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P.28 TRULY SEEN
The Best Brand Is You

P.34 MONOLIGHT REVIEW
Elinchrom Three

P.42 LEADING LINES
Architectural Accuracy



Fine Friends

MARCH 2024

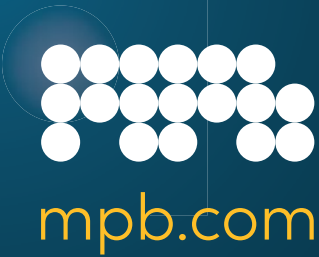
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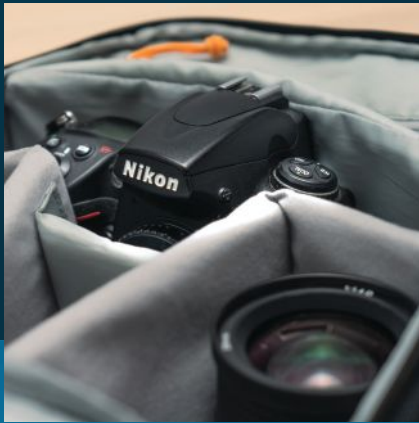
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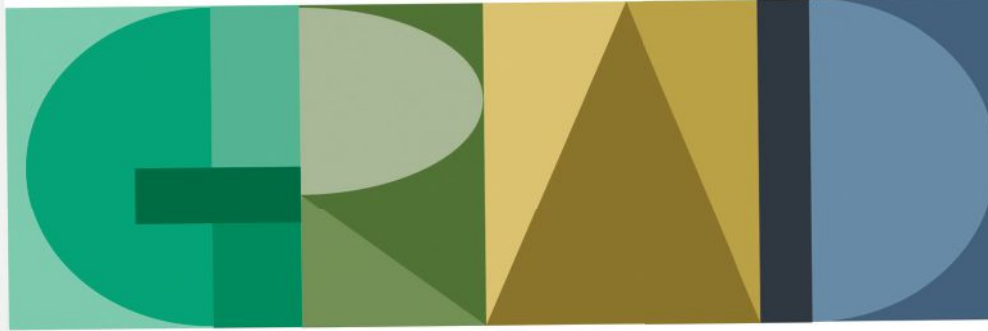
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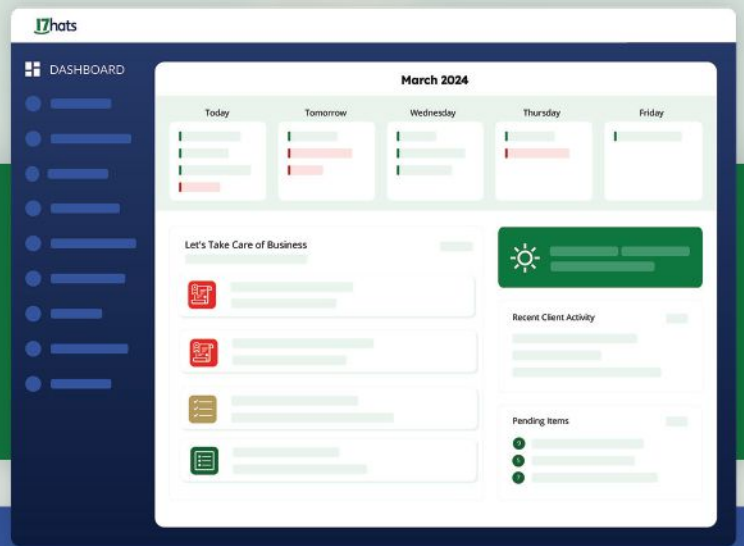
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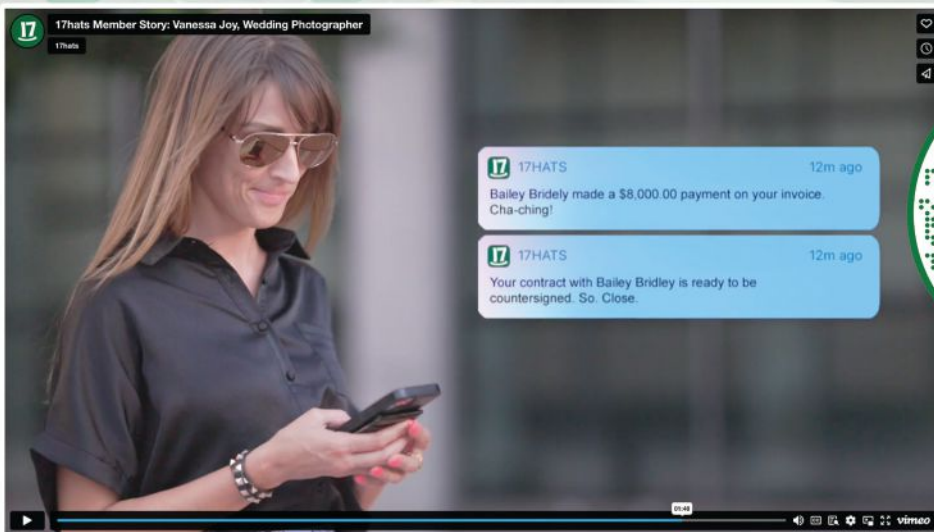
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Paradoxically Invigorating

PROBLEMS ARE OPPORTUNITIES

Paradoxes, contradictions, constraints: They all sound problematic. But what if we considered them gateways instead of obstacles?

During his work on the theory of relativity, Einstein is said to have contemplated how an object could be simultaneously moving and at rest. Can a thing be what it is and what it is not? Such a thought experiment makes some people anxious and others invigorated. Researchers say it's a matter of mindset that determines which camp we fall into. For some people, contradictions and constraints stoke creativity. If we can be comfortable living with the psychic tension that comes from holding competing ideas, we can free ourselves to dream up unlikely scenarios that just might turn out to be diamonds.

Through her research, organizational behavior professor Ella Miron-Spektor has determined that performance is elevated in people who embrace the duality inherent in paradox. They're more creative, flexible, and productive. People who hold a paradox mindset "gain energy from tensions that nurture their creativity and satisfaction," she says. If we can get beyond the discomfort that's created by ambiguous scenarios and conflicting truths, that's when we start to embrace the complex beauty of reality and our potential to explain or enhance it.

When we give deliberate thought to contradictions, we break down assumptions. And what are assumptions if not roadblocks to innovation and creativity? Experiments show that even non-paradoxical thinkers can improve their creativity if they first consider some paradoxical statements.

Paradoxes, contradictions, and constraints are aids to creativity because when predictable paths are blocked, we're challenged to innovate, and this is when we can create something new as a solution. Legendary animator Chuck Jones laid down rules for himself—constraints—about how he would write Road Runner cartoons. The Road Runner could not harm Wile E. Coyote except by saying "Meep, meep," for example, and he couldn't leave the road. The very idea that constraints give us greater freedom is an intriguing contradiction to consider.

Paradox is Jeremy Lock's stock in trade ("Feeling the Love," page 70). Love may not be the first motivation that comes to mind when you consider the work of a longtime Air Force photographer. But it's there in his images: beauty in chaos, strength in the wounded, and dignity in the forgotten. The contradiction inherent in Cassandra Jones' work is that it was only due to a great personal loss that she stepped beyond her role as scientist to embrace her life as an artist ("Enchanted Forests," page 50).

We don't excel in spite of the paradoxes, contradictions, and constraints before us. We excel because those conundrums demand that we look beyond what's plainly visible and dare to dream of what's next. Can a thing be what it is and what it is not? Such is the question—and the opportunity—for the scientist, the artist, the creator. •

Jane Gaboury
Director of Publications

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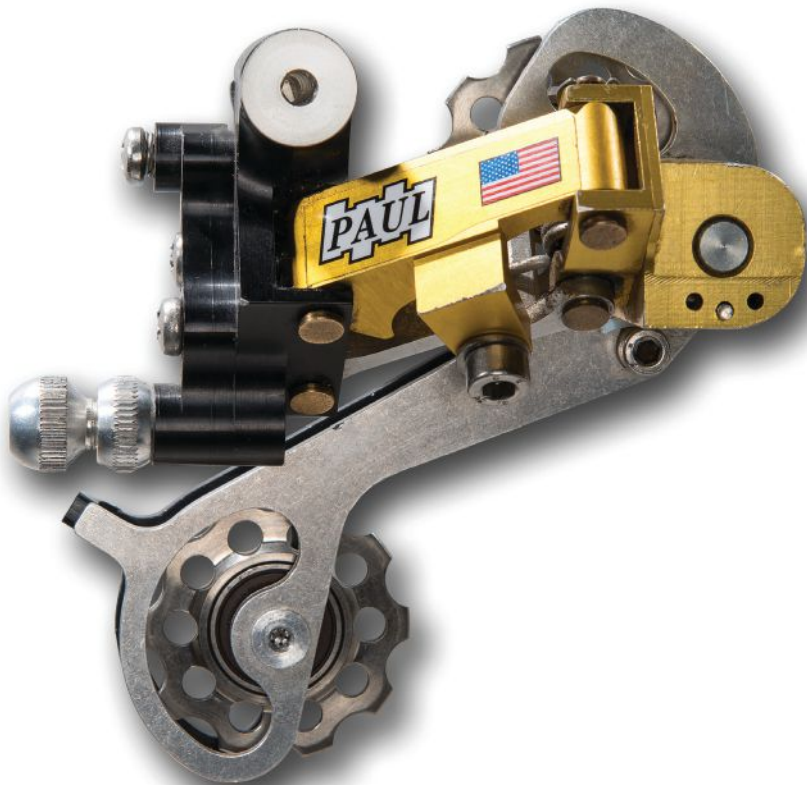
Artful Mechanics

FOR LOVE OF BIKES

It's just one component of the bicycle—the mechanism that moves the chain so the gears can be switched—and yet the derailleur has evolved greatly in construction, design, and aesthetics over the decades while performing exactly the same function. Bicycle aficionado Robert D. Jones is so fascinated by the mechanism that he created the series “The Dérailleur Project” to document its attractive design.

After collecting the mechanisms from cycling buddies and experimenting with the best way to photograph them, Jones elected to shoot from above. For each image, the derailleur was placed on a white background surrounded by white foam core boards held in place with light stands. He used a Nikon D800 with an AF-S Nikkor 24-70mm F2.8G ED lens and Nikon strobes—two SB-900s, one SB-800 and one SB-28. “The strobes were perfect for the job because they’re small, powerful, and have a wide range of adjustability,” he explains. “I placed them differently inside the foam core box to best capture the details of each derailleur.”

His biggest challenge was dealing with the highly reflective quality of the derailleurs and their varying shapes. This meant tailoring the light position for each object to open shadows and reduce highlights as well as doing extensive post-production work to bring out the best in each derailleur. Jones’ work resulted in two calendars, in 2015 and 2016, and more recently a book: “The Dérailleur Project.” •





Revealing the Invisible

EXPLAINING CHRONIC ILLNESS



IMAGES ©PATRICIA FORTLAGE / patriciafortlage.com

“They read like Greek tragedies,” says fine art and portrait photographer Patricia Fortlage of the stories women share about living with chronic illnesses.

Fortlage has a chronic immune disorder called Myasthenia gravis, which makes even simple tasks such as getting dressed and brushing her teeth laborious. She wanted to share her experience via photography—“the insurmountable pain and suffering, along with oppression and gaslighting.” Not to mention grief for the loss of health

as well as the friendships that dissolved as her illness sometimes forced her to isolate herself. “Many of us are becoming invisible, retreating to the safety of our rooms,” she says.

She didn’t want the series to limit her to one type of photography, so she delves into documentary as well as conceptual images, still lifes, portraits, and landscapes. “I love humor, so there is a bit of cheekiness thrown in for good measure.” Her biggest challenge was the physical. “I can no longer



bend or squat without exacerbating my disability, so I had to find work-arounds for images where I wanted to ideally shoot from a low angle.”

“What I like most about the project is that it seems to be resonating with people,” she says. “That tells me it is a story worth telling. And that gives me hope that this little seedling of information could sprout into some changes as to what people with chronic illnesses and disabilities experience going forward.” •

WHOOOPS

ADDRESSING MISTAKES

Made a mistake with a client? It happens. Follow these three steps, advises *Entrepreneur* magazine.

1

From the outset, establish a standard of trust and open communication with clients by regularly checking in with them to make sure they understand your process. Encourage them to ask questions and express opinions.

2

Once you realize you've made a mistake, leverage that standard of candid communication by openly and immediately admitting your error then offering a solution.

3

Reflect on your mistake and reevaluate your processes to prevent the same error from happening again.



INSPIRED WORDS

USE YOUR CORE

“My biggest advice is to be personally congruent and authentic in your work and photograph what you absolutely are head-over-heels in love with. Because if you love it, people will feel that and love it, too, and you will find your people. I think so often we just get caught up in the noise of what everybody else is doing. And the real power that we have as creators, as artists, is the soul inside of us, that personally congruent core. That super authentic core is the biggest driving force behind creating art, and creating art is a service to others.”

—CASSANDRA JONES

(See “Enchanted Forest,” page 50.)

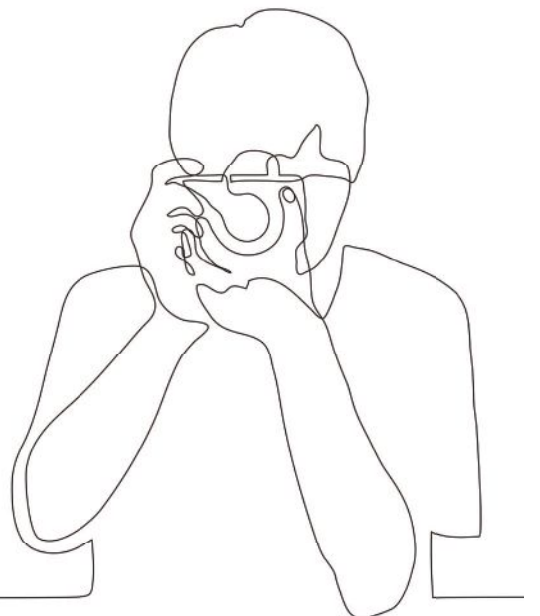


About You

MAKE IT PERSONAL

What should you write on the About Me page of your website? Focus first and foremost on why you do what you do, advises *Creative Boom* magazine. Answer these three questions about yourself:

- What led you to found your business?
- Why are you passionate about your work?
- How well do you solve a problem?





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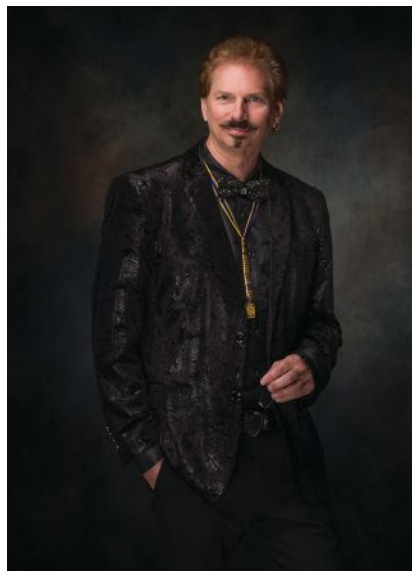
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Stop Trying to Fit In

NEVER FEAR BEING WEIRD

By Mark Campbell, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, API



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If you've ever received disapproving looks or unkind comments from people when expressing yourself, don't worry. No one who ever left their mark on this world was someone people considered to be normal. History doesn't remember average individuals. In fact, consider any person who's contributed to the world in a significant way, whether in a political arena, critical thinking, or creativity, and you'll notice they've been considered odd.

Salvador Dalí once drove a car filled with cauliflower and walked an anteaater around Paris. Leo Tolstoy denounced the look of a rich man and took to wearing peasant clothes. Michelangelo and Steve Jobs considered bathing a health hazard. Albert Einstein filled his pipe with tobacco from cigarette butts he picked up off the ground, and Charles Dickens believed he was being followed by characters from his novels.

Why do those who have changed the world in some way seem to think differently than everyone else? In a 2011 *Scientific American* article, Harvard professor Shelley Carson writes that people who are highly creative often have odd thoughts and behaviors and vice versa. She says both creativity and eccentricity may be the result of genetic variations that increase cognitive disinhibition—the brain's failure (or ability) to filter out extraneous information. Unfiltered information that reaches conscious awareness in the brains of highly intelligent people who can process this information may lead to exceptional insights and sensations. During moments of insight, cognitive filters relax and allow ideas on the brain's back burners to leap forward into consciousness. It also seems to cause behaviors that are often considered odd.

People who possess this variation may dress idiosyncratically, their speech patterns may be out of the ordinary, they

may respond ineptly in social situations, their emotional responses may be inappropriate, they may believe in supernatural phenomena, and they may be hard to get close to physically and emotionally. But according to Carson, these people "are very often high functioning, talented, and intelligent."

We don't have to avoid being thought of as odd. Trying to do so may only stifle the creativity that's within you. If you feel you're a little weird, own it. Let those thoughts you've been afraid to explore rise to the surface and see where they lead you. I've seen profound results when someone ignores the naysayers and moves forward with their gut feelings. Listen to that inner voice when you feel it has something to say. What's the worst that can happen? How would you feel if someone else developed an idea that you yourself were too timid to pursue?

Life is too short not to put everything on the table, and regrets are the hardest things to live with. The fear of failure is one of the best reasons to follow your intuition. Nearly every person who's achieved success has failed more times than they could count.

Many leading corporations now have chief innovation officers on their leadership teams, and many Fortune 500 companies put employees through creativity training to stimulate out-of-the-box thoughts.

My oldest and best client over my 40-year career has been mentalist Craig Karges, who has performed amazing feats of magic for audiences around the world. He claims we use only 10 to 20 percent of our brain capacity. Maybe it's time to put fear aside and see what that other 80 percent is capable of. •

Mark Campbell owns Prestige Photography & Video in Wheeling, West Virginia.

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LIGHTING: Erica Lane used a Godox AD600 with a 5-foot octabox as a main light.

POST-CAPTURE: In Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop, she did compositing, then hand painted the image using a Wacom tablet.



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NOTE: Lighting diagrams shown here are not to scale.

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3

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4

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5

10 seconds is all it takes for people to form an opinion about your logo.
Logos are small but mighty. A great logo needs to be simple, effective, and unique. It must be related to your brand to grab consumers' attention.

6

94% of people are highly likely to recommend a brand they're emotionally engaged with.
A brand that establishes a positive emotional connection can position itself favorably with consumers and get referrals.

Source: smallbizgenius.net

Dropped Like a Bad Habit

CHANGE YOUR PATTERNS TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

By Jeff Kent



Owen Fitzpatrick online
owenfitzpatrick.com

When we think about making a change in our lives, we often think about habits. These little subconscious processes dictate so much about our daily lives, and they're easily identifiable when we want to alter the course we're taking.

But changing habits can be difficult. It's not just a matter of will: Neuroscience and behavioral psychology are involved, and we're often fighting against our brains' natural tendencies when we try to disrupt ingrained behavior.

Owen Fitzpatrick has been studying habits and behavioral change for more than two decades. The globetrotting psychologist is an authority in how to shape behavior through belief—a topic he's examined in nine books and through presentations to hundreds of prominent organizations.

MAXIMIZE THE PRODUCTIVE

Not all habits are bad, of course. Optimi-

zing our behavioral patterns includes identifying and leaning into the good habits we already practice. "Optimization is about looking at what you're already doing, getting down to the micro actions, which are your habits, and then determining if there's a way to make them better," explains Fitzpatrick.

Maybe you already have a good habit of getting up early to get a jumpstart on your workday. Once you're up and in your workspace, can you build in more efficiencies to optimize the time you've given yourself? Perhaps you could knock out simple, routine tasks, like answering client emails or doing billing.

Behavioral change also involves determining which habits are leading to problems then taking action to fix them. Sometimes changing habits is about replacing them. Sometimes it's about creating new ones. Sometimes we just have to stop

destructive habits. To sort this out we need to be aware of all our habitual actions. “Your habits lead up to your routines. And your routines will then dictate your experiences and what results you get in your everyday life,” says Fitzpatrick.

REPROGRAMMING CONNECTIONS

In an effort at efficiency, our brain creates shortcuts to make things easy and automatic. Whenever there’s change, these shortcuts get rerouted and require a lot of cognitive resources. “In other words, our brains have to work really, really hard whenever we change something,” says Fitzpatrick.

When it comes to changing a habit, we’re essentially reprogramming these connections, and we need to ask a number of questions:

- What is going on in my life that I want to change?
- What happened to cause me to want to make a change?
- Do I really want to change?
- What habits are leading me down my current path?
- What habits do I want to change?
- What new habit do I want instead?

Be clear on the answers to these questions, allowing yourself no ambiguity around what you’re trying to change and why. Having the discipline to change a habit can be difficult, so understanding why you’re doing it is critical for maintaining your motivation.

With these questions answered, the next step is preparing to execute a change in a specific way. This entails devising a clear plan of how you’ll engage in the habit-changing process, when and where you’ll do it, and how you’ll measure success. This includes preparing yourself for likely obstacles and plotting how you’ll deal with them.

AN ARCHITECT OF CHANGE

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you're in prime position to become an architect of change. Three tips: Make the change clear, make it fun, and make it rewarding. If you can create a process that makes the change you're embarking on easy and enjoyable, you'll have a greater chance of success. Fitzpatrick recommends a few techniques to advance this process.

Organize your environment. Set up your surroundings to make the new habit easier and the old habit more difficult. Let's say you're trying to get up early and go for a run before work. Lay out your running clothes the night before so your path to the new behavior is easier in the morning.

To discourage a negative habit, set up your environment to make that behavior more difficult. One example comes from Google, which encouraged employees toward healthier eating by putting the best food options up front in the break rooms and moving less healthy options to less convenient locations. People still had a choice, but the environment discouraged one behavior while encouraging another.

Stack your habits. Habit stacking is a way to package multiple productive behaviors to encourage adoption of a new, positive habit. Maybe you already drink plenty of water each day, and you

want to develop a new habit of stretching your muscles. Every time you refill your water, stretch. Refill your water, stretch again. If you're refilling your water five or six times a day, you're also stretching that often. By stacking the new behavior on top of your existing habit, your brain connects the two and you're more likely to continue them both.

Bundle your temptations. Temptation bundling involves pairing something you look forward to with a new habit you're trying to develop. If you're trying to develop a habit of walking a couple of miles a day, you might increase your motivation by listening to your favorite podcast while walking. Here's the trick: Allow yourself to listen to that podcast only while you're walking. If you want to hear the next episode, go for a walk. By pairing these activities, you create an association between walking and your favorite podcast. The desire to listen to the podcast is motivation to engage in the new behavior.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

One of the most common questions about behavioral change is how long it takes to acquire or discontinue a habit.

Bad question, notes Fitzpatrick, "That question implies that you're waiting for the time that you don't have to work at it anymore. If you're doing that, then your mindset is already messed up. You're already thinking to yourself, *This is going to be a pain, I just want to do it until the point I don't even think about it.*"

Instead of looking for an end date to the habit-changing process, reset your thinking about the behavior and how it relates to your identity. Frame the new habit as part of who you are. "Whenever you believe you're a certain type of person, it's easy for you to do the habit that fits into that identity," explains Fitzpatrick. "Whereas if you don't believe you're that type of person, even if you engage in a new habit, you will eventually go back to your old way of doing things."

If you don't believe you're a healthy eater but you're actually eating healthy, a process known as cognitive dissonance eventually emerges. This happens when there is tension between two sets of competing beliefs. The brain tries to alleviate this tension, which may lead you to revert to old behavior that's more in line with your beliefs about yourself. To make a positive change, adjust your mindset about who you are and who you are becoming.

SET THINGS UP FOR SUCCESS

To motivate yourself or others to make a change, the change needs to be important and it needs to be urgent. If you're trying to help your staff implement new, positive habits at your studio, create a compelling vision for them. Help them understand why the change is critical to the business and why it needs to be done in a particular time frame. Circle back to the why to help with motivation, be clear about how the new behavior can be implemented, and outline the obstacles you might face together. Then establish a way to track progress so everyone can feel a sense of control when it comes to implementing the change. "By doing all of that, you'll set everyone up for success," says Fitzpatrick. •

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Show Up How You Want To Be Seen

YOUR BRAND SHOULD BE TRUE TO YOU

By Stephanie Boozer



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After the dark days of the COVID-19 lockdown followed by the national shock and outrage at the killing of George Floyd, Lajune King found herself in a fearful new reality that overshadowed her normal effervescence. She was afraid for her husband to take his routine Saturday morning drive in his vintage car, of him being profiled, of him being in the right place but at the wrong time. Determined to rise above, King reshaped her fear into determination and an opportunity to shift her purpose

and her photography. She wanted to be a bright light for herself, her family, and for other people of color.

“I literally changed how I took photos,” she says. “I wanted to change the way people look at Black families, at people of color, at Black women in business. I wanted to be the change that I wanted people to see.”

REAL PERSONALITY

Earlier in her photography journey, King felt compelled to conform to certain ideas

about being a family photographer, she says, thinking that if she came across as “too ethnic” people might not want to book her. She gradually learned that shying away from her true self was hurting her business. Showing her real personality shifted her gravitational force by pulling in like-minded clients. King began showing up on social media and in front of clients as her authentic joyful self. She wanted to be seen for her real self, not as a watered-down version who was attempting to fit into a set of societal expectations.

In 2020, she started posting more on TikTok, feeling that Instagram had become a place where perfection reigned. She found an enthusiastic audience. Posts began going viral and King found herself in a better financial position to open Blk Stry Studio, a 2,500-square-foot bright and airy space. She revamped her branding to reflect her personality and focused her messaging on celebrating joy and authenticity with every session.

“I want to be seen in a positive light as best as I can,” she says. “I want my clients to have proof that their joy was put into this world, that I see it, and that I can capture it with my camera. Being seen is huge.”

THE RIGHT CLIENT

Based in Frisco, Texas, King focuses on families, lifestyle portraits, and personal branding headshots that celebrate clients’ defining characteristics





and uniqueness. Her message of changing the narrative and bringing joy forward is peppered throughout her website and branding, encouraging clients to let their guard down and be real in front of her camera.

“I bring people out of themselves, help them put some life behind their photos,” says King, who was awarded *Frisco Enterprise* magazine’s 2023 Best of Frisco Portrait Photographer Readers’ Choice Award. “When I look online at photos of people’s kids looking perfect, I’m like, Whose life is like that? I want candid as authentic as possible. If your kid is not looking at the camera and has his fingers in his nose, that is real life!”

King’s Pink Starburst Experience has made her a standout in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, so much so that if she’s out in public it’s not uncommon for someone to call her out as the “pink Starburst lady.” The idea stemmed from her favorite candy and a desire to give clients a fun thank you gift. Knowing it was common for high-end wedding photographers to gift clients something lavish after their experience, King thought it would be fun to give clients something meaningful that was quintessentially her, something memorable with a handwritten note following their session. After finding out she could purchase bags of pink Starburst candies, King reached out to the candymaker

in 2020 for permission to reference the brand in her marketing. Not expecting much, she went to Costa Rica for spring break, and ultimately returned to find a surprise package full of pink Starburst swag and T-shirts from the company.

“It was amazing,” she says. “Now people see me and think of pink Starburst!”

Letting clients and potential clients see who she is has been her best tool for attracting customers who understand her and her work. When she’s teaching and speaking, King pushes that point, noting that the key to attracting the right client for you is to create the right experience.

“If you work with someone who is not ideal for you, then you can’t create the best experience,” she says. “But that’s also an important way to learn. Sometimes people are put into our lives to disrupt us and see how we handle it. When I work with someone who’s a little more difficult, I try to find out how I can grow from that experience and make it right next time.”

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

King coaches photographers to uncover who they are and how they can create an ideal experience, by closing their eyes and thinking back to a perfect experience they’ve had in a retail or service situation. It doesn’t have to be a luxury experience like Neiman Marcus; it can be any setting

where the service and surroundings were just right.

“What did that look like and feel like for you from start to finish?” she says. “That is what you have to give to your clients.”

Along similar lines, King advises photographers to put themselves in the place of their clients by running through their email workflows to understand what the process looks and feels like from their perspective. Is there enough information? Is enough of your personality coming through? Are you communicating what clients want to hear?

To make sure she’s always on target, King regularly asks for client input. “Always be open to feedback,” she says. “If you’re consistent with your work and creating a good experience, you shouldn’t be afraid. But if you do have one bad review, make sure the next client doesn’t experience that, and thank your client for letting you know.”

King’s ability to take negative experiences and situations and reshape them into avenues for growth and positive change is essential to her success as well as her happiness.

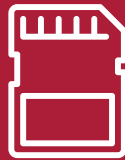
“A keyword for me is joy,” says King. “I love people thinking of me for the pink Starburst experience, me wearing pink, my pink nails. I’m showing up how I want to be seen.” •

Stephanie Boozer is a writer in Charleston, South Carolina.



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THE GOODS

How to Vet a Location

You've envisioned a session on location and just have to find the right spot for it. Here are some considerations to keep in mind when scouting a site.

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eleanorokathrynphotography.com



FEASIBILITY

Is it a private or public location, and would permissions or permits be required to photograph there?

Is it reasonable to expect that you won't be disrupted by people who aren't involved in the session?

Are safety precautions necessary due to issues such as traffic, slick rocks, or sheer drop-offs?

Any wildlife or insect risks? Does anyone in the client or assistant group have insect or plant allergies that could require emergency assistance?

What level of mobility is needed to reach the location?

Could there be other photographers trying to use the same location at the same time?

PRACTICALITY

How close can you park, and how far is the location from the client's home and your studio?

What is the terrain like if there's been recent precipitation?

What kind of shoes will subjects be wearing in the photos? If they need to change shoes on site, is there somewhere suitable to sit?

Is there a restroom close by?

Are electric outlets available?

Will you need to bring water, sunscreen, sun shade?

If the client brings a bag or other personal belongings, is there a safe, clean spot where they can set aside their items during the session?

AESTHETIC

Does the appearance of the location support the story you want to tell about your client?

Is the location uniform and does it fulfill the client's desired look? Check for anything out of place such as a modern element in an otherwise rustic setting.

Where will the sun and shade be at different times of day and seasons?

Are there any buildings or structures at the location that enhance or detract from the setting?

Is there commercial branding, signage, or art that would require you to obtain licensing? Could such items be digitally removed in post-production? •

Thanks to PPA members Julie Kubal, Jo Anne Richards, and Kenneth Johansen for their contributions.

The Swiss Army Knife of Light

REVIEW: ELINCHROM THREE MONOLIGHT

By *Ellis Vener*



COURTESY ELINCHROM

Swiss-designed and Swiss-made, the battery-powered 261-watt-second Elinchrom Three monolight brings twice the power of the Elinchrom One. The design, function, and performance of this flash make a compelling argument for investing in modern, high-quality lighting instruments. You get a compact flash with exposed flashtube design, a near limitless light modifier mount, a 20-watt bicolor LED modeling lamp, on-demand fan cooling, and a rugged—but not waterproof—build. It delivers a six-stop output range, short flash duration, a built-in 20 channel/four group Skyport receiver, an internal battery capable of delivering up to 525 full-power flashes (up to 11,250 at minimum power), plus a fistful of other features.

Along with through-the-lens and high-speed sync modes, you can choose manual output in one-third or one-tenth stop steps across the light's six-stop range (261 to 7 watt-seconds). HSS works in both TTL and manual control modes. The Elinchrom Three also features two flash duration ranges. When you need to prioritize freezing subject motion, switch to Action, signified by the running man icon in the first menu on the light's touch-sensitive user interface, to shorten the flash duration. In Action mode, the color temperature is roughly 450 Kelvin higher. In images taken in the HSS shutter speed range, I measured a color balance shift in the tint (green/magenta) up to 10 points toward the green using the eyedropper tool in Lightroom on raw Nikon Z 7II files.

The Elinchrom Three lets you specify the output level in three ways: the Elinchrom scale, the European 1-10 scale, or in watt-seconds. The table (next page) shows the relationship among the three scales and the range of t0.1 flash duration.

The 20-watt LED (output equivalent to a 120-watt quartz-halogen at full power) has four modes: freely adjustable, pro-

Pros

- Versatility
- Mount compatibility
- User interface and design

Cons

- Price
- Slight noise from the built-in cooling fan

portional to the flash setting, Visual Flash Confirmation (VFC, which turns the modeling light off when flash fires until the flash is ready to fire again), and off. The modeling light has six color temperature presets: 2,700K (soft white tungsten), 3,000K (warm white tungsten), 3,200K (standard tungsten), 5,000K (direct sun), 5,500K (daylight), 6,500K (overcast sky). At 5,500K, the CRI rating for the modeling lamp is 95, with a runtime of 90 minutes at full power and 10 hours at minimum power.

For me, one of the most appealing aspects of the Elinchrom One and Three lights is the versatility of the modifier mount. Unlike virtually every flash in the monolight category, which incorporate a proprietary locking mount, Elinchrom has increased the system's versatility by giving the cylindrical front half of the lights a diameter of 3.9 inches. This makes it a perfect match for the classic Profoto mount, which has been the safest and most versatile light modifier mount since the late 1960s. The safety factor is due to the design of the mount—a pair of steel bands secures the wide rubber collar around the body of the light, locking the modifier and light into one unit. With Profoto-mount hard reflectors, sliding the collar along the body of the flash adjusts both the beam angle and center-to-edge falloff of the light.

For the One and Three, Elinchrom makes a line of OCF modifiers. These include a wide-angle reflector for umbrellas and barn doors and a set of color domes (red, blue, green, yellow, amber, and magenta) instead of the standard frosted diffuser/flashtube protector. There are three Rotalux Go soft boxes: a 14x30-inch strip box, a 22x30-inch recta, and a 24-inch octa. Using the Elinchrom Profoto adapter, which is included in the Elinchrom Three kit, you can use the extensive line of Elinchrom standard mount light modifi-

ELINCHROM VS. EUROPEAN WATT-SECOND POWER AND FLASH DURATION

Elinchrom Scale	European 10 Scale	Watt-seconds	Color t0.1	Action t0.1
0.1	4.8	7.1	1/1,550	1/8,500
1.1	5.8	14	1/1,100	1/6,260
2.1	6.8	28	1/760	1/8,100
3.1	7.8	57	1/550	1/2,830
4.1	8.8	114	1/320	1/1,580
5.1	9.8	227	1/265	1/620
5.3	10	261	1/255	1/440



IMAGES © ELLIS VENER / ellisvener.com

To create the dramatic lighting in this impromptu portrait, I set the Elinchrom Three to TTL and HSS control mode and modified the light with a Plume Wafer 75 soft box. I angled the light toward the subject and feathered it back toward the Corvette, just enough to bring out the car's sleek lines and to complement the reflection of the sky on the hood and front window.



For this still life, I used an Elinchrom standard 8.3-inch reflector on the Elinchrom Three, which was set to manual control mode, and I set the output using the Elinchrom Transmitter Pro. To get the deep focus, I used a Nikon Z 7II in Focus Shift mode for capture, processed the raw files, and used HeliconFocus software to create the composite of 15 focus-stacked frames.

The light weight and portability of the Elinchrom Three make it easy to move the light around to change the direction and quality of light.



ers: soft boxes, inverse soft boxes, shallow and deep umbrellas, and hard reflectors.

If you need additional light modifier options, you can access another wide-ranging family of light modifiers by adding an inexpensive (\$40-\$45) third-party Profoto to Bowens-S adapter.

The Three uses Elinchrom's Skyport radio system to sync with cameras, and while there is no connection port for sync cords, there is a built-in optical eye. For hands-off primary control of the Three, along with the Skyport Pro, Elinchrom's Studio Bluetooth app lets you control the flash

from iOS, Android, macOS, and Windows systems.

Skyport Pro transmitters are made for Canon, Fujifilm, Nikon, Pentax, and Sony cameras and have 20 channels and four groups per channel. With a claimed interior range of 196 feet (60 meters) and up to 650 feet (200 meters) outdoors, the system works reliably in all but the most radio-unfriendly environments. As with all radio systems using the 2.4 GHz bandwidth, traffic on nearby 2.4 GHz wireless systems may impact wireless performance.

An internal built-in 41.04Wh lithium-ion battery powers the Elinchrom Three. Elinchrom lists three capacity specs for the battery: full and minimum capacity, both with and without the modeling light, and runtime for the modeling light only. Without using the modeling light, a fully charged battery delivers 525 full-power (261Ws) flashes and up to 11,250 flashes at the minimum energy setting (7Ws). With the modeling light at full power, these numbers drop to 420 and 9,000, respectively. If you want to use only the modeling light and not the flash, runtime ranges from 90 minutes at full brightness and up to 10 hours at minimum power. Recharging a fully drained battery to full capacity takes 100 minutes in fast charge mode (automatically engaged when the light is powered on) or 135 minutes with the light powered off. While shooting, connecting the light to the supplied 65-watt charger gives you unlimited flash capacity and runtime.

Included in each Elinchrom Three kit are the 65-watt AC watt charging block and USB-C PD cable, an Elinchrom reflector to Profoto adapter, frosted OCF diffuser/flashtube and modeling light protector, and an elegant hard-sided carrying case for \$999.99. The Dual kit includes two of everything and a backpack instead of a case for \$1,899.99. •



KRISTOPHER JOHN VENTRESKO M.Photog.Cr.

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PPA has played a vital role in my growth as a professional photographer, providing me with education, inspiration, networking opportunities, and benefits including equipment insurance that has come in handy on multiple occasions.

I love telling the stories of my subjects and creating heirlooms that can be shared across generations. I'm inspired by the play of light in photographs as well as the mixture of business, technique, and inspiration found in *Professional Photographer*.

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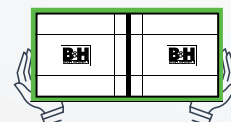


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REVIEW: SIGMA 10-18MM F2.8 DC DN CONTEMPORARY LENS

By Joan Sherwood



COURTESY SIGMA /
sigmaphoto.com



IMAGES ©PPA

With a minimum focusing distance ranging from 4.6 inches at 10mm to 7.6 inches at 18mm, the Sigma 10-18mm F2.8 DC DN Contemporary lens allows you to get close to a subject and still capture a wide composition. This image was taken at 18mm focal length.

Pros

- Bright aperture
- Lightweight and compact
- Price

Cons

- Push-on hood is tricky

For most photographers, an ultra-wide-angle lens is a niche tool, something you need for a specific job, not one of your regulars. You don't want to spend a lot of money for a tool you don't use often, nor do you want to add a lot of bulk or weight to your equipment case. The Sigma 10-18mm F2.8 DC DN Contemporary lens fills that niche with the capacity to deliver.

It's currently the world's smallest and lightest f/2.8 ultra-wide-angle zoom lens designed for mirrorless ASP-C cameras. If your mirrorless is a full-frame, you can still use this lens, but you'll get a significant vignette around the edges at 10mm unless you engage an ASP-C crop mode or crop in post. On my Sigma fp camera, this means the focal range is a 15-27mm full-frame equivalent based on the field of view described to the sensor, and a 1.5X APS-C crop factor, resulting in a 2,840x2,560-pixel resolution capture. On the higher-resolution Sigma fp L camera, it would be 6,240x4,144 pixels.

Sigma's Contemporary lenses are more economical than the top-of-the-line Art series and tend to be smaller and lighter. The Sigma 10-18mm F2.8 DC DN C is a mere 9.2 ounces, measuring 2.8 inches in length and 2.4 in diameter. The included petal-type hood is petite and features a push-on design. This on/off method isn't intuitive; I had to go to the instructions to figure it out. Once I knew what I was doing, on and off were simple operations, but I never got the hang of reversing the hood to fit back on the lens for minimal storage size. The push-on design uses a spring lever mechanism that's unique among camera manufacturers, and

the design allows the hood to be thinner and smaller.

The lightweight and compact design make this lens good for travel, on-the-go video, and content creation. You could easily fit this into a waist bag along with another lens without feeling like you were lugging unnecessary weight.

At the 10mm focal length, the optical design allows you to focus at just 4.6 inches (11.6cm) from the image sensor plane and has a maximum 1:4 magnification ratio, allowing close photography with distinct background separation. The lens features 13 elements in 10 groups in an inner-focus system with a stepping motor.

Auto and manual focus are smooth, and the optical design minimizes focus breathing. The stepping motor is quiet for video use. With its f/2.8 constant aperture zoom, the lens does well in low light, for video, and to create a shallow depth of field.

I enjoyed testing the 11.6-centimeter minimum focusing distance at the wide end of the focus range. Since that measurement is from the sensor plane, you're nearly touching the object with the lens at that distance, yet you can still get a remarkably wide background around and behind the subject.

I also took advantage of having the ultra-wide-angle lens to try some star trail photography. I took a set of 99 10-second exposures at f/5.6, ISO 800 and blended them together with pleasing results.

The Sigma 10-18mm F2.8 DC DN Contemporary is a nifty ultra-wide-angle lens that's lightweight, compact, and affordable at \$599. If you want to add wide-angle work to your repertoire, this is a great lens to get creative with. It's available in L-Mount, Sony E-Mount, and Fujifilm X Mount systems. It's compatible with camera functions such as electronic image stabilization and aberration correction. •



A wide-angle lens works wonderfully to capture a leafless winter tree canopy in long exposures to create star trails in a night sky. This image is a blended composite of 99 10-second exposures.



At 10mm there is no visible lens distortion in the vertical lines of this cityscape. If an APS-C crop has not been applied to a full-frame capture, pincushioning is visible in the outer 20% of the left and right sides. (See ppa.com/sigma-10-18mm.)



LEADING LINES

HOW BRIAN BERKOWITZ BUILT A PATH TO ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

BY JEFF KENT



©MARC ANTHONY

BRIAN BERKOWITZ



Growing up with a wedding photographer father, Brian Berkowitz thought that professional photographers did weddings and portraits, maybe had a couple of small sidelines, and that was it. But as an adult, a series of events led the Long Island photographer—who initially followed in his dad’s footsteps—to discover architectural and interior photography. His eyes opened to a fascinating field with new creative avenues he previously didn’t know existed. Today, Berkowitz is considered one of the preeminent architectural photographers in the New York area, with a specialty in retail store photography and commercial work with brands such as Gucci, Rolex, Louis Vuitton, and others.



DOOR TO REAL ESTATE

Working as a wedding photographer in 2012, Berkowitz was creating some HDR exposure fusion portraiture for highly saturated bridal portraits with a unique look. An owner of a studio he’d been contracting with asked if he’d be interested in applying the technique to real estate photography for a friend who was an interior designer. “That was it for me,” recalls Berkowitz. “I fell in love with shooting the built environment and found a passion for architecture and design that I didn’t know I had.”

From there, Berkowitz started researching architectural photography and associated career options. That research led him to real estate photography—doing shoots for real estate agents to help promote properties for sale—which he soon realized was a good way to get a foot in the door for architecture and interior photography. “Real estate photography has a lower barrier to entry,” he says. “And most professional photographers can do a real estate shoot with the equipment they already have.”

Berkowitz identified a couple of business approaches to real estate photography that could work. The first is the volume option, which involves doing five to 10 shoots a day in rapid-fire succession. The second is more of a boutique option, maybe one property a day, working on higher-end listings and producing a more refined product.

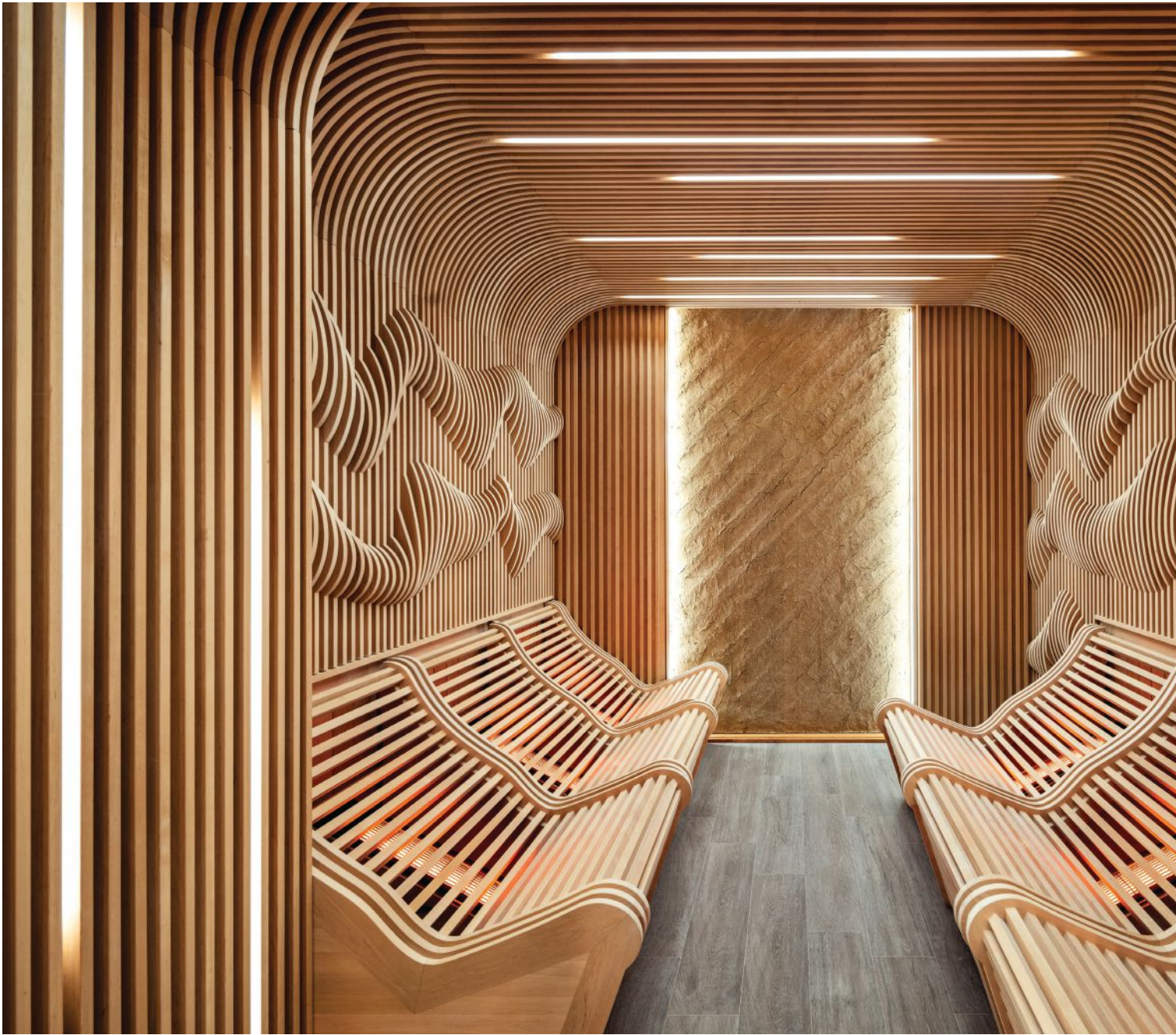
Berkowitz leaned toward the boutique model and gradually built up a client list of some of the top real estate agents on Long Island. He was able to land contracts with successful agents because he understood an underlying truth about real estate photography: Although the job is to help sell houses with striking imagery, an important secondary purpose is to help agents get more listings. “We’re providing marketing content for agents to go out and get their next listing,” he explains. “The agents use the photographs to pitch new potential listings. It allows them to show sellers that they have a dedicated photographer producing high-quality work to help sell their home; they’re not just walking around snapping pictures with their phone.”

INTO ARCHITECTURE

Real estate photography provides a natural steppingstone into architectural and interior design photography. Architects and interior designers need photographs of their









projects, but not all projects have the budget for a full-fledged commercial shoot. But skilled real estate photographers can provide a quality, budget-friendly option and, in turn, set themselves up for additional work on the commercial side of architectural and interior photography.

To step into architectural work, Berkowitz says most photographers can get started with the gear they already possess. Essentials include a camera body, a wide zoom lens (15-35mm is a good option), and a tripod. Berkowitz recommends bracketing exposures to provide the ideal exposure combination and learning to edit images using different brackets.

It's also critical to learn the basic rules of architectural photography, which are founded in representing the space so it appears true to reality. Straight lines are particularly important. Vertical lines should be vertical, horizontals horizontal,

not converging in a manner that a viewer wouldn't see if they were looking at the scene in real life. "It's obvious when a shoot hasn't been done professionally because there are converging lines, crooked doorways, or horizontal lines that aren't level," says Berkowitz. "In those cases, it's clear that someone shot the image with a phone or did it quickly and didn't know what they were doing."

Architectural clients want photographs that show the room as it appears when someone walks in or a building as it appears when seen from outside. Photographers can help ensure this true-to-life perspective by mounting their camera on a geared head to verify a perfectly level shooting surface.

For interior shots, Berkowitz likes to bring in at least a little detail from outside the windows, assuming the scene out there is appealing. If there's an ugly





wall covered in graffiti, he'll blow out the windows a little more in the exposure to hide the outdoor scene, but even in those cases it's important not to over-expose so that windows appear as an amorphous white blob of light.

Berkowitz photographs most interiors with natural and available light, typically using off-camera flash only to address a problem that natural lighting won't solve. For instance, if the sun is shining into a room and producing a halo around the window but the architect wants to feature the millwork around the window, he'll use a flash and bring down the exposure to compensate for the added light to avoid the halo effect and clearly show the window detail. Or on cloudy, gloomy days he might place flashes outside the windows to mimic sunlight shining in.

"These are techniques that go beyond architectural photography as well," says Berkowitz. "For wedding and portrait photographers, they can elevate the work." Let's say you're photographing a bride and groom in a great venue with interesting architectural features. "You want to make sure you're including those but also shooting them in a way that is accurate, with good lighting, and without converging lines. If you're more aware of those kinds of details while shooting, it brings your portrait and wedding work up a notch, and it can help you appeal to another level of client."

RETAIL NICHE

As his work in architectural and interior design photography expanded, Berkowitz carved out a niche with retail establishments. It began with a series of shoots for what was Google Business View, which led to a contract with a luxury mall on Long Island and, eventually, to photographing stores for luxury brands.

Retail store photography represents an interesting and somewhat untapped subset of architectural photography, combining elements of interior photography, marketing, and commercial product photography. Clients use the images for media related to store openings, to showcase store decor for holidays or special events, and for website store locators



and online listings. It's a fast-paced field, with images being used to announce openings or for time-sensitive publicity. Often, Berkowitz photographs a store early in the morning before its launch "because a store will never look as good as it does the morning it opens," and delivers the images later that day.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

When photographers ask him about getting into architectural photography, Berkowitz recommends starting, like he did, with real estate photography. "Most people that have a camera, a decent zoom lens, and a tripod can probably go out and start shooting some basic real estate photography right away," he says. There is a lot of technique that needs to be learned, but opportunities abound with real estate agents who are eager to work with photographers for professional images, especially if you offer to do an initial shoot or two for free while working on your technique.

Then practice, practice, practice. Photograph your own home if you need to. Stage some shoots and work on lighting, leveling the camera, and depicting spaces accurately. Build a portfolio of sample shoots, and then you're ready to start approaching paying clients.

All the while, do your research. There are abundant resources available to learn and hone the skills necessary for architectural and interior photography, including YouTube tutorials, photography blogs, and podcasts. In fact, Berkowitz has hosted the Shooting Spaces podcast for the past

several years and has 180 episodes dedicated to real estate photography.

"Building any business is a lot of work, but it isn't that complicated," says Berkowitz. Take each step, use steppingstones like real estate photography, improve your techniques, and things will develop from there." •



Enchanted Forests

DREAMY SCENES
MADE FOR BABY
AND CHILD
PORTRAITS

BY AMANDA ARNOLD









It's not uncommon for photographers to send out dozens of proofs following a baby or child portrait session. But for Cassandra Jones of Noelle Mirabella Photography in Grande Prairie, Alberta, the number is much lower: four to 10 images per client. Each of those images is the result of a planned, detailed concept she and the client agree on before the session. The client commits to and pays for a print of each concept before the session has even been completed.

It's a unique way of doing business but one that's necessary. "It takes me so long to put these sessions together," Jones says. "There's an incredible amount of planning that goes into every single session." When a client books with her, she conducts a pre-session interview—either by phone or in person—to get to know the client and determine how best to serve them. She wants to know their story, how she might incorporate meaning or symbolism into their photos, how they'd like the photos to be structured, and how they'd like their loved ones to be seen and remembered. The client agrees to a specific number of images—between four and 10—and then Jones develops the concepts. "We leave room for magic," she says, but for the most part, it's a detailed scheme that she OKs with the client pre-session so there are no surprises.

The process requires "a huge level of commitment for both me and my clients," says Jones. She can't risk taking on clients who may not follow through with a purchase. That's why she requires the minimum order commitment of an 8x12-inch print of each concept she creates. Most clients go bigger once they see the work, she notes, purchasing at least one piece of wall art for their family. Some clients purchase wall art for each image she creates.

LOOKING FOR BEAUTY

Jones came into photography after the heart-wrenching loss of her first daughter. At the time, she was working toward a master's degree in clinical psychology. "I didn't even think I had any artist in me," she says. "I was more of a scientist and researcher." But sorrow overwhelmed her, and she elected to take a leave of absence from her studies. That's when she bought her first DSLR. "I just challenged myself to get out into the world and look for beauty every single day and capture it, and it became my therapy," she says. "I never wanted to leave therapy, so here I am."

In retrospect, Jones sees that her style was established from the first moment she picked up a camera. "I am more skilled now, I have more tools now, and I have refined the process, but when you look back at my earliest work that I ever created, I was doing a lot of the same things I am doing now," she says. "I grew up off the grid on a farm out in the middle of nowhere, and



CASSANDRA JONES



my mom used to sew our pajamas and we had little knit pixie suits and little smock dresses, and so much of my work is just being inspired by the environment that I was raised in—in this beautiful, absolutely stunning farm, remote, in the middle of nowhere, where there were no distractions and we lived off the land. ... When I had my own babies, I tried to curate a world for them that pulled the best parts of my childhood together and the things that were the most nostalgic to me and that just naturally filtered into my work, and that is how I have the style that I have.”

She thinks the cohesiveness of her style is in part thanks to doing all her own editing from scratch. “I don’t use presets or actions, and this helps to give me a lot of control over how I want my final images to look.” Wardrobe is essential to her style and is included with the sessions, which usually incorporate a couple of wardrobe changes. “Most of my wardrobe is custom made,” she says. “A lot of it comes from the Miou knit shop.” She’s also begun doing her own embroidery work on dresses as well as experimenting with felting.

Color, another essential to Jones’ photography, is one way she connects her wardrobe choices with the natural surroundings of portrait locations. “I’m pretty obsessed with color,” she says, and admits that color theory came naturally to her without study. For those who struggle with it, she suggests learning about color theory through adobecolor.com, which has excellent tools that enable you to pair colors to see what they look like together.





See more images with this story
ppa.com/cassandra-jones

Or hover your phone camera
over the code



She uses complementary colors, split complementary colors, mono-chromatic colors, repeating colors. “I use colors in every combination you can possibly think of. I don’t limit myself. But everything is planned out in advance and it’s very, very thoughtfully planned out,” she notes. The colors of the wardrobe must coordinate perfectly with the colors of the natural environment.

Though Jones has a number of tried-and-true locations she returns to time and time again, she consistently challenges herself to find new session locations. “I location scout as a daily habit,” she says, “almost every single day in the spring, summer, and fall.” It’s part of her lifestyle to take walks on nature trails and picnic in the park, always keeping her eyes peeled for new locations and assessing known locations to see whether they are looking particularly pretty or a bit barren. That one beautiful tree in that one beautiful scene that was perfect last year may be withered this year, she notes. “It is different from season to season, and it is different year to year. Everything is constantly changing and ebbing and flowing and evolving, so I really have to be on my toes and continue to look for new little nooks of magic all the time.”

Not only does she note the status of the environment but also the light and the weather and how they will affect the scene. “Not every location is magical when it’s cloudy or when it’s sunny. It depends on how the location is structured, what your tree line looks like, how much distance that you have, and what kinds of trees you are deal-

ing with—whether they are deciduous or coniferous—or whether there are mountains in the background or hills or a flat landscape.” When scouting, she keeps notes on her phone mapping out each tree, shrub, and bush, as well as where the light is best.

MANIFESTING

Jones admits she’s not a numbers person but does have one business tip for budding photographers: Don’t put everything you earn back into the business. “When I first started out, I put everything back into the business and [in hindsight] I was really wasteful,” she says. She put all her earnings into purchasing additional wardrobe and props she didn’t need. It can be difficult not to put all your money where your passion is, she admits. “I would encourage people to pay themselves as artists and not put everything back into the business from day one. It took me a long time to learn that—like, years.”

In 2020, Jones added another source of inspiration to her business: After a 10-year search, she and her husband purchased land in the nearby countryside dotted with trees and abundant with the wildflowers of her youth. “My acreage is my little slice of heaven. I feel like I manifested that place in my mind and then fate brought the acreage to my doorstep,” she says. “It was one of those things that was absolutely meant to be. It is the place that I go to just rejuvenate and be with nature.” She’s sprinkled about 30 pounds of wildflower seeds throughout the property, she laughs, and can’t wait to see what is reaped over the years.

Eventually, she and her husband hope to build a home on the land, but for now it’s simply a place to explore—in the summer she’s there every day, she says—and to host a majority of client portrait sessions. “[Clients] drive out there with me and they are like, ‘Wow, how does this

exist here? Because it’s so pretty. The forest is nicely spaced so light can come through and you can frolic between the trees, and it’s just magical.” It reminds Jones of the farm she grew up on as a child—of the land and the life that has always inspired her work. •



RELENTLESS



OFF-BEAT STORIES SUIT
CHRISTIE HEMM KLOK
JUST FINE

BY ROBERT KIENER



SPIRIT

It's a sunny August morning. Photographer Christie Hemm Klok is standing at the base of a 150-foot ponderosa pine tree in California's Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest, about 75 miles north of her home in San Francisco. She's carrying an assortment of cameras and lenses and is wearing thick leather gloves, sturdy hiking boots, gaiters, a white hard hat, an orange vest, and a sturdy harness.

As an experienced forester loops a thick climbing rope through a carabineer on the climbing harness that's cinched around her waist, she looks up to watch another climber clamber up the stately pine tree. In a few moments she'll begin ascending 150 feet to the top of the same tree to photograph the forester as he collects pine cones for a state-sponsored reseeding project.

As she recounts the story from her home, she remembers that scene from 2021: "I

was terrified. I knew I was in good hands with the experienced climbers, but I'd never climbed *any* tree before, much less one that was 150 feet high."

She smiles. "But there is another reason I was so scared. This was my first—my very first—photography assignment from *National Geographic*. And I knew I couldn't blow it."

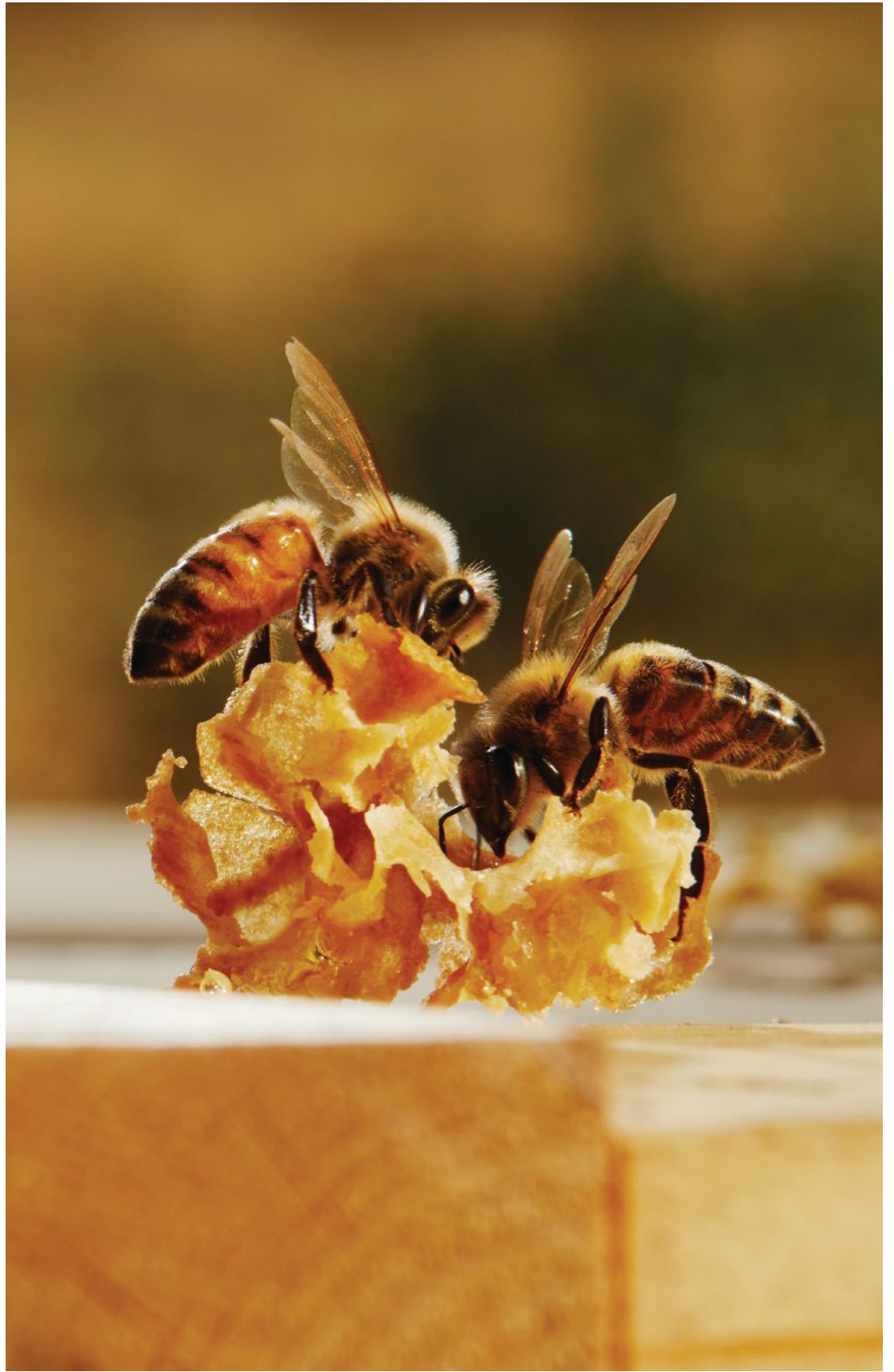
She didn't.

She climbed the tree. And for almost four hours Hemm Klok and a lighting assistant carefully moved through the ponderosa pine tree's canopy, photographing the climbers collecting seeds that would eventually help restore forests scorched by wildfires. The story, the first of several she's since done for *National Geographic*, featured a wide variety of Hemm Klok's images online and ran to great acclaim.

NO FEAR

While her aerial debut for *National Geographic* was one of







CHRISTIE HEMM KLOK

Hemm Klok's most dramatic commissions, the 38-year-old has built a reputation as a freelancer known for her willingness to take on the most challenging assignments. Her work has been published in *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *Wired*, *Inc.*, *Playboy*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and more.

She's known for bringing

a strong narrative voice and story sense to her editorial work. Says Marisa Schwartz Taylor, senior photo editor at *The New York Times*, "In addition to her technical talents, Christie has that rare ability to bring very different elements of a story together so they all fit perfectly and tell that story in a unified way."

After graduating with a

degree in photography from Pasadena's ArtCenter College of Design in 2010, Hemm Klok began freelancing but admits she lacked career direction. She worked as a bar manager, in a cheese shop, as a freelance photographer for local magazines, and as an intern with California-based documentary photographer Lauren Greenfield.



After the birth of her son in 2013, Hemm Klok took a job as an associate photo editor at *Wired* magazine, where she worked for almost two years assigning stories for the magazine and website as well as doing in-house photography. “Looking back as a freelancer, the great part of my time working at *Wired* was that I got to see how the sausage

was made,” she remembers.

“I was in the room with editors when conversations with—and about—photographers were taking place. So, when I began freelancing again I could read between the lines when it came to getting hired or not hired. This helped me develop a relentless spirit when it came to selling myself and my work. I

learned not to be afraid of rejection and when—and when not—to keep pitching.”

She smiles as she remembers sending hundreds and hundreds of emails and postcards to photo editors and getting just a few responses. “But I learned to keep trying and eventually developed a few relationships with photo editors that eventually blos-

somed into work,” she says.

She kept in touch with *National Geographic* photo editor Samantha Clark after several of her story ideas were rejected. “She was always willing to give me advice and I would incorporate her ideas into my next pitch,” says Hemm Klok. “Then, two years after first writing her, she gave me my first assignment with *National*



“I think doing personal work is so important for photographers who want to develop or hone their own style or aesthetic. It is also something you can send out when introducing yourself as you market and look for assignments. I like to say, Make the work you want to get.”



Geographic, the seed collecting, tree climbing story. If I'd given up, if I hadn't been relentless, I'd never have gotten that assignment."

FINDING A STYLE

Another benefit of working for the fast-paced *Wired*: Understanding the difference in photographing for a website. "I quickly learned how important the website aspect of stories was," says Hemm Klok. "So often we think of how our work is going to look in a print layout and ignore the importance of also shooting for a website. But a freelancer who understands that a client may need an image that will work in many differ-

ent formats and sizes for the inevitable changes that occur on websites as stories morph, gives them an advantage."

At *Wired*, Hemm Klok photographed in-house assignments intended to resemble the style of other photographers to fit in with an existing story. "Essentially I was copying other photographers," she says, so after leaving the magazine she felt a bit lost. "I wasn't totally clear on what my own preferred aesthetic was."

To remedy that and discover and develop her own style, she began a personal project that would reflect her voice. Over a year, between freelancing jobs, she photographed the women fire-

fighters of the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD). She wanted to depict their strength and also had another reason for the portraits project: "I had the chance to make my own mistakes, work through my processes, and perfect my lighting and posing," she says. "This project gave me the time to experiment and even make mistakes. Plus, I got the chance to hang out with some very cool people for a year!"

The book, "The Women of the SFFD," was self-published in 2017 to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the department's hiring of the first female firefighter. "Doing the book taught me so much,"

says Hemm Klok. "I think doing personal work is so important for photographers who want to develop or hone their own style or aesthetic. It is also something you can send out when introducing yourself as you market and look for assignments. I like to say, Make the work you want to get."

WEIRD STORIES

Thanks to what *New York Times* senior photo editor Marisa Schwarz Taylor describes as Hemm Klok's "enthusiasm to explore a new story," she's been receiving an increasing number of assignments described as off-beat or even weird.

Hemm Klok recalls a *New York Times* photo editor contacting







her in 2019 and saying, “I’ve got a story that needs strong creative direction, and so I’m hoping you’ll be available to cover this one.” Says Hemm Klok, “The editor explained that there was something she described as ‘a raisin mafia,’ and she wanted black-and-white photos that had a film noir aesthetic to them to illustrate the piece. I loved the challenge, and although I knew nothing about the photographic style or subject of the story, I immediately said I’d do it.”

Hemm Klok did a lot of research on the film noir genre of photography and its era. She also read about the raisin business controversy so she would be able to suggest scenes and settings. The high-contrast

black-and-white images she photographed turned out to be some of the most popular she’s ever produced. “Suddenly, I was getting emails from strangers praising my pictures. It was the first time I was flooded with fan mail.”

Another offbeat story for *Smithsonian Magazine*, on fig hunters in California, also required hours of research on both figs and the people who search for and collect the fruit. “Again, this was a topic about which I knew absolutely nothing, even though it was in my backyard,” says Hemm Klok.

After reading, research, and collaborating with the article’s writer, Hemm Klok felt she knew at least enough to talk intelligently with the

fig hunters she was hoping to photograph. “It’s so important to do the research so you can have a dialog with your subjects. That gets them excited, and they can trust you because they can see you care about what they care about.”

The story, “Gather the Wild Figs” won an American Society of Magazine Editors award for best photography in 2023. And there’s more, says Hemm Klok. “Before I began my research, I had no idea how figs were even pollinated. But now I know a lot about figs. And I see the ones I have in my own backyard through different eyes. This job is so much fun.” •

Robert Kiener is a writer in Vermont.



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JEREMY LOCK
SEES BEAUTY
IN EVERYTHING

BY ERIC MINTON

Feeling the love

In 2004, PBS invited a group of Civil War reenactors to take part in its documentary series “Slavery and the Making of America.” U.S. Air Force photographer Jeremy Lock, then stationed at Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, had been photographing the reenactors in his free time and accompanied them to the set. Lock knew to remain low-key and out of the way, but as he “bounced around” taking photographs, he noticed the cinematographer keeping a close eye on him. At the end of the shoot, Lock apologized if he’d interfered in the filming. “No,” the cinematographer replied. “I was watching you to see where my next shot was going to be.”

“I took that as a huge compliment,” says Lock, whom PBS subsequently hired to take production shots for the series. Lock hears a variation of that compliment a lot, he says. Watching as Lock goes about his business, people know his images will be special. Call it his work ethic, but a more apt description would be his play ethic.

“That’s what I consider all my photography: Unless it’s a paid gig, I play,” Lock says. “Playing to me means being able to create, learn something, see the world differently, and excel, get better.” And have fun. “Every time I pick a camera up, I want to be like a kid opening a present. It’s like going through Christmas every day when I get to look at the images.” Even when he’s in combat.

MEANT TO LOVE

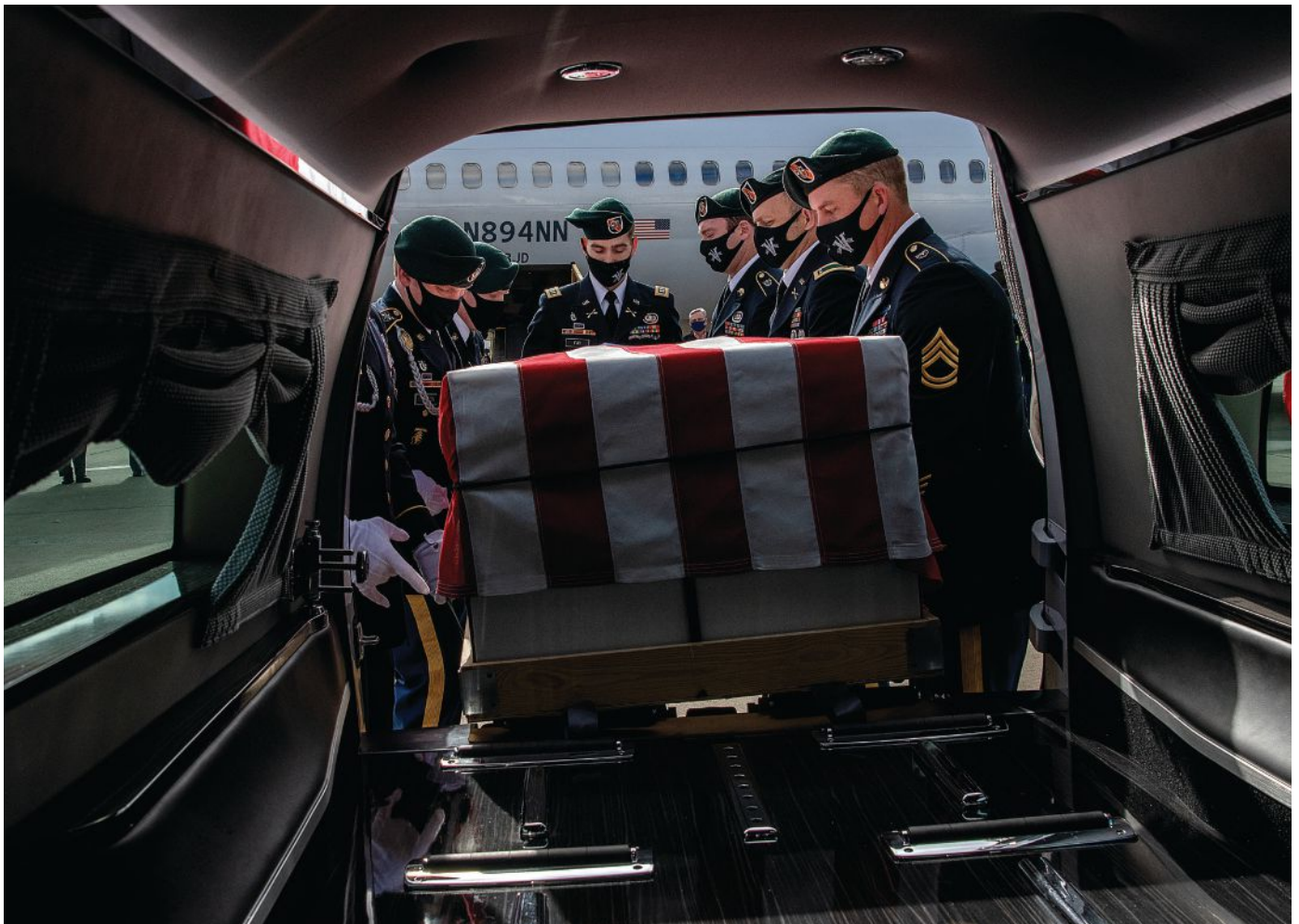
During his 21-year Air Force career, Lock was named Military Photographer of the Year a record seven times, four more than anybody else. Upon retiring from military service in 2013, he settled in Dallas and established a portrait studio to supplement photojournalism assignments for clients such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, American Airlines, Airpower Foundation, Mercury One, and the Texas Department of Public Safety. His images have been published in *National Geographic*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*; he strings for Reuters; and his honors include

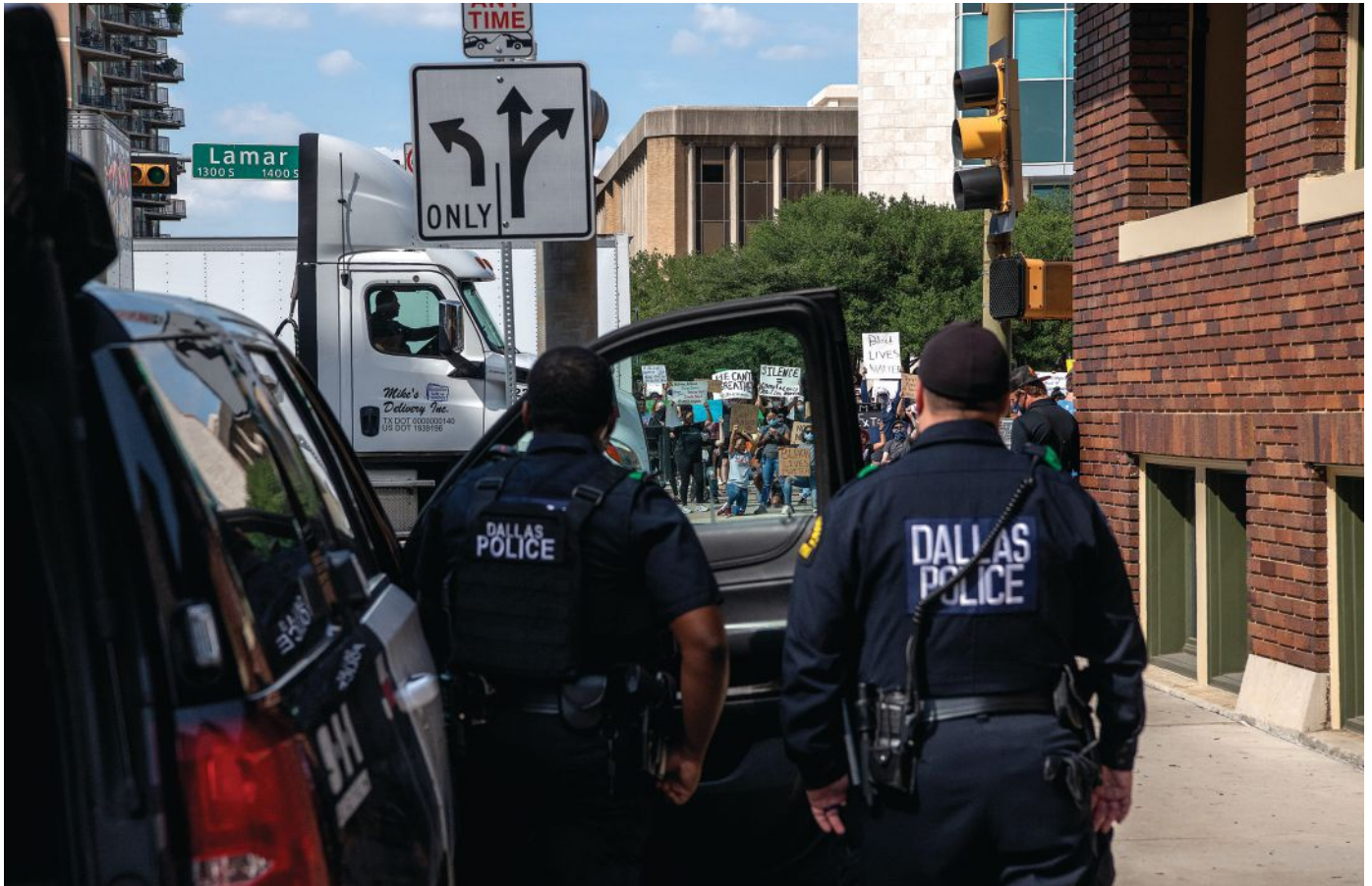


awards from World Press Photo, National Press Photographers Association, and the Oasis Photo Contest.

Not bad for a man who joined the Air Force to be a medical X-ray technician. Assigned instead to work as an image processor for U-2 spy planes, seeing those images emerge in the darkroom convinced Lock to see the world through a camera lens. He put together a portfolio, applied for reassignment as a photographer, and the Air Force sent him to the photojournalism program at Syracuse University.

In a Zoom call from his Dallas home, Lock has a look of wide-eyed wonder as he recounts his career, the mentors who inspire him, and the stories he's told in single photographs and series. These images span the world, his 30-year career, and a wide array of subject matter, from the hunt for Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan to vet-





erans hunting elk in Idaho; from NASCAR to Calcutta cab drivers; from the aftermath of earthquakes in Japan and Haiti to dancing cowboys in Costa Rica; from portraits of Medal of Honor recipients to portraits of headhunters in India; from pilots navigating the skyways to divers working under the waves.

Lock's passion for humanity is the common denominator in his images. "Humans are meant to love and not hate, and that's with everything I photograph," he says. "Even in war, there's beauty amid all this death and destruction. I choose to look for those beautiful bits of life unfolding in front of us even in bad times."

Though he does commercial assignments, he prefers working for causes, such as military veterans' services and nongovernmental organizations, or developing his own projects, including championing African children with severe scoliosis. His interest in Calcutta cab



drivers is documenting a subculture heading for extinction at the hands of online ride services, though he also admits, “It’s self-serving because it’s fascinating to me, and I want to learn and soak it up. I could read a book but, wait, I can be there, witnessing it.” Thanks to his Air Force retirement pay, Lock uses his photography earnings, including the occasional sales from his online art gallery ranging from \$750 to \$20,000, to finance his special projects.

His passion is more than an abstract notion: It is his photographer’s playbook. “To pat myself on the back a little bit, people look at my website, they look at my work, and they feel something. That’s the No. 1 comment I get,” he says. “To me that’s the biggest compliment. There’s a reason why I clicked that photograph, there’s a reason I was there for that. I want you to feel something.” Reaching that goal is a process with three go-to principles every time he picks up the camera:

- **Fill the frame.** “You’re showing the viewer what you want the viewer to see. Do I want the viewer to see the ceiling in my shot? No. So don’t put it in your image.”

- **Control the background.** “Am I putting that viewer’s eyes to where I want them to see? What’s distracting in the background?”

- **Watch for the moment.** “If you do that every time, soon you’ll just be pulling that camera up and your mind will automatically fill the frame and control the background because you’ve seasoned yourself, and you’re just watching for that moment,” he says. Watching is noting situations and body language but also something specific to Lock: “It’s really watching and caring what’s going on within what you’re documenting.” Sometimes there aren’t moments, like two people walking on a mountain or a guy walking a flightline. “So how do I bring you into it? By pulling back and making this into a beautiful picture. Maybe

there’s a cloud, or maybe these human beings are this big”—he holds his thumb and finger a half-inch apart—“on this big vast mountain,” he says sweeping his hands wide.

Photographing combat is no different than photographing other genres, from sports to pet of the week, he says. For each story, he knows he needs at least an overall scene-setter, a portrait, and some kind of interaction. It plays in his mind like a movie script. “I’m out on patrol, I need an overall: there’s guys rolling down in a Humvee. Who are they? There’s their eyes, their portrait of who these people are. What are they doing? They’re serving the Iraqi community, so there’s the nice medium shot of some interaction.” Even in combat he’s looking for the moment, though when “big action” happens, the adrenaline-fueled Lock will get about 200 medium shots of the action going on. “Then the adrenaline starts coming down and I’m thinking,

OK, now I can start moving around and getting more of the story.” Lock photographed a lot of sports to train for war photography, learning how to anticipate and situate himself for the image. “We were on a night patrol. It was black, and we’re moving and, oh my gosh, there’s a lamp up there that they’re all going to go under. I know I can steal that light to create an image.”

He points out that his job was to be a photographer, not a war fighter. “To this day I’ve had no greater honor—no greater picture—than my job of getting to show what our brave men and women do for our country,” he says. In Iraq in 2006, Lock earned a Bronze Star Medal for continuing to photograph through two firefights and providing life-saving aid to a wounded Iraqi policeman in one

of those firefights. During a sniper attack, Lock photographed a wounded Marine’s evacuation under fire, then drove the Humvee in the counterattack.

TRULY INQUISITIVE

In all his years with Combat Camera, Lock never used a flash or strobe. He started experimenting with additive lighting in his Dallas studio and began creating a



ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

DATE: Jan. 11, 2017

LOCATION: Ghana

SUBJECT: Getachew Akalu Agebrehna, 16, of Ethiopia, diagnosed with congenital kyphosis, in a portrait for the Foundation of Orthopedics and Complex Spine

CIRCUMSTANCES: "On a work trip for a client in Ghana, I decided to stay in the country for about a week after my work was done and find a story so I could play. I say play because that's just what it is: a time when I can explore, study, connect, imagine, create, learn, and have fun with what I love with no pressure, just for the love of storytelling. The opportunity to photograph at a scoliosis hospital fell into my lap.

EQUIPMENT: "I am not a tech guy—my friends and mentors are amazed I can push a button. I see something in my mind and want to create it using what I have with the best of my ability. Based on the camera data embedded in the image: Nikon D800 (second favorite camera I have ever owned behind the D850 I'm currently using); 92mm, so maybe a 24-120mm zoom; 100 ISO, 250th shutter, 16 f-stop, and two rented lights with umbrellas or soft boxes.

"I worked with the doctors, staff, and children for about a week documenting their daily lives. I fell in love with the children, who came from all over Africa. Their communities regard them as demons, and most are hidden from society, which only worsens their condition. These kids are sent to this hospital for a life-changing surgery alone—no family or friends—and must depend on each other through the good times and bad. For example, I saw Getachew cry and touch his friend going back for surgery. I didn't photograph that moment, but it inspired me. Since my retirement from the Air Force I had been playing around in the studio learning light. I realized here I had these beautiful humans, and I could capture who they really are by taking their portraits. At the market the next day, I bought a piece of cloth that I used for the background and hung it in the hospital. Using a few hospital connections, I rented two portable lights and modifiers. My vision was to capture their essence by lighting their faces—their heart and emotion that makes them who they are—and a second light to give a glimpse of the deformity they are battling through. I distinctly remember watching Getachew through the lens, waiting for him to show me the tender moment of wishing his friend well in surgery. I patiently waited quietly with the camera to my face uncomfortably long until he showed me his own vulnerability and I snapped the photo. This was the first time I became a portrait photographer, using light to capture the essence of a person, a story in a single frame."



AWARD WINNING

Jeremy Lock won three Military Photographer of the Year (MPOY) awards in a row, capping off his 21-year Air Force career with a total of seven. No other military photographer has won more than three. His first came in 2002, then back-to-back in 2005 and 2006, another in 2008, and a final back-to-back-to-back run from 2010 to 2012. The bulk of his wins came after his last deployment to Iraq in 2006; the years following saw him photographing the U.S. military's contributions to disaster relief efforts around the world, including the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the 2011 tsunami in Japan.

He's most proud of his 2005 win while stationed at Royal Air Force Menwith Hill, a small Air Force outpost in North Yorkshire, England. Working for the base newspaper, he filled his MPOY competition package with images of base person-

nel interacting with residents of the area. This included young adults with Down syndrome whom the base hosted for Christmas parties and Special Olympics. "I did a series following a girl with Down syndrome," Lock says. He included images of a dunk tank at the base fair and a girl experiencing her first day of school. For the combat images category, he photographed an annual joint training exercise with the Army.

"And I'm competing with war images," Lock says. "We always heard that Combat Camera always wins." His win proved great images can be captured anywhere. "It's what's outside your front door," he says. "Go down your street and take a left instead of the right you always take, and then take another left. See what's there."



signature style of portraits that hews to his overall photography mission: to make the viewer feel. “I hope in my portraits that you see there’s impact, there’s purpose with these people.” He uses a black or white background for timelessness and singles out the individual on the canvas. He uses a single large strobe on the face and a small flash at the back as a kicker. He sets the ISO as low as possible—100-200—and the aperture as high as possible—f/16-f/22. “I want you to see every little hair on that person’s face,” he says.

Listening to his subjects in portrait sessions is akin to watching his subjects on photojournalism assignments: It’s how he captures a feeling. Lock has become so enthralled with the aural form of human touch that he developed a podcast called “Last Letters.”

“It is the best storytelling I’ve ever done, and it’s not from doing this,” he says as he mimes pressing his finger on a camera. “It’s from listening and speaking,” his finger moving from the imaginary shutter button to his ear and his mouth. “As a human being I’m truly inquisitive about other people. There’s so much going on in the world, and whether you’re right, left, purple, pink, I don’t care. Can’t we as humans sit down and talk with one another and have a conversation, not me hearing you but not really hearing you because I can’t wait to tell you about me?”

He’s produced 83 episodes of “Last Letters,” in which his subjects write a letter as if tomorrow is their final day on earth. “What would you say and who would you say it to?” Lock explains. Then he records a conversation in his home based on the letter. Episodes include Medal of Honor recipients, Navy Seals, an Elvis impersonator, a Dallas cop with paraplegia after being shot in the line of duty, and a woman born to a heroin addict who gave birth to her while chained to a prison bed. “It’s been incredible,” Lock says. “And then I do the portrait sessions with them.” •

Eric Minton is a writer and editor in Washington, D.C.



JEREMY LOCK



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Unlock Your Full Potential

9 MEMBER BENEFITS YOU SHOULDN'T MISS

A friendly reminder for seasoned PPA members and newbies alike: The following are the top PPA benefits you should take advantage of ASAP, according to PPA Director of Member Value and Experience Gerard Wright-Bullard.

1. Equipment insurance: Available to Full and Life members, this policy takes less than 10 seconds to activate. With up to \$15,000 in total coverage, full replacement value of equipment, and a \$350 flat deductible, it's a no-brainer to activate this coverage.

2. Indemnification Trust: Have you ever had a client say you messed up? Don't worry, PPA has your back. The Indemnification Trust will offer advice, direct help, and even cover some costs. Plus, with Ontrack Data Recovery, you

can recover lost images. It's not if but when you'll need this benefit in your corner.

3. Education: The education library is a treasure trove. Dive into video classes, curriculums, and webinars on all things photography at any time.

4. Professional Photographer magazine: Product reviews, profiles, captivating imagery, and educational content are delivered every month in this award-winning publication. Stay abreast of the latest in your profession and be inspired by colleagues.

5. Contracts and forms: Ready-to-use customizable contracts, model releases, print releases, NDAs, and more are available for download.

6. Sales and marketing tools: Get

e-books, brochures, and price list templates to make marketing a breeze.

7. Copyright: Protect your creative work with an extensive library of copyright templates. If someone infringes on your images, PPA has the tools to help you stand up for your rights.

8. Community: Join the conversation on PPA's online forum, theLoop, where photographers connect, share tips, and find answers. And don't forget Imaging USA, the perfect occasion to reconnect with mentors and friends.

9. Certification: Boost your knowledge in the fundamentals of your craft, and market your services with confidence. Show the world and your clients why your prices are worth every penny. • ppa.com/benefits





The PPA customer care team is well equipped to assist members with a wide range of inquiries. The most common questions pertain to member benefits, insurance details, and the certification process. Here's a selection of some of the most frequently asked questions as well as the answers.

Q: Does the PhotoCare Plus package include drone coverage, and are my employees covered?

A: Yes. The PhotoCare Plus equipment insurance provides coverage for drones and unmanned aircraft systems up to \$100,000. This comprehensive policy also extends to a member's employees regardless of the employees' membership status. It covers a wide range of scenarios, including mysterious disappearances, with full replacement cost value and no tiered deductibles.

Q: I want to get the certified professional photographer credential.

What does that process look like?

A: To begin your journey, complete the CPP candidacy form and pay the \$200 application fee. This gives you two years to fulfill the exam and image evaluation requirements of the CPP credential. The online exam costs \$25, and the image evaluation kit is \$35. CPPs are required to recertify every three years by acquiring 15 continuing education units in that time.

Q: Is it necessary to retake the exam for CPP recertification?

A: No. To recertify, earn 15 CEUs over three years and pay the \$100 fee. That fee is waived if you attend Imaging USA those three consecutive years.

Q: When can I expect to receive my critiques from a Merit Image Review?

A: Critiques from the MIR, essential for photographers interested in receiving feedback on their images, are typically delivered within three weeks of the review,

which occurs on the second full week of each month, February through November.

Q: How can I find a PPA workshop near me?

A: On ppa.com, navigate to the Education tab, select Live Education, and then choose Photography Workshops. Workshops are held in the spring and fall. Registration for spring sessions opens March 7. You can search by location and instructor name to explore class offerings.

Q: Does PPA provide legal advice?

A: No. Legal advice is best left to practicing attorneys. But PPA does offer legal information to photographers with guidance to resources that may help reduce costs when seeking legal advice from a qualified attorney.

PPA's customer care team is available to assist members Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time: csc@ppa.com or (800)786-6227. •

Tight Crop

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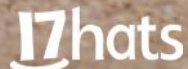
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Community Network with PPA

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:

[PPA.com/Community-Networks](https://www.ppa.com/Community-Networks)