

# PHOTOGRAPHY

## MASTERCLASS

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WHAT IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME AND HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH IT

### LIGHTROOM

EDITING YOUR PHOTOS USING JUST LIGHTROOM



*featured*  
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**INTERVIEW**  
STUNNING PET PHOTOGRAPHY

### EXPERT GUIDE

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTRAST IN BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY

### BUYERS GUIDE

3 PROFESSIONAL PORTRAIT LENSES

### MASTERCLASS

MASTERING THE ART OF CAPTURING  
**BIRDS IN FLIGHT**



# PHOTOGRAPHY

## MASTERCLASS

### MAGAZINE



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**W**elcome to this edition  
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Masterclass Magazine

Photographing birds in flight is more than a skill; it's a pursuit that demands agility, precision, and a touch of technological finesse. The challenge is part of the joy and, with the right tools and techniques, you can transform fleeting moments into timeless images. In this issue of Photography Masterclass Magazine, let's embark on this adventure together, exploring the gear, technique, and the artistic skill required to nail that perfect flight shot!

In this issue we interview Photography Masterclass Magazine reader and veterinary pet photographer, Françoise Sachdé. We came across Françoise's work when she joined

our Facebook group as a reader of the magazine. Her images of animals and pets really caught our eye, so we decided to investigate a little further. Françoise is an animal lover through and through and you can feel that in her images. Françoise is a veterinarian who decided to take her hobby a step further by setting up a studio right near to her practice. We hope you enjoy her stunning images.

There are loads of other great articles, photos and videos in this issue and we hope you enjoy it. 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:** Alonso Reyes  
**Shot Details:** Sony a7R IV, at 105mm,  
f/2.8, 1/200 sec, ISO 160

[Instagram](#)



**By:** Cameron Venti  
**Shot Details:** Nikon Z6, at 300mm,  
f/5.6, 1/1600 sec, ISO 250  
[Instagram](#)



EDITORS CHOICE



**By:** Alonso Reyes  
**Shot Details:** Sony 7R M4, at 35mm,  
f/1.8, 1/500 sec, ISO 100  
[Instagram](#)







**By:** Jake Blucker  
**Shot Details:** DJI, at 4.5mm,  
f/2.8, 1/240 sec, ISO 800  
[Instagram](#)





EDITORS CHOICE



By: Skyler Ewing  
[Instagram](#)

EDITORS CHOICE



**By:** Alonso Reyes  
**Shot Details:** Sony 7R M4, at 31mm,  
f/16.0, 1/250 sec, ISO 100  
[Instagram](#)

# WHAT IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME AND HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH IT AS A PHOTOGRAPHER?

by Jo Plumridge



Photo by: *Fernand De Canne*

**I**mposter syndrome is something that can strike anyone, although I think it's particularly prevalent in creatives. But what is it and what does it mean for photographers?

## WHAT IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME?

A loose definition of imposter syndrome defines it as a belief that you don't really deserve success and feel like a fraud. Imposter syndrome causes us to doubt our own abilities and to believe that

someone is going to catch us out as a charlatan.

Imposter syndrome can lead people to question everything they do, believing that any success is down to luck rather than qualifications, experience or skill. How does it manifest in photographers? You might hear that a shot was just down to luck, they just happened to be in the right place at the right time, or had the right settings dialled in. Photographers suffering from imposter syndrome also tend to apologise for a photograph, even when the shot is manifestly excellent!

## CAN ANYONE SUFFER WITH IMPOSTER SYNDROME?

The short answer is yes, of course. However, research suggests that it often affects those with the most experience the most severely, with these people struggling to believe that they have achieved anything of note. But imposter syndrome can strike anyone, from those just starting out to those who have been working for years.

From my perspective, imposter syndrome does all seem to be more prevalent in women. This is not particularly surprising when we consider that there's still a glass ceiling for women in many industries. And indeed, photography is still somewhat mistakenly thought of as a male profession, with the industry being bent towards men.

## WHY DO I BELIEVE THAT PHOTOGRAPHY IS STILL GEARED TOWARDS MEN?

In the interests of an explanation, a brief segway about the photographic industry and its attitude towards women. There have been massive strides over the last decade to make the industry more balanced, but we still see many issues.

Even the way equipment is designed is based on a man's grip and hand span (although the advent of smaller mirrorless cameras is helping in this department). And unfortunately, I still hear of plenty of women who have experienced sexism from manufacturers and other male photographers, who seem confused that women are out and about taking photographs.

All this can lead into imposter syndrome, which can be further exacerbated by the fact that women are often simply not as vocal about their success.



## WHY IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME SO PREVALENT AMONGST PHOTOGRAPHERS?

Although I think more women tend to suffer from imposter syndrome, this is obviously not to say that men don't suffer too. And imposter syndrome is particularly prevalent in the creative industries. Why is this? Well, when it comes to photography any image is going to evoke a subjective opinion and judgement from its viewer. This means that some people might love your image, but others might not like it or understand it at all. Obviously, this can lead to doubts setting in.

Photographers also have a tendency to compare themselves to other photographers – usually unfavorably. It's very easy to feel that your work isn't good enough if you're suffering with imposter syndrome.



## HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH IMPOSTER SYNDROME AS A PHOTOGRAPHER?

Even the most confident of people can suffer with imposter syndrome from time to time. When it comes to photography there are ways to deal with imposter syndrome – these are some of the most effective:

- **REMEMBER WHY YOU STARTED TAKING PHOTOS**

Whether you're an amateur or a professional, you probably started taking photos because you fell in love with being able to capture moments and memories. That's all you really need to focus on – take photos because you love doing so, and enjoy experimenting with new techniques, equipment and subjects.

- **EMBRACE YOUR OWN STYLE**

Every photographer has a unique way of looking at the world, which leads to their own style of photography. Embrace this! Your images don't have to look the same as other photographers and there's nothing wrong with them if they do look different.

- **DON'T COMPARE YOUR WORK WITH OTHERS**

Following on from the last point, it's very easy to compare your work with other photographers. It's so easy to view images online these days, with photographs on social media and websites left, right and centre. It can be easy to compare yourself to other photographers, but you need to remember that everyone's style is different and that your work is unique. There's plenty of room in the world for everyone.





### • LOOK BACK AT YOUR OWN WORK

Give yourself a quick boost by looking back at photographs you took when you first started out with a camera. You'll quickly see how far you've come and how much your work has improved. Celebrate your own achievements.

### • TALK TO OTHER PHOTOGRAPHERS

Many of my close friends are also professional photographers. Older photographers have mentored me in the past and now I return the favor with younger photographers. Talking to other photographers is a great way to share experiences, get encouragement and receive feedback on our own work. It can also be really helpful to know that you're not alone and that other people are struggling with imposter syndrome as well.

### • KEEP LEARNING

There's always something new to learn in photography. And if you want to improve your work, learning new techniques can be a great way to spark creativity.

## IN CONCLUSION

It's okay to feel uncertain about your own work and there's nothing unusual about suffering from imposter syndrome. But by understanding what causes it, we can find ways to become more confident in our photography and, more importantly, enjoy getting out there and shooting.

#### 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: I'M A PHOTOGRAPHER & I HAVE IMPOSTER SYNDROME

by NIGEL DANSON



I have struggled with my creativity this year so I reflect on what imposter syndrome is, how I have got over it in the past and what I am going to do in the next year.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

I am passionate about landscape photography and the great outdoors. Follow my adventures taking beautiful landscapes in the UK and US on my [website](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) & [Facebook](#). My aim is to inspire with Landscape photography tips and techniques.

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTRAST IN BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY



*Photo by: [Jordan Whitt](#)*

**by Jo Plumridge**

**H**ave you ever looked at black & white photographs taken on film and wondered why they seem to have far more depth than your digital black & white conversions? If your digitally produced black & white

shots appear flat and uninteresting, it's almost undoubtedly down to a lack of contrast. In this guide, I'm going to teach you all about contrast and how you can apply it to your black & white images. Let's get started.

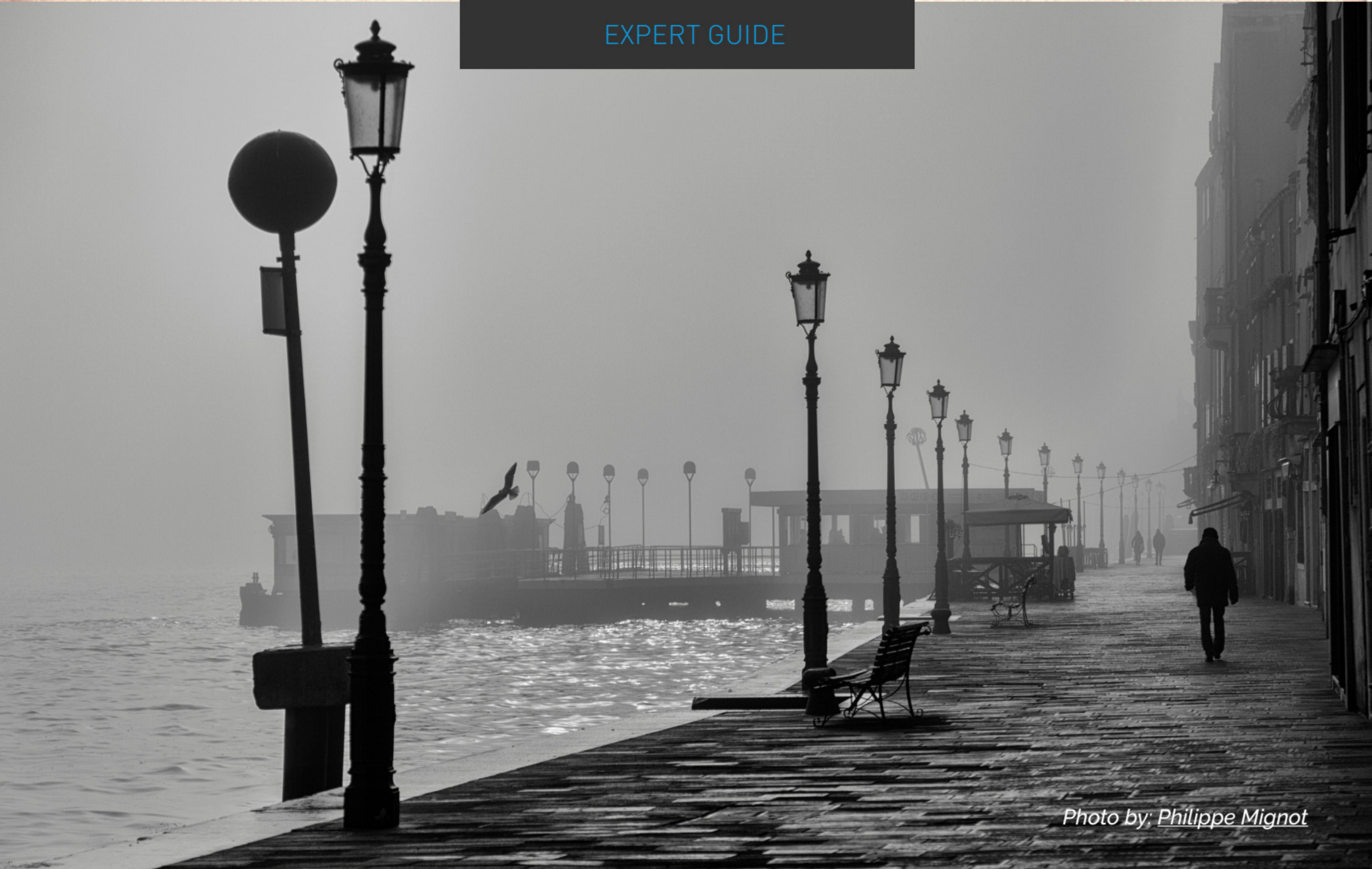
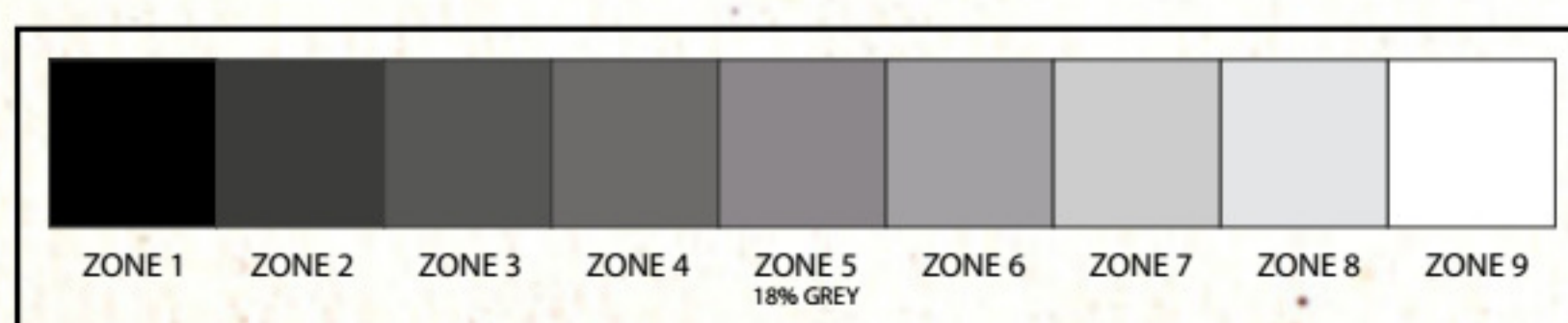


Photo by: Philippe Mignot

## WHAT IS CONTRAST?

Put very simply, contrast is the difference between the brightest whites and the darkest blacks, with all the shades of gray in between. One of the best ways to learn more about contrast is to familiarise yourself with Ansel Adams' Zone System. To summarize, Adams worked out a chart that runs from zone 1 to zone 9. Zone 1 is pure black, whilst zone 9 is pure white. In the middle, you have zone 5, which equates to 18% gray (halfway between pure white and pure black). This is a very simplistic explanation, but using the system can help with understanding contrast.



ANSEL ADAMS ZONE SYSTEM

## WHY IS CONTRAST SO IMPORTANT IN BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY?

When you take a photograph in color, those colors can help to carry the visual weight of an image. But without color, an image needs to tell its story using only shadow and light or, in other words, contrast. And there are other reasons why contrast is so important:

- **DEPTH**

Contrast helps to add depth to a photograph, giving it more of a 3D feel. Shadows will create depth, whilst highlights will bring out features, making an image appear more lifelike.

- **DETAILS**

Contrast also helps to bring out details in a black & white image. High contrast helps enhance textures, patterns and the nuances between black & white.

- **CONTROLLING THE NARRATIVE**

Contrast is also an easy way to direct a viewer's eye through your image. A skilled photographer can use contrast to show a viewer where to look first in a photograph.

- **SETTING THE MOOD**

You may not have realised it when looking at black & white images, but the chosen contrast in them often sets the mood of the photograph. So, a high contrast image might feel powerful and dramatic, whereas an image with softer contrast may feel more serene and soothing.

- **DIFFERENCES**

Human eyes notice variations. Contrast in a black & white image is vital as it gives our eyes elements to look out for in an image. These tonal values will become the main subjects of the photo.



*Photo by: Armando Castillejos*



## HOW TO INCLUDE CONTRAST IN YOUR IMAGES

There are lots of techniques to use when it comes to making sure an image has enough contrast. Before you start though, you need to decide if the photograph you're about to take is destined to be a color shot or a black & white one. It's often easier to get good results if you're shooting with the mindset that your photo is going to be converted into black & white.

You might be wondering why you wouldn't just shoot your image using the monochrome setting on the camera? Well, the monochrome setting often only gives you the option of shooting in 8-bit Jpeg, meaning you're losing a lot of detail and dynamic range. You are far better off shooting in RAW and then converting to black & white.

Here are some simple techniques to try out when you're photographing that will help to add contrast:

### • SKIES

A clear blue sky can look beautiful in color but will be completely washed out in black & white. This isn't always an issue (see my next point) but can lead to uninteresting black & white images. Add contrast by shooting when there are plenty of clouds in the sky. These will add depth and contrast to your shot. The Golden Hours at dawn and dusk are also a great time to shoot black & white, with plenty of interesting shadows and highlights in the sky.

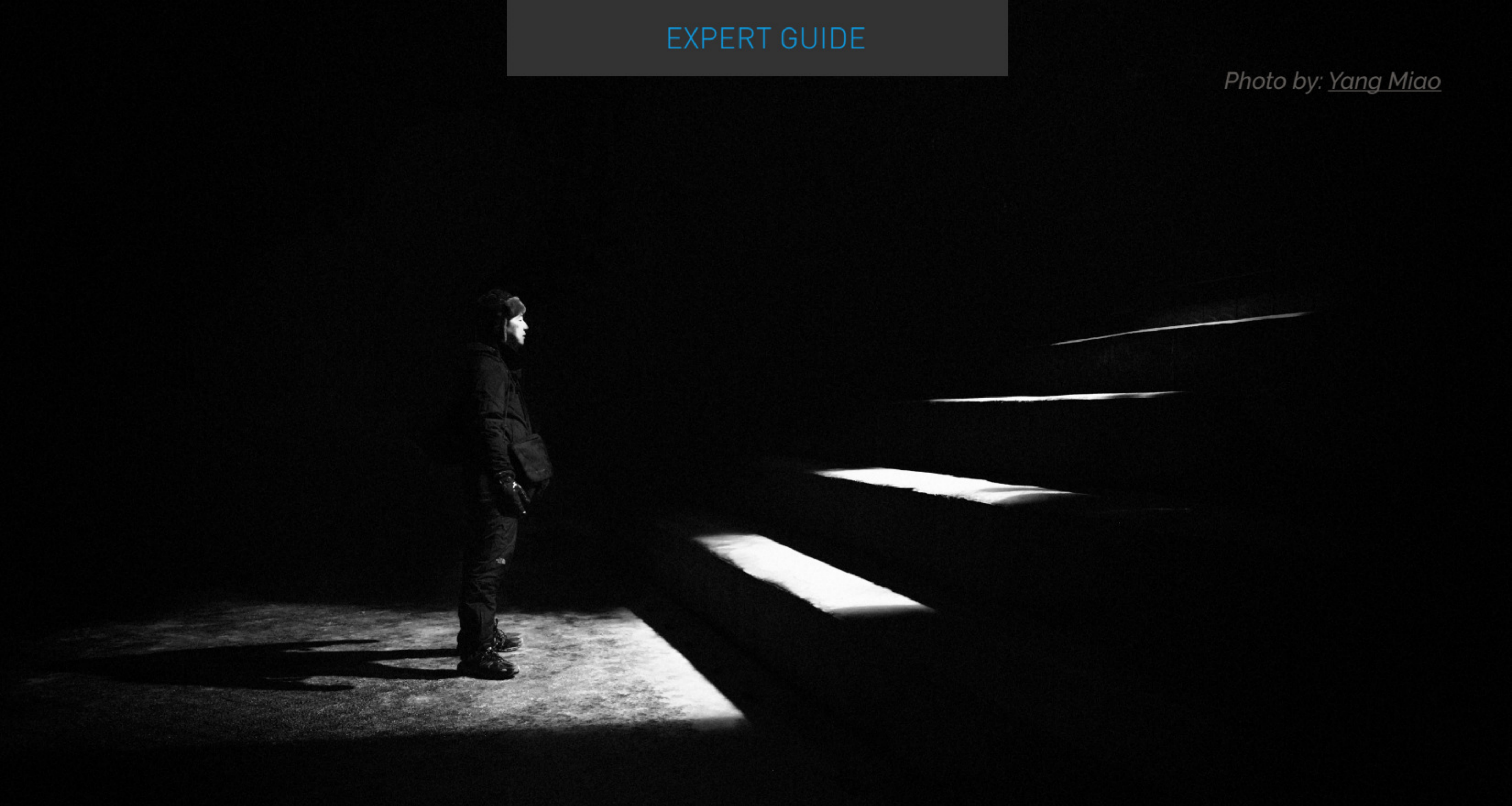
### • STARK SCENES

Simple scenes can be an easy way to add contrast. For example, a dark tree against a bright sky gives a shot with tones at either end of the Zone scale. This juxtaposition can create a lot of negative space and very strong images.

### • LEADING LINES

This is one of the basic composition tenets and is a useful way to add contrast. Using lines in the landscape or on people's faces for portraiture helps to create a strong shot and directs your viewer through the image.



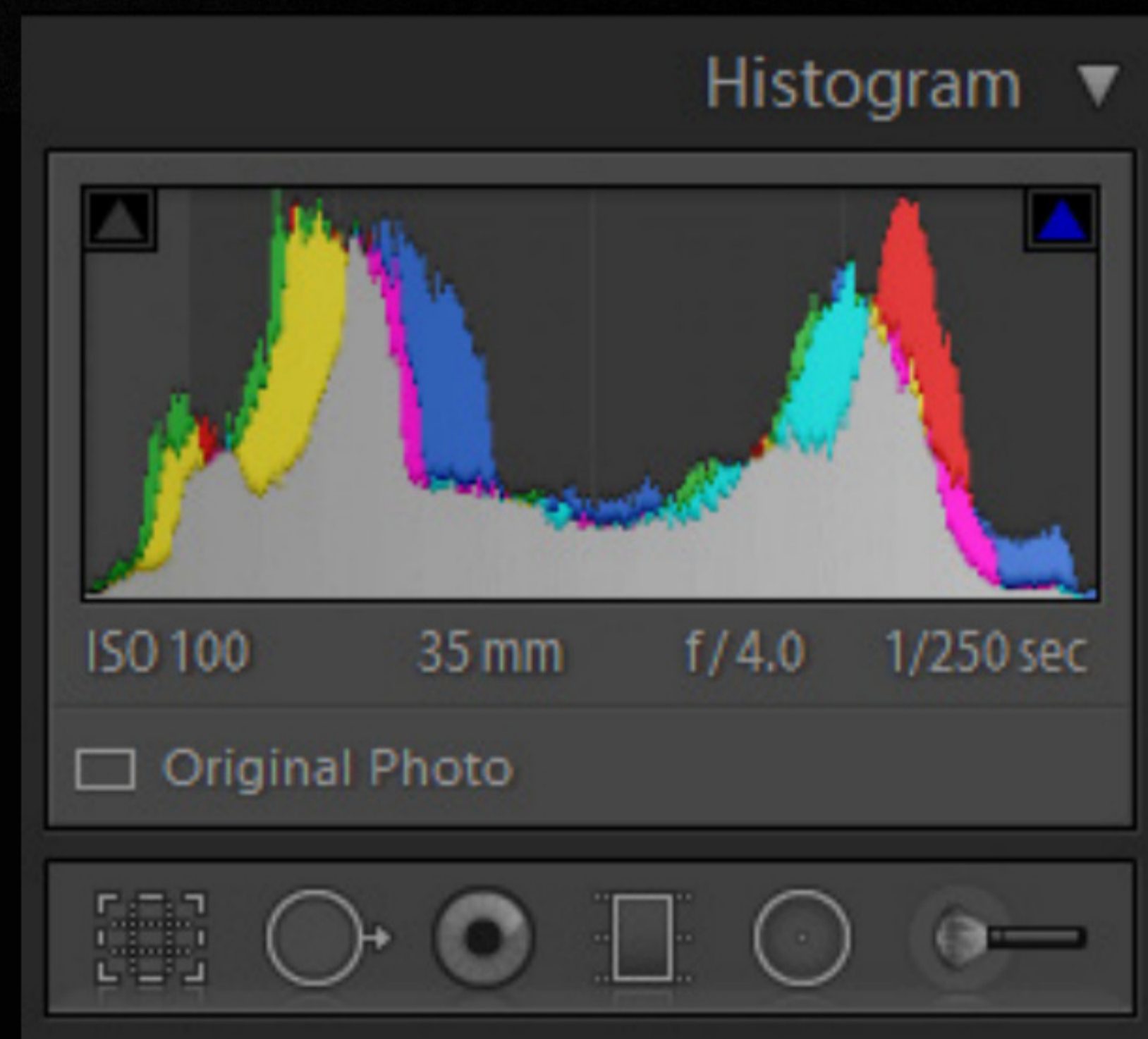


## • LIGHT AND DARK AREAS

Instead of focusing on the colors in an image, start looking for the lightest and darkest areas in a scene. Can these areas be used in your image to add contrast in a black & white shot? You need to see if these can be used to help separate your subject / point of interest from other less important elements. You're looking for a broad tonal range.

## • USE THE HISTOGRAM FOR SUPPORT

It can be hard to learn how to spot the dark and light areas that are going to help give you contrast. The histogram can help to show you if your photo will have low, medium or high contrast. There's a whole article's worth of information when it comes to the histogram which you can [read over on our website here](#) but you'll basically want a histogram that stretches to both the left and right side of the spectrum, showing that you've captured tonal values in both the shadows and the highlights.



## • LIGHTING

Got a flat scene in front of you? Shift your perspective and make the lighting add in contrast for you. Side lighting is the easiest way to add in contrast. Position your subject so that light hits it from the side and you'll add shadows and depth that help to emphasize textures and contours.

## POST PRODUCTION CONVERSIONS

There are many ways to convert your images to black & white in post production, and you'll even find plenty of pre-built actions that you can download to do the job for you. Here are three ways to do conversions in Photoshop which will then allow you to play around with your contrast levels.

### BLACK AND WHITE

Photoshop has a dedicated black & white adjustment setting, which is a good way to start experimenting with conversion. Go to Layer > New

Adjustment Layer > Black and White and your image will automatically be converted to black & white. You can then make further adjustments by going to the properties tab.

You'll find a selection of color sliders – reds, yellows, greens, cyans, blues and magentas. Move the sliders to the right to brighten any tones associated with that color and to the left to darken them. These sliders are designed to emulate the colored lens filters that used to be used with black & white film. So, you'll probably find that the red and yellow filters work best for portraits, whilst the blue and green will be effective for landscapes.



*Photo by: Wadi Lissa*



## CHANNEL MIXER

The Channel Mixer gives you a good level of control over black & white conversions. Go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Channel Mixer and click the box that says

monochrome under the properties tab. You can then fine tune by adjusting the red, blue and green sliders although you should only make small adjustments, or you'll run the risk of destroying the highlights and shadows in the photo.

## GRADIENT MAP

The Gradient Map is the gold standard for black & white conversion, but it is more complicated. This is because it allows you to control every aspect of your image's tonality. To start with you'll need to set your foreground and background colors to black and white on your toolbar (the shortcut for this is 'D' on your keyboard).

Go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Gradient Map and select the black to white gradient in the drop-down box. Now, converting the image this way will give you a higher contrast look than with other methods.

You can now make further adjustments by double clicking on the drop-down image of the gradient to open the Gradient Editor. You will see your gradient with a set of sliders to represent black & white. Moving the bottom sliders in will increase the contrast, moving the white sliders in brightens your highlights and moving the black

slider in deepens the shadows. Keep an eye on your histogram to ensure you don't clip your highlights or shadows.

If you want to brighten your shadows or darken your highlights, you need to change the color of your sliders. If you double click on the slider you want to adjust, you'll see a Color Picker color palette. This should be primarily red, but if it isn't press 'H' for Hue. Now click into the far-left hand side of the palette and slide the cursor up and down to get the tone you want. It's really important to stay on the far-left hand side or you'll give your image a color tint.

Lastly you can control the mid-tones of your image by creating a new slider. You can do this by clicking just underneath the gradient bar and dragging slightly to make a new slider. Double clicking on the new slider will bring the Color Picker back up and you can then select a gray tone from the top left, before sliding the cursor to get the look you want.





## IN CONCLUSION

Contrast is vital in black & white photography – elevating an image and giving it tonal depth and interest.

Shooting successful black & white images is very much a case of practice makes perfect, so the best thing to do is to get out there and start shooting!

### 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: 9 QUICK TIPS FOR BETTER BLACK & WHITE PHOTOS

by JAMIE WINDSOR



These days, color is the default from the casual smartphone shooter to the professional photographer with a high-spec camera. Black and white has become a filter, an afterthought, a way of 'rescuing' problematic shots. But black and white is more than an editing technique, it's a completely different way of working. A completely different photographic language. Making the conscious choice to create black and white photography will help you develop your visual senses and force you to see the world differently. In this video, I run through 9 tips and techniques to help you develop your black and white photography.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Originally from Bath, England, Jamie Windsor now lives and works in London as a filmmaker and photographer. He runs a [YouTube channel](#) and his photographic work can be found at [jamiewindsor.com](http://jamiewindsor.com).

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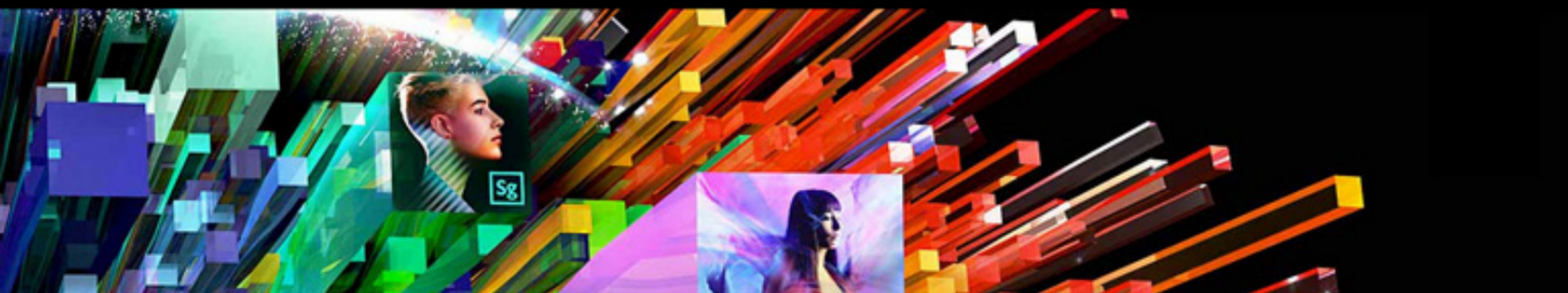
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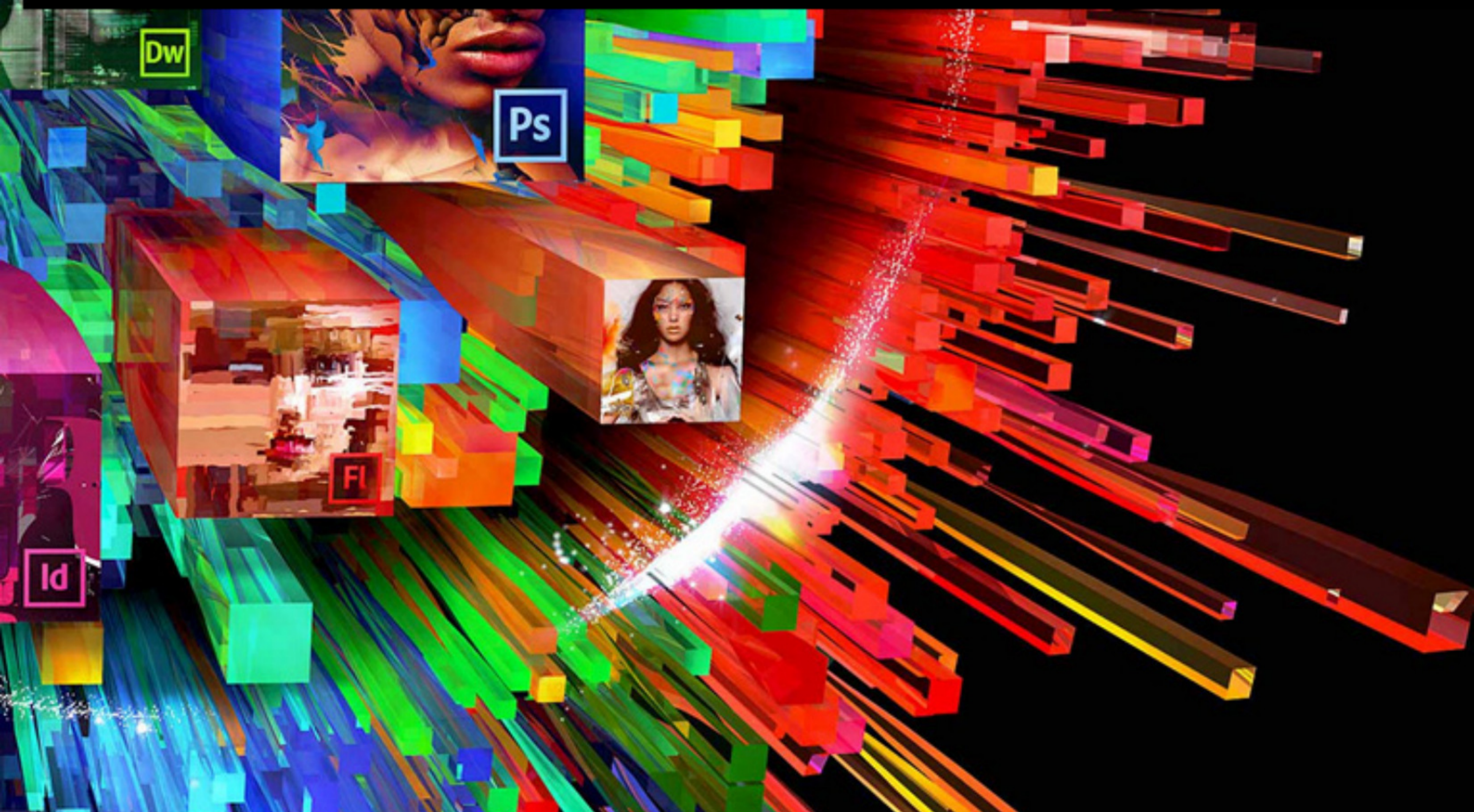
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# PHOTO EDITING:

Editing Your Photos  
Using Just Lightroom



# VIDEO TUTORIAL: **EDITING YOUR PHOTOS** USING JUST LIGHTROOM

by NIGEL DANSON

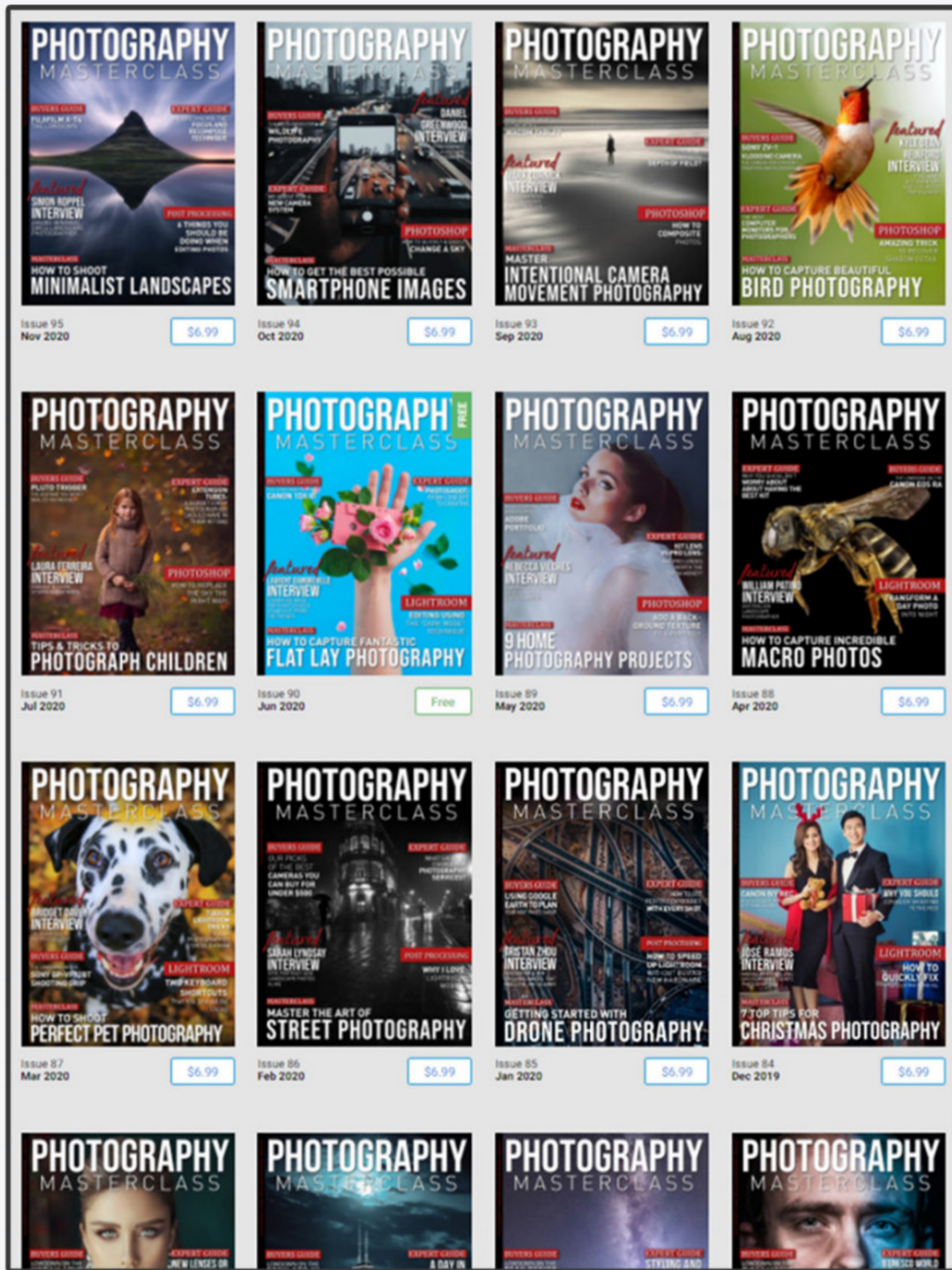


In this video, Nigel edits some photos that were submitted to him, and also shares some of his top tips and tricks when using Lightroom.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

I am passionate about landscape photography and the great outdoors. Follow my adventures taking beautiful landscapes in the UK and US on my [website](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) & [Facebook](#). My aim is to inspire with Landscape photography tips and techniques.

# WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO PHOTOGRAPHY MASTERCLASS?



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.

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MASTERCLASS

# MASTERCLASS MASTERING THE ART OF CAPTURING BIRDS IN FLIGHT



**By:** Vincent M.A. Janssen  
**Shot Details:** Canon EOS at 400mm,  
f/6.3, 1/800 sec, ISO 2000  
[Instagram](#)





**By:** Frank Cone

**Shot Details:** Nikon Z9 at 120mm,  
f/4.0, 1/1250 sec, ISO 200

[Instagram](#)





**By:** Vincent M.A. Janssen  
**Shot Details:** Canon EOS 6D at 187mm,  
f/4.0, 1/800 sec, ISO 1000  
[Instagram](#)







**By:** Vincent M.A. Janssen  
**Shot Details:** Canon EOS RP at 400mm, *f/6.3*,  
1/2000 sec, ISO 2500  
[Instagram](#)







**By:** Vincent M.A. Janssen  
**Shot Details:** Canon EOS 6D at 200mm, f/4.0,  
1/640 sec, ISO 400  
[Instagram](#)

# MASTERING THE ART OF CAPTURING BIRDS IN FLIGHT

by Jo Plumridge



Photo By: Frank Cone  
Shot Details: Nikon Z6, at 500mm,  
f/6.3, 1/3200 sec, ISO 1000  
[Instagram](#)

**P**hotographing birds in flight is more than a skill; it's a pursuit that demands agility, precision, and a touch of technological finesse. The challenge is part of the joy, and with the right tools and techniques, you can transform fleeting moments into timeless images. Let's embark on this adventure together, exploring the gear, technique, and the artistic skill required to nail that perfect flight shot.



**Photo By:** Frank Cone  
**Shot Details:** Nikon Z9, at 500mm,  
f/5.6, 1/3200 sec, ISO 2500  
[Instagram](#)

## CHOOSING THE CAMERA AND LENSES

The ideal choice for photographing birds in flight are a DSLR or mirrorless camera known for their rapid autofocus capabilities. High frame rates, of at least 8-10 frames per second, along with a high enough megapixel count will allow you to crop your image quite a bit without losing quality.

When it comes to lenses, the market is rich with options. While fixed telephoto

lenses, such as the Canon EF 600mm f/4L IS III or the Nikon AF-S NIKKOR 500mm f/5.6E PF ED VR, historically boasted superior optical quality, the landscape is evolving. Recent advancements in zoom lenses, like the Sigma 150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM Sports, now rival their fixed counterparts.

Ideally you want a fast lens with a maximum aperture of f/5.6 or larger (smaller f/stop number). This means the lens lets in more light meaning you can get the same exposure with a faster shutter speed.

## STEADY SHOOTING: NAVIGATING THE MECHANICS

The quest for steady shots involves a careful balance of factors. Should you shoot handheld or with a tripod?

The choice between handheld and tripod-mounted shooting really depends on your preferences. Many photographers find that being able to move quickly in all directions and all heights, means shooting handheld is the best option for shooting birds in flight. If this is what you choose,

make sure you take into consideration the weight of your gear and your personal arm strength.

If you decide tripod shooting is the way to go, investing in a high-quality tripod, ensures stability, especially with longer lenses.

Gimbal heads can play a pivotal role in enhancing stability, providing a fluid panning motion crucial for tracking birds in flight. Brands like Wimberley and Jobu Design offer reliable options that can significantly improve your shooting experience.



**Photo By:** Skyler Ewing  
**Shot Details:** Sony a9 II,  
at 600mm, f/7.1, 1/400 sec, ISO 800

[Instagram](#)





**Photo By:** Frank Cone  
**Shot Details:** Nikon Z9, at 500mm,  
f/7.1, 1/2000 sec, ISO 1600  
[Instagram](#)

## WEATHERING THE ELEMENTS

While often in photography we look for the perfect light and weather for optimal shooting conditions, there's more to explore in the realm of weather and light when it comes to shooting birds in flight. Consider the artistic possibilities that rain, or fog can introduce to your bird photography.

Experimenting with these conditions might produce images with a unique atmospheric quality.

Shooting against the sun, known as backlighting, can be an artistic choice rather than a rule. Explore situations where backlighting enhances the mood of your images, casting silhouettes and adding a touch of drama to your bird-in-flight compositions.

## BEING READY FOR THE MOMENT: RECOGNIZING SIGNS AND POSITIONS

Becoming attuned to the subtle signs indicating a bird's impending flight requires patience and observation.

Keep a look out for avian body language—heightened alertness, a sudden defecation, or a lift of the head.

Birds often take flight just after they have defecated, so be ready if you see this! Understanding these cues positions you to anticipate and capture the dynamic moments in a bird's flight.

## BE RESPECTFUL

Being considerate to nature extends beyond maintaining a respectful distance. Avoid disturbing birds unnecessarily by frightening them into flight. This isn't kind and interferes with letting nature take its natural course.

The same can be said of using flash with nocturnal birds, who may be blinded by the flash, potentially causing an accident. So be respectful in all you do and capture the moments as they appear.

## FRAMING THE SKY: CONSIDERING BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds matter as much as the birds themselves. While a blue sky has its appeal, capturing a bird against a textured landscape elevates the image. Be strategic; wait for the bird to fly at a

level where the background adds interest. Sometimes, a change in your position is the key to a compelling composition.

## CAPTURING MOTION: IDEAL CAMERA SETTINGS

In the pursuit of freezing the dynamic motion of birds in flight, getting your camera settings right is essential. Shutter speed is the top priority. Use 1/1600 sec as a baseline, but consider pushing beyond to 1/4000 sec or even 1/5000 sec for faster species like hummingbirds or swallows.

Making use of higher ISO settings is crucial for low-light conditions. Familiarize yourself with your camera's ISO limits, finding the balance between achieving acceptable noise levels and maintaining a fast shutter speed. In the world of bird photography, high ISOs are a necessity, and understanding your camera's threshold for noise is an essential aspect of mastering bird photography.

Continuous focus, wide apertures, and high-speed burst modes ensures your camera is ready for the flight of birds. It's the small details in your settings that can make a significant impact on the sharpness and clarity of your bird-in-flight images.

Manual mode is often the best choice when it comes to the realm of photographing birds in flight. Using manual mode ensures a consistent exposure, which would otherwise be affected by shifts in the background's tone or color as the bird moves through the frame.

## TIPS TO CAPTURE BIRDS IN FLIGHT

Here are some practical tips on how to physically capture photos of birds in flight, including how to hold your camera if shooting handheld.

### 1. STANCE AND HOLDING TECHNIQUE

Adopt a stable and balanced stance: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart to provide a solid foundation.

Hold your camera close to your body: This minimizes camera shake and allows for more controlled movements.

### 2. HAND-HOLDING TECHNIQUE

#### *Cradle the lens:*

Support the weight of your camera and lens by cradling the lens with your left-hand underneath. This provides stability and control.

#### *Use your right hand for control:*

Grip the camera with your right hand, keeping your index finger on the shutter button. This allows for quick and precise shots.

### 3. PANNING TECHNIQUE

Practice smooth panning: When tracking a bird in flight, pan your camera along with the movement of the bird. This technique helps maintain focus on the bird while creating a sense of motion in the background.

Keep the bird in the frame: Anticipate the bird's movement and try to keep it centered in your frame as you follow its path.

### 4. CONTINUOUS SHOOTING MODE

Use burst mode: Set your camera to continuous shooting mode to capture a series of shots in rapid succession. This increases the chances of getting a perfectly timed shot during dynamic bird movements.

### 5. FOCUS AND TRACKING

Utilize continuous autofocus: Enable continuous or AI Servo autofocus mode to keep the bird in focus as it moves. This mode adjusts focus continuously, crucial for dynamic subjects.

Select the right focus point: Choose a single-point or dynamic-area autofocus mode to pinpoint your focus on the bird, avoiding distractions in the background.



**Photo By:** Frank Cone  
**Shot Details:** Nikon Z6, at 500mm,  
 f/5.6, 1/2500 sec, ISO 500

[Instagram](#)

## 6. ZOOM AND COMPOSITION

**Zoom out for initial tracking:** When a bird is at a distance, zoom out to easily locate and track it in your viewfinder. Zoom in for detailed shots when the bird gets closer.

**Pay attention to composition:** Aim to capture the bird with appealing backgrounds and consider the rule of thirds for a balanced composition.

**Remember if you are using a camera with a high enough megapixel count you can always crop your image in post-**

**production, if you didn't manage to get the composition quite right in camera.**

## 7. PRACTICE AND PATIENCE

**Spend time practicing by familiarizing yourself with your camera's controls and autofocus settings by practicing on slower-moving subjects before tackling birds in flight.**

**Be patient and observant:** Understanding bird behavior and flight patterns enhances your ability to anticipate movements, increasing your chances of capturing compelling shots.



**Photo By:** Frank Cone

**Shot Details:** Nikon Z6, at 600mm,  
f/6.3, 1/2000 sec, ISO 2500

[Instagram](#)

**Photo By:** Frank Cone  
**Shot Details:** Nikon D500,  
at 600mm, f/6.3, ISO 2500  
[Instagram](#)



## IN CONCLUSION

Remember, practice is key. Experiment with these techniques in different settings and lighting conditions to find what works best for you. Adjust your approach based on the specific challenges presented by the birds and the environment you're shooting in.

The path to mastering photographing birds in flight is paved with countless

clicks, trials, and errors. Local parks can be your training ground. Each bird presents an opportunity to refine your settings, test your equipment, and enhance your intuition.

Embrace the iterative nature of practice; every failure is a stepping stone toward improvement. Develop a keen eye for the subtleties of flight, a steady hand for your camera, and an unwavering passion getting better at your craft.

### 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: HOW TO CAPTURE BIRDS IN FLIGHT

by First Man Photography

## HOW TO CAPTURE BIRDS IN FLIGHT



Photographing birds in flight is one of the most challenging and rewarding shots to capture in all of photography especially when there is often no second chance. Watch the video now to see how capture amazing images of birds in flight using these simple and effective techniques.

### 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](#).

# SHARE YOUR MASTERCLASS SHOTS

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: FRANÇOISE SACHDÉ



We came across Françoise's work when she joined our Facebook group as a reader of Photography Masterclass Magazine. Her images of animals and pets really caught our eye, so we decided to investigate a little further. Françoise is an animal lover through and through and you can feel that in her images. Françoise is a veterinarian who decided to take her hobby a step further by setting up a studio right near to her practice. We hope you enjoy her stunning images.





***Photographic Speciality/Style:***

Pets and their owners

***Short Bio:***

I work as a veterinarian in the south of France and turned my passion for photography into a part-time business alongside my veterinary practice two years ago.

I have been practicing photography as a hobby since I was a teenager. I discovered photography during a workshop at school. I started with a film camera and experimented in a very basic darkroom in my parent's basement. The development was as interesting and exciting as taking photos. I have very good memories of those moments.

Then I had a very long break, not touching my camera for over 20 years, and in the meantime digital cameras flooded the market. It took me a while to get back into it, because I had difficulty considering digital photography as "real" photography.

When I took the plunge, internet was a great help to me in training and discovering development and retouching software. I have been a member of different online-learning platforms, and still am for some of them, I've followed online tutorials, and finally also booked a few face-to-face workshops with pet and studio photographers to improve my skills. This is how even as a self-taught person; it is possible today to achieve your goals.





***Your animal images are really captivating. Tell us a bit about your story and how you ended up getting into this photography genre.***

Animals are at the centre of my interests. Although I explored different genres of photography, I found pet photography the most captivating. One of the reasons is that I like the contact with them. I made animals my job as a veterinarian, they surround me at home in my free time, and it is therefore natural that they attract me as models.

I appreciate their naturalness and spontaneity in front of my lens, without worrying about the camera.

I'm a bit introverted and not very comfortable giving people instructions on how to pose, I'm much more

comfortable with animals. And that's what's great about them - they don't need direction, they are who they are... like children. We learn to take what they offer.

The other reason is that I really like to capture the soul and character of the animal, but also the bond and the relationship they have with their humans. This really melts my heart.

When photographing people with their pets, they suddenly no longer need instructions on how to pose. They immediately feel soothed and can behave in a completely natural way and without shyness, and so do I.

I consider animals to be full members of the family, who deserve a place in our precious family memories.

***Am I correct in saying that your studio located by the veterinary practice? Tell us a bit about it and your setup for photographing animals.***

I started pet photography with an improvised studio in a room in my veterinary practice where I could initially practice before offering charity shoots for a local shelter. But when I had the opportunity to buy a small house with a garden 2 minutes from my veterinary practice, it was a great opportunity to set up a professional studio with more and better equipment.

My classic setup for starting a session with cats or dogs is to place them on something, so they are easier to control. I let them sit, lie down, or stand on a platform, a chair or I sit them in

a basket, so that they have a limited space where they quickly understand that I like them to stay.

You can't prepare the light set up for an animal session like you do for a session with humans. As the animals move a lot and we don't have 100% control over how they will be placed where exactly, I use a two-or three-light setup, to be sure that my models will be lit evenly, whether they are facing one direction or the other.

On rare occasions, with very obedient dogs, I can use more sophisticated lighting to play with light and shadow and achieve a more artistic result, but this is not the case with the majority of my models.





***Are there any tricks that you could let us know about as to how you go about being able to get such great shots? Over time have you become aware of specific animal behaviour that has helped with getting the shot or is it more about waiting the right moment?***

As a vet, I'm used to handling animals as stress free as possible, and I also have some solid knowledge about their behaviour. Pet owners are frequently surprised how we pet photographers can manage to get some great shots of their overactive or sometimes very shy furry friends.

In order to create a pleasant and relaxing atmosphere for the animals as soon as they enter the studio, I spray a calming and de-stressing spray made from natural essential oils in my studio, as well as on the props that I will use for the session.

I first let the animals explore the studio while I chat with the pet parents.

Concurrently, I trigger the flash to observe the animal's reaction and to let them get used to it. Most of them don't seem bothered by the flash.

All interactions with the animals are approached playfully. I never coerce them into specific poses but rather work with what they naturally offer. Rather than waiting for the ideal moment, the key is to stay focused and act swiftly, as a dog or cat may hold a desired position or display a cute expression for only a split second.

To capture the pet's attention and cooperation, I use treats, toys, and amusing noises. Importantly, I make it a point to give them a break after a few shots, even if they are cooperative, to maintain their happiness and alertness. Since asking a dog or cat to smile isn't feasible, creating a relaxed and joyful environment is crucial for eliciting pleasant expressions and body language. It's all about fun and friendliness.





***What are the challenges you face with animal photography and what was the most challenging shoot you've had?***

The primary challenge lies in the unpredictability of how an animal will respond during a session. It's a new situation, a new discovery of the animal's state of mind for every single session, and I have to adapt individually.

Amongst the various challenges, cats in the studio prove to be the most demanding. Unlike dogs, they are unaccustomed to travel and strongly dislike unfamiliar environments. Some cats tend to seek refuge behind furniture, aiming to be inconspicuous. They are less responsive to amusing sounds, they are less treat-motivated and stress often induces them to freeze or withdraw into introversion. Patience

and a calm demeanour are crucial while handling cats, but if you can get them to play, you have won their trust.

Nevertheless my most challenging session involved a highly nervous dog. The only one I've had in the studio so far, who was terrified of the flashes. I could only manage to get three photos of him. Despite attempts with treats, toys, and patience, I could only capture three photos before deciding to stop the session. I firmly believe that no photograph is worth causing distress to an animal. Following this experience, I invested in continuous lighting specifically for such situations. Even though I haven't needed to use it yet, having a plan B in place reassures me that I have an animal-friendly alternative if needed in the future.

***How do you go about deciding on and sourcing props for each shoot?***

I maintain a variety of props in diverse sizes and colors to accommodate different animals. For instance, a little Jack Russel terrier might get lost on a large couch, while a German Shepherd could struggle to maintain balance on a smaller prop.

In selecting props, I take color theory into consideration to ensure they complement the fur of the dog or cat. I source my props from decoration shops, as well as second-hand stores and flea markets, where unique vintage or antique accessories can be found. Occasionally I come across something that is aesthetically pleasing and that I really want, like my vintage gramophone. Although it's not a prop used in my everyday practice, it serves

as a beautiful and distinctive piece in certain sessions.

***Where does your photographic inspiration come from?***

I embrace a wide range of art and photography genres, drawing inspiration from various sources such as paintings, photographs and stories I have read. My creative process usually begins with a specific mood, lighting or scenery, which I then aim to translate into the realm of pet photography.

I particularly enjoy including narrative elements in photos, a skill I am actively working to develop and refine in my photography. Although integrating storytelling is relatively simple in lifestyle photography, it poses a significant challenge in the studio.









***We see that you recently had an exhibition. Could you tell us more about it and the topic that you are trying to raise awareness for?***

I've been documenting the daily activities of 16 women farmers as they carry out their work on their respective farms. My goal is to shed light on the significant and commendable efforts of these women in an agricultural landscape that has traditionally been dominated by men. In France, women in agriculture have historically received minimal or no recognition, and I believe it's crucial to amplify their visibility and acknowledgment.

Aligning with my passion for animals, I selected these 16 women due to their involvement with cows, goats, sheep, horses, and their commitment to ethical agricultural practices and animal welfare. For instance, I photographed three vegetable gardeners who captured my attention for their use of animal traction in working the land.

This project prompted me to step out of my comfort zone and immerse myself in an unfamiliar environment. It's very different to properly light a little studio space or a large stable!

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

One of my significant accomplishments is overcoming imposter syndrome and gaining confidence in the field of photography. While I am a qualified and experienced professional in veterinary medicine, my journey in photography has been self-taught. It took me some time and hands-on experience to feel legitimate about getting paid for photo services.

***What's your favorite photo/image that you've ever taken/created & why?***

This particular image holds a special place in my heart as it captures a

profound emotional connection between the woman and her horse. When this lady discovered her photos, she was so moved that she had tears in her eyes. What adds to my satisfaction is that equine sessions are not a frequent part of my bookings, making each opportunity in this realm a unique challenge. The rarity of such sessions means I have less routine and familiarity in the domain of equine pet photography.

In this photograph, I find everything to be perfectly aligned: the genuine emotions, the play of light, the thoughtfully composed frame, the harmonious colors, and the overall image quality.





### ***What's inside your kit bag?***

I use a Nikon D850 and a Nikon D500 for action. In studio my favorite lens is the Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8, outdoors it is the Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8. I also have a 14mm wide angle lens with which I like to experiment and capture surprising perspectives.

Of course reserve batteries and memory cards. I also always have an expo disc in my bag.

At the studio I use Godox flashes. Some of them are all-in-one outdoor flashes (AD600 pro, AD200 pro) and can also be used on location.

I use a Sekonic light meter to properly set the lights.

I also always have a special photo halter for horse sessions and a very fine leash for dogs in my bag. They are easy to remove in editing.

### ***Which piece of kit couldn't you do without?***

Even if I would be curious about trying a mirrorless camera, I love my D850 and would not want to miss it. I appreciate its extreme high resolution and image quality, and the highly capable autofocus system.

### ***What words of advice would you give to beginners?***

For beginners in photography, I suggest immersing yourself in hands-on shooting and experimentation as much as you can. Although there are excellent educational resources like books, tutorials, and workshops that offer valuable insights, the essence of learning photography lies in practical experience. While drawing inspiration from diverse learning materials is important, the key to improvement is actively applying and refining your skills through real-world practice.



FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER



Follow more of Françoise Sachdé's work on her [website](#) and [Facebook](#).

TIMELAPSE

# MELBOURNE MINIATURE MIRACLE

by LITTLE BIG WORLD

**MELBOURNE**



Voted the world's most liveable city many times over, experience an epic timelapse journey through the city of Melbourne.

# BEHIND THE SCENES: LITTLE BIG WORLD'S “MELBOURNE MINIATURE MIRACLE”

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



**M**elbourne is the capital and most populous city of the Australian state of Victoria, and the second-most populous city in both Australia and Oceania.

I was in Australia to shoot an ARTE documentary in the Outback and decided to stay one week longer and team up with Visit Victoria to shoot my first Little Big World episode in Australia.

Melbourne consistently ranked as the world's most liveable city for much of the 2010s and I can totally see why! It's a big vibrant city with impressive architecture, amazing cultural offers, from museums to street art, live music and theatre. Also there are some pretty great food places in the city. Many beautiful parks in the area invite you to relax and the Yarra River for water activities. Oh, and the ocean is just a quick tram ride away.





But don't take my word for it. Check it out yourself in less than 4 minutes.

Thanks to Barbara Samoilenko and Cassandra Chapple from Visit Victoria and Viola Munzar from Tourism Australia for making this episode happen.

For all drone shots in this film there were permissions from multiple parties necessary.

Please do not fly your drone in any of these locations without proper permission!

### GEAR LIST:

Lumix GH5  
 Lumix 7-14 mm  
 Lumix 14-140mm  
 Gimbal Weebill S  
 360° Camera  
 Actioncam  
 Mavic Pro 2  
 DJI Mini 2 (Great with new EU regulation)  
 SSD

SD Cards  
 Boom Pole for Gimbal  
 Gorillpod  
 Tripod  
 Tall Tripod for „No drone zones“  
 Backpack  
 Macbook Pro  
 iMac  
 iPhone SE as screen for drone and Gimbal  
 Phone wristholder for „gimbal on pole shots“  
 Post Production

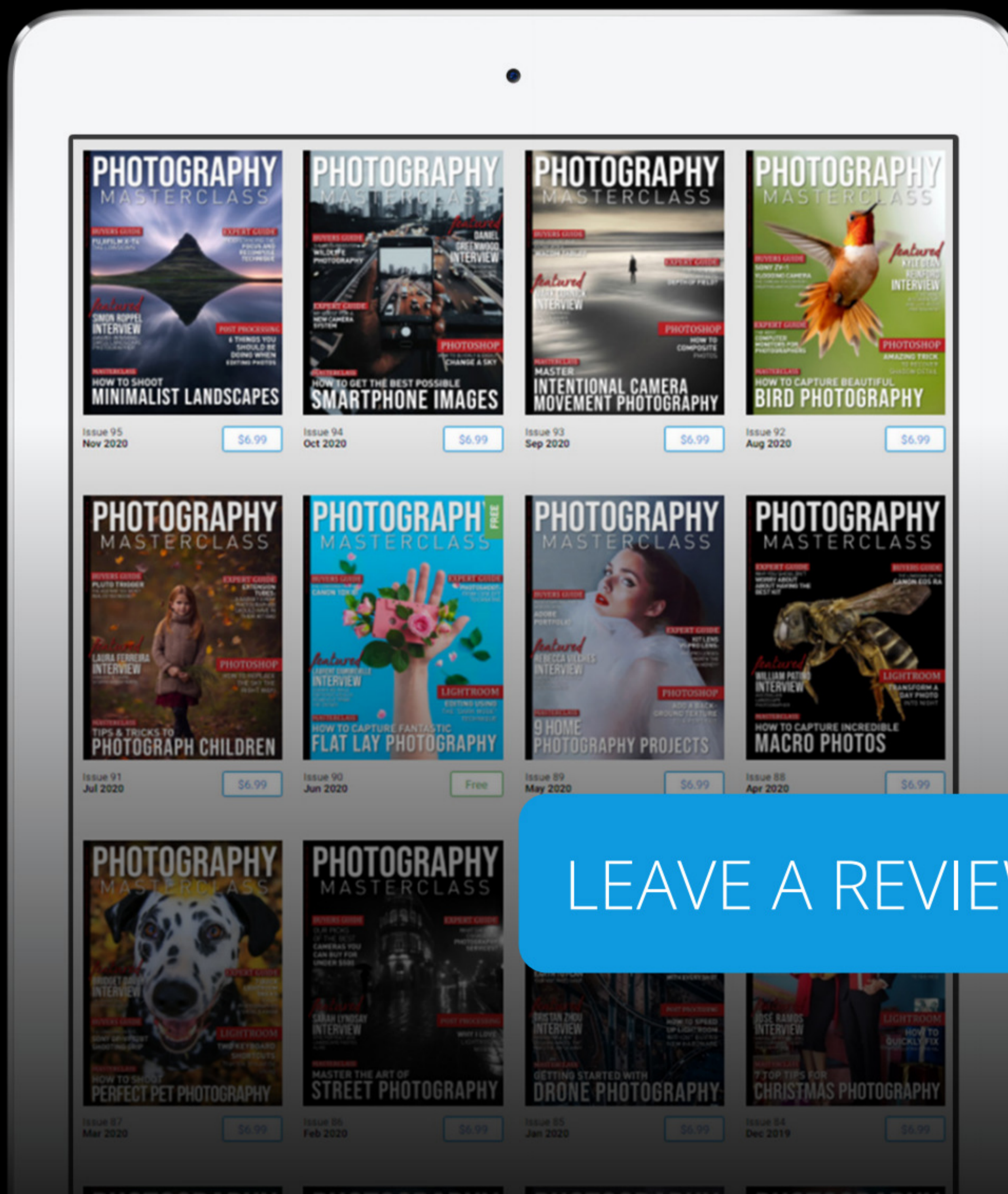
### MUSIC:

Peer Gynt Suite 1 – Morning Mood by Edvard Grieg  
 Right Side of the Road by The Lonely Wild  
 Renegades by Tiger Run

Shot with Lumix GH4 and GH5, 14-140mm and 7-14mm Lumix Lenses and DJI Mini Pro 3. Postproduction with DaVinci Resolve Studio.

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# READERS GALLERY

Your Very Best Shots Showcased



**MORNING MIST**

**By:** Per Birkhaug

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS R at 400mm,  
f/6.3, 1/500s, ISO 100

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



**MORGEN VED SKRANEVATNET**

**By:** Per Birkhaug

**Shot Details:** OnePlus AC2003 at 5mm,  
f/1.8, 1/1600s, ISO 100

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



**OTROEVANNET**

**By:** Per Birkhaug

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS R at 24mm,  
f/8, 15s, ISO 100

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



**LONE SHIP IN THE OCEAN**

**By:** Per Birkhaug

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS R at 400mm,  
*f*/6.3, 1/500s, ISO 400

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



**URANOSTIND**

**By:** Per Birkhaug

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS R at 400mm,  
f/11, 1/320s, ISO 200

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



**JOTUNHEIMEN**

**By:** Per Birkhaug

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS R at 300mm,  
f/11, 1/320s, ISO 200

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)





**MYRULL**

**By:** Per Birkhaug

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS R at 105mm,  
f/11, 1/200s, ISO 200

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



**SEEN IN JUNEAU**

**By:** Peter Eckstein

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS R5 at 62mm,  
f/6.3, 1/125s, ISO 400

[Instagram](#)



**AUSTRALASIAN CRESTED GREBE**

**By:** Peter Foulds Photography

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS R6 Mark II at 700mm,  
f/10, 1/640s, ISO 1000

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)



**CAVE DWELLER**

**By:** Geri Lynn Smith

**Shot Details:** Canon EOS 6D Mark II  
at 100mm, *f*/32, 4s, ISO 100

[Website](#) | [Portfolio](#)

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FIND OUT MORE

# 3 PROFESSIONAL PORTRAIT LENSES EVERY PHOTOGRAPHER SHOULD CONSIDER

By Jo Plumridge

*Photo By: Mairon Silveira  
Shot Details: Canon EOS REBEL T5 at  
50mm, f/1.8, ISO 100*



**I** bang on about this a lot, but lenses are by far and away the most important aspect of a camera kit. A good lens has high-quality optics and superior glass that allows for pin-sharp images across a greater range of apertures.

Different lenses fulfil different purposes, but what lenses are best suited for shooting portraits? In this guide I'll run you through my favorite

portrait lenses and why I think you should invest in them.

For all these lenses, do note that I'm talking about using them on full frame cameras. If you're using an APS-C camera a 50mm lens will give you roughly the same field of view as a 75-80mm lens on full frame, for example, whereas a 45mm lens on a micro four-thirds camera will give you the same field of view as a 90mm lens on full frame.

## PRIME LENSES

For me, prime lenses are the ultimate tool for portraiture. They have a wider maximum aperture than zoom lenses, meaning it's easier to isolate your subject and get attractive bokeh in the background. They also offer far superior image quality for less money.

Yes, there are zoom lenses that offer fantastic glass, but you'll have to pay a sizeable amount for them. Prime lenses also encourage you to take your time – something that I think is very valuable to a portrait photographer as it allows you to properly assess your subject. These are my three choices for prime portrait lenses.



*Photo By: Amir Taheri*

*Shot Details: Canon EOS 6D Mark II at  
85mm, f/1.8., ISO 100*

## 1. 85MM

85mm lenses are typically available with either f1.8 or f1.4 apertures, making it easy to get a small depth of field to blur out a distracting background. The 85mm is probably the most versatile prime portrait lens as it's ideal for full-length, waist-level and head and shoulders crops.

This focal length has good reach and gives a really flattering look to subjects, although I wouldn't recommend it for really tight face crops as you might get a little distortion. You'll get slightly superior glass with the f1.4 versions, but they'll also have a higher price tag. In my opinion the f1.8 versions should be absolutely fine for the vast majority of people, with plenty of amazing optics to produce sharp shots. 85mm lenses also really come into their own in the studio where you wouldn't have the space to use a longer telephoto lens.



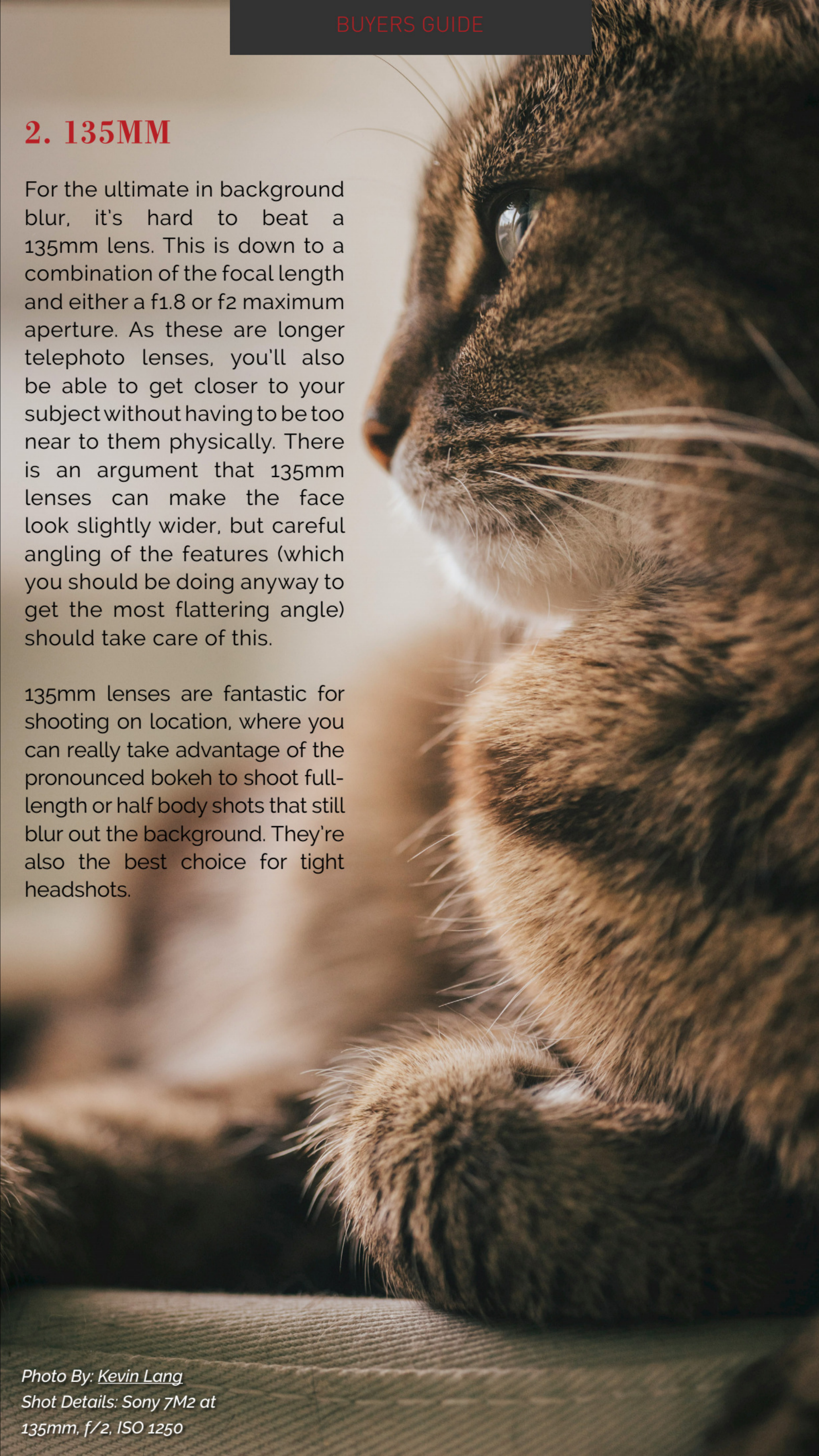


## 2. 135MM

For the ultimate in background blur, it's hard to beat a 135mm lens. This is down to a combination of the focal length and either a f1.8 or f2 maximum aperture. As these are longer telephoto lenses, you'll also be able to get closer to your subject without having to be too near to them physically. There is an argument that 135mm lenses can make the face look slightly wider, but careful angling of the features (which you should be doing anyway to get the most flattering angle) should take care of this.

135mm lenses are fantastic for shooting on location, where you can really take advantage of the pronounced bokeh to shoot full-length or half body shots that still blur out the background. They're also the best choice for tight headshots.

*Photo By: [Kevin Lang](#)  
Shot Details: Sony 7M2 at  
135mm, f/2, ISO 1250*



### 3. 50MM

The nifty-fifty is the first lens that most people go for after outgrowing their camera's kit lens. This is often because you can pick up a 50mm f1.8 for around \$100 / £100, making them reasonably accessible. 50mm lenses also come with maximum apertures of f1.4 and f1.2, with price tags increasing respectively. I've always gone for the f1.4 version – it's far more solid than the f1.8, which tends to be made of plastic and a quarter of the price of the f1.2 (and you have to really need that extra f-stop to justify the price)

The 50mm makes objects appear as they are to the naked eye and is a true 'standard' lens. It's ideal for full length and waist level portraits, and you don't need to be miles away from a subject to achieve those crops. Getting in too close to a subject can distort features though, making the nose look bigger and the face too thin. It's the ultimate lens for street photography though – small and unobtrusive, making it easy to capture people without attracting their attention.



Photo By: *Shahin Khalaji*  
Shot Details: Sony 7M3 at 50mm, f/5.0,  
1/160 sec, ISO 64

## ZOOM LENSES

I'm a fan of prime lenses, but I do think zoom lenses have their place. And for some photographers they're a far more practical option. Shooting a wedding or event? A zoom lens is the correct choice. And one lens is far easier to carry around than a bunch of prime lenses. But which zoom lenses are good choices for portraits? I have two options to add to our list.



*Photo By: [Halil Ibrahim Cetinkaya](#)  
Shot Details: Canon EOS 6D at 50mm,  
f/2.8, 1/500 sec, ISO 100*

## 1. 70-200MM

The 70-200mm is a real workhorse and almost every manufacturer has one in their range (or an equivalent focal length). This lens generally comes with a maximum aperture of either f4 or f2.8. I'd go for the f2.8 if you can afford it in this case – the extra f-stop gives you more flexibility with light and depth of field.

The focal length range gives you a huge amount of options out on location, allowing you to get some incredible compression on the background and really isolate a subject. Again you do need to take a little care at longer focal lengths not to widen out the face – angles are your friend here again. This is a versatile lens that's particularly useful at weddings and events for shooting candid shots.

## 2. 24-70MM

24-70mm lenses again come with maximum apertures of f4 or f2.8. The f4 versions are more recent additions, with a much more purse-pleasing price tag, but they won't give you as many options as the f2.8 versions if you're using this lens for wedding and event portraiture. They're also great lenses for shooting in the studio with.

The 24-70mm is slightly different to all our other options, in that you've got the inclusion of a wide-angle lens at the 24mm end. This means you can use the lens for group shots, street scenes and even landscapes, along with full length and close-up portraits at the 70mm end.



Photo By: [Warren Wong](#)  
Shot Details: Sony a6000 at 50mm,  
f/21.8, 1/320 sec, ISO 100



## IN CONCLUSION

Everyone has their own opinion as to what the best portrait lens is but pick

any one of these and you can't go far wrong. Each of these focal lengths will give you beautiful portraits.

### 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

# 3 BEST PROFESSIONAL PORTRAIT LENSES

by TONY & CHELSEA NORTHRUP



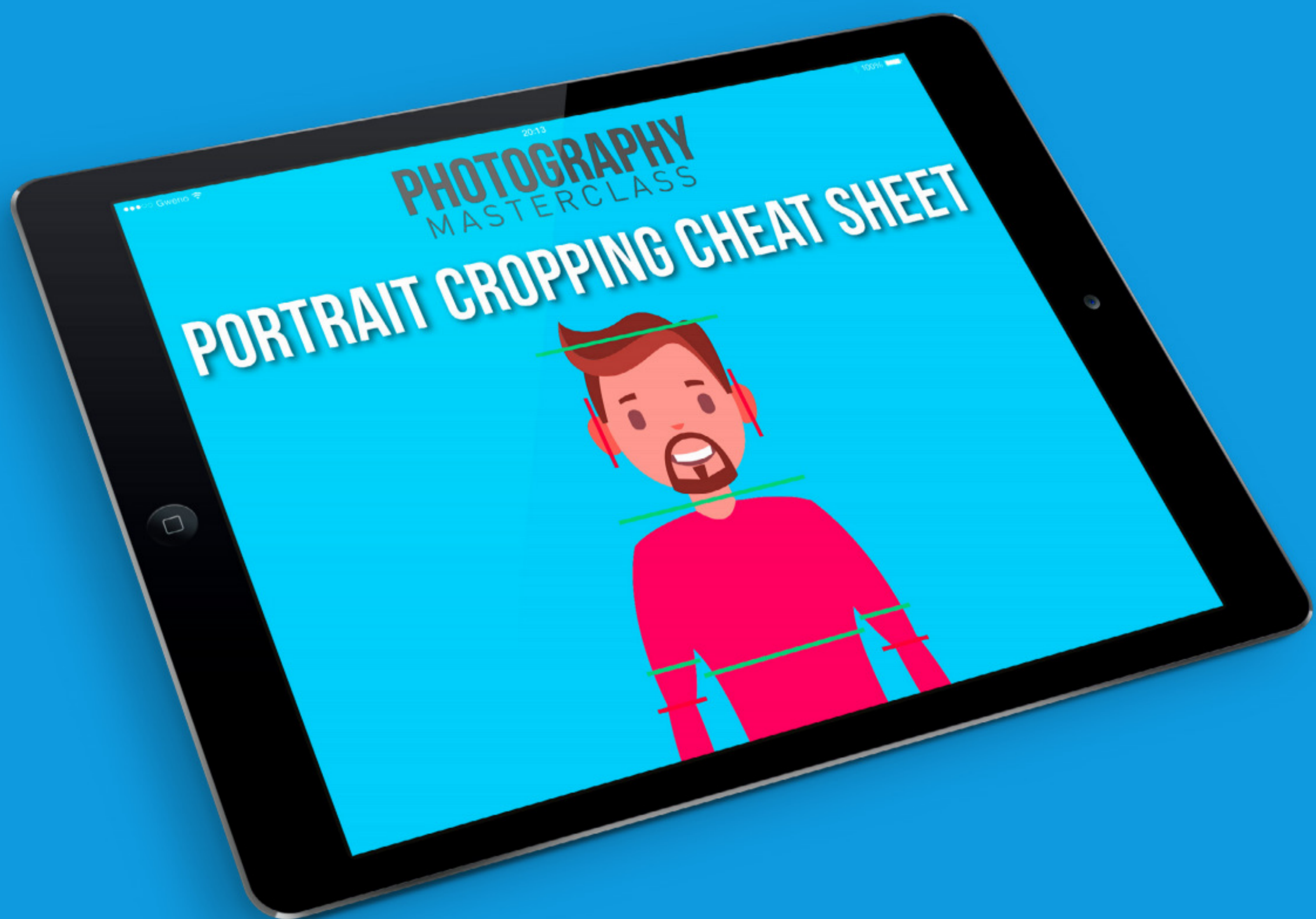
Tony and Chelsea choose their favorite lenses for portraits, different price points for each, and the benefits of each lens.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Chelsea and Tony Northrup are photographers based in Connecticut. They are the creators of the top-rated photography book, "[Tony Northrup's DSLR Book: How to Create Stunning Digital Photography](#)" which features over nine hours of video training and free lifetime updates. To see more of their tutorials and photos you can follow them on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

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