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25-31 JANUARY 2024 ISSUE 592

Photography Week



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W E L C O M E

Photography Week



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Welcome to the world's No.1 weekly digital photography magazine. If you're already a reader, thanks for your continued support and involvement; if you're new to *Photography Week*, you've come to the right place! In addition to expert advice, brilliant tips and step-by-step tutorials, every issue features interactive galleries of brilliant photos, how-to videos on

essential shooting and editing techniques, and in-depth reviews of the latest camera kit.

But that's not the whole story. *Photography Week* is more than a magazine – it's a community of like-minded people who are passionate about photography. To get involved, just follow any of the links below and share your shots and comments.

Jeff Meyer, Editor

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We're more than just a magazine – read on and discover the many ways you can interact with and enjoy *Photography Week*



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© Mik Dogherthy



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WHAT'S HOT

THE WEEK'S TOP HEADLINES IN PHOTOGRAPHY

COSINA ANNOUNCES 18MM F/2.8 LENS FOR FUJIFILM X-MOUNT

New manual-focus Voigtländer optic is aimed at street and travel shooters



© Cosina

Cosina has announced the new Voigtländer Color-Skopar 18mm f/2.8 Aspherical manual-focus lens for Fujifilm X-mount cameras. Cosina says it “implements an optical system optimized for the image sensor of Fujifilm X system cameras” such as the X-T5 and X-S20.

This all-metal pancake lens measures just 23.5mm from the lens mount and weighs just 115g, making it extremely lightweight and compact. This is to be expected of a pancake lens, but in this instance the tiny form houses many key features that should make this an

exceptionally capable lens for street and travel photography.

Comprising seven elements in five groups and 10 aperture blades, the lens offers a maximum aperture of f/2.8, with the 10 blades allowing the aperture to become more spherical, enabling natural out-of-focus areas that render smoothly rounded bokeh.

The 18mm focal length is the equivalent of 28mm on full-frame, a favorite among landscape, street, and travel photographers, as it enables capture of a wide scene.

Other noteworthy features include

a minimum focusing distance of just 0.17m, a focus ring lever for precise adjustments, and electronic contacts for information communication between lens and body. This last point is not a feature on all manual-focus lenses, but is a useful inclusion. As long as the camera in use has updated firmware, Cosina says it will be able to detect “Exif data, focus check, shooting distance linked display, and certain models also support in-body image stabilization”.

The Voigtländer Color-Skopar 18mm f/2.8 Aspherical will be available in February, priced at around £475 / \$600.

F E A T U R E

GET INSPIRED

Don't miss out on the beauty surrounding you. Keep your eyes open – the inspiration for your next project is just waiting to be discovered



© Mik Dogherly

UNLOCK WINNING ADVICE

Unleash your full potential in 2024 with tips and trend insights from some of 2023's award-winning photographers Words Kim Bunermann

In 2024, the photography industry will maintain its focus on creating messages and conveying emotions, however, we can expect to see an increased emphasis on immersive experiences through technology such as AI (artificial intelligence), VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality). These technologies have been around for a while, laying the foundations for major technical and visual changes within photography.

Following trends is often viewed critically by creatives, but doing so can benefit photographers of all levels. Being aware of new challenges, and

preparing for them, can be conducive to developing and refining your style. The knowledge acquired can be used to shape your future projects, or take them in a different direction. While the old approaches have their place, the trick is to keep expanding your knowledge and experience.

Regardless of what 2024 brings, it's important that new technology is used to improve sustainability within the industry, not just in the materials and the printing processes we use but also in our photography practices. Genres such as landscape and wildlife photography, in particular, can help spread the message

and play a crucial role in increasing awareness of these issues. Although the industry strives for perfection, there's still room for improvement, especially in terms of accessibility. Photography can be a powerful platform, and ensuring that it's open to everyone can only be beneficial to us all.

Over the next few pages, we talk to award-winning photographers who have perfected their craft, to get advice and fresh inspiration for projects in the year ahead. We'll also analyse the latest trends, to give you insights into the new technologies that are set to redefine the industry in 2024.



SHOOT SPEEDY SUBJECTS

Capture dramatic sports action with tips from Sports POTY Finn O'Hara

Finn O'Hara submitted his photograph, titled *Mikaël Kingsbury, Olympic Freestyle Skier* (see next page), to the prestigious International Photography Awards, an annual competition that attracts entries from top professionals, amateurs and students worldwide. His skier photograph was originally a commission from a client; however, Finn saw its potential and decided to follow his instincts. "I took it another step further by creating an image that I couldn't take during the pandemic. I had imagined what it would be like if we had a skier flying through a cloud of coloured smoke, and how incredible that would look," says Finn.

Constrained by the pandemic, time and money, he decided to photograph skier Mikaël Kingsbury in a studio in Canada where he was based. The photographer's point of view is crucial to showcasing movement in sport and action photography. "The skier is on his back on a waist-high platform so he can articulate his skis, poles and body. I'm on a 12ft-high platform above him, shooting directly down. He's looking at a monitor that shows him what I'm shooting so that he can get his body positioning correct," says Finn.

Finn used a PhaseOne IQ3 100MP camera with a Schneider Kreuznach LS 55mm lens to capture the shot, adjusting his camera settings to 100 ISO, f/11 and setting the shutter speed to 1/320 sec. The combination of aperture and a fast shutter speed enabled him to freeze the



MATT CHAPMAN
Major League Baseball star for the Toronto Blue Jays

© Finn O'Hara

movement. Since the photo was taken in a studio, artificial lighting played a big role in creating the shot.

"Our lighting system is powered by

FAST GEAR

"The most-used items in my camera kit are my Canon R5 and RF 28-70mm f/2L lens," says Finn. "With reliable autofocus and respectable ISO, they allow me to be flexible. I love my travel tripod with Gitzo carbon fibre legs and Manfrotto 410 geared head – it's versatile and solid. But the tools I most rely on are my SanDisk memory cards and field SSD drives – I need them for every photo I take, and they never let me down."



five ProPhoto Pro-10 power packs. I took shots of the mountains to give the skier context, and then photographed green smoke from several smoke bombs but turned them red in post," Finn explains. In post-production, he worked closely with a retoucher to seamlessly combine the elements he had captured in the camera into one photograph.

FINN O'HARA



Driven by a passion for storytelling, Finn takes photos that are intimate, situational and visceral. His most notable work includes projects for Nike,

Adidas, ESPN and The New York Times magazine. Finn has won many international photography awards, and was recently named Sports Photographer of the Year by the IPA. His images are held in the permanent collections of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro.

GET READY FOR THE PERFECT MOMENT

A split second can make or break the picture, so be prepared with these tips

1 VISUALISE THE IMAGE

"Think ahead and visualise your photo days ahead of time, and circle back to those visualisations at the end of the day. Compare those visualisations to what you captured. Boom! You're developing your mind's eye."

2 SPEED UP WORKFLOW

"I use a few custom button functions to make my workflow easier. I use back button focus, which helps a lot when shooting high-speed sports. It allows me to be more reactive to constantly changing subjects. I've also assigned a custom button on the back that resets the focus point back to the centre of the viewfinder."

3 EMBRACE THE UNEXPECTED

Selecting an aperture of f/8 helps to keep the action sharp within the frame. Indeed,

the popular saying 'f/8 and be there' still holds up. Don't be overly concerned by the tech and technique; instead, pay close attention to where you are, and who or what you're photographing."

4 FOLLOW A ONE-SHOT MENTALITY

When shooting athletes with strobes, I never shoot in burst mode. This is partially because when I shoot with a PhaseOne system there's no option for burst mode, so I have to take my images one shot at a time. Athletes can only repeat their performance for so long, so I really have to nail it first time. Even when shooting athletes with the Canon R5 and a strobe, I still like shooting with the one-shot mentality. It keeps myself, the athlete and my client focused on what we really want, rather than just spraying the camera and hoping I get something."



F E A T U R E

SHOOT SPEEDY SUBJECTS CONTINUED

20^{years} *ipa* international
photography
awards

WINNER
SPORTS

**MIKAËL KINGSBURY, OLYMPIC
FREESTYLE SKIER**

The image that earned Finn the title of Sports Photographer of the Year 2023 in the International Photography Awards



BEAT THE WEATHER

"I use a hard shell backpack made by ThinkTank when photographing in snowy conditions," says Finn. "It's not only rugged but it's waterproof too. Water can silently ruin camera equipment, so by having a waterproof and shockproof case, I never worry about my equipment."



FEATURE

FRAME ATMOSPHERIC LANDSCAPES

How to convey visual impressions in one shot, with tips from Mik Dogherty, UK Landscape POTY winner



Landscape photography isn't just about the beautiful surroundings of our environment; it's a way of documenting time. Natural phenomena, the elements, and how the landscape changes around are fascinating subjects, and due to the easy accessibility as well as the aesthetics, plenty of creatives choose this as a subject.

"I entered my image *After the Fire* into the UK LPOTY competition because of the way the heath fire had destroyed the character of this local heathland. It went from life to death, and then the regeneration could begin," Mik says. He passes this spot every time he travels through the New Forest National Park, and when a heath fire destroyed the landscape he saw the photographic potential of the scene. "It needed to be a panorama to give a perspective of the size of the area affected," he explains.

Since landscapes necessarily cover a large area, it can be difficult to decide what to include and exclude in the frame. There may also be distractions that cannot be easily removed from the scene. Therefore, it's important to take time to observe and appreciate the

natural environment before deciding on how to frame the shot. Alternatively, you could consider returning at different times of the year or in different weather conditions to capture the scene.

"I wanted to hide the view of the large Fawley oil refinery complex in the background, with its towers and chimney stacks," Mik says. "I had to consider that I would need to wait for a foggy or misty morning before I could get the shot I'd seen." This decision not only eliminated distractions but also added a layer of atmosphere to the photograph; considering the atmosphere the natural environment gains through the weather is crucial to enhance the image's mood, and distinguishes this image as a professional shot.

The most important ingredient of a pro landscape shot is the light, but natural light is also the most challenging light source to work with. "When that morning came with the great sunrise there was a low, thick mist," Mik explains. "Shooting towards the sun could have been an issue, but the mist helped diffuse its brightness, allowing me to increase the exposure slightly to give more detail in

the foreground." Waiting for the ideal weather and sun can be limiting, but it's advisable not to wait too long. "Now, months later, the lone tree has fallen and most of the burnt skeletal remnants of gorse bushes have gone, mostly devoured by the grazing ponies," Mik says. "This picture no longer exists, and the gorse is already growing back".

MIK DOGHERTY



Mik Dogherty is an outdoor photographer based in the New Forest National Park in southern England. Mik is self-taught, and had been a keen film

photographer in his younger years, although a career in the Royal Navy and then the petrochemical industry had put his hobby on hold. In 2010, the advent of digital cameras helped Mik to revisit his passion. After suffering from mental health issues, Mik took early retirement, giving him the time to follow his photography hobby with dedication. His recent win in the LPOTY competition for the image above is a new highlight of his career.

mikdogherty.com

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



FEATURE

FRAME ATMOSPHERIC LANDSCAPES CONTINUED



AUTUMN LEAVES
Captured in the New Forest, this photo showcases a gradient of autumnal colours with green leaves on the left and orange on the right

© Mik Dogherty

PRO ADVICE

Weather can affect the mood of an image, says Mik – and the lifespan of your

1 THINK ABOUT WEATHER

“Once you’ve found a great shot, it’s always worth considering not just the composition, but the ‘atmospherics’. Try to think about what the best weather conditions could be for that photograph – whether that’s fog, a moody sky, sunset, rain, snow, diffused light, strong, direct light or flat light – and then maybe come back at another time to shoot when the conditions are perfect.”

2 TAKE CARE

“Bear in mind the old phrase ‘Failure to prepare is preparing to fail’ so, once you get home, take care of your kit straight away by charging batteries and cleaning lenses and filters, so it’s ready to go for the next outing.”

3 PROTECT YOUR GEAR

If you’ve been using a tripod, when folding it away, don’t push the bottom legs all the way up but, instead, leave the width of a hand between the foot or

spike and the bottom of the next leg section. That way you won’t force mud, sand and moisture up into the tripod workings and cause the legs to jam.”

SHOOT LONG-TERM PROJECTS

The landscape is constantly changing due to the time of year, weather and natural phenomena, and it’s worth visiting the same location throughout the year to capture how these elements affect the scene. This will provide you with valuable experience and new challenges to overcome in terms of lighting and weather conditions, as well as helping you develop your photographic style.

MIK DOGHERTY’S KIT ESSENTIALS

FUJIFILM GFX 50S II

The medium-format camera is the fifth model in the GFX series, with a 51.4MP sensor and X Processor 4 image processor.



FUJINON GF 32-64MM F/4

This lightweight lens (875g), provides effortless switching between wide-angle and standard angles of view, all while maintaining a constant f/4 aperture rating.



FUJINON GF 45-100MM F/4

This lens is highly versatile, and perfect for all types of photography, thanks to its optical image stabilisation technology that provides up to five stops of stability.



FUJINON GF 100-200MM F/5.6

The lens features two Super ED elements and an aspherical element that minimise chromatic and spherical aberrations, while improving clarity as well as sharpness.



KASE MAGNETIC CIRCULAR ND FILTERS AND POLARISER

ND filters control the light in bright scenes or when using long exposures, while polarisers enhance colours and reduce glare, reflections and haze.



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A stable carbon fibre tripod with a maximum load capacity of 16kg. The tripod features detachable rubber feet and metal spikes, ensuring stability for use both indoors and outdoors.



BENRO GD3WH PRECISION GEARED HEAD

This accessory allows for precise positioning when composing, thanks to three independent movement options and accurate levelling with three bubble levels.



FEATURE

CAPTURE DELIGHTFUL STORIES

Tell a story with your food images says Jon Enoch, a Food POTY winner

To capture his winning Food Photographer of the Year 2023 image (see next page), Jon travelled to Mumbai, India, one of the busiest cities in the world. "I read an article years ago about food colourings in sweets, with candy floss as an example, so I could vividly see what the photo series would look like," he says.

Although Jon won the title, he does not describe himself as a food photographer in the traditional sense. "Taking images of lasagne doesn't interest me, I focus mainly on the human side of the equation. As a food image, mine is a bit different, and in the world of photography different is your superpower". When creating a personal project, Jon finds a back story that initially inspires him that has certain criteria he is looking for – and this idea ticked all his boxes.

Photographing in Mumbai brings challenges, including the relentless heat and humidity and the sheer amount of people. Shooting at night was a good option, as the temperatures are slightly lower, it's a bit less busy and the jet lag is less of an issue. Therefore, lighting was one of Jon's first considerations. "I think about what lighting can I take on the plane with me, what is portable and flexible, as I don't know the city layout. Then I ask myself what atmosphere I want to create from

PREPARATION IS KEY

"I always have a backup plan, and a backup for the backup plan. It might be spare kit or a quick fix if something goes down, but also a spare idea if things aren't working. I turn up before the subject to prepare everything in advance – you can never over-prepare."

the lighting setup. It's all about the atmosphere, enhancing what's naturally there in the scene," he explains.

"Getting around in Mumbai is a nightmare, and our setup with all the lighting attracted a lot of interest. We had an amount in cash for smoothing the way with local police, which is an unusual item to see on the production plan," he explains. As the images were shot at night, Jon could control the lighting, and give it an unusual take. "I had a crew of two assistants, and we set up the shot with

the lighting as quickly as we could with the crowds building up around us. The portrait was shot with a Canon 5DS R, with 50mm Sigma f/1.4 lens at 1/160 sec at f/5.6 and ISO 400."

Jon's shot is all about the man, but he offers enough information to draw the viewer in while also holding enough back for extra intrigue. As he explains: "He's clearly a candy floss seller, but what's his life like? Where does he live? Why has he chosen this life? I want the viewer to leave with more unanswered questions than when they started and also to create a little portal to another world. The amazing structure of candy floss is visually striking; it grabs your attention at first sight."



FISH MAN

A fish seller and his mobile shop captured on the streets of Hanoi, Vietnam

© Jon Enoch

CAREER ADVICE

First-hand tips to build, form, and develop your photography business

1 TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY

"My most important tip for early-career photographers is always to grab every opportunity that is offered to you. You don't need to emerge fully formed. Take the opportunity and make the most of it – at the very least you'll learn how to get better. There are great images everywhere, you have to get out there and find them."

2 BUILD YOUR TEAM

"I have a small and loyal mix of people I call upon, so I can scale up and down for any shoot. I work with assistants, as you might expect, but as you grow, this will extend to other areas, such as accountants, kit hire houses, stylists, makeup artists and designers. Treat people well and they tend to put a shift in for you when you need them."

3 INVEST IN YOURSELF

"I put a fixed percentage of turnover into a separate bank account, and 100 percent of that has to be spent on creative development. It's a simple trick, but one that works for me. If I have a few spare days between commercial assignments, then great; I can reinvest some of the cash into shooting a little personal project."



F E A T U R E

CAPTURE DELIGHTFUL STORIES CONTINUED



THE CANDY MAN

Jon's winning image in the Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year competition pictured candy salesman Pappu Jaiswal on the streets of Mumbai, India



JON ENOCH



Jon is an award-winning London-based portrait, advertising and lifestyle photographer who takes a bold and uncomplicated approach

to his work. This covers campaigns for advertising agencies, working directly with brands worldwide, and he also shoots portraits of sports personalities, celebrities and CEOs.

jonenoch.com

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

GET INSPIRED

Let your environment influence you to develop ideas with impact

"I allow inspiration to come to me in any guise – it could be something I see when walking around London, on TV, or online; the smallest unusual item can spark an idea. I let my ideas stew for a while, and if the concept keeps popping up I know I'm onto a good idea. Once I've made a decision to do a personal portrait project, I don't hang about. I get it planned and booked, often in fear that someone else will complete a similar project. Ideas are the key – original ideas are gold dust."

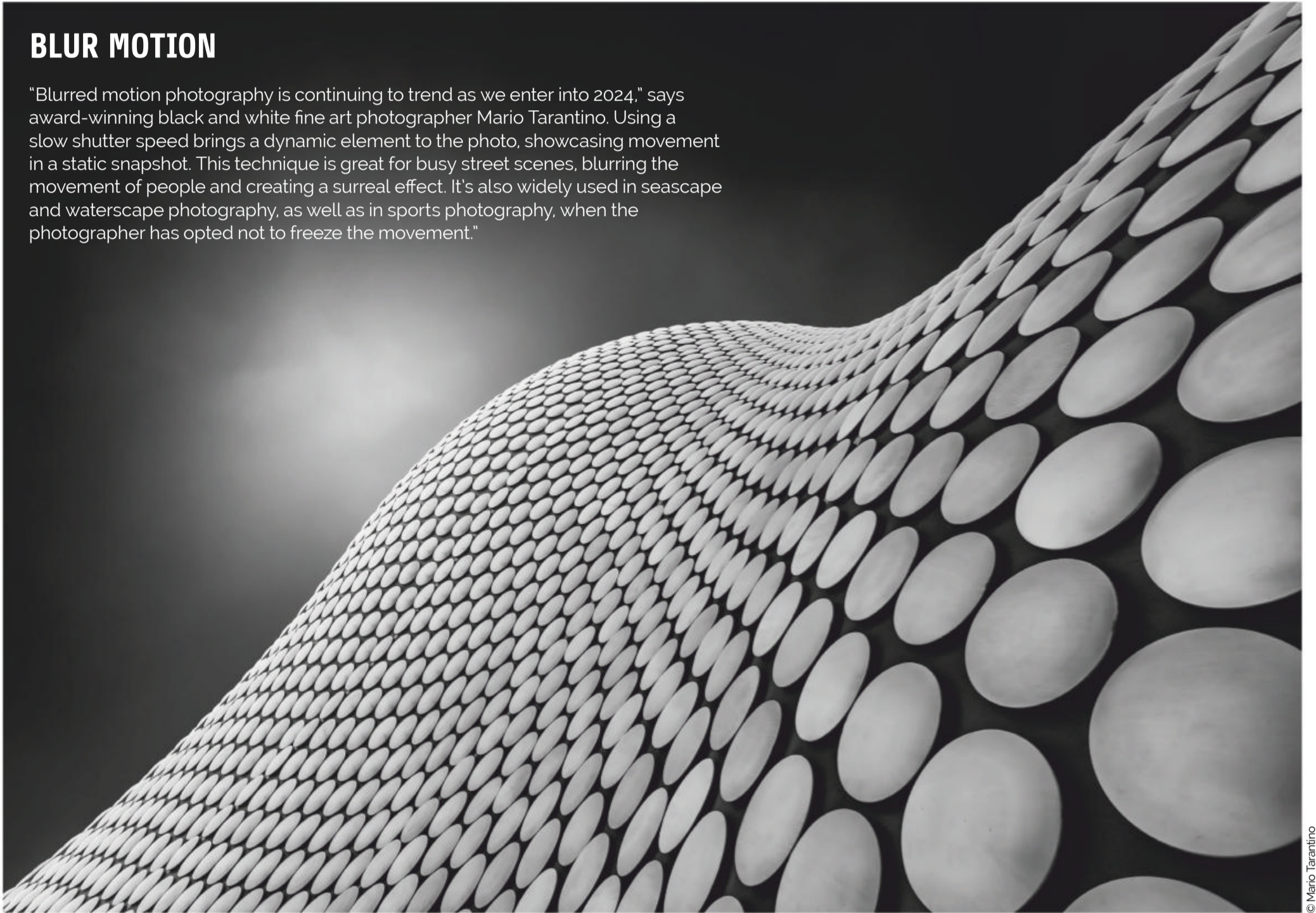
FEATURE

GET INSPIRED FOR 2024

Start the year with some fresh perspectives
by following these pro tips and trends

BLUR MOTION

"Blurred motion photography is continuing to trend as we enter into 2024," says award-winning black and white fine art photographer Mario Tarantino. Using a slow shutter speed brings a dynamic element to the photo, showcasing movement in a static snapshot. This technique is great for busy street scenes, blurring the movement of people and creating a surreal effect. It's also widely used in seascape and waterscape photography, as well as in sports photography, when the photographer has opted not to freeze the movement."



© Mario Tarantino

One of the biggest factors in 2024 will be artificial intelligence, which inspired most trends of the past year. We've seen a number of perfectly generated images, mostly themed around human-like subjects and depicting utopian scenarios, which left a lasting impression. This year, a symbolic response to this movement is emerging from the classic photographic genre.

The biggest trend of 2024 is likely to be the creation of so-called hyper-realistic photographs that mimic the aesthetics of AI-generated images. This approach involves using ultra-high-definition techniques to create hyper-realistic images of the subject, and incorporating significant elements found in generated images. This could, for example, mimic the liquid texture of

skin. The trend may divide opinion, but it allows photographers to re-examine the medium, and use new and cutting-edge techniques in light, composition and image processing.

This approach will also be noticeable in another trend in 2024, in this case, minimalism. The use of negative space to abstract the reality around us is a creative approach that follows a 'less is more' philosophy. However, this doesn't necessarily mean that creating images with a minimalistic theme requires any less effort or planning from the photographer. In fact, the opposite is true; the approach to the scene must be carefully considered to depict it in a minimalist way. Composition rules such as the rule of thirds, new perspectives, soft light, and black-and-white

techniques all come into play.

The rise of social media brought lots of aesthetic photos, with no messages behind them; but this year, photography is finding its voice again. This trend could be a reaction to the overwhelming amount of content-free photographs. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so it's all the better to see that this power is being recognised, and that thought-provoking imagery is back.

Technology never stands still, with virtual reality and augmented reality technologies bringing in 360-degree photography. This tech is popular in advertising and wedding photography, where moments from the special day can be re-experienced, or a product can be viewed from all angles.



F E A T U R E

GET INSPIRED FOR 2024 CONTINUED



© Mik Dogherty

CHANGE PERSPECTIVE

"I've always enjoyed getting the wider picture, with a preference for multiple-shot panoramas. However, more recently, I've also been taking shots of more intimate views, close-ups and experimenting with using a smaller depth of field to isolate the subject."

Mik Dogherty

© Finn O'Hara



TELL ACTION STORIES

"I think the most relevant techniques in sports photography in 2024 will continue the evolution of storytelling. Audiences are compelled by the range of human emotion that sport traverses and sports photographers will be there to capture it."

Finn O'Hara

FRAME AUTHENTIC

"I'm a commercial-minded photographer and the vast majority of brands want to align themselves with values such as authenticity and craftsmanship. Every action creates an equal and opposite reaction so, despite the rise of AI, genuine moments of real human interaction will, perversely, become more powerful and sought after. Real will become the new sign of luxury." **Jon Enoch**



© Jon Enoch



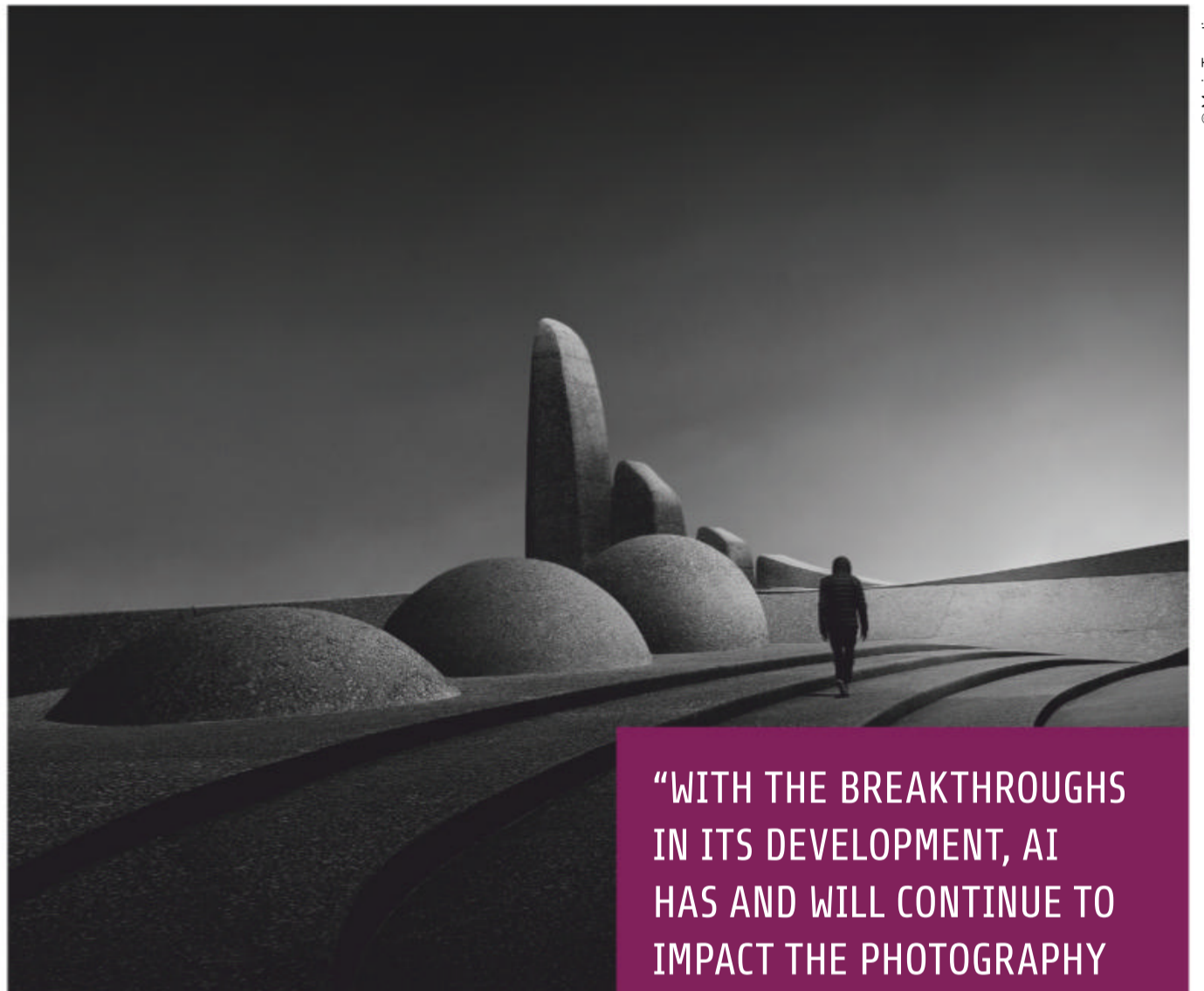
F E A T U R E

AI: OPPORTUNITY OR THREAT?

AI divides the world of photography, so how can we make the most of it?

As we look ahead, it's clear that artificial intelligence will continue to gain momentum throughout 2024. On one hand, this is exciting for photographers who are likely to see new opportunities arise as AI technology develops, but on the other, it's difficult to predict exactly how these developments will impact the photography industry. One thing is certain though: photography will always find a way to adapt and capitalise on new technology.

There are a few potential outcomes to consider. It's possible that AI will soon reach its peak, and that the industry will distance itself from it. Alternatively, new art movements may be created as photographers explore the unique possibilities offered by AI – not just to generate but to enhance their own imagery. It's clear that the industry will adapt to AI in some capacity, whether that's to streamline existing workflows or to create new and innovative forms of art.



© Mario Tarantino

“WITH THE BREAKTHROUGHS IN ITS DEVELOPMENT, AI HAS AND WILL CONTINUE TO IMPACT THE PHOTOGRAPHY INDUSTRY. AI-ASSISTED POST-PRODUCTION HAS GREATLY SIMPLIFIED PHOTO EDITING, AS WELL AS ALLOWING FOR INCREASED ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.” NOT ONLY IS AI MAKING ITS PRESENCE FELT IN POST-PRODUCTION METHODS AND WORKFLOWS, BUT IT IS ALSO BECOMING A RECOGNISED ART FORM AT THE SAME LEVEL AS PHOTOGRAPHY OR ANY OTHER. THIS CAN BE NOTICED IN THE MANY PRESTIGIOUS PHOTO COMPETITIONS NOWADAYS THAT ALSO HAVE A SPECIFIC AI CATEGORY.”

MARIO TARANTINO



“I THINK WE’RE GOING BACK TO BASICS, AND THERE WILL BE A REACTION AWAY FROM AI AND THE FAKE.” JON ENOCH

© Jon Enoch

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G A L L E R Y

XPOSURE

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



RED FOX

DOUG GRIFFITH

"This was taken in rural West Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. A vehicle stopped behind us, and the driver told us he had spotted the younger of two foxes heading our way. We waited, and were rewarded a few minutes later."

<http://bit.ly/3K8fA95>

G A L L E R Y

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



FEATHER

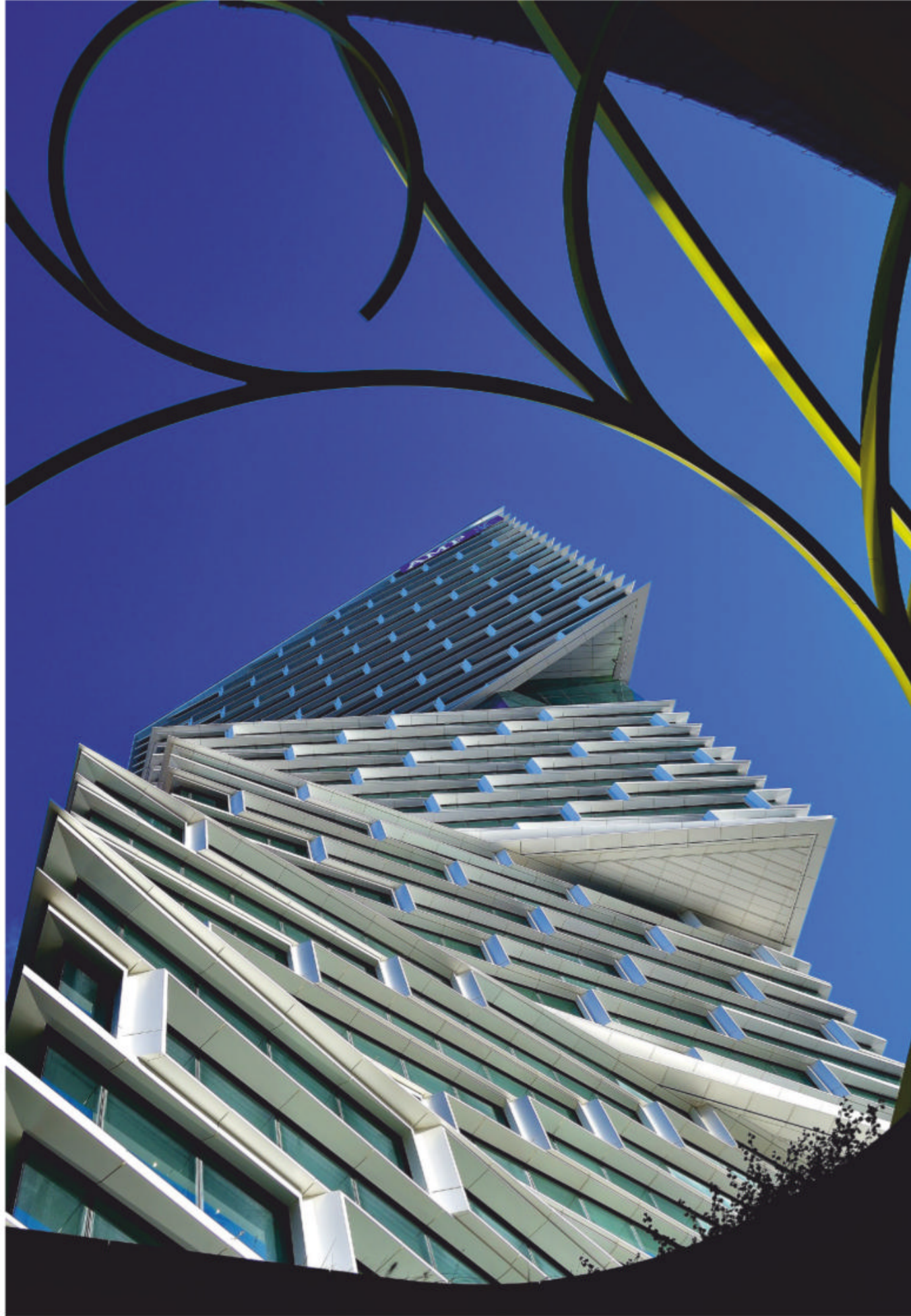
NICK STRONG

"I set up this shot in my home studio using LED lights."

<https://bit.ly/3tXh6GI>

GALLERY

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



SYDNEY BUSINESS CENTRE

PHILIP WOOD

"The Quay Quarter (AMP) Tower in Sydney's CBD is an intriguing building in its own right, but this nearby curved steel structure supplied the element I was seeking in order to give a more interesting and eye-catching perspective to this famous and much-photographed tower."

<https://bit.ly/30v32dU>

GALLERY

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



DAENEMARK THYBORON

DIRK BUSE

"This picture was taken at a beach on the north sea near Thyboron in Denmark. The waves are crashing against an old bunker of Germany's Atlantic Wall coastal defences."

<https://bit.ly/48vygKR>



FACEBOOK

<http://bit.ly/39py9lg>



FLICKR

<http://bit.ly/2VlgsJ0>

PHOTOGRAPHY WEEK WANTS YOUR PHOTOS!

Taken a portrait you're particularly proud of? Shot a sensational sunset you'd like to show off? Then join the *Photography Week* Facebook community and share your best photos today! You'll get feedback from fellow readers and the *Photography Week* team, plus the chance to appear in *Xposure*, or even on our cover!

I N S P I R A T I O N

IT'S COOL, THAT

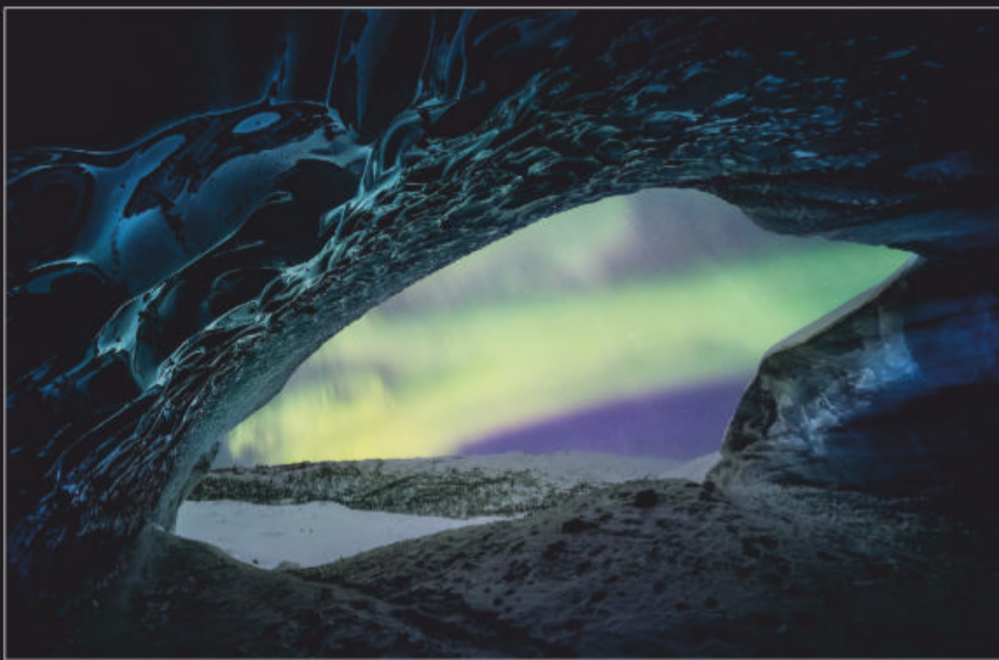
THE BEST THING WE'VE SEEN THIS WEEK



Island of Aurora, Wales, UK, by Kat Lawman



Infinity, Norway, by Giulio Cobianchi



Fleeting Moments on Ice, Alaska USA, by MaryBeth Kiczenski



Goleuadau'r Gogledd, Wales, UK, by Mathew Browne

Images © The photographer and courtesy Northern Lights Photographer of the Year

BREATHTAKING IMAGES OF THE GREATEST LIGHT SHOW ON EARTH

Travel blog showcases 2023's best images of the northern and southern lights

Travel photography blog Capture The Atlas has announced the 25 breathtaking images selected for its 2023 Northern Lights Photographer of the Year showcase.

Each year Capture The Atlas features its pick of the best images of the northern lights, or aurora borealis, and southern lights, or aurora australis, taken in the past 12 months by photographers around the world. This year's collection includes images

taken in Norway, Iceland, Australia, Alaska, New Zealand, and even the UK, with photos from new and unusual locations featured alongside shots from popular photography sites in the Arctic regions.

Click the link to see all 25 spectacular images, and read the stories of how and where they were taken, at Capture The Atlas, where you'll also find photography tutorials – including of course, how to photograph the northern lights – and lots more.



S K I L L S

CRASH COURSE

ESSENTIAL PHOTO SKILLS MADE EASY



MONO TO THE RESCUE

Flat light and boring skies spoiling your landscapes?
Adam Waring recommends ditching the colour...

A great landscape image is dependent on the weather it's shot under, so when you've put in the miles to get to a hard-to-reach location only to be faced with dreary, drizzly skies that result in a lacklustre shot, you might be tempted to pack up and head straight back home again. But when an image is lacking that certain oomph, removing the colour can make all the difference.

A black-and-white conversion forces the viewer to focus on tones and texture, and it's possible to control how specific colours are rendered in mono, and push the contrast further than you normally would, to make a so-so shot really stand out. Setting the Monochrome picture control or picture style in conjunction with Live View enables you to preview your mono image in camera. Here's how it's done...

QUICK TIP

Coloured filters were used extensively in B&W film photography: green boosts contrast between leaves and other foliage; yellow cuts through mist and increases contrast between clouds and sky; red renders blue skies near-black with really punchy clouds; while orange acts as a halfway house between yellow and red.



SKILLS

HOW TO DITCH THE COLOUR



1

COLOUR ME BAD

Our original colour shot, straight out of the camera, isn't particularly inspiring. The sky was overcast and the light was flat, and the resulting image lacks punch, with the grey rocks failing to stand out from the surrounding green grass. The murky conditions meant the scene was lacking in contrast, too.

2

LANDSCAPE SETTINGS

Shoot Raw+JPEG. We set an f/11 aperture for a good depth of field and our camera's base ISO100 for the best image quality. In dreary conditions, this may well result in a relatively slow shutter speed, so it's best to use a tripod, not only to counter camera shake but as an aid to fine-tune your composition.



3

MONOCHROME MODE

Select your camera's Monochrome picture control or picture style. As we were using the Nikon Z f, this is as simple as flicking the dedicated lever that sits below the shutter speed dial. How you select this option on other makes of camera will vary, but on other Nikon models the quickest way to do it is to press the *i* button and highlight the picture control, then select Monochrome from the options.



SKILLS

HOW TO DITCH THE COLOUR

4

MONOCHROME OPTIONS

Most cameras enable you to fine-tune the Mono picture style for a custom look – on our Nikon we can do this by pressing down on the multi-selector. In addition to various options for sharpening, contrast and so on, you can also simulate various coloured filters (see Quick Tip). If you shoot in Live View, the effect will be previewed in the image on the back of the camera.



5

RAW POWER

The monochrome edits will be baked into the JPEG, but you'll have greater editing flexibility with the raw file (note that this will appear in colour on initial opening in non-Nikon software). We used Adobe Camera Raw's B&W Mixer panel to fine-tune our processed file, and applied a strong vignette to focus attention on the rocks.

E D I T I N G

PHOTOSHOP

LEARN ESSENTIAL EDITING SKILLS FAST!



HOW TO...

SWING INTO ACTIONS

James Paterson shows you how to make the most of our free portrait retouching kit

Photoshop actions allow you to save and reuse a sequence of edits, commands and settings. As such, if you carry out a multi-step task once, you need never to do it all again. In practice, you can use actions to automate tasks, speed up your workflow, and access your most used Photoshop features. It only takes a moment to create an action for a chosen sequence of edits, then the same sequence can be applied to other images with a single click.

But what if there are certain points in the sequence where you need to change things manually? Thankfully, you can build

stops and pauses into your actions, as well as several other useful functions. In this issue's video tutorial we'll explore some of the key features and show you how to create custom actions. As an example, we've used a technique called frequency separation, which is very useful for retouching uneven skin tones.

The other useful thing about Photoshop actions is that you can make use of those created by others. To that end, we've supplied a set of 10 free handy actions (including frequency separation) in our bonus Retouching Actions Kit for you to experiment with on your own photos.

EXPERT TIP

To install our free retouching actions, click the flyout menu in the Actions panel (Window > Actions) and choose Load Actions. We've used the frequency separation action, which separates high-frequency and low-frequency details to smooth out uneven skin. Run it on your portrait, make a layer above the 'Colour' layer, then grab the Clone tool, set it to Sample: Current and Below, then clone.

G E A R

LENS TEST

EXPERT OPINION ON THE LATEST KIT



CANON RF 24-50MM F/4.5-6.3 IS STM

A full-frame zoom lens in a surprisingly compact package

www.canon.co.uk [£379/\\$299](#)

The Canon RF 24-50mm f/4.5-6.3 IS STM is designed to take a load off. One of the big attractions of many mirrorless cameras is that they're small; but for travel and walkabout photography, that advantage is largely lost if you hang a hefty lens on the front of it. This not-so-standard zoom is fairly short on actual zoom range and has a modest aperture rating, but it packs wide-angle to standard focal range coverage, effective optical stabilisation and ultra-quiet autofocus into an amazingly compact package that weighs in at just one-fifth of a kilogram.

Although this configuration is new to the Canon lineup, it's not unique: Nikon launched its Z 24-50mm f/4-

6.3, which is even shorter and lighter, in 2020; and, just as that lens became a kit option for the Nikon Z 5, the RF 24-50mm has become a kit lens for the EOS R8. There's also something to be said for using it on Canon's APS-C format R-system bodies, such as the R10, on which it gives an effective zoom range of about 38-80mm; and if you don't mind a drop in megapixel count, you can switch to APS-C crop mode in full-frame cameras and get the same extended zoom range.

Key features

This lens's standout feature is its compactness. It has a retractable design that shrinks the stowage length to just 58mm, which isn't much longer than the RF-S 18-45mm

1 The optical path features a modest eight elements in eight groups.

2 The Control option lets you choose your own setting to adjust via the focus ring.

3 To keep the weight of the lens down, the mounting plate is plastic.

f/4.5-6.3 IS STM for APS-C format Canon R-system cameras, which measures 44mm when retracted. And while the RF 24-50mm is more than 50 percent heavier, it's still amazingly light for a full-frame compatible zoom at 210g; to put that into perspective, the Canon RF 24-105mm f/4-7.1 IS STM is 89mm long when retracted, and weighs



LENS TEST CANON RF 24-50MM F/4.5-6.3 IS STM



The RF 24-50mm is designed for those times when you want to travel light and concentrate on shooting photos; its small size and low weight mean you'll hardly notice it in your kit bag

395g – getting on for twice as heavy.

One of the main drawbacks of this downsizing is the lens's lack of telephoto reach. There's nothing wrong with its wide-angle coverage, which stretches to an 84-degree viewing angle, but the lens runs out of stretch at the long end, topping out at a standard 50mm. For many, though, that's not a problem: if you major in street, landscape or cityscape photography, you're likely to find the zoom range adequate, and it also works well for vlogging.

Another plus point for both stills and video capture is that the stepping motor-based autofocus system is quick and snappy, while also enabling smooth, virtually silent focus transitions for shooting movies.

Given that the original EOS R and RP cameras had no in-body stabilisation, the optical stabiliser featured in this lens is a useful addition – and the advantage isn't

limited to these two cameras. The stabiliser has 4.5-stop effectiveness in its own right, rising to a seven-stop advantage when you mount the lens on a body that features in-body image stabilisation.

In order to keep the size and weight down, the optical path features just eight elements in total, including two precision-moulded aspherical elements to enhance image quality. Canon's heritage Super Spectra coating is applied to minimise ghosting and flare.

Build and handling

As is typical of Canon's lower-budget RF lenses, the build quality feels pretty solid, but there are no weather seals. This one's a little less solid than some, as it features a plastic rather than metal mounting plate, but that's another design choice that helps to keep the weight to a minimum.

Although it's fairly compact in



Image sharpness in the centre of the frame is respectable, although not on a par with some other Canon RF lenses

its retracted state, the lens almost doubles in length once extended for shooting. It's physically longest at the 24mm end of the zoom range, with the inner barrel receding a little at mid-zoom settings and extending again towards the 50mm mark.

Two switches are fitted to enhance handling, which saves dipping into camera menus. One is a Stabiliser On/Off switch, the other is a three-pole switch for AF/Control/MF. As well



LENS TEST CANON RF 24-50MM F/4.5-6.3 IS STM



The 24-50mm range for focal length is pretty limited – that’s the compromise you have to make with such a travel-friendly barrel

as giving direct access to autofocus with manual override and fully manual focusing, the Control option enables the focus ring to be assigned to other customisable functions like aperture, exposure compensation and ISO adjustments. The focus ring

S P E C S

MOUNT: CANON RF **LENS CONSTRUCTION:** 8 ELEMENTS IN 8 GROUPS **ANGLE OF VIEW:** 84-46° **MAX APERTURE:** F/2.8 **MIN APERTURE:** F/22-32 **DIAPHRAGM BLADES:** 7 **MIN FOCUSING DISTANCE:** 0.3M (W), 0.35M (T) **MAX MAGNIFICATION RATIO:** 0.11X (W), 0.19X (T) **FILTER SIZE:** 58MM **DIMENSIONS (W X D):** 70 X 58MM (RETRACTED) **WEIGHT:** 210G

itself is rather small, in keeping with the diminutive size of the lens, but operates smoothly with the now-typical electronic coupling.

One component that’s lacking, as usual with Canon’s non-L-series lenses, is a lens hood, which is sold separately.

Performance

In our real-world testing, sharpness proved very good (rather than entirely great) throughout the zoom range. Centre sharpness isn’t as impressive as you’ll get from other Canon RF standard zooms that we’ve tested, but levels of sharpness are remarkably uniform across the whole image frame, right out to the edges and corners, and are also pretty consistent throughout the zoom range.

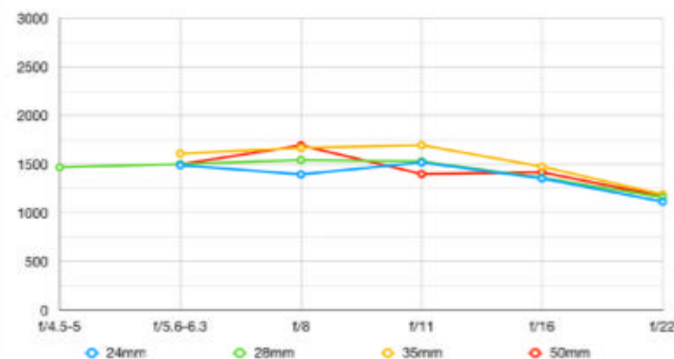
In practical terms, the highly effective optical image stabilisation system helps to maintain consistent sharpness in handheld shooting, even at slow shutter speeds. After all, there’s little point in having a really compact, featherweight lens if you need to lug a tripod around.

Lateral chromatic aberration towards the edges and corners of the frame is minimal at all zoom settings – and automatic in-camera correction is available anyway. The lens relies entirely on auto-correction for distortions, especially in the 24-35mm sector of the zoom range. This can’t be switched off in-camera because the lens would be basically unusable without auto-correction for distortion; this is by no means uncommon in recent lenses designed for mirrorless cameras.

The speed and accuracy of the linear stepping motor autofocus system are impressive for stills, and it lives up to its billing of delivering smooth autofocus transitions while shooting video. Overall, the performance is impressive, considering the compact and lightweight design of the lens. However, the modest aperture rating is a minus point for gaining a tight depth of field, and for maintaining quick shutter speeds under low lighting levels to freeze motion.

Matthew Richards

SHARPNESS



It’s not the sharpest as Canon RF standard zooms go. Levels of centre sharpness proved underwhelming in our lab tests but, on the plus side, sharpness is remarkably consistent across the whole image frame and throughout the entire zoom range.

FRINGING

SHORT **0.60** LONG **0.37**

The lens does well to control colour fringing, with minimal lateral chromatic aberration even out at the edges and corners of the frame. This remains the case at all focal lengths and aperture settings.

DISTORTION

SHORT **-10.3** LONG **-2.82**

Like many compact lenses designed for mirrorless cameras, this one relies on in-camera corrections, which can’t be switched off in the menu settings. Disabling correction at the editing stage reveals extreme barrel distortion in the 24-35mm sector of the zoom range.

VERDICT

Full-frame compatible zoom lenses don’t get any smaller than this. While it doesn’t stretch into telephoto territory, wide-angle and standard focal lengths are covered in style, and you also get effective optical stabilisation and snappy, near-silent autofocus. It’s a lens that truly punches above its weight, although the modest aperture rating can be a limiting factor in some situations.





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A P P S

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