently depending on the brand or camera model. To maintain a low profile, cameras such as the Canon EOS R or EOS RP are equipped with an electronic or silent shutter option. Meanwhile, some DSLR cameras come with a mirror lockup feature to reduce noise.



Nail the focus

Get to know two different photographic approaches to keep the subject sharp

Zone Focusing

- **Application:** No viewfinder check needed, ideal for shooting from the hip
- **Focus:** One particular zone
- **Vital factors:** Aperture, focal length, subject distance
- **Result:** Sharp subjects in adjusted zone
- **Keep in mind:** The wider the aperture, the harder it is to control



1 Switch to A Use aperture priority mode with aperture set between f/5.6 and f/11 and enable the auto ISO function in the menu. Note that the camera will automatically calculate the shutter speed. Keep an eye on the exposure to avoid slow shutter speed and motion blur.



2 Set the zone To determine the range of focus, some lenses have a marked distance scale. If your lens doesn't have one, you can use apps such as DoF Table. Here you enter information including focal length and aperture manually, and the distance to the focus subject will be calculated.



3 Ditch the viewfinder Now position the camera at the height of your hips. To maximise support, you can use a camera strap to hang it around your shoulder. Before waiting for a perfect scene to happen, take some test shots and adjust the settings if needed.

Double-Distance Focusing

- **Application:** All-round solution, mainly used in street and landscape photography
- **Focus:** From one point and onwards to infinity
- **Vital factors:** Aperture, focal length, subject distance
- **Result:** Uniform sharpness throughout the frame
- **Keep in mind:** Needs practice for accuracy



1 Shoot in M Switch to M and select an aperture that isn't too wide – start at f/8 or f/11 to maintain detail and sharpness. For a scene with pedestrians, a shutter speed of 1/125 sec should be sufficient. Adjust the ISO settings until a balanced exposure is achieved.



2 Measure distance Switch to your camera's live-view mode to give you more control over adjusting the focus settings. Then, focus on the closest element in the image foreground, such as a bin. This will set the lens at the initial focus distance and, for now, blur the background.



3 Refocus To refocus, adjust the focus window to twice the distance you set in the previous step. For example, if your closest object was 1m away, adjust the focus to 2m. If your lens doesn't have a focus window, you can use an app to calculate or estimate the distance.



Capture the layers

Add layers of content to engage the viewer with cultural differences, characters and planned 'coincidences'

One of the most intriguing aspects of humans is their natural curiosity, which naturally leads to exploring the diversity of life. The bustling streets of cosmopolitan cities offer a perfect platform for observing people from different parts of the world. Through capturing their visual impressions, we can learn a lot about their cultures, traditions and ways of life.

Although the exceptions may prove the rule, there are still many stereotypes that stand out, especially when we encounter tourists

from different cultures. For instance, the cliché is that Germans wear Birkenstock shoes, while the English are known for wearing shorts in cold weather. The rich variety and diversity of people from different backgrounds and cultures makes street photography appealing, not only for us as photographers but also for delivering impactful insights.

However, it's important not just to focus on the tourists and visitors but also to capture the people who live in the city. They are the

ones who bring the urban landscape to life. These faces are the missing puzzle pieces that add authenticity to your perspective of street life, making your portfolio stand out.

By communicating with the locals as you photograph them, you can discover insider information that isn't found in most city guidebooks. This is particularly valuable if you're new to the city or have limited time to explore as they give a more comprehensive understanding of life in that location.

Pictured
Cashing in

City streets offer a great opportunity to observe people from different backgrounds and learn about their ways of life



‘Control’ the unpredictable

Get active and maximise the chances of capturing the shot you want

Street photography is all about capturing unexpected moments, but as photographers, we also have our own ideas. Sometimes, we come across the perfect background, such as an archway, and we can envisage a passer-by walking through it. Other times, we see big, colourful posters dominating the scene, and we imagine how a person could fit into the scene and interact with the illustration. By thinking in layers and waiting for these imagined interactions to happen, we can take our photography to the next level, even without needing to be in a busy city.

When you decide on a great backdrop, it's best to find a good point of view, take your position and wait patiently. This might take some time, but it's worth it to bring your idea to life. You might even get more ideas or be surprised by a new position suggested by the passengers passing by. Professional black-and-white street photographers, such as Alan Schaller, pay attention to more factors. In black-and-white photography, the lightest or darkest elements are usually the first things that catch

the viewer's attention. They wait for passers-by wearing specific clothes to achieve maximum contrast between the backdrop and the subject. For example, if there is a light wall in the scene, the aim is to wait until a person in dark clothes passes by, and vice versa.



Blur it

Opening the aperture to the maximum (smallest f-stop number) creates a shallow depth of field (DOF), which means that the aperture opening is wider, allowing more light in and blurring the background of your subject. It's essential to keep in mind that the shallower the DOF, the smaller the focus area, so if you're struggling to keep your subject in focus, select a higher f/stop or step back a few feet to reduce the DOF intensity and therefore widen the focus area.

While a shallow DOF is visually pleasing and highlights the subject, it's crucial to ensure that the subject's eyes are always sharp to establish a connection with the viewer. Advanced camera models often have an AF eye detection feature that automatically focuses on the eyes without requiring any additional adjustment, making it particularly useful if you are feeling nervous about speaking to strangers.

Pictured
Make it authentic
By capturing people working in the city, you add a sense of the city's culture, daily life and work rhythms

5 tips for street photography

Jamie Canning offers his top five communication techniques to get you out of your comfort zone when shooting on the streets

1 Be polite

When connecting with strangers, approach them with respect. I usually engage subjects with a genuine smile, it can work wonders!

2 Introduce yourself

Explain what your work is about and why you are photographing people on the streets. This will help them understand your goals and projects.

3 Show your work

Have your phone ready to show your work on Instagram or other social media platforms. This will give the person a better idea of what you are doing.

4 Establishing a connection

I seek their unique story. Show interest and be open to their thoughts and input. And don't forget, everyone has a 'good' side.

5 Don't give up

Not everyone will be happy to get photographed and sometimes you might get rejected. But when a stranger is willing to appear in front of your camera, then the feeling of rejection will disappear in a second.



— WHITEWALL —

Black & White



Gregory Prescott

"White Feather"

Photo Print on ILFORD B/W Paper sealed under Acrylic Glass

42 x 56 cm | Floater Frame Basel, white matt | printed and framed by WhiteWall.com

Bringing photography to completion

When an image becomes visible as a print, it transforms from an abstract idea into reality. For WhiteWall, that means that a picture is only complete once it is hanging on the wall. We achieve perfection through craftsmanship, innovation, and use of the very best materials. Our award-winning gallery quality is always accessible to photo enthusiasts both online and in our stores.

 WHITE WALL

CHALLENGING

Capture panoramic images in confined locations and overcome the problems



Words and images: Peter Fenech

Difficulty level: Advanced

Time taken: 2.5 hours



Panoramas – a wide-angle view or photograph of a physical space – open up new ways of viewing a scene that go beyond simply being wide. Images in a panoramic aspect ratio allow us to capture long, thin subjects without incorporating too much empty space in the frame. For the urban scene captured on these pages, which is

a common shot required by estate agents where more than one property needs to be shown in the same composition, using a wide-angle lens would have been impractical.

Shooting this row of townhouses with an optic between 14mm and 20mm would include excess sky and road at the top and bottom of the shot, while the buildings would

PANORAMAS

of repeating patterns and optical distortions by seamlessly merging segments



What you'll need

- Standard zoom lens
- Artificial horizon
- Image stabilisation
- Software with layers

become merely a strip across the middle of the frame. On the other hand, a panoramic shot captures plenty of detail in each house front while minimising the negative space. The main challenge of this type of panorama stitch is the overlapping and repeating patterns, which can confuse software and cause failure in blending the multiple image segments.

Over the next few pages, we'll explore methods of stitching complex panoramas using a mix of automatic and manual techniques, for real-estate shots with a difference. By the end of this tutorial, you should be able to capture effective panoramas in any location, without a tripod or even advanced editing software.

Pictured
Stitch in time
 Real-estate photography often requires working in busy streets, providing challenges for wide-angle imaging and pano blending



1 Plan start/end points Define the boundaries of your panorama, making sure you leave room for the removal of lens distortions and other cropping at the editing stage. Try shooting an image at your lens's widest setting to visualise how much of the scene you want or need to include to get all the relevant details into the composition.



2 Find a clear foreground When shooting in streets or other busy environments, it helps to minimise the overlapping objects in the foreground as these can cause the greatest issues in software. For this scene, we chose an area with the fewest parked cars in the foreground so that the ground texture was fairly uniform and flat.



3 Balance detail and distortion We need to capture some detail around the edges while accepting that much of this will be lost when we blend and straighten out the segments at a later stage. For this scene, 35-50mm offered the best balance of croppable space and wide-angle lens distortion, which could confuse the editing software.



4 Turn off AF Focus your scene, take a test shot and then deactivate the autofocus mode to prevent the lens from re-focusing between panorama segments. Shooting at an aperture of f/8 to f/11 is advisable to get the whole scene in focus while allowing handholding of the camera without excessive motion blur.



5 Lock settings Select an ISO of greater than 400 to help with sharpness, then switch the camera to Manual mode to prevent these settings from changing between segments. Any exposure shifts will be highly visible in the sort of shots that we are trying to create here and we need to avoid any further complications for autoblending.



6 Check the overlaps Shoot a sequence of images covering your chosen field of view, with some excess space at either end. Scroll through your pano segments and inspect them for even tone and sharpness, checking that they overlap by around 20 per cent. While this overlap is less necessary with the latest software, it works here.

STANDARD ZOOM
A zoom lens allows the greatest control when working in tight conditions

CLEAN CAMERA
A body with good high ISO performance is useful for handholding segments of the pano

POLARISER
While it isn't advisable for wide panos, using a Cir Pol filter reduces reflections in windows

The setup

Shoot and slide

Avoid parallax error for more reliable stitching

Rotating the camera causes objects at different distances from the sensor to vary in their apparent distance from each other, which causes scaling issues when trying to stitch pano segments. To minimise distortion on this long street, line up your first shot, capture it and then move your whole body position to shift the scene

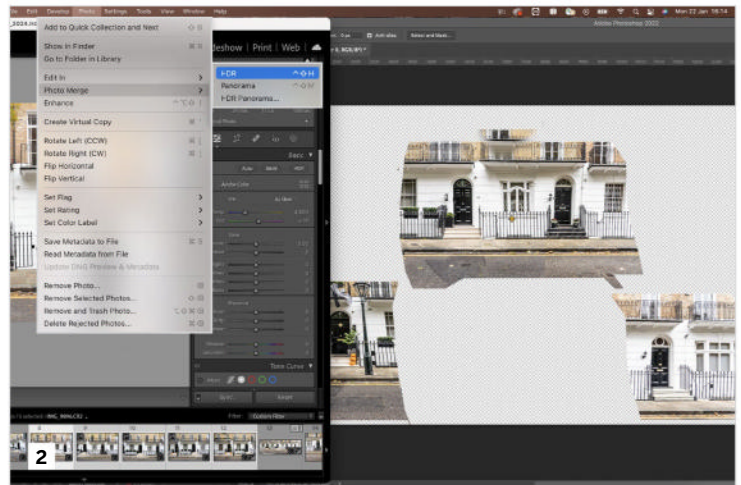
through the viewfinder. Physically moving along the street keeps the camera perpendicular to the buildings and ensures the relative distance from the lens remains the same for all segments. This takes more shots to cover the whole scene but streamlines the blending process. In general, the more shots the better.



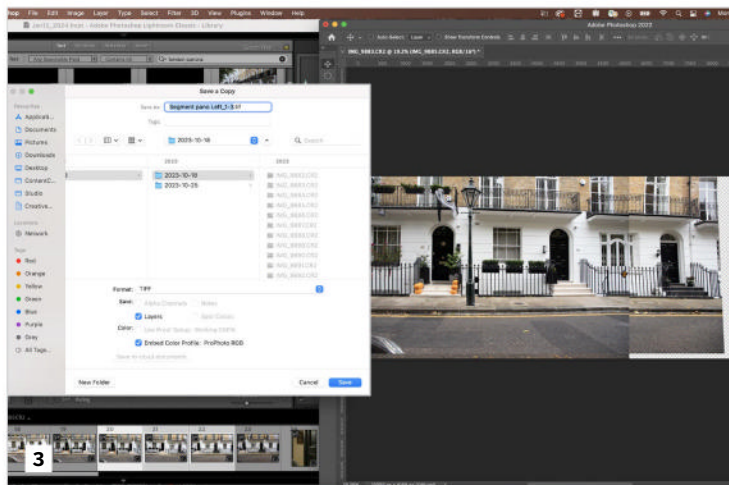
SHOOTING SKILLS



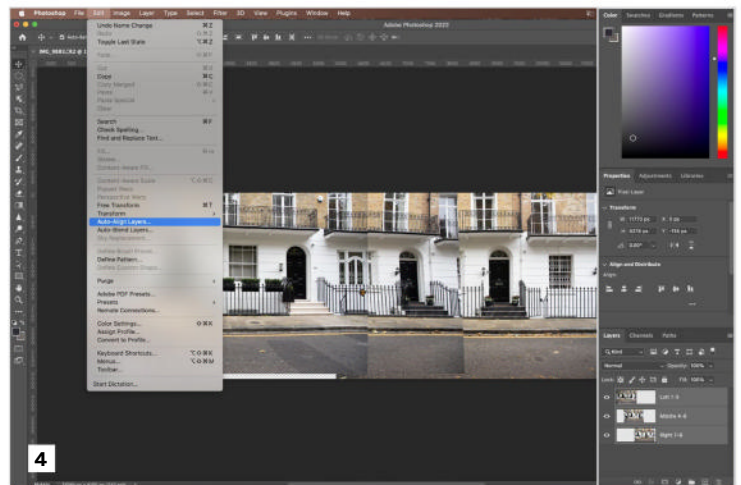
1 Process all segments Start by opening all your RAW files, sync them and then apply global adjustments to Exposure, Black and White points, Contrast and Clarity. Next, apply lens corrections to reduce major aberrations and geometric anomalies.



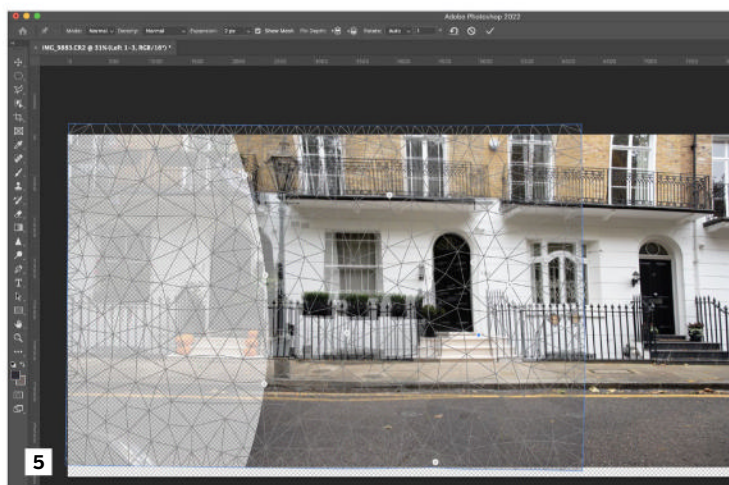
2 Attempt full stitch I suspected this scene would not fully stitch together in one go, but it's always worth attempting it to see how close the automatic blending will get you to a finished product. For this scene, Photoshop split the panorama into three segment groups.



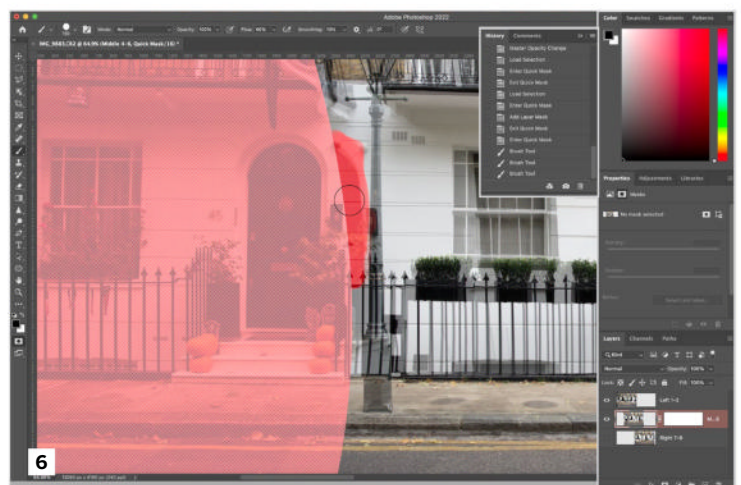
3 Group segments Each group is rough, but demonstrates which parts of the scene your software can handle most easily. Try opening two or three segments at a time to recreate the groups that were possible automatically and save these as separate flat files.



4 Manually align blocks Open each file and extend the left-most segment group to the right, using the crop tool. Drag in the next group moving right and manually align it to overlap. Once your groups are arranged, select the layers and go to Edit > Auto-Align Layers.



5 Transform and fill Follow up by using Edit > Auto-Blend Layers. Some seams may remain visible, especially with any layers that aren't perfectly aligned. Use Edit > Puppet Warp to adjust the scaling and alignment of essential details such as doors and window frames.



6 Crop and retouch Reduce layer Opacity to guide final scaling misalignments. If the underlying layer has a better overall alignment than the rest of the pano, use a mask to remove the least accurate layer detail. Crop any empty space at the edges.



BEFORE

Above
Incorrect angle

The only alternative way to shoot this scene was to use a wide lens, but the angle doesn't capture all of the houses and so a front-on view is required




AFTER

Above
Wide appeal

Manual blending smaller segments allowed a successful panorama in a crowded street, giving an engaging front-on view of the multiple properties

Create black pixels

Break the rules by removing detail in the shadows, creating vibrant frames and eye-catching silhouettes

 When it comes to scenes with high-contrast lighting, your camera's sensor struggles to capture the details of both the foreground subject and the background. Despite what one of the commonly taught rules in photography says, intentionally blowing out shadows can benefit your image. Here, you need to go against the grain and remember that not every element of an image needs to contain information.

By exposing the sky, the viewer's attention is drawn towards its details, without being distracted by the lacklustre foreground that adds little and may prove to be a hindrance. Underexposing the subject integrates into the scene, with only the outlines of the houses visible, creating a silhouette while adding an extra layer of depth and interest.

Insert

Auto exposed

The exposure meter of the camera indicates an exposure which is neither beneficial for the foreground subject nor the backdrop sky, resulting in a lack of depth and colour

Main

Powerful sky

By underexposing the scene by two stops and metering for the sky, the houses and the tree become silhouettes with black pixels, creating contrast in front of the enhanced and detailed vibrant sky

To capture scenes such as this, we must bear three things in mind. Firstly, the timing is crucial – sunrise and sunset often produce dramatic backdrops, but even harsh midday sun can work if it is hidden behind the subject you are trying to capture. Secondly, selecting the right subject is key, so choose ones with distinctive shapes or outlines, such as trees, houses or even humans.

Finally, it is crucial to keep the sun's position in mind. To create a silhouette, you need to shoot into the sun. At midday, when the sun is at its highest, light illuminates the subject from many angles but when the sun is low at sunset or sunrise, an elevated perspective such as a window on the second floor offers the best angle to create a true black silhouette in front of a colourful sky.



1 Shoot in M When trying to create silhouettes, it's important to switch to manual mode. In automatic mode, the camera will try to optimise the exposure for the scene, searching for details in the dark elements and making it a challenge to get true black pixels.

2 Deactivate functions Some cameras have modes that create a balanced exposure for all elements. To produce deep black pixels, disable these settings. For Nikon users, it's called Active D-Lighting; Canon's is Auto Lighting Optimizer; and Sony's is DRO.

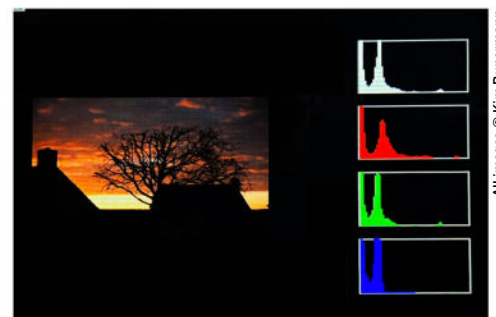
3 Attach a polariser A polariser boosts the saturation in a scene but it also reduces the amount of light reaching the sensor. This tool isn't ideal for low-light conditions, so this stage is optional, but it can be useful when shooting in harsh lighting conditions.



4 Select Spot Metering Mode Metering from the brightest element is best to achieve balanced background exposure. Take the meter reading from the sky and not from the sun as this leads to underexposed results where it is not wanted – in this case, in the sky.



5 Set the focus In low-light conditions, your camera's autofocus can struggle to achieve a precise focus. If this is the case, disable the autofocus function and focus manually on the subject. Focus on the edges of the subject's silhouette to make it easier.



6 Overview and fine tune Pay attention to the histogram and zoom in on both the sky and the silhouette. Experiment with exposure, reducing it by one or two stops until the silhouettes are a deep black – this way, you will better understand the technique.



Easy multiple exposures

Meet the editing pro



James Abbott is a professional photographer and photography journalist specialising in shooting and editing techniques. His first book was recently released and covers professional image editing skills in both Adobe Photoshop and Affinity Photo. @jamesaphoto jamesaphoto.co.uk

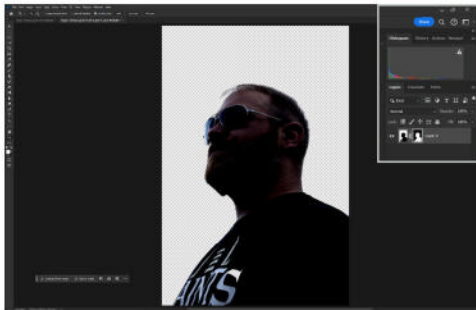
Create a multiple-exposure image in under a minute in Photoshop



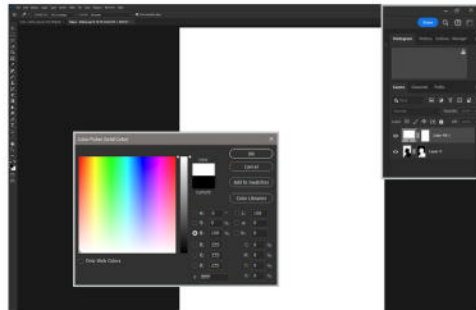
Shooting multiple exposures is fun, but while many cameras offer this feature, merging two images in Photoshop can produce better and more controllable results. We'll look at a simple technique that takes no more than a minute to complete. For this, you'll need a near silhouette of a person and another shot of something like trees for the detail of the multiple exposure.

What you'll be using

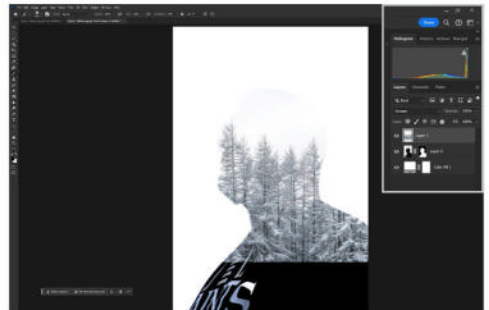
- Select Subject
- Solid Color
- Layer Masks
- Curves
- Blending modes



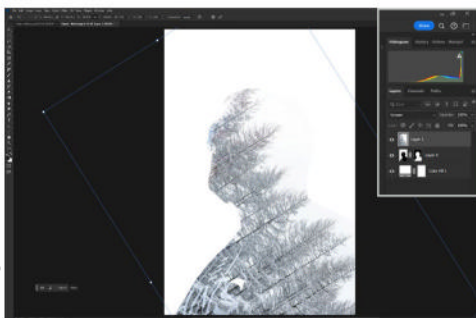
1 Select Subject Open your two images in Photoshop and click on the tab for the figure. Go to Select > Select Subject and when the figure is selected, click on the Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel. Next, click on the Create new fill or adjustment layer icon and select Solid Color from the list.



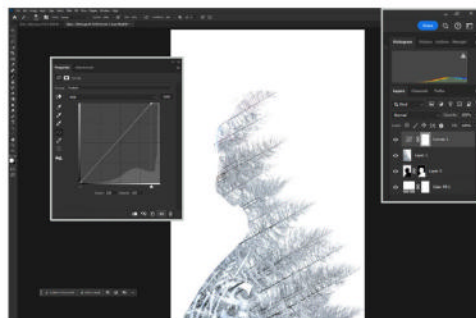
2 Create a white Layer When the Solid Color dialogue opens, select white and hit OK to close the dialogue. Drag the Solid Color Adjustment Layer below the Masked figure Layer so the empty space around the subject is filled with white. Click on your other image and press Ctrl/Cmd+A then Ctrl/Cmd+C.



3 Paste in the image The last part of the previous step selected all and then copied the other image. Next, click back on the figure image and press Ctrl/Cmd+V to paste. Drag the image to the top of the stack if necessary and change the blending mode from Normal to Screen to add transparency to the blend.



4 Transform the image Press Ctrl/Cmd+T to open the Transform controls, then rotate and resize the second image so it's in position and then press OK to commit. At this stage, the outline of the subject may still be visible, so if this is the case, we can move on to the next step where we'll remove that.



5 Clean up the image Create a Curves Adjustment Layer and when the dialogue opens, drag the white point at the bottom right of the Curves to the left to brighten and remove the subject outline. To finish up, create a Black & White Adjustment Layer and close the dialogue to make the image monochrome.

KEY TIP

PROCESS YOUR RAW FILES

If you don't have a portrait shot that's a near silhouette, you can edit one in Lightroom or Adobe Camera Raw. Use the sliders to boost Blacks and Whites until the subject is dark and the background totally white.

Insert

Boring images

The two start images are fairly unremarkable in themselves, but they each provide the elements needed to create a multiple-exposure image

Main

Perfect blend

Using a simple technique, the two start images were blended together to create a surreal multiple exposure image in less than a minute

AFTER




BEFORE





Faster Lightroom masking

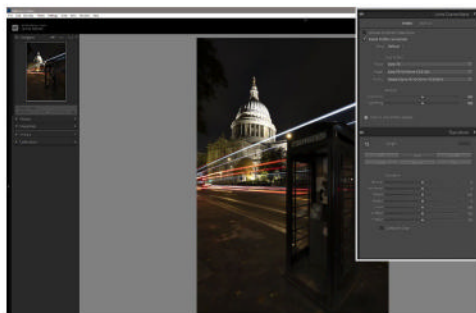
Use Lightroom's AI-powered Tools for faster editing

 There was a time when complex masking had to be done in an external application such as Photoshop, meaning an image had to be moved out of Lightroom, adding time to the

editing process. Even then, the tools in older versions of Photoshop don't come close to the AI masking tools now available in LR. Let's take a look at how newer instant masking options can allow non-destructive edits in a flash.

What you'll be using

- Lens Corrections
- Transform
- Basic Adjustments
- Masking
- Add/Subtract



1 Make simple corrections When starting with any image, it is often worth checking whether Lens Corrections improve the image using the Lens Profile built into Lightroom. For this image, Enable Profile Corrections was checked and Auto Transform was used to straighten the image for a better view.



2 Apply Basic adjustments Now make adjustments in the Basic tab to get your image looking as good as possible before moving on to Masking. High contrast makes this image tricky, so the aim was to improve White Balance and reveal as much detail as possible without pushing the settings too far.



3 Lighten the subject Click on the Masking icon below the histogram and then click Subject. If Lightroom selects additional areas or misses part of the subject, click on the Add or Subtract buttons then choose Brush and paint in or out as required. Here, the phone box was lightened with Exposure and Shadows.



4 Mask the Sky Click on the Create New Mask icon and choose Select Sky from the list. Lightroom will automatically select the sky and, again, click on the Add or Subtract buttons and use the Brush to refine the Mask. For this image, Add was used and the sky was lightened to reveal the clouds.



5 Add further Masks There are several AI Mask options, identifiable because they are aimed at a specific element such as Sky, Subject, Background and People. To complete this image, Select Subject was used, but the phone box was Masked out using Subtract and the cathedral dome detail was recovered.

KEY TIP

ZOOM IN FOR PRECISION

After applying an AI-powered Mask and refining it with either Add or Subtract and the Brush or any other option, zoom into the image and use feathering for a seamless result that blends perfectly with the original image.

Insert High contrast

This is a naturally high-contrast image with bright highlights in the background and deep shadows in the foreground, which makes global adjustments difficult

Main Improved balance

After applying both global and localised adjustments using the AI-powered Masking options, the image is much more balanced in terms of its exposure and detail

AFTER



BEFORE



Enhance low light

Take advantage of targeted editing techniques

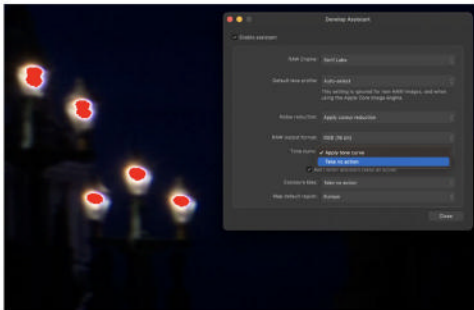


Once the sun sets, the surroundings take on a magical aura and the light plays a crucial role in creating the ambience and guiding the viewer's attention to the subject. However, capturing low-light

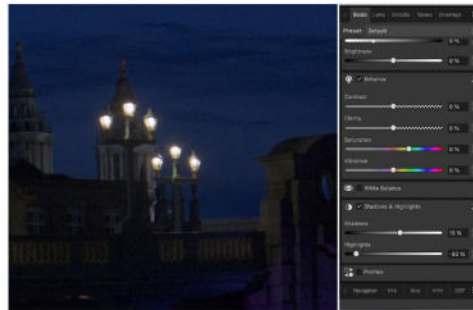
scenes isn't easy and finding the right balance between dark and light elements and blending them seamlessly is a challenge. Affinity Photo 2.0 offers a range of features to help make the most of small light sources in your photos.

What you'll be using

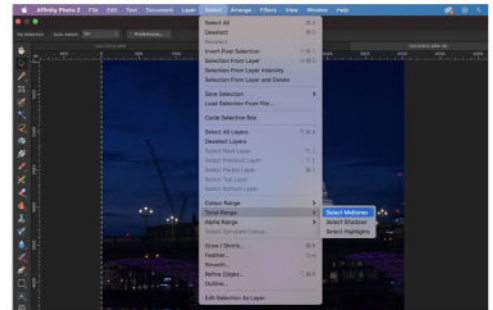
- Shadows & Highlights
- Detail Refinement & Noise Reduction
- Pixel layers
- Curve Adjustment Layer
- Brush Tool
- Colour Panel



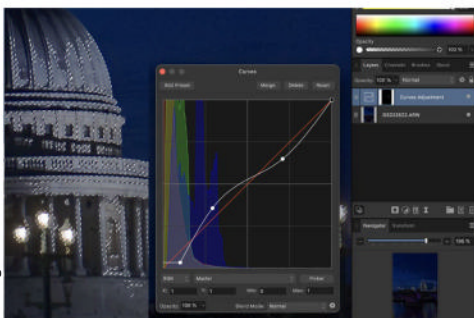
1 Change Tonal Curve Open your RAW file and the Development Persona will open. Affinity automatically sets the Tonal Curve to Apply tone curve, which enhances highlights and contrast. To start with a more neutral base, set the Tonal Curve to Take no action by clicking on the seventh symbol in the headbar.



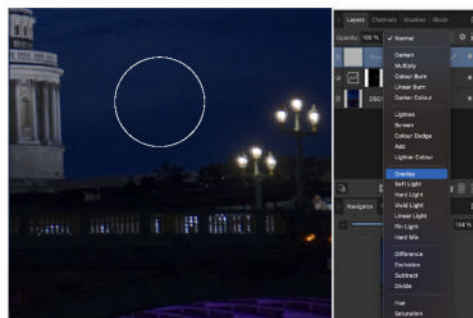
2 Basic edits Go to the Basic option and increase the Shadow slider while also decreasing the Highlight slider. Navigate to the Detail option and use the Luminance sliders to reduce image noise. Use the Detail Refinement slider to bring back sharpness. Don't overdo these settings as it may start to look unnatural.



3 Select midtones After clicking on the Develop option, it's time to start working non-destructively on the major edits. Go to the headbar and click on Select. Next, enable the Select Midtones option under the Tonal Range category. This will allow Affinity to autoselect all midtones for you to work on.



4 Bring back midtone contrast Create a new Pixel Layer above the Background Layer. Add a Curve Adjustment Layer and adjust the anchor points to modify the curve as per your preference. Keep in mind that, for now, you're only working on the midtones. For the best results, focus on enhancing the contrast.



5 Fine-tune exposure To adjust the exposure of specific image elements, add a Pixel Layer. Change the Blend mode to Overlay and decrease the Opacity to 20 per cent. Select the Brush tool with a soft setting. In the Colour Panel, choose White to lighten or Black to darken elements and paint over them.

KEY TIP

EDIT EXPOSURE AND ADD COLOUR

Using a soft brush with a White or Black colour on a pixel layer above the background layer can do more than simply adjust the brightness of image elements. Using a light or dark shade of the colour pink, for example, can enhance the tone of the image, making the colours pop.

Insert

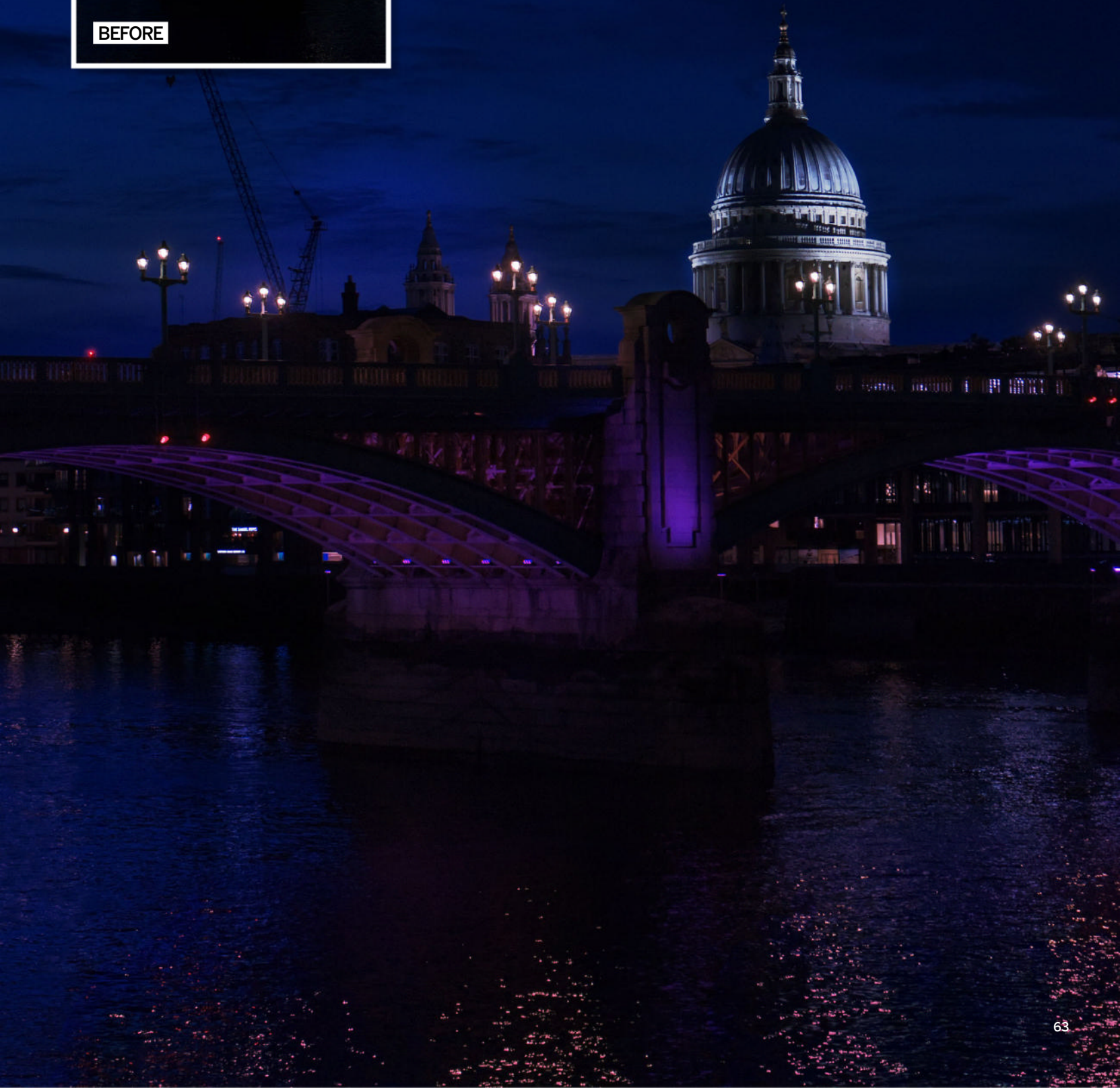
Shot in the dark

Dark elements in the image overwhelm the frame and obscure the subject's details, while highlights are blown out, resulting in an unbalanced and uninteresting image

Main


Low-light magic

By targeting exposure and contrast editing in mid-tones and enhancing the colour and exposure of individual light sources, the low-light scene is improved



THE PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO SHOW 2024

The top five things to do at this year's show at the NEC, Birmingham

 It's that time of year again – The Photography and Video Show is back from 16-19th March, so mark it in your diary. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned pro, the show is a must-attend event to boost your photography, filmmaking or content creation skills.

In this constantly evolving industry, it is crucial to stay ahead of the game. The Photography and Video Show provides exclusive and innovative perspectives to transform your business. It's an opportunity

to learn in-depth strategies from award-winning pro photographers and connect with potential clients on a different level.

The show offers a range of high-profile speakers, exclusive bargains and hands-on access to the latest products. From beginner-level tips to business-related advice for pros, there's something for everyone. And if you want to take out a subscription to *Digital Photographer*, now is a great time to take advantage of our special show-only offers.

Meet the team!

Find the DP team at The Photography Show at stand H404! We will answer questions about the magazine, talk about changes in the industry and discuss camera techniques and kit. To claim your 20% discounted tickets, visit www.photographyshow.com and use the code DGPTPS24.



Inspiring talks

Get ready to be inspired by some of the biggest names in photography, all in one place. Join us for free talks on three different stages: Photo Studio, In Motion Studio and Shoot to Inspire. Confirmed speakers so far include Matias Klum, Kim Grant, Ben Moore, Scarlett Page, Scott Kelby and Bella Kotak among others. You can read more about Scott Kelby in our Photo CV section on page 70, and Bella Kotak in her exclusive interview starting from page 76. We will announce further speakers shortly, so stay tuned!



Exclusive deals

Get your hands on the latest gear innovations from over 250 top brands. Witness live demonstrations and test new products on the spot so you can see the extraordinary results for yourself. Expert exhibitors will answer your questions and provide technical advice to help you upgrade your gear. Take advantage of unbeatable discounts from top retailers, including Camera World, London Camera Exchange and WEX.





Develop your skills in a workshop

Unlock your potential as a photographer by learning from the best in the field. The show features numerous photography workshops, covering everything from photographing newborns and travel photography to safari skills. With guidance from experienced pros, these workshops offer a wealth of knowledge and expertise to help you hone your craft.



What's in it for a pro?

The event has a lot to offer professionals who are looking to improve their business. With four days of technology, insightful talks and networking opportunities, you can gain valuable knowledge and skills to optimise and perfect your business. For further information and to get a comprehensive overview of all the activities and sessions taking place, visit www.photographyshow.com/for-professionals



Dive into a Masterclass

In addition to all the free talks available, there is also a series of Masterclasses you can attend for a modest fee. The Photography and Video Beginners/Turning Pro Masterclass is specifically designed to help beginners and aspiring photographers improve their skills and knowledge, and is priced £10.

The Pro Forum focuses on pro photography, offering insights and tips from experienced pros in the industry. These cost £10 for one session or £15 for both. For those who want to learn more from top-level photographers, Specialist Masterclasses offer in-depth knowledge and techniques from the best in the field. These are available for £25 each.




What's on?

Scan the QR code to find out



BUYING SECOND-HAND

In a market where new camera prices only seem to be going up, **Dan Mold** says pre-loved equipment can offer great quality and value for money

 It's no secret that photography can be an expensive hobby, especially when cameras like the Canon EOS R5 cost around £4,000 and that's before we even consider the lenses. Buying second-hand camera equipment could therefore be a good route to go down if you're looking to save some money on your next upgrade.

I've always been a savvy soul, so I can't actually remember the last time I bought any brand-new camera kit, but that's not to say there aren't dangers when buying used equipment. In this article, I'll run through the main things to look out for when buying second-hand kit so that you can avoid ending up with a lemon.

One thing to consider is where you're buying your second-hand item from. If it's online through a reputable store such as MPB, who specialise in used equipment, you will get a six-month warranty. Whereas if you buy from a private seller on Facebook Marketplace, you'll likely have no recourse

if you find a fault down the road, so you'll need to make sure you do your due diligence before buying. Beware of scammers and check to see when user accounts were created on Facebook Marketplace. If they're a relatively new account, then they're likely to be a scammer and if an offer feels too good to be true, it usually is.

MPB specialises in selling second-hand camera equipment. I have bought many items through them in the past and am glad to report that I've always had a positive experience. I have also picked up the odd bargain on eBay, but the trick here is to find a reputable seller by checking their user score and recent feedback comments – if they have a low feedback score or negative comments, this should be an instant red flag.

If you're setting off to look at a second-hand lens in person, don't forget to take your camera with you so that you can thoroughly inspect it. Here are my top tips to consider when buying used cameras and lenses.



Catch up on our career features

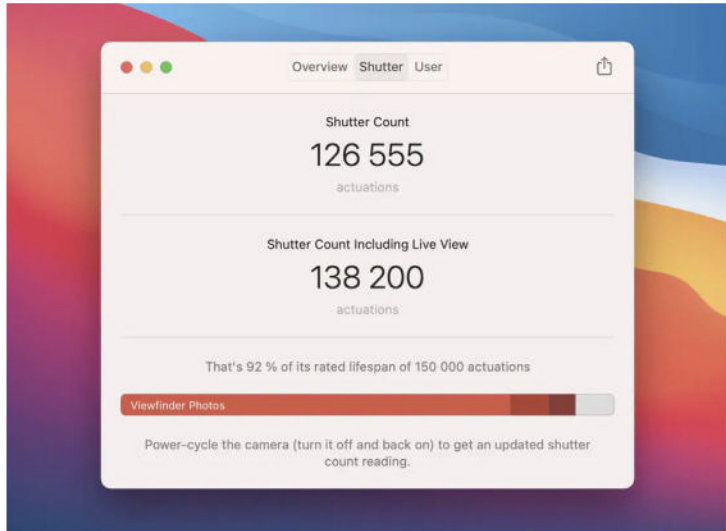


ISSUE 274: PART-TIME PHOTOGRAPHY

ISSUE 275: START YOUR PHOTO BLOG

GET YOUR BACK COPIES HERE: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/DPBACKISSUES](https://bit.ly/dpbackissues)





© shuttercheck.app

Check the shutter count

While Sony's latest A9 III has a global shutter that negates the need for a mechanical one, most of us will still be relying on a mechanical shutter for the foreseeable future. Even mirrorless users will still need to use a mechanical shutter to avoid rolling shutter distortion. Unlike the electronic shutter, which takes a sensor readout, the mechanical shutter uses moving parts to expose the frame and therefore those parts have a lifespan (usually between 150,000 to 300,000 uses, depending on the model). You will want to check the shutter count of the second-hand camera you are buying to see how much life is left on it. Upload a picture to www.shuttercount.com or use an app like ShutterCheck to find out.

Check the battery condition

One aspect of buying a second-hand camera that is often overlooked is the condition of the battery. Over time, batteries can lose their charge, especially if they haven't been taken care of properly. Buying a replacement battery can be expensive – the Canon LP-E6NH costs £114 or if you're considering purchasing a pro Canon EOS-1D X series, its larger LP-E19 batteries will set you back £190. It pays to spend a few minutes checking this detail on your potential purchase and you can do this on the menu of most cameras. On our Canon, pressing Menu > Battery Info revealed that the recharge performance was still strong. Be sure to repeat this step for all of the batteries that are bundled with your used camera.


© Eclipse_Images via Getty Images

Battery info.

LP-E6N

Remaining cap.	 59%
Shutter count	25
Recharge performance	

INFO 

MENU 

© Dan Mold



© Jose Antonio Bernat Bacete via Getty Images

What to look for

Let's start off with the obvious things – look for any wear and tear around the lens or camera body. Is everything present or have bits of trim fallen off? Is it beaten up and been used professionally or is the LCD scratched or looking pristine? If the lens or camera does have signs of damage, try to assess whether this is superficial. Don't worry if the sensor has dust spots as they can be cleaned easily, but take care if a lens or camera has serious dents or scratches as these could be an indication that it's had a tumble.

Websites such as MPB and Wex usually do a pretty good job of showing the lens or camera from all sorts of angles so you can get a good look if you can't see the item in person. It's also worth using a serial number checker to check the legitimacy of your camera and to make sure it's not a grey import or counterfeit.

In the past, we have seen people trying to pass the Canon EOS-1D X Mark II off as the similar-looking but more expensive Mark III model by taking off and replacing stickers and badges – so beware!

© Extreme-photographer / iStock/Getty Images

Give lenses a road test

In addition to checking for fungus, there are some key checks you should make when looking at a used lens. Check that the focus and zoom rings feel smooth. If they are stiff or crunchy, this could be cause for concern and the lens may need servicing. Rubber parts of the lens such as focus and zoom rings can sometimes deteriorate over time and become sticky,

leaving residue on your hands. These can usually be replaced fairly cheaply, but it's another cost you may have to factor in.

Remove any filters attached and check the front and rear elements for scratches. It's also worth checking the filter thread to make sure this is pristine so that you don't have any issues when attaching a filter later on.

Take a few pictures at different apertures and look for soft spots that can develop if a lens has been dropped at any point. Also, make sure the AF and any image stabilisation are working properly. Finally, use the depth of field preview button on your camera to close the aperture down so you can see whether it is closing down smoothly.

Beware of lens fungus

If lenses aren't particularly well weather-sealed and are stored in a dark and damp place for extended periods, they can create the perfect environment for fungus spores to thrive inside. If you have a small amount of fungus on the rear or front elements (or UV filter), then you should be able to wipe it off relatively easily, but if left for prolonged periods, the glass can become stained and impossible to fix without replacing the glass elements. Unless you think the level of fungus is so low that it won't noticeably affect the image quality, or you're happy to part with some cash to get it professionally cleaned, then it's usually best to steer clear. Take your time to thoroughly inspect the lens elements from both ends for any wispy or spider web-like fungus strands – it can be devilishly hard to spot.



© Dan Mold



© Dan Mold

What's in the box?

Cameras usually come with a box, charger, various cables and a manual, while for lenses, it's usually a box, lens hood, front and rear caps – and sometimes a soft pouch or case for storage. Having as many of the original accessories as possible will help you retain the value of your kit if you sell it at a later date. The seller might also bundle in accessories such as lens filters, a spare battery or a memory card, all of which can help sweeten the deal. Don't forget, if the item is missing some of those original accessories, you can use it as a bargaining point to try and get a better price.

Photo CV

We profile an expert photographer's career journey for insight on becoming established in the industry



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



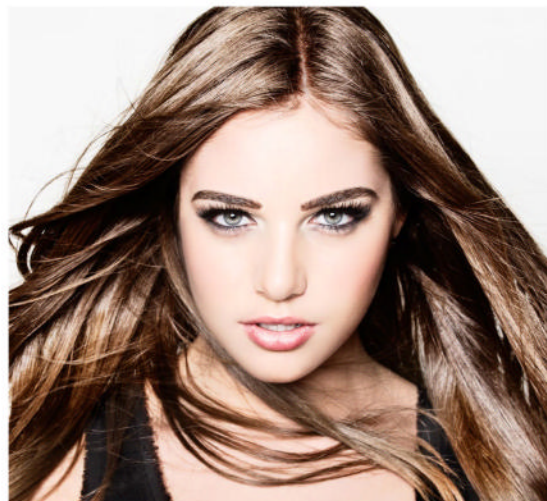
The Photography & Video Show
18-19 March 2024
The NEC, Birmingham

Scott Kelby
Location: Florida, USA
Specialisms
● Travel ● Portraiture ● Sports
To see more of Scott's work: scottkelby.com @scottkelby

A legendary name in photography education, Scott is the president and CEO of KelbyOne, the online educational community for photographers and Photoshop and Lightroom users. As well as being a best-selling author of photography books, Scott also hosts the hugely popular photo talk show 'The Grid'. Come and see him at TPS 2024 at the NEC, Birmingham.



Portrait photographer
As well as his travel and sports images, Scott also shoots portraiture, beauty and fashion photography



Story-teller
"A crucial skill is the ability to tell a story, but instead of a typewriter, a camera is the tool we photographers use"



© Scott Kelby X7

Mont Saint-Michel, Normandy, France
"After four hours of driving under grey skies, the rain stopped and an incredible sunset emerged over Mont St Michel"



Passion reignited
Scott picked up a Nikon DSLR at a show around the year 2000 and reignited his passion for photography



Left
Guilin, China
 "At dawn with the famous Cormorant fishermen near Guilin in China. I feel so fortunate to have photographed these wonderful men"

Below
Vik, Iceland
 Scott captured this wonderful little chapel overlooking the village of Vik on the southern coast of Iceland



Scott's photo kit

The essential gear he couldn't do without for his everyday work



CANON EOS R6 II
 This full-frame mirrorless camera sports a 24.2MP sensor, advanced Dual Pixel CMOS AF II system and excellent low-light performance at high ISO settings



CANON RF 24-240mm f/4-6.3
 This superzoom lens is the ideal choice for travel photography, offering both inclusive wide-angle and telephoto focal lengths in one optic



CANON RF 14-35mm f/4L IS USM
 For ultra-wide-angle shots, this mirrorless zoom lens has close-focusing capabilities and a highly effective image stabilisation system that's ideal for handheld shooting



TAMRON 150-600mm f/5-6.3
 For grabbing close-up shots of athletes and sports cars, this affordable super-tele zoom enables frame-filling shots even when the subject is further away from the camera

Career Path

When did you start out in your current photographic genres?

I shoot three genres – travel, people (portraits, beauty and fashion) and sports. I guess I really just shoot people – it's just that some are moving very fast! I started shooting film in the 1980s, but in the early 90s, I got burned out and stopped shooting altogether. I put my studio hot lights, cameras, light meters and flashes up in my attic and didn't touch a camera again until I held my first Nikon DSLR at a show around the year 2000, and that reignited my passion for photography.

What are your favourite aspects of talking at events like The Photography Show?

I love getting to talk with other photographers from all different backgrounds, and The Photography Show brings together so many photographers from many backgrounds. I also love teaching in front of a live audience.

So much of what I do these days is creating online courses, but nothing beats the energy and instant feedback that you get from a live audience – especially the type of audience The Photography Show brings in. They're passionate, totally engaged and not afraid to have a good time. Plus, there's a shared feeling that we're all in this together – everybody is so willing to help each other, share what they know and compare tips and techniques – it's an incredible atmosphere to teach in, making it a really special event.

Who and what else are you excited to see at The Photography Show?

I absolutely love visiting the vendor booths and watching the demos and presentations from leading photographers. There is so much education on the show floor, and I cannot tell you how much I've learned from sitting in the audience at the Canon, Nikon or Sony

booths, and even the smaller booths – I so look forward to that. Plus, I just like seeing the new gear. I'm a bit of a gear junkie, so this is like visiting new gear heaven, so I'll be busy scoping out all the new goodies. I can't wait!

What key skills are needed for your line of work?

I think a crucial skill is the ability to tell a story. We are essentially visual storytellers and instead of a typewriter or computer, our camera is the tool we use to weave our stories, so I think having that skill is hugely important.

Outside of professional assignments, what are your personal photo interests?

My personal photo interest is simply capturing a visual history of my wonderful family and my life, and I do most of that with my iPhone. I also want to start shooting more videos this year, especially when I'm doing a workshop.

Career advice

Claire Gillo rocks out with her photography this month and shares advice on how to shoot a music event

Event advice

I've lined up my first paid job to photograph a music event this summer. But having never covered something like this before professionally, I'm a bit nervous. What is your advice?

Anonymous

What a great gig (excuse the pun) you've got yourself. There are many different ways you can approach it, but here are my top five tips for anyone shooting a music event...

1. Familiarise yourself beforehand with the layout of the stage and work out your angles. Some of it will be trial and error but you can plan a lot beforehand. You want to move around to get a variety of shots so they're not all from the same angle.
2. Anticipate the moment and watch before you shoot. If you observe most bands or musicians, they tend to have a pattern to their performance and will often move around the stage a few times in the same way. Watch how they behave and get into position so that you can get your winning shots.
3. Capture the crowd. Crowd shots can be just as dramatic as band shots. You can also go to the back of the crowd to capture the whole space and the atmosphere of the gig.
4. Shoot generic pictures. As well as getting the big band shots, look for more generic compositions. The organisers of the event will find these types of shots useful for marketing.
5. Use a lens or lenses that can handle low light. Prime lenses are ideal as they can be opened super-wide, although you need to make sure you're spot on with your focusing.



Issy Ferris, lead vocalist and one half of folk group Ferris and Sylvester playing her guitar at the Dart Music Festival in 2023

© Claire Gillo

What's the most versatile lens?

I'm an amateur photographer who is trying to go pro but I'm still not sure what area of photography I want to go into. What do you think is the most versatile lens for someone who might shoot a variety of genres?
Lacey Jones

It's a no-brainer! A 24-70mm f/2.8 is an excellent option whatever genre of photography you want to shoot. With a lens like this, you can photograph architecture, portraits, weddings, products and landscapes to name just a few genres.

It really is one of the most versatile lenses out there and



the fixed f/2.8 is definitely worth the additional cost rather than going for an f/4 or having a varied aperture range (f/3.5-f/5.6). In low light, the f/2.8 will give you far more flexibility but also when shooting portraits, that shallow depth of field setting is a winner.

If cost is an issue, look at the second-hand market and go for an older model. Some older lenses still perform to an excellent level but they cost a fraction of the price of a new one.

A versatile lens like a 24-70mm f/2.8 is an excellent choice for most photographers and can be used to shoot a variety of genres

Best background stand?

I'm new to the industry and want to invest in a studio background stand but I'm on a limited budget. Are there any for under £100 that you would recommend?
Shawn Newman

The Calumet Background Support System can be purchased for £97 from Wex and is a good place to start. If you can spare an additional £62 on top of that it is worth upgrading to the heavy duty model (£159) as this will offer you a bit more flexibility but it does take you over your budget. The latter reaches a height of 3.6m and has a maximum load of 8kg, compared to the lighter model, which only reaches 2.7m with a maximum load of 7.5kg.

If you want to go really budget the NEEWER Backdrop Stand 10ft x 7ft can be purchased from

Amazon for £45. The maximum height on this model is 2m and the load is 5kg so you have less to work with. Remember, budget products won't last as long but if you don't overload them and treat them well, then there is no reason why they can't be a good way to get you going.



The NEEWER Backdrop Stand is a versatile budget product and a good way to get going



Shona has photographed a range of big name bands from the Foo Fighters (left) to Avatar (top)

© 4x Shona Cutt

How to get into music photography

Music photographer **Shona Cutt** shares her top tips and how she balances photography, her day job and the rock'n'roll lifestyle



What's in your kit bag?

I have my Canon 5D MKIII, Sigma 24-70mm f/2.8 lens, Canon 50mm f/1.8, two Speedlites, A Hanel TUF remote flash with two triggers, a Gobe Star filter

and a dome flash modifier. But more essential than any of the camera equipment are my earplugs – you can replace the gear but you can't replace your hearing!

My go-to lens is the Sigma 24-70mm, as I love its versatility. If I'm in a smaller venue and working directly for a band, I'll also have a pouch with a shoulder strap to carry a Speedlite and a star filter in case the lighting needs an extra boost (flash is used sparingly).

What do you love most about photographing live music?

I love capturing the energy and raw passion, the sweat, the hair, the interaction with the crowd and the chemistry between the musicians – I love it all! Feeling the music and anticipating when someone is going to do an epic guitar solo, headbang or jump and being able to capture it, that never gets old!

What's the best band or musician you have ever photographed?

For sheer spectacle and showmanship, Avatar was enormous fun to shoot and a visual delight, but one of my favourite experiences

has to be shooting the Foo Fighters at a sold-out London O2 Arena in 2017. Being a few feet away from Dave Grohl and the rush of energy from 20,000 people there was extraordinary – I went into shock on the way home!

What do you look for when photographing a music event?

If I'm shooting for a band directly, I like to move around to capture as many different aspects of the gig and venue as possible. I try to look for angles where I can get clean shots of the musician's faces and instruments, without any microphones, stands, cables and other stage clutter getting in the way.

In smaller venues where the stages are low, I will often shoot on my knees while at the front. I'm quite tall and I don't like blocking the paying punter's view. It's also a more flattering angle to the bands, rather than being at eye level, and helps the stage look bigger. I will be in the mosh pit if I need to be – as long as I can remain upright and not have my camera bashed, I always use a lens hood too, in case of any flying beer (well, you always hope it's just beer, anyway...)

Have you been able to make a full-time career out of your music photography?

I'm a graphic designer by day and a music photographer by night – that makes me sound like a naff superhero! It can be quite difficult to balance it all sometimes and

I would love to go freelance full-time one day. I am lucky that my boss is very supportive and doesn't judge me for wanting to use my annual leave to shoot gigs all over the UK.

My photography skills have been indispensable in my day job as it means I can shoot our advertising campaigns, and have total control across all aspects of the creative output. I'm able to use the techniques I've learned from music photography within my design job and, likewise, the skills I've learnt through being a designer also help with my music industry work – such as being able to shoot and design album artwork and filming and editing music videos.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to go down the same path?

Get the best camera and fastest lens you can afford and go to smaller gigs that will let you take it in without a photo pass. Whether it's local cover bands in a pub or a mate's band – the more you shoot, the more you learn about your camera settings and what works for you.

Once you've got a portfolio together, approach publications, such as local newspapers and online gig reviewers, as you'll need press accreditation to be able to photograph bigger bands and gigs. Be friendly and talk to the musicians and the other photographers. And always turn up to photograph the support bands, that is how I've met some of my biggest clients.

To find out more about Shona go to www.shonacutt.co.uk and follow on social media @shonacuttphotography

Monochrome magic

Converting an image into black and white is a powerful technique that effectively eliminates visual distractions, simplifies the composition and creates a strong foundation for visual storytelling. "By doing this, the viewer's focus is directed towards the shapes, textures and overall tonality within the image," Divyanshu explains. "It also enhances the overall impact and visual clarity of the subject matter and that's the reason I decided to convert this image to mono." Divyanshu's use of this technique has resulted in a more dramatic and visually striking frame, with bold contrast and captivating textures that convey a more moody look.



Defined shadows

Divyanshu created this image by combining the harsh glow of the afternoon sun with the long shadows of the subjects in the frame. This resulted in a high-contrast scene with hard shadows and a silhouette of a person. "The shadows make this scene, but to get the correct placement, I observed this place for a while at multiple times of the day," he says. "I love how the diagonal lines are used here in the form of shadows. While I was capturing the scene, this kid showed up, creating an interesting shadow that added a surprising element. His silhouette gives the shot an extra layer of interest," Divyanshu adds.

High angle perspective

This picture is a perfect example of how composition and perspective can make or break an image. With a clear vision in mind, Divyanshu experimented with various angles but he wasn't satisfied with the initial results. "I wanted to compose and balance this frame properly, but the challenge was to find the right spot to achieve this composition. In the end, I had to go to the top of the wall of the temple to take the shot," he explains. By choosing a high angle and a top-down perspective, Divyanshu could capture the scene while controlling the shape of the shadows. The resulting shot is a harmonious and captivating frame with strong visual language.

Negative space

"Negative space is one of the most powerful tools of composition as it can be used to draw attention directly towards the subject," says Divyanshu. While it may seem easy to simplify the frame, it's important to strike a balance between the input of negative space and image elements. "The effect of negative space can create a positive impact on the viewers because it gives the image room to breathe and helps them direct their attention on the subject while easily understanding the story behind the photo," he says. Negative space is frequently used in photographic genres such as minimalism and black-and-white photography, as it adds dramatic impact to the photo.

WHY SHOTS WORK

Name: Run free

Date: March 2023

Kit:

- Canon EOS 500D
- 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II
- Focal length: 47mm

Website: www.divyanshuverma.net



"Photography is the art of storytelling through my lens. The most important thing that I love about photography is it helps me express my feelings and emotions through my photos. Finding extraordinary and creative things from the ordinary helps me to become a photographer. Enjoying and capturing the moments around me always inspires and motivates me to do my best."

Divyanshu Verma



A self-taught photographer based in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India, Divyanshu Verma is known for his passion for finding moments

around him that help him develop his inner strength and see the world from a different perspective. His work has been recognised by various platforms both nationally and internationally. With his positive attitude, Divyanshu strives to create his own style and identity in this competitive world.

INTERVIEW

MAGICAL MISSION

Bella Kotak takes us on a journey to discover her photographic art with a focus on empowerment and soulful connections

Words by: Kim Bunermann

All images © Bella Kotak





GAIN EXCLUSIVE INSIGHT

Don't miss Bella Kotak's talk 'Transforming Visions: Crafting Dynamic Narratives in your Studio Photography' at The Photography & Video Show, which will be held at the NEC Birmingham between 16-19th March. Bella is scheduled to give her talk from 1pm on 16th March at the Editing & Post-Production Suite. To claim your discounted tickets, visit www.photographyshow.com and use the code DGPTPS24.

Pictured

Midsummer Dream

"On a neighbour's front lawn one summer's day, with raindrops landing softly on us, this picture came together. This final image is a total of seven pictures"





Pictured
Turbulence
“Being a creative is one hell of a journey,” says Bella

Bella Kotak



Bella Kotak is a fine art, fashion and portrait photographer known for her ethereal, feminine, and whimsical style. Her work is heavily influenced by the

natural world, fairy tales and strong feminine characters. Bella grew up in Kenya but is currently based in both the UK and the US, and her work has gained international recognition, featuring in various exhibitions, magazines and art publications. She is also known for her educational workshops and speaking engagements, where she shares her expertise in creative photography and post-processing techniques.

www.bellakotak.com

[@bellakotak](https://www.instagram.com/bellakotak)/[@bellakotak.ai](https://www.instagram.com/bellakotak)

Picking up a camera has transformed the lives of many creatives, including Bella Kotak. A student of architecture at the time, Bella found a creative outlet in photography that allowed her to visualise and capture her thoughts and imagination, combining a passion for design and storytelling with a fascination for nature and the human form. In her work, Bella draws inspiration from fairy tales and the natural world, and her themes of women’s empowerment, diversity, and culture are woven into her art. Her images tell a story by revealing the hidden beauty

in spaces and faces and her skill in crafting magical backdrops for her subjects not only creates aesthetically pleasing images but also conveys a deeper meaning.

Bella is an expert in creative photography and post-processing techniques, and she is renowned for her educational workshops and speaking engagements. Since her early days as a photographer, The Photography Show has been a focal point, helping nurture her creative growth over the years and, this year, she is a speaker at the event. We met up with Bella to discover what we can expect from her presentation in Birmingham and what she is most looking forward to when engaging with the creative community at the show.

“I’m inspired by the Earth, her abundance of life and rich natural beauty. I see that reflected in the feminine form with her softness, strength and ability to create life”



Pictured
Floral Creation
Bella captured this
image using a Phase
One camera and
Profoto A1 lighting

INTERVIEW

Pictured
Breathing Light
"Photoshop plays a huge role. It's just me, the screen and a world of possibilities"

Pictured
Beauty in Bloom
"I proposed this project on my socials and these women reached out with their stories"

Pictured
Dance of the butterflies
"The butterflies are from the Oxford Natural History Museum. I took photos of them and cut them out for this piece"

Hey Bella, what is it that drives you most about the medium of photography?

Photography is a form of magic. It freezes a moment in time, crafting connections in both our memories of the past and also to each other as human beings existing on this earth in our own timelines. As an artist's tool, I appreciate that photography has allowed me to cultivate a skillset and open up my world by creating interesting and meaningful human connections. It has also become the primary way for me to make tangible the stories I dream of and want to tell.

Photography is how I connect with the Earth, her flowers and seasons, her light and shadow, her scents and softness. Through this medium, I get to create experiences that connect me to those with whom I work and, in turn, connect us to our inner child... it offers a chance to slip back into pure childish joy and explore all the possibilities of bringing a vision to life.

Your work often highlights cultural aspects such as the empowerment of women. Why do you consider inclusion and diversity to be so important?

We should never underestimate the power

of representation. By incorporating diverse influences, I hope to inspire others to be proud of their heritage and to share their own stories. Being aware of the value of diversity can serve as a tool for creative ideas, cultural exchange and understanding, breaking down barriers and fostering empathy. It makes our art more accessible and relatable to a broader audience, connecting us human to human.

Can you tell us a little more about your project Beauty in Bloom?

Beauty in Bloom was a passion project and a chance to connect with my audience. At the time, I frequently photographed models and muses who had become friends. However, I yearned to capture real people in my signature style and share their stories. I invited my audience to reach out if they wished to be photographed and share a bit about themselves, particularly any current life experiences or struggles.

I had the privilege of highlighting their unique beauty while providing a space for openness and empowerment. Please check out the Beauty in Bloom video on my YouTube channel to fully appreciate the glimpses

into these courageous individuals and our collaborative creative process. Projects like these nourish my soul. Being able to uplift others through my photography is a gift. Beauty in Bloom embodied my desire to see everyone as the works of art they are.

You mostly shoot outdoors, so do you work with a portable lighting system?

The vast majority – around 90 per cent – of my outdoor shoots use only natural light. I have learned to observe the sun's path and position throughout the day and also to spot whether there are natural reflectors in the environment that I can take advantage of. While post-processing allows me to refine the lighting ambience, it all stems from amplifying what was available on location.

When I do opt for a light, my go-to is the Profoto A1 with a Clicbox. This compact yet powerful setup is easy for me to transport and quick to rig on-site. It's been a game-changer. The emphasis remains on crafting a lighting aesthetic that feels organic to the scene.

How much of your work is planned and how much is spur-of-the-moment?



Bella's choice of camera

Why Bella uses a Phase One

"I had an opportunity to use a Phase One camera back in 2016 and completely fell in love with the files from the very beginning. A few years ago, I was invited to be an ambassador for the brand and have been using it ever since to create many of my photography pieces.

The camera itself forces you to slow down and observe everything for the moment or expression that you want to capture. The dynamic range has come in handy several times and, of course, the quality of the files speaks for itself. They are so beautiful and have an almost film-like texture and allure that I haven't been able to recreate with any other camera so far."



Pictured
The Secret Garden
Bella captured this with a Phase One camera for her SmugMug film, available on her website





Pictured
Golden flower
Zeng Hao Dun Huang's
goddess paintings
inspired Bella to create
work that reflects the
feelings his pieces evoke



Pictured Regal
 "A tale of two lost in a floral world, sharing secrets only known between sisters..."

The majority of my process – let's say around 70 per cent – is dedicated to thoughtful planning. That includes finding the right model, securing the location, styling, research and conceptualising ideas. This advanced work lays the foundations, but I leave plenty of room in the other 30 per cent for some spontaneity and spur-of-the-moment inspiration.

I try not to become too attached to an idea. There is magic to be found when we allow the shoot's energy to guide things organically.

In post-production, how do you maintain the feeling and vision you had on set?

When I'm on set, I'm already tapped into the vision of the end result – the colours, vibrance, expressions, poses and the overall story. I can already see the final image in vivid detail. This allows me to be fully immersed in that creative headspace while shooting. Then during editing, I try to sustain that energy. I'll put on music or a documentary as I meticulously enhance the narrative, one step at a time. My goal is to amplify the vision I connected with on set and it's a meditative process. I love the creative flow state both during the shoot and in post-production.

You are also the founder of onlythecurious. Could you tell us more about it?

Onlythecurious evolved from my desire to connect and provide value to the community. By showcasing not only my artistic approach but also the creative visions of other leading photographers, it has become a nurturing space for our community to learn, get inspired and bring more beauty into the world through photography. It represents a central part of my mission to empower others on their artistic path just as others empowered me on mine.

You often create unique worlds on set by hand and combine them with your subject, but has AI technology impacted this creative process?

Absolutely. Photography allows me to share my creative vision and AI is proving to be yet another avenue for imagination. While I cherish capturing life's moments in real-time, I've started blending both real and artificial worlds out of curiosity to see what's possible. Following your curiosity can open doors we never knew existed.

Though I love tangible experiences, combining photography's realism with AI's potential intrigues me. My work has already started interweaving these tools to create something new. The technology may differ but creativity aligns them.

You are going to be a speaker at the forthcoming Photography & Video Show in March. What are you most looking forward to while you're in Birmingham?

I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to engage with the UK's creative photography community at this event. Having attended since the early days of my photography journey, it has nurtured my creative growth over the years. From speaker presentations to demos and vendor discussions – there's always something new to learn.

I look forward to reconnecting with familiar faces, making new friends and soaking up all I can from the wealth of knowledge shared. Events like these, where I'm surrounded by kindred creative spirit, reignite my passion.

What can the attendees at the show expect to hear during your talk?

I want to share my unique perspectives and

Bella's kitbag essentials



PHASE ONE IQ3 TRICHROMATIC



PHASE ONE 80MM f/2.8 LS AF SCHNEIDER KREUZNACH



PROFOTO A1 & CLICBOX



GELS & GAFFER TAPE



CANON EOS R5



CANON EF 50MM f/1.2L USM

how they have shaped my artistic choices and workflow. It's easy to feel pressure to emulate others' methods to achieve their success. But in truth, their path won't be ours – and our paths hold their own value.

My goal is for attendees to leave with the insight to enrich their craft and the confidence to forge their own trail, not merely follow someone else's. My aim is to impart actionable knowledge and my wish is that my talk sparks the ability to apply these learnings in a way that aligns with your individuality.

THE GALLERY

The Gallery

The Urban Photo Awards 14

The Urban Photo Awards

The 14th edition of the Urban Photo Awards was organised by dotART, a cultural association based in Trieste, Italy. The contest is open to both amateur and professional photographers and is split into four sections – Streets, People, Spaces and Creative. The theme is 'Urban Life: Urban Photography', which explores the idea of modernity in the urban environment, the contrasts between the city and the countryside, the aesthetic views and the architectural geometry of the city. The Streets category conveys the multiple facets of urban life, from roadside scenes to candid moments. An awards ceremony was held at the Auditorium of the Revoltella Museum in Trieste. For further info, visit urbanphotoawards.com/en



Pictured

Untitled

Taken at Songkhla beach
in Thailand, Sakulchai
Sikitikul's image makes
great use of bold colour

THE GALLERY



Above
Tough Life
Andres Ramos Palacios captured these jet-lagged tourists on an excursion to Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

Right
Alone
A boy shelters from the wind and spray on a boat tour of Niagara Falls in Jasper Tejano's image





Top
And Then the Winter Came
Pierpaolo Mittica's image of the shop with a power generator during a winter blackout in Kyiv, Ukraine

Above
Risky Train Journey
People return home after Eid celebrations in Dhaka, Bangladesh, taken by Jubair Ahmed Arnob

Left
Cartino
This monochrome shot of the sea wall in Antalya, Turkey, was captured by Nurlan Tahirli of Azerbaijan



Above
Untitled
Francesco Armillotta captures the atmosphere of the annual fireworks festival in San Severo, Italy

Right
Nightfall by the Sea
Antonio Denti captured this magical moment by the sea in Capomulini, Sicily, with his iPhone 13





Left
Multicolor
Charles Chojnacki was intrigued by the straight lines and bold colours at the bus station in Tel Aviv

Below
Untitled
This image of fishermen in Bangladesh was taken by Rimon Mia, who made full use of the backlighting

Bottom middle
Tokyo Metro Ticket Booth
Argus Paul Estabrook shot this ticket booth attendant on the Tokyo Metro with his Sony A7

Bottom
Winter Play
Focusing on the high-key contrast, Stanislav Sitnikov captured this image of men playing football in Moscow, Russia

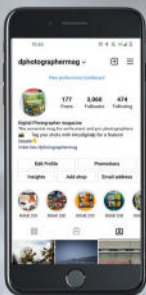


SHOT OF THE MONTH



Photographer: Mark Deans
Title: Fox Feud
Location: Aberdeen, UK
@markdeans_photography

About the shot: "While I was in Aberdeen, I was watching these two foxes when they suddenly began fighting in the middle of the street, bringing traffic to a halt in both directions. Eventually, after about five minutes, they resolved their dispute and continued on their way, but not before I had managed to snap this shot. It was shortlisted for the Scottish Wildlife of the Year image in the Animal Behaviour category."



**Tag us @dphotographermag
for a chance to feature here**

Every issue, we'll be sharing the best images from our Instagram community. Tag us on @dphotographermag



**WIN! SAMSUNG
256GB PRO PLUS
MICRO SDXC MEMORY
CARD WITH SD ADAPTER**

Every issue, one *Digital Photographer* reader wins a Samsung 256GB PRO Plus MicroSDXC memory card with SD adapter. Boasting up to 160MB/s and 120MB/s read/write speeds, the card is perfect for high-res stills and Ultra HD video. It is the go-to card for the modern content creator using mirrorless, smartphone, action cam and drone cameras. Find out more at samsung.com/uk/memory-storage



THE BEST OF **DARK NIGHTS**

The winners of our latest contest with Photocrowd have been revealed

For our latest competition in association with Photocrowd, we challenged you to submit your best Dark Nights images. After working through all the entries, the winners have been selected. As a prize, the expert winners will receive a licence for Affinity Photo professional editing software. Congratulations to all of the winners – as usual, the standard of submitted images was extremely high and it was a difficult task to select the best ones.

1ST PLACE WINNER **Untitled**

Photographer esraburcun

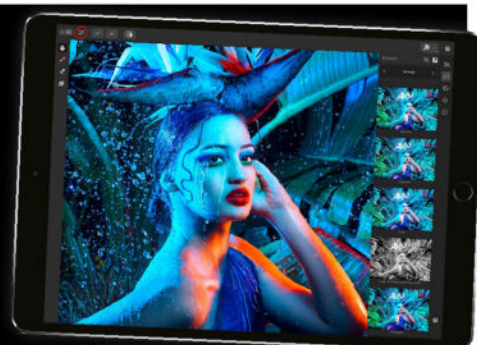
We love the high contrast of this shot. The choice to keep the colour version adds to the stark difference in tone between the building and the darkness beyond. It almost looks like a tear in a black curtain, revealing a stage behind and the placement of the figure is perfect for drawing the eye to it. Well done!

WIN! Prizes from Affinity

Enter our Capture Colour contest before 4th March for a chance to win Affinity Photo

We love colour photography! Show us your images rich in hues and high in dynamic range – all subjects are welcome, so it's your chance to showcase true-to-reality colours as well as your colour grading skills. Enter at photocrowd.com/digitalphotographer from 19th February for a chance to win a licence to Affinity Photo editing software (worth £49 for Mac or Windows), a toolset for

photography professionals. Whether you're editing and retouching or creating multi-layered compositions, Affinity Photo has non-destructive editing, RAW processing, real-time edits and colour management as standard. Winners will be notified by email and can choose between Mac, Windows or iPad versions. Winners will be revealed in issue 278 of *Digital Photographer*, on sale 12th April.





2ND PLACE

Lost in your phone

Photographer John Wakeling

There's a wonderful contemplative atmosphere about this image. Many people see night-time in the city as intimidating, avoiding shadowy areas like this. However, this image shows off the tranquil side of the darkness – this man is experiencing the city in a way that would be impossible during the day. Nicely spotted.

3RD PLACE

Startrail above Michaelschapel

Photographer Helitz_photography

We saw many star trail images in this round, so it was a popular approach to the brief. However, this one stood out for its simplicity and tranquillity. The subject is so small it feels dwarfed by the night sky, while the exposure is perfectly matched and blended. Well done.



RUNNER UP Manhattan Bridge At Night

Photographer MartinDuffyPhotography
Nothing makes better use of the night-time than a cityscape, but the detail in this shot is truly astonishing. From the deepest shadows to the brightest highlights, the exposure is perfectly blended, giving us an all-encompassing view of the New York skyline. A brilliantly shot and edited image.



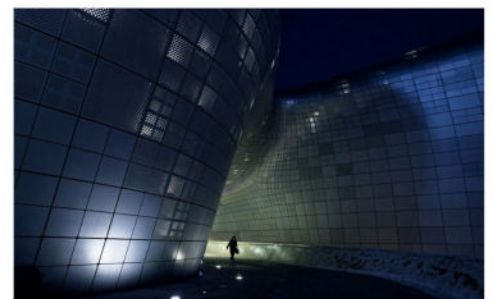
RUNNER UP Night Hunter

Photographer Graham Davis
This shot looks far more difficult to take than one might immediately imagine. The timing, lighting and composition all come together to tell a story and give us a glimpse into this bird's nocturnal life, as it scans the blackness for its next meal. Expertly photographed.



RUNNER UP Spring Moon

Photographer Tetiana
This is an unusual shot and an exciting interpretation of the brief. The colours are beautiful and we love that the photographer has chosen to focus on the flowers, which contrast warmly against the deep blue of the twilight sky. A lovely night study.



RUNNER UP City Night

Photographer Ludwig P
Many shots of people walking through dark streets were submitted for this round, but the buildings drew us to this particular example. The lights, colour depth and composition pull the viewer into the frame and make us want to know what is around that corner.



96
Head-to-head
This issue, we pit two of the most exciting cameras on the planet against each other – the Canon EOS R3 and Nikon Z 9. Which offers the best balance of value, features, power and image quality for high-end photographers?

Kit intro

The expert and independent reviews of gear we've bagged this issue



104 Sony Alpha 9 III

James Artaius tests the latest trail-blazing camera from Sony to see whether its full-frame global shutter is worth the hype and wonders whether it could change photography forever

108 Apple MacBook Pro 14

The MacBook finally gets the body upgrades users have been asking for, but Gareth Bevan asks whether it's enough to justify upgrading

110 Lenses

Every month, we take two professional optics out into the field. This issue, it's the affordable Viltrox AF 27mm f/1.2 Pro and Canon RF 200-800mm f/6.3-9 IS USM superzoom

112 Accessories

It's the little things that can enhance your photography, so we've rounded up the best photo gadgets and gifts to add to your kitbag

Our ratings

Our team of trusted and expert reviewers score gear thoroughly to help you make better buying choices.

- Don't go there ★★★★★
- Could be better ★★★★★
- Solid performer ★★★★★
- Excellent bit of kit ★★★★★
- Best on the market ★★★★★

Product awards

Digital Photographer's awards are given out when a product really catches our attention. Here are our three most used accolades.



Lab testing

Some of our product reviews also have in-depth lab data, graphs and scores. This means that the kit has been subjected to more rigorous testing. Lens tests are carried out using Imatest, and cameras are tested in our laboratory using DxO Analyzer hardware and software to check the image noise and dynamic range.

Clash of the Mirrorless Titans

Sparks fly as we pit the Canon EOS R3 and Nikon Z9 in a duel for dominance





The hardest concept to grasp when comparing the EOS R3 from Canon and Nikon's Z 9 is that these aren't even the manufacturer's top-of-the-line models. It would be easy to assume that the EOS R3 is a like-for-like mirrorless replacement for the iconic EOS 1DX Mark III DSLR and, likewise, Nikon had served up the Z 9 as a natural successor to its D6 SLR speed demon. However, both brands have made it clear that these cameras either sit alongside their mirrored counterparts or just below in the case of the Canon. This suggests the best is yet to come and, with the Canon range

in particular, the industry is holding its breath for the EOS R1, the model everyone is expecting to become the master of the Paris Olympics this year.

The reason all of this is hard to grasp comes down to just how much technology is already packed into the R3 and Z 9. Both cameras offer blistering frame rates, high-resolution full-frame sensors and the best autofocus technology the respective ranges have at their disposal. Even at first glance, the built-in vertical grips indicate that both models are aimed squarely at the pro shooter, continuing a tradition that goes back to the earliest days of

digital photography, with the Canon EOS 1D/1Ds and Nikon D1/D1H.

The long-time rival companies have taken slightly different approaches to their respective camera specifications. One fits more organically within the kit bag of a sports and wildlife photographer, while the other bridges the gap between action and studio camera. Both cameras are certainly not cheap, but which gives photographers the biggest bang for their buck? We took the R3 and Z 9 out into the field for a few days to discover which one takes the crown, in an effort to (temporarily) answer the enduring question: Canon or Nikon?



Pictured
Masters of light
The Canon EOS R3 and Nikon Z 9 both combine the latest sensor and processing tech for a great combination of speed and low-light performance

REVIEWS

PRICE: £5,499/\$5,999

Canon EOS R3

Thirty years after the concept was first conceived, Eye-Controlled AF is back, but is it as good as it sounds?



As a teenager, I became the proud owner of a Canon EOS 3 film SLR. It was a wonderful machine and now it's back with a 24.1MP full-frame sensor and without a mirror. The EOS 3's position in the Canon range of its day, sitting just below the EOS 1v, is reminiscent of the suggested relationship between the EOS R3 and the much-anticipated EOS R1. It also came with Eye-AF – sorcery by late 1990's standards.

I admit I was sceptical about how well it would work, even in 2024, but after a simple calibration process, the R3 effortlessly kept track of where I was looking in the viewfinder, almost instantaneously locking onto my subject of choice. The AF speed and accuracy of the R3 generally are sublime, but it feels magical to simply glance at an object to select the AF point. It's not flawless and demands user experience but is undoubtedly impressive and an advantage over the Nikon.

Compared to the Z 9, I felt my focus hit rate edged ahead with the R3, the Canon keeping up fractionally better with fast-moving birds. This was less apparent with subjects moving past the cameras, but the R3 seemed to cope a little better with hungry gulls flying towards

or away from the lens. The subject tracking is also phenomenal and most of the time, the camera felt as if it were doing most of the hard work, allowing me to concentrate on composition. Speaking of the viewfinder, both cameras have exceptional EVFs. The resolution on the Canon inches ahead of the Nikon at 5.76 million dots compared to 3.69 million dots but in practice, the difference isn't a deal breaker.

The burst rate is more than most people will ever need, but for sports and wildlife photographers, 30fps allows the R3 to capture every tiny movement of the subject using the electronic shutter. Importantly, the camera doesn't slow down excessively when shooting full-resolution RAW files and jpegs. Meanwhile, a maximum of 20fps is possible on the Z 9 when shooting full-sized files – a significant advantage for the Canon.

Unsurprisingly for a pro model, there are two card slots but, unlike the Z 9, which provides dual CFexpress types, the R3 supports an SD slot too. I prefer this approach as I have accumulated numerous SD cards over the years and this split support allows a gradual transition to the newer format.

Below
Natural colour
The colours from the R3 are signature Canon. Gradation is smooth and true-to-life

Bottom
In flight
The Canon R3 keeps up with fast-moving birds fractionally better than its Nikon rival

Below
Subject tracking
Subject tracking is phenomenal, letting you concentrate on the composition

Bottom
Burst rate
With a 30fps burst rate, sports and wildlife photographers can capture the subject's every movement



PRICE: £5,299 / \$5,500

Nikon Z 9

It has almost double the resolution of the R3 but does the Z 9 come with too many compromises to steal Canon's crown?



The headline feature of the Z 9 is its 45.7MP sensor, which is effectively twice the pixel count offered by the R3. It isn't the first time Nikon has bridged the gap between sport and studio cameras and the extra resolution comes in handy when cropping in on small or distant subjects. Images are supremely detailed and it's a joy to be able to recompose shots of unpredictable wildlife in post-processing.

Even shooting with a 70-200mm lens, I could zoom in on fine textures in the feathers of flying birds and do so far more confidently than with images from the R3. There is a noise penalty and while shots taken on the R3 at the top sensitivity of ISO 102,400 were just about usable, I'd steer clear on the Z 9. However, the argument can be made that with greater resolution to begin with, any loss of fine detail is effectively compensated for at more commonly used ISO values. In short, noise performance from both cameras is top-notch, as is the dynamic range, although I did experience highlight clipping a little quicker in images from the Nikon. The larger pixels in the R3 produce a visibly more compressed tonal

range, with greater detail at the extremes of the histogram. I also felt colours from the EOS camera were a touch smoother in gradation, characteristically more film-like than those from the Z 9, which take on a more 'digital' appearance, although that is a matter of taste.

Since the Z 9 only features an electronic shutter, it makes sense to compare only frame rates in electronic mode on the R3. Once again, the latter jumps ahead providing a full 10fps lead when shooting full-resolution jpegs or RAW files but this is forgivable considering the file size differences. You can also shoot at the absurd burst rate of 120fps on the Z 9 when capturing 11MP images which, let's be honest, is perfectly suitable for web use and half-page magazine or newspaper printing.

Where build and handling are concerned, the Z 9 truly feels like a tank. Both grips are deep and well-textured and the body exudes professionalism, even more so than the EOS R3. It is more balanced with longer lenses than the Canon. I found the thumb wheel more convenient on the R3 however and a fully articulated screen is a big miss on the Z 9.

Below
High ISO quality

At their respective top sensitivities, the Z 9 displayed more prominent grain than the Canon EOS R3

Bottom
Pixel count

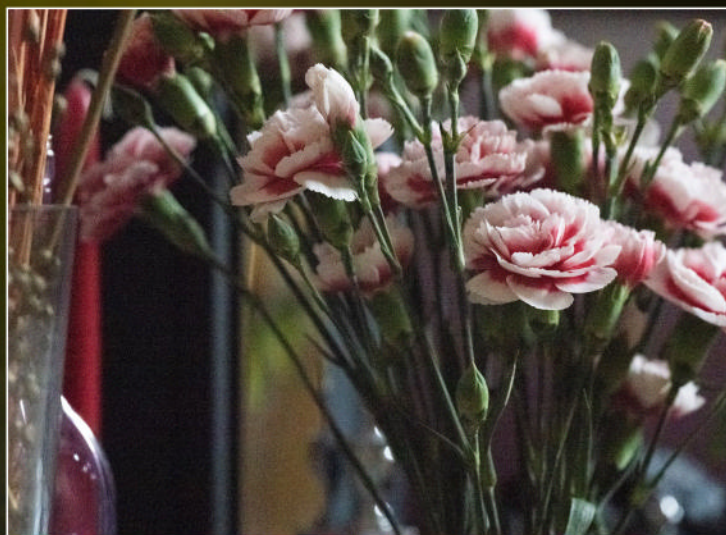
The Z 9's 45.7MP sensor is effectively twice the pixel count offered by the R3

Below
Dynamic range

The smaller pixels can result in more noticeable highlight clipping in the Nikon

Bottom
AF performance

The AF on the Z 9 coped less effectively with subjects moving towards or away from the camera position



Canon EOS R3

Megapixels (effective)
24.1MP

Max resolution
6000 x 4000

Image sensor
36 x 24mm CMOS

Image processor
DIGIC X

Max drive rate
30fps (electronic)

Buffer depth (max speed)
540 jpeg/150 RAW

Image stabilisation
5-axis up to 8EV

Shutter speed
30-1/8,000 (M),
1/64,000 (E)

ISO (expanded)
ISO 100-102,400
(50-204,800)

Shooting modes
PASM, Custom

AF points
1053 points, Area 100%

Metering options
Eval, CW, Partial, Spot

Max video resolution
4K 120p, FHD 240p,
6K RAW 60p

Connectivity
USB 3.2 (USB-C),
HDMI micro, Wifi

Weight
822g (body only)

Dimensions (WHD)
150x142.6 x 87.2mm

Battery (life)
Li-ion LP-E19 (860shots)

Storage
1x CFexpress, 1x SDXC

LCD
3.2-inch, 4.15 million dots

Viewfinder
0.5-inch 5.76-million-dot OLED

Features

Everything is built with speed in mind and there are as many features as any pro could hope for

★★★★★

Build quality

The body is lightweight yet feels sturdy, though perhaps slightly less so than the Nikon Z 9

★★★★★

Handling

Handling is superlative and everything is positioned where it should be for comfort

★★★★★

Quality of results

It loses out to the Z 9 on pixel resolution but noise benefits at high ISOs and colours are superb

★★★★★

Value for money

Undeniably expensive, but the R3 does basically everything you could want a camera to do

★★★★★

Overall

The AF smarts make the R3 the better action camera right now, although the price is nearly £700 more than the Z 9 at some retailers

★★★★★

Nikon Z 9

Megapixels (effective)
45.7MP

Max resolution
8256 x 5504

Image sensor
35.9 x 23.9 mm FX CMOS

Image processor
EXPEED 7

Max drive rate
30fps (jpeg), 20fps (RAW)

Buffer depth (max speed)
1000+ RAW (20fps)

Image stabilisation
5-axis giving up to 6EV

Shutter speed
900sec - 1/32,000sec

ISO (expanded)
ISO 64-25,600 (32-102,400)

Shooting modes
PASM, Custom

AF points
493 points

Metering options
Matrix, CW,
Spot, Highlight

Max video resolution
8K UHD 30p, 4K 120p

Connectivity
USB, HDMI, Wi-Fi, BT

Weight
1160g (body only)

Dimensions (WHD)
149 x 149.5 x 90.5mm

Battery (life)
EN-EL18d (740 shots)

Storage
2x CFexpress

LCD
3.2-inch, 2100k-dot

Viewfinder
0.5-inch 3.69-million-dot

Features

In many ways, it's the better-rounded camera, catering for virtually all photo genres

★★★★★

Build quality

It feels completely solid, more like its DSLR predecessors than the EOS. Can't be faulted

★★★★★

Handling

It's notably heavier than the R3 and we missed the thumb wheel, but everything is within reach

★★★★★

Quality of results

High ISO files suffer from more noise, but the extra pixels offer superb detail at lower sensitivities

★★★★★

Value for money

You can get the R3 for the same price with offers but the Z 9 is better value at the RRP

★★★★★

Overall

The R3 is snazzier and wins on specs alone but the Z 9 is arguably the more rounded model. A firmware update or two might close the gap

★★★★★





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Sony Alpha 9 III

Packed with innovative technology, this Sony camera could change photography as we know it forever, says **James Artaius**

 The Sony A9 III is, hands down, the most advanced camera ever made. While it isn't yet being referred to as the company's flagship, the A9 series has traditionally occupied that position. And as mighty as the Sony A1 is, its specs honestly look kind of quaint compared to the Sony A9 III. The best sports cameras are the launchpad for manufacturers' bleeding-edge technology, but I have never seen a camera with as much earth-shatteringly futuristic tech as the Sony A9 III. Terms like 'game changer' are banded about liberally these days, but this is a camera that could transform the way we use cameras.

With headlines including the world's first full-frame global shutter image sensor, 120fps continuous shooting at full resolution

(24.5MP) jpeg and RAW, and the ability to shoot with a shutter speed of 1/80,000 sec, this is a camera made of pure photographic muscle. For those who haven't come across the concept of a global shutter, essentially it exposes whole frames on the sensor at the same time – rather than line-by-line, scanning left-to-right or from top-to-bottom, the way traditional sensors do. The result is that rolling shutter – the phenomenon where non-horizontal straight lines (whether they're golf clubs, baseball bats, telegraph poles or buildings) appear warped and distorted when shot at high electronic speed – is eliminated.

That global readout dovetails with the A9 III's second most amazing feat: a maximum shutter speed of 1/80,000sec.

On the photographic side, this makes flash sync speeds extinct. It is simply so fast that it can sync with flash at all speeds, making not just standard speeds redundant (such as 1/250sec), but also rendering high-speed sync technology completely superfluous. There is a temporary caveat here, which is that the camera cannot shoot at 1/80,000sec in continuous mode; here, it maxes out at 1/16,000sec. However, Sony says that its first firmware update, which is due around March 2024, will bring continuous shooting all the way up to 1/80,000sec.

What else does the global shutter do? It gives us the ability to shoot continuous bursts of stills at 120fps. The Nikon Z 8 and Z 9 can do this but only with 11MP jpegs. That's not a problem for the A9 III, though. It can rattle off 120fps images at full 24.6MP resolution, in 14-bit jpeg and RAW, blackout-free, with full autofocus and autoexposure.

The only realistic way of testing an elite-level sports camera is to shoot elite-level sports – so I torture tested the A9 III at an

With headlines including the world's first full-frame global shutter, this is a camera made of pure photographic muscle

FEATURES

FULL-FRAME SENSOR

The imaging sensor measures 35.7mm by 23.8mm but carries far fewer pixels (24.6MP) than other cameras in the Sony lineup

MAX RESOLUTION

The effective resolution can output files with maximum pixel dimensions of 6000 x 4000. This allows for the maximum frame rate of 120fps but still enables 4K video shooting

VIDEO RESOLUTION

The Sony A9 III can shoot Ultra HD 4K (3840 x 2160) video at 120p, 60p, 50p, 25p and 23.98p internally. Supported formats include XAVC S, XAVC HS and XAVC S-I

CFEXPRESS TYPE A

While many other manufacturers use the Type B format, Sony sticks with the Type A variant

COMPOSITE RAW SHOOTING

This captures 32 RAW images that can be stacked in Sony Imaging Edge to minimise noise and false colour when shooting at high ISO to compensate for the more limited ISO performance of the global shutter sensor

MAX SHUTTER SPEED

The electronic shutter is capable of up to 1/80,000sec but this tops out at 1/16,000sec in continuous shooting mode

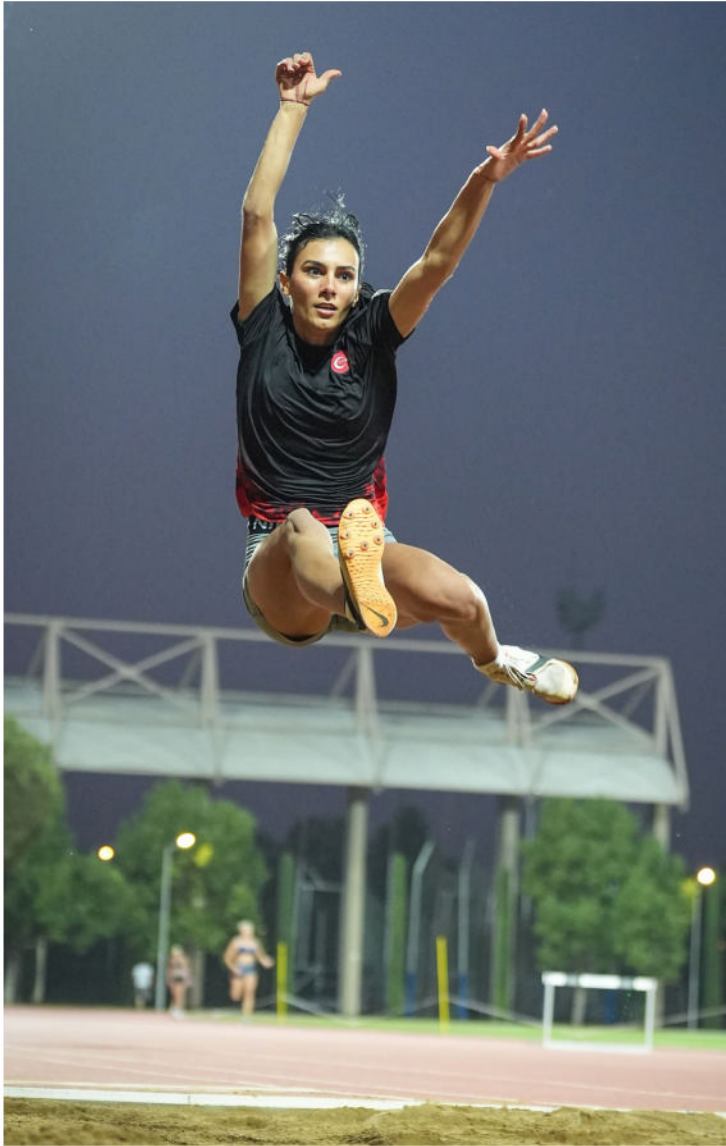


Olympic training facility, photographing teams as they prepared for this summer's Paris 2024 Olympic games. With a lone subject in an empty space, the AF acquisition and tracking were flawless, keeping the athlete in focus whether facing the camera or fully contorting in the middle of a move.

Overall, I have to say that the A9 III's autofocus system is absolutely incredible. Bearing in mind that I was blasting away at up to 120fps and up to 120p in 4K, for the AF to keep up at all is remarkable enough. For it to be as resoundingly robust and subject-sticky as it is, it's actually pretty mind-blowing. The only occasional issue I had was side-on shots, where acquisition took a fraction longer. High-jump subjects also posed a challenge as the AF simply didn't recognise the human body shape in such an unusual position.

It's a running gag that all Alphas look and feel the same, so it's no surprise to know that the A9 III looks and feels much like the A9 II before it – which is to say it looks pretty and feels great in the hand – but with





All images © James Artaius



Above
On-target
In most conditions the A9 III's AF system kept up with fast-action sports

slightly refined ergonomics. This is mainly in the form of the beefier grip, which certainly offers much more purchase and a better handhold when using big lenses. The back of the camera is virtually identical apart from a different graphic on the record button. The top plate sees the most changes, with photo, video and S&Q now removed from the mode dial and placed on a collar switch surrounding it. I actually found this a little cumbersome in the heat of the moment, when I wanted to flick between stills and video, not helped by the slightly awkward dexterity required to simultaneously depress the lock button on top of the dial.

Left
Gone global
The global sensor allows incredible top shutter speeds and burst frame rates

There will be some who scoff at the specs, questioning the need for a 1/80,000sec shutter or the point of 120fps shooting. And no doubt, there will also be naysayers at the other end of the spectrum, berating the relatively modest 24.6MP resolution. To put it kindly, this camera isn't meant for these people – it's for the Reuters photographers and NBA regulars. The A9 III is the best sports camera I've ever used. Can it be even better? Yes, it can. And, with the promised firmware update, it no doubt will be.

TALKING POINT... Autofocus performance

Sony has made a bold claim about its new AI processing unit that powers Real-time Recognition AF. It promises 'human pose estimation technology' that recognises and tracks subjects' bodies and heads, even when they're facing away from the camera and in a small area of the screen. And mostly, that's exactly what it does. The discipline it handled most capably was gymnastics. With hurdles, it had few problems, given that the subject's face was always in the frame. But with kickboxing and Muay Thai, the A9 III was surprisingly less consistent than the A9 II.

Here, the camera is too clever for its own good. In mapping a database of human skeletal positions to predict movement, it is setting itself up to be tricked in the same way a boxer's opponent is when a feint or fake is thrown. This could account for the AF system occasionally getting confused about what to focus on, in a way that the A9 II didn't. It was particularly noticeable when shooting video, as the focus would dart around trying to stick to something.



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Sony Alpha 9 III

- Megapixels**
24.6MP
- Sensor information**
Full frame
Exmor RSCMOS
(35.6x23.8mm)
- Shutter speed**
30sec-1/80,000sec
- Native ISO sensitivity**
250 - 25600 (Native)
125 - 51200 (Ext.)
- Drive speed**
120fps max
- Buffer**
196 x 14-bit RAW files
- Max video resolution**
UHD 4K (3840 x 2160) 60p
(oversampled 6K), 4K 120p
(uncropped)
- Autofocus options**
Phase detection, 759 points
stills, 627 points video, AI-based
Real-time Recognition AF
- Image stabilisation**
Up to 8 stops
- Connectivity**
WiFi, BT, USB-C, HDMI,
headphone, mic, sync
- Batteries**
Rechargeable Li-ion
(NP-FZ100)
- Storage**
1x SD UHS-II,
1x CFexpress Type A
- LCD**
8.0 cm (3.2-type) TFT with
2,095,104 dots
- Viewfinder**
0.64 inch
Quad-XGA OLED,
9,437,184 dots, 0.9x
magnification
- Weight**
702g
(inc. battery/card)
- Dimensions**
136.1x96.9x82.9mm

FEATURES
The A9 III introduces features which are sure to become a staple in pro cameras of the future
★★★★★

BUILD QUALITY
The body maintains the pro grade feel of other top-end Sony mirrorless cameras
★★★★★

HANDLING
Refinements help the ergonomics, especially with larger lenses in use
★★★★★

QUALITY OF RESULTS
AF could use some improvements but the blend of speed and quality is top-notch for pros
★★★★★

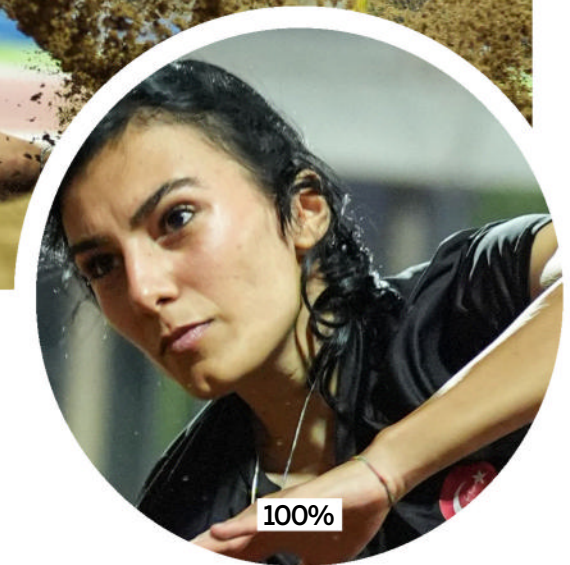
VALUE FOR MONEY
It's definitely not cheap but you're really paying for the world firsts in shutter technology
★★★★★

Overall

The Sony A9 III is currently the most advanced camera on the planet and could even usher in a new era for photography.



It's no surprise to know that the A9 III looks and feels much like the A9 II



- 1 FAMILIAR LAYOUT**
If you have shot a Sony before you'll fall right into step with the A9 III design philosophy
- 2 REFINED HANDGRIP**
There have been marginal body redesigns that make handling smoother

- 3 LENS MOUNT**
Featuring a full-frame sensor, the A9 III can accept all FE-compatible optics
- 4 CARD FORMATS**
Users have a choice of SD or CFexpress Type A cards for backup or overflow duty



Price: £1,699/\$1,599

Website: apple.com

Apple MacBook Pro 14 (M3, 2023)

The base MacBook Pro finally gets a welcome body upgrade, but is it lost in the MacBook lineup? **Gareth Bevan** finds out whether it's worth splashing the cash



After Apple turned the world of computing upside down with the release of its M1 chip, proving the hold Intel had over the high-end processor market could be broken, Apple has rolled out a new version of its processors like clockwork each autumn. We are now onto the third version of Apple's in-house silicon, fittingly named the M3. It also comes in M3 Pro and M3 Max varieties, although those are not my focus this time – this review covers the base

M3 chip in the MacBook Pro, which for the first time in several years has had an almost complete redesign.

Apple seemed reluctant to phase out the base MacBook Pro with the much-maligned touchbar design for the past couple of generations, so it is a welcome sight to see it has finally made the jump. The new version of the MacBook Pro M3 is a fair bit more expensive than the previous version, with Apple adding around \$300 to the price.

The new version is just under an inch larger but otherwise has similar internal specs as the previous model. It also gets rid of the touchbar for a row of standard keys. I'm not an economist, and maybe I am missing something, but is the new design really that much of a premium?

The keyboard has also had a redesign, with black keys on a black background compared with the black keys being separated from the chassis colour on the previous model.



screen also goes extremely bright, which will be a great help when summer rolls around and I am editing outside.

If you are coming from the previous M2 MacBook Pro, you probably won't notice a significant real-world difference between that processor and what the M3 is capable of. However, if you're switching from Intel models of the MacBook Pro, it's an entirely different story, with the M3 chip being a revelation over those older models. For photo and video editors looking to use more creative software, the difference between the M3 and older Intel systems is so dramatic I don't know how I go back to using my Intel-powered laptop.

I spend the majority of my computing time in Adobe Lightroom Classic, which even on a good day is one of the slowest apps around, but where my i7 MacBook Pro frequently gets hung up on the simplest of tasks, such as creating previews of images or exporting batches of photos, the M3 MacBook Pro doesn't get bogged down. Apple's choice of RAM has also caused a stir and though Apple will claim that its unified memory is superior to normal RAM, where I have a sticking point with the base M3 MacBook Pro is with its standard 8GB of RAM. Even though the new M3 chip adds more processing power, I wonder whether this is enough for editors who often use Photoshop, Lightroom, Premiere, or other software at the same time. Nonetheless, this iteration marks the most significant MacBook update in recent years.

The keys are a little hard to distinguish and the black picks up more greasy fingerprints, however, the keyboard itself is still beautifully easy to type on, with classic scissor-switch keys and not the horrendous butterfly key experiment from previous MacBooks.

Other new additions that come along with the revised body design are the inclusion of an SD Card slot and HDMI port, both of which will be greatly received by photographers everywhere. I am not sure why the laptop manufacturers collectively decided to banish

SD Card readers from their devices, but I am pleased to see that they are making a comeback. As someone who copies files several times a day between an SD card and my laptop, having a dongle dangling near-constantly is a huge annoyance.

The screen itself is stunning. This is one of the best screens I have ever used on a laptop, with beautiful colour and contrast. Editing on this screen is a joy, making my photos and video look better than ever and showing off more of what my cameras are capturing. The

Right laptop, wrong place

There's lots to like but who exactly is this laptop built for?

The central issue with this revamped MacBook Pro lies in its place within the lineup. With 8GB of RAM, it might not meet the demands of power users, making the MacBook Pro with M3 Pro chip the one to add to your wishlist. It also makes the MacBook Air the potentially more appealing and economically sensible choice for those users who don't require such extensive processing power. This begs the question of whether this iteration of the Macbook is caught between catering to different user segments, potentially leaving both power users and casual users searching for a more fitting alternative and having no real clear target audience to appreciate it on its own merit.

Summary

Ease of use	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Quality of results	★★★★★

Overall



With a stunning screen, revised design, superb battery life, the return of the SD card slot and HDMI support, the Apple MacBook Pro 14 M3 has much to offer. However, it comes at a price that may be difficult to justify as an upgrade.



PRICE:
£444/\$545

FOCUS DISTANCE:
0.28m

WEIGHT:
560g

Viltrox AF 27mm f/1.2 Pro

A pro lens with a consumer price? You'd better believe it, says **Matthew Richards**

Build and handling

The AF 27mm f/1.2 Pro picks up the baton from some seriously good Viltrox f/1.4 lenses we've tested. Build quality feels consummate with the lens's 'Pro' label. The construction uses a metal casing and a coated brass mounting plate. Unlike the Viltrox AF 23mm, 33mm and 56mm f/1.4 lenses, this one also features full weather-sealing. A handling bonus is that the 27mm features an AF/MF focus mode switch, which is quicker and more convenient to use compared with delving into camera menus to make the change. Another welcome addition is the customisable L-Fn button, which falls neatly under the thumb and that we tend to use for AF-hold.

Performance

As advertised, autofocus is very quick and

virtually silent, and proved consistently accurate in our tests with a Nikon Z fc. Naturally, fast autofocus and great handling are of little use if optical quality doesn't hit the spot. The Viltrox shines through with excellent sharpness and clarity, even when shooting wide-open at f/1.2. And for such a 'fast' lens, wide-open sharpness bears up well even at the extreme edges and corners of the image frame. Bokeh is soft and smooth, with a natural transition between focused and defocused parts. Bokeh disks are smooth and have fairly soft outlines, although they do take on irregular shapes away from the centre.

Verdict

Delivering a great all-round performance, we'd happily pay three or four times as much for a lens of this quality. It's a steal!

Technical specs

Manufacturer	Viltrox
Model	AF 27mm F1.2 Pro
Web	viltroxstore.com
Elements/construction	15 elements in 11 groups
Angle of view	55.3°
Max aperture	f/1.2
Min aperture	f/16
Min focus distance	0.28m
Mount	Nikon Z DX, Fujifilm X, Sony E
Filter size	67mm
Length	92mm
Diameter	82mm
Weight	560g

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★

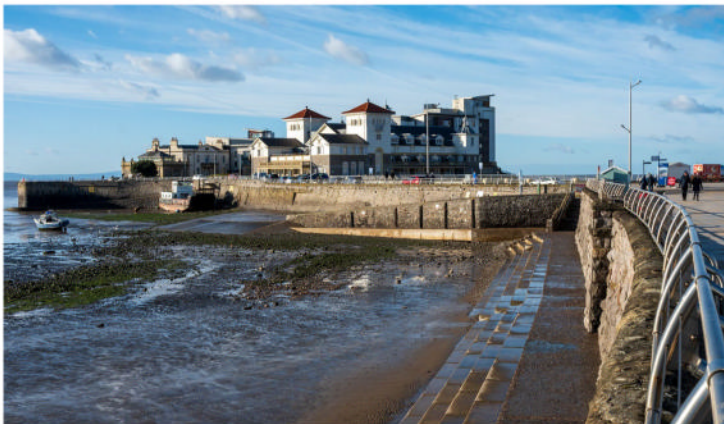
IMAGE QUALITY ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

- **Superb handling**
- **Excellent image quality**
- **Robust weather-sealed build**
- **De-clicked aperture control ring**
- **Necessarily bigger and heavier**



Above
Out and about
The 27mm is noticeably larger and getting on for twice the weight of the f/1.4 trio of 23mm, 33mm and 56mm lenses but still feels manageable



Above
Sharp detail
The lens allows impressive close-focusing capabilities and produces images with plenty of crispness and punchy colour contrast

Images by Matthew Richards



DOWNLOAD TEST SHOTS
<https://bit.ly/DPH276>

PRICE:
 £2,299/\$1,899

FOCUS DISTANCE:
 0.8m

WEIGHT:
 2,050g

Canon RF 200-800mm f/6.3-9 IS USM

Gareth Bevan finds that Canon's latest super-telephoto offers (mostly) super performance

Technical specs

Manufacturer	Canon
Model	RF 200-800mm f/6.3-9 IS USM
Web	canon.co.uk
Elements/construction	17 elements in 11 groups
Angle of view (diagonal)	12° - 3° 05'
Max aperture	f/6.3-9
Min aperture	f/32-54
Min focus distance	0.8m
Mounts	Canon RF
Filter size	95mm
Length	314.1mm
Diameter	102.3mm
Weight	2,050g

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★

IMAGE QUALITY ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

- ➕ Massive zoom range
- ➕ Comparatively lightweight
- ➕ Super-fast and quiet AF
- ➖ Narrow maximum aperture
- ➖ Image quality at 800mm

Build and handling

The Canon RF 200-800mm offers a potentially record snatching 600mm difference in focal length from wide to tele and manages to achieve this in a body weighing just over 2kg and only 31cm long. I was initially struck by the size – while not compact, I was expecting it to be so much larger and heavier. When you remember just how much focal length it covers, the overall size is actually remarkable. Unusually, the lens comes in white, which is normally reserved for Canon's more premium L-series lenses, but it has been employed here as it reflects more heat.

Performance

This also has the psychological benefit of making me subconsciously assume it's going to be a more optically impressive lens – if that

was intentional, it's a smart move, Canon. On first impressions alone, combined with the Canon EOS R5, the lens seems impressive. Down at 200mm, things are sharp with good contrast and colours.

This continues with shots around the 400-600mm length also being strong. It isn't until you get up to the headline 800mm focal length that things begin to decline just a touch in my testing – that sharpness just isn't quite there. Don't get me wrong, the photos are still entirely usable, but they don't seem to quite have the same crisp clarity.

Verdict

If you want a lens that covers the absolute widest range of telephoto focal lengths possible, then the Canon RF 200-800mm f/6.3-9 IS USM is an easy decision.



Above
Closing the gap
 With such a huge focal range, you can capture almost any wildlife subject of different sizes without changing lenses throughout the day, all in a lightweight design



Above
Colour separation
 Sharpness drops at the long end, but when adding the RF 1.4x or 2x teleconverters the quality isn't severely impacted, with both colour and detail well maintained

Images by Gareth Bevan

ACCESSORIES

A collection of the best fun-yet-functional products out there for photographers

VALLERRET SKADI LRS ZIPPER MITT

photographygloves.com

(£108/\$136/€125)

Vallerret rates its Skadi LRS Zipper Mitt as suitable for deep winter conditions, offering more warmth than the brand's Milford and Markhof Pro V3 gloves. These mittens blend PU faux leather, laminated soft twill and a DWR-coated shell for weather protection, and both Primaloft insulation and a Merino wool lining for added warmth. They also come with Polartec Power Stretch Pro inner gloves.

A key feature is the mittens' zip-opening finger cover and flip-back thumb cap, allowing quick camera access. Each mitten also has a useful zip-close pocket for small items such as memory cards or a tripod plate key on a lanyard.

Available in black and green, the Skadi LRS Zipper Mitts combine style with functionality. Their durable outer layer, snug jersey cuff, and user-friendly zip perform well in harsh conditions. They also have a convenient wrist strap to keep them close by when they're not on your hands and there's also a clip to keep them together in storage.

The mitts provide excellent warmth in deep winter conditions, even at -10°C with dramatic windchill. And while your fingers might cool when exposed, the inner gloves offer sufficient warmth and dexterity. It's worth noting, however, that prolonged exposure to wet conditions can lead to moisture ingress.



DB RAMVERK PRO SLING CAMERA BUNDLE

dbjourney.com

(£159/\$185)

By itself, the DB Ramverk Pro Sling is a soft, squishy bag that fits around your body, but the Ramverk Cinch Top Camera Insert S that's included in the bundle transforms it into a bag suitable for carrying camera gear.

Measuring 31cm x 60cm and with a depth of 5cm, the Ramverk Pro Sling has a total capacity of 20-litres, while the (21 x 31 x 19cm) insert has a capacity of 10l. This provides enough space for a full-frame camera and two or three lenses including a 70-200mm f/2.8. Both the Sling and the Insert have a nylon exterior and a polyester lining, which gives them a combined weight of 0.82kg.

The insert has a zip-close top flap that can be completely removed if you want, plus two positionable dividers that are slim but dense enough to protect your camera kit. There's also a drawstring



closure that can be pulled tight or opened and pushed down the sides of the bag out of the way, allowing you to have quick access to your gear.



A couple of internal pockets and a zip-close external pocket allow you to organise small items, and there's a removable waist belt for added security and weight-bearing if needed. It adds up to make a stylish, comfortable and versatile bag.



QIMERA GEAR FLAT STRAP

qimeragear.com

(£50/\$63)

The Qimera Flat Strap is designed to be easy to fit, easy to remove, comfortable to use and quick to adjust. It's also suitable for use on cameras with large strap lugs or split rings.

While Peak Design's straps are popular, the Anchor Loops tend to flap in a breeze and this

can introduce a little vibration and a clicking sound which isn't ideal when you are shooting videography. The loops are easy to remove in theory, but they can often be a little fiddly. Qimera's attachment mechanism avoids the issue as it uses Dyneema loops (Qimera Gear



**Digital
Photographer
EDITOR'S
CHOICE**

calls them pigtails) that thread through the camera strap lug and then slip over a hook in the screw-close clasp. It means that the strap can be attached and detached in just a few seconds, with the loops staying on the strap rather than the camera.

Dyneema is claimed to be up to 15 times stronger than steel of the same weight, so your camera should be safe and well-supported. Meanwhile, the main body of the strap is made from silky webbing and there's a sliding fastener that enables it to be adjusted quickly in length from 93cm to 152cm. The double threads that pass through the camera lug to the strap look a little unusual as they're quite long but, overall, the strap works well.





PRO COLUMN

PLASTIC HEADS

Ryan O'Donoghue rediscovers the joy of childhood through plastic figures

All images © Ryan O'Donoghue

Plastic Heads is all about nostalgia, vibrant colours and the beauty of our beloved childhood characters. I've always had a desire to create still-life compositions in a vibrant and pop art-inspired style.

As a photographer, I specialise in food photography for various restaurants in London, as well as headshots for corporate companies. Last year, in the middle of a busy shooting period, I realised that I needed a macro lens so that I could capture the intricate details of the beautiful food I photograph daily.

One day, my mum mentioned that she had a collection of my old toys from my childhood stored in the loft. Naturally, I seized the opportunity to reminisce and share these treasures with my sons. While going through the old shoe boxes filled with classic action figures and dolls, I stumbled upon the Action Man box. I always admired the detailed head moulds of these toys and thought it would be interesting to capture them up close with my new macro lens, just like I do with my corporate portraits. Inspired by this idea, I gathered all my old figures, including the

Action Man, the four classic Ninja Turtles and a vintage Batman doll, and brought them home for a test shoot.

Using the macro lens, I quickly realised that it revealed even the tiniest details, such as specks of dust, bits of dirt and scratches. I did consider whether to leave these imperfections untouched so that it preserved the toys' history of play. However, I couldn't resist the temptation to retouch one of the turtles and I instantly fell in love with the result. It was as if they had just been freshly unboxed, exuding that new toy smell.

Initially, I used a grey card for the background, which I found appealing. However, I decided to explore different colours to enhance the visual impact. I ordered a variety of coloured A4 cards from Amazon, eagerly awaiting their arrival the next day. Little did I know that this simple purchase



PRO BIO

Ryan O'Donoghue is a photographer who captures a variety of subjects, including film and TV stills, marketing campaigns, portraits and food, among others. When he is not shooting these subjects, he dedicates his spare time to his new project, Plastic Heads, which explores the nostalgia and beauty of beloved action figures from our pop culture history.
www.ryanodonoghuephotographer.co.uk
 @plastic_head_official

would bring about an exciting discovery, reigniting a sense of childlike joy within me.

Since that day, Plastic Heads has become a passion that I thoroughly enjoy. I actively seek out new heads to add to the Plastic Head community by attending toy fairs, meeting fellow toy collectors and delving into the history of each action figure I come across. To give my followers an inside glimpse into my process, I create reels for my Instagram account, showcasing how I photograph and retouch the heads to restore their freshness.

It brings me immense joy to see my Instagram account gaining traction and attracting more followers. My ultimate hope is to build a strong following and provide everyone with the same sense of nostalgia and fond memories through my Plastic Heads project.

IF I HAD SOMEWHERE TO LIVE...

I COULD GO ANYWHERE IN LIFE



When Abi's mum died, life got tough. She didn't get on with her dad and the arguments became violent. Abi felt her only choice was to leave home. With just the clothes on her back, and no idea where to go, she ended up sleeping on the streets in the freezing cold.

Right now, you could give a homeless young person like Abi somewhere to start their future

Abi's life changed when she was given a room at Centrepoint. A safe place to sleep and recover. A place to develop the skills and confidence she needed to rebuild her life – and leave homelessness behind for good. Now, Abi believes she can go anywhere.

Thousands of homeless young people like Abi are desperately trying to find their place in the world – but first they need a place to start again. You could help right now by sponsoring a room at Centrepoint for just 40p a day.

We know this support changes lives. 88% of the young people we help move on positively in life. So please, help someone like Abi today. **Thank you.**

Text **PLACE to 78866 to donate £3**

Call free on **0800 472 5798**

Visit **centrepoint.org.uk/place**

Or **complete and return the form below**

SPONSOR A ROOM. HELP A HOMELESS YOUNG PERSON FIND THEIR PLACE.

YES, I WANT TO SPONSOR A ROOM FOR £12 A MONTH

Please collect my payment on the 1st/15th of every month (please circle preferred date).

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit	
To the Manager: Name and full address of your Bank or Building Society:	Originators Identification No. 659107
Postcode	
Name(s) of Account Holder(s)	
Bank Sort Code: <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/>	Account Number: <input type="text"/>
Instructions to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay Centrepoint Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Centrepoint and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.	
Signature(s)	Date
Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.	

Increase your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate with Gift Aid *giftaid it*

By ticking this box I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and want Centrepoint to Gift Aid all donations I've made in the last four years and any donations I make in the future until I notify you otherwise. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in any tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Your name and address are needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

Full Name: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____
Email: _____

Thank you for donating to Centrepoint today.

We'd love to show the impact of your support and share how young people continue to need your help, through newsletters, fundraising appeals and information about events. Please let us know how best to stay in touch with you by adding your details above, and ticking the relevant boxes:

Please contact me by email Please contact me by phone

Last year our supporters helped us change the lives of over 15,000 homeless young people. By letting us know we can count on you, we can continue helping young people with a home and a future.

Your privacy is key.

We promise never to sell or swap your details, and will always keep them secure. You can view our Privacy Notice in full at www.centrepoint.org.uk/privacy. You can opt out of post and change how we communicate with you at any time. Please call **0800 232320** and speak to one of our friendly team or email supportercare@centrepoint.org to do this and ask us any questions.

Please return this form to: Freepost Plus RTXY-LBEA-UTJJ, Angel Fulfilment Services Ltd, Communication Centre, Par Moor Road, Par PL24 2SQ.

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