

PHOTOGRAPHY

MASTERCLASS



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11 TIPS FOR
CRISP, CLEAR
PHOTOS

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BEST EDITING
TOOL

MASTERCLASS

CREATE STUNNING
WATERDROP PHOTOGRAPHY





PHOTOGRAPHY

MASTERCLASS

MAGAZINE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to this edition
of Photography
Masterclass Magazine

Waterdrop photography might sound like a very niche process, but it's one that utilises creative techniques and allows photographers to practice capturing high-speed movements. It's also great fun! In this this issue of Photography Masterclass Magazine, we'll teach you all about waterdrop photography and show you how to get the most out of this technique.

Be sure to share your own shots with the PhotographyMC community on Instagram using hashtag #PhotographyMasterclassMagazine and you could be selected to be our next "Photo Of The Week" on Instagram.

In this issue we were lucky enough to interview German landscape photographer Daniel Gastager. Daniel's journey in the world of landscape photography skyrocketed at an astonishing pace. Just three years after he first picked up a camera, he earned the prestigious title of German Photographer Of The Year at the Sony World Photography Awards and it's clear to see why.

There's loads of other great articles, photos and videos in this issue and we hope you enjoy this issue. If you try out any of the techniques mentioned, we'd love you to see your results, so please do share them with us in our [readers' Facebook Group](#), or on Instagram using hashtag #PhotographyMasterclassMagazine

Happy Shooting!



Gill



MESSAGE FROM GILL ROBERTS
THE EDITOR

EDITOR'S CHOICE

A Hand-Picked Selection of
our Favorite Photos



By: Alexander Jawfox
Shot Details: Canon EOS R,
at 50mm, f/5.6, 1/160 sec, ISO 100

[Instagram](#)



By: Alonso Reyes
Shot Details: Sony a7R IV,
at 85mm, f/4.5, 1/1250 sec, ISO 100
[Instagram](#)









EDITORS CHOICE



By: Damian Denis
Camera: Sony a7R III
[Instagram](#)



EDITORS CHOICE



By: Alexander Jawfox
Camera: Canon EOS R5
[Instagram](#)



By: Alexander Jawfox
Shot Details: Canon EOS R5.
at 35mm, f/3.5, 1/160 sec, ISO 160
[Instagram](#)

CAPTURING LIFE: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO PROJECT 365

Photo by: Jean-Daniel Francoeur



As we step into a new year, what better way to embark on a creative journey than embracing the challenge of Project 365? This isn't just a

resolution; it's a commitment to a year filled with daily photos, each capturing a slice of your life.

WHAT IS PROJECT 365?

For those unfamiliar, Project 365 is a year-long commitment to capture a photograph every single day. It's like maintaining a visual diary, documenting the nuances of your life, the fleeting moments, and the unexpected beauty in the ordinary. Whether you're an amateur enthusiast or a seasoned pro, this challenge serves as a canvas for honing your skills and telling your story, one click at a time.

REASONS TO UNDERTAKE THE CHALLENGE

Why take on this daily challenge, you

ask? In the midst of resolutions to hit the gym or learn a new skill, Project 365 offers a unique avenue for growth. It's not just about clicking pictures; it's about cultivating a daily practice, training your eye to see beauty in the mundane, and telling your personal story through the lens.

Picture this: every day, you wake up with the mission to find something worth capturing. It's not about grand events; it's about appreciating the simple joys. Your morning coffee, a sunset stroll, a quirky street sign—each moment becomes an opportunity to freeze time and create a memory.



STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Now, let's talk reality. A year is a long journey, and it won't always be a smooth ride. Some days, inspiration will flow effortlessly. Other days, you might find yourself grappling with creative block or struggling to find a subject. Embrace the challenges; they're not roadblocks but stepping stones in your photographic evolution.

Here's the scoop: Project 365 will have highs that make you want to leap with joy and lows that might tempt you to throw in the towel. It's okay. It's part of the process. Let's delve into why you might feel the urge to give up and why, against all odds, you shouldn't.

There will be days when the idea of picking up your camera feels like a chore. Perhaps your photos aren't meeting your expectations, or life's demands are taking a toll. The temptation to quit will knock on your door, but remember, it's just a visitor, not a permanent resident.

So, why persist through the tough days? Because that's where the real growth happens. Pushing through the lows unveils your resilience, sparks creativity, and adds layers to your identity as a photographer. Every click, even on the seemingly uninspiring days, contributes to the masterpiece that is your year-long visual story.



CREATIVE IDEAS FOR DAILY IMAGES

Now, let's delve into the heart of Project 365—the daily images. Here are some creative ideas to keep your daily captures interesting and diverse:

DAY IN THE LIFE: Dedicate a day to document your routine from morning to night. Capture the mundane and the extraordinary to tell a visual story of your daily life.

MACRO MONDAYS: Explore the intricate details of everyday objects. Macro photography adds a new perspective, revealing beauty in the smallest elements.

COLOR STORIES: Focus on a single color each day. This theme encourages you to find and highlight specific hues, creating a vibrant and visually cohesive collection.

SEASONAL CHANGES: Capture the evolving seasons throughout the year. Showcase the beauty of nature's transformations, from the vibrant colors of autumn to the blossoming hues of spring.

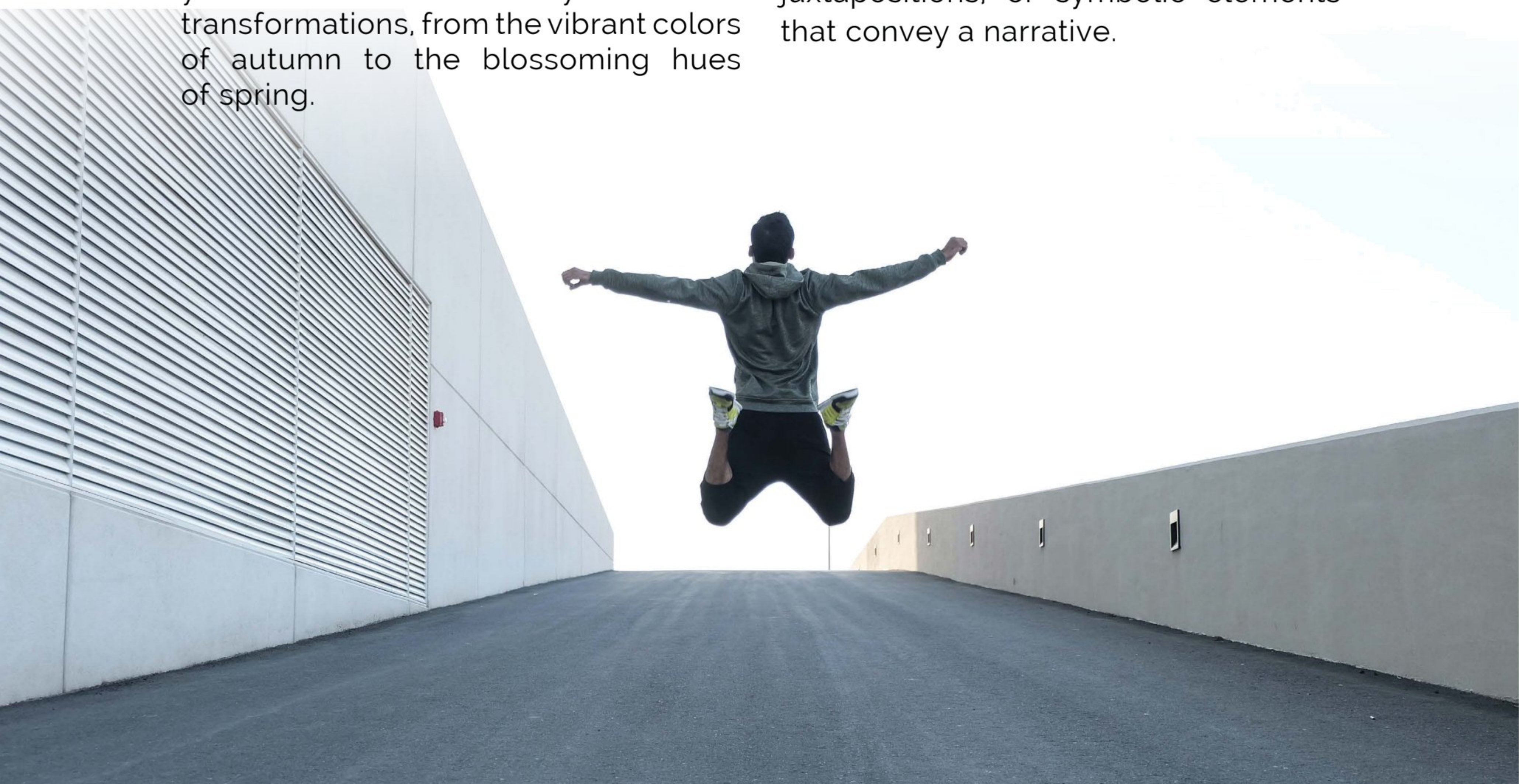
SILHOUETTES: Experiment with backlighting to create striking silhouettes. Capture the essence of a scene through the play of shadows and light.

CONTRAST EXPLORATION: Seek scenes with pronounced contrasts. Whether it's light and shadow, old and new, or vibrant and muted colors.

REFLECTIONS: Incorporate reflections into your images. Whether it's in water, glass, or shiny surfaces, reflections add depth and visual interest.

CAPTURE EMOTION: Focus on capturing emotions. Whether it's joy, contemplation, or surprise, strive to evoke feelings through your images.

STORY IN A FRAME: Compose images that tell a story within a single frame. This can involve capturing interactions, juxtapositions, or symbolic elements that convey a narrative.



THEMES AND VARIATIONS

To prevent monotony and infuse creativity into the project, consider incorporating themes or variations into your daily captures. Themes can be as broad as "nature" or as specific as "textures." Experiment with black and white photography for a week, or challenge yourself with a series of close-up shots. These variations not only add diversity to your portfolio but also keep the creative juices flowing.

SHARING YOUR PROJECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR A BLOG

One of the most rewarding aspects of Project 365 is sharing your photographic journey with others. In the age of social media, the Project 365 journey becomes even more enriching when shared with a community of like-minded individuals. Platforms such as Instagram or dedicated

photography forums provide spaces to showcase your work, receive constructive feedback, and draw inspiration from others.

The communal aspect of Project 365 transforms the challenge into a shared experience. It's an opportunity to learn from fellow photographers, gain insights into different photographic styles, and receive encouragement during moments of creative uncertainty.





Photo by: [Eduardo Gorghetto](#)

REFLECTING ON THE JOURNEY: THE EVOLUTION OF A PHOTOGRAPHER

As the days turn into weeks and weeks into months, participants in Project 365 often find themselves looking back on the evolution of their work. The project becomes a visual diary, chronicling not only the external world but also the growth and transformation of the photographer behind the lens.

Reflection is an integral part of the journey. Take time to review your images, identify patterns, acknowledge progress, and recognize areas for improvement. The retrospective aspect of Project 365 contributes to a deeper understanding of one's artistic identity.

IN CONCLUSION

Project 365 offers photographers a unique and rewarding path to growth. It's a commitment that transcends the technicalities of photography, delving into the realms of discipline, creativity, and self-discovery. By capturing the essence of each day, photographers can create a visual narrative that reflects not only the world around them but also the profound journey of becoming a more skilled and attuned photographer.

So, are you ready to embark on the adventure? Grab your camera, set aside any reservations, and let the shutter clicks tell the story of your next 365 days. The beauty lies not just in the images you capture but in the transformative journey they represent.

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MASTERING SHARPNESS: 11 TIPS FOR CAPTURING CRISP, CLEAR PHOTOS



Photo by: Amir Seilsepour

In the world of photography, achieving sharpness is a crucial element that can make the difference between a good photo and an exceptional one. Sharp images not only convey a sense

of clarity but also draw viewers into the finer details of a scene. To help you elevate your photography skills, we've compiled this comprehensive set of tips and techniques to ensure your photos are consistently sharp and clear.

1. INVEST IN QUALITY OPTICS

The cornerstone of achieving sharp, clear photos lies in the quality of your optics - specifically, your lenses. These pieces of precision engineering are the bridge between the world you're capturing and the sensor within your camera. While it's tempting to focus solely on the camera body, it's the lens that ultimately defines the level of detail and clarity in your images.

Prime lenses, with their fixed focal lengths, are renowned for their exceptional sharpness. These lenses are engineered for a single purpose, resulting in a level of optical excellence that's hard to match with zoom lenses. Their design allows for fewer optical compromises, resulting in images that are often tack-sharp from edge to edge.

Whether you opt for a prime lens with its fixed focal length or a versatile zoom lens, investing in quality optics will pay dividends.

2. UNDERSTAND DEPTH OF FIELD

Controlling depth of field is crucial for achieving sharpness. A smaller aperture (higher f-number) increases the depth of field, ensuring more elements in the frame are in focus. However, be cautious of diffraction, which can occur at very small apertures and slightly soften the image.

Mastering depth of field gives you control over the narrative of your photograph. It allows you to isolate a subject in a sea of soft bokeh or bring an entire scene into razor-sharp focus. Understanding the delicate balance between aperture, subject distance, and focal length is the key to creating images that resonate with clarity and impact.



By: Harry Hundal

Shot Details: Canon EOS Rebel T6,
at 50mm, f/1.8, 1/640 sec, ISO 100



3. STABILIZE YOUR CAMERA

A tripod is the unsung hero in the pursuit of sharpness. It's the steady hand that ensures your image remains crisp and clear, even in challenging shooting conditions. Eliminate camera shake by using a sturdy tripod, especially in low light conditions or when working with telephoto lenses. Investing in a quality tripod is akin to giving your camera a rock-solid foundation, allowing you to explore creative techniques like long exposures without the risk of unwanted blur.

4. OPT FOR A FAST SHUTTER SPEED

Fast-moving subjects or handheld shooting situations require a high shutter speed to freeze motion and prevent blur. Adjust your settings

based on the speed and nature of your subject, experimenting to find the optimal speed for each scenario. Using your camera hand-held with too slow shutter speed will result in blurry images. Aim for a shutter speed at least 1/60 seconds or faster. A good rule of thumb is that your shutter speed should be at least equal to the focal length of your lens. For example, if you're shooting with a 80mm lens, your shutter speed should be at least 1/80 seconds to avoid camera shake.

5. UTILIZE IMAGE STABILIZATION (IS)

Modern cameras and lenses often come equipped with image stabilization technology. When activated, image stabilization helps counteract minor shakes and vibrations, particularly useful when shooting at slower shutter speeds or with telephoto lenses.

6. SELECT THE RIGHT AUTOFOCUS MODE

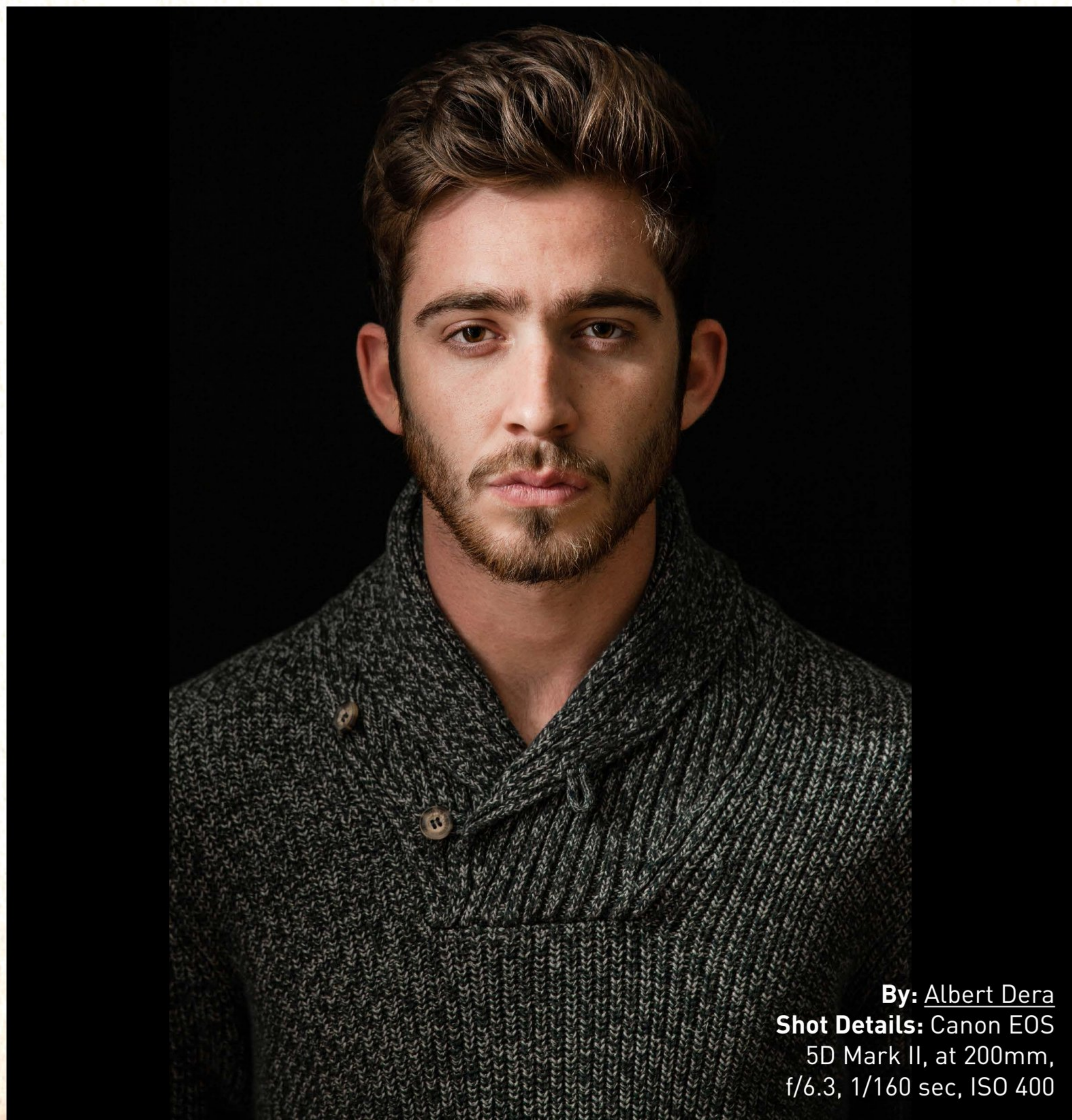
Choose the appropriate autofocus mode for your subject. This is a critical aspect of achieving sharp photos, as autofocus plays a central role in ensuring that the camera accurately and swiftly locks onto the intended subject.

Modern cameras offer a variety of autofocus modes, each tailored to different shooting scenarios. Experiment with Single-shot AF for still subjects and Continuous AF for moving subjects. Additionally, some cameras offer tracking

modes, which can be invaluable for fast-paced action.

Familiarize yourself with your camera's focus points and how to select them. This allows you to pinpoint exactly where you want the camera to focus within the frame. In dynamic scenes, knowing how to quickly shift focus points can be a game-changer.

Consider utilizing [back button focusing](#), a technique where autofocus activation is separated from the shutter button. This allows for greater control, especially in situations where you need to lock focus and recompose.



By: [Albert Dera](#)
Shot Details: Canon EOS
5D Mark II, at 200mm,
f/6.3, 1/160 sec, ISO 400



Photo by: Pouriya Kafei

7. HONE MANUAL FOCUSING SKILLS

While autofocus is highly advanced, there are situations where manual focus offers more precise control. Practice manual focusing techniques to confidently handle scenarios where autofocus may struggle, such as low light conditions.

There are also situations where a hybrid approach works best. This involves using

autofocus to get close to the correct focus point, then fine-tuning manually for absolute precision.

8. FOCUS ON THE EYES

For portraits, achieving sharpness in the eyes is paramount. The eyes are the windows to the soul, and ensuring they are tack-sharp establishes a strong connection between the subject and the viewer.

9. MIND YOUR ISO SETTINGS

Higher ISO settings introduce noise, which can affect image sharpness. Aim to use the lowest ISO setting possible while maintaining proper exposure to minimize noise and preserve image quality.

10. ADDRESS FRONT OR BACK FOCUS ISSUES

Like any finely tuned instrument, camera equipment can sometimes require calibration. Front or back focus issues can

occur, subtly shifting the plane of focus away from your intended subject. Consult your camera's manual or manufacturer guidelines to learn how to address this issue.

11. MAINTAIN YOUR EQUIPMENT

Dust, smudges, and debris on your lens or camera sensor can degrade image quality. Regularly clean your gear to ensure optimal performance and prevent any unwanted artifacts from appearing in your images.

By: Janko Ferlič

Shot Details: Nikon D810, at 85mm, f/5.6, 1/160 sec, ISO 64





By: Houcine Ncib

Shot Details: Nikon D3200, at
50mm, f/2.5, 1/1000 sec, ISO 200

CONCLUSION

Mastering the art of sharpness in photography is a dynamic process that combines technical knowledge with practical skills. By understanding the factors that influence sharpness and implementing these comprehensive

tips, you'll be well-equipped to capture stunning, crisp images that leave a lasting impression on your audience. Remember, practice and experimentation are key to honing your skills, so get out there and start shooting!

VIDEO TUTORIAL: 5 REASONS WHY YOUR PHOTOS AREN'T SHARP

by LEE IVESON



It has to be one of the most frustrating experience's to go through! That is coming home after a great day out with the camera only to find your favorite photos aren't sharp or even worse completely out of focus!

Here's 5 tips that have helped me limit that frustration, and a bonus tip for all of my fellow DSLR photographers out there!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Hey I'm Lee, a photographer from the North East of England! I run a [YouTube channel](#) where you'll find camera, lens & photography equipment reviews. On location photography & general photographic talk! I have a saying "shoot what you love with the gear you have". Buying & selling cameras, lenses & photography equipment is probably my favorite thing to do outside of actually using them! I like showing the real world scenarios I photograph to give my opinions & reviews on the gear I use.

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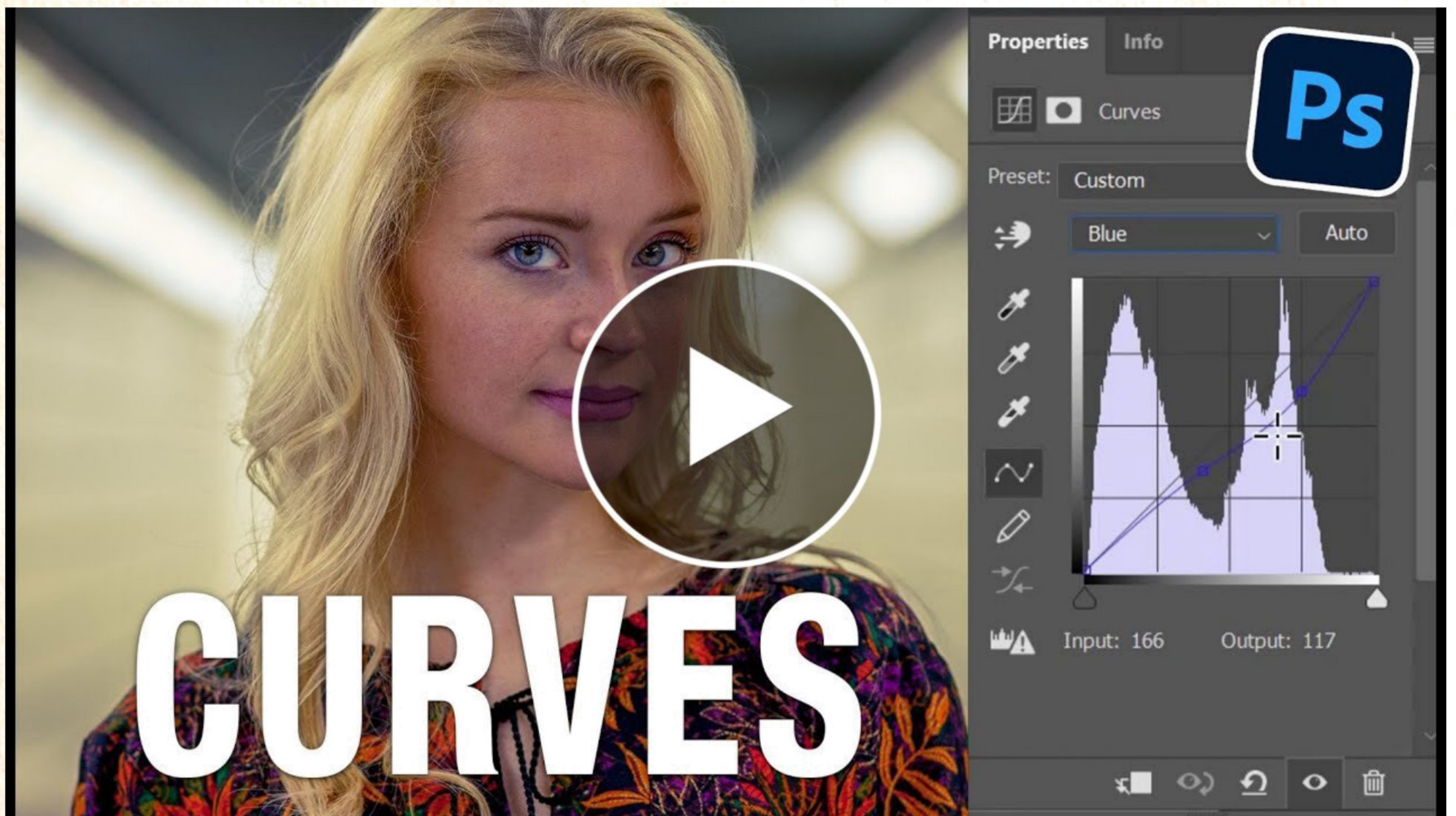
PHOTO EDITING:

**Curves in Photoshop -
The Best Editing Tool
Photographers Don't Use**



VIDEO TUTORIAL: **CURVES IN PHOTOSHOP** – THE BEST EDITING TOOL PHOTOGRAPHERS DON'T USE

by THE SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY



CURVES

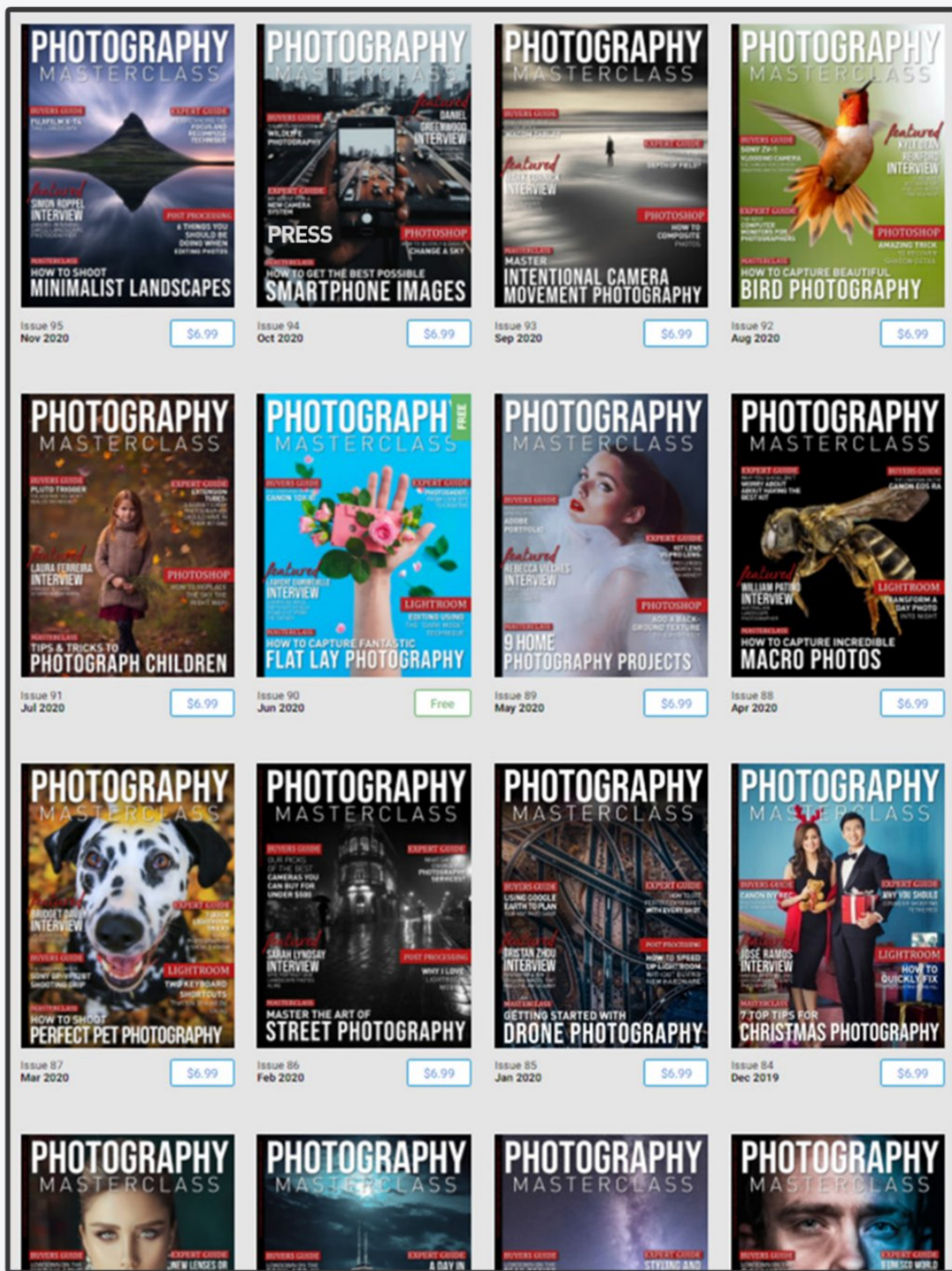
Curves are a fundamental component of Photoshop's editing toolbox and if you are not using them, you are seriously missing out. They possess the ability to breathe life into dull photos, accentuate mood and drama, and fine-tune color balance with unmatched precision.

With a solid understanding of curves in Photoshop, you'll have the means to effortlessly manipulate tonal values and breathe new life into your digital creations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

The School of Photography deliver high-quality photography courses online, in person and in books, and are a leading provider of photography education to schools and colleges in the UK. You can follow more from The School of Photography on their [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouSTube](#).

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If you are a photographer with tips to share and are interested in helping others improve their photography, then we'd love to feature your content in Photography Masterclass Magazine.

Your submission can be based on any topic relating to digital photography, including post production. We also accept reviews of cameras, lenses and equipment.

Submit your articles or videos at Photographymc.com and your content could appear in an upcoming issue!

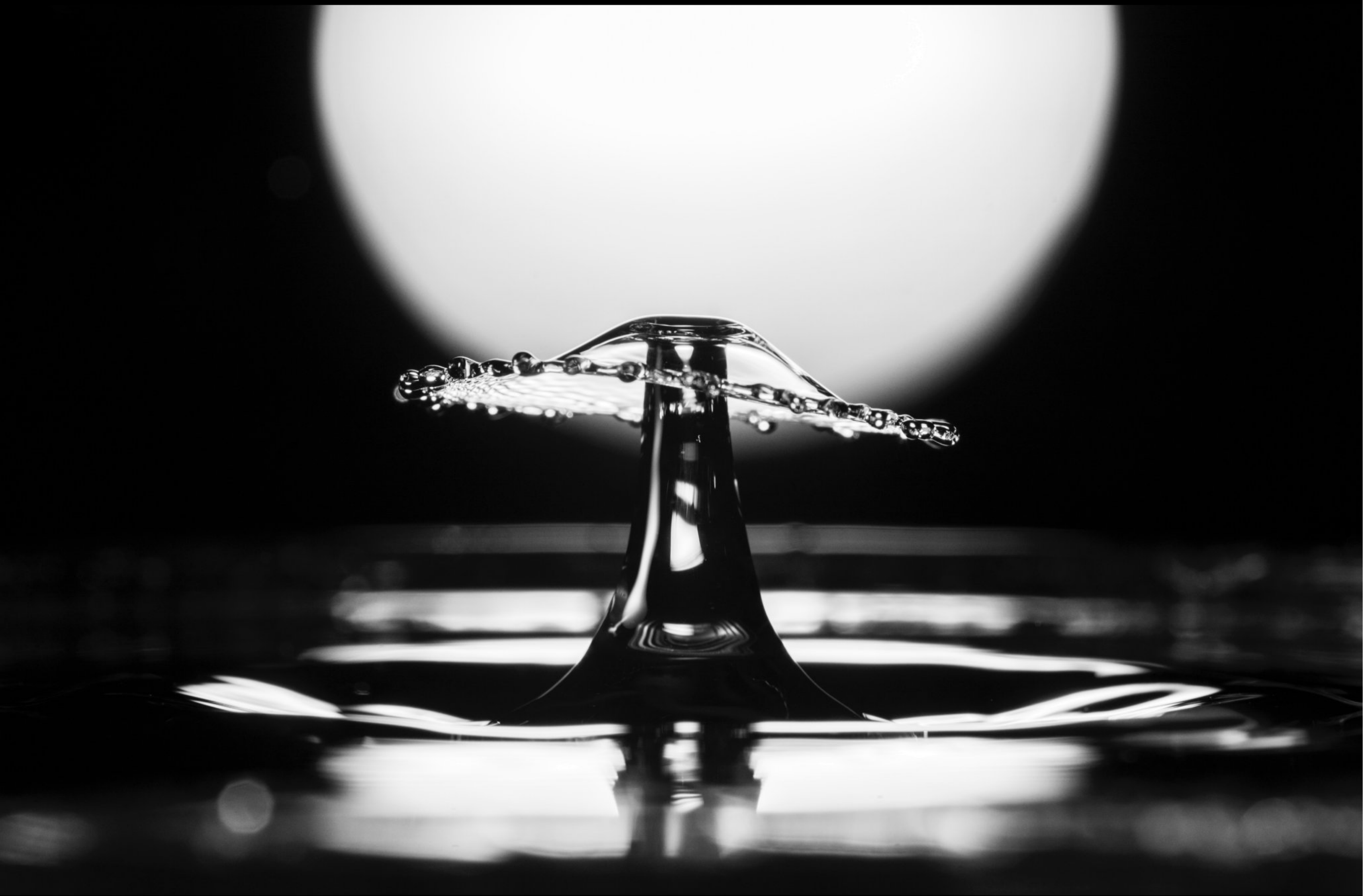
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MASTERCLASS

MASTERCLASS CREATE STUNNING WATERDROP PHOTOGRAPHY



By: Robert Anderson
Shot Using: Miops Splash Water Drop Kit
[Website](#)



By: Mick De Paola
Shot Details: Sony a7R IV,
at 90mm, f/13, 1/250 sec, ISO 100
[Instagram](#)



By: Robert Anderson
Shot Details: Canon EOS 6D,
at 100mm, f/11, 1/180 sec, ISO 200,
Miops Splash Water Drop Kit
[Website](#)





By: Robert Anderson
Shot Details: Canon EOS 6D,
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Shot Details: Canon EOS 6D,
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Miops Splash Water Drop Kit
[Website](#)

CREATE STUNNING WATERDROP PHOTOGRAPHY



by Jo Plumridge

Photo By: Robert Anderson
Shot Details: Canon EOS 6D,
at 100mm, f/11, 1/180 sec, ISO 200,
Miops Splash Water Drop Kit

Waterdrop photography might sound like a very niche process, but it's one that utilises creative techniques and allows photographers to practice capturing high-speed movements. It's also great fun! In this masterclass I'll teach you all about waterdrop photography and show you how to get the most out of this technique.

Photo By: Mick De Paola
Shot Details: Sony a7R IV,
at 90mm, f/16, 1/250sec, ISO 100



WHAT IS WATERDROP PHOTOGRAPHY?

Simply put, this is a high-speed photography technique where you capture a water droplet bouncing off water's surface. You can, of course, use different liquids for this technique, with milk being one of the most popular. Colored liquids can also work well for vibrancy.

There are also a few variations on waterdrop photography. Waterdrop refraction photography is where you photograph waterdrops suspended on an object, such as glass or a leaf. You can then add in a background that gets reflected in the waterdrop, using a macro lens to photograph it. And if you drop an object into water as opposed to a waterdrop, this is then known as splash photography.

EQUIPMENT

You don't need a lot of specialist photography equipment for waterdrop photography. A mirrorless or DSLR camera with interchangeable lenses is going to be your best option, although you could start off experimenting with a compact camera with macro setting as long as it has manual exposure controls.

The ideal lens for waterdrop photography is a macro lens as it allows you to get close to the droplets. Of course, macro lenses are a significant purchase so if you don't have one you can use a lens with a good close focus – lenses with focal lengths of between 50mm and 100mm

should work. You may need to do a little cropping afterwards in post production.

A tripod helps with focusing on a small waterdrop and you'll also need an external flash to freeze the drops. You'll also need a remote release or app to allow you to fire your camera handsfree.

You'll obviously also need a way to control the drops. I recommend using a pipette or medicine dropper – you can also get water dropper kits that coordinate the waterdrops with a remote shutter release but, as you might expect, they're not cheap! You could also use a plastic bag filled with water and cut a small hole in it for the water to drop out of.



Photo By: [Robert Anderson](#)

Shot Details: Canon EOS 6D,
at 100mm, f/11, 1/180 sec, ISO 200,
Miops Splash Water Drop Kit

Photo By: Robert Anderson
Shot Details: Canon EOS 6D,
at 100mm, f/8 1/125 sec, ISO 400,
Miops Splash Water Drop Kit



CAMERA SETTINGS

Waterdrop photography needs precise settings, so you'll need to work in manual mode and shoot in RAW; this will give you more control in post production. The exact exposure you'll use is going to depend on the power of your flash and how many flashguns / studio lights you're using (I've recommended starting with one flash, but waterdrop photography can be done with multiple flashes, which can make life easier).

You will need to use the fastest shutter speed that syncs with your flashgun. This is usually 1/250th but can be slower with some camera / flashgun combinations. Remember though that it's not the shutter speed freezing the waterdrop, it's the flash. But you do still need a faster shutter speed to avoid capturing any motion before and after the flash fires.

Because you're working with tiny waterdrops, you'll need a larger depth of field. I'd recommend starting with around f8 / f11 but you could need f16

to achieve a large enough depth of field. This is particularly true if you're using a macro lens, as these lenses will create a narrow depth of field.

Keep your ISO as low as possible and only raise it if you're struggling to get the correct exposure. Raising the ISO adds noise and, even on the best cameras, this will be more noticeable on macro / close-up shots.

Switch the flash to manual mode. You need to keep a consistent exposure from shot to shot. Start at the lowest power and work from there. In general a power setting of between 1/128 and 1/64 works well, but this will vary according to your flashgun and the setup of the room you're working in.

Most importantly, you will need to switch to manual focus. You then need to pinpoint where to focus. There are various ways to do this, but here's a relatively simple way to try. Watch where the drops fall and then place a pencil at this point to focus on.

SETTING UP AND CREATIVE TECHNIQUES SHOOTING

It's best to work in a dark environment, using just the flash to illuminate your waterdrops. This makes it easier to control the light and gives a consistent look to images. You can use any container of your choice to hold your liquid – obviously if it's going to be in the shot, make sure it looks attractive but, if you're zooming in on just the liquid you could just use some Tupperware. Fill this with water, milk or your chosen liquid.

Place a piece of white cardboard behind your container to form a background and add your flash in, making sure it illuminates the spot where your droplets will land. It's also a good idea to diffuse the flashgun if possible with a softbox or Sto-fen.

You can change the shape and size of your waterdrops by adjusting the height that you drop from. Another trick is to thicken your waterdrops to give them a higher viscosity. Guar gum is the most popular substance for this – mix 1/8th of a spoon to two cups of warm water, stir well and pass through a sieve or coffee filter to get rid of any lumps.

Once you've mastered the basics, it's time to start adding a few creative touches. Here are some ideas to get started with.

- **Add color** – You can color the liquid, the background or the flash. Coloring the liquid could be as easy as using milk or fruit juice instead of plain water. But for more vibrant and unusual colors you can add food dye. Change the background with different colored card or put colored gels on your flash to change the light.
- **Add reflections** – Try using a water container with patterns or shapes on the bottom of it. These will reflect on the water's surface and add interesting distortions when a droplet hits the water.
- **Waterdrops and bubbles** – For a real 'wow' factor, why not photograph a waterdrop inside a bubble? This might sound impossible but a waterdrop can pass through a bubble made of liquid soap without bursting it. Use the soap to create a bubble on the water's surface and then capture the drops as they make a splash inside the bubble. I think this technique works particularly well if you use a bright colored background to help emphasize the bubble.
- **Create shapes in post production** – You can create recognisable shapes and forms in your editing programme by manipulating and modifying your drops.



Photo By: [Erda Estremera](#)

Shot Details: Nikon D810,

at 105mm, f/7.1, 1/250 sec, ISO 500



POST PRODUCTION

You're going to take a lot of shots in order to get a few that are capturing a waterdrop at exactly the right time. Once you've got your selection, it's worth doing a few tweaks in your chosen editing programme to make sure the images look at perfect as possible.

I already mentioned that you should shoot in RAW – this makes it easier to start off by tweaking the exposure and white balance if necessary. I'd then recommend adjusting contrast to add a little drama to the shot. Now increase vibrance and saturation, along with adding some clarity to help your colors pop and to make your splashes look more defined. Don't forget to do batch processing on images with the same colors and setup to save time.

Crop your images if necessary and remove any light reflections or distracting elements. If you've got any unwanted

bubbles or splash areas, remove these with either the Content Aware tool or the Clone stamp.

Waterdrop images can also look beautiful in black and white. There are lots of preset black and white conversions available or, of course, you can do your own. Make sure that you add in plenty of contrast so as to prevent too many similar grey tones in your shot.

IN CONCLUSION

Waterdrop photography is a fun and easy technique to try out at home. You don't need a lot of specialist equipment and there are lots of possibilities to try out. It's also a really good way to learn about using flash to freeze action and can help improve your skills in other areas of photography.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jo Plumridge is a UK based photographer, writer and lecturer. She specializes in portrait, corporate and travel photography, and writes photography, travel and comedy pieces for magazines, websites and books. You can see some of her work at her [website](#) or follow her on [Twitter](#).

VIDEO TUTORIAL: WATER DROP PHOTOGRAPHY EVERY STEP FROM START TO PRINT

by First Man Photography



We take a look at the amazing world of water drop photography. I show you how I created this beautiful piece of art from the original concept through to the stunning final print.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

I'm Adam, owner of First Man Photography, which is your gateway to capturing beautiful images every time. We have everything you need to take the next step in your photography journey. With tips, tricks, reviews and tutorials, we have something for everyone. Follow First Man Photography for the latest updates on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Medium](#) & [YouTube](#), or get the [book](#).

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We want to see your own masterclass shots! If you've put the techniques from this issue to the test, share your results with us. Use the hashtag #PhotographyMasterclassMagazine on Instagram for a chance to be featured. We can't wait to see your stunning shots!

#PhotographyMasterclassMagazine



FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER: DANIEL GASTAGER



Stokksnes Golden Sand

In this issue we feature German landscape photographer Daniel Gastager. Daniel's journey in the world of landscape photography skyrocketed at an astonishing pace. Just three years after he first picked up a camera, he earned the prestigious title of German Photographer Of The Year at the Sony World Photography Awards and it's clear to see why.



Val Venegia Winter Sunset

Photographic Speciality/Style:

Moody/Dramatic Landscape
Photography

Short Bio:

My name is Daniel Gastager (34), and I'm a professional landscape photographer and photo editor based in Rosenheim, Germany.

I've been into photography since 2013 and I love it every single day. I love traveling the world, but I also like shooting beautiful images of my backyard. Photography is a great passion for me, and I enjoy every aspect of it.

It's not just in the field surrounded by beautiful mother nature - it's also about the technical perspective, like photo editing in front of my computer. That's where you can get

creative and set yourself apart from other photographers. I do use Adobe Photoshop on a daily basis to keep improving my image processing skills.

Your images are stunning. Tell us a bit about your story and how you ended up specializing in landscape photography?

My photographic journey was quite fast but also successful. I travelled to a lot of beautiful countries to shoot their amazing landscapes. I especially love the North and the Alps, as you can see in my portfolio. I won several international awards, and I got published in many different magazines, which were great achievements for me.

I love landscape photography because it's so quiet and peaceful. We live in a fast and very loud world. Standing in the landscape always resets my mind and makes me feel calm and relaxed.



Tre Cime Golden Summer Drama



Hot Creek Sunrise



Haukland Sunset Lofoten

How do you decide on locations for your photography?

I love to shoot pictures of beautiful landscapes. I'm creative enough to make an ugly place look good through my photographs. I tend to pick

locations which are quite popular, such as Norway, Iceland, the Alps and so on. I search for pictures on the internet and then I try to capture something unique or at least in a different perspective. Nothing too fancy to be honest.



Tipsoo Lake Autumn Sunrise

You've travelled to so many great places. Which have been your favorite locations to shoot so far and why?

I love the North and I love mountains as many landscape photographers do. Iceland is definitely at the top of my list together with the Alps. I like photographing the Alps because you can find a unique place by simply taking a 2-hour hike somewhere. I love Iceland because it's Iceland - I guess I don't have to explain this :D

Tell us a bit about how you go about planning a shooting a specific location and getting the final image.

In the past I was all about planning my shoots. Finding the right angle of the

sun was a key point. Apps like PhotoPills helped me a lot to achieve this. These days I simply check the weather and then I try to find a composition that speaks to me. I got a bit more relaxed with the years passing by. I'm not too drawn to the iconic shots anymore. I try to find something else, even though I still love my images of well-known icons.

Your images always have such great lighting. Is it luck or are you able to plan it to some extent?

I can plan the angle of the sun and maybe a little bit the timing depending on the weather, but the rest is pure luck. It's easy to check if it will be a sunny day but it's hard to predict if there will be the right cloud cover at sunset.



Monte Pelmo Red Evening





Iceland Beautiful Highland Lake

It's great to see that you alternate between day and night photography. Could you tell us how you get such great dynamic range in your images regardless of whether it's a day or a night shot?

I like to take different exposures in a high dynamic range scene. For night images I like to take an image during blue hour for the foreground and then

one in the night for the night sky. This helps me to get a much cleaner image, but it also takes time of course.

What's your long-term photographic ambition?

I simply want to keep enjoying being in nature and get inspired by it.



The Frozen Mountain

Where does your photographic inspiration come from?

There are many awesome photographers out there and I get a lot of inspiration from them by looking at their work. Some places in nature are also sometimes too beautiful to be true.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement (or achievements) in your photography to date?

That's not an easy question for me. I got many awards in the past and these were all great achievements for me. But I think the greatest achievement is

when I meet new people at a friend's party, and they tell me that they love my work. They heard from a friend that I'm a photographer and they had to check out my photos on Instagram for example.

What's your favorite photo that you've ever taken & why?

The Frozen Mountain (pictured above). It was one of my first "good" images and it helped me to win the Sony World Photography Awards in 2016 as the best German photographer. This was such a crazy title for me and still is.



Mont Pelvoux Sunset

What's inside your kit bag?

I have a Nikon Z7, Nikon Z 14-24mm, Nikon Z 24-120mm and a Tamron 100-

400mm with the FTZ Adapter. I use two Leofoto tripods along with some circular polarizers and ND filters from Breakthrough Photography.



Mount Chephren Winter Sunrise





Norway Stetind Autumn Evening

What's inside your dream kit bag?

I don't have a dream kit bag to be honest. The Z8 looks interesting but I can't afford it right now :D

What words of advice would you give to beginners?

Keep shooting. Keep going back to places in your backyard and try the same compositions at different times of the day and with different light. Buy post-processing tutorials from photographers you like, if they offer any as it makes all the difference in getting better.



Norway Mountains Sunset Camping

Follow more of Daniel Gastager's work on
his [website](#) and [Instagram](#)

TIMELAPSE

ARRIVAL OF SPRING THE FOREST

by JONAS HØHOLT



Arrival
of
Spring

Experience a beautiful timelapse and video
journey through Spring in Denmark

BEHIND THE SCENES:
JONAS HØHOLT'S
“ARRIVAL OF SPRING | THE FOREST”

Jonas gives us a behind the scenes look
on how he put it all together



Moving to a new home near the Marselisborg forests south of Aarhus, Denmark, has been very soothing, and it opened up an area quite unknown to me. I quickly discovered the serene atmosphere of this forest just a hundred meters from

my home, even though until recently, forests haven't been my go to place when spending time in nature. Early mornings chasing wild animals and the ever changing plant life with my camera provided me new inspiration. An idea of a seasonal video project from my local area began to take shape.



This project shows the seasonal transformation during the three months of spring in my local forest through timelapse photography and real time video shots.

GEAR:

Shot on Canon 5D Mark III and Mark IV
 Canon 16-35 f4L
 Canon 24 1.4L II
 Canon 70-300
 Dynamic Perception Stage Zero slider
 Emotimo TB3 pan/tilt

Thanks to [Jeppe Svendsen](#), for showing me a couple of great locations.

Thanks to [Anders Aastrup Mortensen](#) from [ideart.co](#) for providing a great sound effect pack.

Thanks to Kasper from [NaturenIDanmark](#) for conveying knowledge about the danish nature through his Youtube channel.

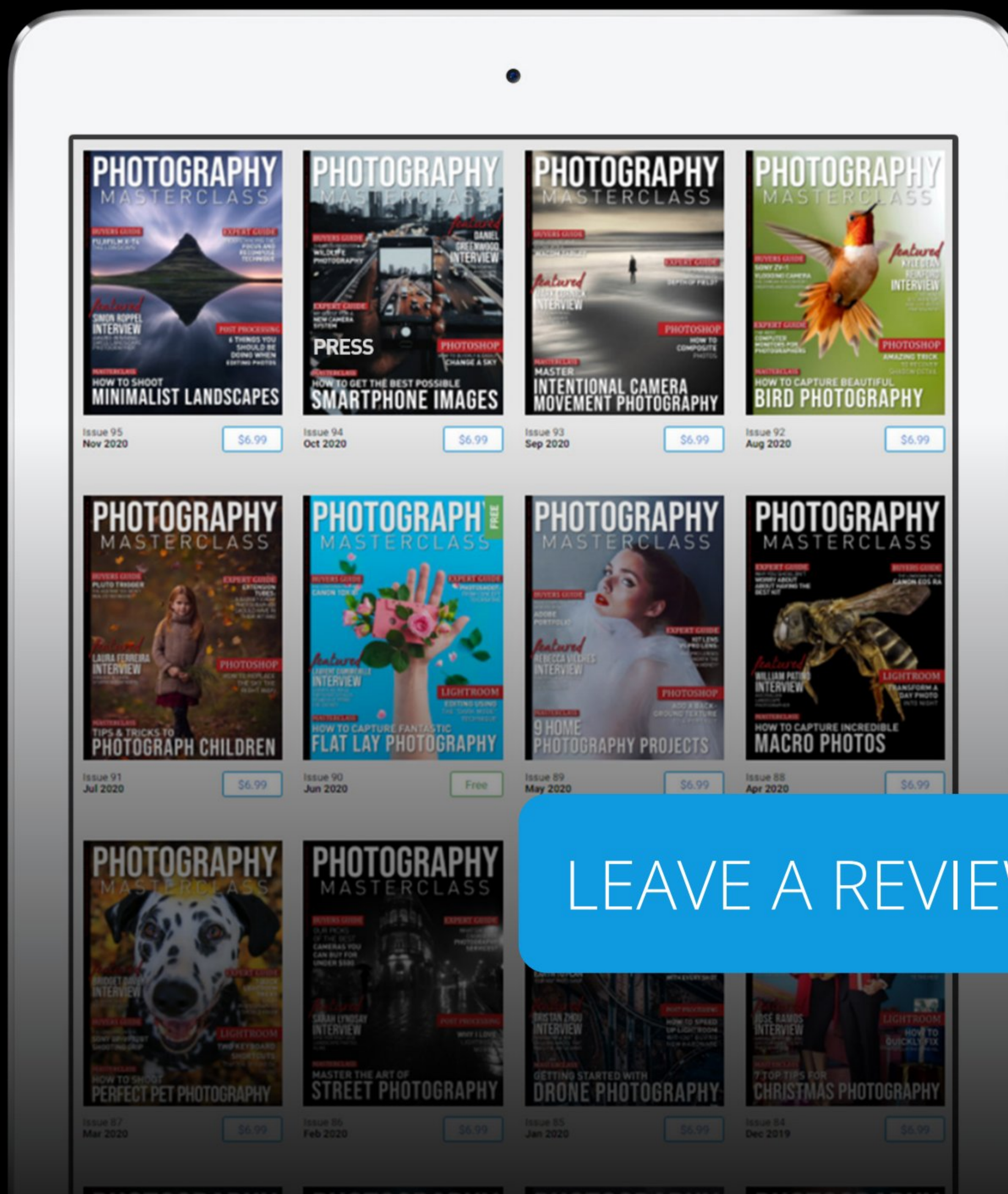
Camera, edit & sound design done by myself, Jonas Høholt

MUSIC:

Emergence by [Christian Wade](#)

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READERS GALLERY

Your Very Best Shots Showcased



By: Kjell Værøy Ljøstad
Shot Details: Sony a7R V at 35mm,
f/8, 1/500s, ISO 250
[Instagram 1](#) | [Instagram 2](#)



HOVER FLY ON CHICORY FLOWER

By: Kathy Holder

Shot Details: Canon EOS Rebel T8i at 50mm,
f/13, 1/500s, ISO 800



rk

By: Rudi Kurt
Shot Details: Nikon D500 at 105mm,
f/5.6, 1/2500s, ISO 200



By: Kjell Værøy Ljøstad
Shot Details: Sony a7R V at 35mm,
f/8, 1/500s, ISO 125
[Instagram 1](#) | [Instagram 2](#)



By: Wanda Sheppard
Shot Details: Sony a7R III at 105mm,
f/4, 1/500s, ISO 250



By: Wanda Sheppard
Shot Details: Sony a7R III at 39mm,
f/5, 1/640s, ISO 320



By: Dawn Best
Shot Details: Nikon Z 8 at 500mm,
f/5.6, 1/1250s, ISO 2000
[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)







By: Wanda Sheppard
Shot Details: Sony a7R III at 105mm,
f/5.6, 1/500s, ISO 250

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FIND OUT MORE

THE LOWDOWN ON THE PROFOTO CAMERA APP

By Ryan Sitzman



The Professional Smartphone Camera App Optimized For Flash Lights

Over the years, I've noticed two main interesting contradictions about being a photographer in the modern world.

The first is that it is easier than ever to take high quality photos with your cell phone, yet most of us don't really take better pictures - we just take *more* of the same old pictures that we always have. For a lot of us, those pictures tend to be pretty mediocre. It reminds me of how some language learners say they speak a foreign language better after they've

had a few drinks. They don't necessarily speak the language better - in fact, they generally speak it worse - but being a bit tipsy can lower inhibitions and prompt them to speak more than they normally would. They don't speak the language better, they just speak it more. Of course, increased production of speech or photos can be a good thing for gaining practice time towards mastery. Still, in the twin realms of language and photography, it's important to not confuse quantity with quality.



The other contradiction I've noticed in myself, and I'm sure that I'm not alone. I seem to have two mindsets when it comes to new gear. One is a strong urge to simplify and to make everything as easy, as compact, and as basic as possible. For this version of me, the perfect gadget would be a brand new cell phone camera with one single button that reads my mind and captures a scene exactly as I imagine the end product (and it also doubles as a toaster and an electric razor).

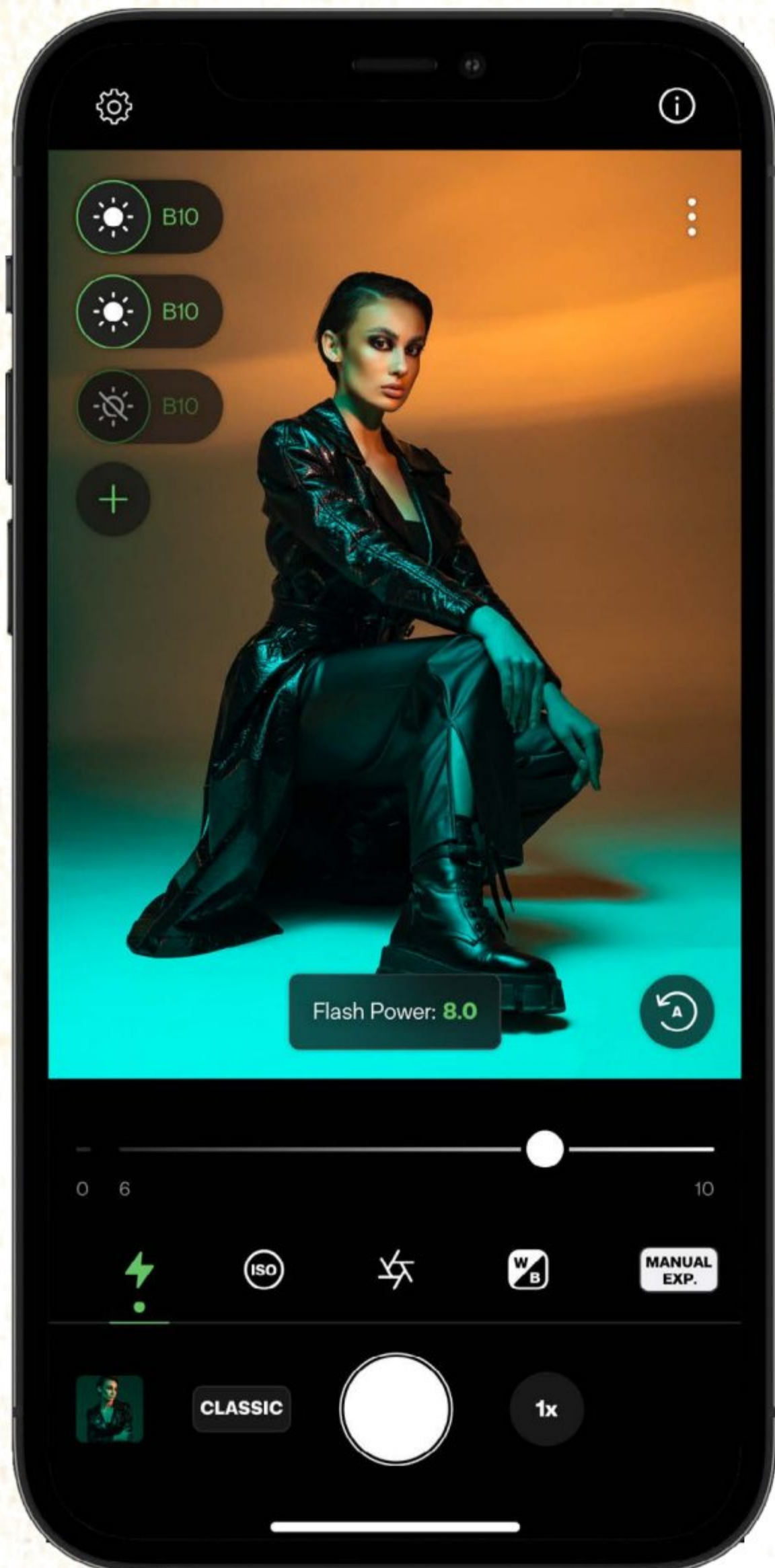
On the other hand, the other part of my brain wants to reject modernity by going back to an "old school" non-digital SLR camera, while learning and even relearning everything I know about photography, in an effort to distill and refine my skills until they become sublime.

I suppose that the tension of Traditional vs. Modern is a dynamic that plays out in all realms of life, and photography is no exception. But because photography is continually evolving as both an art and a science, it's perhaps more noticeable when we take the time to think about what we do with our cameras and our cell phones.

My apologies, I didn't mean to go into full-on Existential Crisis Mode on you there. The reason for this whole long-winded introduction is to point out that I experienced many of these same thoughts and feelings as I learned more about the Profoto Camera app.

I know that seems like a pretty big reaction to a simple app, but hear me out. On the one hand, you can approach Profoto Camera very simply, by seeing it as a camera app that can serve as an alternative to the standard camera app that comes with your cell phone.

On the other hand, if you have the right gear (or are willing to pay for it), you can really take advantage of the capabilities of the Profoto Camera app, and then things really start to get interesting.

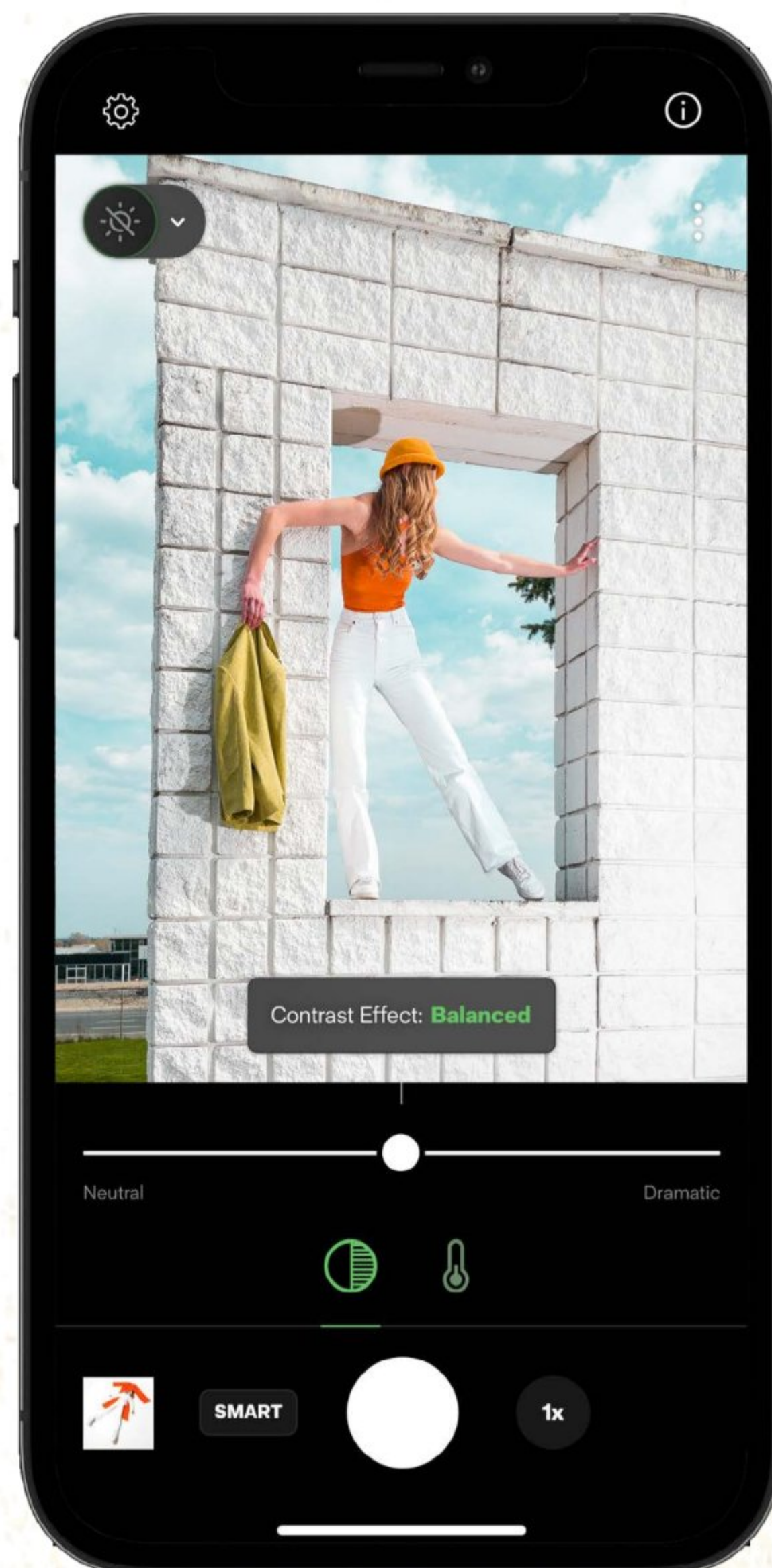


At its core, Profoto Camera is a simple app that you can use instead of (or even alongside) your phone's native camera app. It's free to download, and they don't even try to upsell you or get you to pay for a version of the app with more features. And the features that it comes with are comparable to what your phone camera probably has already, or at least that was the case with my phone.

Profoto Camera's interface has two main modes: Smart and Classic. If you were comparing it a traditional

camera, the Smart mode would be like Automatic, and Classic would be like Manual. Seems pretty simple, right? That's because it is simple.

The Classic mode even lets you adjust the settings you'd expect to be able to adjust in Manual mode, such as ISO, shutter speed, and flash power). Finally, both modes let you add Effects, which are basically filters or other tweaks to change the look of your picture in-camera. You can make the light cold, neutral, or warm, and you can make the lighting look natural, balanced, or dramatic. Overall, these are the kinds of things you'd expect from a camera or photo app, or any basic photo editing software.



If you're wondering whether you should get the app, then the answer is also simple: yes. Just get it and try it out. It's free, and you've got nothing

to lose. It likely works very similarly to your phone's native camera app, and it might even give you more options for customization.



My particular phone is getting increasingly long in the tooth, and at first it seemed like the Profoto Camera gave me more options than the iPhone camera app. However, we may be able to chalk that up to recency bias. The Profoto Camera was new to me and perhaps I was just looking for ways that it was different or better. After playing around more with the apps and comparing them further, though, it seems like both Profoto Camera and my phone's included camera app had about 95% of the same features, although they may have called the features by different names.

So, what's the point of shouting out yet another camera app, when there are already loads of options out there - including the free one that comes with our cell phone? In a word: Flash. If you

have a Profoto flash or light, then the Profoto Camera app positively bursts with value and possibility. In fact, if you have a Profoto light but you don't use the app, then You're Doing It Wrong.

The Profoto Camera app lets you sync any Profoto light with the app, and that in turn lets you use an external light or flash with your cell phone. The process to sync the light to the phone is extremely simple. You just tap the "plus" sign that says "Connect Device," and then you choose the light you want to connect. That's it; you should be connected. Then you can make those same adjustments mentioned before, such as adjusting the flash power, changing the light color and warmth, and adding effects to your photos, but now it will also be affecting the flash itself. It's kind of a Big Deal.





In other words, one of the most significant limitations of cell phone photography - that you couldn't generally use an external, off-camera flash with a cell phone - is now effectively no longer an issue. Granted, you still need to understand how to use an external flash, and that's a whole other can of worms. But if you already know how to do that or if you can learn how to do it, then you will have eliminated one of the last differentiators between traditional cameras and cell phone cameras.

What's the catch, then? Well, for the camera app, there isn't really a catch. It's free, and the only drawback I experienced when using it without a ProFoto light synced to it, was the mild annoyance at always seeing the text "No connected light - Connect Profoto device" on the screen. But the app worked well for me when I tested it like this, and I didn't have any hiccups.

When it comes to using the app with a Profoto light, the catch is obviously the price of the lights. A little while ago, in [Issue 122](#), we did a review about the Profoto A2 flash, which costs around \$1,000. The A10 is about \$100 more, and the prices for the other Profoto lights just go up from there, eventually reaching beyond \$2,000 and \$3,000 for some models. That's redonkulous, to use a technical term.

The other notable issue is compatibility. The Profoto Camera app only syncs with Profoto lights. That makes perfect sense and I'm certainly not faulting Profoto, but you should keep in mind that the light syncing won't work with any old flash you might happen to have.

As I said earlier, if you aren't sure whether you should get the free app, just do it! At the very least, it will give you the chance to try a new camera interface, and you might like it. When it comes to the lights, if you happen to have a Profoto light, that's when the app really comes into its own.

Finally, let's say you don't have a Profoto light, but you're considering whether

you should get one. In that case, knowing about how the app syncs with lights could be a good thing to keep in mind, and it might even be the tidbit that convinces you to go ahead and buy a Profoto flash.

In any case, all these scenarios involve trying out new things and practicing your photography, and in my book, that's always a good thing.

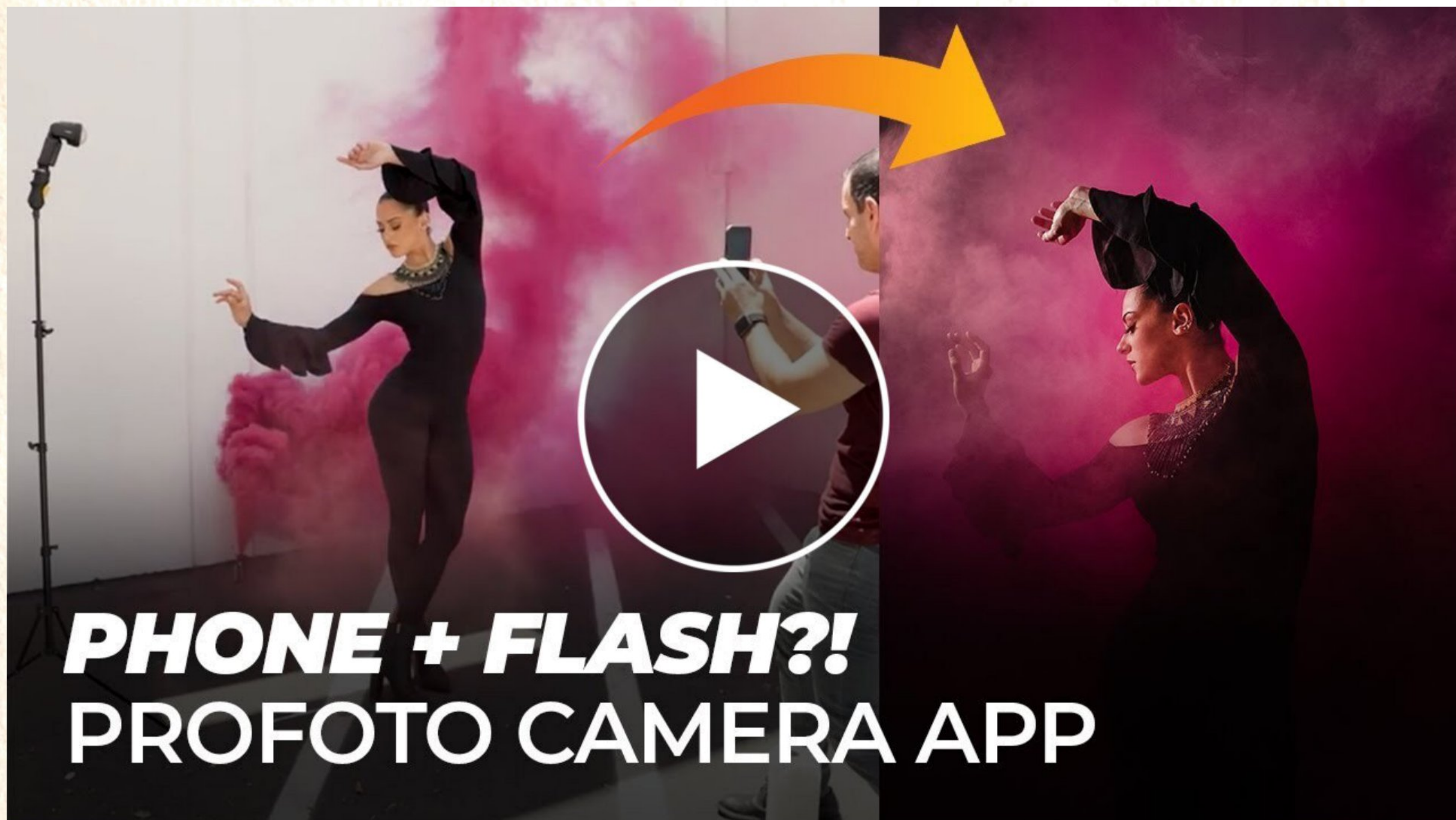


ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ryan Sitzman splits his time between the coffee fields of Costa Rica and the mountains of Colorado. You can find him on one of his [several websites](#).

VIDEO DRAMATIC OFF-CAMERA FLASH WITH AN IPHONE

by SLR LOUNGE



In this video, we're going to be showing you how we use the new Profoto Camera app to create dramatic flash images using just a smartphone (yes, you read that correctly).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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