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Digital Practical advice for enthusiasts and pros Photographer

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Issue 277

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO

LANDSCAPE EDITING

- 🌟 Create amazing colours
- 🌟 Discover masking
- 🌟 Make your shots glow

GEAR ADVICE

BOUGHT THE WRONG CAMERA?

Pro advice for switching
up your camera system



PRO TIPS TO

SHOOT ABSTRACT

Capture photos with
mesmerising drama



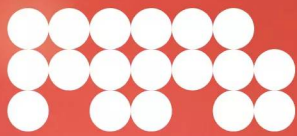
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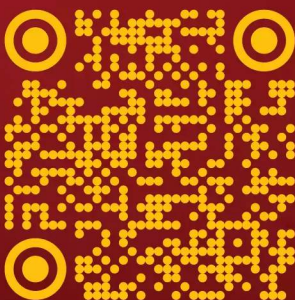
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“Often, expressive imagery is far from literal, indeed the two may be polar opposites”



For a great many creative people, photography is a means of expression – a way of converting emotions into a physical representation of who they are and what they stand for. However, for some, the act of photography itself can present challenges most of us would never stop to consider. On p14 of the magazine, we join a photographer on a mission to highlight issues of accessibility in photography and the small changes that could make the industry a better environment for us all to work in.

Then, on p24, we dive into the core software techniques for editing landscape images, covering everything from colour treatment to lighting effects. Create scenic shots that truly express the emotions you experience when out in the field.

Often, expressive imagery is far from literal, indeed the two may be polar opposites. Turn to p36 to learn how to capture abstract photos that tell a story and convey an idea rather than an object, getting your work noticed by a wider audience in the process.

As creative people ourselves, your *DP* team never likes to sit still for long, so we have two big new features for you. On p96, be sure to check out our exciting new Photo Kit Leaderboard – our real-time guide to the best cameras, lenses and accessories on the market. Meanwhile, on p112, we’ve introduced a handy digital photography glossary for you. Never be confused by photo jargon again!

I hope you enjoy the issue and, until next month, I wish you a happy few weeks of photography, wherever you are in the world.

Peter Fenech, Editor
peter.fenech@futurenet.com

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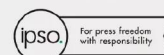
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© Mitchel Wu

Our contributors



KIM BUNERMANN
Our technique editor, Kim, has a fondness for creating abstract photography, so on p36, she shares

various techniques to transform subjects with a mystical quality while adding a layer of perception. Kim has also written a tutorial on p62 on how to add drama to your monochrome portraits in Affinity Photo.

Website: digitalcameraworld.com



RAGHUVAMSH CHAVALI
Canada-based nature and wildlife photographer Raghuvarsh has an interest in discovering

new techniques and concepts in photography and his pro advice forms part of our Abstract feature. Turn to p44 of the magazine to learn how to combine movements abstractly with the interlacing frames technique.

Website: raghuvarsh.com



ISOBEL GREENHALGH
The medium of photography is diverse, and so for this month's Shoot Like A Pro, we visited

Manchester-based Isobel, who specialises in sessions for clients with additional needs and raises awareness of issues in the industry. Turn to p14 to see her vibrant style, inspired by modern concept art.

Website: isobelcreative.co.uk



KUZMA VOSTRIKOV
Kuzma is a multi-disciplinary artist who doesn't confine himself to working solely with photographs. His

artistic creations blend various art forms to create conceptual frames in a style that challenges and questions the nature of art itself. Learn more about Kuzma's career path, his influences and essential gear on p70.

Instagram: [@kuzmacinema](https://www.instagram.com/@kuzmacinema)



KAV DADFAR
Kav is a seasoned travel photographer who has contributed his pro expertise to

our magazine on several occasions. On p50, he demonstrates how to capture photos that are not crowded with people using a technique that you might have tried before... but for a different purpose.

Website: dalfarphotography.com



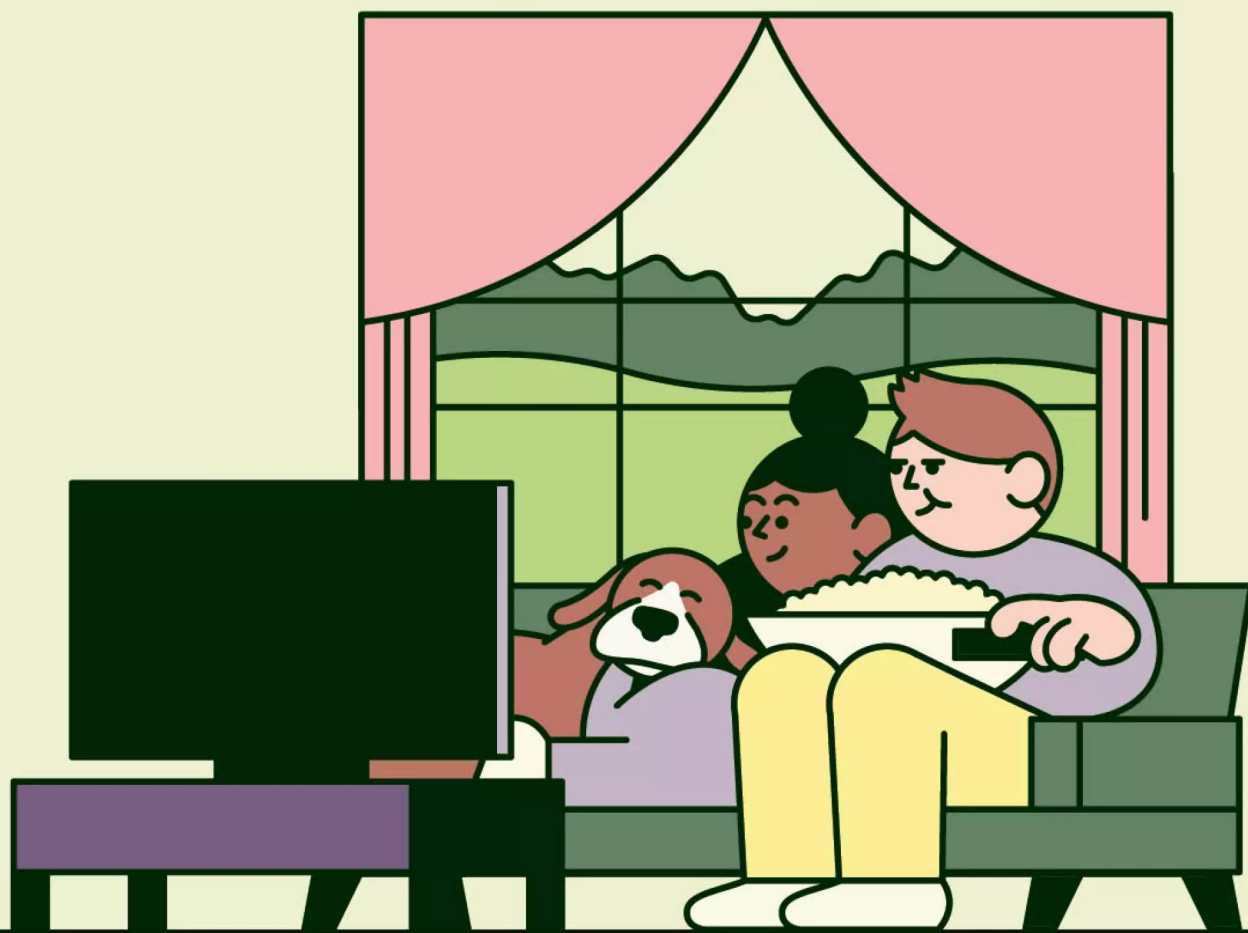
NATALIA ZMYSLOWSKA
Natalia often travels around the world to capture its diversity. This month, she

visits the Scottish Owl Centre to show you how to make the most of the wildlife in your area. Find her step-by-step shooting tutorial on p56, focusing on the essential settings for captivating shots.

Website: theworldwithnat.com

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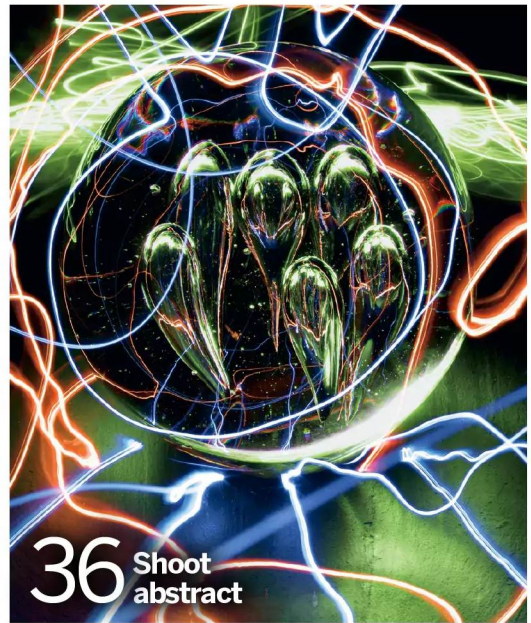
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© Mitchel Wu



© Bettina Vass

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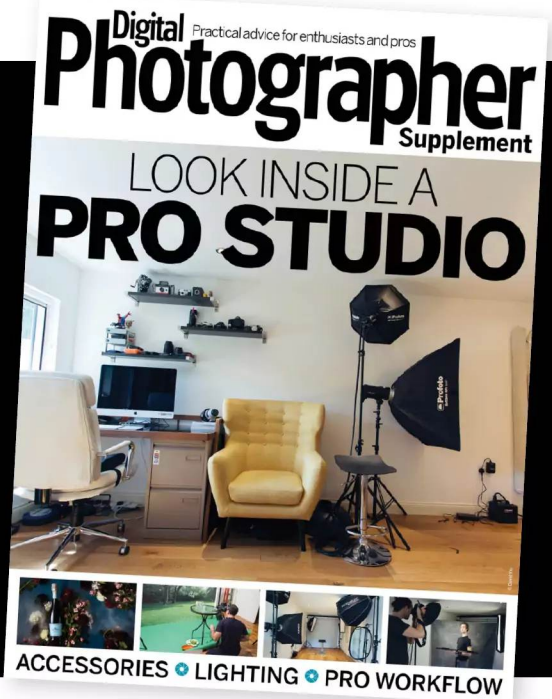
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Free ebook to download Look inside a pro studio

A photographic studio was once the only way to have a presence as a photographer. While the internet now offers an alternative, for many wedding, portrait and commercial photographers, a physical studio is still a vital part of their operation. In this ebook, we cover the key factors of a studio, such as gear outfitting and the challenges of using a fixed location. With advice from pro photographers, you will be able to build your own sustainable studio space.

To claim your free ebook, visit <https://bit.ly/DPH277>



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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!

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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.



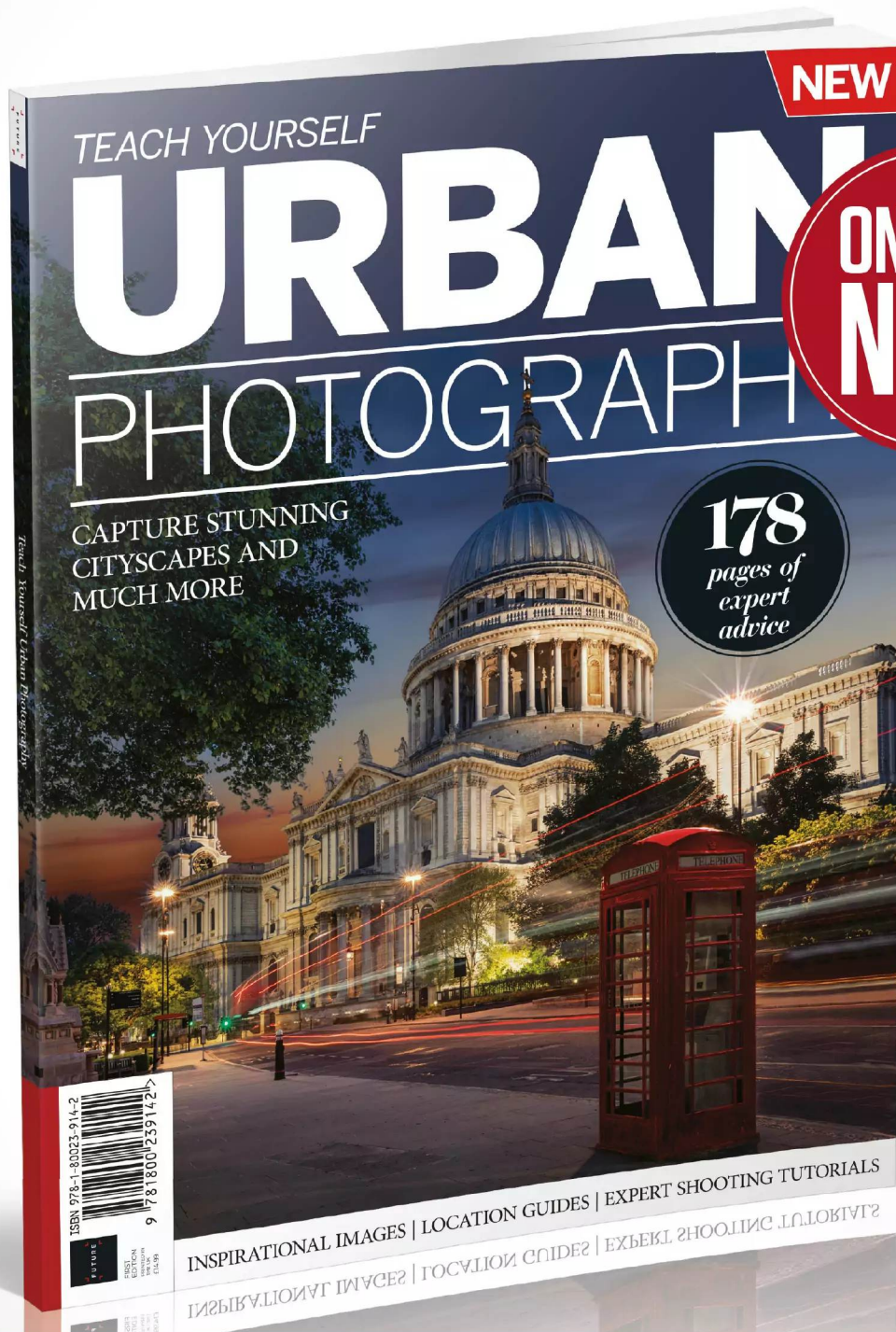
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DOES THIS CAMERA MAKE ND FILTERS REDUNDANT? MEET THE OM-1 MARK II



Flagship firepower gets AI artillery: meet the OM System OM-1 Mark II, with some seriously clever new algorithmic tricks

© OM System



Meet the OM System OM-1 Mark II – an all-purpose AI powerhouse that’s so smart, it might just replace your neutral density and graduated filters.

At first glance, the differences between this model and the original OM-1 might be difficult to spot. But in short, what the Mark II offers is more than double the buffer size for burst shooting, an industry-best 8.5 stops of in-body image stabilisation, improved autofocus performance and what could be the most exciting feature we’ve seen on a flagship camera in ages – AI-based graduated ND filters.

While the software and AI powering the Mark II have seen some welcome upgrades, the core technology remains the same. The body is identical apart from new rubberised dials and at its heart is the same stacked 20.4MP sensor and quad-core TruePic X processor. Of course, the other things people loved about the OM-1, including 120fps burst shooting and IP53-certified weather-sealing, are also present in the new model.

Let’s start with the Live GND filters. An extension of the wizardry introduced with Live ND filters, Live Graduated Neutral Density filters provide an AI-powered, software-

based solution for shooting situations where you may normally need an ND grad. The autofocus gets a boost overall, being generally stickier and offering human detection, but the most significant improvement is when it comes to birding. Here, the AF has been beefed up when it comes to detecting fast-moving birds in the first place, but also when keeping track of them in flight. It can also detect up to eight subjects and you can select which one to focus on and keep track of.

The OM System OM-1 Mark II is on sale now, priced at £2,200 (body only).

explore.omsystem.com

Fujifilm updates its iconic premium compact with the X100VI



How do you follow up a camera that had one of the most passionate followings of recent times? Fujifilm’s answer is the Fujifilm X100VI, which replaces the now five-year-old X100V. You probably won’t be able to tell them apart by looks alone but why change what is now an iconic design?

Those familiar with the previous models should have no issue jumping ship to the VI and feeling immediately at home. However, this also means that the X100VI’s lens isn’t seeing any innovations – the X100VI keeps the same 23mm

(35mm full-frame equivalent) lens from the previous model. The built-in four-stop ND filter is also still present in the lens for creative long exposures.

The biggest advancement is its new 40MP X-Trans 5 APS-C CMOS sensor, which is also supported by six-stop in-body image stabilisation as well as Fujifilm’s latest X-Processor 5, powering all the most recent autofocus tracking and subject recognition algorithms, including faces, eyes, birds, animals and vehicles.


The Fujifilm X100VI is available now, costing £1,599. global.fujifilm.com/en



© Fujifilm

Sigma expands its Sports and Art lens ranges

Premium third-party lens manufacturer Sigma announces two new lenses for L-mount and Sony E

 Sigma has announced two new lenses for L-mount (shared with Sigma, Leica and Panasonic full-frame mirrorless) and for Sony's E-mount. But that's where the similarities end between the new 500mm telephoto for sports and wildlife and the 15mm fisheye with a huge 180° degree angle-of-view.

The Sigma 500mm f/5.6 DG DN OS | Sports is set to be about 60 per cent lighter and 40 per cent shorter than Sigma's 500mm f/4 DG OS HSM | Sports for DSLRs at 234.6mm and weighing 1.37kg (L-Mount). This is, in part, due to its special exclusive low-dispersion glass elements and precision-engineered TSC (Thermally Stable Composite) materials to help keep the size and weight down. Also on the spec sheet is a high-speed HLA motor and OS2 algorithm for fast and precise autofocus with five stops of effective stabilisation.

The Sigma 15mm f/1.4 DG DN Diagonal Fisheye | Art is the world's first f/1.4 diagonal fisheye lens for interchangeable




full-frame consumer cameras. It boasts an incredible 180° degree angle-of-view (corner-to-corner) and a bright f/1.4 aperture. It also features a built-in rear filter holder for gel-type ND filters, a lens heater retainer that prevents heat strips from slipping over the front of the lens

and a unique manual focus lock switch. Read our review on p108 of this issue.

Both lenses are available from March with the Sigma 15mm f/1.4 DG DN Diagonal Fisheye | Art costing £1,859 and the Sigma 500mm f/5.6 DG DN OS | Sports costing £2,779. sigmauk.com

New Think Tank BackLight Sprint 15L

Think Tank's latest photography backpack is the perfect blend of style, comfort, practicality and price

 Think Tank has just launched a new lightweight backpack for photographers on the go. With its slim, compact design, the Think Tank BackLight Sprint 15L is aimed at photographers who love to hike and explore. Despite its size, it can still hold a standard-sized mirrorless camera, such

as a Nikon Z7 II, plus three zoom lenses or several shorter lenses and additional accessories, such as a flash or filters. Fitted with two harness systems for ultimate comfort, the chest and waist straps help alleviate the weight from your shoulders.

On the front, there is a large 2L pocket for personal items such as a wallet, keys or map. Two more side pockets can accommodate a 1L bottle and a tripod. There's also space on the front of the bag where you can attach straps to secure a coat when not in use, or even attach a drone.

As you'd expect from a bag designed for the outdoors, the BackLight Sprint 15L has a durable water-repellent coating on the exterior and a seam-sealed rain cover is included for added protection should the heavens open.

The Think Tank BackLight Sprint 15L is available now in green or grey colour schemes, with prices starting at £198.

thinktankphoto.com



In other news

More snippets of photography news from around the world

NEW ROLLEI 35 FILM CAMERA COMING 2024

A brand-new Rollei 35AF will hit the shelves 'as soon as possible' this year. Designed and developed by Mint Camera – a boutique manufacturer of some of the best instant cameras – the Rollei 35AF started in 2022 as a project to apply Mint's ability to engineer brand new instant cameras to the world of 35mm film. The new model will feature Lidar AF and cost between £515-630 (\$650-800).

VILTROX 2024 ROADMAP

Chinese lens manufacturer Viltrox has revealed it plans to launch four new lenses in 2024. The lenses include a Viltrox AF 40mm f/2.5 for Sony FE, Nikon Z and Fujifilm X, then there's a Viltrox AF 56mm f/1.7 for E, Z and X mounts, followed by a Viltrox AF 16mm f/1.8 for Nikon Z and the fourth lens on the roadmap is a Viltrox AF 135mm f/1.8 LAB. The latter sits in a new LAB series, denoting 'ultimate image quality'. Pricing and availability are TBA.

STORY BEHIND THE STILL



Photographer: Louise B

📷 @louiseb.photography

Website: louisebphotography.com

Image location: Home session, London

Type of commission: Commercial

Shot details: Nikon D750, Nikon 50mm
f/1.8, 1/200 sec, f/2.8, ISO 320

About the shot: As a photographer who specialises in family and newborn images, Louise's timeless images aim to tell a story about each family. She does this by creating a relaxed and organic atmosphere to capture the raw beauty of the special bond between family members. "If the subjects aren't fully relaxed, then it shows," Louise says. "But taking a short break to reset can really help." Lots of patience is required, especially with newborns but, having young children of her own, she understands what's required to get the balance between the perfect shot and a happy and calm family.

Louise prefers working in her clients' homes and shooting with natural light. "For this shot, we were in their apartment, which had high ceilings and was flooded with natural light," she says. "Capturing babies and young children requires you to increase your shutter speed as there are sudden movements and changes in facial expressions." With her background in design, Louise uses a mixture of textures and fabrics to create further depth and interest. "The new mother chose a beautiful dress from a collection I have for these sessions. The delicate sleeves add a touch of elegance to the image," she says.

In post-production, Louise carried out some basic editing steps, adding some texture around the newborn's hairline to ensure she visually dominated the frame. "Newborns tend to have a red undertone to their skin, which quite often has patches and pimples, so I took the saturation down along with the texture," she explains. "Once I had removed the main blemishes, the skin appeared much smoother but I avoided heavy airbrushing to keep the subject looking natural."

Right

New Beginnings

Louise aims to capture the essence of how a newborn fits into the family unit, receiving plenty of love and attention





All images © Louise B

SHOOT LIKE A PRO

ALL ACCESS


Peter Fenech meets Isobel Greenhalgh to discuss accessibility in photography and how small changes can make a big difference

All main images © Isobel Greenhalgh



Isobel Greenhalgh



Manchester-based Isobel Greenhalgh is a commercial and portrait photographer, image retoucher and creative who specialises in photoshoots that are accessible to clients with additional needs. Her colourful style is contemporary and heavily inspired by modern concept art. Isobel strives to raise awareness of accessibility issues in photography and as a working professional who is dealing with chronic illness herself, she is well-positioned to understand the community she serves. isobelcreative.co.uk  [@isobelcreative](https://www.instagram.com/isobelcreative)



The term 'anything for a photograph' is used quite a lot. Many professional photographers will find themselves walking several miles to remote locations, lying on the floor of a studio or contorting into odd positions to get the perfect shot for their clients, resulting in a few aches and pains in the following days.

However, few of us put much thought into what it must be like to work with a disability in this industry and the additional challenges this involves. Furthermore, in our quest for the perfect image, it is easy to forget the toll this may take on our subjects themselves and the discomfort this could inflict if they too have physical or mental health conditions.

Photographer Isobel Greenhalgh is on a mission to spread the word about how disability can impact the photography industry and to raise awareness of how we can make things better for people working on both sides of the camera. I meet Isobel at a studio space on the east side of Manchester, housed in a marvellously atmospheric old textiles facility. Isobel jokes about the lift being broken and as we climb several flights of stairs, I already see how this could present a problem for clients less able-bodied. I start by asking her about the common accessibility issues. "Unfortunately, regulations in this country favour buildings over people," Isobel says. "Many



buildings cannot legally have required accessibility alterations made to them. This is a huge barrier. It makes finding locations that are suitable for everyone almost impossible. That's either because they don't exist or because those that do are woefully expensive," she adds. "That's the biggest issue for people on both sides of the camera. There have been occasions when I can't work with someone simply because the building is not accessible. That's always hugely disappointing."

Isobel herself is neurodivergent and disabled although, as is the case with many disabilities, this is not visibly obvious. She tells me that after years of misdiagnosis, she was only recently discovered to have Coeliac disease, which has impacted her physical and cognitive abilities and, in turn, her personal and professional life.

"After my diagnosis, I was able to look back and everything made sense. I cut gluten out of my diet and the brain fog lifted – I was able to think creatively. I thought 'Wow, I can problem-solve on the spot now!' It's only been in the last few weeks that I've realised just how debilitating that was for so long," she says.

"Now my mind is clearer, I can see how all the years of accumulating techniques and working the way I did has resulted in the style I'm known for, which is largely whacky bright colours."

The years of physical pain have also spurred Isobel on to work with chronically ill subjects or those who suffer from a variety of ailments. Her model today, Bunny, arrives and it's immediately clear that the tone of the shoot is going to be full of energy. As the photographer and model

Isobel's journey

The influences that have shaped her photo career

"I worked as a retoucher out of university but that nearly killed my creativity. I worked with a school photography company for a while too, but it wasn't for me. I've done a bit of a backwards process. People say 'Learn to get everything right in-camera first and then work on your editing'. But, having started as a retoucher and

spent years going into other photographers' RAW files to fix problems with lighting, composition or a stylist's mistakes, I'd built up a picture of how I would fix things if I was there on set. "I'm inspired by concept art. Sometimes they do really cool things with lighting that I want to try with photography. I reckon that it might have

something to do with my particular neurodivergence." "People often have two or three aspects – for me, it's autism, ADHD and dyspraxia. I've spent time recently unmasking who I am creatively, underneath the layers of expectation I'd built up to please other people. That's allowed me to discover what feels authentic to me."



“Just knowing that you’ve done a bit to support their needs goes a long way to making your client feel comfortable”



SHOOT LIKE A PRO



Isobel's main gear

1 Nikon D750 Isobel says that she prefers the handling characteristics of Nikon cameras as the command dials and button layout feel more natural to her. She also prefers DSLRs due to the presence of an optical viewfinder. The D750 is a full-frame (FX) with a 24MP sensor and a native ISO range of 100-12,800, which is perfectly suited to Isobel's studio work. The articulated screen also comes in handy for complex compositions when you're going low down, close to the ground.

2 AF Nikkor 24-85mm f/2.8-4 D This standard Nikkor zoom lens covers all the main focal lengths needed for everyday commercial and studio photography. It's lightweight and easy to handle, which is useful on longer shoots. It allows Isobel to capture both closeup and wider-framed images, which is necessary when using accessories such as the prism, as focal length impacts the effect.

3 Godox V1N Flashgun This powerful speedlight has a unique round flash head that evenly distributes light for a studio-like appearance. This means that it blends in perfectly with Isobel's usual strobe setup. On today's shoot, Isobel used a background light to add some extra dimension to the coloured backdrop behind the model. It also has a magnetic accessory port so optional filters and add-ons can be applied, such as the gels that Isobel tried today.

4 Accessories Part of Isobel's style is her experimental colour and abstract effects, which she uses when her client's character is a good match. For this shoot, she used her prism lens to refract the light and create a kaleidoscope effect. She also uses coloured gels that are added to the strobe lights to colour balance the scene or add a theatrical feel.

get to work, Isobel explains that her experience of professional life and disability has made her passionate about making photography as fun, safe and comfortable as possible and that this starts with understanding your client.

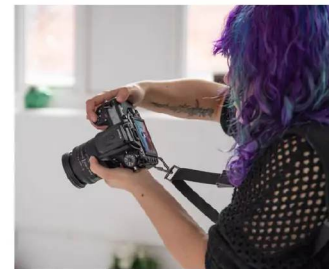
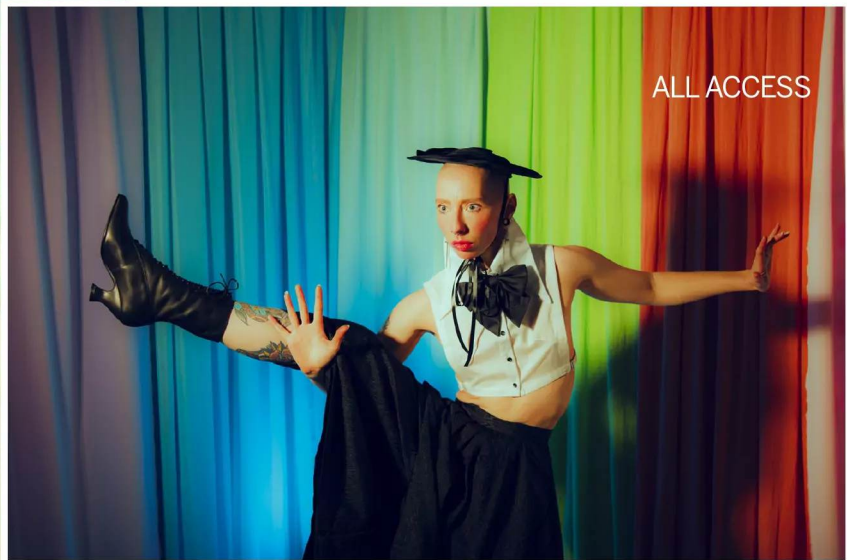
"Photographers often don't go into much detail about what a shoot with them looks like. On my website, I have a post that goes into exactly what's involved in my complete process, such as when people can expect to hear back from me and what the workflow looks like. Having that knowledge can be really relieving for people who need to plan every little detail," she explains.

Bunny is a complete pro when it comes to posing and has an almost otherworldly quality that fits perfectly with Isobel's setup today. Isobel takes some test shots and then starts working on multiple angles. "Posing is another area that many photographers don't provide much assistance with," she says. "Usually, I'd go into depth with my posing

guidance, using mimicry to show exactly what I want the shot to look like – where to put their hands, how they should angle their knees and where to place their shoulder. It's not something I can show off in the studio today – our model is fantastic but I'm not good with my left and right, so I do a lot of gesturing. I've been told by subjects that this is a huge help. I often get people into a specific pose, then tell them to 'shake it out', meaning that they should get in a similar pose but relax, without looking stiff."

Isobel jokingly explains that the reason she is constantly moving is due to her joint discomfort and she and Bunny share stories of their respective illnesses. There is clearly a rapport here and Isobel isn't afraid to underline the shared experiences on both sides of the camera lens.

"I'm part of the community that I serve so, in some ways, it's easier for me as I understand them. If you're outside that, you may have to make yourself known as a safe person to work with."



As Isobel adds a red gel to her main light, she explains that supporting disabled subjects needn't be inconvenient or impact your business.

"Don't be afraid to ask people what they need. Have a dialogue with them as you normally would and use those conversations as an opportunity to ask if they have any special requirements. These might include accessibility or sensory needs. Are there any materials they can't tolerate? Are they okay with flash? If there is makeup involved, are there any skin sensitivities you should be aware of?"

"What are the sound and light levels like in your studio – would your subject be okay with background noise or prefer it to be quiet? Let people know that you don't have a ramp or lift or an accessible toilet. There are so many things you can potentially consider that it's better to simply ask what your client needs from you," Isobel explains.

"You don't need to know every disability out there. Even if you

can't accommodate them fully, then be willing to meet them halfway on something."

Bunny tries another pose and Isobel instantly knows to reach for her prism, which she attaches to the filter thread of her lens. After another test shot, it becomes apparent that the shoot has found its rhythm.

Tips for accessible shoots

🔊 Communicate

Talk to your clients about their needs during your normal onboarding process, asking about special requirements. Be honest if you can't support disabled access with a ramp or lift, and enquire about sensory discomforts and preferences.

📄 Supporting information

On your website, provide a breakdown of what a shoot with you normally involves, for example, how long it normally takes, where you can travel to

and what style of shots you normally like to capture. This allows less able-bodied clients to decide if there is anything they might need to ask you ahead of a shoot. Offer an introductory questionnaire people can fill out with anything you might need to know but that they may not feel able to bring up in a conversation.

🕒 Take regular breaks

If you suffer from any conditions that cause fatigue or pain, don't be afraid to take breaks

throughout the shoot. You can use this time to show your clients some of the images you've already captured or offer them a coffee so that everyone is recharged and the pacing of the session is consistent.

🔍 Do your research

Prepare to make your shoots more accessible by looking into shared symptoms of common conditions. This will make you appear more receptive to requests and can uplift your business in return.

SHOOT LIKE A PRO





"That looks so cool!" says Isobel. While Bunny is accomplished and able to work to Isobel's style, it's important to know the subject's limits. "Do a risk assessment of your own space, beyond the basics. Do some research into the most common issues people have that you might encounter," Isobel says. "A lot of disabilities have overlapping symptoms, so you can consider a range of people by making one small change. Just knowing that you've done a little bit to support their needs goes a long way to making your client feel comfortable."

For a final adjustment, Isobel adds a colour LED light to the setup. I'm interested to know how intense work such as this impacts her own well-being. After all, taking good care of yourself as a disabled photographer is just as important. "I build rest periods around everything that I do. It's all paced. However, this

has to extend to my personal life as well as my professional. If don't consider both together, I burn out really quickly and have to take long periods of rest. I'd rather work two days a week than have extreme instability of cash flow, which we all have to deal with already as freelancers. If you have to take a long time off, tasks build up really quickly."

It's a reasonable assumption that many photographers with neurodivergence and disabilities are intimidated by working professionally. I ask Isobel what advice she would give to them from her experience.

"Be brave! I had this image in my head of what the professional industry looked like, but once you start talking to people, you realise that you don't need to put a mask on when you're working just to create a false sense of professionalism. Clients are a lot more forgiving than you think.

I've asked to take a break many times and nobody has said no. It's actually endearing and humanises you on set."

As the shoot winds down, I'm humbled by Isobel's enthusiasm, positivity and dedication to her clients and her peers.

"I try to be as inclusive with model choice as possible, but in

a way that feels organic. I want it to seem natural and not just like we're trying to hit diversity quotas. I make the effort to work with as wide a group of people as possible. It all ties in together – accessibility, inclusivity – if you start with these now, it makes the industry better for everyone involved in the long term."

Shoot like Isobel



1 Set up early Any shoot can be stressful but preparation is especially important if fatigue is a potential issue for either you as the photographer or your subject. Get your kit ready to go as soon as the model arrives so you can spend more time shooting.



2 Direct the subject Clients who aren't used to being in front of the camera may be unclear about what you want them to do. Give them clear and specific instructions to follow and inform them what you have in mind for style, posing and composition.



3 Start simple Take a few test images to get a feeling for the tone of the shoot and to ensure everyone involved is comfortable and clear on what you need from them. Start off with less complex poses and angles to ease into the shoot.



4 Provide feedback Keep your subject in the loop. Keep talking to them throughout the shoot, providing instructions and positive feedback, then offer to show them some sample images as a reference so they know what you like.



5 Experiment With some safe shots in the bag, move on to more complex concepts. Isobel added a prism to her setup halfway through our session to experiment with abstract images, perfectly matching the tone of Bunny's outfit.

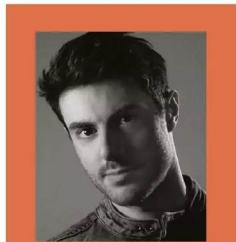


6 Create variations Capture as many images as you can using multiple lighting setups and framing ideas. This gives you plenty of choice at the selection stage and can be important if arranging a reshoot would be impractical.

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TECHNIQUES

COMPLETE GUIDE TO LANDSCAPE POST-PROCESSING

Take your stunning scenic images further using natural editing techniques

Words by Peter Fenech



Very few photographic genres offer the same range of lighting, colour and detail that can be found in a landscape. Changing weather, the shifting position of the sun in the sky and the steady progress of the seasons afford us the opportunity to capture familiar locations in new ways almost every day, which goes some way to explaining why landscape photography is such a popular area of the medium.

The downside of so many photographers shooting landscape images is that it has become almost impossible to capture

a truly unique shot of a well-known landmark. Instagram is awash with photos of places such as Durdle Door in Dorset, Yosemite National Park in the USA, Lake Louise in Banff National Park, Canada and, more recently, the misty skeletal forests of Madeira or the wild shores of the Faroe Islands. It doesn't take long for content creators to flock to even the remotest of locations in search of 'the shot'.

The solution, therefore, is not to try and produce images that could be taken by anybody else, but rather to find new combinations of styles and techniques. The editing stage is the most convenient place

to start. Modern image editing software suites offer a wide range of professional features to play with, both AI and conventional. Although AI hits the headlines regularly these days, there are plenty of manual filters and colour-grading tools you can use to realise your vision.

Over the next few pages, we will take a look at the key steps favoured by two professional landscape photographers and how they use these to craft a signature look for their images. Then, we'll progress onto high-level landscape processing tricks that you can use today to get the maximum drama out of all your scenic shots.

Pictured
Natural balance
With careful and targeted adjustments in post-processing, you can turn your landscape images into shots that stand out

© Liam Willis

Create a baseline

Liam Willis on adjusting your RAW files to provide the best opportunities for later creative processing

One of the aspects you come to appreciate as an experienced digital photographer is that editing is a multi-step process. It's not simply a case of taking the images from a camera, applying a standard set of adjustments and then sending the files to print or archive.

To create the best possible results, it is almost always necessary to 'pre-cook' images in RAW processing software, before applying more complex local edits and finally, retouching in applications such as Photoshop or Affinity. Landscape photographer Liam Willis keeps his editing process refined and targeted, integrating his shooting and editing workflows.

"Like thousands of others, I travel the length and breadth of the country in search of the perfect shot. I take inspiration from other photographer's work but I also like to give it my own style; slightly changing the focal length, adjusting the composition or even the exposure length" he explains.

"My tutorial will take you through my editing process of Tu Hwnt I'r Bont, a tearoom next to a bridge in Llanwrst, Wales. I picked the wettest week of the year, with the River Conwy bursting its banks. I used an exposure length of 0.5sec and shot at f/22 to give some movement to the water. I choose to edit using Adobe Lightroom for iOS on the iPad, as I don't own a laptop."

Liam Willis



Liam Willis is a wildlife and landscape photographer based in Sussex, UK. He took up photography in 2015, focusing on nature images, but developed

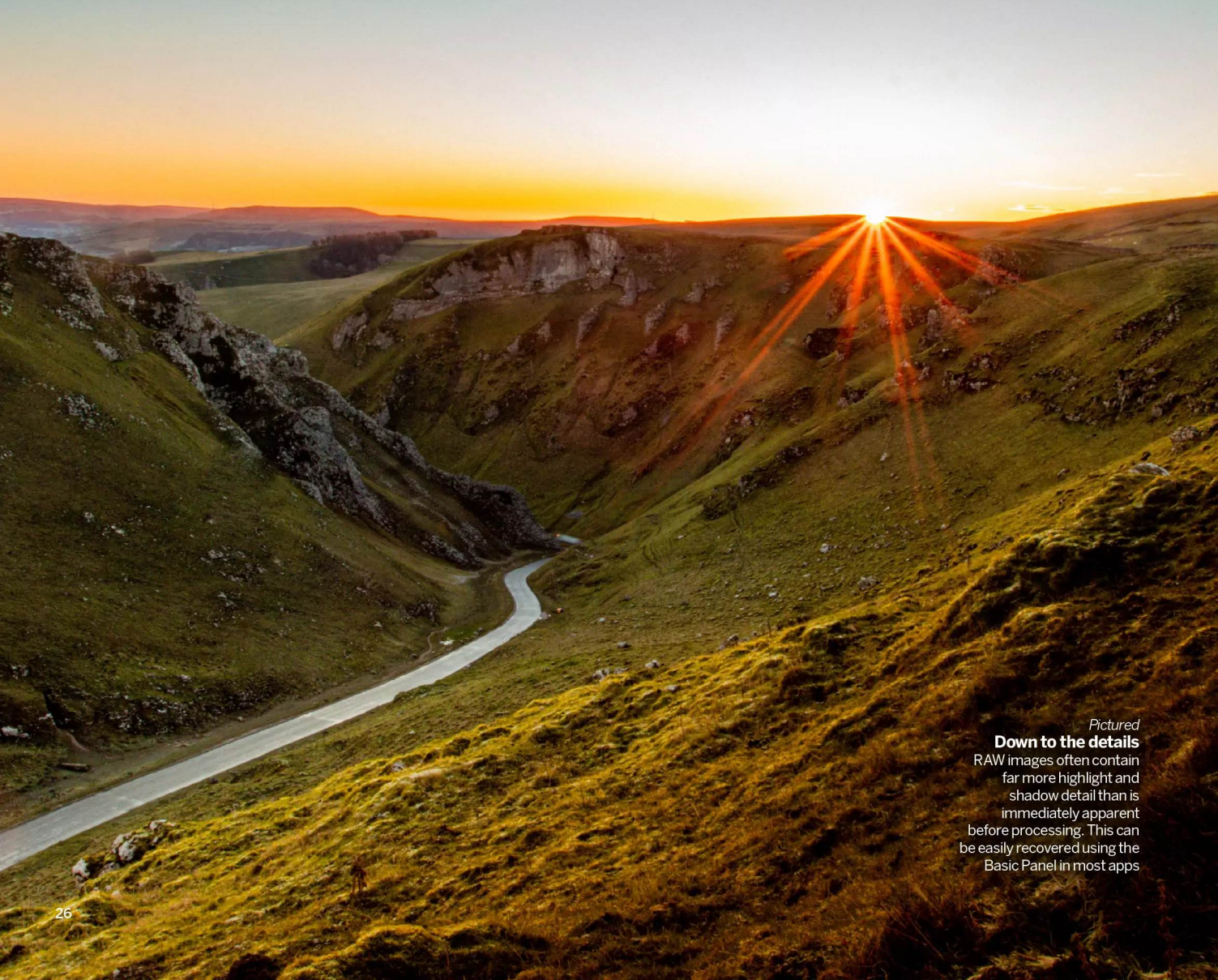
a passion for landscape photography.

In 2023, Liam was shortlisted for UK Landscape Photographer of the Year and The British Wildlife Photography Awards, and his picture of a stag 'Morning Breath' was a finalist at the British Photography Awards in 2023.

@mrliamwillis

liamwillisphotography.sumupstore.com

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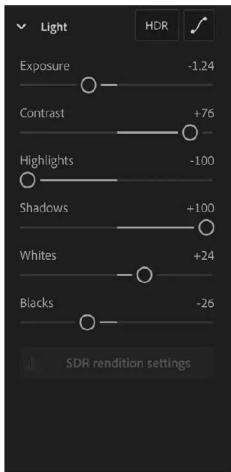
Pictured

Down to the details

RAW images often contain far more highlight and shadow detail than is immediately apparent before processing. This can be easily recovered using the Basic Panel in most apps

Balance tonal range

Apply first-wave adjustments to RAW files for a moody base image



1 Find a Balance Firstly, I reduced the Exposure and the Highlights to bring out more of the details that had looked 'washed out' in the lighter RAW file. This gave more depth to the background and gave more layers to the shot. The increase in contrast will give better clarity when enhancing colours.



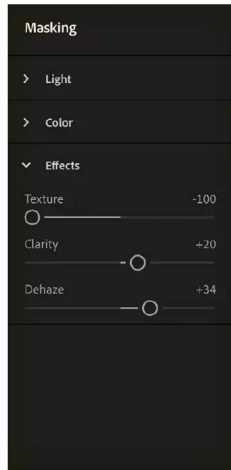
2 Colour Vibrancy It's easy to over-toggle the Temperature and Tint bars to make something extra vibrant and completely change the colour of the image. I used them slightly on this to improve the existing colours. I also used the Color Mix to bring out the vibrancy in the autumnal colours.



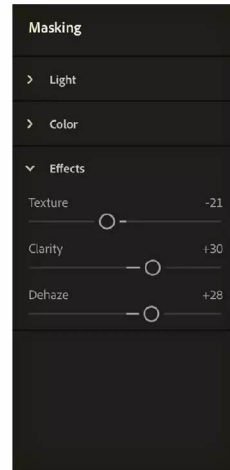
3 Sharpness and details For this shot, I increased the Dehaze slightly for a darker and more vibrant finish but also reduced the Texture to give it a smoother look. I opted not to add a Vignette to avoid taking the detail away from the flowing river, as that's also an important feature of the shot.



4 Apply Healing I spent some time removing dust particles and spots before any final touches. This is important as it removes any distractions. Light colours often make them invisible in a RAW image and they are more visible when the Exposure is reduced and Dehaze increased.



5 Masking Part 1 Firstly, the sky – find a balance in the exposures and colours. Here, I added a mask to the sky, increasing the Dehaze and reducing the Texture, allowing the weather to be evident but also to blend in with the rest of the shot by removing the previously 'washed out' looking sky.



6 Masking Part 2 Secondly, the river – as a vital part of the image, I wanted it to have the right effect. I used a long exposure so I wanted that motion to be evident. I then increased Clarity and Dehaze to enhance the movement. Texture is reduced in line with the rest of the image.

Below
Washed out
The original shot appears overexposed and lacks depth. It wasn't entirely level either, so required straightening by 0.13° degrees clockwise

Right
Final touches
Liam removed the sign for the gallery on the right using the Remove Tool in Healing. The final shot is now perfectly balanced for any further treatment



Create with colour

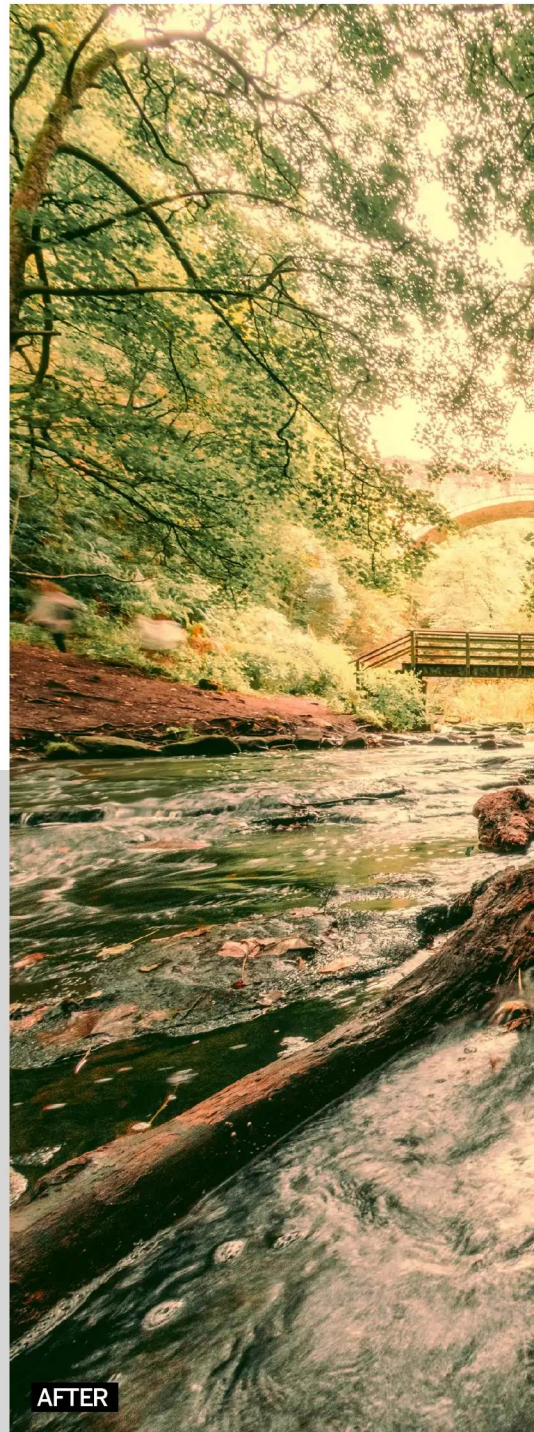
Enhance the natural beauty or create a particular mood with colour adjustments, says **Mark Brion**

The range of colours visible in a landscape scene is vast. Even under flat lighting or in seemingly drab locations, there are a plethora of analogous colours hiding in the scene – subtle variations, the sum of which creates a natural palette that the human eye can identify and relate to. This spectrum can be both a blessing and a challenge.

It's one of the aspects that makes landscape photography so appealing but also means that becoming a deft hand at post-processing is a crucial skill. Over-working colour can break down the smooth gradations we're accustomed to seeing and introduce

uncomfortable jumps and shifts which instantly make the scene look strange and unattractive.

"Colour adjustment is a vital aspect within post-production and plays a crucial role in enhancing and refining landscape images," says nature photographer Mark Brion. "Remember, the goal of adjusting colours in a landscape photo is to enhance its natural beauty, evoke emotion or convey a particular atmosphere," he adds. "Experiment with colour adjustments in post-processing, whilst keeping the scene intact. Assess your changes to ensure that they complement the overall aesthetics of the landscape image."



Colour grade to perfection

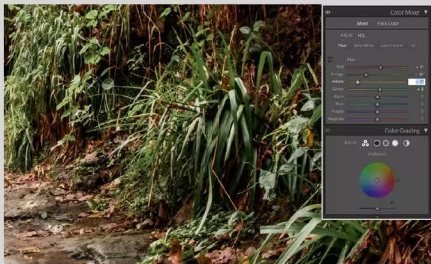
Balance grading to create images with maximum tonal separation



Inset right
Flat colour
I was struck by the vibrancy of the red mud in this scene but it doesn't show through in the out-of-camera shot

Right
Super separation
By selectively editing each colour channel and toning down the green leaves, the soil and bronze foliage stand out more, giving the image added three-dimensionality

1 Black and White Points Most RAW workflows should start by setting the Black and White points, which define the tonal parameters of the file. Hold down the Alt/Option Key to visualise when clipping starts to occur, setting the sliders to just before warnings appear.



2 Adjust HSL We need to create separation between the green foliage and the bronze leaves and mud behind. I reduced the Yellow Hue and Saturation, which makes natural greens 'fresher'. I also reduced Green Luminance to remove the presence of sheen.



3 Use Point Color To target the underlying reddish soil and brown foliage, I used the Eyedropper in the Point Color tab in Lightroom to select this range. I checked 'Visualise Range' to see which colours were selected, then further adjusted the HSL of these colours.



4 Grading wheel techniques For a subtle split tone, I added green to the Shadows and orange to the Highlights, using the Grading Wheels in Lightroom. This complemented the existing scene colours. To fill out the range, I added a mid-tone halfway between these.



LANDSCAPE POST-PROCESSING

Mark's most-used editing tools

Top tools for editing landscape shots



WHITE BALANCE

I often use the Basic Panel sliders in Lightroom to correct the colour casts, adjust the colour temperature of the scene and control the Tint for a more natural range of colours.



SATURATION AND VIBRANCE

I use these tools to enhance or tone down colours, as they impact all colours and the least dominant ones, respectively. For more precise control, use Point Color or other sampling tool.



HSL

Fine-tune specific colours to achieve the desired look. The Hue, Saturation and Luminance sliders alter the shade, intensity and brightness of each colour range.



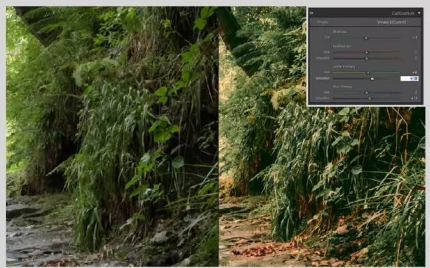
COLOR GRADING

This will influence the impact of the image, based on the depth of colour. Independently add or neutralise colours in the highlights, mid-tones and shadows.

© Peter Fenetch



5 Tone Curve targeting Adding more complex tones to the colour palette ensures that the grade looks natural. Using a Tone Curve, I added more green to the Darks, Magenta to the upper Midtones and Yellow to the Highlights, creating a warm glow.



6 Control Calibration Finally, I made some minor adjustments to the Color Process by increasing the Green and Blue Primary Saturation and shifted the Green Primary Hue to the right. This finished off the cinema-like grade style I was looking for.

Craft lighting and exposure

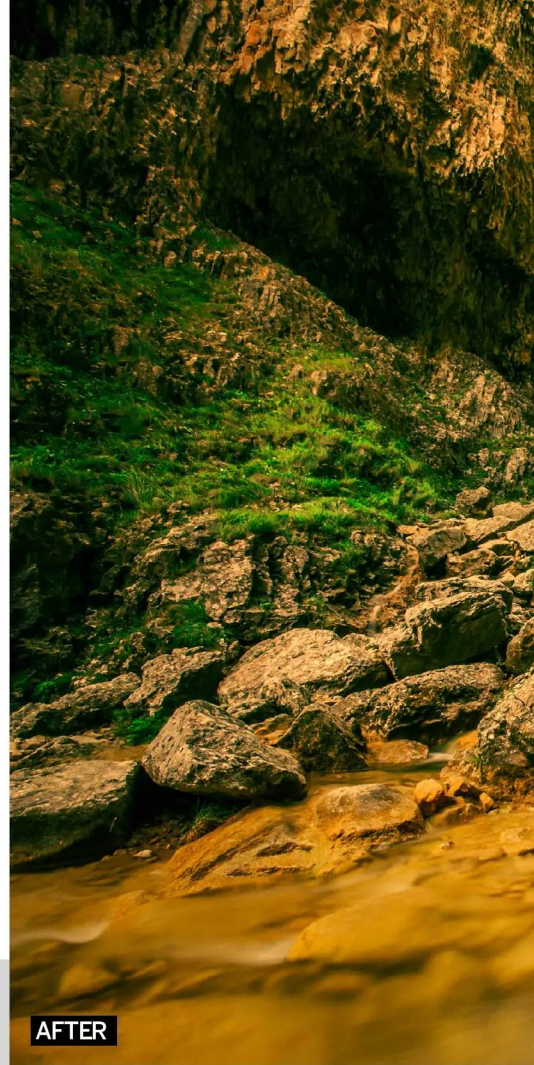
Control tonal balance using local adjustment tools

Exposure and colour in photography are often discussed independently as if they are unrelated topics, however, it is important to remember that the brightness of an image directly impacts the appearance of colours. In landscape photography, the decision is often taken to underexpose slightly to maintain highlight detail but also to create richer colours that appear more saturated. This means that you need to be mindful of how your exposure choices affect the colour fidelity of your photos.

In scenic imaging, this can be challenging due to the tonal range of many compositions. The sky is usually brighter than the foreground by a significant margin, which means colours will be impacted differently in each area of the frame. This is why localised adjustments are hugely important in landscape editing.

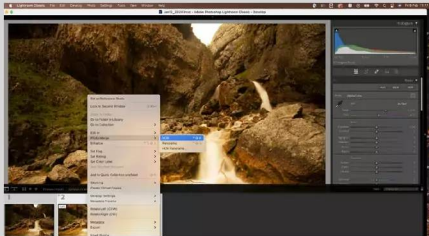
Most advanced software applications offer adjustment tools that allow localised edits to many parameters, including exposure, colour saturation, white balance and clarity. This workflow is far more flexible than when applying global adjustments. However, when we make changes to the tonality of an image, especially in local areas, we must keep the dynamic range natural. We must also ensure that we do not change the lighting structure of the shot, creating hotspots where none could exist in reality due to a lack of light source.

A professional approach is to work in rounds of edits that get progressively more concise. Start with global edits, then move down to working using local adjustment tools, before finally targeting the brightness and intensity of specific colour ranges.



Perform complex blends

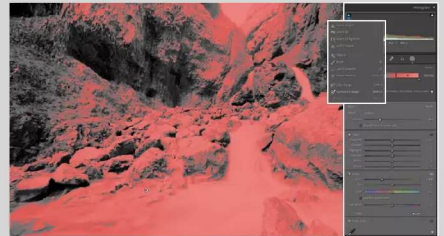
Merge images with challenging moving elements and tricky lighting



1 Auto blend shots In this high-contrast scene, I captured a bracket of three exposures, which I then blended together using Lightroom's Merge to HDR function. This did a good job of loading all of the tones into a single frame for later adjustment.



2 Adjust main parameters On the merged image, I set the Black and White Points, introduced some extra Clarity and pulled back some of the highlight detail. I toggled the Clipping alerts by clicking on the triangle symbols on the Histogram.



3 Adjust tonal shift The use of a strong ND filter has given the image a yellow tone. I wanted to remove this from the shadows, so to target this range, I created a Luminance Range Mask, selected a highlight with the eyedropper and refined the Luminance Range.



4 Restore natural colour After adjusting the Temperature of that range, the greens remained an ugly brown, so I adjusted them using HSL, increasing the Green Hue until the colours looked more natural. I also applied +33 Green Primary Hue under Calibration.



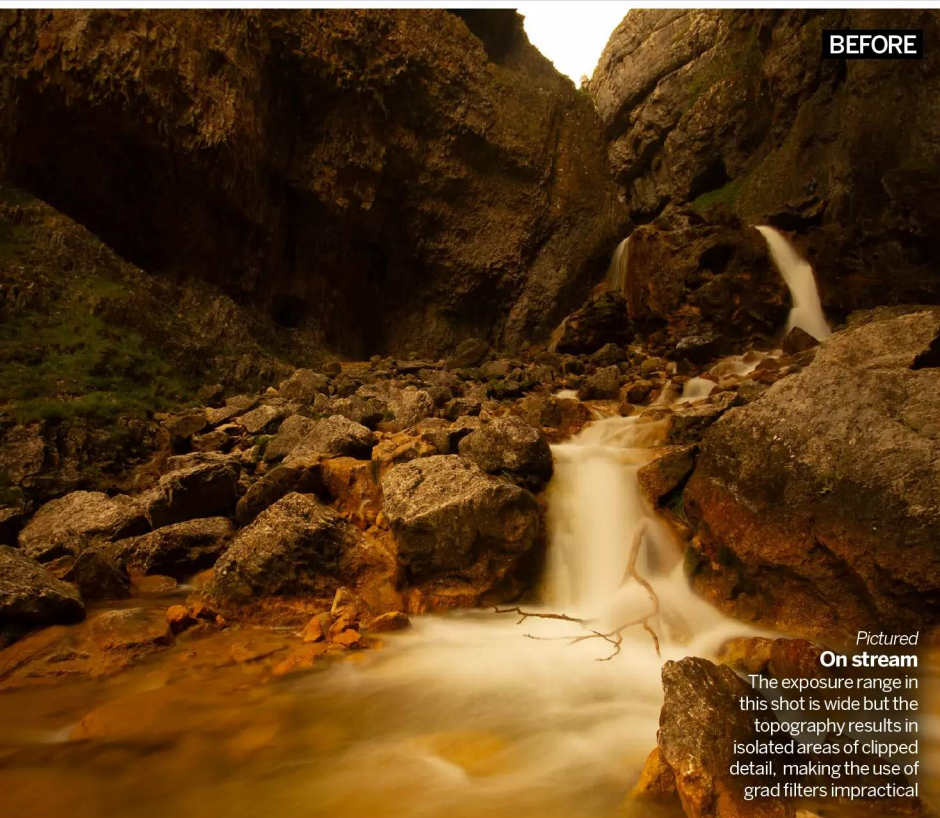
5 Remove ghosts The moving water has created blending artefacts, so I stacked the HDR file and one of the original bracketed images in Photoshop. I made a selection around the foreground water in Quick Mask Mode, feathered it and applied a layer mask.



6 Create a light gradient For a sunset feel, I added a Radial Gradient layer with a yellow foreground and magenta background and applied Soft Light Blend Mode. For a smoother gradient, go to Layer Styles and, in Blend If, move the Underlying Layer Handles.



Pictured
Natural light
After making a range of localised adjustments, the image now contains much more detail and the dynamic range still looks natural

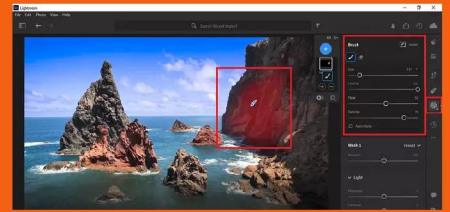


BEFORE

Pictured
On stream
The exposure range in this shot is wide but the topography results in isolated areas of clipped detail, making the use of grad filters impractical

Essential local adjustment features

Mark Brion's pick of software tools



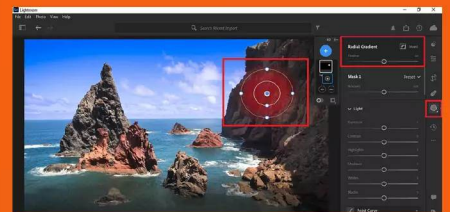
LOCAL ADJUSTMENT BRUSHES

Editing software offers brush tools so you can paint onto specific areas of the image and then make selective exposure adjustments.



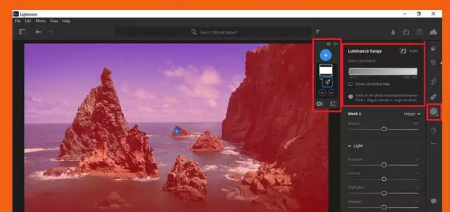
GRADUATED FILTERS

Enables gradual exposure adjustments across the image, such as darkening the sky while keeping the foreground unchanged.



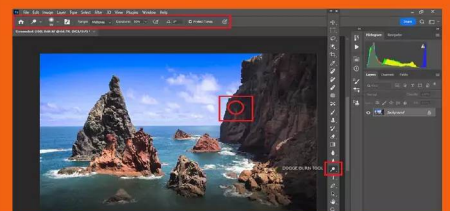
RADIAL FILTERS

Creates circular or elliptical selections with controllable feather measurements so you can brighten or darken specific areas.



LUMINANCE RANGE MASKS

Layers and masks allow complex exposure adjustments to specific parts of an image. Range masks allow precise tonal targeting.



DODGE AND BURN TOOLS

These are commonly used to selectively lighten (dodge) or darken (burn) targeted areas based on a specific tonal range.

© Peter Fenech

Pictured

Maximum impact

If getting people to connect with your final image is the ultimate goal as a photographer, we should be free to use all tools possible to help that



Work with special effects

Explore advanced software techniques to make your shots stand out

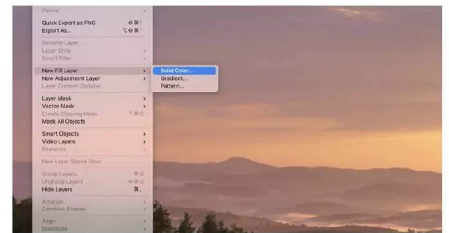
Landscape photography can often be seen as a literal genre, merely tasked with capturing the scene before the camera exactly as it is. However, this attitude has changed over recent years, thanks to the advent of social media trends and AI software features such as Generative Fill in Adobe Photoshop. Although these tools have been controversial and have stretched the definition of digital photography, they have also opened up a whole world of creative and cultural possibilities.

I have always believed that the impact of the final image is the end goal for a photographer and that we must be free to take whatever steps are necessary so that the viewer can connect with our subject. If that means adjusting the colours and lighting conditions of a scene because they had less impact on the day we conducted our shoot, or because we had to shoot at a sub-optimal time of day, we should explore all the possible options to enhance our images.

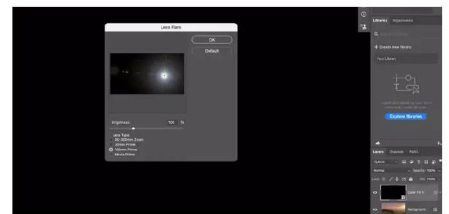
Modern software is packed full of filters and advanced functions, such as layer masking and gradients, which can be used to simulate exposure effects. The key is to use them with restraint and only apply filters where there is a clear advantage in doing so. Special effects, as in any photo genre, aren't necessarily enough to justify an image on their own. Instead, they should enhance the lighting and detail already in the scene, or complement the intended tone of the shot, at the moment of exposure.

Relight the scene

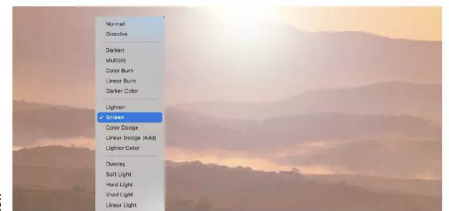
Introduce lighting effects to your shots to overcome flat conditions



1 Add a movable layer Start by adding a Black Solid Colour layer above your Background layer. The black background will make it easy to move the lighting effect around at a later stage. You can toggle the layer on and off using layer visibility.



2 Add a flare The process varies between software, in Photoshop go Filter > Render > Lens Flare. Select the 105mm Prime option, resize using 'Brightness' based on the focal length and resolution of your image and place the flare where your light source would be.



3 Remove the background Click OK and the filter is applied. Change the layer blend mode to Screen to remove the black background and then adjust the placement and size of the flare layer. Consider the ambient lighting and match its direction.



4 Match the ambient colour Tone the flare layer to match the ambient colour balance. Go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Hue/Saturation and, with the flare layer below, use Layer > Create Clipping Mask. Check Colorize in the H/S dialog and shift the Hue slider.



Mark Brion



Mark Brion is an award-winning photographer, based in Oxfordshire UK. He served in the British military and the police, before becoming a pro photographer in 2013. Initially, he worked in events, portraiture and real estate before specialising in natural world imagery. Teaching photography is now Mark's passion and he leads workshop groups to destinations both in the UK and internationally.
 @markbrionphotography
 markbrion.com

© Mark Brion

Use filters like a pro

Other special effect tools to try on your images

DIFFERENCE CLOUDS

In Photoshop, go to Filter > Render > Difference Clouds. This applies a fog-like effect that can be scaled, transformed and blended using the Screen blend mode. Use this at an Opacity of less than 40 per cent and ensure the scaling matches the focal length of the frame.

RADIAL BLUR

When shooting in the middle of the day, it can be a challenge to achieve a long exposure without using a 10-stop ND filter. Select the sky and with the selection active, choose Filter > Blur > Radial Blur. Select Zoom as the method and adjust the Amount to suit your image.

DIFFUSE GLOW

For a fairytale look, this filter subtly diffuses the highlights, creating a soft-focus effect. Use this sparingly on high-key images or those with a defined light source. Alternatively, go to Select > Color Range, sample a highlight and add a light Gaussian Blur.

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SHOOT ABSTRACT

Think outside the box to cross the line from reality based images to mesmerising photo art

Words by Kim Bunermann

Abstract photography is a dynamic and varied genre that presents endless opportunities to explore and unleash your creativity. In the early days of photography, there was little room for abstract frames. The first cameras served the sole purpose of capturing scenes as they appeared in real life, providing a more accurate depiction than paintings.

However, like most art forms, photography evolved and began to find its creative voice as a reaction against expressionism in the 1920s, when photographers such as Albert Renger-Patzsch freed the medium from its initial function. This period saw the emergence of movements such as New Objectivity and New Vision, where photographers embraced a fresh approach to discovering the technical possibilities of photography to showcase structures, forms and angles in innovative and exciting ways.

To create frames that offer a fresh and unique perspective on familiar

subjects, the key is to break away from preconceived notions by transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary. This often means removing subjects from their usual context, which renders the functions of objects less important. Instead, the focus shifts to the optical characteristics of materials and colours.

To experience subjects in a new and extended way, we need to train our eyes and develop the necessary observation skills, while also trusting our vision. Breaking traditional photographic rules is an important part of this process, even though it may be easier for some than for others. However, abstract photography is a genre that allows us to have fun, experiment and discover.

Over the next few pages, we'll explore some abstract techniques that you can adapt to other photographic genres and let you showcase your creative side. We'll show you how to find fresh perspectives on everyday objects and familiar scenes, showing you how to transform them in a game of hide and seek with the viewer.

RACT

Pictured
Cut loose

Photography can be more than a representation of reality. It can transform subjects in a way that opens up a new level of perception for the viewer

Turn reality around

Train your eye to detect the hidden visual qualities of everyday subjects

Any image that does not show reality can be considered abstract. Although people might perceive the level of abstraction in different ways, as long as the photograph causes the viewer to question what they are seeing, it can be considered a successful abstract frame. The easiest way to portray any subject in an abstract way is to free yourself mentally from its concepts and functions. Abstract photography doesn't have to explain what is depicted – in fact, the aim is not to do so.

The most important skills required for abstract photography are observation and perception. Freeing your mind from the functions that the material world and society have ascribed to the object you are shooting means you can alter the subject's context from its reality. To do this, select an item of your choice and observe and analyse it. Take your time, turn it, get closer and see how it looks in different lighting. Work out what makes the object interesting or unique and

concentrate on enhancing those features. Try doing this as a weekly challenge, with the aim of training your mind to look out for possibilities and also to become more familiar with the way your camera and lens work.

In terms of the composition, aim to give the viewer a direction to explore the image, using leading lines and a strong focal point to guide their eyes. While traditional composition rules, such as the rule of thirds and the golden ratio, are handy, it's good to think more abstractly.

Especially when you are filling the frame with the subject, leading the viewer's eye is crucial. Start by taking a wider shot of the subject and then get progressively closer with each photo. This will help you identify where the leading lines and other visually dominant elements are in your frame. Keep getting closer until the composition of the frame provides the viewer with a mystery to solve, where the subject is transformed and incorporated into a supporting composition.



Pictured
Fill the frame
Monochromatic subjects can often create a calm and harmonic frame, letting the viewer focus on the details

BREAK THE RULES

When it comes to abstract photography, the sky's the limit. Experimenting and overlooking the classic photography rules and techniques, for example, in terms of the shutter speed, will help you make even the most ordinary subjects appear mysterious and interesting.

Pictured Get close

Macro lenses let you transform everyday objects with underlining optical characteristics like material and structure

Compress your image elements

Bringing elements closer together can help you to manipulate reality

Depending on the subject you want to transform, a telephoto zoom lens can be a great tool. Due to its versatility, it allows you to explore scenes with a different approach and from a different perspective than a macro lens. A zoom lens has more to offer, especially when photographing architecture. Due to its compressed perspective, the foreground and background appear closer together at narrow focal lengths.

However, telephoto zoom lenses aren't cheap, and to avoid going over your budget, it's a good idea to consider second-hand options. MPB is one provider of pre-used kit that carries out checks on the functionality of a lens before it goes on sale online. The Canon EF 70-300mm f/4-5.6L IS USM, for example, is a relatively budget-friendly professional lens with rapid, virtually silent autofocus.

Isolate for alienation

Get up close to your subject and frame tight to discover fresh perspectives on ordinary items

A popular method for creating abstract frames is to isolate the subject from its surroundings, offering the audience a different view that deviates from reality. One way to achieve this is by incorporating negative space to give the subject room to breathe or to take close-up shots to fill the frame to the maximum. The latter allows the viewer to focus on the unique features of the subject's material and colour.

Here, macro lenses with at least a 1:1 reproduction ratio are recommended, such as the budget-friendly AstrHori 25mm f/2.8 2-5X Ultra Macro optic. It can focus down to 113mm at 2x magnification or 186.4mm at full 5x magnification. However, if you are new to abstract photography, most kit zoom lenses are also suitable for this technique. Often these lenses have decent close-focusing capabilities, and when you capture the subject in RAW format, you have the option to crop the frame even further in post-processing.

To achieve the best results while maintaining high quality and sharpness, choosing an aperture of f/8 works best. As the depth of field can be shallow when using a macro lens, even if you are working with narrow apertures, the focus stacking technique comes into play. This approach is highly effective when capturing still subjects and involves stacking several images at the post-processing stage.

Stack shots for depth



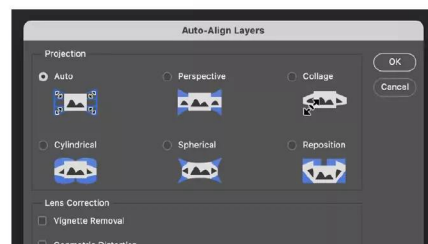
1 Secure camera For the highest quality image, go to the menu and select RAW as the file format. To make the image stack process perfect, mount your camera on a tripod. Now activate the Live View to decide on framing and composition.



2 Switch off AF Set your camera to manual focus (MF) and turn off any image stabilisation modes. In M mode, select an aperture of f/11, set the shutter speed to around 1/200sec and adjust the ISO until you achieve a well-exposed image.



3 Set the focus Select the two-second self-timer or use a shutter remote release to avoid camera shake and blur. Now focus on a specific area, press the shutter and continue without reframing the scene until all the elements are covered.



4 Stack in post In Photoshop, select all layers and go to Edit > Auto-Align Layers. Go to Edit > Auto-Blend Layers, choose Stack Images, Seamless Tones and Colors and Content Aware Fill Transparent Areas.





Pictured
Light painting
Working with light and long exposures, combining different coloured lights and movements can bring your vision to life

Let there be light

Use light to create abstract frames

When creating photographs that deviate from our perception of reality, the subject is independently reshaped to create an additional level of interest. This can be achieved by adapting the material and visibility of the subjects, or by using photographic techniques. One such subject is light, which offers great creative potential.

Light is a crucial tool for photography, whether it's natural or artificial light from a flash. It can be used to achieve different visual effects and can be shaped and combined with colours to create unique compositions. While the light is more controllable indoors, sunlight can also be great for creating abstract frames. For example, a strong midday sun creates high-contrast shadows that can contribute to and become part of the composition.

Defocus for abstraction

1 CHOOSE THE OPTIC

You can create a full-frame bokeh with most lenses, but if your goal is to achieve natural-looking, circular-shaped light sources, a nine-blade lens is ideal. Lenses with fewer blades create polygon-shaped orbs

2 FIND THE SCENE

Light sources in the dark, for example, street lights or coloured fairy lights in your room make great subjects as they are naturally colourful with lots of high contrast. The effect works best when the light sources aren't overlapping each other

3 DIAL IN CAMERA SETTINGS

Shoot in M and deactivate the AF function. Now choose the maximum open aperture setting and adapt the shutter speed and ISO values until the exposure is balanced. When working in the dark, using a tripod allows you to use longer exposures.

4 CREATE THE BOKEH

Frame the scene and defocus to the maximum. To enhance the bokeh, decrease the distance to the light sources. The further away you are, the more intense the effect will be. Experiment and try different compositions to frame the colourful light orbs.

Play with wavelengths

Create abstract images that we cannot perceive with the naked eye

When taking an abstract approach, an extended shutter speed provides the opportunity to get creative with light, such as turning an existing scene around or constructing a conceptual photograph. In both scenarios, the light sources need to stand out, so it should be dark.

One approach is to capture the light of moving objects, such as cars, to create light trails. You can also move the camera to control the shape of light sources – this approach is called Intentional Camera Movement (ICM) and we will explore this further in the following pages.

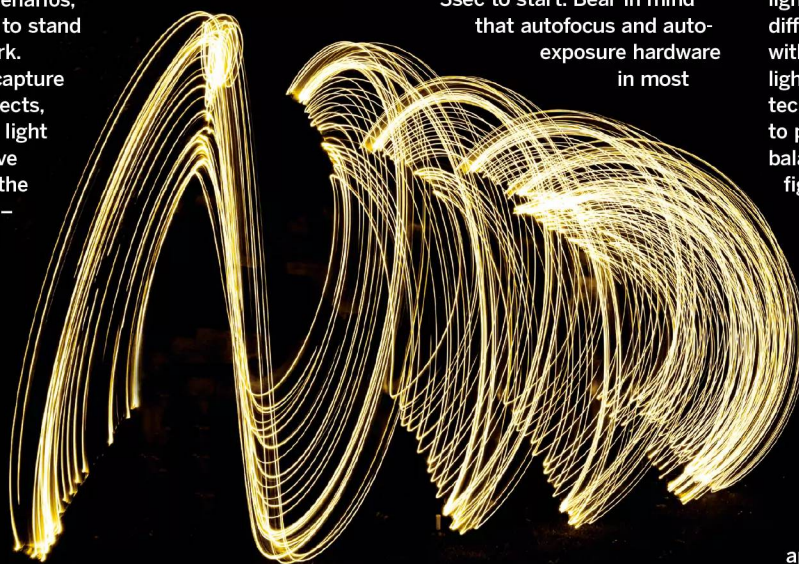
To bring your vision to life, you can create a scene without access to a photo studio – all you need is some space and

a flexible LED light source with a bundled light cone. For this project, you need a tripod to keep the camera steady and avoid blur but you won't need a shutter remote as the self-timer function will work.

Prepare yourself by wearing black clothes, including black gloves, to help you to blend seamlessly with the dark background. Set your camera to manual mode (M) and choose a shutter speed of 3sec to start. Bear in mind that autofocus and auto-exposure hardware in most

cameras are not designed to work with monochromatic light. To ensure sharp images, choose an aperture of around f/8. Activate the self-timer and position yourself in front of the camera. Now, move the light source around to create different patterns. Be creative with shapes and use coloured light to mix things up. This technique may take some time to perfect, as you will need to balance the exposure time and figure out how fast to move the light source to achieve the desired effect.

Coloured LED lights can be tricky to shoot because colours have different wavelengths that affect their visibility. For instance, blue LEDs have shorter wavelengths than red ones. As a result, you need to widen the depth of field to ensure that they appear sharp and in focus.



Add optical effects

Achieve abstraction by using your camera and lens in a different way

The joy in creating scenes that don't depict reality is that you can experiment by playing around with both the camera and the subject. Intentional Camera Movement (ICM) is one technique that is especially popular in woodland and nature scenes to add a dynamic and painterly style. This approach works by setting a longer exposure time and moving the camera while the shutter is open. These images often have a captivating abstract blur that conveys a sense of movement while blurring colours and shapes.

This technique thrives on vibrant colours and structures that the captured scene should provide. A beach scene, sunset or flower field are other great subjects that may also create an intense effect. When deciding on a subject to capture, analyse the scene and the direction of lines, and work out what type of movement will enhance the subject. This is often achieved by adapting the subject's shape in the movement, for example, imitating the lines of the tree trunks by moving the camera up and down.

As the name of the technique suggests, there are no rules in terms of the camera movement. However, it's useful to know what type of movement creates each effect. To achieve a panoramic glide effect that generates a multitude of colours, move the camera from side to side. A drop motion can be created by mounting the camera on a tripod and moving the camera via a fluid ball head or tripod handle downwards. If your camera is already on a tripod, it's also worth trying the 360° rotation effect.

Create a zoom burst

1 DECIDE ON OPTIC

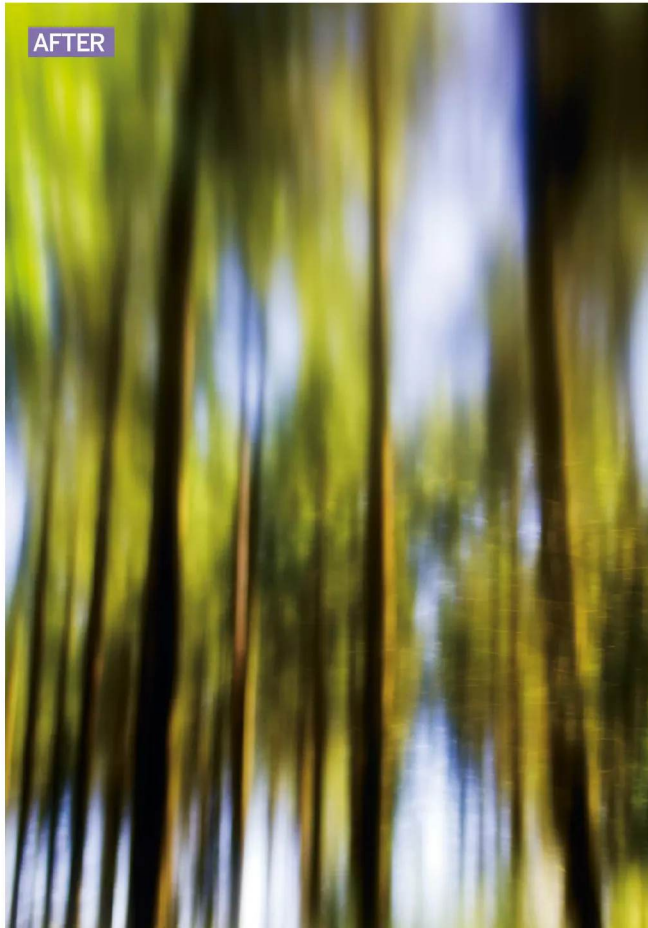
The longer the available focal length of a zoom lens, the more intense the effect. Lenses with a flexible range of 70-300mm are ideal, but this technique will also work with slightly shorter focal lengths

2 BALANCE EXPOSURE

To avoid overexposing your image, use a closed aperture of around f/22. Start with a shutter speed of 1/13sec and experiment with this setting as it will depend on how quickly you zoom

3 PRESS THE SHUTTER

Click the shutter and have one hand ready on the lens to zoom in or out of the scene – or do both. If longer exposure times benefit the look of your image, attach an ND filter to balance the exposure



Fake an ICM image

Use your lens filter to simulate camera movement

ICM is a great technique to explore new visual possibilities in a scene. However, mastering this technique is important if you have a specific idea of how you want the final image to appear. Finding the right balance between movement and shutter speed is key. But you can also apply this effect in a more controlled manner with simple and inexpensive tools.

To achieve this, you need a clear filter that does not affect

the overall image. A UV filter, which is often used to protect the lens against sand or water, is ideal for this. These filters are cheap, reusable and can be easily cleaned. To simulate the effect before shooting, you will also need a jar of petroleum jelly, such as Vaseline.

Once you have your tools, mount your camera on a tripod. It is best to activate Live View mode to oversee the results. Work with an aperture around f/8 and keep your ISO value low by adjusting the shutter speed until a balanced exposure is achieved. Attach the UV filter and smear the petroleum jelly on its surface.

Control the effect by smearing the petroleum jelly in a particular pattern. Horizontal lines, for example, will create vertical blurred streaks. Start with a minimal amount of petroleum jelly and add more as needed. If you are not satisfied with the result, wipe the petroleum off with a damp microfibre cloth and dry the surface afterwards with a different cloth.



Shoot without a lens

Go back to the early days of photography by creating a pinhole camera to shoot appealing abstracts

The camera obscura, also known as a pinhole camera, was the first camera created and has been around since the fifth century BC. As part of his studies on how we see, the Arab scholar Ibn Al-Haytham is credited with inventing this camera, showing how light can be used to project an image onto a flat surface.

The camera obscura works without a lens and it results in soft and slightly blurred images. To make one yourself, you will need a spare body cap, a drill, some aluminium foil, a needle and some sticky tape. First, create a card or paper template of the body cap by drawing around it and marking the centre point. Place the template over the body cap and drill to create the hole with a diameter of around 2-4mm.

To create the actual pinhole, cut off a small piece of aluminium foil and carefully prick a hole. Bear in mind that the smaller the hole, the sharper your image will be. Use a piece of tape to attach the foil to the cap in the centre. Attach the body cap instead of the lens and find a suitable location for your shoot.



Pictured
Turn back time
Shot with a pinhole camera, this scene has a blurred, abstract effect, which is in contrast to the sharpness of a modern DSLR or mirrorless camera



Combine movements

Raghuvamsh Chavali explains the technique of interlacing frames

Raghuvamsh Chavali



Raghuvamsh Chavali is a nature and wildlife photographer, originally from India but now living in Canada. His photography involves travelling to remote

locations to create inspiring images that capture the emotional energy of the place. His work has been featured in publications such as *Canadian Geographic*, *Smithsonian Magazine* and *Lonely Planet*.

Chavali is also a researcher in digital and biometric data and has patented a digital watermarking system that incorporates human biometrics into imaging systems to help prevent theft. His academic work has been published in international journals, including the *IJICS* and the *AJPCR*.

raghuvamsh.com

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

One way of turning reality upside-down is by blending together many images of a commonly photographed subject, such as birds. This technique of interlacing frames has lots of potential for creating abstract images and, by learning how to use it, you can convey the natural movement of animals in a unique manner, explains wildlife photographer Raghuvamsh Chavali.

"Interlacing frames involves capturing consecutive frames of the bird's movement (see image above). The technique can be used to create and showcase smoother and more fluid motion when displaying bird flight or other rapid movements using a burst mode or video timelapse footage. With this technique, the motion appears more natural and less choppy, enhancing the experience.

"I frequently observe birds gracefully gliding through the sky, creating picturesque scenes, like artists with their brushes. It's captivating to witness their flight patterns. While it's common to spot them in nature, forests, countryside and lakes, I find it intriguing to see them in urban environments. I often liken

the journeys of humans to those of birds, noting how both species navigate distinct paths to reach various destinations.

"That's why I began capturing what I call 'Wings Over Concrete', to create composite photographs, showcasing these distinctive flight patterns both in nature and urban settings. To apply this technique, I choose higher frame rates, such as 100fps, for fast actions and complex manoeuvres of birds in flight. When capturing regular flight patterns, I use slower rates, like 50fps, to ensure smoother playback. It's important to use the highest resolution supported by your camera, such as 4K, to capture fine details of the birds' movements and features. Use manual focus to precisely control focus on the subject, ensuring clarity in each frame.

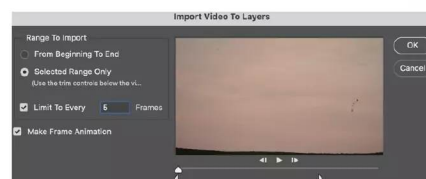
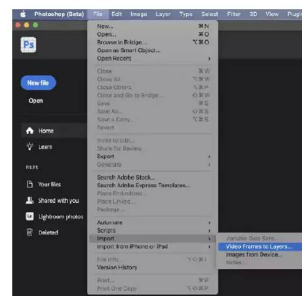
"Then, set the frame composition before initiating recording to capture the desired scene effectively. I leveraged features, such as the Sony A7III's MF Assist, which zooms in when adjusting the focusing ring, providing a clearer view for precise focusing on the birds' movements."

Blending frames

Create one frame in post-processing

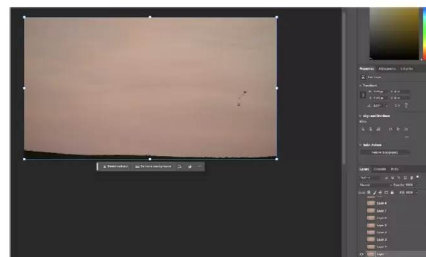
1 Import video frames

After capturing your video, carefully align and blend each frame using specialised image processing software, such as Adobe Photoshop or any other editing tool. Go to File > Import > Video Frames to Layers to import the footage.



2 Set import options

Now a settings window will open. Here, it is important to leave both the Selected Range Only and the Make Frame Animation settings ticked. For the best results, don't forget to enable 'Limit to Every' and select five frames.

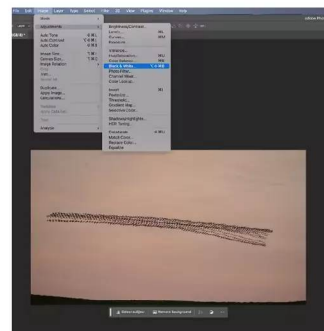


3 Selective framing

Now go through the process of selecting the best frames and eliminating any shaky ones. Ensure that the final image is clear and crisp so that it beautifully showcases the intricate details and grace of the bird's flight path.

4 Create one frame

Then it's time to flatten the image to create one final photograph. For my work, I convert the image tones to monochrome. Instead of changing the Mode, go to Adjustments > Black & White to gain more control of the tones.



Pictured In-flight movie

To achieve this abstract effect, Raghuvamsh used multiple images of birds in flight, adding layers of interest

Pro Advice

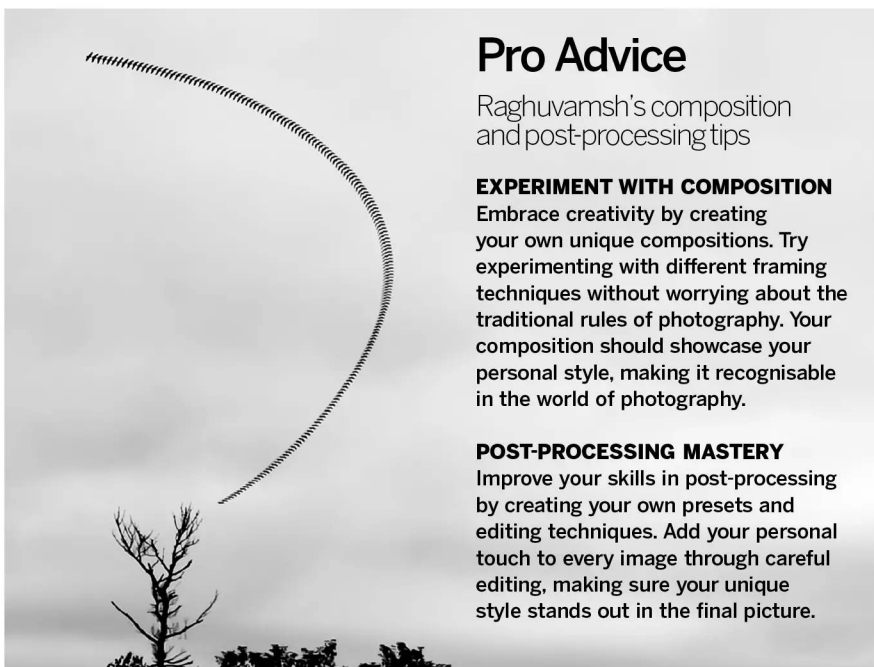
Raghuvamsh's composition and post-processing tips

EXPERIMENT WITH COMPOSITION

Embrace creativity by creating your own unique compositions. Try experimenting with different framing techniques without worrying about the traditional rules of photography. Your composition should showcase your personal style, making it recognisable in the world of photography.

POST-PROCESSING MASTERY

Improve your skills in post-processing by creating your own presets and editing techniques. Add your personal touch to every image through careful editing, making sure your unique style stands out in the final picture.



TECHNIQUES

Pictured

Mystical enveloping

The structure of the glass highlights a range of colours and also adds extra layers of interest

Shoot through glass

Ladoza explains how refracting daily scenes through frosted glass can enhance your images

As a conceptual artist with a passion for abstract art, Ladoza loves exploring different mediums and techniques to create new concepts. Photography remains key to this process. "As with music, abstract art can reflect our moods or embrace our feelings. It shifts the importance of knowing what you are looking at to how it makes you feel," he says.

3x © Ladoza "The Viewing Glass project (the working title) is still in its early days and with every shoot, I continue to learn what it is and see

how my objectives are evolving. My focus isn't on the final piece, but rather on the process and exploration of an idea.

"The concept came to me while I was looking through a textured glass window. Instead of seeing the window, I saw bold, distorted shapes and colours, similar to an impressionist painting. I was inspired to create something that I could use to capture the landscape in a way that looked like a real-life oil or pastel painting."

Ladoza



Ladoza is a multi-media abstract and conceptual artist, based in Sheffield, UK. With a passion for nature and the outdoors, Ladoza takes inspiration from the surrounding landscape to explore and develop new artistic ideas through painting, photography and other media.
ladoza.co.uk @ladoza.uk

THE VIEWING GLASS PROJECT

"I am looking forward to capturing the landscape through the different seasons as colours play a big role in the outcome. I am also keen to explore how the technique can be used with portraits and still life imagery."



Pro Advice

Ladoza explains how to create abstract art through frosted glass

TRY, ANALYSE, REFLECT

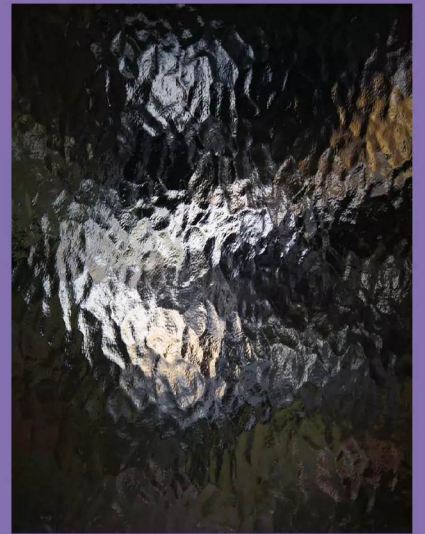
Don't ask yourself why you want to create an image. This can get in the way of producing it in the first place. If you get an idea, try it out, then ask yourself, how do you feel about it? What have you learnt? How could you improve? That way, you can reflect and learn from what you've created and evolve from there.

CREATE A CONCEPT

Abstract art and photography is about exploring your own concepts, not necessarily complying with what others want you to do. Knowing this can be liberating and free you up creatively.

GET INPUT

There is a lot of value in being self-critical, especially if you learn how to do it constructively. Visiting galleries and thinking about why you like – or more importantly, dislike – a piece, can help in the development of your own creations.



SHOOT REGULARLY

People often say 'Get out and shoot more' when talking about photography, but not why this is important. We only learn more by doing and reflecting. The more we do something, the more we learn from our mistakes and become better at what we do.

Turn your image into abstract art

LONG EXPOSURE

Ladoza captured the scene using an extended shutter speed. As a result, the movement of the water is softened, giving it a dreamy effect. This is a common technique in landscape photography to transform outdoor scenes



USING GLASS FRAME

The glass effect is in direct contrast to the background. It becomes clear how the structure of the glass changes the scene into a painterly frame, setting the focus clearly on structure and colour of the subject



Incorporate filters

Whatever abstract effect you want to create, there's probably a filter that can help

Pictured
Transform colours
 Infrared filters are a great tool for creating abstract-looking landscape images

© Ben Brain

UV filters, polarisers, and other similar filters are commonly used to protect the lens or to enhance the overall look of your image. However, there are some specialised hardware filters you may not have heard about. That's probably because they are usually unsuitable for every photo project, as they add distinctive visual effects to the frame.

However, whenever you decide to purchase a filter, it is important to consider its material. Filters made from plastic are often cheaper but they can negatively affect the image sharpness. On the other hand, more expensive high-quality filters are made of optical resin or glass, which are less prone to scratching, keeping up the quality

during regular use. Initially, you may wish to purchase a budget-friendly filter to determine whether it's worth investing in high-quality filters later on. To give you an idea, here are two unusual filters that can add an abstract touch to your photography. Both effects are also achievable in post-processing, but attaching a filter will save you hours in editing.

Infrared filter

IR filters don't affect the subject's form but its colours. The tool cuts wavelengths and permits transmission of the red region of the light spectrum, resulting in frames that look surreal in their colours. When using filters such as the Hoya R72, bear in mind that setting the focus accurately before attaching the IR filter is a must. These filters cut down the overall exposure, so working with a tripod to slow down the shutter speed is advisable.



Kaleidoscope filter

Many of us may recall playing with a kaleidoscope toy in our childhoods – kaleidoscope filters work like those, creating a unique visual experience like looking through one by splitting images into fractions, mirroring them and rotating some elements. To create this effect, the Subtle Kaleidoscope filter from Freewell is an excellent choice, transforming ordinary subjects into mesmerising and enchanting artworks. To maximise the effect, shoot colourful scenes with small subjects and details, such as stained glass windows or fields of flowers.



HOPE AND HOMES FOR CHILDREN



URGENT APPEAL



Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine is not just a humanitarian crisis for the Ukrainian people; it's a child protection emergency.

Up to 100,000 children warehoused in Ukraine's vast orphanage system – a network of over 700 buildings – risk being forgotten. Left to face the dangers of war alone as staff flee. As families are torn apart or forced from their homes, many more children are at risk of being separated from the love and protection they desperately need. Worse still, they are at risk of trafficking, or being placed in overcrowded, understaffed and poorly resourced orphanages in border countries.

We must act now.

Born out of the Balkans conflict 30 years ago, we've championed the vital importance of family and community-based care of children and our teams are on the ground in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania to ensure this war does not rob children of the love and protection they need now more than ever. Across all three countries, we're directly supporting displaced families and unaccompanied children with material and emotional

support. We're working closely with authorities to keep families together when they are at their most vulnerable and to fight for the safe tracking, monitoring and care for children without parental care. And we won't stop when the fighting stops.

Will you help us by donating?

With your help, we can avert a child protection crisis of epic proportions and ensure children are protected and kept in families. Never orphanages.

To help protect vulnerable children, donate online at: www.hopeandhomes.org/donate. Or call **01722 790 111** Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm.

Please quote **FP22 - P&D** when making your donation.

In the event that funds raised exceed what is needed to deliver Hope and Homes for Children immediate and longer-term response to this crisis, we will use donations where the need is greatest.

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I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to Hope and

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Card no.	-	-	-	-
Start date	Expiry date	Issue no.	Security no.	on signature strip
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Signature	Date			
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You can view our privacy policy here www.hopeandhomes.org/privacy.

Registered charity (No. 1089490) FP22 - P&D

TOURIST TRAP

So, you've found a location for the perfect shot – but so has everyone else. **Kav Dadfar** explains how long exposures can help you escape the crowds

 For photographers, the frustration of a pristine scene marred by distractions is a common occurrence. Whether it's busy crowds, moving vehicles or onlookers in popular tourist spots or scenic viewpoints, we have all experienced this frustration. While patience might secure a gap for a clean shot, it's often unfeasible in continuously busy locations.

So how can you ensure your photos aren't inundated with crowds of people? One highly effective solution involves the use of extremely long exposures. By keeping the shutter open for an extended duration, the motion in the scene blurs, effectively eliminating unwanted elements from the frame. This technique proves particularly valuable in crowded scenarios, transforming busy city streets or

iconic landmarks into empty, almost surreal landscapes. The beauty of this method lies in its ease; with the right equipment and a few considerations, any photographer can use long exposures to enhance their photos and avoid hours of editing work. Whether you're capturing iconic cityscapes or serene landscapes, using long shutter speeds opens up new realms of creative possibilities.

Words and images by: Kav Dadfar
Difficulty level: Intermediate
Time taken: 1.5 hours

Pictured
Far from the crowd
This image was taken at a busy tourist hotspot but by using long exposure techniques, we managed to escape the maddening crowd

What you'll need

- Tripod
- ND filters
- Spare batteries
- Image editing software





SHOOTING SKILLS



1 Ensure everything is stable Stability is crucial when using slow shutter speeds to blur out any motion as any slight camera movement can cause camera shake. So, to ensure that your photos remain sharp, mount your camera on a stable tripod on a solid surface.



2 Select a small aperture For long shutter speeds, the key is to limit incoming light by choosing a small aperture, such as f/14 or f/16. Avoid going anywhere above f/16, as extremely small apertures can lead to reduced sharpness due to lens diffraction.



3 Go with a low ISO Depending on how quickly the distractions in your scene are moving, you are likely to need an exposure of at least 30 seconds and possibly even longer. Alongside a small aperture, expanded low ISO will also help you achieve longer exposure times.



4 Use a filter During the daytime, the main challenge will be to attain a sufficiently long shutter speed. To overcome this, use a six- to 10-stop neutral density filter. If necessary, consider using stacking filters to achieve a long enough shutter speed that blurs out any movement.



5 Select live view mode When using DSLR cameras, mirror flips cause subtle vibrations. In long-exposure photography, this may lead to camera shake and soft photos. Prevent this by choosing Live View mode to eliminate mirror movement and ensure your images stay sharp.



6 Don't touch the camera Even pressing the shutter button can be detrimental to the sharpness of your photos in a long-exposure shot. So refrain from touching the shutter button and, instead, opt for a cable release or go into your camera's menu and set a two-second timer.

The setup

24-70mm LENS

Normally with this type of scenario, you need a wide-angle lens to be able to fit the entire scene into your frame

10-STOP ND FILTER

In bright conditions, using a 10-stop neutral density filter is essential to allow you to take long exposures

CABLE RELEASE

Using a cable release means you won't have to wait for the two-second timer to elapse before each photo

TRIPOD

A sturdy tripod is a must for this type of long-exposure photography to avoid blurred photos

Top tips for long exposures

- 1** Be aware of where you are placing your tripod. For example, if you are on a bridge, a passing car or even people walking by can cause vibrations that will blur your images.
- 2** Make sure that you have multiple filters – even a 10-stop filter might not be enough to slow your shutter speed sufficiently.
- 3** If you have a UV filter on your lens, remove it before you attempt to screw in an ND filter or the ND filter holder. If there is a slight

jam, it will be difficult to unscrew the two filters from one another.

- 4** You also need to ensure that you have enough power and spare batteries for this type of photography. Long-exposure photos will drain your battery quicker than you think.

- 5** Be aware of colour casts when using poor quality or cheap filters, especially if they are made from plastic. If you stack these, you may find that your images have a magenta colour cast.





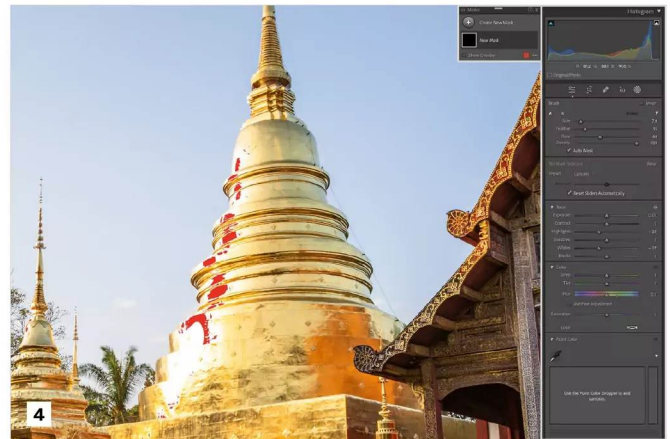
1 Fix the shadows This was a high-contrast scene between the bright, reflective stupa (shrine) and the shaded areas in the foreground. So the first thing to focus on is to brighten the shadows and recover the highlights slightly to avoid them being clipped.



2 Add contrast Fixing the highlights and shadows has meant that the image now looks a little flat. The next step is to remedy that on the Tone Curve by moving the sliders to create an S-curve. I also added a bit more Clarity to define the edges of the objects.



3 Tweak the brightness Boosting the contrast has darkened the image slightly again, so I tweaked both the Brightness slider and the Shadows slider to make it lighter. To make the colours pop a little more, I also increased the Vibrancy and Saturation sliders.



4 Zoom in and finesse At this stage, I zoom into my image to make some local adjustments and tweak things. For example, increasing the brightness has resulted in some of the highlights being clipped, so I created a mask and recovered these local areas.



5 Straighten and crop Next, I try to fix the converging lines in the image. In most cases, the image can be straightened by selecting the Auto setting in the Transform tab. I then cropped in slightly on either side and the top of the image to get a 4:3 ratio.



6 Tidy up My last step is to zoom into the image at 100 per cent and check the photo for things like dust spots, which often become more noticeable when you darken clear sky areas. I use the Healing function to remove these and clean up the rubbish in the foreground.



Pictured
Quiet reflections
By using the long-exposure technique, the movement of people at this busy location has been rendered invisible

BEFORE




AFTER

Pictured
Silence is golden
After a few adjustments to fix the shadows and converging lines, the final image shows a peaceful and uncluttered scene

Capture nearby wildlife

Practise the core skills for a genre where a split second makes the difference

 Wildlife photography is arguably one of the medium's most challenging genres. However, if you are thinking of practising your wildlife shooting skills, you needn't necessarily travel to far-off places. Wildlife can be found in urban areas, even on the streets of our biggest cities, where foxes and deer often appear at night.

Wildlife parks or nature reserves also provide opportunities to capture animals closer to your home. In these better controlled environments, you can observe a

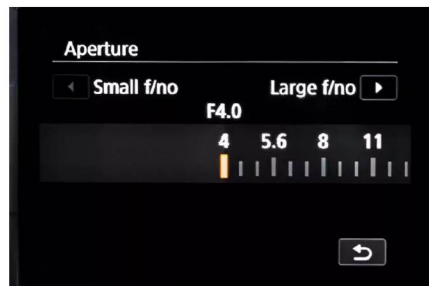
range of species and learn their behaviour, characteristics and movements. Pay attention to their feeding times, activity patterns and preferred environments within the area.

If you decide to shoot in your local forest, take advantage of the many helpful resources available online, such as the RSPB website, forums and apps, which provide detailed information on identifying different species, their habitats and migration patterns.

Timing is of the utmost importance in wildlife photography, so have your camera set

up and ready to go before you set off. Take the time to familiarise yourself with your camera and check the menu for any special features that may help you shoot your best images.

For this shoot, we visited the Scottish Owl Centre in Polkemmet Country Park, near Bathgate. The centre is home to over 140 owls from 50 species and offers indoor photo shoot sessions and workshops with expert tuition from pro Dean Bricknell. In this tutorial, we'll explain the steps you need to conquer limited lighting, make fences disappear and more.



1 Do your research Check that the park or facility you are visiting follows an ethical approach to conservation and identify the species you're interested in photographing. For action shots, consider visiting during feeding times or scheduled enrichment activities.

2 Shoot in M To capture the best images, shoot in manual mode. Choosing an open aperture when shooting through a fence will eliminate the bars and let more light reach the sensor. Bear in mind that an open aperture, such as f/4, will reduce the area of sharpness.

3 Ensure sharp results Shutter speed settings vary depending on the subject – the faster the animal, the faster the speed. Start with 1/250sec for moderately fast-moving subjects and to nail the focus, deactivate AF and activate the eye detection.

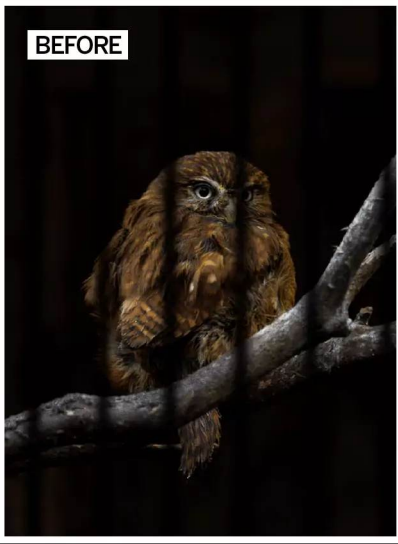


4 Embrace higher ISO If you are shooting in low light with a fast shutter speed, increase the ISO setting to maintain a proper exposure. Modern cameras perform well with higher settings but use the Denoise feature in Lightroom to eliminate image noise, if needed.

5 Shoot in burst mode When shooting animals in motion, activate burst or continuous shooting mode in your camera menu. This way, the camera captures multiple frames when holding down the shutter for a little longer than you would usually do.

6 Analyse frame When waiting for the subject to appear, use any spare time to look at your photos and analyse them in detail. It's a great opportunity to discover patterns, leading lines and angles that could enhance your composition for the next set of frames.

BEFORE



Inset
Hidden details

The image has distracting elements blocking the owl, while the exposure and focus settings aren't perfect either

Main
Easy prey

By shooting through the fence, using appropriate camera settings, the owl is showcased in full detail, with all its colour and texture



Create differential focus using Depth Blur

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](https://www.instagram.com/jamesaphoto) jamesaphoto.co.uk

Take advantage of Photoshop's AI tools to apply a shallow depth-of-field effect



There are many occasions where you may want to capture a shallow depth-of-field for creative purposes but were unable to for technical reasons. This could be because you required a specific shutter speed or something else. Either way, all isn't lost because Photoshop's Depth Blur Neural Filter allows you to achieve shallow depth-of-field effects quickly and easily.

What you'll be using

- Depth Blur Neural Filter
- Focal Point/Focal Distance
- Focal Range
- Blur Strength
- Haze



1 Open Depth Blur Open your image in Photoshop and go to Filter > Neural Filters > Depth Blur. If you've never used the filter before, click on the download button. Once that's done, activate the Filter and the dialogue opens with default settings applied, creating a crude shallow depth-of-field effect.



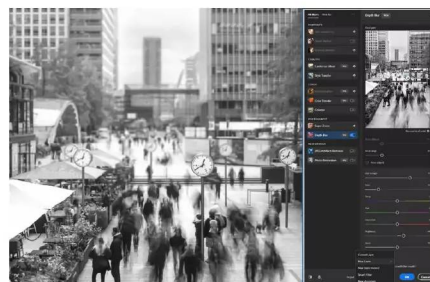
2 Set the point of focus You can either left-click on the image thumbnail, use the Focal Distance slider or check the Select subject box to set the point of focus. Of the three, left-clicking on the image thumbnail is the most precise. Next, set the Blur Strength to the desired amount – 70 was used here.



3 Set Focal range Now, with the desired amount of blur, drag the Focal range slider to the right to increase the depth of sharpness until you're happy with the result. You can also increase Haze, which is stronger in the blurred areas if you would like to mimic wide aperture haziness. For this image, Haze was set to 20.



4 Brightness and Grain At this stage, you can adjust the Brightness but the more important setting is Grain. The blurring effect can smooth out the natural grain in these areas, and this can be restored by zooming into the image and increasing the slider. This image was set to +10 Brightness and 50 Grain.



5 Set the Output Next, once you're happy with the overall result, set the Output option. This can be set to Current Layer, New Layer, New Layer Masked, Smart Filter and New Document. The option selected here was New Layer to maintain a non-destructive workflow, although all options have merits.

KEY TIP

DON'T GET BOGGED DOWN BY UNNECESSARY TOOLS

The Depth Blur Neural Filter provides all the tools you need to be able to create a convincing shallow depth-of-field effect, including white balance Temp and Tint controls. However, for the majority of images, these won't be necessary.

Insert Large depth-of-field

To help achieve the slow shutter speed required to blur the subject motion, this image needed to be shot at f/11, which resulted in a large depth-of-field

Main Greater depth

The Depth Blur Neural Filter has done a great job of reducing depth-of-field, creating a greater sense of depth in the scene with more focus on the point of interest




AFTER



Correct perspective distortion

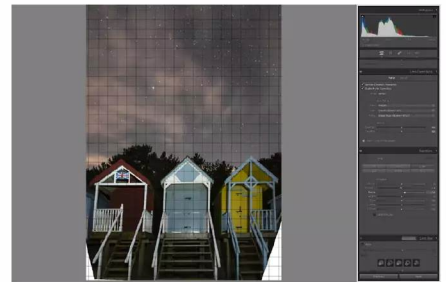
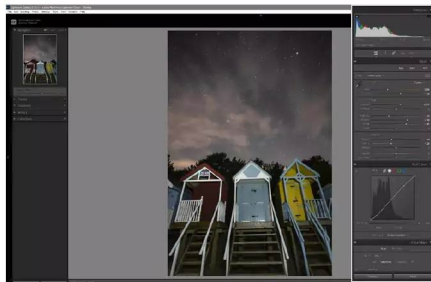
No tilt-shift lens, no problem thanks to Transform

 Tilt-shift lenses, also known as perspective control lenses, are specialist optics typically used in architecture and cityscape photography. They use a shift mechanism to avoid converging

verticals when shooting tall buildings. However, they are so expensive that many photographers can't justify buying one. The good news is that you can achieve excellent perspective correction tools in Lightroom.

What you'll be using

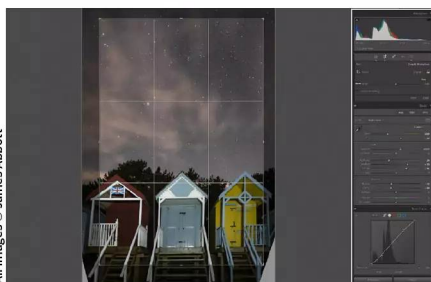
- Basic adjustments
- Tone Curve
- Transform
- Guided controls
- Crop Tool



1 Process the Raw file Process your image as usual, using the Basic controls and the Tone Curve to add contrast. Complete the image processing as much as possible, but you can return to these settings later if you need to make further adjustments once the perspective correction has been applied.

2 Use Guided Transform Scroll down to the Transform tab and click on Guided. Left-click on a converging vertical line tilting inwards at the top, keep the button held down and use the guide to place the second point when you release the button. Repeat for the right side and the image will correct itself.

3 Apply manual controls You may still need to apply further adjustments, so use the sliders in the Transform tab. This image still needed to be rotated slightly and there was a small amount of horizontal distortion where the camera wasn't aimed directly at the subject, so we also set Horizontal to -3.



4 Crop the image You can check the Constrain Crop box for Lightroom to automatically crop the image, but this removes your control of the process. Instead, use the Crop Tool below the Histogram to crop the image manually so you can decide how the composition looks and how much to crop.

5 Double-check adjustments Now the image is straightened, decide whether you need to make further adjustments in the Basic tab. For this image, we reduced the Temp from 5200 to 5100 to remove a hint of yellow and the Exposure was increased from +0.97 to +1.10 to brighten the image slightly.

KEY TIP

SHOOT FOR TRANSFORM
At the point of shooting, if you think you may need to use the Transform controls to remove perspective distortion, shoot wider than you would normally to accommodate the amount of cropping that will inevitably be required.

Insert Converging verticals

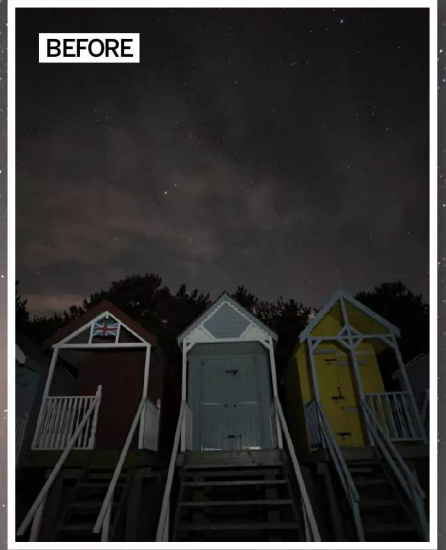
This photograph was taken on soft dry sand so the horizon isn't quite straight and the tilt of the camera has resulted in converging verticals on the beach huts

Main Final crop

Using the Transform controls will result in some degree of cropping to the image. Apply the tools then decide whether the image looks better with or without the distortion

AFTER

BEFORE





Add drama to your portraits

Frame your portrait to make the subject stand out

Monochrome portraits are a great way to highlight the eyes and facial features of your subject. By editing the background to black and blending the subject's outlines in one frame, you can create

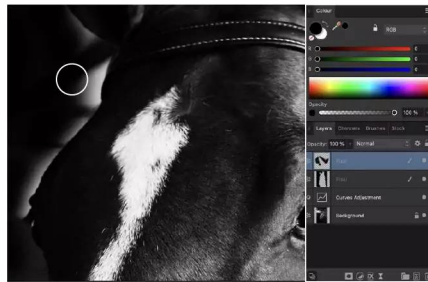
a negative space that allows the subject to stand out, while effectively drawing the viewer's attention to the frame. With this technique, your portraits will look as though they were shot in a high-end studio.

What you'll be using

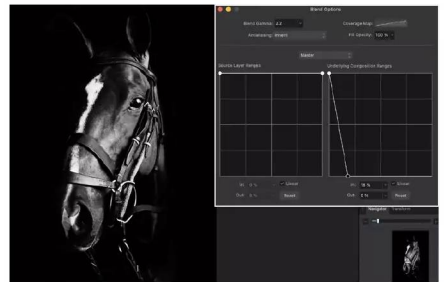
- Curve Adjustment Layer
- Pixel layers
- Brush tool
- Colour Panel
- Blend Ranges option



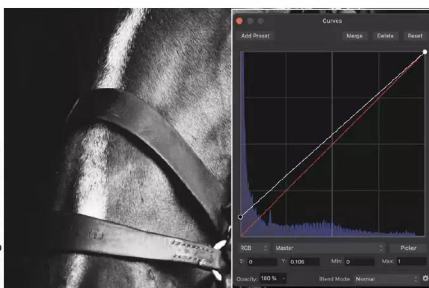
1 Add drama Firstly, work on the overall contrast of the image. Add a Curve Adjustment layer and make the line into an S-curve by adding nodes and dragging the line to bring the highlights up and the shadows down. The layer works non-destructively, so you can fine-tune the settings at the end.



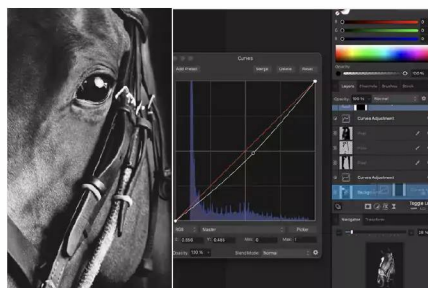
2 Colour in the background Add a Pixel layer. Select the Paintbrush tool with 100% flow, opacity and 0% hardness. Choose black from the colour wheel. Paint around the subject, avoiding the outlines. Add another Pixel layer. Select the Brush tool with 20% flow and use it to fill in the gaps. Correct with the Eraser.



3 Blend outlines Add a third Pixel layer. Use the Paintbrush tool to paint over the outline of your subject. It doesn't need to look perfect, as we will blend it in. Open the Blend Ranges option and focus on the right graph. Lower the right node and move it to the left to recover any overpainted highlights and details.



4 Add a mood To create a moody look, adjust the darker areas by adding another Curve Adjustment layer. Select the bottom left node and gradually increase its position. This step is optional and depends on personal preferences, so experiment with the settings until you achieve the desired result.



5 Fine-tune Add another Curve Adjustment layer and bring the middle node of the graph right down. Now invert the layer and drag and drop it to the right of the background layer. Finally, use the Brush tool to paint over any elements you want to darken with a white colour or brighten by painting with black.

KEY TIP

EXTEND THE FRAME

If your portrait only has a little background space around the subject, extend the frame by selecting the Crop tool and adjusting it to your preferences. You can apply the editing technique to a variety of portrait shots so that your subjects stand out for a more professional look.

Insert Cluttered background

The image elements in the background distract the viewer so that the focus is no longer exclusively on the subject, resulting in a lack of contrast and overlooked details

Main Monochrome drama

Using the Layer tools and Blend modes in Affinity Photo 2.0, we have added some drama and enhanced the contrast, making the subject stand out visually



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Issue 276

What's inside: Get the most from your camera kit by applying our secret steps to improving image quality. Next, learn to shoot incredible street scenes, capture panoramas and read our Canon EOS R3 vs Nikon Z9 head-to-head test.



Issue 275

What's inside: With exclusive advice from the winners of the Photographer of The Year competition, discover the essential techniques you need to know right now. We also round up the best kit of 2023 in our annual Gear Of The Year Awards feature.



Issue 274

What's inside: Shoot golden-hour colours in our dazzling sunset landscape Creative Project, capture wildlife shots in challenging conditions and, in our main feature, you can dive into our complete 10-page guide to landscape photography composition.



Issue 273

What's inside: Portrait photography needn't be complex. Find out how to capture top-tier images with ease. Plus, we have a special feature on becoming a photo-editing maestro, a cityscape shooting tutorial and a full review of the Lumix G9 II.



Issue 272

What's inside: Filters still have a place in the landscape photographer's kitbag, so we cover the ones you should own and how to use them. In our regular Shoot Like a Pro feature, we shadow a photographer on a magazine editorial shoot for key tips.



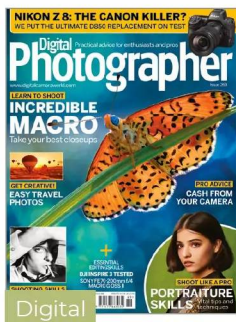
Issue 271

What's inside: Autumn is a popular time for landscape photography. Our cover feature explores how best to capture this colourful season. If you love black and white photography, don't miss our tutorial on shooting and editing film-noise scenes.



Issue 270

What's inside: Demystify video in our behind-the-scenes guide to working as a pro videographer. Get the best quality from your RAW files, both at the shooting and processing stages. Shoot amazing architectural images with our pro advice.



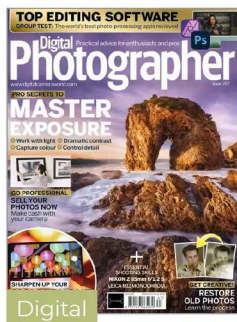
Issue 269

What's inside: Read Ross Hoddinott's top tips for mesmerising macro photography. We also review the awesome Nikon Z 8 full-frame mirrorless camera to see whether it takes the crown as the best model in its class and price bracket.



Issue 268

What's inside: Astro photos can inspire like no other genre. Find out how to shoot nightscapes like a pro. Delve into our career advice pages to learn how to take your first steps towards your dream photo job. Plus, shoot and edit summer landscapes.



Issue 267

What's inside: As part of our ongoing Masterclass series, seasoned pro photographer, Jeremy Flint explains how to master exposure. We also round up the best photo-editing apps today and explain how to get incredible shots from your smartphone.



Issue 266

What's inside: Shoot great images at the most popular times of day – sunrise and sunset. Go behind the scenes with a luxury car photographer. Learn how to capture impossible macro photos and shoot emotive weddings like an expert.



Issue 265

What's inside: Who doesn't love shooting at the coast? Overcome the challenges of capturing stunning seaside masterpieces. And, if you think you know your camera, think again! Read our hidden camera features guide and get the most from your gear.



Issue 264

What's inside: Master the art of fine black and white photography with expert Kay Dadfar. In our career guide, learn how to widen the audience for your photos and discover the latest features you will need when buying your next telephoto lens.



Issue 263

What's inside: You don't have to travel far to capture stunning wildlife – read how in our urban wildlife cover feature. Also, capture cinematic landscapes and check our reviews of the Fujifilm X-T5 and monster Nikon Z 600mm f/4 lens.




Issue 262

What's inside: Everyone loves pet photography and we're on-hand with insight into running a smooth shoot with your furry companions. We also have a hands-on review of the amazing Canon EOS R6 full-frame mirrorless camera.

SWITCHING CAMERA SYSTEMS

Stick or twist? **Dan Mold** assess the options when it comes to staying loyal to your camera brand, switching over or straddling multiple systems

 Over the years, I've owned cameras from pretty much all the big camera manufacturers, switching between systems to find one with the right ergonomics and menu systems that make sense to me, all whilst weighing up the range of lenses available, portability and, of course, the price.

No doubt you've faced a similar conundrum – stick with the system you're used to or switch to a rival brand. There are many reasons to switch systems and even justifications for shooting on multiple brands at the same time, whether that's using a portable Micro Four Thirds camera for travels and holidays and a DSLR or mirrorless full-frame body for better detail in a studio, as just one example.

If you shot in the days of film, this probably isn't your first rodeo, as you'll have likely made

the switch from your film SLRs to modern digital DSLRs in the early 2000s. A similar turning point is happening again with the latest mirrorless camera technology, as pretty much all new cameras and lenses released now are of the mirrorless variety.

If you have a camera with a cropped sensor, such as Micro Four Thirds or APS-C, and your current system doesn't meet expectations, this could be a convenient time to make the switch. If you've always dreamed of upgrading to a full-frame body, you may have to cash in all of your equipment as your kit won't work properly on a larger full-frame body.

In this feature, we'll look at the benefits and drawbacks of shooting on multiple systems and assess whether switching or upgrading your camera kit is the correct thing to do.

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ISSUE 275: START YOUR PHOTO BLOG



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Using dual systems

There are various reasons for shooting on multiple interchangeable lens camera systems, whether you're in the process of switching from one to another or you have to separate systems to cater for different jobs. Maybe you have a small and portable

Micro Four Thirds or APS-C system that is less conspicuous when shooting street and travel photography and a larger full-frame mirrorless or DSLR for shoots where you need more pro features and resolution or for enhanced video

capabilities. There's often a cost aspect to this as, if you have the budget, you could get a camera such as the Canon EOS R5, which can do everything from 45MP stills to 8K video all in one model – the catch is that it costs £4,000 just for the body.

Look for gaps in lens ranges

You can guarantee that all the big manufacturers will have iterations of the most common lens models, such as f/2.8 versions of 16-35mm, 24-70mm and 70-200mm lenses for their full-frame mounts. But it's worth looking at any specialist lenses you may wish to purchase later, as there could be gaps in the range that make you regret your choice.

For example, Nikon makes a 20mm f/1.8G lens, which is fantastic for astrophotography, however, there isn't an equivalent lens for Canon photographers in EF or RF mount.

Canon is the only manufacturer to currently have a 100-300mm f/2.8 lens in its arsenal, although Sony has a much larger offering of third-party lenses for its mirrorless full-frame E mount.



Third-party options

Sony was the first company to produce a full-frame mirrorless camera back in 2013, while Canon and Nikon didn't launch their respective full-frame mirrorless iterations until 2018.

This puts Sony at an advantage as it has had an extra five years to build up its lens range. It has also opened up its E-mount to third parties, so optical offerings from the likes of Sigma, Tamron and Samyang are plentiful. In comparison, Canon and Nikon are yet to fully open up their mirrorless mounts to third parties, so the range of lenses can feel limited, which is worth taking into account.





Cash in your DSLRs and go mirrorless

Unfortunately, not all adapters are made equal, and proprietary first-party adapters to convert full-frame DSLR lenses to the newer full-frame mirrorless mounts can be a great idea, helping you save money by using your old DSLR lenses. It's no secret that many new mirrorless lenses are extremely pricey, so it can make economic sense to hang on to your DSLR lenses, using an adapter to make them compatible with your new mirrorless camera from the same manufacturer. Canon has various adapters to convert its full-frame DSLR EF lenses to the new RF mount, with some adapters having built-in ND filters or drop-in filter options. As these adapters are first-party, it means the exposure settings can all still be set in-camera and the autofocus continues to work well too.



© Dan Woid

Avoid cross-party converters

There are adapters out there to allow lenses from one brand to fit another manufacturer's camera body, such as Nikon to Canon, Fujifilm to Sony and so on. But while these may do a reasonable job, we've never had a good experience with them. The manufacturers would much rather you buy their own proprietary optics, which will deliver the smoothest operation. Many of these adapters also forego any electrical communication so dialling in camera settings and focus becomes a manual affair – that's not the end of the world but for a better experience, we wouldn't recommend crossing your mounts. On the other hand, using third-party glass intended for the mount it was made for is fine.



Personal preference

It's important to try out a camera before you part with your cash, so visit a camera shop, borrow a friend's camera or rent one from a site such as hireacamera.com so that you can get your hands on one and give it a proper test. You'd be hard-pressed to find a modern digital camera that won't take a decent image, instead, the main differences between makes are often found in the ergonomics of the camera grip, layout of the buttons and features such as frame rate or video options and the user interface. Try out a few different cameras to find which model you prefer to shoot with as you're less likely to pick up your camera if you find it difficult to operate. There may be specific features, colour and design choices that sway you one way or the other.

Photo CV

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



Kuzma Vostrikov

Location: New York City, USA

Specialisms

📍 Contemporary 📍 Portraiture

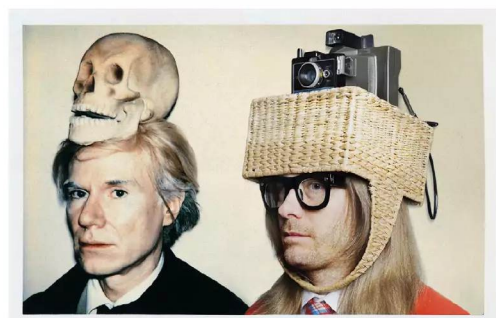
To see more of Kuzma's work: [@kuzmacinema](#)

Filmmaker and visual artist Kuzma Vostrikov's work reflects diverse interests, including the role of technology in contemporary society, psychology and history. The artist's work is found in international collections, including the CICA Museum in Korea, The Yokyung Art Museum, Korea and The Museum of Russian Art in New Jersey, USA. He recently released a new book, *Just To Land In Tokyo*, with his collaborative partner, Ajuan Song (see *Photo CV*, next month).



JTLIT (Just To Land In Tokyo) 2

Kuzma is a self-described multi-disciplinary artist who works to blend photography with other art forms



JTLIT 25

Much of Kuzma's imagery is often abstract and conceptual in nature, questioning the very nature of art



JTLIT 1

Kuzma collaborated with his long-time artistic partner Ajuan Song on the *Just To Land In Tokyo* book project



Left
Absolutely Augmented Reality
This image was part of a larger photographic project now set to appear in documentary format

Below
JTLIT 5
Kuzma's parents were underground artists in the 1970s, influencing his career path and current expressive style



x6 © Kuzma Vostrikov

Kuzma's photo kit

The essential gear items used for this type of professional work



HASSELBLAD H2 FILM CAMERA
A classic analogue setup for a range of artistic tasks in-studio and outdoors. It has an autofocus system, which is crucial for certain situations.



HASSELBLAD HC 80MM LENS
A standard MF lens for the H2, equivalent to the classic 50mm in 35mm format. Autofocus is effective at smaller apertures and it delivers a shot with notable plasticity.



SONY A7II
A classic camera body well-regarded for various tasks. One of its advantages is its capability for both photography and video recording.



ZEISS COMPACT PRIME CP.2 35MM T1.5 + ADAPTER FOR SONY
Designed for cinematography, this lens has an aperture of T/1.5, enabling low-light performance and beautiful bokeh. For closeups, consider the 85mm T/2.1 too.

Career Path

When did you start out in your current photo genres?

It would be accurate to say that I've been handling everything that captures movies and photos since before school: that was my path to the genre. My eyes were preparing to become accomplices in interpreting visual reality. In the 1970s, my parents formed an underground art group called Synthesis and I was involuntarily a participant in the artistic process, helping to shoot on 35mm film. I understood the aspects of camera work but the technical side is not the most important. You can shoot with a matchbox or an ironing board. The main thing is the thirst for exploration.

You describe yourself as a multidisciplinary artist. How do you bring all of your artistic interests together for a project?

It's hard to work in just one narrow genre.

I want to take a risk with the unknown, not to make everything by the rules but to combine different interests and techniques in one project. It's not that difficult, after all, an idea can be expressed in various forms and languages. Even in the abstract form of supersonic aeroplanes, laid out in a mosaic across the entire territory of Australia. Or a love confession, engraved under a microscope on the eye of a needle. After all, some people stick bananas to walls with tape.

What are your future plans? Are there any other genres you'd like to expand into?

In the near future, we plan to show the documentary-fiction, full feature film 'Absolutely Augmented Reality,' an autobiographical picture about a namesake photo project of a hundred works that we completed in 2018. Work on the film has recently been finished, you can watch the

trailer at absolutelyaugmentedreality.com. Perhaps the next project will be a new art film. As for other genres, we would like to try to mix photography and the plasticity of painting at a new level. There is also enough material for a new photo album.

How do you balance personal vision and commercial appeal in your work?

Good question. I have an answer for you. Art cannot be 'commercial'; that's an oxymoron. A true idea maintains its virginity and has no price. The more commercial, the more dead-end. We're not going to call work that is done to order for corporations – in the broad sense of the word – 'art,' are we?

Muriel Roberta Latow advised Andy Warhol to draw money. We all draw money from time to time. Some with pride, others with a sense of shame. If you're a guy who loves money, you should be polite to the mainstream!

Career advice

This month, **Claire Gillo** explains how getting advice from a business coach can help you turn things around quickly

All work and no pay

I feel like I'm working hard but only bringing in a minimal amount of money. I love the photography side of my job but I'm not business minded at all – I struggle to keep up with my admin and have no idea how to approach clients to get more regular work. Do you have any advice?
Anonymous

It sounds like you could do with getting some help from an external source. There are many ways you could do this from employing someone to run the admin/marketing side of your business (although if

you're only earning a minimal amount of money, this won't be viable at the moment) to getting help from a business coach like Marisa Guthrie (see interview, next page). Often, we cannot see what we are doing wrong as we get so emotionally involved with our work that we need a fresh set of eyes on the problem.

Being a self-employed photographer is a challenging job. One half of the job is photography but the other is more complex and requires a multiple skill set – don't be hard on yourself if it doesn't all come naturally. Getting help elsewhere is the best place to begin.



Getting help from an external source is usually an excellent way to take back control of the way you work and start growing your business

© Claire Gillo

Suitcase query

I need a roller bag for my corporate and commercial photography work. I travel a lot and mostly work in an urban environment. Do you have any recommendations?
Jenny Henderson

The Manfrotto Advanced Rolling Bag III is a solid choice and is available from retailers such as WEX for £199. This suitcase has a hard exterior layer for protection and fits one or two camera bodies, five or six lenses and a 15in laptop. It also meets airport carry-on luggage size restrictions, which is a bonus. If you have a bigger budget, the Manfrotto Reloader Switch-55 PL Roller Backpack is also worth a look at £299. This roller can also be used as a backpack, making it a more versatile piece of kit. Again, it fits international carry-on luggage size and can carry up to



two cameras and four or five lenses. If

you're on a tighter budget, the Calumet RM2197 Airport Roller Bag is £109 and can hold two cameras and two or three lenses plus an integrated 13in laptop compartment so is worth a look.

The Manfrotto Reloader Switch-55 PL Roller Backpack can hold lots of camera gear and is fully protective

Frozen fingers

My aim this year is to spend more time outside taking photographs for my landscape portfolio but I struggle to keep my hands warm. What do other landscape photographers do to stay warm?
Carol Jones

It's always the hands that go first, then the feet! Keeping your extremities warm is key to being comfortable in the field – staying that bit longer could be the difference between getting a winning shot and not – so you need to invest in some good gloves.

The Pgytech Photography Gloves are a good place to start. They're waterproof and triple-insulated and have a removable finger part, so you can work your camera with them on. Costing just £39, they are a solid choice if you're on a budget.

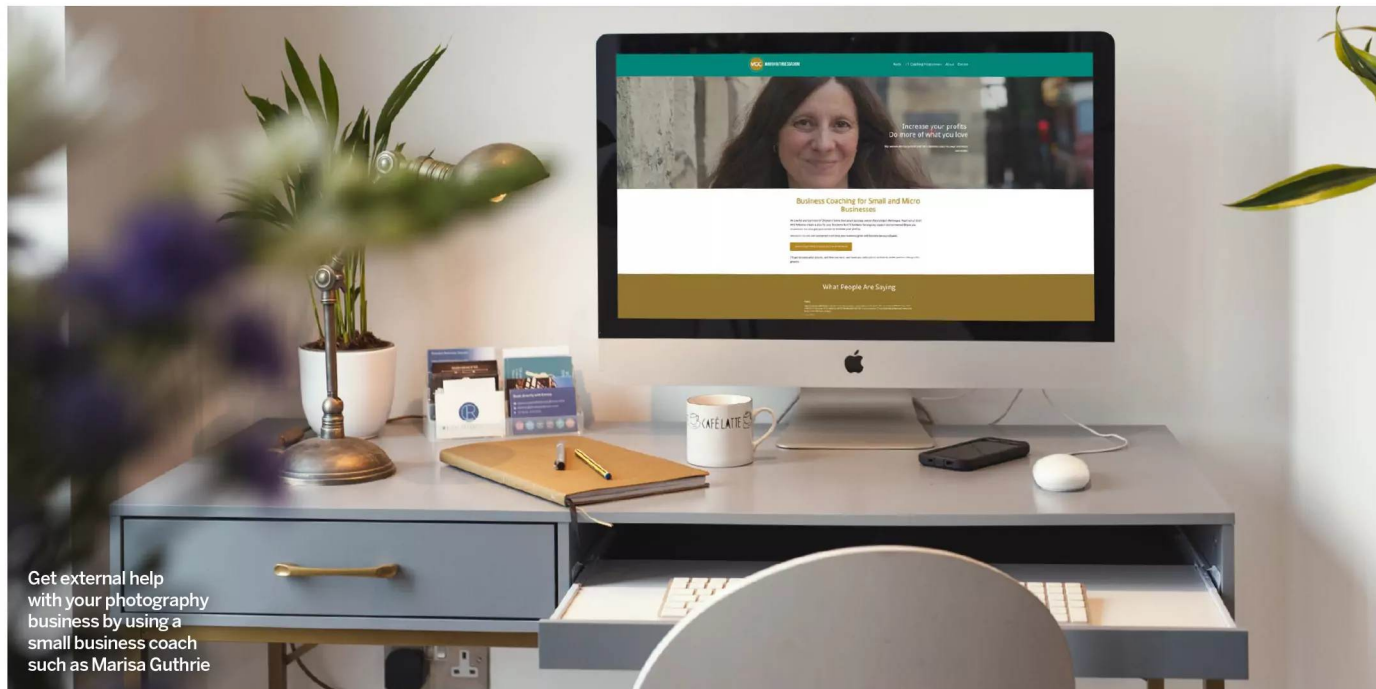
Another option is the Vallerret Hatchet Photography Glove. These come with a luxurious merino wool liner and a goat leather exterior. Again, they have flip-open tips on the thumb and forefinger so you can control your camera but, at £97, they are more expensive. Finally, the Swarovski GP Gloves Pro cost £66 and they feature a leather-reinforced neoprene material that is water-repellent and wind-proof. The index and middle fingertips are touchscreen-compatible as well.

Also, take a bottle or flask of warm water (make sure it's not boiling) to pour over your hands when they get cold. A small towel to dry them as well is essential. This is a real game-changer!



The Vallerret Hatchet gloves could be a game changer for landscape photographers

© Claire Gillo



Get external help with your photography business by using a small business coach such as Marisa Guthrie

How do I make my business work?

Small and micro business coach **Marisa Guthrie** explains how she can help small photography businesses grow and become more profitable



Hi Marisa, tell us a bit about yourself...

I'm a business coach to small and micro businesses. One way or another, I have been running businesses for nearly 28 years across many industries and sectors. Since setting up my coaching business in 2008, I have worked with hundreds of business owners, many of whom are artists, creators and makers.

What is a business coach and how do you help your clients?

Crucially, I am not a consultant, so I don't tell people what to do! As a coach, I believe that you already have answers to the issues you are grappling with. My role is to facilitate you being able to find those answers. That doesn't mean I don't hold my clients accountable.

I spend a lot of time getting to know you and your business, and together we create a strategy and a plan for your business. My job is to hold you accountable to that plan so that you move closer to your goals. Working in this way means my clients see the changes they wish to see because they have bought into the whole process. It's hugely satisfying and such a privilege to be invited to be a part of that.

Why do you choose to work with small and micro businesses?

The majority of business activity in the UK

comes from small and micro businesses, (typically one-person enterprises or up to 10 employees) with some estimates quoting as much as 80 per cent of overall businesses. That's a huge amount!

But because they are usually self-funded, have limited budgets and little infrastructure, these businesses are the least able to access any specialist kind of support, such as working with a business coach. I'm using my skills to address that inequality and level up the playing field for these hard-working business owners.

For any pro photographers or aspiring photographers out there who are reading this, what services would you offer and how could you help them?

For every kind of business imaginable, there is a business coach, and we all do things slightly differently. The work I do focuses specifically on helping people create profitable businesses that they love running. This might sound obvious, but we're all aware of those 'get to six figures in six months' type of coaches. While that kind of growth is possible, it isn't likely because what those coaches don't tell you is that you will need to work 80+ hours a week to get there and, if you do that, you'll be burnt out and hate your job.

What I am interested in is helping people create fulfilling and sustainable businesses. Businesses that facilitate the owner's personal

goals and bring them joy, while being of service to others. That's why my strapline is "Increase your profits, do more of what you love." If you build a profitable business that you don't enjoy working in, it won't be fulfilling. Equally, if you love what you do, but you aren't making enough money to support the life you want, it's not sustainable.

Through providing sustainable growth programmes, I help business owners create the businesses they want. To show them specifically how I do that, I offer a free two-hour business review so we can really explore exactly how I can help them and they can leave with actions they can take and implement straight away.

Are there common mistakes that micro business owners, such as photographers make and what advice do you give them?

Confusing sales and marketing is something nearly all business owners struggle with. Often, there is a big emphasis on marketing, but there is no strategy around any kind of sales process, so it is left to chance with an 'if I build it, they will come' kind of mentality.

Of course, we need good marketing to get people to our business, but if we don't know what to do with them when they get there, we won't see our businesses grow. Luckily, this is something I can help with. None of this is rocket science, just something that requires a bit of time and strategy.

To find out more about Marisa Guthrie, visit marisaguthriecoaching.co.uk, or follow on Instagram @marisaguthriecoaching and LinkedIn @Marisa Guthrie

Natural behaviour

When capturing wildlife, you should always respect your subjects and give them plenty of space. This ensures safety for both you and the animal and also allows you to capture more natural behaviour. "I frequently capture the Great Blue Heron, due to its common presence in our region," says Shaun. "They are quite comfortable around humans, so I find it a valuable chance to refine my skills while respecting its space," he adds. Shaun believes that capturing an animal's natural behaviour is important. "Photography plays a vital role in raising awareness about conservation issues. By capturing compelling images that resonate with viewers, you foster empathy and understanding for threatened ecosystems and species," he says.

Low perspective

"Shooting from a low perspective, such as the animal's eye level, is fundamental. This approach enables viewers to connect with the subject, creating a more intimate portrayal," says Shaun. He aims to show wildlife from a new and distinctive perspective, while also raising awareness of conservation issues. By creating these visual connections, Shaun's images serve as a powerful tool for advocacy, mobilising action to protect biodiversity and natural habitats – this approach earned Shaun an honourable mention in *Canadian Geographic's* Wildlife in Action contest in 2023. "In today's world, where environmental challenges are increasingly urgent, conservation photography that connects with the viewer inspires stewardship and drives positive change for our planet's future."



Sharp details

Freezing rapid motion, such as the bird diving into the river, requires a keen eye for detail and a mastery of the exposure settings. "I typically aim for the sweet spot between f/8 and f/10 and, depending on the available light, I adjust the ISO accordingly," Shaun explains. "With these settings and some adjustments to the shadows and highlights in post-processing, I was able to capture the scene as I'd hoped." For this dynamic close-up shot, Shaun used the R7's animal tracking feature. "I've honed my skills in approaching wildlife discreetly and anticipating the decisive moment. And as soon as the Great Blue Heron signalled its intent to strike, I was ready," he says.

Mirrored elements

Reflections create mirrored elements that add an extra layer of depth and complexity and create dynamic compositions. "During my shoots, I actively seek out reflections," says Shaun. "In this instance, the conditions were ideal – calm waters, warm air and minimal wind – and the reflection you see is straight out of the camera; no filters were applied," he says. In post-production, Shaun cropped the image and made clarity adjustments to emphasise the bird's eye within the water splash. "My goal was to maintain authenticity by adding or removing as few elements as possible, ensuring that the image stayed true to its original capture while also enhancing its focal point," he adds.

WHY SHOTS WORK

Name: Splashdown

Date: July 2023

Kit:

- Canon EOS R7
- Canon RF 100-500mm f/4.5-7.1L IS USM
- Focal length: 324mm



"Capturing moments, creating memories – never give up on chasing your dreams!"

Shaun Antle



Shaun Antle, also known as 'Oh Me Nerves Photography', hails from Ontario in Canada but calls the Newfoundland

region his 'true home'. Since taking up photography in the early 2000s, Shaun has undertaken many journeys across the globe but it has also had a profound impact on his life, serving as a therapeutic outlet for managing anxiety and depression. Shaun's eye for a great image has been recognised by several professional organisations, including the International Photography Awards 2023, where he received an honourable mention, and *Canadian Geographic* magazine, reaching the final of its Photographer of the Year contest in 2023.

ohmenervesphotography.ca

Instagram: [@oh.me.nerves_photography](https://www.instagram.com/oh.me.nerves_photography)

THROUGH THE LENS OF

PLAY

With some special effects and a vivid imagination, **Mitchel Wu** brings toy figures to life, revealing a different side to these iconic characters

Words by: Kim Bunermann

All images © Mitchel Wu



Pictured
Weekend Warriors
General Grievous enjoys a beer or four as the Stormtroopers take control of the barbecue

Pictured
The Clawwww
These aliens appear to be transfixed by a different claw to the one in the Pizza Planet vending machine





“Ultimately, the question is, in your photography career, do you want to be a commodity or do you want to be an asset? Do you want to survive or do you want to thrive?”



When preparing for this interview, the discussion at the *Digital Photographer* office inevitably turned to the cartoon characters that inspired us when we were young. Whatever their background, it's a topic that connects people and, despite growing up on the other side of the World, Mitchel Wu's work features many of the characters that influenced our childhoods.

As we spoke to the Los Angeles-based Wu by video call, the toy figures sitting on shelves in the background reminded us of the movie *Toy Story*, with Wu resembling the human main character, Andy. However, whereas Andy is an ordinary kid who plays with his toys until they come to life when he leaves the room, Wu is the one bringing the toys' characters to life. "As I work, I find myself in the same thought process I had as a child when I played with toys – weaving stories and pushing forward," he says. "I'm rediscovering the joy, reconnecting with my 10-year-old self, while enjoying the creative freedom of writing my own stories – that's what drives me."

Wu has a unique approach to storytelling. Using a range of toys, props and special effects, he tells an alternative story of the characters, often with an added sense of humour. Here, he explains how he creates these miniature worlds around the figures and how he carved out a career in this field.

Mitchel Wu



Mitchel Wu is a Los Angeles-based toy photographer who crafts scenes using toy figures and special effects to create an illusion. He has worked with some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry, including Disney, Marvel, Warner Bros and Nickelodeon. Wu's self-taught craft allows him to capture the nostalgia of iconic film and cartoon franchises, such as *Toy Story*, *Star Wars* and *Rocky*, with precision and creativity. He is committed to providing unparalleled experience for his clients while creating images that build brand awareness in a fun, engaging manner. Wu also shares his knowledge with others and his work has been featured on Disney Plus, PBS SoCal, *The Pop Insider* magazine and PetaPixel.

mitchelwutoyphotography.com

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

[@MitchelWuToyPhotography](https://www.youtube.com/@MitchelWuToyPhotography)

Pictured Step On It, They Both Said

The low perspective adds dynamism to the shot, while the flying sand and stones create a visually striking effect to indicate the movement of the car

Hey Mitchel, tell us how you got into shooting toy characters?

I've worked in creative careers for most of my life. The best 'job' I ever had was with the Walt Disney Company, where I managed product design and development for their collectables division. I worked there for six years but eventually left because I grew tired of working with the same characters day in and day out. This was a recurring theme throughout my career. Regardless of which company I was with, I would eventually reach a point where I began feeling bored. I considered myself a restless creative before picking up a camera and pursuing photography as a career.

Being self-employed as a toy photographer has been a revelation. With so many characters and figures to work with, the only real limit is my imagination. I can create stories around established comic, cartoon and movie characters that don't adhere to existing narratives. This almost unlimited potential for creativity is what I love about image-making and storytelling through toy photography.

With an almost unlimited potential for creativity, do you have to be mindful of anything in terms of creative freedom?

When I'm working with a client, there are always certain parameters that need to be followed. On the other hand, when I'm creating work for myself, the sky's the limit. The possibilities are endless, especially as I can combine characters from different properties and universes, what I call a mashup. There's so much creative freedom that, if I'm not careful, I could easily push it too far. It's a lot of fun but it's important to know where to draw the line, or at least when to cross that line with conviction and intent.

Many people have childhood cartoon heroes, who was your favourite character?

One of my favourite cartoon characters was Popeye. I grew up watching *Popeye* and still joke that the spinach industry was secretly behind his popularity. Am I the only one suspicious that so many kids became spinach eaters and fans by watching *Popeye*

cartoons? Ridiculous conspiracy theories aside, I also watched a lot of Warner Brothers' Looney Tunes cartoons, such as *The Road Runner Show* and *Bugs Bunny*. The cartoons I watched as a kid during the 60s and 70s influenced my creativity and the properties I now gravitate towards. What influences you when growing up almost always ends up influencing you as a toy photographer. Those who grew up in the 80s and 90s, for example, tend to shoot a lot of *Star Wars*, *Marvel* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Besides my own nostalgia, another significant influence is the characters that my daughter grew up with, such as *Toy Story*, *Monsters Inc.* and *Where The Wild Things Are*, a classic children's story I read to my daughter at least once a week before bedtime. These memories are precious and I love incorporating them into my work.

When creating new worlds, do you treat the characters differently?

Yes, but it depends on the character and the property. My work with Disney years ago instilled a deep respect for their properties and characters, so I try to remain faithful to the storylines and characters' personalities. However, I can get very irreverent with other properties, like *Star Wars*. I've put Stormtroopers in situations that are hilarious and strange. Stormtroopers are often the butt of the joke in many of my *Star Wars* images. I also enjoy showing characters in unexpected ways. For example, I recreated a famous scene from the first *Rocky* movie with Sylvester Stallone. In this scene, he's in a meat locker with slabs of beef hanging from meat hooks. As he angrily hits the slabs of beef, you can hear the ribs of the beef cracking. But for my image, instead of using beef, I used hot dogs to create a fun and strange photograph – and it was one that my audience loved.

What goes through your mind when developing a little bit of a different story?

I try to come up with unexpected twists and present characters in a unique manner. For me, it's important to incorporate elements of entertainment, joy, and humour. My Darth Vader images are a great example of this. I asked myself whether Darth Vader is a villain 24/7 or is that just his 9-to-5 job? What does he do when he gets off work? Does he go back to his cabin on the Death Star, kick off his boots, take off his helmet and let down his hair? Well, he doesn't really have any hair because it was burned off in lava when he was younger, but maybe he cracks open a beer and watches some TV? That was my thought process before creating an image where Darth Vader is pushing a Stormtrooper on a swing. I imagined it's the weekend and they're out having a great time, without thinking about villainous things.

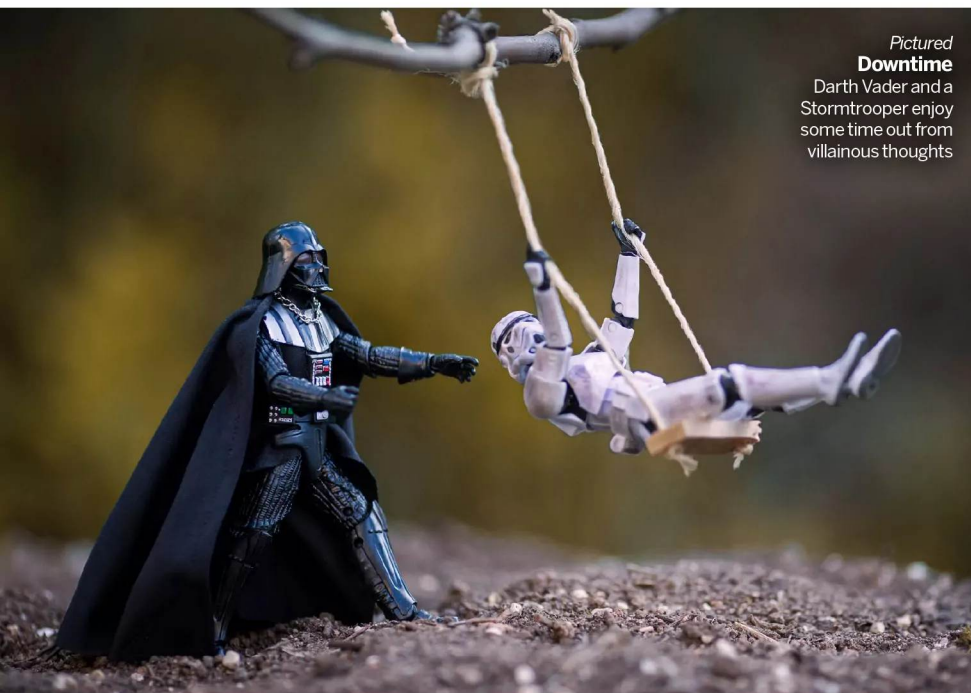


Pictured
Skyscraper Capers
Popeye is one of Wu's favourite cartoon characters, so every element of this scene was crafted to bring it to life



Pictured
Dog Pound

"Creating this scene, I had the theme music on repeat. It ended up on the cutting room floor at the insistence of the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council!"



Pictured
Downtime

Darth Vader and a Stormtrooper enjoy some time out from villainous thoughts

You use elements such as fire and even mini-explosions in your images. How do you create these effects and do you prefer real effects to adding them digitally?

Those are practical effects but you can create many of the same effects digitally. Nowadays, it can be difficult to differentiate between what's real and what's digital. However, what I enjoy most about toy photography is the opportunity to play and I have a lot of fun using fireworks in my photos. As a kid, I loved playing with firecrackers, sparklers, and smoke bombs. Blowing stuff up is fun, so having the chance to do that for my work is pretty cool! Apologies to my neighbours, who never know when loud explosions might be heard coming from my yard.

What are the most difficult types of effects to incorporate on the set?

Liquid splashes are unpredictable. When blasting water with a can of compressed air, you don't really know what kind of splash you're going to get. If you're lucky, you get something dynamic on the first try, saving you from continuous cleaning up and resetting –

INTERVIEW



Pictured
Let The Wild Rumpus Start

This scene, featuring Max and the Wild Things, shows how Wu uses special effects to enhance his stories

but that's rare, and it can often take dozens of more tries before getting something you're happy with. Despite all that, it's just fun to create liquid splashes, whether it's with water, coffee, beer or milk.

How do you decide which effect you want to visualise with which figure?

I don't want to create effects gratuitously, just because they're cool. I want them to support and enhance the story being told. If a Stormtrooper is just standing still and suddenly a blast of dirt appears under his feet, it doesn't really make sense. But if they are jumping or being thrown back from an explosion, an effect like that would absolutely make sense. However, I try not to say there is a right way and a wrong way to doing anything, because people really just want to do what they enjoy. And if that's creating effects for no other reason than they enjoy it, go for it and express yourself!

You have been featured in Marvel's 616 series on Disney+. What was that like as an experience, being part of the show?

It was an amazing experience, but it also felt odd being in front of the camera. What made it so interesting was that it gave me the opportunity to share my experience with a broad audience about finding a niche and the impact it made on my career and life... I'll elaborate more on this in a bit. Filming for the documentary began at Toy Fair New York in 2020, where I held the first exhibition in Toy Fair's 100-plus-year history. The camera team documented some of my experiences at the event, which was really cool. We finished filming at my house a week later. The little cul-de-sac I live on was filled with film gear trucks and my tiny backyard was packed with the production crew and their gear. It was a wonderful experience and I'm very grateful to have had it. I was especially grateful to be able to introduce toy photography to such a large



Pictured
Calcium For Strong Bones

For this shot, Wu used 1:18 scale skeletons from Boss Fight Studio

audience, most of whom had never seen or heard of toy photography before.

What is the first piece of advice you give to someone starting in toy photography?

My advice to anyone, whether they're new or a seasoned pro, is the same – find the story. Tell me a story that makes me feel something. Ultimately, this is what gives a photo impact and makes it memorable. I would much rather see an image that speaks to me on some level, even if it's not technically amazing, than see a technically perfect image that says nothing to me. I do see the desire and importance of perfecting one's craft, but that should be happening during your countless hours of shooting and practicing, and not at the expense of storytelling. That's part of the journey. You need to shoot a lot to build up your technical skills.



Pictured
Milk and Cookies

This image was used as part of the promotional campaign for Toy Story 4

Judging by the explosions in the background, we're guessing that you shoot most of these scenes outdoors...

Yes, I definitely do that kind of shooting outside. I won't be setting off fireworks inside my studio, but I do shoot a lot indoors now. Regardless of where I am, I always ensure that I control the light. Especially if it's a client project, everything has to be perfect. However, I never forget about storytelling. While I still deal with the available light, I also use artificial lighting to make scenes more dynamic but I try not to get too caught up with the setup.

So what artificial lighting do you use?

I mainly use small, battery-powered LED lights that are charged up and ready to use. Usually, I use them as fill lights. I sometimes place them behind the characters to get a rim light effect, which separates them from the



background and makes them pop. I also use RGB lights to create specific colour moods. Learning to use light is a skill I've learned later on, it is an ongoing process. In the end, it all comes back to telling the story and creating a matching environment for the characters.

Can you tell us more about the career niche aspect you mentioned earlier?

Ultimately the question is, in your photography career, do you want to be a commodity or do you want to be an asset? Do you want to survive or do you want to thrive? You're a commodity when you are competing for jobs with hundreds, if not thousands, of other photographers offering essentially the same service at the same price. You are virtually indistinguishable from your competitors. When you're a commodity, you have little control over your pricing and little negotiating strength.

This was me as a wedding photographer. I photographed weddings for seven or eight years, surviving but never really thriving. After meeting a potential client, I knew they would be likely to meet with two or three other wedding photographers to see if they could get a lower rate. Even if they really liked my work, they'd often ask for a rate reduction. That is working as a commodity.

Then, in 2015, I discovered toy photography and was one of the first to pursue it as a career. As I began getting more and more work, I quickly saw the difference and benefit of working in a niche and being an asset, as opposed to being a commodity. Finding a niche, or differentiating oneself from the competition, is crucial for any artist or photographer. You have infinitely more control over pricing and have much more negotiating strength. Finding a niche or differentiation

isn't easy, it took me a decade to find toy photography, but it's something everyone should be thinking about along their journey.

What's next for you and your work?

I'm excited to share the news that I have a solo exhibition taking place at the Science Museum, Oklahoma beginning in May. It's an honour to showcase my work in an environment that encourages creativity and innovation through science-based activities. The exhibition, titled 'Out of the Toybox', will be on display for a year and will feature not only a gallery of my toy photography but will also exhibit many of my actual setups so viewers can see how I created some of my shots. I'm looking forward to sharing my passion for toy photography and hope to inspire families and children to explore their own creativity while reinforcing the value and importance of play.

THE GALLERY



The Gallery

Best Wedding Photo Contest 2023

Best Wedding Photo Contest 2023

Since 2008, international wedding publication *Junebug Weddings* has hosted annual photography contests, celebrating the artistry of wedding photography and curating image collections that represent the very best of the year's achievements in artistry, technical skill and emotional impact.

The 2023 contest saw nearly 10,000 submissions from photographers around the globe eager to share the love stories they captured over the past year. A judging panel of wedding photographers, including Henry Teiu, Brittany Boote and Mic Panic, assisted the *Junebug Weddings* team in compiling a shortlist of 50 images that showcase diversity through sexuality, race and geography. For more info, visit junebugweddings.com/photo-contests/best-of-wedding/2023

junebug
WEDDINGS

Pictured
Sands of time
Heading towards a
bright future together
at Reynisfjara, Black
Sand Beach in Iceland

© Sharlyn Hodges Photography

THE GALLERY



© Valerie Fernandez



© Andri Tei Photography



© Emanuele Gradagno



Pictured
Love birds
Gulls join the wedding party in this image by Levi Hriczo, taken on Tofino Beach, British Columbia, Canada

Top
Underwater love

Diving headfirst into marriage in this underwater image taken by Valerie Fernandez

Above
Always the bridesmaid

A young guest takes a nap as the bride gets ready for her big day at Hotel Fort Canning, Singapore

Above right
Put a ring on it

Emanuele Gradagno shot an exchange of vows in Campo Imperatore, Gran Sasso, Abruzzo, Italy

Right
Give me shelter

Nico Friedrichs captured these newlyweds in Fanal Forest, Madeira, Portugal



© Nico Friedrichs Photography



© Harsh Mehta



© David Conaty Photography



© Elsa Romo



© The Caryl's

Far left
Love blossoms
 Pink petals add a touch of colour to this white wedding shot in India, taken by Harsh Mehta

Left
Dream team
 David Conaty offers 'cinematic experiences for adventurous couples' on the Isle of Skye, Scotland

Bottom left
Hand in hand
 Elsa Romo chose a more abstract representation of love and marriage for her wedding day image

Left
Ups and Downs
 Jim Caryl captured the newly married couple in the mountains of Glencoe, Scotland

THE GALLERY



© Bettina Vass



Pictured

Rock solid

Jane Iskra captured the couple at the beginning of their long journey in the south of Iceland

Above

Awe and intimacy

Bettina Vass says her image, taken at the Gljúfrabúi Waterfall, Iceland, shows a fusion of awe and intimacy

Right

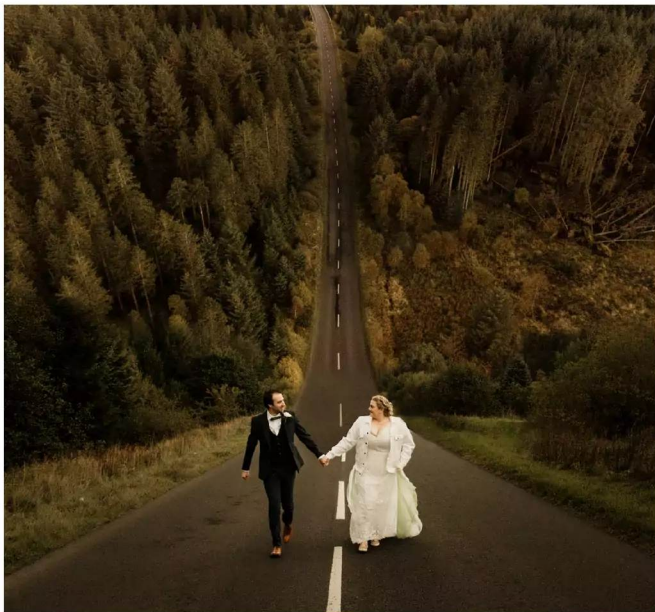
Road trip

Peter Robinson photographed this couple in Kielder Forest, Northumberland, UK

Farright

A new chapter

This image by Kelsey Justice was taken at Birmingham Public Library in Birmingham, Alabama, USA



© Peter Robinson/Eye of the Tyne Photography



© Kelsey Justice



© Jane Iskra/Iskra Photography

Below left
New adventure
 Traci Edwards of Adventure and Vow offers elopement images with an adventure, such as this one in Moab, Utah, USA

Below middle
Holey matrimony
 Anneri Wasserman took this shot in the Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) in Cape Town, South Africa

Below
Pier pressure
 Kasey Powell used a drone to take this unusual wedding shot on a lake in Outer Banks, North Carolina, USA

Bottom middle
Passing moments
 Dahalan Sarlip captured the bride and groom in a hotel on Raffles Boulevard, Singapore

Bottom
Wild riders
 Carissa Cannizzaro took this shot of the couple riding into the sunset in Capitol Reef National Park, Utah, USA



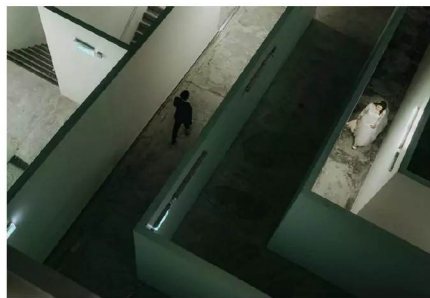
© Traci Edwards



© Anneri Wasserman



© Kasey Powell Weddings



© Dahalan Sarlip Pictures



© Carissa Cannizzaro

SHOT OF THE MONTH



Photographer: Jo Brown
Title: Sparrows, Watch Out!
Location: Kirkcudbright, Scotland
@jobrownphotography
ko-fi.com/jobrownphotography

About the shot: "My goal for 2023 was to dedicate more time to wildlife photography, so I booked myself a week in Scotland. I was aiming to shoot mustelids, such as otters and stoats, but spent most of the time watching this sparrowhawk. I was fascinated by his intense stare and set up the shot to highlight it against the soft green backdrop."



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

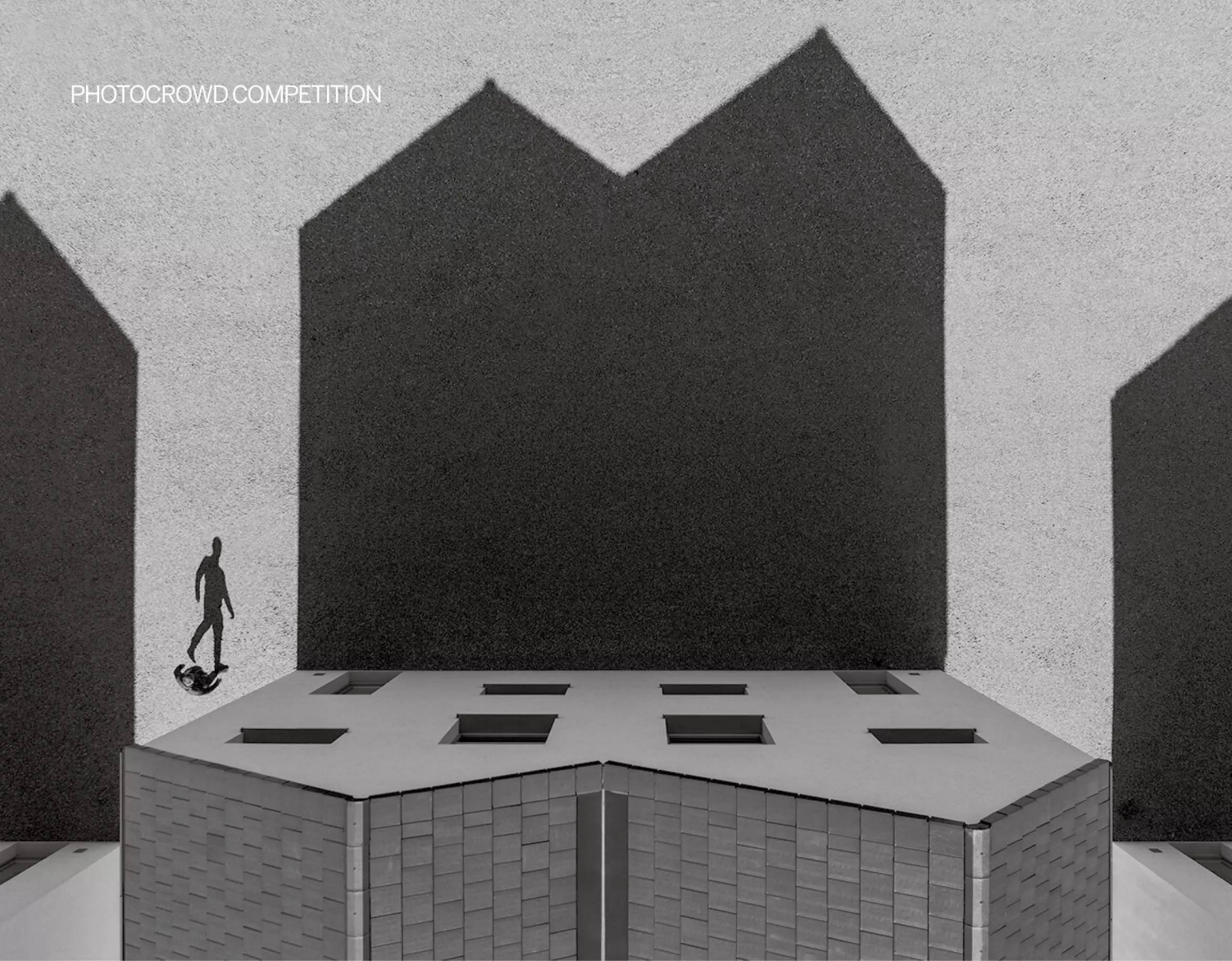
Every issue, we'll be sharing the best images from our Instagram community. Tag us on @dphotographermag



**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 **MINIMALIST MASTERPIECES**

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 Minimalist Masterpieces. 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

Back home

Photographer Jeremiasz Gadek

This is a true minimalistic masterpiece, skilfully demonstrating how shadows can sometimes be given more importance than the physical subjects themselves. We love the surrealistic touch this frame provides, introducing the viewer into the scene, despite a common perception of reality. Well done!

WIN! Prizes from Affinity

Enter our Macro Studies contest before 2nd April for a chance to win Affinity Photo

Dive into the fantastic world of macro photography and showcase the details and microstructures our nature has to offer. From tiny wildlife to floral studies, there are many subjects to explore. Enter at photocrowd.com/digitalphotographer from 19th March 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. The winners will be revealed in issue 279 of *Digital Photographer*, on sale 10th May.





2ND PLACE
Swimming pool

Photographer Stefan Nielsen

The use of geometric shapes and forms in this minimalist composition has created an impactful visual effect. The diagonals divide the frame into distinct sections, with the pool handle adding a familiar element to the overall composition. The water appears almost invisible, with only a hint of its presence visible through the integration of the white lounge.

3RD PLACE
Red Umbrella

Photographer Igor Zuikov

A captivating image due to its structure and the splash of red that stands out against the background. The traces of the subject and its shadow are attention-grabbing, while the subject itself is artfully concealed under the umbrella, creating a skilful game of hide and seek. The minimalist qualities of the scene have been expertly composed to set the stage.

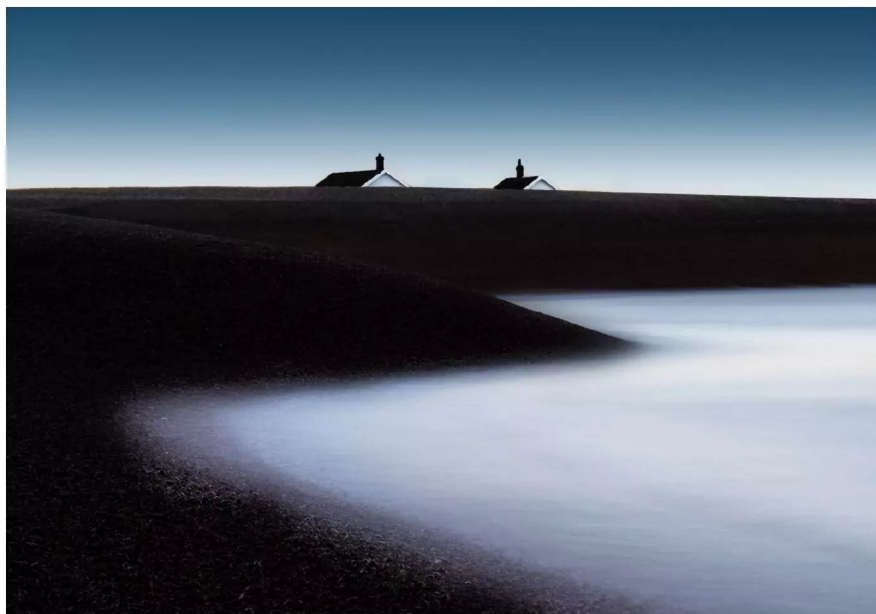
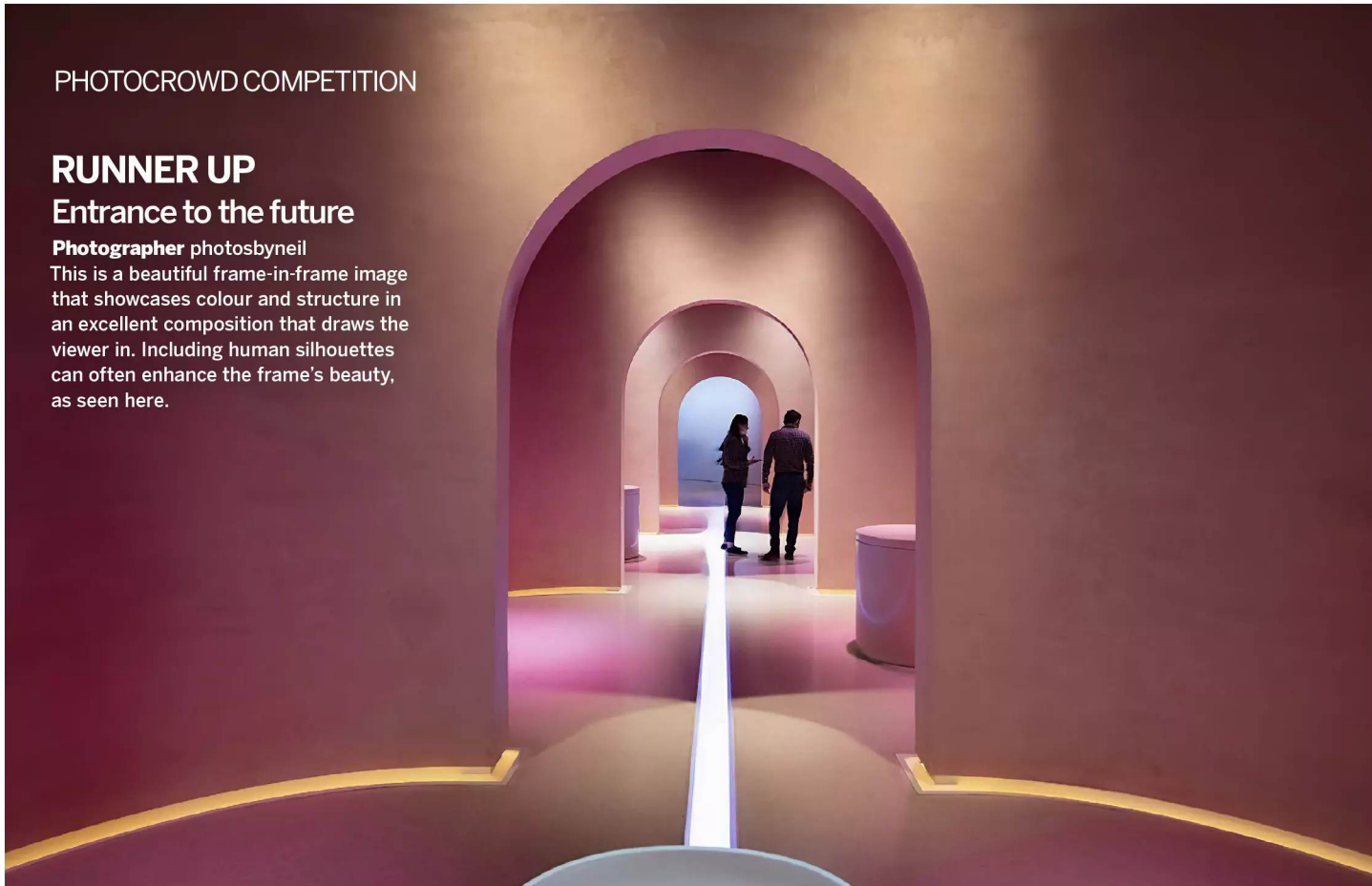


RUNNER UP

Entrance to the future

Photographer photosbyneil

This is a beautiful frame-in-frame image that showcases colour and structure in an excellent composition that draws the viewer in. Including human silhouettes can often enhance the frame's beauty, as seen here.



RUNNER UP

Cottages, Shingle Street

Photographer Kilterums

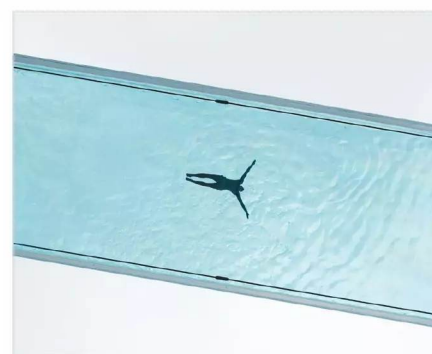
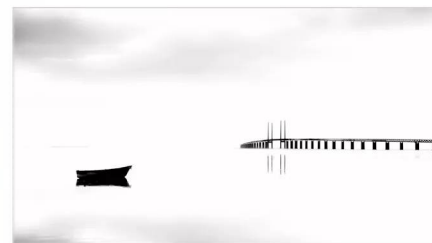
By including the foreground on a larger scale, the shoreline creates a dynamic composition that draws the viewer in. Using a long exposure turned the water into a smooth texture, in harmony with the horizon. The minimalistic approach to the cottages lets the viewer discover them without overloading the frame.

RUNNER UP

Untitled

Photographer Peter S

Minimalism takes many forms and we love the stripped-back nature of this landscape. Many photographers chose black and white for this round, as the lack of colour helps the minimalist theme. It has been put to great use here, allowing us to focus on the shapes. An expertly exposed and composed shot.



RUNNER UP

The Swimmer

Photographer Andrew Robertson

This frame allows us to wonder whether it is a photograph, a graphic or a combination of both. There is a clear gradient visible in the water that appears to be disrupted in the background. The human silhouette is the only element that hints at reality, which makes this frame intriguing and thought-provoking.

**104
Fujifilm
GFX 100 II**

Gareth Bevan tests a do-it-all medium-format camera that is aimed at tempting full-frame professionals



KIT INTRO



**106
Canon XA65
camcorder**

Is there still room for another pro camcorder in a crowded market, wonders Lauren Scott

Kit intro

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



**NEW
SECTION**

96 Photo Kit Leaderboard

Check out our exciting new Photo Kit Leaderboard feature – a real-time guide to all the best cameras, lenses and other photography accessories on the market.

104 Fujifilm GFX 100 II

Gareth Bevan tests this do-it-all medium-format camera that Fujifilm hopes will tempt full-frame professionals.

108 Lenses

Every month, we take two professional optics out into the field. This issue, we put the Sigma 15mm f/1.4 DG DN Diagonal Fisheye Art and the 7Artisans 50mm f/1.05 lenses to the test.

110 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.

Leaderboard 2024

Our real-time report on the very best gear available for you right now



Welcome to the *Digital Photographer Photo Kit* Leaderboard! The digital world

moves fast and photo kit comes and goes in no time at all. The continuous march of development and progress means there can be a confusing array of potential cameras, lenses, software and accessories to choose from. Some products see yearly updates and replacements while others stick around

for longer, a testament to their quality, usefulness, value and popularity.

We review a huge variety of items, but these summaries are often time-specific to the tech generation in which the products were launched. A five-star review might be awarded for ingenuity, marking something that is ahead of its time, but several months later, the competition has caught up. Conversely, as a product's price drops over

time, its value proposition may render it eligible for a bump up in our ratings.

This Leaderboard does not replace our in-depth reviews, instead, it provides a real-time snapshot of the photography industry, helping you decide which gear is right for you, right now. The longer a piece of kit is ranked, the more points it will accrue – and that means the better it performs in our annual Gear of the Year Awards!

KEY SPECS

What features should you expect as standard in a camera today?

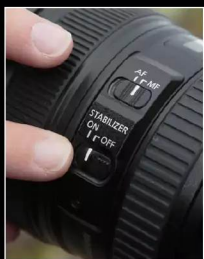


IMAGE STABILISATION

In-body Image Stabilisation (IBIS) now commonly offers five to eight stops of compensation for camera shake, when combined with lens-based IS. Note, that maximum compensation is sometimes available with only certain lenses.



ARTICULATED SCREEN

Older cameras offered two or three-way LCD rotation but today, the best camera models have fully articulated main screens for awkward compositions and difficult angles.



BURST RATE

Electronic shutters enable incredible burst rates of up to 120 frames per second but look for at least 12fps when a mechanical shutter is used in High Speed Continuous mode



ISO RANGE

The new arms race focuses on maximum sensitivity instead of resolution. Use a top ISO of 12,800 as a starting point but don't let unusable values like 102,400 sway your potential buying decisions.



Sony Alpha 9 III

Featuring the world's first full-frame global shutter, the latest Alpha tops the charts

New features always get a lot of hype in the photo industry,

but few have as much potential to change cameras forever in the same way as a global shutter. Headlining an all-round excellent specification, this feature opens doors to an incredible top shutter speed of 1/80,000sec and renders flash sync speeds a thing of the past. Other cameras might have more pixels, but the A9 III really is the most advanced camera on the market



right now, so top marks to Sony. We can't wait to see how Canon and Nikon will respond in the next year or two. Watch this space!

■ [Read our review in Issue 276](#)



SPECIFICATION Resolution 24.6MP Sensor Full-frame EXMORRS CMOS (35.6mmx23.8mm) ISO range ISO 250-25,600 (Native), ISO 125-51,200 (Expanded) Frame rate 120fps max Storage 1x SD UHS-II, 1x CFExpress Type A Battery NP-FZ100 LCD 3.2in TFT (2,095,104 dots) Viewfinder 0.64in Quad-VGA OLED (9,437,184 dots) 0.9x Weight 702g (inc battery and card) Dimensions 136.1 x 96.9 x 82.9mm

BEST FULL-FRAME CAMERA

If it's quality you're after, larger pixels mean that a full-frame camera is often the best place to start

1 Nikon Z 8

The Z 8 is a worthy mirrorless successor to one of the best DSLRs

The Nikon D850 took the world by storm on its release due to the almost perfect blend of resolution and speed it offered photographers. Now, right on cue, the Z 8 is Nikon's answer for the mirrorless age. Providing a high-resolution 45.7MP full-frame sensor and 20fps burst shooting, it matches its Z 9 bigger brother but is

available at a much more affordable price. Handling is very DSLR-like, which is sure to please D850 users, while there are dual card slots installed, offering both SD and XQD/CFexpress compatibility. It's also built like a tank, meaning that, overall, the Z 8 is excellent value for pro photographers.

■ [Read our review in Issue 269](#)

SPECIFICATION Resolution 45.7MP Sensor Full-frame (FX) CMOS (35.9mm x 23.9mm) ISO range ISO 64-25,600 Frame rate 20fps (RAW) 30fps (Jpeg) Storage 1x SD UHS-II, 1x XQD/CFexpress Type B Battery EN-EL15c LCD 3.2in (2,100,000 dots) Viewfinder 0.5in OLED (3,690,000 dots) Weight 820g (body only) Dimensions 144 x 118.5 x 83mm



2 Canon EOS R3

Until the EOS R1 makes an appearance, the R3 remains Canon's top-of-the-line mirrorless model. Building on the technology found in the EOS 1DX III DSLR, which sits just above it,

a 24.1MP sensor, blistering 30fps electronic burst rate and futuristic Eye-Control autofocus make this a star performer.

■ [Read our review in Issue 249](#)

SPECIFICATION Resolution 24.1MP Sensor Full-frame CMOS (36mm x 24mm) ISO range ISO 100-102,400 (Native) 50-204,800 (Expanded) Frame rate 30fps (electronic) Storage 1x SD, 1x CFexpress Battery LP-E19 LCD 3.2in (4,150,000 dots) Viewfinder 0.5in (5,760,000 dots) Weight 822g (body only) Dimensions 150 x 142.6 x 87.2mm

3 Nikon Z f

Following in the footsteps of the popular Nikon Df DSLR and APS-C format Z fc, this retro-styled mirrorless camera takes all the best qualities of the Z6 II and Z8 models and fits

them neatly into the body of the legendary FM2, complete with class-style setting dials on the top plate.

■ [Read our review in Issue 275](#)

SPECIFICATION Resolution 24.5MP Sensor Full-frame (FX) CMOS (35.9mm x 23.9mm) ISO range ISO 100-64,000 Frame rate 14fps max Storage SD, Micro SD Battery EN-EL15c LCD 3.2in 2,100,000-dot TFT Viewfinder 0.5in 3,690,000 dot (Quad VGA) OLED Weight 710g (Body only) Dimensions 144 x 103 x 49mm

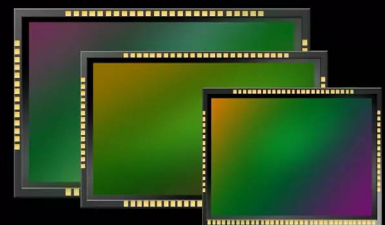


SENSOR SIZES AND CROP FACTORS

Get to grips with the variety of sensor formats available

The range of sensor sizes can be confusing when gauging lens system versatility. As sensor size decreases, crop factor increases as less of the frame

areas is captured compared to full-frame. However, it is important to remember that the exact size and crop factor can differ between camera brands.



Type	Medium Format (Fujifilm GFX)	Full-frame	APS-H	APS-C	APS-C (Canon)	Micro 4/3
Sensor area	43.9mm x 32.9mm	36mm x 24mm	27.9 x 18.6mm	23.6 x 15.7mm	22.2 x 14.8mm	17.3 x 13.0mm
Crop factor	0.79x	1x	1.3x	1.5x	1.6x	2x
Comparison (50mm)	39.5mm	50mm	65mm	75mm	80mm	100mm

BEST APS-C CAMERA A lighter and more compact body

1 Fujifilm X-T5

Retro power is the order of the day with this APS-C modern classic from Fujifilm

The single-digit Fujifilm X-series cameras have settled into a niche of their own, catering not only to high-level photographers but also to video shooters. The latest version took things up a notch with the introduction of a new 40.2MP sensor, making it one of the highest-resolution APS-C models around while maintaining an electronic frame rate of 20fps. Fuji controls take some getting used to, but the compact, high build quality, 7-stop stabiliser and 1/180,000 top shutter speed make this the perfect travel and documentary camera. It also has the bonus of 6K advanced video.

■ [Read our review in Issue 263](#)

SPECIFICATION Resolution 40.2MP Sensor APS-C X-Trans CMOS 5 HR (23.5mm x 15.6mm) ISO range ISO 125-12,800 (Native), ISO 64-51,200 (Expanded) Frame rate 15fps (mechanical), 20fps (electronic) Storage 2x SD/SDHC/SDXC UHS-II Battery NP-W235 LCD 3in (1,840,000 dots) Viewfinder 0.5-inch, 3,690,000-dot OLED EVF, 100fps refresh Weight 476g (body only) Dimensions 130 x 91 x 64mm



2 Canon EOS R7

With a 32.5MP sensor and rapid 30fps burst rate, the EOS R7 easily steps into the mirrorless shoes of the hugely popular EOS 7D line of DSLRs. It's a great introduction to the RF mount and offers advanced features galore, more than enough to satisfy enthusiasts and semi-pros.

■ [Read our review in Issue 271](#)



SPECIFICATION Resolution 32.5MP Sensor APS-C CMOS (22.3mm x 14.8mm) ISO range ISO 100-32,000 (Native) 100-51,200 (Expanded) Frame rate 15fps (mechanical) 30fps (electronic) Storage 2x SD/SDHC/SDXC UHS-II Battery LP-E6NH LCD 2.95in (1,620,000-dots) Viewfinder 0.39in OLED EVF (2,360,000-dots) Weight 612g (body only) Dimensions 132 x 90 x 92mm

3 Fujifilm X-H2

Fujifilm is fully invested in the APS-C format and, as such, is focused on creating a system with something for everyone. The X-H line is the X-series answer for sports and action photographers. While the X-H2S offers a higher fps, the X-H2 provides 8K video. It's the X-T5 on steroids.



SPECIFICATION Resolution 40.2MP Sensor APS-C X-Trans CMOS 5 HR (23.5mm x 15.6mm) ISO range ISO 125-12,800 (Native), ISO 64-51,200 (Expanded) Frame rate 15fps (mechanical), 20fps (electronic) Storage 1x CFexpress Type B, 1x SD UHS-II Battery NP-W235 LCD 3in 1,620,000-dot vari-angle Viewfinder 5,760,000-dot EVF Weight 660g (body only) Dimensions 136 x 93 x 95mm

BEST MICRO 4/3 CAMERA

Panasonic Lumix G9 II

The latest flagship for the M4/3 format has plenty of features

If you thought Micro Four Thirds was a dead format, think again. The Lumix G9 II reinvents the system and demonstrates Panasonic's dedication to maintaining it, despite the burgeoning L-Mount alliance. The G9 II features a 25.2MP sensor, which allows excellent telephoto images when combined with the 2x crop mode of the format. Also pushing the camera to the top of the tree is 5.8K 30p video, 60fps shooting with AF (75fps with AF locked) and excellent ergonomics.

Furthermore, coming in at less than £/\$2000, it offers superlative value for money, too.

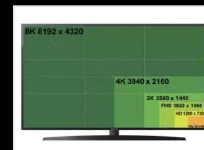
■ [Read our review in Issue 273](#)



SPECIFICATION Resolution 25.2MP Sensor Micro Four Thirds Live MOS (17.3 x 13 mm) ISO range 100 - 25,600 Frame rate 14fps/10fps (mechanical) 75fps/60fps (electronic) Storage 2x SD UHS-II Battery DMW-BLK22 LCD 3in (1,840,000-dot) Viewfinder OLED (3,680,400-dot) Weight 658g (with battery and card) Dimensions 134.3 x 102.3 x 90.1mm

ESSENTIAL VIDEO FEATURES

Consider these key features for shooting video



RESOLUTION

While 8K is becoming more common, for most users 4K (3840 x 2160 pixels) is enough. Full HD (1920 x 1080) is fine for social media use.

FRAME RATE

A 24/30p (fps) rate is the most common and useful for everyday videography. 120p or 240p are great for slow-motion work but check this is available at full resolution.



CROP

On some lower-end cameras, 4K resolution is available but only in a cropped aspect, which doesn't make full use of the lens coverage. This means you will need to use a wider lens.

BEST MEDIUM FORMAT CAMERA

Fuji GFX 100 II

The latest GF-mount camera furthers Fujifilm's quest to make medium format accessible to all

Fuji truly reinvented the wheel with the introduction of its larger-than-full-frame GFX cameras. While it's still more expensive than consumer mirrorless cameras, the GFX 100 II and its siblings bring the higher resolutions associated with monster cameras like those from Hasselblad and Phase One and squash them into DSLR-like bodies. The GFX 100 II provides 8fps continuous shooting, which is astonishing for a 102MP camera, while the processor



+10
POINTS

enables 8K video. It's certainly not cheap, and although it only builds on its predecessor's work, this recent model represents the most well-rounded, medium-format camera on the market right now.

■ **Read our review: See page 104**

SPECIFICATION Resolution 102MP Sensor GFX CMOS II HS (43.8 x 32.9mm) ISO range ISO 80-12800 (native) 40-102,400 (expanded) Frame rate 8fps (mechanical, AF-C) Storage 1x SD UHS-II, 1x CF express Type B Battery NP-W235 LCD 3.2in (2,360,000-dots) Viewfinder 0.64in OLED (9,440,000-dot approx) Weight 867g (body only) Dimensions 152.4 x 117.4 x 98.6mm

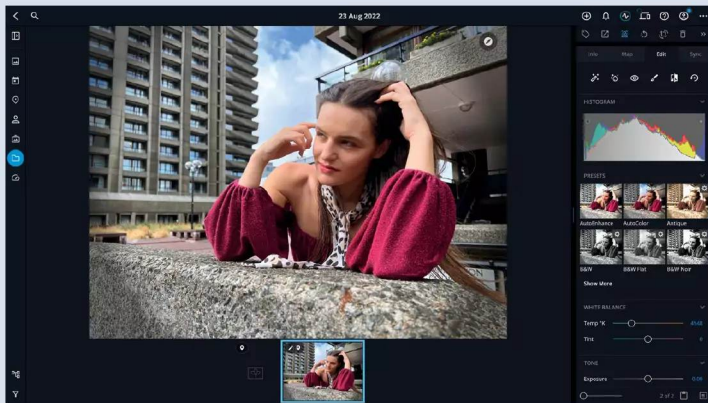
BEST EDITING SOFTWARE

Mylio Photos

The go-to application for keeping track of an ever-expanding database of images

Thanks to its AI features, Mylio Photos is able to gather together images that are almost inevitably scattered across multiple folder destinations on our laptops and desktop workstations. It's hard to keep track of shots downloaded from different devices, across multiple networks, so Mylio Photos is the innovative platform many photographers never knew we needed. It also adds some neat editing tools in the 'Plus' version to sweeten the deal. The latest version impresses with its feature set.

■ **Read our review in Issue 273**



BEST DSLR CAMERA

Old-school tech has life in it yet

1 Nikon D850

Arguably the finest DSLR ever built for enthusiasts and semi-professionals



+3
POINTS

While Nikon's own D6 and Canon's EOS 1DX Mark III sit at the top of the DSLR tree, the D850 is far more accessible to the masses and is the better choice for enthusiasts and semi-pros. For a long time, photographers had to choose between pixels and frame rate, but despite having a 45.7MP FX-format sensor, the D850 manages to rattle off 7fps or 9fps with the optional battery grip. This is rapid in DSLR terms and the result is a camera that is simply untouchable for all-round performance. Launched in 2017, its AF system, noise performance and video features hold their own against newer tech.

■ **Read our review in Issue 193**

SPECIFICATION Resolution 45.7MP Sensor FX-format CMOS (35.9 x 23.9mm) ISO range ISO 64-25,600 (native) 32-102,400 (expanded) Frame rate 7fps, 9fps (with MB-D18 grip) Storage 1x SD/SDHC/SDXC UHS-II, 1x XQD Battery EN-EL18c LCD 3.2in touchscreen (2,359,000-dots) Viewfinder Optical pentaprism, 100% coverage Weight 1,005g (w/ battery and card) Dimensions 146 x 124 x 78.5mm

2 Canon EOS 90D

Cameras like the EOS 20D, 30D and 40D set new precedents for specification versus price. The EOS 90D was the last model in that line before Canon shifted



focus to the R system, so you'll find much of the same tech and image standards but at a bargain price.

■ **Read our review in Issue 219**

SPECIFICATION Resolution 32.5MP Sensor APS-C CMOS (22.3 x 14.8mm) ISO range ISO 100-25,600 (native), 100-51,200 (expanded) Frame rate 10fps Storage SD / SDHC / SDXC (UHS-II) Battery LP-E6NH LCD 3in (1,040,000-dots) Viewfinder Optical pentaprism, 100% coverage Weight 701g (w/ battery and card) Dimensions 140.7 x 104.8 x 76.8mm

3 Canon EOS 1DX Mark III

Technically, this is Canon's flagship, sitting just above the mirrorless EOS R3. Therefore, this is the best camera money can buy as a Canon user, with a price to match. The Nikon D6 is similarly specced, but the 1DX III beats that with 5.5K video and 20fps, to the D6's 4K and 14fps.

■ **Read our review in Issue 227**



SPECIFICATION Resolution 20.1MP Sensor Full-frame CMOS (36 x 24mm) ISO range ISO 100-102,400 (native) 50-819,200 (expanded) Frame rate 16fps (mechanical) 20fps (in Live View, AF-C) Storage 2x CF express Type B Battery LP-E19 LCD 3.2in (2,100,000-dots) Viewfinder Optical Pentaprism (100%) Weight 1,250g (body only) Dimensions 158.0 x 167.6 x 82.6mm

BEST WIDE-ANGLE LENS For even greater frame width

Prime lenses



1 Sigma 14mm f/1.4 DG DN Art

Impressive optical quality, focusing distance and build make this an excellent value choice for landscape and astrophotographers.

■ Review: Issue 268

SPECIFICATION Price £1399/\$1599 Max aperture f/1.4 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.30m Elements/groups 19/15 Mount Sony E, Leica L



2 Laowa Argus 28mm f/1.2 FF

■ Review: Issue 272

SPECIFICATION Price £699/\$599 Max aperture f/1.2 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.5m Elements/groups 13/7 Mount Canon RF, Leica L, Nikon Z, Sony E



3 Viltrox AF 27mm f/1.2 Pro

■ Review: Issue 276

SPECIFICATION Price £444/\$545 Max aperture f/1.2 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.28m Elements/groups 15/11 Mount Nikon Z (DX), Fujifilm X, Sony E



4 Fujifilm XF18mm f/1.4 R LM WR

■ Review: Issue 254

SPECIFICATION Price £849/\$999 Max aperture f/1.4 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.2m Elements/groups 15/9 Mount Fujifilm X



5 Nikkor Z 20mm f/1.8 S

■ Review: Issue 240

SPECIFICATION Price £1,149/\$1,049 Max aperture f/1.8 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.20m Elements/groups 14/11 Mount Nikon Z

Zoom lenses



1 Sigma 14-24mm f/2.8 DG HSM | A

The 14-24mm f/2.8 is a key trinity zoom and this Sigma offers great value for money and image quality for multiple lens mounts.

■ Review: Issue tba

SPECIFICATION Price (£1269/\$1299) Max aperture f/2.8 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.26m Elements/groups 17/11 Mount Sigma SA, Canon EF, Nikon F



2 Canon RF 14-35mm f/4L IS USM

■ Review: Issue 249

SPECIFICATION Price £1599/\$1299 Max aperture f/4 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.20m Elements/groups 16/12 Mount Canon RF



3 Sony FE 12-24mm f/2.8 G Master

■ Review: Issue 231

SPECIFICATION Price £2699/\$2898 Max aperture f/2.8 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.28m Elements/groups 17/14 Mount Sony E



4 Tamron SP 15-30mm f/2.8 DI VC USD G2

■ Review: Issue 236

SPECIFICATION Price £1099/\$1149 Max aperture f/2.8 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.28m Elements/groups 18/13 Mount Canon EF, Nikon F



5 Sony FE 16-35mm f/2.8 GM II

■ Review: Issue 271

SPECIFICATION Price £2,299/\$2,298 Max aperture f/2.8 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.22m Elements/groups 15/12 Mount Sony E

IS MODES

Get steady shots with stabilisation for any occasion

Many high-end lenses feature multiple stabilisation modes. Standard (or Mode 1 as it's commonly known) is for everyday work when you are stationary and holding the camera. Tripod mode avoids introducing vibration when support-mounted and Hybrid mode (Canon's terminology) reduces rotational movements when close-up. Active mode (Nikon's terminology) should be used when shooting from a moving vehicle. Note: similar modes exist for each brand.



CONTROL RINGS

Assign your lens a custom handling experience

Most mirrorless lenses feature control rings that can be assigned specific roles. From your camera menu, allocate the function (eg. aperture control, shutter speed, ISO) and how you want the rings to work (direction, torque sensitivity). These can be amended at any time, so try altering the assignment to discover what works best for your shoots.



BEST STANDARD LENS

Essential for all-round use

Prime lenses



1 Canon RF 50mm f/1.2L USM

For many years, Canon was the only DSLR brand to have a 50mm f/1.2 and now this heritage is brought to the RF system.

■ Review: Issue 218

SPECIFICATION Price £2,449/\$2,199 Max aperture f/1.2 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.40m Elements/groups 15/9 Mount Canon RF



2 Nikon Z 85mm f/1.2 S

■ Review: Issue 267

SPECIFICATION Price (£2,999/\$2,597) Max aperture f/1.2 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.85m Elements/groups 15/10 Mount Nikon Z



3 Sony FE 50mm f/1.4 GM

■ Review: Issue 265

SPECIFICATION Price (£1,499/\$1,298) Max aperture f/1.4 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.41m Elements/groups 14/11 Mount Sony E

Zoom lenses



1 Sigma 24-70mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM | Art

The 24-70mm f/2.8 is a kitbag essential and this Sigma is arguably the best value model around, offering great sharpness, build and AF

■ Review: Issue 239

SPECIFICATION Price £1,149/\$1,249 Max aperture f/2.8 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.37m Elements/groups 19/14 Mount Canon EF, Nikon F, Sigma SA



2 Canon RF 24-105mm f/2.8L IS USM Z

■ Review: Issue 275

SPECIFICATION Price (£3,439/\$2,999) Max aperture f/2.8 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.45m Elements/groups 23/18 Mount Canon RF



3 Fujinon XF16-55mm f/2.8 R LM WR

■ Review: Issue 231

SPECIFICATION Price (£979/\$1,199) Max aperture f/2.8 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.60m Elements/groups 17/12 Mount Fujifilm X

BEST SPECIALIST LENS

For something a little different

Prime lenses



1 Fujinon GF30mm f/5.6 T/S

Bringing 'affordable' Tilt-Shift functionality to the Fujifilm MF system, this optic widens the creative possibilities for pro photographers.

■ Review: TBA

SPECIFICATION Price £3,899/\$3,999 Max aperture f/5.6 Min aperture f/32 Closest focusing distance 0.30m Elements/groups 16/11 Mount Fujifilm GF



2 TTArtisan Tilt 50mm f/1.4

■ Review: Issue 262

SPECIFICATION Price £249/\$199 Max aperture f/1.4 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.50m Elements/groups 7/6 Mount Sony E, Canon RF, Fujifilm X, Nikon Z, Leica L, M43



3 Laowa 15mm f/4.5 Zero-D Shift Lens

■ Review: TBA

SPECIFICATION Price £1,259/\$1,199 Max aperture f/3.5 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.20m Elements/groups 17/11 Mount Canon EF/RF, Nikon F/Z, Fujifilm GF, Leica L, Sony E, Pentax K

Zoom lenses



1 Canon RF 24-240mm f/4-6.3 IS USM

Redefining the superzoom lens, this 10x zoom optic is the perfect choice for travel photography, offering versatility and quality.

■ Review: Issue 243

SPECIFICATION Price £909/\$899 Max aperture f/4-6.3 Min aperture f/36 Closest focusing distance 0.50m Elements/groups 21/15 Mount Canon RF



2 Nikkor Z 24-200mm f/4-6.3 VR

■ Review: Issue 246

SPECIFICATION Price £949/\$797 Max aperture f/4-6.3 Min aperture f/36 Closest focusing distance 0.50m Elements/groups 19/15 Mount Nikon Z



3 Tamron 18-400mm f/3.5-6.3 Di II VC HLD

■ Review: Issue 248

SPECIFICATION Price £699/\$699 Max aperture f/3.5-6.3 Min aperture f/40 Closest focusing distance 0.45m Elements/groups 16/11 Mount Canon EF, Nikon F

BEST TELEPHOTO LENS Zoom in closer to the action

Prime lenses

Zoom lenses



1 Sony FE 300mm f/2.8 GM OSS
 The 300mm f/2.8 sets standards for portability. Its fast AF and superb sharpness are pro grade.
 ■ Review: Issue 275

SPECIFICATION Price £5,799/\$5,998 Max aperture f/2.8
 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 2.0m
 Elements/groups 20/16 Mount Sony E



1 Sigma 60-600mm f/4.5-6.3 DG DN OS | S
 Offering a huge 10x zoom, this super telephoto is a perfect choice for sports and wildlife photographers.
 ■ Review: Issue 271

SPECIFICATION Price £2,099/\$1,999 Max aperture f/4.5-6.3
 Min aperture f/22-32 Closest focusing distance 0.45m
 Elements/groups 27/19 Mount Sony E, Leica L



2 Nikon Z 135mm f/1.8 S Plena
 ■ Review: TBA

SPECIFICATION Price £2,649/\$2,497 Max aperture f/1.8
 Min aperture f/16 Closest focusing distance 0.82m
 Elements/groups 16/14 Mount Nikon Z



2 Nikkor Z 70-180 f/2.8
 ■ Review: Issue 273

SPECIFICATION Price £1,299/\$1,247 Max aperture f/2.8
 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.27m
 Elements/groups 19/14 Mount Nikon Z



3 Canon RF 600mm f/11 IS STM
 ■ Review: Issue 240

SPECIFICATION Price £829/\$799 Max aperture f/11
 Min aperture f/11 Closest focusing distance 4.5m
 Elements/groups 10/7 Mount Canon RF



3 Sony FE 70-200mm f/2.8 GM OSS II
 ■ Review: Issue 258

SPECIFICATION Price £2,479/\$2,798 Max aperture f/2.8
 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.40m
 Elements/groups 17/14 Mount Sony E



4 Canon RF 135mm f/1.8L IS USM
 ■ Review: TBA

SPECIFICATION Price £2,599/\$2,099 Max aperture f/1.8
 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.70m
 Elements/groups 17/12 Mount Canon RF



4 OM System M.ZUIKO Digital ED 40-150mm f/4 Pro ■ Review: Issue 258

SPECIFICATION Price £749/\$899 Max aperture f/4
 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.70m
 Elements/groups 15/9 Mount M4/3



5 Nikon Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S
 ■ Review: Issue 263

SPECIFICATION Price £15,499/\$15,497 Max aperture f/4
 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 4.3m
 Elements/groups 26/20 Mount Nikon Z



5 Sigma 70-200mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM | S
 ■ Review: TBA

SPECIFICATION Price £1,199/\$1,499 Max aperture f/2.8
 Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 1.2m
 Elements/groups 24/22 Mount Canon EF, Nikon F, Sigma SA

BEST LIGHTING Take full control of the lighting conditions

1 Godox VING V860III
SPECIFICATION Price £223/\$229
 Type Speedlight Compatibility Canon, Nikon, Sony, Fujifilm, Olympus, Panasonic, Pentax Output Gn 60/197 (ISO 100m/ft, 200mm) Power source Internal (rechargeable) Weight 530g (inc battery)



2 Canon Speedlite 430EX III-RT
SPECIFICATION Price £279/\$299
 Type Speedlight Compatibility Canon Output Gn 43/141 (ISO 100m/ft, 105mm) Power source 4x AA batteries Weight 295g



3 Rotolight AEOS 2
SPECIFICATION Price £1,099/\$1,399
 Type Portable continuous Compatibility N/A Output 11,500 Lux at 3 feet (continuous) Power source V-lock 24V 150W Weight 1,400g



4 Hahnel Modus 600RT Mk II
SPECIFICATION Price £249/\$283
 Type Speedlight Compatibility Canon, Nikon, Sony, Fujifilm, Olympus, Panasonic Output Gn 60/197 (ISO 100m/ft, 200mm) Power source Internal (rechargeable) Weight 540g (inc battery)



BEST FILTERS

1 Hoya Variable Density II

SPECIFICATION
Price: \$99-190/\$80-160
Exposure increase: +1.67 - +8.67 stops
Sizes 52-82mm



2 H&Y Revoring Variable ND & Circular Polariser

SPECIFICATION Price £170/\$189 (46-62mm)
Exposure increase: +1.5 to +10 stops
Sizes 67-82, 46-62, 37-49mm



3 Cokin Nuances Extreme Z-Pro Soft Grad ND

SPECIFICATION
Price £148/\$150 (3-stop)
Construction Glass
Sizes 84x100mm, 100x150mm, 130x170mm



4 Hoya HD Nano Mk II CIR-PL

SPECIFICATION
Price \$69-221/\$85-200
Construction Glass/PL film
Sizes 49-82mm



BEST MACRO LENS

For capturing the world up close

1 NIKKOR Z MC 105mm f/2.8 VR S



In our initial review, we called this 'one of the best macro lenses we'd used'. The quality, build and weight make this a fantastic macro optic.

■ Review: Issue 245

SPECIFICATION Price £1,049/\$947 Max aperture f/2.8
Min aperture f/32 Closest focusing distance 0.29m
Elements/groups 16/11 Mount Nikon Z



2 OM SYSTEM M.Zuiko Digital ED 90mm f/3.5 Macro IS PRO

■ Review TBA

SPECIFICATION Price £1,299/\$1,500 Max aperture f/3.5
Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.22m
Elements/groups 18/13 Mount M43



3 Canon RF100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM

■ Review: Issue 254

SPECIFICATION Price £1,369/\$1,099 Max aperture f/2.8
Min aperture f/32 Closest focusing distance 0.26m
Elements/groups 17/13 Mount Canon RF



4 Sigma 105mm f/2.8 DG DN Macro Art

■ Review TBA

SPECIFICATION Price £729/\$799 Max aperture f/2.8
Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.30m
Elements/groups 12/7 Mount Sony E, Leica L



5 Nikon Z 50mm f/2.8 Macro

■ Review: Issue 248

SPECIFICATION Price £679/\$647 Max aperture f/2.8
Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.16m
Elements/groups 10/7 Mount Nikon Z



6 Laowa 90mm f/2.8 2x Ultra Macro

■ Review: Issue 264

SPECIFICATION Price \$529/\$499 Max aperture f/2.8
Min aperture f/22 Closest focusing distance 0.21m
Elements/groups 13/10 Mount Canon RF, Nikon Z, Sony E, Leica L



7 Canon RF 85mm f/2 Macro IS STM

■ Review: Issue 242

SPECIFICATION Price £619/\$599 Max aperture f/2
Min aperture f/29 Closest focusing distance 0.35m
Elements/groups 12/11 Mount Canon RF

BEST TRIPOD

Using a tripod is the key to sharper shots

1 Benro MeFoto RoadTrip Pro

SPECIFICATION Price £240/\$296 Construction Carbon Fibre Leg sections 5



2 3 Legged Thing Leo 2.0

SPECIFICATION Price £203/\$267 Construction Carbon Fibre Leg sections 5



3 Gitzo Légende Tripod

SPECIFICATION Price £549/\$549 (w/ball head) Construction Carbon Fibre Leg sections 4



4 Peak Design Travel Tripod

SPECIFICATION Price £349/\$380 Construction Aluminium Leg sections 5



5 Benro Cyanbird

SPECIFICATION Price £235/\$190 (w/N00P Ball Head) Construction Carbon Fibre/Aluminium Leg sections 5






Price: £6,999/\$7,499

Website: fujifilm-x.com

Fujifilm GFX 100 II

Gareth Bevan tests a do-it-all medium-format camera to tempt full frame professionals

 It has only been a few short years since Fujifilm began a journey to push its own vision of exactly what a medium-format camera should be. After decades of medium-format being large, boxy and heavy cameras for high-end professionals, the Fujifilm GFX 50S and GFX 50R brought medium format (almost) to the masses with a body size that rivalled DSLRs and even some mirrorless cameras, but at a price that undercut the competition from other brands.

The Fujifilm GFX 100 II features a new high-speed 102-megapixel CMOS sensor paired with Fujifilm's X-Processor 5. This enables the camera to shoot at 8 frames per second at full resolution, a notable achievement for a medium-format camera, with a larger buffer than its predecessor of up to 325 frames in RAW format. It supports shooting in various formats, including 16-bit HQ RAW and HEIF 10-bit, offering improved dynamic range over the previous model with a new base ISO of 80.

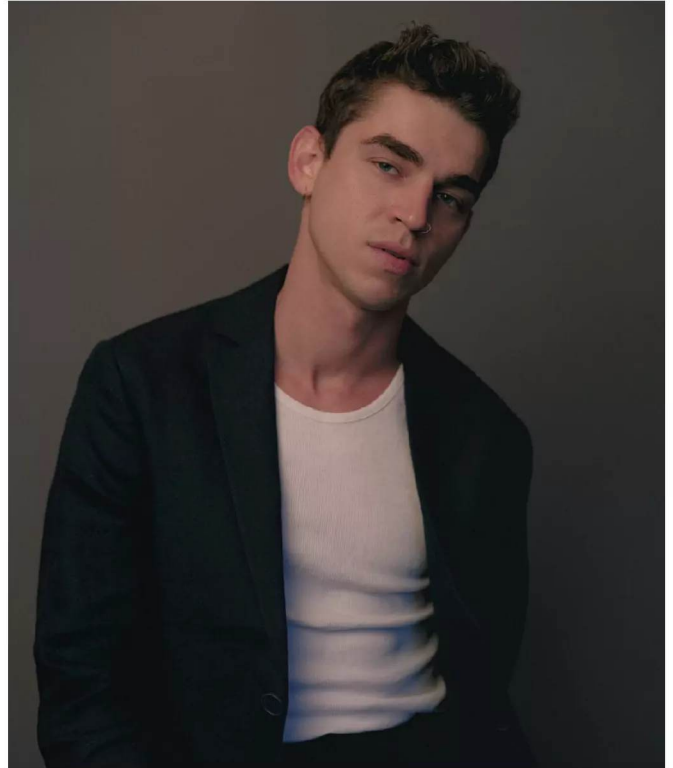
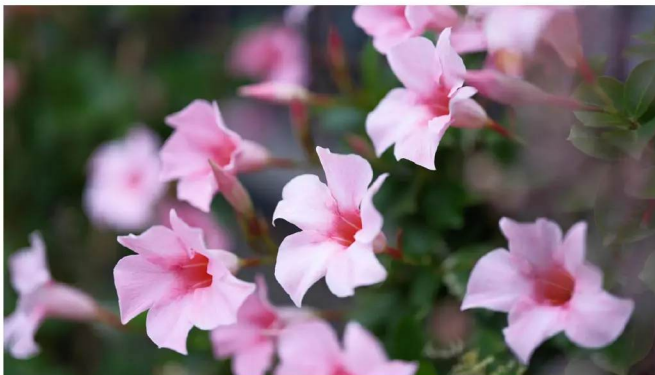
The GFX 100 II can also create 400MP Pixel Shift images by combining 16 RAW shots and achieve true colour images in just four frames.

I initially got to test the GFX 100 II at Fujifilm's X Summit 2023 in Stockholm, and while the weather was unfortunately against me, the undeniable beauty of one of Europe's best-preserved old towns was a pleasure to capture on the GFX 100 II. Photos are incredibly detailed, with the resolving power of 102MP simply incredible – there is so much cropping potential in these photos. When taking photos of a crowded street, I could zoom in on individual faces and still find incredible detail in the image.

We have already seen Fujifilm's 102MP sensors at work in its previous GFX cameras and they have been mighty impressive, but with a new faster sensor combined with even higher rated in-body image stabilisation and the autofocusing prowess of the X-Processor 5, the camera is now a worthy rival to almost any full-frame camera.

At 8 frames per second, this thing is fast for a medium format camera – Fujifilm pushing that many pixels at that speed is a hell of an achievement and drives medium format ever closer to being a viable high-speed action camera. The GFX 100 II is most at home taking portraits though, so that was my first port of





call when testing the camera. Where to start? The eye detection autofocus is near flawless, I got such a high hit rate I barely needed to discard any final shots, which is so important when the perfect shot can be ruined by missed focus. The autofocus had no hesitation jumping to the nearest eye as the model moved around – after a while, I completely stopped even being concerned about the focus, meaning that I could redirect my energy to the composition and poses.

Fujifilm is one of my favourite manufacturers when it comes to the build quality and styling of its cameras, and the GFX 100 II continues in that tradition. The GFX 100 II is a slick-looking camera, but also it feels good in the hand. The new Bishamon-TeX material on the camera is nice to hold and is a little more grippy than the traditional faux

leather finish, although not revolutionary. It gives me strong futuristic spacesuit vibes and makes the camera look much more modern. I admit that I prefer the look of the faux leather but, after a while, I did stop noticing the new material.

Coming from using smaller systems day-to-day, the GFX 100 II feels heavy and bulky – this is certainly a camera that you will notice if you're carrying it around for long periods. Throwing the camera into a rucksack to walk around, I could feel the additional weight, although when you remember that this is a 102MP medium-format camera, it is still much smaller than most of the best professional full-frame DSLRs. For its size and weight, the power is pretty amazing.

The GFX system is still hamstrung by having large GFX lenses. Unfortunately, current

technology dictates that larger lenses with more elements have better image quality and more space for powerful autofocus motors. With a medium-format image circle, there is only so small a GFX lens can ever get. The GFX 100 II is about what is comfortable to hold and still balance with large GFX lenses.

The 2.09-inch top screen remains and still functions as the fastest way to view the camera settings quickly. The rear screen is good quality, Fujifilm opted for a three-way tilting screen, which for the purposes this camera will be used for is probably all it really needs. The viewfinder is a pleasure to use too, with a clear and sharp resolution. The Fujifilm GFX 100 is not just the medium-format camera to beat, taking the large sensor camera to new heights, but it's right up there with the best cameras, full stop.

Updated design

Body alterations make this latest version more manageable

The styling of the GFX 100 II follows that of Fujifilm's compact medium-format cameras, such as the GFX 100S, and it loses the built-in vertical grip from the original GFX 100. The camera is smaller and lighter than the GFX 100 as it no longer has the grip built in, although, with the optional grip accessory attached, it actually becomes the heavier and larger option of the two. For me, the optional grip is the right move – I don't usually like using vertical grips and the GFX 100 II is big enough already, so having it as an optional extra and still being able to enjoy the full force of Fujifilm's most powerful medium-format camera without the extra bulk is welcome.

Summary

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

Overall



Losing the vertical grip has allowed the camera to be not much larger than some of the best full-frame cameras while retaining some of the best image quality I have seen. I have never been more tempted to buy a review camera.



Price: £1,999/\$2,299 • **Website:** canon.co.uk

Canon XA65 camcorder

Is there still room for a pro camcorder in a crowded market? **Lauren Scott** investigates

While testing and reviewing the Canon XA65, I learned that the acronym ENG stands for electronic news gathering. In that case, the XA65 is an ideal ENG camera, given that it is capable of being operational seconds after being switched on – and that its epic 20x optical zoom range (29.3 to 601mm on a 35mm equivalent) and 40x digital zoom is enough to capture breaking news events up close and far away almost instantly.

Camcorders have a somewhat unfair reputation for being dated, clunky and old-fashioned. In many ways, the Canon XA65 is less sexy than some of the best mirrorless cameras and the best cinema cameras. But if you're someone who gets paid to make news or journalism-style content or a documentary filmmaker in search of something capable and compact to shoot video but not stills, the XA65 might be just what you're looking for.

At around £2,000/\$2,300, it's the company's middle offering in Canon's pro camcorder lineup. In terms of video recording, you get internal UHD 4K capture in MP4 or XF-AVC file formats; the latter is exclusive to Canon and gives you the benefit of metadata and a higher bit rate, while MP4 is pretty much universal and provides smaller files.

External recording via the HDMI or 3G-SDI supports streaming at 1080p and 60fps. Although these specs aren't particularly exciting, they're reasonable at this price.

When designing the XA65, Canon has considered its audience. The 1/2.3-inch CMOS sensor is smaller than the Canon XA75's 1-inch sensor, which keeps the cost down, but the 20x zoom is incredibly versatile, focusing

as close as 1cm at the widest end to 60cm across the whole zooming range. It's a real do-it-all camcorder, allowing jobbing filmmakers to pick it up and start shooting straight away.

Taking the Canon XA65 out of its case, I was struck by how closely it resembles the Canon HF G70 camcorder. The dimensions are almost identical, as is the weight, which makes me think that Canon has chosen to share the





You might also like

Which camcorders are the XA65's main competitors?

The Canon HF G70 is a cheaper camcorder aimed at prosumers rather than professionals but its specs and handling match the XA65 in many respects. You still get a 3.5-inch touchscreen LCD and a 20x optical zoom but no XLR terminals for high-quality audio or a detachable handle that offers greater control.

Meanwhile, if you need a mirrorless camera for shooting stills just as well as video, the Panasonic Lumix S5II is a top hybrid option. It's similarly priced (body-only) to the XA65, and you get unlimited 4K/60p 4:2:2 10-bit recording internally, plus a larger 24.2MP full-frame sensor.

outside design (apart from adding an SDI port) and many of the specs.

Although I am reasonably familiar with Canon products, I found the XA65 easy to use almost immediately – and I think that's the whole point of it. The menu is split up into five Setup sections; Camera, Recording, Audio, Display and System, which are simple to navigate on the touchscreen. You will usually get fewer physical controls on a camcorder than on an advanced mirrorless model, but what's included on the XA65 is still pretty basic. Compared with the Panasonic HC-X2000, there isn't a dedicated switch for setting the ND filter or the Gain. Pros are more likely to fine-tune parameters themselves rather than rely on automated settings and while the assignable buttons help with quick access, the experience still isn't as smooth.

As with all modern cameras, you can compose the frame, view settings, and keep an eye on levels in two ways; with the LCD monitor or the viewfinder – but not at the same time. The capacious 3.5-inch touchscreen is wider than EOS R cameras to reflect the proportions of video footage, and I found the 2.76-million-dot resolution made it a joy to use. At the brightest setting, I was still able to view the screen in bright sunshine.

However, I was disappointed at the quality of unedited RAW footage from the XA65, simply because it's similar to the HF G70 at half the price and noticeably worse than the XA75, which is just a few hundred pounds more. The XA65 is prone to lens flare without the hood attached, which happens to be a look I love – but won't please everyone. Shooting towards the sun through a forest brought noticeable

light leaks, and the camcorder struggled to expose the scene correctly on its own, underexposing by a few stops to compensate.

Many users are likely to be on a tripod or gimbal for professional applications, only relying on the XA65's 5-axis image stabilisation occasionally. It can be set to three strengths – Dynamic, Standard and Powered. I found that Dynamic was vital for steady hand-held walking shots. It did a good job at the wide end of the zoom but felt shaky when recording birds at the full 20x zoom.

The second issue is motion blur when filming in 4K since you're limited to 25p. We take for granted the speeds that the latest cameras can record in and, if you're used to 50 or even 60p, you'll be frustrated by the XA65's 4K for sports, or people and animals.

The Canon XA65 is a neat camcorder for its price point and it actually represents even better value given that you don't have to pay extra for lenses. I would recommend it to videographers who are creating quick, news-friendly content or documentaries.

Summary

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

Overall



I enjoyed the handling and simplicity of the XA65 enormously. It might only have a niche appeal in a diminishing market, but if you're a professional who doesn't need a larger sensor, the XA65 should serve you well.





PRICE:
£1,859/\$1,999

FOCUS DISTANCE:
0.38m

WEIGHT:
1,360g

Sigma 15mm f/1.4 DG DN Diagonal Fisheye Art

This inclusive fisheye lens will appeal to your inner Vincent van Gogh says **Matthew Richards**

Build and handling

I've seen some seriously small fisheye lenses over the years. However, this one is a comparative heavyweight, complete with a tripod mounting ring that has an Arca-Swiss profile, enabling direct attachment to like-minded tripod heads. I like that the ring is completely removable and the lens comes with a rubber band that you can slip over in its place, which is ideal for handheld shooting.

With so much emphasis on 'hybrid' shooting these days, I also like that the lens has lockable aperture control and focus rings, along with a click/de-click switch. Another nice touch for astrophotography is a lens heater retainer lip at the front, which keeps heat strips in place to avoid condensation as the temperature drops during the night.

Performance

I tested the L-mount version of the lens with a 61MP Sigma fp L camera body. An image sensor with such a high resolution represents a challenge for a fisheye lens but I was impressed with the sharpness. A bonus for astrophotography is that the optics are designed to minimise sagittal coma flare, so stars are rendered accurately rather than as irregular shapes like batwing coma. Suppression of ghosting and flare is also good, while colour fringing is kept to a minimum.

Verdict

I love the astronomical potential of this lens and its refined handling. The comparatively warp-factor aperture speed takes it where no fisheye has gone before, but at a cost.

Technical specs

Manufacturer	Sigma
Model	15mm f/1.4 DG DN Diagonal Fisheye Art
Web	sigmauk.com
Elements/construction	21 elements in 15 groups
Angle of view	180°
Max aperture	f/1.4
Min aperture	f/16
Min focus distance	0.38m
Mount	Leica L, Sony E
Filter size	Rear
Length	156mm
Diameter	104mm
Weight	1,360g

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
IMAGE QUALITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

- + **Fast f/1.4 aperture**
- + **Excellent image quality**
- + **Pro-grade build and handling**
- **Relatively big and heavy**
- **Expensive for a fisheye lens**



Above
Stretched perspective
The lens features a 180° field-of-view, making it ideal for interior photography and astrophotography, albeit with tell-tale fisheye distortion



Above
Close quarters
The minimum focus distance of just 0.38m allows the user to get up close to the subject and capture images in tight environments

Images by Matthew Richards



PRICE:
£339/\$399

FOCUS DISTANCE:
0.57m

WEIGHT:
606g

7Artisans 50mm f/1.05

Matthew Richards puts this ultra-fast standard prime to the test. Is it the perfect low-light lens?

Technical specs

Manufacturer	7Artisans
Model	50mm f/1.05
Web	7artisans.store
Elements/construction	10 elements in 7 groups
Angle of view (diagonal)	46°
Max aperture	f/1.05
Min aperture	f/16
Min focus distance	0.57m
Mounts	Canon RF, Leica L, Nikon Z, Sony FE
Filter size	58mm
Length	86mm
Diameter	61mm
Weight	606g

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
IMAGE QUALITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

- +** Super-fast f/1.05 rating
- +** Well-rounded 13-blade diaphragm
- +** Stepless aperture control ring
- Fully manual
- Lacks weather-seals

Build and handling

Think super-fast prime lens and you're probably thinking of big, hefty glass with a preposterous price tag. The 7Artisans 50mm f/1.05 breaks the mould at less than a third of the weight of the Nikon Z 58mm f/0.95 S Noct and costing a fraction of the price. Build quality feels solid and robust. Both the inner and outer barrels are crafted from metal, the inner one extending at shorter focus distances. The supplied slip-on front lens cap is also metal but, by contrast, the mounting plate is made from high-grade plastic, unlike the metal plate of 7Artisans' sibling 10mm fisheye lens. There are no weather-seals, neither on the mounting plate nor elsewhere.

Performance

Sharpness is highly impressive at apertures of

f/2 and narrower and, for such a fast-aperture lens, holds up well even when shooting wide-open at f/1.05. What's arguably more important for this type of lens is the quality of bokeh, and that's where the 7Artisans excels. The depth of field is tight at f/1.05, enabling you to isolate subjects against blurred surroundings. The quality of defocused areas is lusciously smooth and dreamy, and the transition between sharp and blurred areas looks entirely natural with a soft progression.

Verdict

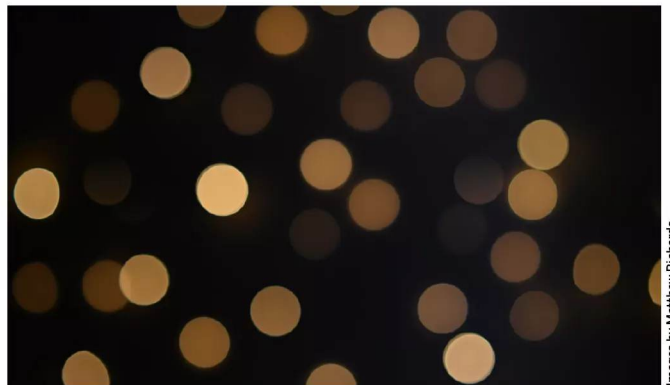
For keeping shutter speeds fast under dim lighting, without bumping up your camera's ISO setting too, this lens has a lot going for it. Handling is particularly refined and the image quality is excellent, making this lens stand out value at this price point.



Above

Colour and clarity

The lens resolves a large amount of detail and colour rendition is saturated and natural. Manual focusing can be a challenge when working up close and wide open



Above

Bright thing

At f/1.05, the lens permits a great deal of light into the camera, with only minor distortion of the bokeh at the frame edges. However, this is almost gone by f/1.4

Images by Matthew Richards

ACCESSORIES

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

The Heat Company Heat 2 Softshell gloves

Price £61/\$75 • Website: theheatcompany.com

Founded in the Austrian Alps in 1994, The Heat Company produces cold-weather gear for outdoor enthusiasts, including gloves, warmers and insoles. The Heat 2 Softshell gloves are a combination of fingerless gloves and mittens, with their flip-tops making them ideal for those chilly but not extremely cold, winter days that we are familiar with in the UK.

The gloves feature a wind and water-resistant outer layer, a goatskin palm and a soft fleece lining. There's also a pocket inside the mitten cap that's designed to fit a hand warmer, helping your fingers stay toasty after they have been out in the cold. The gloves also have a long knitted cuff to keep your wrists warm, but they will need to be pulled up under your coat sleeves to prevent them from slipping down your hands.

Magnets hold the mitten and thumb caps back securely, keeping them out of the way when you're using your camera. However, the thumb covers are secured over your thumbs by Velcro, which can be tricky to open when the mitten caps are on. However, loops between the fingers make the gloves quick and easy to remove.

The Heat Company's Heat 2 Softshell gloves are an ingenious blend of warmth and functionality, making them a good choice for photographers who operate in cold conditions.

Their design balances full hand protection with the flexibility you need to operate your camera.



Hahnel Module Softbox

Price £39/\$28 • Website hahnel.ie

The Hahnel Module Softbox is a small, collapsible softbox designed for use on flashguns with rectangular heads. It mounts on the flash via a Module Clamp, which is sold separately and comes in two sizes – the Module 360 Clamp (£10/\$11) and Module 600 Clamp (£10/\$21).

Both clamps mount by stretching them over the head so they spring back and grip onto the flash. The Module 360 Clamp opens to 35-64mm, while the Module 600 Clamp stretches from 65-80mm. These are supplied separately because it's important to buy the correct size for your flash. The clamps are also compatible with Hahnel's excellent Module Creative Lantern kit.

Hahnel supplies the Softbox in a simple fabric case, making it easy to store and keep clean. It only takes a few seconds to pull the softbox into shape and then mount it on the clamp, where it is held by magnets. Despite its simplicity and affordability, the Hahnel Module Softbox works extremely well, diffusing the light from a flashgun, making it more flattering for portraiture or product photography, with softer shadows and less harsh highlights. It's the type of accessory you can slip into almost any bag for when you need it.



3 Legged Thing Patti 2.0

Price £120/\$130 • Website 3leggedthing.com

The 3 Legged Thing Patti 2.0 tripod is tailored toward both newcomers and photography students. As seen on other recent 3 Legged Thing tripods, the integrated monopod leg has been added to the feature set of the original Patti. It also has an enhanced column lock and more durable leg locks, plus a thread for mounting an accessory to the canopy.

The Patti 2.0 maintains the four-section aluminium legs of its predecessor, allowing it to extend to a maximum height of 163cm or 133cm without the centre column extended. Each leg can be set to one of three angles, 23°, 55° or 80°. Meanwhile, the monopod created by attaching a leg to the centre column can reach up to 166cm in length. With a collapsed length of 45.5cm, the Patti 2.0 is portable and can easily be carried in a backpack. It supports up to 10kg, more than enough for a hefty DSLR setup.

The included AirHed Mini tripod head, which is Arca-Swiss-compatible, is extremely




user-friendly with a knurled metal knob enabling precise adjustments. However, as it doesn't have a dedicated pan-lock, care is required when moving the camera.

3 Legged Thing's build quality shines through with the Patti 2.0, and while it doesn't offer some of the features of bigger, more expensive tripods, it is easy to deploy and creates a stable shooting platform.



DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY GLOSSARY

We explain the essential jargon you need to demystify modern photo technology

 Photography is both an art and a science and, as such, there are a plethora of confusing technical terms to get to grips with. Luckily, we don't often need to think about this jargon, except perhaps when buying a new lens or investing in new tech. However, understanding how your camera works and what these terms mean can improve your appreciation of the medium, help you make better buying decisions and shoot better images as you progress. Here are some of the ones we wish we had known from the beginning.

Aspect ratio

The shape of an image frame, defined by the proportional relationship between the width and the height of the image sensor.

Aspherical element

Any lens element, the surface profile of which does not form part of a sphere. Used to reduce aberrations, especially in wide-angle lenses.

Acutance

The subjective perception of the sharpness of a photographic image, as defined by the contrast between edges, independent of pixel resolution.

Additive colour

Colour created by mixing light from different light sources, starting with black, red, green and blue light, which produces the visible spectrum of light that is captured by our eyes.



Barrel distortion

A common lens distortion that results in horizontal and vertical lines appearing to arc outwards from the centre of the image frame.

Bit depth

The pixel capacity for storage of bits (digital storage units created per captured photon of light). Greater bit depth means more colour information is captured.

Kelvin scale

A measurement of the colour temperature of light. A high value (10,000) indicates blue/cyan tint and a low value (3000) means yellow/red bias. The inverse of White Balance.

Chrominance

The characteristic of light that causes the perception of colour when compared with a reference of the same brightness, but different hue and saturation.

Coma

The distortion of points of light within an image, usually into a conical shape at the edges of the frame and often at its strongest at the maximum aperture.

Crop factor

The magnification of the set lens focal length by smaller sensor sizes, relative to the full-frame format (36 x 24mm), such as APS-C or Micro Four Thirds.

CMOS

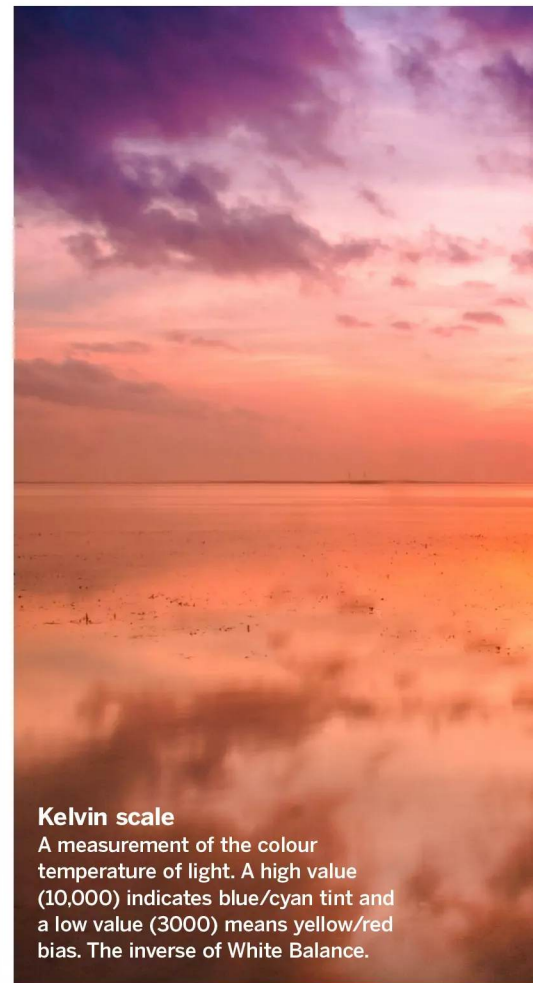
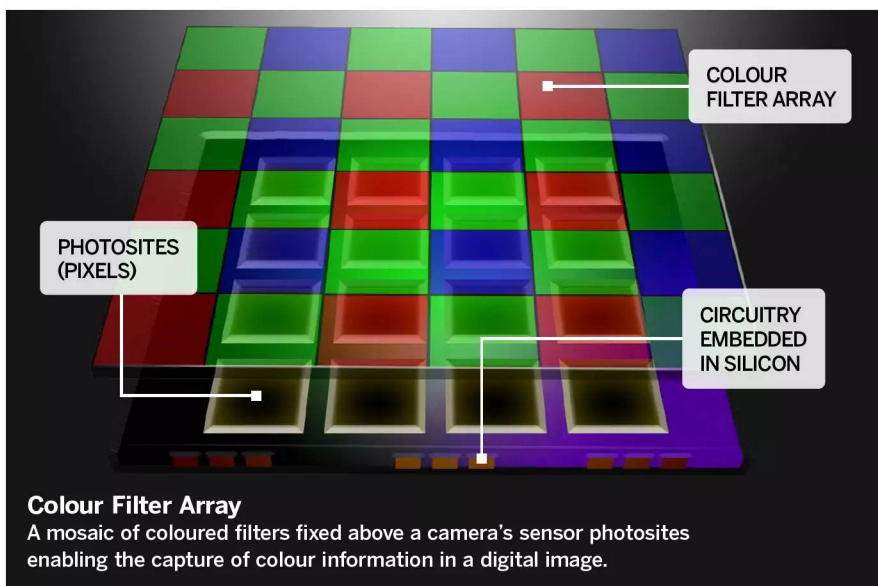
Complementary Metal-Oxide Semiconductor. This is the preferred sensor type used in the majority of modern digital cameras and replaced the Charge Coupled Devices (CCD) of older models.

Circle of Confusion (COC)

A disc around a point caused by a cone of light created due to imperfect focusing at a specific location. Across a whole image, a wider COC manifests as blurriness.

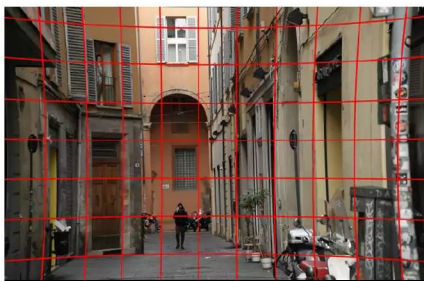
Demosaic

A digital image processing algorithmic process





Hot and cold
Yellows are mistaken as high kelvin colours and blues as low. White balance is the inverse, so you need 9000K to neutralise strong blue



Pincushion distortion
A common lens distortion that results in horizontal and vertical lines appearing to arc inwards to the centre of the frame from the edges.

by which digital cameras create full-colour images using the incomplete data collected by the sensor and Colour Filter Array.

Diffraction

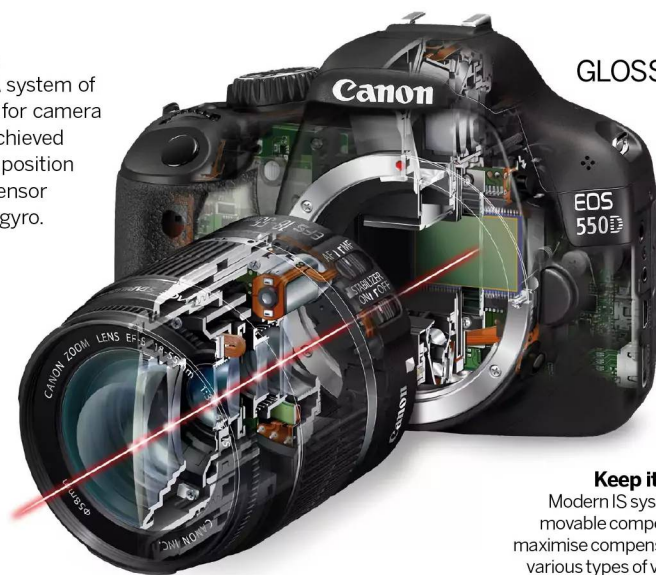
The blurring effect introduced by the interference of light travelling through a lens aperture by the diaphragm blades. Diffraction is worse at small apertures eg. f/16 or f/22.

Focus breathing

A noticeable shift in the field-of-view of a lens when changing focus position, even if focal length remains constant. This is problematic for videography or when focus-stacking.

IBIS

In-Body Image Stabilisation. A system of compensation for camera movements, achieved by shifting the position of the image sensor mounted on a gyro.



GLOSSARY

Keep it steady
Modern IS systems use movable components to maximise compensation for various types of vibrations

Focal plane

The position of the light-sensitive surface within the camera body which, for digital cameras, is the photosite-containing CMOS sensor surface.

Flange depth

The distance between the lens mount of a camera body and the sensor plane. This can vary between mounts, sensor-lens designs and camera brands.

Ghosting

Flare or haze effects in the image frame, which are often caused by internal reflections within the optical system contacting the sensor multiple times.

Gobo

From 'go-between'. A light modifier, usually black or opaque, that is placed between the light source and subject to alter the properties of the emitted light.

HEIF

High-Efficiency Image File format. An emerging file format used to contain image data that is smaller than a jpeg format file but offers superior image quality.

Hyperfocal distance

The focus distance at a set aperture that provides the widest depth of field, using the equation Hyperfocal Distance = $\text{Focal Length}^2 / \text{Aperture} \times \text{COC}$.

Luminance

The apparent brightness of a light source or surface as measured by the intensity (amount of units) of light emitted from (or reflected by) an object.

Moiré

An aberration caused by a digital sensor failing to correctly resolve ultra-finely detailed repeating and overlapping patterns. Manifests as wavy patterns that don't exist in the scene.

MTF chart

Modular Transfer Function. A graphical representation of the optical performance of a lens, plotting the resolution and contrast from the frame centre to the edges.

Resolution

The ability of a camera and lens to render two points or lines in an image as separate, influencing apparent sharpness and detail.

Subtractive colour

The creation of visible colour through the selective removal of wavelengths from white light, often through absorption by pigments printed on a physical surface.

Signal gain

The amplification of a signal generated by the sensor on contact with light. As ISO is increased, the gain is turned up to simulate an equivalent sensitivity at a given exposure.

Specular highlights

A spot of light on a reflective surface that provides a strong visual cue for the shape of an object. These are often encountered as eye catchlights in portraiture.

TTL metering

Through-the-lens metering is a method of calculating exposure in flash photography by measuring the ambient light and adjusting flash output for a correct subject exposure.

Ultrasonic motor

A type of fast and quiet piezoelectric autofocus motor that makes use of ultrasonic waves to vibrate a stator ring, pressed against a rotor.

Zone System

A standardised numerical system for calculating exposure in any lighting conditions. Created by Ansel Adams and Fred Archer, the system ranges from Zone 0 (pure black) to Zone 10 (pure white).



THE MOMENT IS NOW – 2024

Gonzalo Rosendo on leaving everything behind for a second shot at completing his world tour

All images © Gonzalo Rosendo

Which came first? My passion for travelling or my passion for photography? They are both so intertwined that it's a hard question to answer.

However, I do remember once standing in front of the New York City skyline and realising that my old phone camera simply wasn't doing justice to what my eyes were seeing. Since then, I have travelled to over 50 countries taking shots that showed the culture and sights of each new city, village or nature park I was visiting.

In 2018, that eventually led me to leave everything behind – including my job, my apartment and my furniture – so that I could travel the world for 18 months. Despite the many challenges, it is a decision that I will never regret. It wasn't an easy one, though. I kept overthinking things, telling myself how

foolish I was to leave everything behind just for a few months of travel. Yet my heart kept pushing me the other way.

I started nervously in Argentina, my home country, but kept on at a fairly slow pace, visiting almost all the countries in Latin America. From the Atacama desert in Chile and the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu in Peru to the chicken buses of Central America and beyond – at every step of the way, my camera was always around my neck.

I mostly prefer street photography, so my memory card was filled with faces of everyday people going about

their daily lives. Holding a big DSLR makes you conspicuous, yet I mostly encountered curiosity from the locals, rather than anger.

I eventually made my way to southeast Asia, that old beaten path of backpackers, where destiny decided that I would

be stranded in Thailand for four months. And by destiny, I mean the Covid-19 pandemic. With the world in apocalypse mode and my trip cut short, I had no choice but to return to my old office job and rejoin the rat race. Yet always in my mind, the roads were calling me back and inviting me to finish what I had started in 2018.

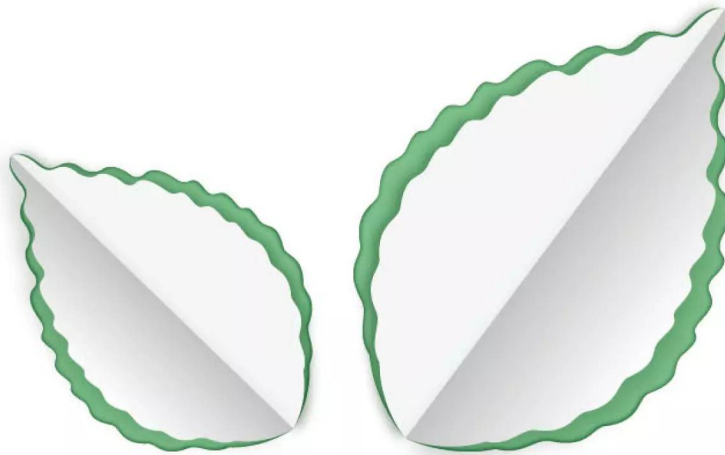
That moment is now. So, in 2024, I am, once again, beginning a world tour to complete the task that I set myself up for back then. This time, it will be Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. I hope I can share with you what I'm seeing through my lens.



PRO BIO

Gonzalo Rosendo is a travel and street photographer from Argentina, who has captured images from around the world over the past 10 years. In 2018, he embarked on an 18-month world tour to capture life in Asia and Latin America, but his trip was cut short by the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, he plans on doing the same in Africa and the Middle East.

gonzaloimages.com
[@gonzorosendo](https://www.instagram.com/gonzorosendo)



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