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Photography week



INSPIRATION | IDEAS | IN-DEPTH REVIEWS



SONY ALPHA 9 III

REVIEW: IS THIS THE NEW
BEST CAMERA ON THE
PLANET?

PEAK PERFORMANCE

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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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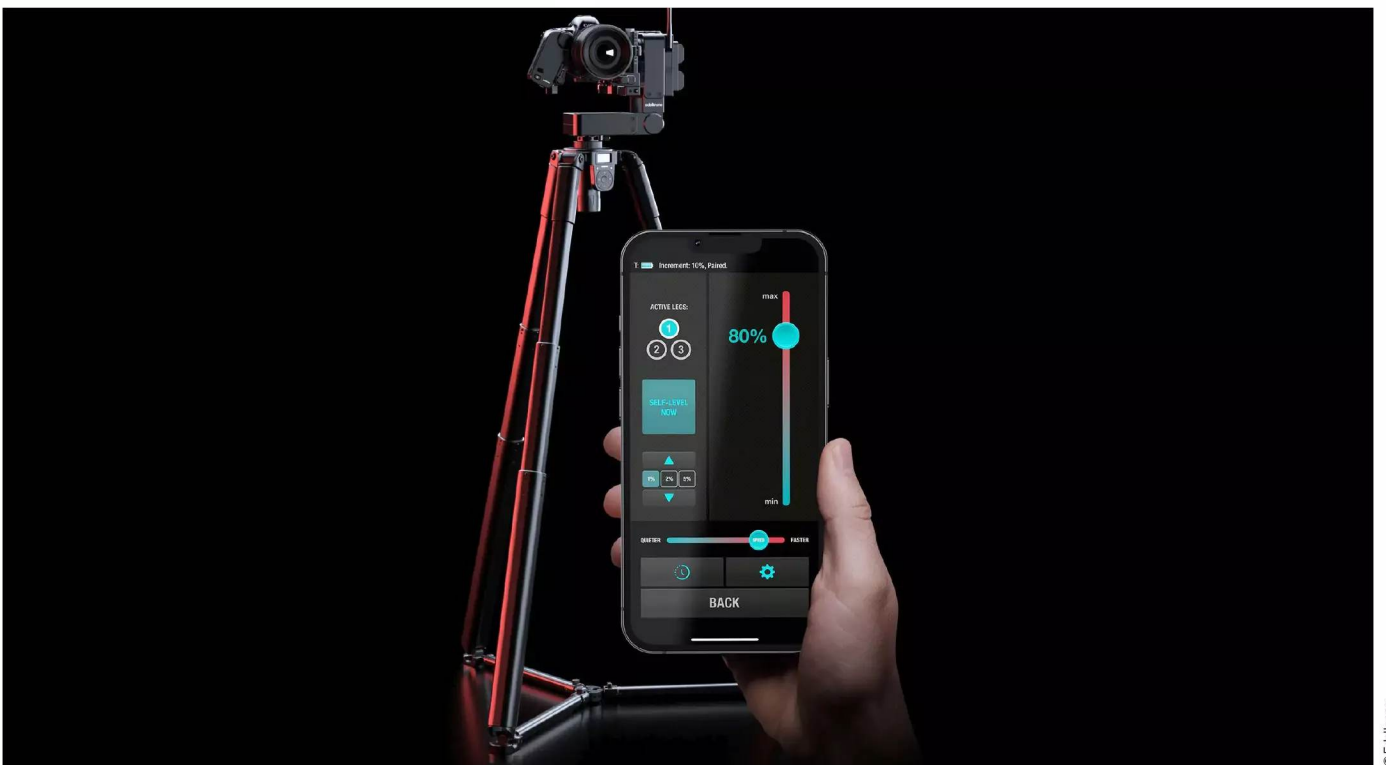


WHAT'S HOT

THE WEEK'S TOP HEADLINES IN PHOTOGRAPHY

EDELKRONE UNVEILS MOTORIZED AND SELF-LEVELLING TRIPOD

The new Tripod X offers effortless set-up and adjustment – for a price



© Edelkrone

High-end tripod and camera support brand Edelkrone has unveiled the Tripod X, the first motorised and auto self-levelling tripod that's available to buy (Benro announced its own version of the concept last year in the shape of its Theta tripod, but it's yet to go on sale).

The highlight feature of the Tripod X is auto self-levelling, with a gyroscope accelerometer that's built into the crown of the tripod controlling motors within the legs that raise and lower each leg until your camera is level. The tripod

has a height range of 34cm to 148cm, depending on leg extension and the spread of the legs, and the motorised system can also be used to enable camera movements for video and timelapse sequences.

The Tripod X is controlled via a button interface and small display, which includes direct controls for raising and lowering the legs, a shortcut button for instant levelling, and speed controls so you can choose between faster or quieter performance. Remote control via the Edelkrone app is coming soon.

Edelkrone's main business is professional video equipment, and as such the motors in Tripod X are rated to lift up to 20kg, while the tripod itself weighs 6kg. That's heavy even by video tripod standards, but once it's in position you can let the motors do all the lifting for you. Power is supplied by a removable and rechargeable 12V battery which Edelkrone says can deliver weeks of use per charge. Both the battery and charger are included.

The Edelkrone Tripod X is available to buy now, priced at \$2,599 (about £2,070).

PIN-SHARP

Achieving absolute image quality is a two-stage process that involves knowing your camera kit and how to control it in any shooting conditions



© Jeremy Flint

10 PRO WAYS TO MAXIMISE IMAGE QUALITY

Shoot and edit your best-ever digital files by understanding how to make your cameras and lenses perform at their very best Words by: Peter Fenech

The concept of image quality is an abstract one that we have all become accustomed to hearing, without necessarily stopping to consider in detail. We often associate the idea with camera and lens specifications to such an extent that it can feel as if the integrity of our photos is beyond our control, being purely dependent on pixel count, processor type and fancy optical coatings. Of course, the technical quality of an image file is controlled to some extent by

the resolution of the camera's sensor – on some cameras, this is even accessed by a button named 'Image Qual'.

However, it's wrong to assume that upgrading your camera kit will automatically produce higher-quality images – it's better to understand your gear, and know how and when it performs at its best. This has never been more true than with today's digital cameras. As new features are added to ever-expanding menu options, it's vital to recognise what

each item is designed for, and how you can use it to your advantage.

Image quality is in the eye of the beholder to an extent, but, by exploring all the tools your kit is equipped with and reassessing how you use them, you can discover a plethora of ways to get the maximum colour, resolution and sharpness from your bodies and lenses. Read on to discover 10 features and techniques you can start using today to create better raw files or JPEGs.



FEATURE

1 CHEAT THE IMAGE CIRCLE

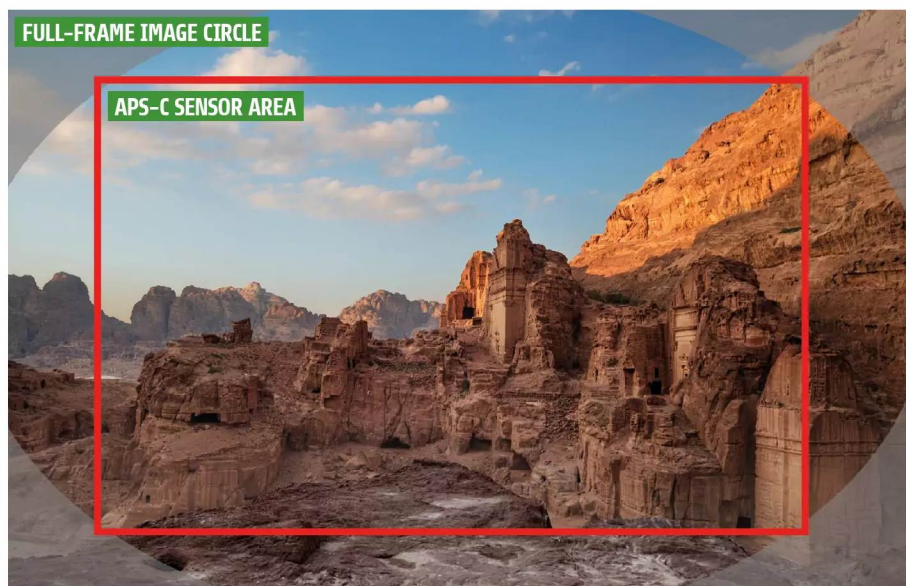
Sometimes using the 'wrong lens' is the best way to achieve better-quality shots



© Jeremy Flint

When deciding which system to settle on, the variety of lens mount types and formats can be overwhelming. However, while having cameras with different-sized sensors can be problematic, it can also be advantageous. Buying a full-frame lens for your APS-C or Micro 4/3 camera will mean the image circle is considerably larger than the sensor area. This effectively eliminates the frame edges – where any lens, even a pro model, performs at its weakest, and as a result vignetting is reduced, centre-edge sharpness is more consistent, and distortion is minimised. You have the additional weight to contend with and, potentially, adaptors to consider, but 'buying bigger' than you need also future-proofs subsequent upgrades to a larger-sensor camera. The grey areas in the image show zones of weak sharpness.

LOW-LIGHT DREAM TEAM For the maximum stated image stabilisation (IS) effectiveness, such as up to eight stops, it's often necessary to pair modern mirrorless lenses with cameras featuring dual IS, with sensor-shift IBIS



FEATURE

2 AVOID CLOSE FOCUSING

Even macro lenses have a hidden weakness at short working distances

Many lenses have a 'macro mode' or can focus down to short working distances from the subject. However, regardless of whether your optic can produce life-size, 1:1 reproductions, 1:2 half-life-size or significantly less, there's a chance the lens won't perform at its best at the closest focusing distance. Every lens is designed to resolve detail optimally at a set distance, and the extremes on either side of this will see sharpness fall-off.

The floating element design of newer models goes some way to helping with this, but unless you need to fill the frame with the subject, taking a step back and framing wider, then cropping your shot can improve apparent sharpness. This is a combination of optimising lens performance and using only the centre of the frame, similar to technique 1.



CROP MODES

Many full-frame cameras feature APS-C crop modes, producing greater magnification from the lens in use. While this can be useful for sports, where image turnover is a priority, for longevity it's better to shoot at full resolution and enjoy full, re-editable control of cropping in software

3 DRAG THE SHUTTER

Work flash into your shots for greater sharpness with natural lighting



1 TAKE A READING

Start in Program or Aperture Priority mode, take an exposure reading from the subject, and then switch to Manual mode. By entering the measured settings you'll be able to prevent the exposure from changing as you recompose the shot.



2 SET FLASH POWER

Activate the flash and set the power just high enough that it begins to fill in some of the shadows on the subject. Start at 1/64 power or lower, and only increase this if your subject still appears soft.



3 CONTROL BACKGROUND EXPOSURE

Since your shutter speed is going to be lower than ideal, your shot may already be balanced. If the flash is still too visible or the background is showing light fall-off, lower the shutter speed until the lighting is even.



F E A T U R E

4 SHOOT TETHERED

Get a better insight into the true quality of your exposures



© Getty Images

Even when shooting in raw format, the image you see on your camera's LCD is a JPEG preview, and the associated histogram and highlight alerts are readouts from that. Since JPEGs have a more limited

dynamic range, this is unlikely to be the most accurate assessment of your file quality. Tethering your camera allows you to instantly view the true raw file in your dedicated raw software, gaining a valid analysis of clipping and tonal

distribution. While this is often impractical when out in the field, for studio work it's an easy step towards achieving the best possible signal-to-noise ratio, detail and colour capture your camera and lens combination can output.



5 BANISH BACKLIGHTING WOES

Reduce flare when shooting towards strong light sources

LIGHTING COLOUR

Due to the default pixel bias of most camera sensors caused by the colour filter array, the blue and red channels are subject to a noise disadvantage. Where practical, avoiding images taken under single-colour blue or red lighting will produce cleaner files at any ISO



© Jeremy Flint



A popular look in modern lifestyle portrait and wedding photography is to shoot into the light, with the sun or a flash behind the subject. However, this can introduce significant ghosting and flare effects, even when using lenses equipped with advanced coatings.

One quick solution is to shoot wide-open at the lens's maximum aperture. This reduces the flare caused by the diaphragm to diffused washes of colour that are easier to remove in editing or leave as an attractive glow. For landscape photography, consider shooting two frames at different f-stops – one for a broader depth of field, and another with reduced hard flare. The two frames can then be combined using layer masking. Alternatively, focus stacking allows a wider aperture setting to be used.



6 PRESET FOCUS DISTANCE

Quickly nail perfect focus by pre-empting the subject position

FOCUS HAZARDS

Uniform detail, such as these sand dunes, can confuse AF systems. Make sure your lenses are correctly calibrated, while setting pre-focus to improve accuracy



© Jeremy Flitt

Modern AF systems are incredibly accurate, but there are times when your shooting position is sub-optimal, with obstructions between your lens and subject. Vegetation, for example, can cause the focus to slip to foreground elements, and the shift might be minor enough that you won't see the subsequent lack of sharpness until post-production. One helpful feature of modern high-end lenses is pre-set distance focusing, allowing you to program a custom distance that the lens shifts to when you press a function button. Take a test shot with focus set at the estimated distance, check sharpness and depth of field, then enter that distance as the preset. When the subject arrives, tap the button for superior focus accuracy.



© Getty Images



F E A T U R E

7 ACTIVATE PRE-SHOOTING

This increasingly popular feature can vastly improve your sharpness hit rate

Features we're starting to see more regularly on newer mirrorless cameras are Pre-shooting or raw burst. With this mode active, the camera starts to record shots to the image buffer when the shutter release is half-pressed. This means that a series of files can be captured quicker, pre-empting the perfect moment. This is a big deal, as it can capture the subject closer to the instant you recognise a photo opportunity, and reduces the delay caused by raising the camera to your eye, potentially capturing a sharper view of a moving subject. Files are then written into a single raw file, which can be extracted in software.



PART OF THE PROCESS

With the latest software, it's possible to take edits further without artefacts developing, so for better results, try re-processing your older raw files



FEATURE

8 APPLY NEW COLOUR SCIENCE

Breath new life into your older raw files with updated algorithms



FULL SPECTRUM

Knowing how your camera responds to individual colours and manages each channel can help you target your workflow to protect the most at-risk tones; for example, if it turns lush greens a yellowish colour

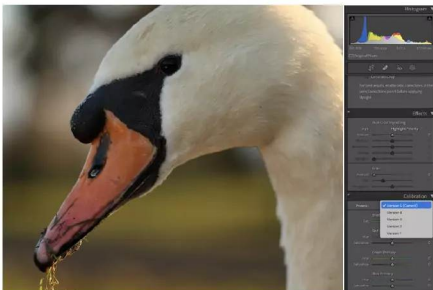
© Jeremy Flint

As editing software is updated, colour and sharpness processing are improved, and with the latest versions of your software

it's often possible to take edits further without artefacts developing than you could in previous versions.

The Process version can have a

significant impact on the appearance of your images, so it's a great idea to try re-processing older raw files to see if you can produce better results.



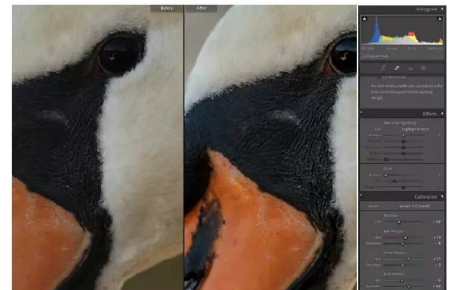
1 SELECT PROCESS VERSION

In the software with which you originally processed the raw image, ensure you have the latest version, then check you have the most recent Process active. In Lightroom, this is found on the Calibration panel. With other applications, open your raw and sidecar files in the new software.



2 TWEAK THE TONALITY

New algorithms also impact the treatment of shadows and highlights. While the dynamic range of a file is decided at capture, improved software tools can extract greater detail without emphasising noise as much, so readjust the tonal range now, before making further colour adjustments.



3 ADJUST CALIBRATION

In the Calibration panel or similar dialogue, experiment with the colour control sliders to adjust how each channel is represented. The updated algorithms improve how saturation increases look, such as under Blue Primary, allowing you to take colour adjustments further than before.



9 SENSOR-SHIFT SUPREMACY

Maximise resolution when you need it the most while saving on storage

Cameras with pixel counts above 30MP are often most at home in the kit bag of a product, commercial or advertising photographer, as the file sizes produced are impractical for the majority of use cases. However, there are times when more pixels are essential for a specific shoot, and when this happens, sensor-shift high-resolution modes can be just the ticket.

Make sure you mount your camera on a tripod, then activate high-resolution mode from the Custom Function or Image Quality menu. Check your remaining image counter for the memory card in use, as this will drop considerably with this mode engaged. If the file size exceeds the actual remaining number, you risk corrupting the card and losing all previously saved files.

GO LARGE

Sometimes ultra-high resolutions are needed for a customer, or because you want to print a large image. The sensor-shift mode on many modern cameras can help here



10 UNDERSTAND LENS BEHAVIOUR

Get to know exactly when your optics perform at their very best

COOL AND CRISP

Every lens, including professional models, have an optimal aperture setting. Become familiar with how your optic performs at each focal length and f-stop

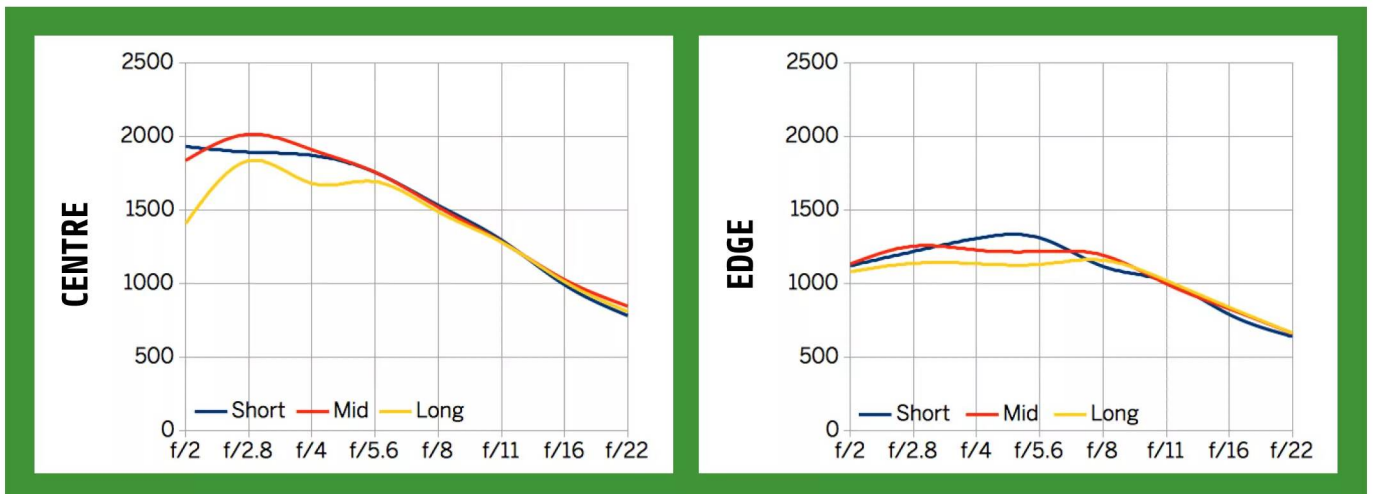


© Jeremy Flint

It's fairly well known that each lens has an optimal f-stop for resolution, and that neither shooting wide-open or stopped down to f/22 and beyond will produce the best sharpness. While many photographers know that stopping

down by around 2EV will help, you can take this a step further, and find your lens's specific sharpness sweet-spot. Each model varies in the exact setting that will produce the best combination of sharpness and contrast, so refer to the manufacturer's website, and find

the MTF (Modular Transfer Function) chart for your lens. All you have to look for is where the lines representing contrast and resolution are at their peak, which might be a little on either side of two stops from the maximum aperture setting.



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GALLERY

XPOSURE

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



TOOLS

KEITH TODD

"A still life of some vintage tools: a meat tenderiser, a spirit level, a hammer and a knife."

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

GALLERY

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



FORTH RAIL BRIDGE

NICK STRONG

"The Forth Bridge crosses the Firth of Forth in the east of Scotland close to Edinburgh. This photo was taken from Harbour slipway at North Queensferry."

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

GALLERY

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



THE SCOUTING MISSION

DOM HAUGHTON

"I shot this photo on my first visit to this abandoned farm in the wilderness – the conditions were decidedly moody and damp, which was ideal for the subject."

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

GALLERY

THE WEEK'S MOST INSPIRING READER PHOTOS



HMAS CANBERRA

PHILIP EDWARD WOOD

"Taken from the waterline of the Manly Ferry in Sydney Harbour. Using a polarising filter with a pure blue autumn sky emphasised the size and power of Australia's largest warship bearing down on the viewer."

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



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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



Above: Mike Kitchen, Photographer of the Year 2023 and Winner, Open Avant Garde. Left, top: Peter Jones, Winner, Documentary. Left: Duncan Cauchi, Winner, The Natural World – Landscapes

Images © The photographer and courtesy The Society of Photographers

AMAZING LONDON 'TUBE' IMAGE WINS PRESTIGIOUS PHOTO PRIZE

The Society of Photographers unveils the winners of its 2023 competition

The Society of Photographers has announced the stunning winners of its 2023 Photographer of the Year competition. UK photographer Mike Kitchen took the top prize for his image, *Velocity*, which shows a London Underground train seemingly bending through time and space. The image earlier won the Society's monthly award in the Open Avant Garde category.

The UK-based Society is an association that brings together photographers from all

around the globe, helping them to improve both their photography and business skills. The entries cover a broad range of photographic subjects, with three overall winners selected from the gold award winners of the monthly contests.

Click the link to see more winning and commended images at the Society's website, where you'll also find details of how to join, and how to enter the monthly and annual competitions.

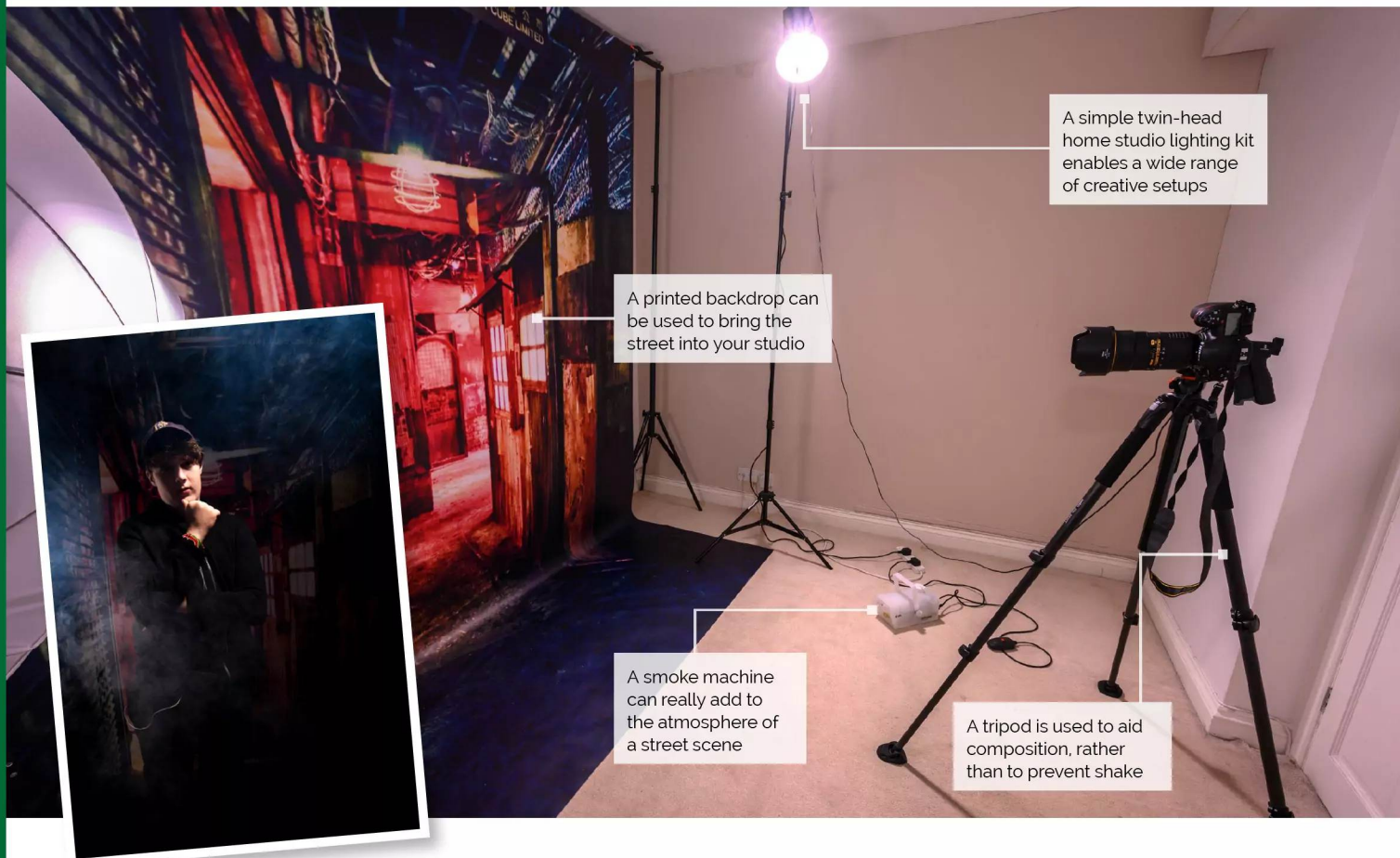


SEE MORE IMAGES
<https://bit.ly/48h6a5s>

S K I L L S

CRASH COURSE

ESSENTIAL PHOTO SKILLS MADE EASY



BRING THE STREET INSIDE

Can't get to a suitable location for your shoot? Adam Waring shows you how to create a street scene indoors using a printed backdrop

Finding and getting to suitable locations for a shoot can be easier said than done, especially if you're looking for something unusual or exotic. So if you can't get to – in the case of our street-themed shoot – Japan, why not let Japan come to you?

With a pre-printed photo backdrop you can transform a home studio into all manner of locations, from forest glades and tropical paradises to grungy backstreets or industrial scenes. These

backdrops are usually made from hard-wearing rolls of thick vinyl, which unlike paper backdrops can easily be wiped clean when you're finished.

You'll need some form of artificial lighting, as well as a backdrop support. A home studio kit, consisting of a pair of flash heads on stands, is ideal, enabling you to construct controlled lighting setups. You could also use a couple of flashguns; but whatever you use, take note that vinyl has a much more reflective surface than paper, so you'll

need to take care when positioning the lights to avoid glare on the backdrop spoiling your photograph.

For our Tokyo street scene we used a low-key lighting setup to create the feel of night time, and asked our subject to dress in 'street' garb and pull a series of moody poses – not difficult when the only choice of model you have to hand is a sulky teenager! We also employed a smoke machine to add some extra atmosphere to our shoot. Here's how we got on...



S K I L L S

HOW TO SHOOT A STREET SCENE AT HOME



1

SET THE SCENE

We went for Click Props' Urban Tokyo backdrop, and used a backdrop roll holder to secure our vinyl, carefully unrolling it to form a curve where it met the floor. Ensure your backdrop hangs flat – kinks ruin the illusion! We used a couple of alligator clips to lock the backdrop firmly against the holder.

2

CAMERA SETTINGS

When working with studio lights, it's crucial that you work in Manual mode. You'll also have to set the shutter speed below your camera's max sync speed – this is 1/200 sec on most DSLRs and mirrorless cameras, and 1/250 sec on some high-end models. We set 1/200 sec, f/11, ISO100. Taking a test shot without the lights should result in a black (or near-black) frame.



3

COMPOSE THE FRAME

We used a tripod to ensure our backdrop was perfectly framed, and we used the level on our camera's display to check the frame was level (alternatively, use the bubble level on the tripod), and that no bits of lighting kit were encroaching. After autofocusing on our model, we set manual focus, confident that f/11 would keep him sharp as he moved between poses.



S K I L L S

HOW TO SHOOT A STREET SCENE AT HOME



4

MOOD LIGHTING

To enhance the urban look, we set our 'key' light up high, pointing downwards to mimic a streetlight. We didn't use any modifiers to soften the light, as we wanted plenty of harsh shadows. Connect the light to the camera's flash sync socket (or use a wireless trigger), take a test shot, then adjust the power to light your subject without bleaching them out.

5

LIGHT YOUR SUBJECT

We placed our second, 'fill' light on the other side of our subject and slightly behind them, angled towards their back to create a bit of rim light around their body and help separate them from the background; we used a white shoot-through umbrella to soften the light and help it spread around their outline. We set this light to receiver mode, so it fires instantaneously on detecting the flash from the key light.



6

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...

We used a smoke machine to add some steam/mist to our scene. A quick blast around your model should do it – too much smoke can bounce the light from the flash. We asked our model to pull a variety of moody-looking poses – as we had pre-framed the shot, we were free to direct them as we fired the shutter, rather than being stuck behind the viewfinder.



QUICK TIP

The ratio of power between your lights dictates the feel of the shot, and experimentation is key here. Set the 'key' light first, then the 'fill' light, tweaking both until you're happy.

To get the right feel for our moody street scene we kept the power low on both, ending up with 1/4 power on the key light and 1/8 on the fill.

E D I T I N G

PHOTOSHOP

LEARN ESSENTIAL EDITING SKILLS FAST!

HOW TO...

CREATE SCRIBBLE ART

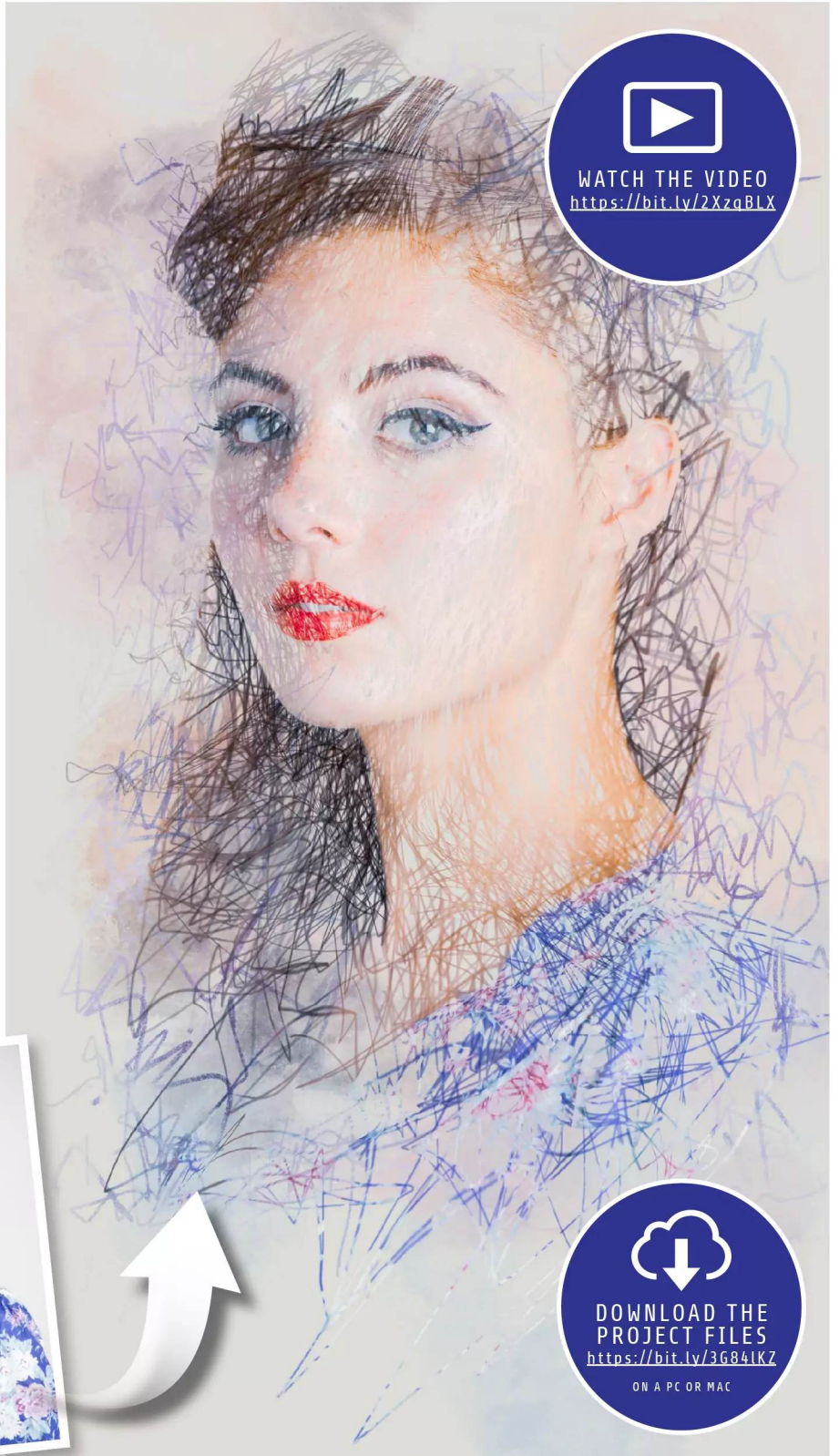
James Paterson shows you an easy way to add fun effects to your portraits in Photoshop

If you're a fan of doodling, this video tutorial will be perfect for you. We'll show you how you can transform a portrait into a piece of 'scribble art', and while it might look like a complicated effect to create it's actually rather simple to pull off.

We begin by cutting out our subject (using automated selection tools to speed things up), then we hide the portrait behind a mask, grab a brush and start scribbling. This last part is best done with a pen and tablet, so that you can make use of pressure and tilt to vary your strokes. But if you only have access to a mouse, it's still easy to create the scribbles, as you can use helpful Photoshop features like Smoothing on your brush tip to combat the jagged strokes you get with a mouse.

To add some depth to your scribble effect you can build it up over several layers, using different layer opacities to blend them together. You can also paint a few watercolor splashes around the image to give it a more painterly feel, and

Adobe offers an excellent watercolor brush set for this: to download it, go to the Brush Picker, click the cog to open the flyout menu and choose Get More Brushes, then download the Watercolor set from the Adobe site.



G E A R

MIRRORLESS CAMERA TEST

EXPERT OPINION ON THE LATEST KIT



SONY ALPHA 9 III

Packed with innovative technology, this Sony camera could change photography as we know it forever, says James Artaius

www.sony.co.uk [£6,099/\\$5,998](#)

The Sony A9 III is, hands down, the most advanced camera ever made. While it isn't yet being referred to as the company's new flagship, the A9 series has traditionally occupied that position. And as mighty as the Sony A1 is, its specs honestly look kind of quaint compared to the A9 III. The best sports and action cameras are routinely the launchpad for manufacturers' bleeding-edge tech, but I've never seen a camera with as much earth-shatteringly futuristic technology as the Sony A9 III. Terms like 'game changer' are banded

about liberally these days, but this is a camera that really could transform the way we use cameras.

With headlines including the world's first full-frame global shutter image sensor, 120fps continuous shooting at full resolution (24.5MP) JPEG and raw, and the ability to shoot with a shutter speed of 1/80,000 sec, this is a camera made of pure photographic muscle. For those who haven't come across the concept of a global shutter, essentially it exposes whole frames on the sensor at the same time, rather than line-by-line, scanning left-to-right or from

top-to-bottom, the way traditional sensors do. The result is that rolling shutter – the phenomenon where non-horizontal straight lines (whether they're golf clubs, baseball bats, telegraph poles or buildings) appear warped and distorted when shot at high electronic speed – is eliminated.

That global readout dovetails with the A9 III's second most amazing feat: a maximum shutter speed of 1/80,000 sec. On the photographic side, this makes flash sync speeds extinct. It's simply so fast that it can sync with flash at all speeds, making not just standard speeds



MIRRORLESS CAMERA TEST SONY ALPHA 9 III

1 FAMILIAR LAYOUT

If you've used a Sony before you'll fall right into step with the A9 III design philosophy

2 REFINED HANDGRIP

There are some marginal body redesigns that make handling smoother

3 LENS MOUNT

Featuring a full-frame sensor, the A9 III can accept all FE-compatible optics

4 CARD FORMATS

Users have a choice of SD or CFexpress Type A cards for backup or overflow duty



redundant (such as 1/250 sec), but also rendering high-speed sync technology completely superfluous. There is a temporary caveat here, which is that the camera cannot shoot at 1/80,000 sec in continuous mode; here, it maxes out at 1/16,000 sec. However, Sony says that its first firmware update, which is due around March, will bring continuous shooting all the way up to 1/80,000 sec.

What else does the global shutter do? It gives you the ability to shoot continuous bursts of stills at 120fps. Yes, the Nikon Z 8 and Z 9 can do this, but only with 11MP JPEGs; the A9 III, however, can rattle off 120fps images at full 24.6MP resolution, in 14-bit JPEG and raw, blackout-free, with full autofocus and autoexposure.

IT'S NO SURPRISE TO SEE THAT THE A9 III LOOKS AND FEELS MUCH LIKE THE A9 II

The only realistic way of testing an elite-level sports camera is to shoot elite-level sports – so I torture-tested the A9 III at an Olympic training facility, photographing teams as they prepared for this summer's Paris games. With a lone subject in an empty space, the AF acquisition and tracking were flawless, keeping the athlete in focus whether facing they

were the camera or fully contorting in the middle of a move.

Overall, I have to say that the A9 III's autofocus system is absolutely incredible. Bearing in mind that I was blasting away at up to 120fps and up to 120p in 4K, for the AF to keep up at all is remarkable enough. For it to be as resoundingly robust and subject-sticky as it is, it's actually pretty

TALKING POINT... AUTOFOCUS PERFORMANCE

Sony has made a bold claim about its new AI processing unit that powers Real-time Recognition AF. It promises 'human pose estimation technology' that recognises and tracks subjects' bodies and heads, even when they're facing away from the camera and in a small area of the screen. And mostly, that's exactly what it does. The discipline it handled most capably was gymnastics. With hurdles, it had few problems, given that the subject's face was always in the frame. But with kickboxing and Muay Thai, the A9 III was surprisingly less consistent than the A9 II.

Here, the camera is too clever for its own good. In mapping a database of human skeletal positions to predict movement, it's setting itself up to be tricked in the same way a boxer's opponent is when a feint or fake is thrown. This could account for the AF system occasionally getting confused about what to focus on, in a way that the A9 II didn't. It was particularly noticeable when shooting video, as the focus would dart around trying to stick to something.



MIRRORLESS CAMERA TEST SONY ALPHA 9 III



© James Artaus



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WITH HEADLINES INCLUDING THE WORLD'S FIRST FULL-FRAME GLOBAL SHUTTER, THIS IS A CAMERA MADE OF PURE PHOTOGRAPHIC MUSCLE

mind-blowing. The only occasional issue I had was side-on shots, where acquisition took a fraction longer. High-jump subjects also posed a challenge, as the AF simply didn't recognise the human body shape in such an unusual position.

It's a running gag that all Alphas look and feel the same, so it's no

surprise that the A9 III looks and feels much like the A9 II before it – which is to say it looks pretty and feels great in the hand – but with slightly refined ergonomics. This is mainly in the form of the beefier grip, which certainly offers much more purchase and a better hand-hold when using big lenses. The back

FEATURES

FULL-FRAME SENSOR

The imaging sensor measures 35.7mm by 23.8mm but carries far fewer pixels (24.6MP) than other cameras in the Sony lineup

MAX RESOLUTION

The effective resolution can output files with maximum pixel dimensions of 6000 x 4000. This allows for the maximum frame rate of 120fps but still enables 4K video shooting

VIDEO RESOLUTION

The Sony A9 III can shoot Ultra HD 4K (3840 x 2160) video at 120p, 60p, 50p, 25p and 23.98p internally. Supported formats include XAVC S, XAVC HS and XAVC S-I

CFEXPRESS TYPE A

While many other manufacturers use the Type B CFexpress format, Sony sticks with the Type A variant

COMPOSITE RAW SHOOTING

This captures 32 raw images that can be stacked in Sony Imaging Edge to minimise noise and false colour when shooting at high ISO to compensate for the more limited ISO performance of the global shutter sensor

MAX SHUTTER SPEED

The electronic shutter is capable of up to 1/80,000 sec but this tops out at 1/16,000 sec in continuous shooting mode



of the camera is virtually identical apart from a different graphic on the record button. The top plate sees the most changes, with photo, video and S&Q now removed from the mode dial and placed on a collar switch surrounding it. I actually found this a little cumbersome in the heat of the moment, when I wanted to flick between stills and video,



G E A R

MIRRORLESS CAMERA TEST SONY ALPHA 9 III



The global sensor allows incredible top shutter speeds and burst frame rates

All images © James Artaius



and it's not helped by the slightly awkward dexterity that's required to simultaneously depress the lock button on top of the dial.

There will be some who scoff at the specs, questioning the need for a 1/80,000 sec shutter or the point of 120fps shooting. And no doubt, there will also be naysayers at the other end of the spectrum, berating the



In most conditions the A9 III's AF system kept up with fast- action sports

relatively modest 24.6MP resolution. To put it kindly, this camera isn't meant for these people – it's for those who shoot sports for a living. The Ag III is the best sports camera I've ever used. Can it be even better? Yes, it can. And, with the promised firmware update, it no doubt will be. **James Artaius**

S P E C S

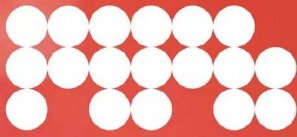
MEGAPIXELS 24.6MP **SENSOR INFORMATION** FULL FRAME EXMOR RS CMOS (35.6 X 23.8MM) **SHUTTER SPEED** 30SEC-1/80,000SEC **NATIVE ISO SENSITIVITY** 250 - 25600 (NATIVE) 125 - 51200 (EXT.) **DRIVE SPEED** 120FPS **MAX BUFFER** 196 X 14-BIT RAW FILES **MAX VIDEO RESOLUTION** UHD 4K (3840 X 2160) 60P (OVERSAMPLED 6K), 4K 120P (UNCROPPED) **AUTOFOCUS OPTIONS** PHASE DETECTION, 759 POINTS STILLS,

627 POINTS VIDEO, AI-BASED REAL-TIME RECOGNITION AF **IMAGE STABILISATION** UP TO 8 STOPS **CONNECTIVITY** WIFI, BT, USB-C, HDMI, HEADPHONE, MIC, SYNC **BATTERIES** RECHARGEABLE LI-ION (NP-FZ100) **STORAGE** 1X SD UHS-II, 1X CFEXPRESS TYPE A **LCD** 8.0 CM (3.2-TYPE) TFT WITH 2,095, 104 DOTS **VIEWFINDER** 0.64 INCH QUAD-XGA OLED, 9,437,184 DOTS, 0.9X MAGNIFICATION **WEIGHT** 702G (INC. BATTERY/CARD) **DIMENSIONS** 136.1 X 96.9 X 82.9MM

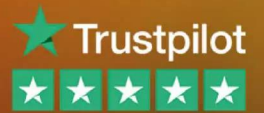
VERDICT

The Sony Ag III is currently the most advanced camera on the planet, and could usher in a new era for photography.





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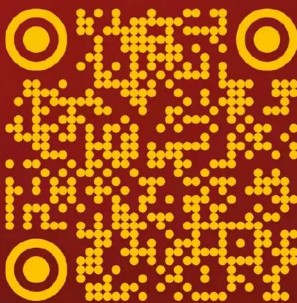
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