

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

P.24 PUBLISH A BOOK  
How to Do It

P.34 BLACK AND WHITE  
Monochrome Pentax

P.70 SEA SAVERS  
Mittermeier and Nicklen



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FEBRUARY 2024



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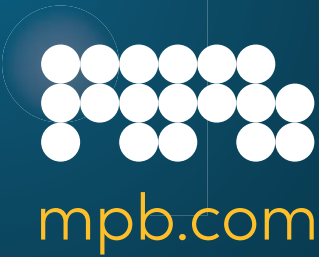
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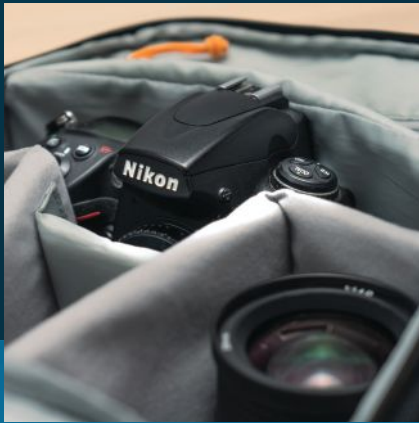
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# A Stockpile of Experience

WE CAN'T HOARD LIFE, BUT WE CAN TRY

Writing in his blog “The Imperfectionist,” author Oliver Burkeman perfectly characterizes a common human experience. The morning after a heavy snowfall, he walked at sunrise and was struck by the dreamy beauty of the snow that was still falling, the landscape, the birds, the distant trees. And then, by virtue of trying to hold onto that remarkable experience, he ruined it. So intent was he to possess the moment, to make it last, that the magic vanished. “The feeling in question wasn’t a matter of words,” he writes. “It was more of a clenching or a gripping, an attempt to grasp the moment and bring it under my ownership—which caused it, unsurprisingly, to draw back from me instead.”

Remaining in the now is hard. Strike that. It’s not hard; it’s nearly impossible. Meditation trains us to live in this moment, but my inability to stay there for more than a breath is frustrating. More often, my mind insists on pulling me back to mull over or appreciate past events (*Why did I say that? Oh, that was beautiful*) or else push me forward with anxiety or anticipation of what might be (*Will it arrive in time? I can’t wait for dessert*). I breathe in; I breathe out. I focus. Voilà! And the nanosecond my brain realizes it is indeed in the moment—*whoosh*—there it went.

The title of Burkeman’s blog post, “You Can’t Hoard Life,” sums up his musings about this phenomenon tidily.

While we can’t stockpile the reality of our days, we can try to attain a facsimile. One of the many cherished aspects of photography is that captured images give us at least the illusion of freezing some of our nows. It’s a comfort to look through old family portraits, wedding albums, and vacation snapshots because they allow us to revisit the special as well as the mundane moments that comprise a life. They can transport us back in time to be with friends and family who are no longer with us. They can revive faded memories. And we can be young again.

One story in this issue that speaks to this desire to hold onto our days is Robert Kiener’s profile of Doron Gild (“Making It His Own,” page 50). Gild has cleverly developed a business niche that offers clients a unique and unforgettable experience. He tells the story of a family and the individuals in it while also providing a portrait experience that goes well beyond the typical. He brings clients into the development process, taking them on a creative journey that’s collaborative and interactive. The scenes he creates are often playful and always reflective of a family’s dynamics. The entire endeavor—involving assistants and crew, hair and wardrobe, and staging and direction—becomes an extraordinary remembrance for the subjects. What they receive is so much more than the photographs they’ll enjoy on their walls. They’ll be admiring those images for years while appreciating that Gild froze a moment they can savor forever. •

**Jane Gaboury**

Director of Publications

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# FOREGROUND

## High Contrast

MODERN NOIR

The photographic style of Alan Schaller's black-and-white street photography in his book "Metropolis" (teNeues) wasn't born out of an idea he set out to create, he writes—at least at first. He was simply experimenting with street photography. He'd print the photos and keep them in a shoe box. One day, as he laid out prints on his living room floor, he grouped together five that seemed to correlate because of their strong black tones. After that, he set out to make more photos in that style. "It was the starting point of this book, and it defined the style that I still run with to this day," he writes.

An epiphany dawned when a friend perused Schaller's photos and remarked, "These images look like people dwarfed by the modern world around them." It was an aha moment for Schaller, as he hadn't seen that theme in his own work, and it highlighted the importance of showing one's work to others.

"For me, the process that seems to work best is to instinctively shoot and reflect later. But it is critical to have the insight of others, as it's easy to overlook simple things when caught up in the creation of something." •



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# Ultimate Americana

PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY IN THE MAKING

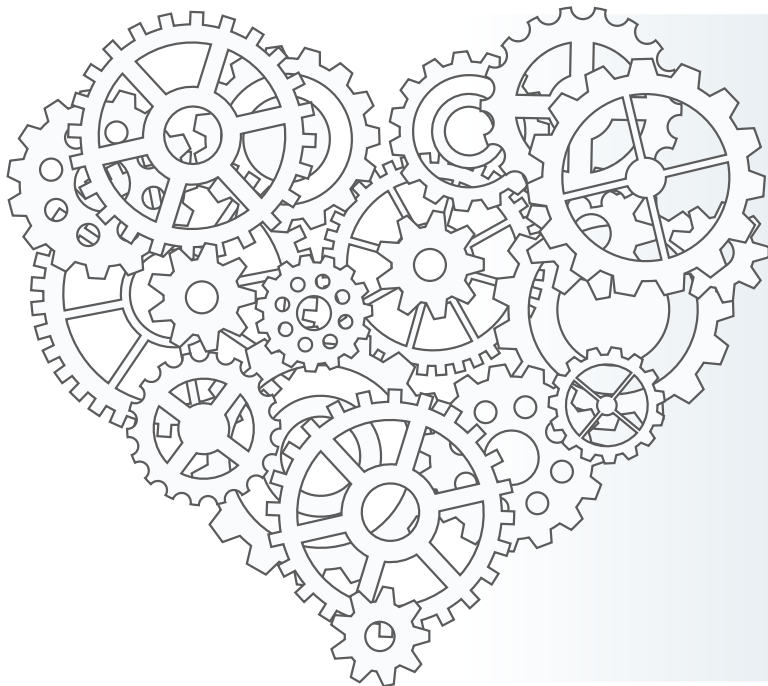
“Not an ostrich—but the oddly plumed Floradora goose,” reads the caption for the photo that inspired the title of the Library of Congress’ current photography exhibition, “Not an Ostrich: And Other Images from America’s Library.” Over the decades, the Library of Congress has amassed more than 14 million photographs chronicling American culture. A select 400 of those photos featuring both the significant and the everyday are on display at the Library of Congress’ Thomas Jefferson Building through the fall.

The exhibition is organized into sections, including portraits; arts, sports, and leisure; social, political and religious life; icons; panoramas; photographers; the built environment; and business and science. The collection includes sections featuring the archives of Carol M. Highsmith (see “America’s Documentarian,” [ppa.com/carol-highsmith](http://ppa.com/carol-highsmith), March 2023), Camilo José Vergara, and the Detroit Publishing Co. Some of the photos feature famous people and significant moments, while others picture the everyday silliness of American life throughout photography’s history. Photography’s evolution from daguerreotypes to digital is on full display. •

British actress Isla Bevan, right, holds a prizewinning Floradora goose at the 41st annual Poultry Show at Madison Square Garden in 1930.



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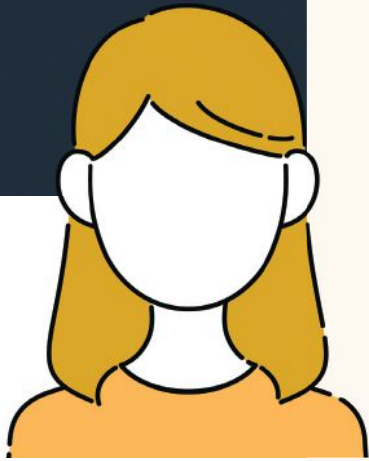
## WHAT'S YOUR COMPANY'S ESSENCE?

CENTER YOUR BUSINESS MODEL ON MEANING

“In my experience, most business models cover the bases nicely: how the company will serve customers better than rivals. But they don’t really explain why the company matters. Why should anyone care that your company exists? Why should they walk past your rivals in order to reach you? What’s your real differentiation in the eyes of target customers? Without good answers, you aren’t likely to stand out in the marketplace for long.”

—RON SHAIKH,  
FOUNDER AND FORMER CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF PANERA BREAD

Source: *Harvard Business Review*



## TIME IS MONEY

### ESPECIALLY IN THE HEADSHOT BUSINESS

When you're a headshot photographer and your clients are large corporations with tons of employees, efficiency is paramount. Gary Hughes, M.Photog.Cr., offers the following tips in his educational video "5 Life Hacks for Headshot Photographers" at [ppa.com/edu/videos](https://ppa.com/edu/videos).

**NAIL IT IN CAMERA.** When you're making hundreds of shots of dozens of employees in one day, get it right in camera because you won't have time for many corrections in post.

**REDUCE EDITING TIME.** In the headshot business, post-production is for polishing, not significant corrections.

**GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE MEANS SAVING CLIENTS' TIME.** From scheduling to making a purchase, your process should be streamlined, easy to understand, and efficient.

**SHIFT YOUR MARKETING FOCUS TO CLIENT RETENTION RATHER THAN ACQUISITION.** It's much less work to keep a client than to gain a new one. Ideally, 75% of your clients should be return customers.

**AUTOMATE EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE AUTOMATED.** When you use software and systems to automate your processes it can save you tens of thousands of dollars a year because of the time it saves you.



# Leading with Empathy

A PERSONAL JOURNEY IGNITES A NEW SPECIALTY

IMAGES ©KRISTAL SHUGA / krystalshuga.com



When portrait photographer Krystal Shuga's son Noah was born with Down syndrome and a hole in his heart that required two surgeries, there was little time to think about photography. "We were in the hospital for three months," she says. "Many of those moments felt overwhelming, and it was hard to see past what we were going through."

As a photographer, it hurt that she couldn't get her newborn son into a studio for professional infant portraits. So, she set up a makeshift studio at the hospital. "It was not ideal," she admits. Although the photos were not perfect, she notes, "they embodied the journey we were on."

Once Noah was out of the woods and Shuga's mind was clearer, she realized she could be of service to other families going through similar experiences. She launched Noah's Lens, a niche of her business that focuses on portrait sessions for children with chromosomal disorders like her son's. Many of her clients find her through GiGi's Playhouse, an organization she's involved with that supports children with Down syndrome, as well as through referrals.

Shuga offers tips for photographers making portraits of children with chromosomal disorders:

- Many chromosomal disorders have wide spectrums, so never make an assumption about a child's abilities.
- Communicate with the family before the session so you understand the child's abilities. Rather than focusing on milestone sessions, she asks what a child's abilities are, she says. "Not only does it give a good guide to help with the session, but it helps not make any par-

ents feel discouraged their child is not where the typical standard is.”

- Have the family complete a questionnaire that details accommodations necessary for the child as well as any important celebrations, such as a heart surgery anniversary or the removal of medical equipment.

“The truth that I have noticed personally and with other families is that there is a guard in place,” says Shuga. “When you need certain accommodations or additional time and planning, it can be a stressful thought to find someone who will be understanding. So, when you find photographers who put your needs and accommodations first, it can help let that guard down.” •



## DISASTER-READY

### A REMINDER TO PROTECT YOUR EQUIPMENT

“I personally think that the procurement of a waterproof, fire-proof large case for camera bodies, lenses, and other critical [photography] gear is a good idea,” says Kelly Schneider, M.Photog. Cr., CPP, EA-ASP, whose home was hit by Hurricane Ian in 2022. All gear can be stowed in this box when not in use, and it will be protected should disaster strike. Read “In the Wake of Disaster” ([ppa.com/wake-of-disaster](http://ppa.com/wake-of-disaster)) for more on Schneider’s story. •





# The Most Worthwhile Investment

THE SECRET TO SUCCESS IS NEVER GIVING UP

By Kira Derryberry, M.Photog.Cr., CPP



©KIRA DERRYBERRY

I've procrastinated writing this column. I could say it's because I'm swamped, I could say I'm pulled in several directions at once, but the truth is that I'm struggling to express how I feel about writing my last article as PPA president. I want to share my gratitude for a year that has been professionally and personally fulfilling and that has taken me around the world for PPA. But I won't sugarcoat it: It's also been hard.

Juggling a full-time studio, a full-time family, and what I didn't realize would be a full-time job as PPA president takes a toll. I'd sometimes start writing an overdue article at 11:30 p.m. after a day of shooting and before packing for a trip that included an out-of-town job and a drop-in at a local guild. Of course, if we don't do the hard work, we don't see the rewards.

Just when I thought there was no chance I'd be able to come up for air, I received a call from a longtime client with a last-minute request for an after-hours family session. She's a steady client, though one of modest orders, who is perpetually a year away from a home remodel that would necessitate a large installation and accompanying great sale. I was tempted to say I just didn't have time. While that would have been easy, it would have also meant missing out on one of my best sales this year. Because this was the year she finally said, "You know what? The remodel may never come. I can't live with blank walls forever. Let's do it!"

It's understandable that the stresses of our jobs sometimes wear us down, whether those stresses come from serving on the PPA board of directors or working as a weekend photographer. But we have to hang in there if we want to succeed. My client's family portrait going up on her wall is the culmination of years of trust, hard work, and dedication that in the end gives me an immense sense of pride.

I can't help but see a correlation to my time as PPA president. While I have felt spread thin, I've had an experience of a lifetime traveling the country and the world, learning and sharing with some of the most passionate and dedicated people I've had the honor to work with. I am forever changed by those who care so deeply for the industry and the success of photographers. I have loved those late nights at conventions, talking shop and sharing stories with people about our experiences in a profession that requires so much of us.

There are days when we feel like we can't cut it, can't handle any more. Doubts sneak up and squeeze themselves in and throw a shiny wrench in all our well-laid plans. But we can do this. Keep your head above water long enough, and those moments of hard-earned victory can help us find the fulfillment we've been searching for.

I cannot express how grateful I am for the opportunity to serve the photography community not just as PPA president for a year, but as a member of the board for the past eight years. Serving as president has been a privilege, an opportunity to give back to an association that has given me immeasurable support throughout my career. As I step down from the role of president, I look forward to going back to being an active part of this community—a contributor, an educator, a learner, and a fellow within this awesome group. You guys are my foundation and you remind me that we are all in this together and that I belong here with you. Thank you for making this one of the most worthwhile investments of my life. •

*Kira Derryberry is a studio owner and portrait and headshot photographer in Tallahassee, Florida.*

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Elena Ganusova, M.Photog.M.Artist.Cr.

It's All About Life Photography  
Knoxville, Tennessee

**CAMERA & LENS:** Nikon D90,  
Sigma 70-200mm F2.8 DG OS HSM  
lens

**EXPOSURE:** 1/250 second at f/5.6,  
ISO 320 for the two girls, 1/250  
second at f/2.2, ISO 320 for the  
girl wearing a wreath, and 1/2,500  
second at f/5.6, ISO 500 for the  
dandelion

**LIGHTING:** Natural light with a  
diffuser to bring light onto the  
girls' faces

**POST-CAPTURE:** The final image  
was composited from three  
photos—one of two girls blowing  
dandelions, one of a girl wearing  
a flower wreath, and one of a  
dandelion. In Adobe Photoshop,  
the composite was converted to  
a pencil drawing using Topaz  
Simplify, with further application of  
the texture using Topaz Texture.



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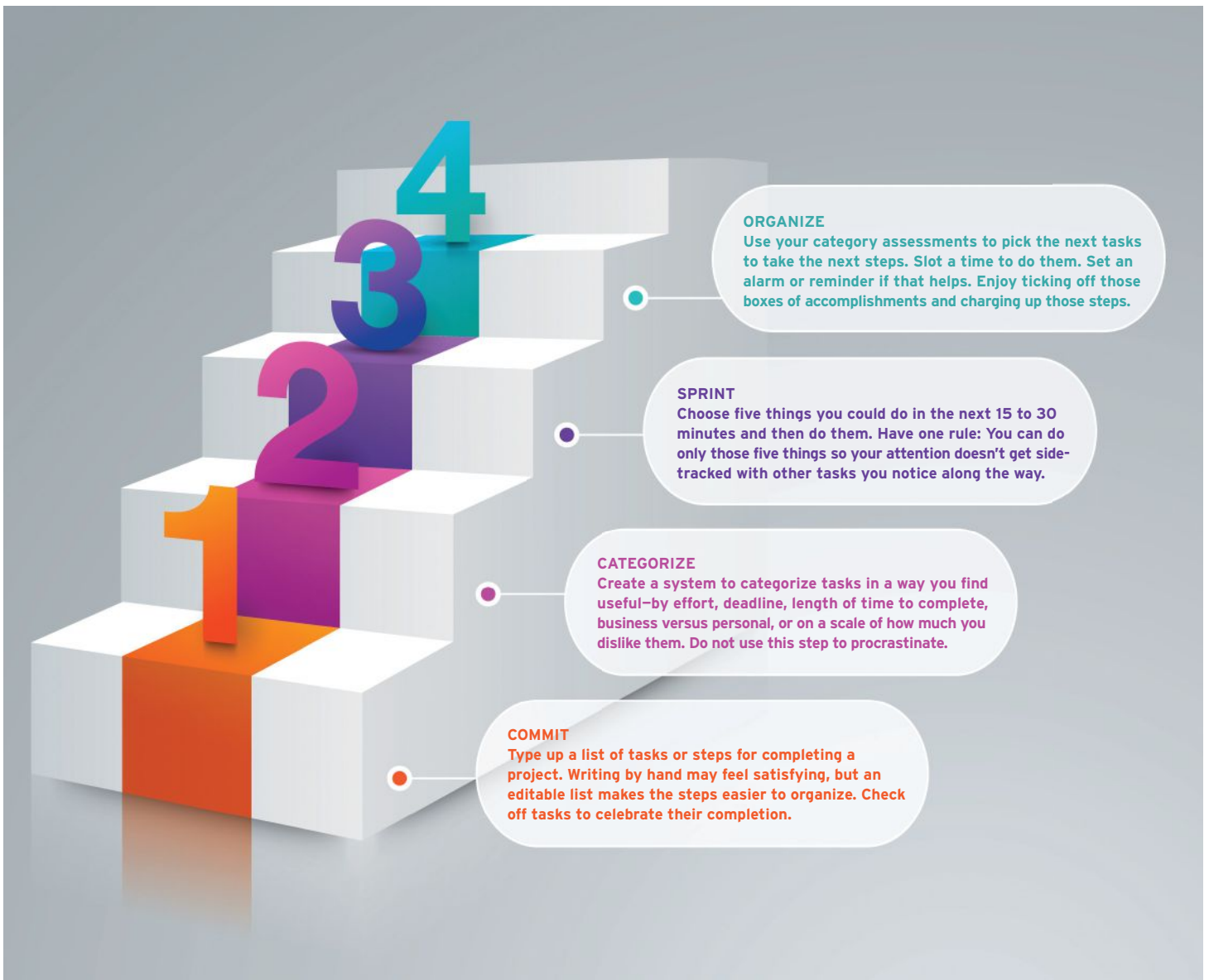


# SUCCESS

## Step Up to the Task

We can become overwhelmed by a mountain of small tasks that need doing, a slog of mundane chores, or a few major efforts that involve many steps. Similar to getting through difficult life circumstances one day at a

time, you can tackle thorny tasks one step at a time. No matter how large or unwieldy the task is, you can commit to taking one step. And then you can take one more. Keep going. But how do you even start? •





# Getting Into the Weeds

HOW TO PUBLISH A PHOTOGRAPHY BOOK

*By Jeff Kent*



IMAGES ©MARK TURNER / turnerphotographics.com

This month will see the release of “Weeds of the Pacific Northwest,” by Mark Turner, M.Photog. This is Turner’s third book in a series of publications about plants of the Pacific Northwest published by Timber Press. A professional photographer in Bellingham, Washington, who earns most of his income from portrait and corporate work, Turner has created multiple large-scale books as a combination of passion projects and a reputation-building sideline business. He shares his insights on the process of getting published.

## STORY

You need to have a unique story, even in a photography book. “You’ve got to start with a solid idea of a story that you want to tell,” says Turner. “You’ve got to have something that you’re passionate about so that you’re willing to put in the time and effort, to do the research, and to set things up to photograph them.”

## PUBLISHER

Unless you plan to self-publish, you’ll need to convince a publisher that there’s a market for your work. Part of this step includes researching competing titles and establishing how your book will be different or adding something new to the topic. An Amazon search for similar books is a good place to start.

“Think in terms of what you can add to the marketplace that isn’t already there,” says Turner. “If you identify a niche and then propose a new way to approach that niche that has not been done, then there’s probably at least a possibility that a publisher will entertain the idea.”

Finding the right publisher is important and challenging. There are myriad options, including the big household names, small specialty publishers, trade organization publishers, and others. Professional organizations like PPA are a

good place to make connections and talk with peers who have gone through a similar process. And if your book focuses on a particular subject, like Turner's do, then getting involved in relevant clubs and professional groups is a logical next step.

"If there is a trade association or some other organized group connected to whatever subject you're looking at, I would strongly recommend being part of it and being active," says Turner. "Go to the conferences, talk to people, have those hallway conversations that are so important at any professional organization."

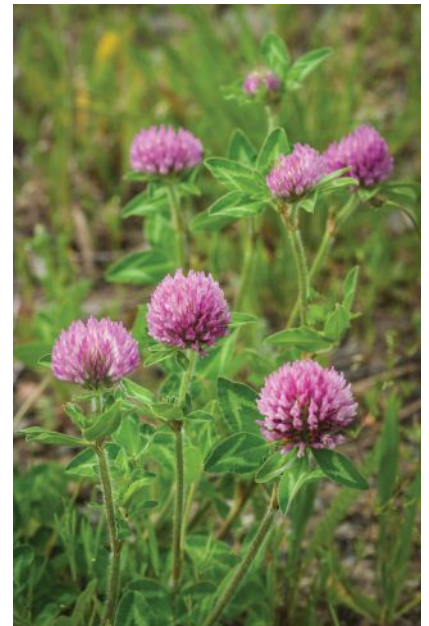
### PROPOSAL

Many books have been written on the subject of book proposals. In sum, you want to write a convincing pitch for your book idea, show a representative selection of images, and include a sample chapter with enough of a hook to leave the acquisitions editor wanting more. You don't need to have the entire book completed at this point, just enough to offer an intriguing preview.

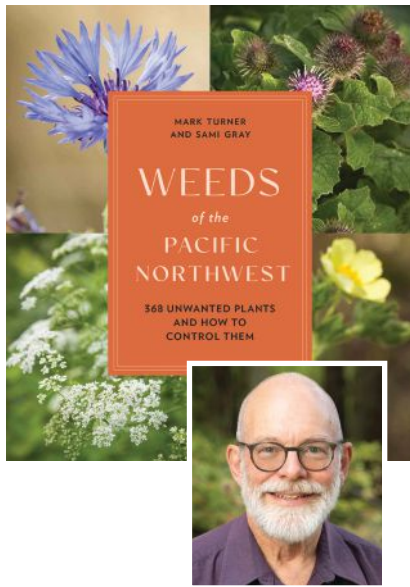
Expect the proposal process to take time and to include many rejections. As a first-time author, it can be difficult to catch the interest of a publisher. However, if you're well known in your field, you can present a compelling case to a publisher. When you've already built a following likely to be interested in your book, you're essentially getting a head start on the marketing, which any publisher will appreciate. Build your audience as much as possible before you pitch, and leverage that status when approaching a publisher.

### WRITING

Unless you're doing a coffee-table book with almost no text, you'll need a plan for the written content. Many photographers partner with a writer to either







MARK TURNER



ghostwrite their book or work as a co-author. For Turner’s plant books, he’s partnered with writers who have a good understanding of the subject matter. In the case of “Weeds,” he worked with Sami Gray, who he collaborated with remotely for the entire project during the COVID pandemic lockdown, never meeting in person until he traveled to her home to make her author portrait.

**CONTRACT**

Once you’ve found a publisher, it’s time to negotiate a book contract. The contract establishes the legal terms between the author and publisher, including payments and royalty structure. Royalties are a percentage of book sales paid to the author on a specified schedule. In many cases, the publisher will offer what’s called an advance. This is an advance payment on the royalties paid at the onset of the project or at delivery of the manuscript. It’s almost like a deposit paid out of the book’s future earnings.

It’s important to note that authors have some room to negotiate the terms of these contracts. The negotiating power of a first-time author with limited name

recognition is significantly less than that of an established author with a track record of sales. Still, as with any contract negotiation, you don’t have to accept the opening offer if it doesn’t suit you.

**TIME COMMITMENT**

Books are time-consuming projects. For Turner, whose books have involved significant regional travel, the commitment may be significantly more than some other photographic book projects that draw from an already captured library of images (for example, a book on wedding photography that draws from previously featured client work). Turner would spend three or four days on the road at a time, photographing plants and then returning to his office to process the images, caption them, and organize them into a database. He did that for the better part of a growing season. From there, he and Gray spent over a year collaborating on the written text and doing additional research on the 368 species shown in the book.

Once the manuscript and images have been submitted to the publisher, an editor reads the text and makes recom-

mendations, which are reviewed by the authors, then a designer works on the book layout. This can take a few weeks to a few months depending on the production schedule and the amount of back-and-forth required with the author. Eventually, the publisher delivers PDF proofs for author review and, in some cases, a printed proof of the book.

Once everything has been approved and quadruple checked, the book goes to the printer then into the publisher’s distribution channels. The time from approval to books on shelves is determined by the publisher based on sales forecasts and their determination for the best time to release the book for maximum sales. A wait of many months isn’t uncommon.

**PROMOTIONS**

The author’s job isn’t over. Publishers look to authors to help promote their books. Once the book is nearing publication, you’re expected to market the work through your channels, including social media, email, professional associations, and media. Getting coverage in magazines or local news is helpful, as

are interviews for radio or TV, speaking engagements, book signings, and other appearances.

Reach out to trade association contacts, touch base with book reviewers or influencers in your field, and seek opportunities to get in front of an audience and talk about your book. If your book covers a specialized topic, having a social media presence and industry connections specifically related to that topic can be particularly helpful.

### BUSINESS CASE

Depending on the type of book and anticipated sales, the project may not be the most profitable standalone business venture. However, publishing a book can increase your stature in the photographic community, which can lead to other money-making opportunities, including speaking engagements, teaching, workshops, and travel photography experiences. It also helps photographers build a body of work that can be licensed for commercial use to other publications or produced for art.

“Over the time that I’ve been photographing plants and doing these books, I have developed a library of images of these plants,” says Turner. “Because people associate me with the subject matter, I will get inquiries for a picture of a particular plant, and I can say, ‘Yes, indeed, I do. Which of these 14 photographs would you like?’”

### ACCOMPLISHMENT

Is it all worth it? “There’s a tremendous sense of accomplishment of getting something like this done,” says Turner. “And it can really raise your status in your field. I’m much better known for my books on plants than I am as a portrait photographer, even though the portrait work represents a higher percentage of my income. But there is a real sense of personal satisfaction that accompanies the successful completion of this kind of project.” •



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# Brand Recognition

HOW TO BUILD A BRAND PHOTOGRAPHY LINE OF BUSINESS

*By Jeff Kent*



IMAGES ©NICOLE BEDARD / nbphotog.com

Nicole Bedard has been a brand photographer since starting her business 14 years ago. During that time, the Connecticut entrepreneur has watched the commercial photography field grow dramatically. Recently, she's had a growing number of questions from other photographers interested in adding brand photography to their current offerings or transitioning into the field entirely.

Bedard feels that brand photography appeals to image makers because of the variety of work within the genre. It's a wide-ranging niche that includes diverse images for marketing collateral—including lifestyle, products, and portraits. It's the variety that can intimidate some photographers since the processes needed to deliver the goods may not be as standardized as in some other specialties. Bedard has put together a list of recommended steps to help people discover greater success in brand imagery.

## SHOWCASE YOUR PROCESS

Educate potential clients about what brand photography involves, and give them insights into your process. This is critical because not everyone understands what goes into a brand photography shoot.

“People think it has to be this huge production, all these lights, lots of people,” says Bedard. “But if you can show what a photo shoot really looks like and they can relate to it and they can envision themselves being part of it, then they are going to be more likely to move forward.”

Bedard educates potential clients by sharing timelapses of photo shoots and snippets of behind-the-scenes coverage. She makes videos illustrating various elements of a shoot and provides insights into her approach. In addition, she posts reels on social media that show the beginning of a shoot, the resulting images, and the images displayed on the client’s website and other marketing materials. This progression illustrates the full evolution of the process. And all these shared media showcase the photographer’s process as well as her unique style.

## GET OUT THERE

“In today’s market, people are investing in the person more than the product,” says Bedard. There are so many photographers out there. You need a way to stand out. Showcase what



you do by putting yourself in front of the camera once in a while. Remember: People connect with people.

Go on video, suggests Bedard, and talk directly to your audience. Talk about your process. Show your personality. Give yourself a voice and use it. This helps build the know-like-trust factor that is essential for making a successful sale.

Not everyone will be a great fit for your business. By providing a glimpse into your personality and working style, which won't resonate with everyone, you may be able to weed out some prospects who are unlikely to work out. Think of this element as a filter as well as a marketing magnet.



More from Nicole Bedard  
[nbphotog.com](http://nbphotog.com)



“As brand photographers, we’re constantly educating the clients on why they need this type of imagery.”



### BE A CLIENT

If you’re going to talk the talk, you have to walk the walk. You have your own brand to promote, so go through the brand photography process for yourself. If you can show potential clients that you’ve taken these steps for your business, your recommendations to them will come across authentically. Knowing your own process from the client side also helps you speak to the pain points clients may have, allowing you to suggest solutions based on real-world experience.

Being your own client also yields valuable imagery you can use to promote your busi-

ness. If you’re selling brand photography, your brand imagery should be impressive. You should be able to show clients your talent in the work you’ve done for yourself.

### STRATEGIZE WITH THE CLIENT

The strategy meeting is essential to a successful photo shoot. First, it helps build the relationship so the client becomes comfortable with you. Second, it’s a practical planning session that helps you and the client assemble all the needed materials, gear, wardrobe, and people.

During her strategy sessions, Bedard shares concept boards of images and inspirations for

the shoot. This demonstration helps clients understand her thinking, get on the same page, and be prepared for photo shoot day. Bedard then brings these boards to the shoot to use as a reference. The boards provide inspiration and keep her efficient as she makes sure she’s getting all the required images.

The strategy sessions also enhance collaboration and help clients be part of the process. This further builds the relationship and leads to more repeat business because clients feel they’ve been included, that their opinions matter, and that the photographer is working with them to create the best possible outcomes for their business.

### FIND THE PURPOSE

The goal of brand photography is to capture the brand story of the business. Every image is intentional and related to that brand story. Every photograph has a purpose. You’re not just capturing nice looking images. Everything is planned before the shoot to serve a specific purpose in the marketing campaign.

“As brand photographers, we’re constantly educating the clients on why they need this type of imagery,” says Bedard. “They may not have even thought ahead about what they need for something like a new product launch. When they bring in a brand photographer, we help them think about

those things and plan it all out ahead of time.”

### SCALE YOUR SERVICE

If you’re working with small or medium-sized businesses, scale your service and deliverables to their needs. Not every company has a large marketing budget, and that’s OK. Create smaller packages that suit their strategy and bottom line. Smaller businesses might need only an hour or two of shooting and fewer overall images, so consider what you can do for them in a smaller package that fits their needs. “It’s a manageable, scalable business when you frame it that way,” says Bedard.

### REPEAT AS NEEDED

Consider the ongoing needs of your clients. Brand photography doesn’t need to be a one-and-done project. Some clients may need a full brand shoot every few years while others have a continual need for images to fill out social media campaigns, new promotions, or other initiatives. Think about the long-term relationship when scoping out a new client, and factor in the ongoing work to your service level and pricing.

Through strategic planning, collaboration, and continual relationship building, brand photography can lead to a stable business or become a consistent sideline to an existing photography practice. •

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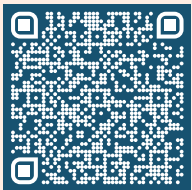
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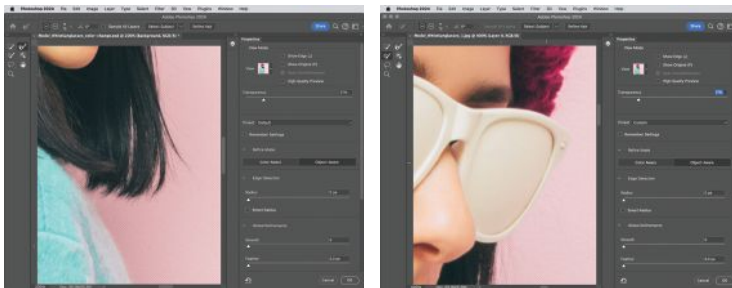


# THE GOODS

## Quick Fix: Change a Background Color



Original



Refined selections for hair (left) and glasses (right)



Final

Recent versions of Adobe Photoshop make selections much easier than they used to be. Here's a quick tutorial on how to select the subject, refine the selection, invert it, and change the background color while maintaining shadows and texture with an adjustment layer.

Choose the Quick Selection tool and click on Select and Mask in the tool's top control. In the Properties window, select Onion Skin in the View mode and a transparency level that lets you easily see your selection.

Drag the Quick Selection tool over the subject, being mindful of where the border of the selection could be indistinct due to similarities in color or where the background shows through the hair strands.

Choose the Refine Edge brush tool and zoom in. In this example, Color Aware refinement works best to remove the background selection from behind the hair strands. Just brush over the area where the hair and background meet. You can use Refine Hair to improve the selection.

If you have an area such as the edge of the white glasses where the selection is not distinct but the edge is a smooth line, you can switch to the Brush tool and hold down the shift key as you click along the edge, making smooth linear transitions between click points. Click OK to complete the mask selection.

Click Select > Inverse to invert the selection to the background. Click on the Adjustment Layer icon and select Hue/Saturation to add the adjustment layer above the original. Use the sliders to change the color of the background. Be aware of the reflected color from the previous background on your subject as it will require additional steps to correct if it's too different from your new background color. •



# Magnificent Monochrome

REVIEW: PENTAX K-3 MARK III MONOCHROME

By Joan Sherwood



COURTESY RICOH IMAGING

It's an interesting take for a modern camera: having a sensor designed to capture solely in black-and-white. The Pentax K-3 Mark III Monochrome camera from Ricoh Imaging offers this option in a DSLR body with a 25.7-megapixel APS-C CMOS sensor. It opens opportunities for photographers seeking exceptional image quality in a creative niche.

With a monochrome sensor, there's no color filter array. High ISO captures are free from the type of chroma noise that comes with RGB, and noise itself appears to a far lesser degree than it does with color sensors at the same ISO. And without a CFA filter, you simply get a cleaner, sharper image. Additionally, without the interpolation required by a CFA filter, the sensor captures and records all of the light. In short, you get a more crisp, detailed image with creamier gradients compared to an equivalent color capture that's converted to monochrome.

The camera itself was hefty when paired with the HD Pentax-DA 16-50mmF2.8ED PLM AW Star series lens I had on loan, but it's well balanced. The grip is significantly deep, so I could comfortably and securely hold it at my side with four fingers. With this lens and the battery, the camera weighed in at 3.5 pounds, so I was most comfortable using it with a Spider Holster belt rather than a neck strap.

The Pentax K-3 Mark III Monochrome has a lot of features going for it. High among them is customization. On the top deck dial are five user preset options. These are more intuitive to use on the fly than custom functions that you've assigned to various buttons (which you can also do on this camera) or switching to custom presets through a menu selection.

You can customize capture and filter settings in the Custom section of the menu. To begin, choose from hard, standard, or soft as the Image Finishing Tone. You can go deeper and customize



## Pros

- Exceptional black-and-white image quality
- High ISO function without noise
- Wide variety of creative and custom options
- Easy wireless connectivity

## Cons

- Bulkier and heavier than a mirrorless camera

the parameters that define each of the finishing tones. The same sort of parameter tweaks can be done with the digital filters, giving you the ability to refine them to a look you like best. The digital filters include a base parameter, toy camera (with tones in red, green, blue, or yellow), retro (levels of blue or amber), high contrast, shading, invert color (a negative), tone expansion, grainy monochrome, miniature, soft, fish-eye, slim, and frame composite, and you can apply multiple filters to the same image. HDR capture options are also available, though filters cannot be applied to raw images captured using HDR.

Autofocus through the viewfinder uses phase-matching detection, while Live View uses contrast detection. The toggle on the back of the camera selects the AF point and can be moved up, down, left, right, and diagonally. It can also be used to manipulate the display area. The LCD monitor offers touch operation that can be set to focus and capture with a single touch on the area of the composition where you'd like the primary focus to be.

The camera's raw format captures PEF or DNG files. At the time of this review, Adobe had not released a camera profile for the Pentax K-3 Mark III Monochrome for use with Adobe Camera Raw. ACR can be used to process files, of course, but you can also process raw files in camera or with the dedicated Image Sync app for iOS and Android. It's surprisingly easy to apply adjustments in camera using the four-way controller, and you can change the image view from full image to the maximum zoom with one click of the rear e-dial instead of having to magnify four or five steps to see details. Image Sync can also be used as a remote control to set exposure and take images as well as sync images to a device via Bluetooth or wireless LAN connection.

The Pentax K-3 Mark III Monochrome



IMAGES ©PPA

The miniature filter applied to a cityscape creates a dreamy effect. I particularly like how the reflection of light from the building on the left makes it look as if the windows are floating in the sky. The exposure is 1/40 second at f/18, ISO 200.

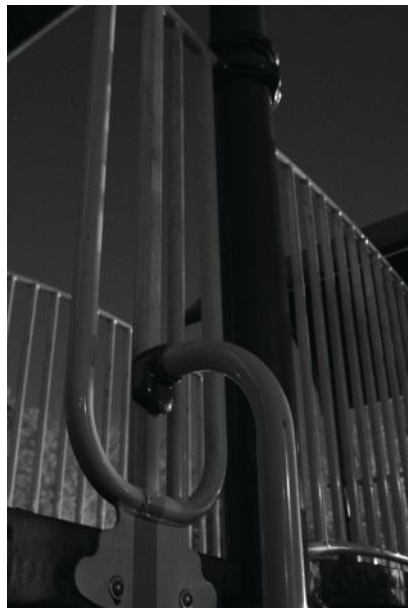


The high-contrast filter produces deep, rich blacks and works beautifully for window reflections.





The tone expansion filter adds a sort of grunge texture to the image (left side) compared to the unfiltered version (right side).



In an image taken at ISO 25,600, the grays are still smooth and creamy. The noise that does appear looks like a fine film grain.



With HDR capture I was able to get wispy clouds in the twilight sky as well as the unique brick work on the shaded side of a former post office built in 1926.

comes with a wireless communication guide that's fairly easy to follow and doesn't require a burdensome number of steps to connect the camera to a device. Image access and editing is surprisingly fast once connected. If you want to transfer images to the device, you can do that automatically as you shoot or in batches, select a format for transfer, auto resize JPEGs to XS if you like, and continue image transfer after the camera is turned off.

The in-camera image stabilizer is a 5-axis sensor-shake reduction SR II that delivers as much as five stops, and with a steady hand you can take handheld images as slow as 1/4 second. Without the chroma noise of color sensors, you can take advantage of ISO settings higher than you usually would. I took the camera to a park at night and got good results with the only light coming from street-lights a parking lot away. At ISO 25,600, the medium and darker tones have what looks more akin to a fine film grain than high ISO noise. The ISO tops out at ISO 1,600,000, but that's more of a technical capability than an advisable setting.

For filmmakers, the Pentax K-3 Mark III Monochrome records in MPEG-4 AVC/H.264 in 4K (3840x2160) in 30p and 24p and FHD (1920x1080) in 60p, 30p, and 24p. It has external microphone and headphone jacks. Recording time is up to 4GB or 25 minutes and will automatically stop if the internal temperature gets high. The hard, standard, and soft imaging tones can be applied to video as well as retro, high-contrast, and invert color digital filters.

Overall, I found the user interface and physical button placement intuitive and comfortable. Autofocus is fast and responsive. The LCD touch focus and capture functioned without a hitch.

If you have an affinity for black-and-white and a desire to get your creative juices flowing and offer some standout images to clients, the Pentax K-3 Mark III Monochrome is an excellent investment at \$2,199.95. The HD Pentax-DA 16-50mmF2.8ED PLM AW Star lens is priced at \$1,399.95. •

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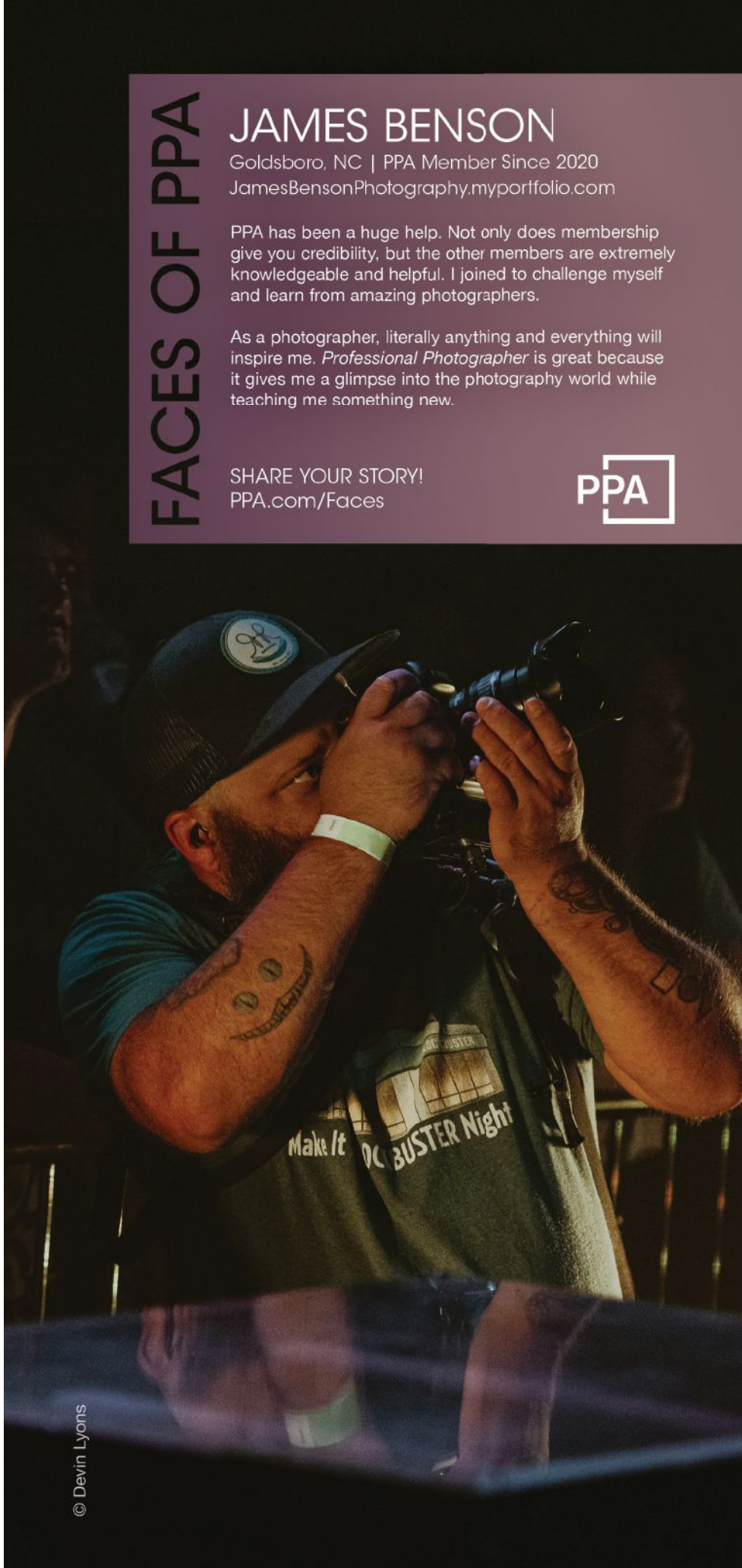
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# Custom Balance

REVIEW: EXPODISC V3 PROFESSIONAL WHITE BALANCE FILTER

By Betsy Finn, *M.Photog.Cr.*

IMAGES ©BETSY FINN / betsysphotography.com



## Pros

- Use with any lens
- No batteries needed
- Adaptable to many situations
- Thinner and lighter than the ExpoDisc v2
- Great for videographers

## Cons

- Only one size
- Limited options for bayonet mount (77mm or 82 mm)
- Step down ring must be purchased from other retailer

For photographers, light is everything, and having spot-on white balance is essential. Whether you're shooting with ambient or artificial light sources, white balance must be managed. For years, ExpoDisc has been a go-to for managing white balance if you didn't want to use a gray card or color chart. While gray cards are great for accurate white balance, you can't always pause an organic flow of special moments to have someone hold a card for post-production purposes. And we all know that auto white balance is unreliable.

The ExpoDisc is an incident light metering tool that's held in front of the lens while capturing an exposure. It filters the visible light spectrum entering the camera's lens into a uniform tone. You can then use this reference image to set the camera's custom white balance for subsequent exposures. It requires no software, and if you'd rather capture reference images and then set the white balance in post-production, that's an option too. The ExpoDisc comes in a storage pouch and has a bayonet mount if you want to attach it to your lens.

The latest version, ExpoDisc v3, is thinner and lighter than the previous iteration, and the diffuser is made with materials that perform better into the near infrared and visible spectrum, particularly when photographing in ambient shade or window light. When you shoot through it, the resulting image is a gray-toned reference image you use to get accurate white balance in captures subsequently made in the same lighting conditions. It's not recommended for use with direct on-camera flash.

The ExpoDisc can be used with off-camera flash, ambient light, and LED light. Stand at the subject's location and take a reference exposure with the lens and ExpoDisc pointed at the main light falling on your subject. If you're not working with ambient light, fire your strobe for this exposure. Ideally you will put the camera in the same light that will be falling on the subject, from the

same vantage point as the subject, aiming at the position you'll be photographing from. This accounts for reflected light from walls or grass that may impact the color balance.

Practically speaking, this might not work for a fast-paced wedding or event. I can see improvisation being necessary unless you were to create reference images before or after key moments for use either during the event or in post-production. Note that if you plan to bounce flash off a wall or ceiling, you'll need to create a reference image aimed at the bounce surface.

You can also use the ExpoDisc in conjunction with aperture priority mode to set your camera's exposure. The ExpoDisc v3 ships with instructions on how to accomplish all these things and includes literature reminding you there are demo videos on the company's website. With the camera in manual mode and an ExpoDisc over the lens, stand where the subject will be and aim at the position from where you'll be photographing. Then adjust the camera's settings (aperture, shutter speed, ISO) so that the meter reading is 0. Capture your

reference image and review it on the camera's LCD to make sure the histogram spike is centered. If it is, you're all set.

The ExpoDisc v3 covers a wide range of visible light, from 380nm to 700nm. It also covers some of the near infrared spectrum and can be used to set white balance for an IR camera. Each ExpoDisc is inspected, and the results from the calibration certification testing are included in the packaging. Most of us will just be glad to know it's accurate and consistent.

The ExpoDisc's ease of use depends on your workflow, the type of photography you do, and whether you photograph in raw or JPG. My current workflow uses raw images, off-camera strobes, and a calibration card that has both gray and a color chart. For my work the ExpoDisc would probably yield similar results, but I would also want to photograph the color chart separately in case I needed a reference image in post-production. Photographers working events or on location with mixed ambient light sources will find the ExpoDisc a great tool. But all this color calibrating is for naught if you're not also calibrating the monitors you use

in post-production. It's important to take color management full circle if you want accurate color in your final product.

All in all, the ExpoDisc is a versatile tool that can be used indoors or out and in all sorts of lighting situations. Where it shines is venues with mixed light sources and in being able to capture correctly white balanced video. I can see the ExpoDisc being essential for an event or wedding photographer in particular. If you primarily shoot posed portraits with off-camera flash, the ExpoDisc may not significantly improve your workflow. But if you regularly deal with ambient light, it could save a lot of time. If you shoot video, the ExpoDisc could be essential for capturing footage requiring less post-production work.

The ExpoDisc v3 retails for \$49.95 and comes with a neck strap, storage pouch, and adapter ring (77mm or 82mm). Additional rings are available for purchase for \$9.95. If your lens is a different size you'll need to purchase a step-down ring from a local or online camera dealer. •

*Betsy Finn is a portrait artist in Dexter, Michigan.*



Using an ExpoDisc to balance light helps you achieve accurate skin tones, as seen in the final image (right). Straight out of the camera, the exposure had a blue-toned white balance (left). I corrected it in post-production (center) with the ExpoDisc reference image I'd taken.





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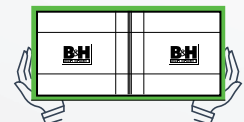


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# SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

THE ART OF  
DELIVERING  
NO MATTER THE  
CIRCUMSTANCES

BY JEFF KENT



WILL CADENA





**W**hen a photographer reaches a certain level, it's tempting for others to explain away the quality of their images by pointing to the high production level, the stunning locations, the gorgeous subjects. Beautiful people in gorgeous settings lend themselves to beautiful images, but photographers can't always count on having ideal elements at their disposal.

More often, you work with what you have, make the best out of less-than-ideal situations. The ability to adapt on the fly may be the best predictor of a photographer's success.

Will Cadena understands this as well as anyone. A well-regarded photographer for well-known people, the New York-based Cadena does a mix of commercial, portrait, and wedding photography for high-profile clients. But that wasn't always the case. He had to work his way up like anyone else, making the

most of every situation presented to him along the way.

"When people look at my work, they often say things like, 'Oh, well, you have these beautiful clients and these amazing locations. You do stuff at The Plaza Hotel. You have clients that fly in on helicopters. Of course you have great work,'" says Cadena. "But I wouldn't have gotten to that level if I didn't know how to work mediocre venues under difficult circumstances on tight budgets. Take advantage of what you have.

Stop with the excuses. Embrace what you have in front of you and create something from nothing.”

### READY FOR ANYTHING

To remain prepared for any situation that comes his way, Cadena trains regularly at his craft, at least once a week for a minimum of two hours. He practices lighting, works on new approaches to creative image making, rehearses improvisational photography with whatever items are at hand.

He also trains his team to be primed for anything by throwing worst-case scenarios at them to see how they'll adapt. “We need to be able to create amazing imagery when we're under pressure because that's when many people fail,” he says. “We work on how to perform under the gun so we can get good results no matter what happens.”

### WORK IN ANY LIGHT

Lighting isn't always ideal on location shoots. Inevitably, photographers end up working some sessions during the middle of the day under full sun. To account for this, Cadena often uses a handheld strobe to overpower the sunlight and eliminate dark shadows caused by strong overhead sun. He also employs butterfly lighting by shielding the subject with a large umbrella then adding a pop of supplemental light with an off-camera flash.

If those tools aren't available, Cadena recommends moving subjects close to a tree line, or if trees aren't







available, a building. Shadows cast by trees or a building can shield the harsh overhead light and provide a more evenly lit setting. Look for reflections that can aim secondary light back up at the subject. This is easier in urban settings where reflections from windows or metal accents can sometimes serve as supplemental light sources.

### **FOLLOW LEADING LINES**

Leading lines are not just a great compositional element; they can also help save a session when you need to improvise. Cadena likes to share a story about a client who was two hours late to her engagement session, which pushed the shoot into a busy time of day in the urban location they'd chosen. Since the client wanted portraits without a lot of people in the background, Cadena had to think fast. He found an alleyway where there was good light and strong leading lines that created an interesting backdrop. The problem was the presence of a dumpster. Rather than ditching the scene, he moved his subjects a few feet to position them in the bottom third of the frame. In post-production, he cropped out the dumpster. He ended up with a fascinating composition with strong leading lines, great light, and no one in the background.

### **WORK THE SETTING**

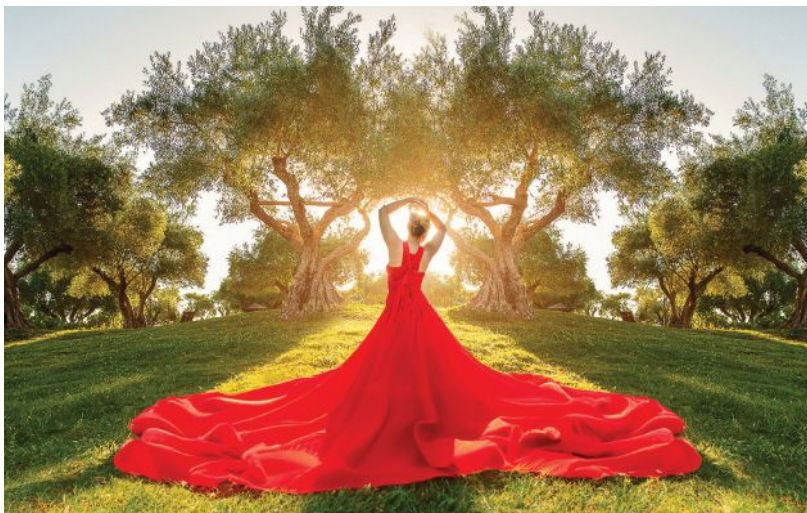
"Take the time to do some homework on your locations," suggests Cadena. "It's good to have some kind

of a plan and a few backup plans because sometimes things hit the fan."

Cadena scouts every location before scheduling a session. When possible, he visits them in person. If an in-person visit isn't viable, Google Maps gives him a view of the area, and sun tracker apps show sun positions for the times of day he's considering. With a good understanding of the scene and the lighting, he develops a plan specific to the location and to the light he anticipates at that time of day.

### **MAKE YOUR LOCATION**

If you can't use your ideal location, don't settle for something subpar. Think of creative ways to stage the kind of location your clients want. This may involve photographing inside a studio with creative backdrops or renting a location that fits the bill. Cadena has staged sessions at rented penthouse apartments and suites with large, open balconies—perfect for an on-location feel. Photographers can also reserve scenic rental properties for the day to provide an idealized setting. To defray costs, try scheduling multiple sessions at the rented property to take full advantage of your temporary access. These options can be particularly useful when the weather turns bad, but people still want a scenic location shoot. They also allow photographers to offer a location portrait experience well into the darker, colder months without suffering in the elements.











“I used to do outdoor portrait shoots in December when it was freezing cold, and it became a nightmare,” recalls Cadena. “It also affected my sales because, again, it goes back to the experience. All the clients could remember about their sessions was how miserable they were during the shoots, and that affected how they viewed the images. So always create the best experience possible because that’s what they remember when they’re purchasing their images.”

#### **DON'T MAKE EXCUSES**

“There’s no reason to make excuses, especially when

speaking with your clients,” says Cadena. The location may not be great. Maybe the client was late. Perhaps the lighting is difficult. But if you spend session time complaining about those elements or making excuses, you’re conjuring negativity into the situation that clients will feel. You’re also setting the expectation that the images won’t be great. “When you create a better experience, the client will see the images in a better light, and they’re going to associate that positive experience with the images.”

#### **PLAN FOR LANDMINES**

Making the most of every

situation means preparing for whatever situation comes your way. Cadena jokes that for every session he has a plan A through Z outlined ahead of time, and the reality may not be far off.

“I have a friend who once told me, ‘You have to plan for the landmines,’” he says. “And it’s true; you have to plan for landmines, those things that could go wrong, because no matter how much you plan, you’re going to have curve balls thrown at you. That’s not just in photography; that’s part of life. The more planned options you can fall back on, the better off you’ll be.” •



# Making It His Own

DORON GILD'S  
VISION INCLUDED  
CREATING A  
NEW NICHE

BY ROBERT KIENER







**D**oron Gild laughs as he explains how he ended up in the artsy, semi-rural town of Rhinebeck, New York, tucked into the Hudson Valley just two hours north of New York City. “It’s sure been an interesting, long ride,” says the 45-year-old Israeli-born photographer. His green eyes light up when he adds, “Yep, it’s been a long ride, but in some ways, I think I am just getting started.”

Bitten by the photography bug—courtesy of a Kodak 110 Instant Camera—as a child in Israel, Gild came to New York City at 20 years old with “two suitcases and a load

of ambition,” he explains. He landed an assistant position with Manhattan-based portrait photographer Mark Seliger, for whom he worked during his undergrad summers. “Working for and with Mark was invaluable,” remembers Gild. “I learned something from him every time I watched him work.”

Over the next decade, Gild earned a bachelor’s degree in photography and a master’s in fashion photography from New York City’s School of Visual Arts. There, he absorbed everything he could about the craft and business of photography. Among his favorite photographers, all of whom he still admires, were Seliger, Robert Frank, Arnold Newman, Gregory Crewdson, Annie Leibovitz, and Nadav Kander. “I









was struck by the way they incorporated narratives, scenarios, and storytelling into their images,” he explains. “Everything they did was based on a strong idea. That attracted and excited me.”

He hoped to emulate his heroes, and he remembers what one of his photography instructors at the School of Visual Arts told him. “He said that you’ll become a photographer when you start making instead of taking pictures,” says Gild. “He said there is no big pile of photographs out there that you can just take from. You need to make your own. That has always stuck with me and that’s what I hoped to do when I started working.”

### BRINGING HIS VISION

But that, as Gild would learn, was easier said than done.

He signed with an agency, and work came his way. “The commercial photography world is so competitive; I was always hustling,” remembers Gild. He eventually did commercial and editorial work for such prestigious clients as Warner Bros., Bacardi, NPR, *New York Magazine*, *Wired*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, among others. He photographed countless business executives and A-list celebrities including Mikhail Baryshnikov, Susan Sarandon, and Jon Bon Jovi.

While he always hoped to bring his vision—by realizing his ideas—to the commercial work, Gild found that the more assignments he got, the more he saw that wasn’t always possible. “So much of the commercial work I received was based on shooting someone else’s ideas,” he says. “Usually these were ideas that had been formulated over months and months by a creative team and an art director. I got that; that’s the way the industry operates. But over time I grew more and more frustrated. I eventually felt stuck someplace between photography’s commercial and art worlds.”

Then, his aha moment: Around 2017, Gild and a photographer friend, who was also looking to branch out, generated the idea of making a different kind of family portrait. “Instead of a portrait of



a smiling family seated in a pretty field, we thought there might be a market for something more creative, more narrative-driven, more idea-based,” he explains.

His friend went her own way, and Gild kept working on the concept. He found a few clients who agreed to collaborate with him on family portraits. They feature extraordinary scenes he’d conceptualize after getting to know a family and their surroundings through hours of interviews and discussions. Each scene was inspired by, and tailored to, each family.

“It felt like I was making a movie about each family’s life,” he explains. Once he’d worked out the scenes he wanted to photograph, he’d bring in a crew, including assistants, a hair and makeup professional, and a wardrobe person if needed. “It was as if I was directing them and producing memorable scenes that were unforgettable moments in their lives. And I was free to be as creative—to run as wild—as I wanted to. I was making, not taking, pictures. And I was loving it!”

He knew he was on to something. He and his wife sold their Brooklyn brownstone and moved with their three children up the Hudson to Rhinebeck, an upscale community with an art-savvy, sophisticated population. “Thanks to COVID and other factors, a lot of my commercial work had dried up, and I knew it was time to make this change,” he says.

### DEEPER THAN A LIKENESS

Gild devoted his energy to selling his concept to local families. After a gallery exhibited some of his portraits, clients began reaching out to him. Among them was Aimee Steele, a noted Broadway vocal coach who lives near Rhinebeck with her husband and children.

“We recently had a family portrait taken by a photographer but weren’t overly excited with it,” says Steele. “While it was professional looking, I just felt it hadn’t captured us. We were all smiling and happy and it certainly *looked* like us. I know this is hard to explain, but we all felt that while it *was* us, it also *wasn’t* us. Something was missing. And when I saw Doron’s exhibit







and how creative the scenes—these special, extraordinary moments—he had created for other families were, I realized this was exactly what we were looking for.”

As with all his clients, Gild explained to Steele that he would set up and photograph five scenes in one day so the family would have a wide choice of images to print and display. He then spent a full day getting to know the family, chatting about everything from their heritage (both have Dutch roots) to jobs and hobbies to what their children liked and disliked. “He paid special attention to our children and even asked our son what he was most comfortable wearing,” remembers Steele. “He told Doron, shorts and a T-shirt, and that’s what he wore in some of the photographs.”

As he became acquainted with the Steeles, Gild also explored their home and property, using his iPhone to capture locations that might make good settings for the compositions he would envision. Then he returned to his home studio and began coming up with concepts—the narrative behind each of the five images he would create for the family. He knew he would play off the Steeles’ Dutch heritage, so he made rough sketches of a Rembrandt-inspired composition he envisioned. Because Aimee Steele was a vocal coach, he’d suggest posing her with a piano, perhaps working with her son as he practiced singing.

On his next visit to the home, Gild brought his large-format camera to photograph the locations he wanted. “I use these plates to help me plan out my compositions and my lighting,” says Gild. He returned to his studio, sketched the family members onto the prints, and sent those concepts to the family. “Once I am done with the rough sketches, I’ve got everything planned, from the images’ composition to lighting to clothing and props,” says Gild. “I don’t want to leave anything to chance.”

On the day of the session Gild says he and his crew “invaded” the family’s home and directed them through the scenarios. “Doron really captured our





## ROUGHING IT OUT

As part of his scouting process, Doron Gild visits his clients at their home to get to know them as well as their surroundings. During these visits, he takes pictures of settings he may want to use during the session. Inspired by these location images as well as by his conversations with the clients, Gild makes several rough (“very rough,” he says) sketches of the family that he adds into the images. “I show these composites to the families to show them what I hope to shoot,” he explains. “They also help me prepare my lighting, props, and whatever else the scene may require.”





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souls,” Steele says. “He worked with us to create images that show precisely who we were in these moments at this time in our lives. They are so much deeper than mere likenesses.”

### PRICELESS CAPTURES

While Gild may be too modest to claim he’s developed a new niche in portrait photography, it doesn’t look like he has much competition. That may seem like an enviable position, but it brings its own challenges. Take marketing, for example.

A gallery that shows his work won’t sell a lot of his images. “I know there aren’t many people who want to buy someone else’s family pictures,” says Gild. So, he has an arrangement with galleries that are willing to present his work: “I ask them to treat a presentation of my photographs as more of a showroom than a gallery. And I offer them a commission on any future sales I may make as a result of the show.”

Gild’s portrait work isn’t inexpensive.

He charges as much as \$17,000 for four or five completed images. “That includes three assistants, a hair and makeup person, and more when needed,” he explains.

“More” could even include an animal handler. For one memorable session Gild planned to use one of his client’s horses in a kitchen shot, but the animal’s trainer nixed the idea. “He said it was too dangerous,” remembers Gild. “We settled for a bunch of beautiful chickens. The clients loved it!”

One of Gild’s recent clients, writer and artist David Lionheart, admits, “It is a big investment in money, time, and effort when you hire Doron. But when he comes to you with all his crew and his creative ideas, it feels like you are part of a movie. It’s like you are actors in a movie that’s depicting your own life. He really captures who you are in that moment. To me, that’s priceless.” •

*Robert Kiener is a writer in Vermont.*





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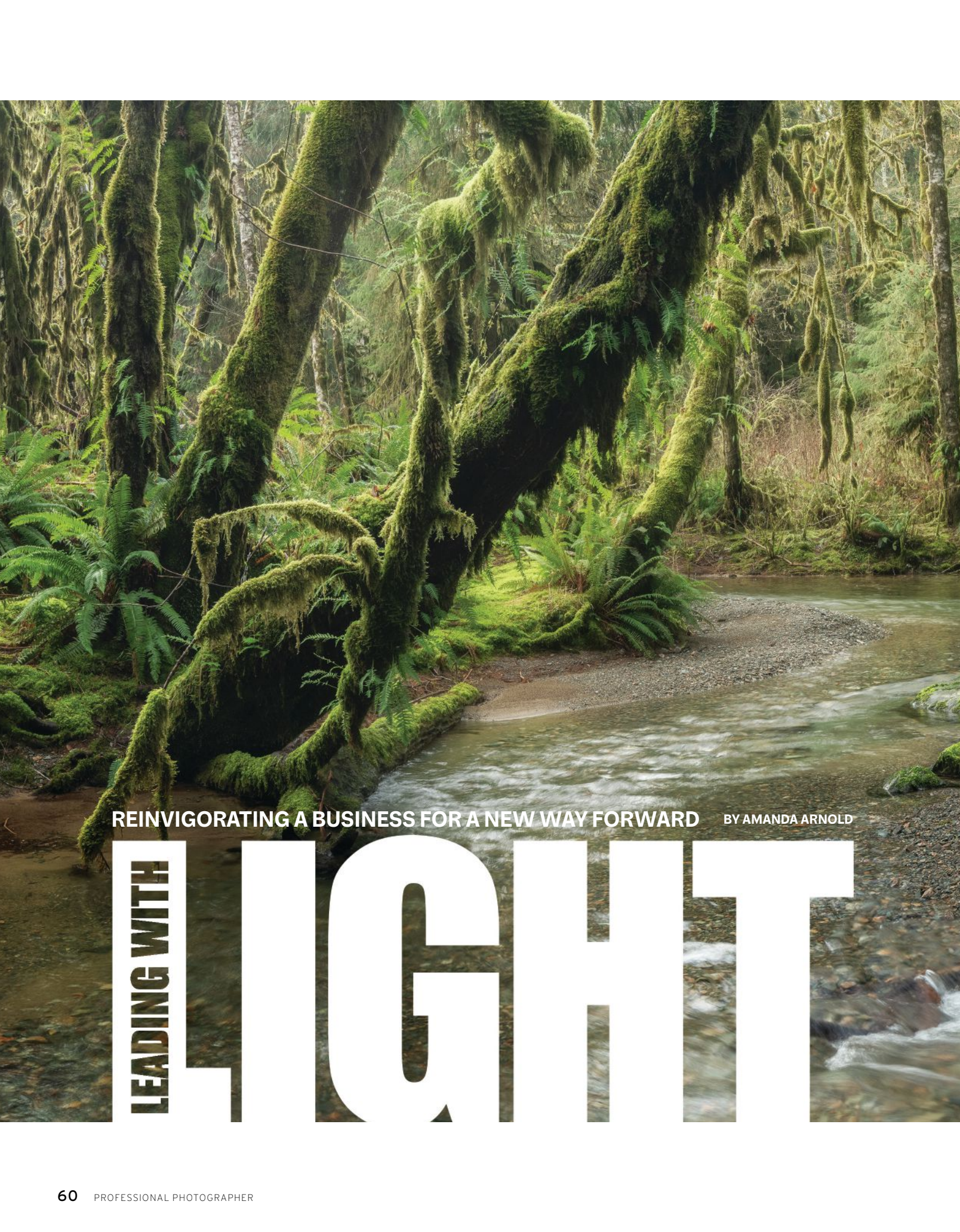
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REINVIGORATING A BUSINESS FOR A NEW WAY FORWARD BY AMANDA ARNOLD

**LEADING WITH** **LIGHT**







**For 25 years,** nature-loving photographer Adam Gibbs pretty much had his dream job: photographing the many gardens across North America for Cornwall Publishing, a small company that published four magazines on gardening. “Each year, the writers would give me a list of gardens they wanted photographed,” Gibbs explains, “and then I would just spend spring and summer flying across Canada photographing gardens.” The travel enabled him to explore his passions for rock climbing and backpacking as well as landscape and nature photography, which he engaged in as a hobby.

The company was shuttered in 2014, and Gibbs was suddenly without the steady job he'd adored. He did what a lot of photographers do: He delved into the business of workshops. Getting those workshops off the ground was another matter. “I had a hell of a time getting going,” he admits. “My business had been about selling the rights to photographs and not education.” Eventually, he started a YouTube channel featuring photography education, a move that not only attracted students to his workshops but ultimately saved his business. “Ever since then, I have not looked back.”

## REINVENTION

What the YouTube channel unexpectedly gave him that he didn't have as an editorial photographer was a diversity of income. “The nice thing is that not all my eggs are in one basket,” he says. “Now I have income coming from all different places, so if one fails at least I have a backup plan.” Ad revenue from the









YouTube channel is low, he admits, but because he has a captive audience, he's been able to attract sponsorships, which is a solid source of income for him. That same audience will also purchase other things from him. He's published one book and is working on another, has offered video courses, and sells prints. "A big hunk of income comes from that," he says. In addition, he hosts photography workshops. He plans to host eight or nine in 2024 (any more than 10 will burn you out, he says), teaming up with two photographer friends. They're based in the United Kingdom and Scotland and organize workshops there, while Gibbs takes on workshops that take place on Vancouver Island, where he's based.

Right now, Gibbs is in the process of designing his second book. His first was published by KoZu Books, which handled every facet of the process—design, editing, printing, distribution. "It was great for a first project because there was no risk and I really didn't have a clue what I was doing," Gibbs says. "And because I have that captive audience, we were able to have pre-sales of the book and sell enough to at least pay for the printing." The only drawback is that KoZu took a 70% cut of all the sales of the book, which is typical in the publishing industry.

"This time around I am doing the whole printing process, the whole design, and self-publishing myself because obviously there is more money in it doing it yourself," Gibbs says. To organize the printing, he'll use a broker, who will be paid a few thousand dollars. The drawback is that Gibbs will have to put up the money for printing and will handle distribution himself. Based on his first book's sales and thanks to his loyal YouTube followers he's confident that sales will pay for the printing, which is expensive.

## NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Based on decades of landscape photography and his time educating other

photographers, Gibbs offers some advice for photographing in nature.

**Get to know the area before you start taking photos.** In the same way that a portrait photographer will capture better portraits by first getting to know the subject, nature and landscape photographers will capture better images when they give themselves time to explore the area before diving into specific compositions, says Gibbs. He usually roams a spot for as long as he can, taking a few simple snaps with his cell phone before deciding what it is he'd ultimately like to capture there.

**Evaluate the scene before deciding on technique.** For example, for water shots, Gibbs first decides what he wants to communicate with the photo. If he wants to capture the rage of a waterfall crashing against the rocks, then he goes with a faster shutter speed to freeze that intense moment of impact. If he wants to convey calmness, he adds an ND filter to smooth out the distracting ripples in a wavy ocean or lake.

**Compose around the light.** Most of Gibbs's compositions are based on the light, not on the subject. Faced with a gnarly, interesting tree and a standard, uninteresting tree bathed in the perfect light, he'll choose to compose around the light every time. "If you don't have the light, it isn't going to work out," he says. That goes for any photo.

**Be patient.** One of the biggest mistakes he sees workshop students make is rushing to capture a little of everything. But nature isn't going anywhere, so unless the light is changing at a rapid pace, there's really no reason to hurry, he points out.

**Get it in camera.** Beginners tend to overprocess their work, using every slider in their program, he notes. Gibbs coaches students that that isn't necessary. In addition, "the part that everybody enjoys is being out there taking photographs," he notes. If you don't find processing photos on a computer enjoyable, then reduce the







“I think light is the most important aspect of photography and composition is second.”







ADAM GIBBS





amount of time you need to dedicate to it by taking time with your technique when you make the shot.

**Know your weather conditions.** In his garden photography days, Gibbs preferred overcast, flat light that enabled him to make photos throughout the day. For grand landscape shots, he loves fleeting moments when sunlight peeks through clouds and bathes one part of the landscape in dramatic light. On harsh sunny days, he pivots to close-ups and photographs in the shade, sometimes using a scrim to reflect light where he needs it.

## LETTING THE LIGHT IN

Though Gibbs has photographed nature in places such as Scotland and Africa, his favorite location is close to home: Carmanah Walbran Park on the west coast of Vancouver Island. “Carmanah was saved in the '90s and it’s basically an old growth forest,” he says. “There are very little old growth forests left on the island.” He returns to the park once or twice a year, referring to it as his happy place.

While it’s lovely to be in the dense forest, one drawback about his happy place, he notes, is that it’s difficult to photograph. It’s a lush forest, overgrown and chaotic, with few spaces for the light to peek through. To overcome that challenge, he seeks out the fringes of the forest that back up to a river or creek, or areas where trees have fallen and left a hole in the canopy. “You will get great ambient light coming through those gaps, and that is what I try to focus on,” he says, as well as smaller vignettes rather than expansive landscape shots.

There was a time when Gibbs was heavy on the post-processing, he says, increasing the contrast in his photos for a dark and brooding mood. But these days he lets the mood of the landscape speak for itself. “The light dictates what kind of mood it’s going to be. ... Most of my images these days tend to be quite bright, not too contrasty, and I open up the shadows quite a bit. I don’t want them to be dark and brooding and sad. A lot of these places, when I’m there, that’s not how I feel. So why should my images look that way?” •





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**CRISTINA MITTERMEIER  
AND PAUL NICKLEN  
ARE THE DYNAMIC DUO OF  
CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY**

**BY MARK EDWARD HARRIS**





A large school of bright orange fish, possibly Surge wrasse, swimming in clear blue water. The fish are densely packed in the lower half of the frame and more sparse in the upper half. The water is a vibrant blue, and the overall scene is bright and clear.

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CRISTINA MITTERMEIER  
AND PAUL NICKLEN

While the Caped Crusaders wore spandex to clean up the streets of Gotham City, the dynamic duo of Cristina “Mitty” Mittermeier and Paul Nicklen don wet and dry suits in their campaign to save the oceans of the world. Like the ships they use to reach remote locations, the battle is often pitched. Victory is far from assured.

Every frame they capture speaks to the heights and depths they go to for the planet and its inhabitants when they venture forth from their home on Canada’s Vancouver Island. This is most evident in the work they do for SeaLegacy, which they co-founded with Andy Mann in 2014 as a nonprofit that uses strategic communications and education to protect and rewild the ocean. Their expeditions to study hundreds of species around the globe have shown a clearer picture of the current state of the crisis above and below the rising sea levels.

They prefer to look for solutions rather

than focus solely on problems. Both have scientific backgrounds. Nicklen was a marine and wildlife biologist for the Canadian government in the Northwest Territories after graduating from the University of Victoria in Canada with a degree in biology. Mittermeier started her career at Conservation International after graduating from ITESM University in Mexico with a degree in biochemical engineering in marine sciences.

### PHOTOGRAPHY LOVES SCIENCE

In the 1970s while living in a small Arctic Inuit town, Nicklen’s mother started a photography hobby and built a darkroom. The young Nicklen was able to borrow then keep her Pentax K1000 for his forays into the tundra on the long summer and short winter days. A collection of Jacques Cousteau books that he read before bedtime fueled his imagination and deepened his knowledge of the world beyond the Arctic.

During Nicklen’s second year at univer-

## ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Cristina Mittermeier

**LOCATION:** Galapagos Islands

**SUBJECTS:** Cardinal fish and a Galapagos sea lion



**PHOTOGRAPHER’S NOTES:** “For the past 20 years, I have been part of a large coalition of conservationists working to protect the incredible seascapes of the Eastern Tropical Pacific. In 2020, as part of that coalition, SeaLegacy had the opportunity to spend several months filming and photographing in the remote archipelagos of Coiba, Panama; Cocos, Costa Rica; Malpelo, Colombia; and the Galapagos with the objective of creating the world’s first-ever interconnected migratory route between existing marine protected areas.

“As the months passed, the first country to announce increased protections was Panama, followed soon after by Costa Rica and Colombia, and finally, after months of negotiation, Ecuador created the Hermandad Marine Reserve to connect the Galapagos to Cocos. Covering an additional 60,000 square kilometers adjacent to the Galapagos, Hermandad was an addition

to the existing 138,000 square kilometers that were declared protected in 1998. The new reserve ensures a safe pathway for creatures travelling to and from Costa Rica’s Cocos Island.

“Clustered in the Pacific Ocean 996 kilometers off Ecuador, the Galapagos provide a critical refuge for an estimated 3,000 marine species, including whales, dolphins, sharks, sea lions, rays, sea turtles, tuna, and tropical fish. The archipelago, which is part of Ecuador, hosts some of the world’s highest levels of endemism—species found nowhere else. Yet the region faces threats from climate change, overfishing, and declining overall ocean health due in part to years-long increases in commercial fishing.

“As our expedition was coming to an end, we found ourselves in the Galapagos. I wanted to create an iconic image to celebrate this considerable conservation achievement that culminated with the creation of the Hermandad Marine Reserve. Diving conditions were less than ideal, with large ocean swells and currents making things unusually dangerous.

“I was focusing on a large school of cardinal fish that were moving in synchronicity with the crashing waves above my head. Suddenly, a sea lion emerged through the curtain of fish, gliding effortlessly through the raging current. I, on the other hand, had to fight to keep steady, kicking my fins against the push and pull of the rocky shallows. Each dive off the islands proved to be an immense challenge, leaving me exhausted and with a cracked camera dome. But the breathtaking scenes of sea lions and giant schools of hammerheads patrolling the vibrant reefs made it worth every moment. As we work toward creating more safe havens for wildlife to flourish, my hope is to see every corner of our ocean overflowing with life and color.”







sity, a diving class fused photography and science and with that came the realization that the camera could play a vital role in bridging the gap between life beneath the waves and humanity above it. But it would take a movie script-worthy experience to put him on a definitive track to the top of the photography and conservation worlds.

In 1994, armed with Tony Robbins' book "Awaken the Giant Within," Nicklen left his government research job and set out on a three-month solo soul-searching, goal-setting expedition into the unforgiving Canadian Barren Grounds, sharing the tundra with wolves and bears. By the end of it, he had clarified his focus and defined a path forward. One of the main goals was to become a *National Geographic* photographer. Thus began a six-year journey.

Mittermeier's epiphany came when she saw how fellow Mexican wildlife photographer Patricio Robles Gil was using his images on behalf of conservation. After moving to Washington, D.C., she solidified what she had learned in photography classes at the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, including extensive dark-room use. In 2005, she founded the International League of Conservation Photographers to provide a platform for photogra-















phers working on environmental issues and coined the now commonly used phrase “conservation photography.”

In 2007, fate would step in to bring the two together, and the world’s oceans would be the better for it. Mittermeier was invited to a breakfast meeting to join the National Geographic Image Collection. This was her first meeting at the famed magazine’s headquarters, and she recalls being nervous, surrounded by the who’s who of *Nat Geo* photographers and their editors. An empty seat was beside her, and Nicklen, who already was a famed contributor, was late. When he did show, the seat was his, and the chemistry between the two of them did the rest. They would soon become partners in both life and the conservation movement.

#### CAMERA AS CONSERVATION TOOL

Projects for *National Geographic* magazine and other major publications made it

clear to both Mittermeier and Nicklen that more had to be done to get the word out about the crisis facing the 71 percent of the Earth’s surface that is covered by water. The Pacific Ocean blob of warm water that was first detected in 2013 was particularly devastating, causing ocean temperatures to rise and killing sea life and land animals that depend on the oceans for survival.

After finding polar bears that had starved to death in the high Arctic due to climate change, Nicklen felt the urgency to do more about the growing crisis. He asked Mittermeier if something could be developed from the model she had used to create ILCP to help scientists tell a more engaging story through the intersection of art, science, and conservation. This gave birth to the organization SeaLegacy and its use of visual storytelling through social media to reach millions of people. Special interest groups

that were harming the planet now had a formidable new adversary.

SeaLegacy embraces “the six recovery wedges” developed in an international study led by professors Carlos Duarte and Susana Agusti of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology. This includes a roadmap of actions required for the planet’s marine life to recover to full abundance by 2050. The report identifies specific actions to be taken within the themes of protecting species, harvesting wisely, protecting spaces, restoring habitats, reducing pollution, and mitigating climate change. Reducing humanity’s carbon footprint, getting away from fossil fuels, and fully embracing clean energy are top priorities.

Nicklen and Mittermeier present the beauty of what humanity stands to lose through exhibitions printed by Toronto Image Works under the direction of famed fine art photographer Edward



## ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Paul Nicklen

**DATE:** 2006

**LOCATION:** Antarctica

**SUBJECTS:** Leopard seal and penguin

**PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTES:** "This photo with the eye of the leopard seal and the penguin feet over my head is one of my favorite images and is classified as one of the top 50 images of all time from the history of *National Geographic*, which dates back to 1888.

"It came about in part because the one skill I'm better at than most people is freezing. Being able to be immersed in cold water for long periods of time opens up more opportunities and allows stories to develop. My secret is to carry about 8mm of biocream around my whole body instead of neocream. We call it a layer of fat biocream. I learned my skillset growing up with the Inuit. I was learning how to be tough, survive, hit borderline hypothermia, and continue to function. Being able to shoot world-class art while freezing is what ultimately got me into *National Geographic*.

"The photo was taken in water in the Antarctic that is 28 degrees Fahrenheit. It's as cold as saltwater can get before it freezes. Even in a dry suit, within five or six minutes, you start to lose feeling in your face. After 10 to 15 minutes, you start to lose feeling in your hands and fingers. After about 20 to 25 minutes, your whole body starts to feel extremely cold. After half an hour, you lose all feeling in your extremities, and after 40 to 45 minutes, you start to shiver violently. The shivering stops after about 50 minutes to one hour, and you're entering the early stages of hypothermia.

"So, in 2006, I was in the water for an hour and a half trying to photograph emperor penguins. This female leopard seal was there trying to feed me. She was attempting to care for me by bringing me live, then dead, penguins figuring that I was a useless predator that was probably going to starve to death. I was with an animal that is as big as a grizzly bear, and I'm looking inside its throat. I'm thinking, *f/8 and half-power strobes. Where's my focus? What's my hyperfocal distance?* Trying to think of all that while a top predator in the ocean attempts to feed you is pretty intense."

©PAUL NICKLEN





Burtynsky. In June and July, the C. Parker Gallery in Greenwich, Connecticut, presented “Double Exposure: Two Photographers, One Mission.” The exhibition featured more than 30 large-scale prints on Hahnemühle paper, the largest being 60x90 inches, allowing patrons to visually immerse themselves in the stunning imagery before them.

These National Geographic Fellows and Sony Artisan of Imagery ambassadors have received the most prestigious awards in the photography and conservation fields, including most recently humanitarian awards at the Lucies. But they feel this is no time to rest on their laurels since far too much is at stake. •

*Mark Edward Harris is an award-winning photographer and writer based in Los Angeles.*

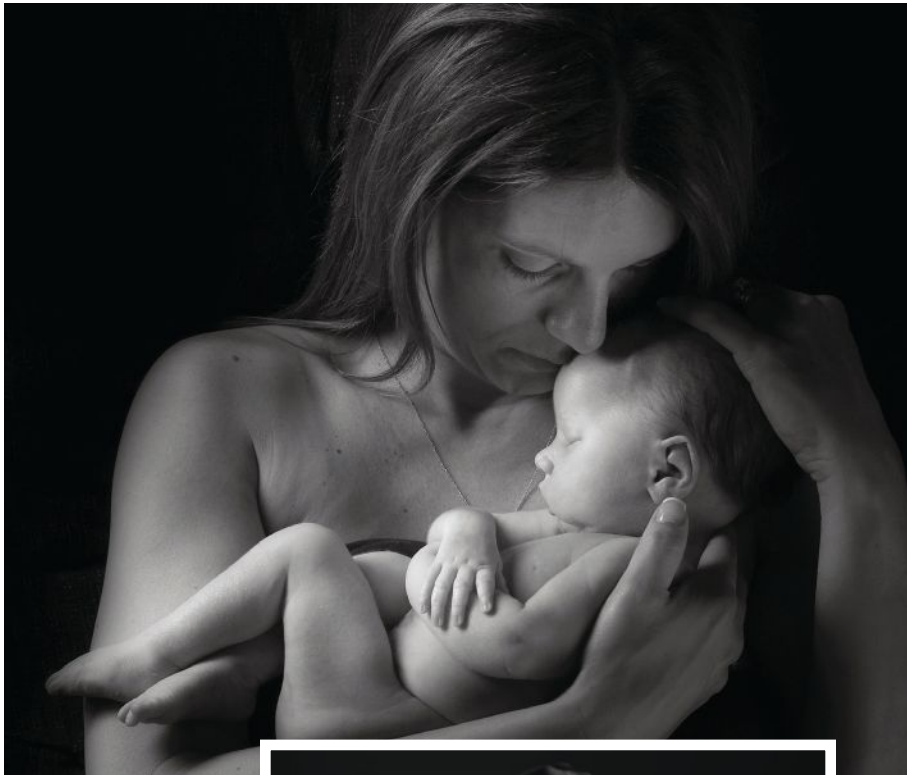




# Support for Grieving Families

GIVING AN IRREPLACEABLE GIFT

IMAGES COURTESY NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP / NOWILAYMEDOWNTOSLEEP.ORG



Imagine a photo session where each moment is a final, precious memory, and the images captured become a treasured possession for a family in mourning.

Founded in 2005, Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep (NILMDTS) is a nonprofit PPA Community Network association that extends the gift of healing and hope to families experiencing the loss of a baby. This organization enlists professional photographers who volunteer their time for intimate portrait sessions. These sessions are often the only opportunity parents have to capture moments with their babies. Families then receive heirloom-quality black-and-white portraits at no cost to preserve their invaluable memories.

NILMDTS recognizes the importance of prepared and empathetic volunteers in this sensitive role. Photographers interested in contributing their time and skills can take part in comprehensive training. The training program, which takes only a few hours to complete, covers various levels tailored to different volunteer roles. It imparts a deep understanding of the organization's history, its mission, and the profound impact of remembrance portraits on grieving families.

Acknowledging the emotional impact of this work, NILMDTS provides support services for its volunteers. This includes the availability of a chaplain, who assists staff and volunteers in processing their experiences and emotions following a session.

In a show of solidarity and support for this mission, other organizations contribute, as well. Shootproof donates online gallery space to showcase photographs, and Mpix offers free albums, further enhancing the presentation and preservation of irreplaceable images for families. •

[nowilaymedowntosleep.org](http://nowilaymedowntosleep.org)

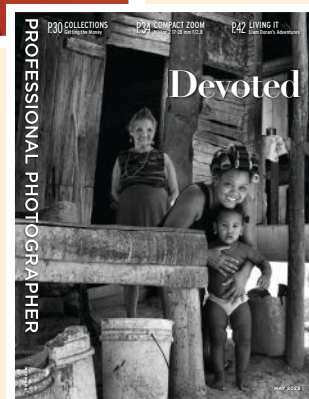


# In Retrospect

IT HAPPENED IN 2023

Each year, PPA looks back to appreciate significant moments in the photography community. To experience the recap of 2023's key events, view the video "2023: Year in Review." •

[ppa.com/2023review](http://ppa.com/2023review)



## BE THE FACE OF PPA

SHARE YOUR JOURNEY WITH PEERS



People in the photography community share many of the same passions for capturing and preserving memories. Yet everyone is on a unique journey. The Faces of PPA campaign showcases the diversity of PPA's membership. Members can share their experiences, specialties, and styles with fellow photographers.

Creating a Faces of PPA profile is simple:

- Log on to your PPA member account at [ppa.com](http://ppa.com).
- Go to [ppa.com/faces-of-ppa](http://ppa.com/faces-of-ppa).
- Complete your profile as thoroughly as possible.
- Submit a print-quality photo of yourself that shows you're a photographer.

Share details that most resonate with you since those are the things people relate to the most. Once approved and published, your profile will be part of the Faces of PPA page.

Faces of PPA profiles include the subject's website and social media links, giving your business exposure. These bite-sized profiles are also posted on Facebook, and some are featured in print editions of *Professional Photographer*. •



# Tight Crop

CAN YOU FIND THE FULL IMAGE IN THIS ISSUE?



Check your answer here  
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**FINE ART PRINTS**

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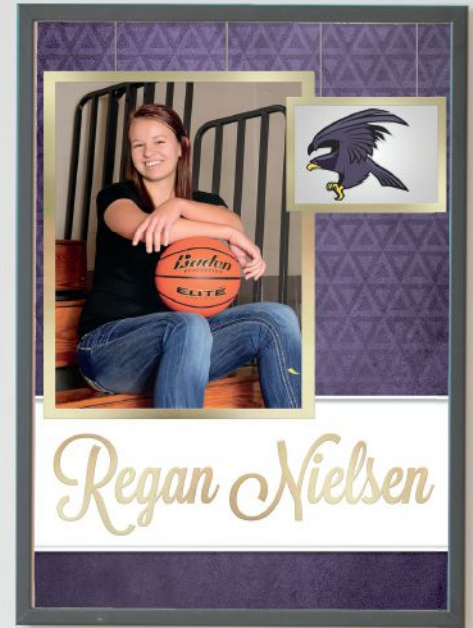
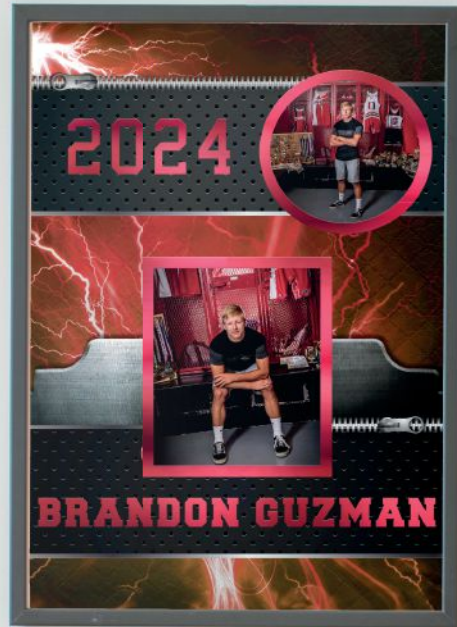
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## Community Network with PPA

# Stronger Together

## Join Your Local Association

Photographers helping photographers is what Community Networks are all about. These local creative communities nurture and provide the support and tools to help you grow. As a member of your local Community Network, you will:

- ◆ Connect with peers and mentors
- ◆ Sharpen your skills by competing in your local image competitions
- ◆ Earn merits towards your PPA degree by attending or speaking at a PPA Merit Program
- ◆ Get recognized, build credibility, and set yourself apart
- ◆ Give back to your photographic community
- ◆ And much more!

There's never been a better time to get involved. After all, it's together that we thrive.

Find a Community Network Association near you:

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