

Tuesday 14 April 2026

Amateur Photographer

Passionate about photography since 1884



Nikon 35mm f/1.7
Why this small, light macro lens is
handy for more than close-ups

Film's on a roll

Why analogue photography still has a very bright future



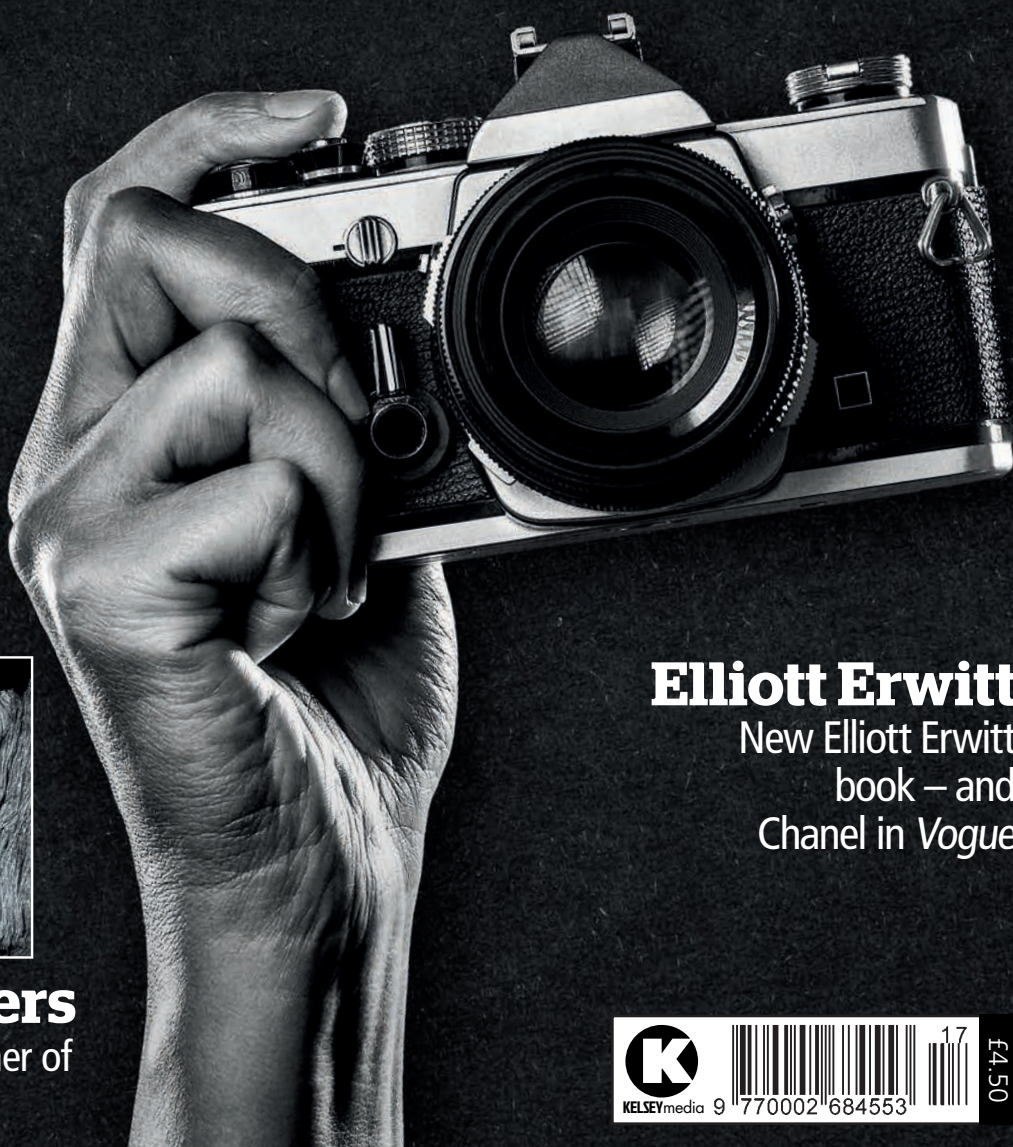
Straight outta Essex

John Wade on the
fascinating story of
Ilford Cameras



Close encounters

Latest Close-up Photographer of
the Year Challenge winners



Elliott Erwitt

New Elliott Erwitt
book – and
Chanel in Vogue



£4.50

Plus The Sony A7 V's third-party lens kerfuffle • 3D-printed camera case tested

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THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS



JOHN GILBEY

Regular AP contributor John speaks to key players about the health of analogue in a digital world



TRACY CALDER

CUPOTY co-founder Tracy shares tips from the CUPOTY CHALLENGE winner and a selection of the finalists



JOHN WADE

Our expert on camera history looks at some of film giant Ilford's best-known cameras



AMY DAVIES
Features Editor

Amy tests Nikon's 35mm f/1.7, and also looks at an Elliott Erwitt book and one on Chanel



ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

Andy tests the Akara Labs Slim Skin Case for Fujifilm X100VI, a 3D-printed case



JESSICA MILLER
Dep Online Editor

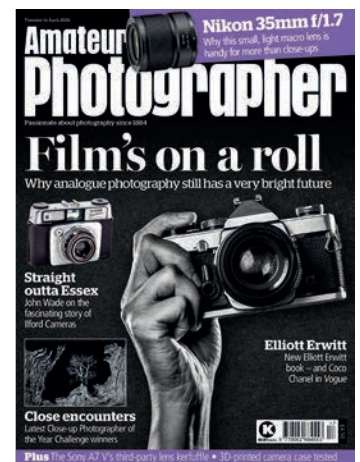
On page 40 Jess gets your views on best locations; and picks great reader shots on page 42

Welcome



This year has certainly been eventful so far, and it's easy to forget that 2026 has also been labelled 'the

year of analogue.' It is definitely the case that more and younger people are tiring of predictable digital sterility, and in the photography sphere, it means the film photography revival is here to stay. Turn to page 19 for John Gilbey's insightful overview of film photography in the UK and why he's confident it has a bright future. Other highlights this issue include John Wade's essential history of Ilford cameras; the latest Close-up Photographer of the Year Challenge winners – proving there is an upside to death and decay; and an in-depth test of Nikon's versatile new 35mm macro lens. All this plus Elliott Erwitt and Coco Chanel in our books section, and more! **Geoff Harris**, Deputy Editor



MAIN COVER PICTURE: © GETTY IMAGES. INSET PICTURE: SIDE PANEL ABOVE: © JOHN WADE. INSET SIDE PANEL BELOW: © JUAN JESUS GONZALEZ AHUMADA | CUPOTY.COM

Our cover photo this issue is by Getty Images and illustrates our big feature on analogue photography. See page 19

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YOUTUBE: [youtube.com/AmateurPhotographerTV](https://www.youtube.com/AmateurPhotographerTV)

Major management changes at OM System

There has been some significant reshuffling at the top of OM System, with President and CEO Shigemitsu Sugimoto taking over as principal shareholder and assuming overall management control.

Previously, the majority stake in OM System was held by a private equity company, Japan Industrial Partners. According to a statement from OM System, the latest management shake-up 'is expected to enable more agile and flexible decision-making, strengthen the Company's management foundation, and further promote investments in technology development and business growth strategies from a medium- to long-term perspective.'

It went on to confirm there will be no changes to OM System's legal entity, corporate name, location, representative, business activities, or the fundamental terms of transactions with customers and business partners as a result of this change.

Power of 3

OM System's most recent major camera release was the OM-3, which came out in



The OM-3 was OM System's most recent big camera release in February 2025

February 2025. Since then, the company has also announced an Astro version which we will be featuring in more detail soon, along with new lenses (including the world's first 100-400mm equivalent f/2.8 zoom).

In a recent interview with US photography site DPReview, Kazuhiro Togashi, OM System's Senior Vice President of Global Brand & Marketing Strategy, said: 'Our fundamental financial situation is very stable and stronger than it was before. We can invest in human resources or new technologies, not only for camera bodies but also for lenses.'

Calling all minimalists

The 2026 Minimalist Photography Awards competition is now open for entries, celebrating the best international work in this popular and eclectic genre. According to the organisers, 'the mission of [the awards] is to discover, recognize, and support photographers from around the world who use simplicity as a powerful visual language, while providing international exposure, professional recognition, and exhibition opportunities.'

The categories this year are: Abstract, Aerial Photography, Architecture, Conceptual, Fine Art, Landscape, Long Exposure, Night, Open Theme, Photomanipulation, Portrait, and Street. The overall winner receives a €2,000 cash prize and trophy, and will have their work showcased in an annual book and exhibition, along with all the category winners. The judging panel is still to be announced. Full details are at minimalistphotographyawards.com



Gleici Rufatto won the Abstract category in the 2024 contest, with 'Colour Conversation'

Moonshine

There's been a lot of excitement about NASA's recent Artemis II lunar survey. Astronaut Reid Wiseman took this image, 'Hello, World', and while it looks similar to older shots of Earth taken from space, it is in fact a unique night-time photo, with our planet lit solely by moonlight. North is at the 7 o'clock position, and the image features two auroras, top right and bottom left. The large brown land mass is North Africa.

'We can also see city lights shining in the darkness, with Madrid lit up like a jewel in the middle of Spain,' noted AP's eagle-eyed technical editor, Andy Westlake. 'The photo was taken using a Nikon D5 DSLR and ISO 51,200. That confirms the scene was extremely dark, with the D5 presumably chosen due to its excellent low-light high-ISO capability.'



Earth, seen from the Orion spacecraft. Taken by the Artemis II Commander Reid Wiseman

Gnat what I had in mind

 Toby Houlton has won the Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year 2025 for his image 'Dance of the Gnats', which shows this oft-overlooked species keeping busy in the afternoon. 'A moment of inspiration made me realise that taking an image with a slow shutter speed would create the amazing light trails,' he explained. 'The speed of these tiny dancers meant that multiple wingbeats were captured in the exposure, creating the patterns.' Meanwhile the Junior Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year 2025 was won by Kiran Simpson for 'The Leaf Eater.' See scottishnaturephotographyawards.com



Toby Houlton's winning image – 'Dance of the Gnats'

Polaroid's so square

 Citing 2026 as 'the year of analogue,' Polaroid has announced the Hi-Print 3x3 photo printer, enabling customisable square prints from smartphones.



Square prints from your phone

A range of customisable frames, stickers and templates are available, and the new printer can also double-up as a photo frame. It uses Polaroid HiPrint 3x3 paper and is compatible with the iOS and Android version of the Hi-Print app.

The Polaroid Hi-Print 3x3 Photo Printer is available now for £99.99 at polaroid.com



Viewpoint Gavin Stoker

It's great to see new compact cameras, reckons our regular columnist, but he'd never buy one without this key feature

In the days before mobile phone photography was 'good enough' for holiday snaps, Panasonic's 'TZ' or 'Travel Zoom' series of compacts was popular among those of us who occasionally wanted to ditch DSLR or mirrorless cameras, but still wanted to achieve detail-rich, colour saturated images that preserved our memories in their best light. I've always found the Panasonic TZ series to be well built, priced fairly, consistently reliable and conveniently compact given its feature set.

However more recent entries, specifically the TZ99, have ditched the electronic viewfinder or EVF – whether to be more cost efficient, add features such as USB charging, or simply because Panasonic doesn't believe those in the market for a compact camera seriously value a separate viewfinder. Our mobile phones just use the one screen, after all, and we're happy with that. So you can understand Panasonic's thinking here.

However, a large part of the appeal of using a compact camera, rather than a phone, is that it turns photography into the distraction-free process it always used to be, before apps 'pinged' us notifications as we lined up a shot. To my mind, there's no better way of shutting out the rest of the world than bringing my eye up close to a viewfinder – be it an optical or electronic version.

Taking a view

And it's not just me. Returning to the bigger picture, there appears to be a groundswell towards 'slow photography' and a more mindful approach to shot composition and execution. At its most extreme this can mean a return to shooting on film, which continues to be popular, particularly amongst younger photographers; but even digital cameras are increasingly offering film camera-like operation, including optical viewfinders or



Panasonic Lumix TZ300

EVFs. Now that the new TZ300 has again ditched the viewfinder, in an echo of what the TZ99 did in replacing the viewfinder-equipped TZ95, I reckon its maker could be missing a trick.

Sure, incorporating an EVF adds expense – and, at times, they've been so tiny and indistinct on compacts I've wondered why its maker has bothered – but anything that helps differentiate a digital camera from a smartphone also adds potential value in my book.

Plus, the market for longer-zoomed, higher-end one-inch sensor incorporating compacts, such as Panasonic's previous TZ200 and TZ100, would, I'd argue, expect to have the viewfinder retained – especially if mirroring the improved 2.33 million dot EVF that the TZ200 boasted over its predecessor.

After all, if a larger sensor than the 1/2.3in chip found in cheaper compact pocket zooms already appeals, then you're probably more of an enthusiast photographer, who wants all the bells and whistles, than a casual point-and-shoot snapper.

Ditching something that helps you to stand out – a viewfinder with a decent specification – therefore feels like a retrograde move to me. Especially on a higher priced and otherwise fully featured camera.

Gavin Stoker has been writing about and reviewing all things photographic for the best part of 25 years.

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Clockwise from left: Gabrielle Chanel, photographed on the mirrored staircase at 31, rue Cambon by Cecil Beaton in 1965. Cecil Beaton, *Vogue*

Cindy Crawford, photographed by Irving Penn, *Vogue*, April 1988. Irving Penn, *Conde Nast*

Photograph by Horst P. Horst, unpublished outtake from shoot for *Vogue*, 1 July 1939 US. Horst P. Horst, *Vogue*

Chanel in Vogue

£150, Thames & Hudson, 2-volume hardback, 448 pages, ISBN: 9780500025772

A veritable treasure trove for fashion, portrait and magazine fans, this is a beautiful book in every respect, says Amy Davies



When two powerhouses of fashion and culture collide, such as we see here with *Vogue* and Chanel, we get some truly stunning creations.

For us as photographers, it is of course the photography that is the big draw here – and there are some huge names on display – but as an overall volume, *Chanel in Vogue* is also filled with beautiful illustrations and fascinating essays too.

The co-author of the book, fashion historian Rebecca C. Tuite, says, 'To consider Gabrielle

(Coco) Chanel's presence in *Vogue's* pages is to reflect on the parallel and entwined histories of two defining powers in twentieth-century fashion. *Vogue* and Chanel came of age together, with a remarkable synchronicity to their development.'

It was *Vogue* who talent-spotted the work of a young Chanel back in the 1910s, with the magazine continuing to report on and work with the designer throughout her life and beyond too. And from 1983, when the fashion house was headed by Karl Lagerfeld, it continued to be one of the biggest

influences in the publication.

The book is split into two volumes. The first looks at Gabrielle Chanel herself, with the second focusing on her successors, Karl Lagerfeld and Virginie Viard, right up to the present day.

Across the two volumes there's work by some of the most prominent and important photographers of the past 100 years, including Horst P. Horst, Irvin Penn, Helmut Newton, Peter Lindbergh, Ellen von Unwerth, Annie Leibovitz and more.

This is a book you can really delve into, and it stands up well to repeated readings. If you're into fashion and portrait photography, there's bound to be something here to interest you. From my point of view as a magazine writer, I found the evolution of such an iconic publication to be of interest, too.



Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography



Isokon Flats

Art Deco London by Franco Pfaller

£19.99, Amberley Publishing, Paperback, 128 pages, ISBN: 9781398121874



During the 1920s and 1930s, the Art Deco style gained huge amounts of popularity in the UK.

London became a key area of growth for this elegant and modern style, and even today you can still see many traces of the interwar period in the capital's buildings.

At the time, the Art Deco style transformed what was primarily a Victorian city. Architects and builders were often using new materials as well as new technology, so it made for quite a striking departure from the past.

Now, some of those very same buildings are recognised as some of London's favourite landmarks. They include cinemas, apartment blocks and luxurious department stores, as well as more utilitarian complexes such as factories, power stations and transport infrastructure.

In this book you'll find a thorough covering of many of those buildings, photographed by Franco Pfaller. If you're looking for some inspiration on where to head off for your next urban landscape outing, this is a great place to start.



Walthamstow Stadium



Dylan, welder, goes hunting. Toyota. Wilson, North Carolina, USA

Homo Mobilis: People/ Vehicles/Identity by Martin Roemers

£50, Lannoo Publishers, Hardback, 192 pages, ISBN: 9789020992359



People tie up a huge amount of their identity in the vehicle that they drive. Whether a beat-up old banger or the latest shiny sports car, when we get behind the wheel, we project a bit of ourselves into the world.

This is the overriding idea behind the Homo Mobilis project by the photographer Martin Roemers. For the work, Martin travelled the world with a large white backdrop, a camera, and a question – ‘would you pose with your vehicle for me?’

The finished result is an astonishing collection of images which raise a number of questions, both on a small scale and more

pressing global matters.

For example, ‘what about the environmental impact of our addiction to oil and engines?’ but also ‘does your choice of vehicle express something about your identity?’

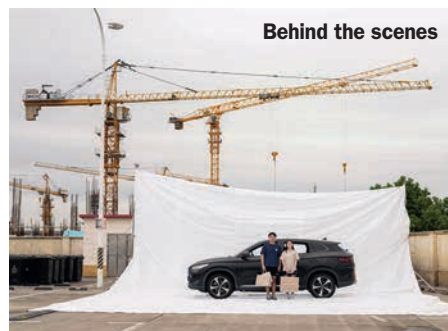
Beyond all that, the images simply are wonderful to look at, all but guaranteed to bring a smile to your face.

I was particularly taken with the behind-the-scenes images, which show how a project like this was carried out. It's clearly one with a huge amount of ambition and scale, and getting a glimpse into how it was done is really quite remarkable.

Now then, what do you think your own car says about you?



Sunny, chicken vendor. Bajaj. India



Behind the scenes



Clockwise from top left:
Washington, D.C., USA 1962
President John F. Kennedy in the Oval Office
USA 1990
Fashion shoot
Provence, France 1955
Provence, France 1959

Elliott Erwitt's Kolor

£55, teNeues, Hardback, 304 pages, ISBN: 9783961717477



Elliott Erwitt's Kolor, the new edition of an Erwitt classic, is a fresh compilation of the well-known photographer's colour work.

Drawn from an archive that consisted of nearly half a million Kodachrome slides, the 304 pages of this new volume reveal that the acclaimed photographer's

embracing of colour imagery was truly something remarkable.

There is a huge variety of different topics on display in the book, including world leaders, bustling marketplaces, and military camps, from an array of different locations, from Las Vegas to Venice, showing that Erwitt was no one-trick pony.

The thread that holds all of the work

together is a keen sense of humour, which is clearly fairly dry and at times even borders on the surreal or absurd.

If you're already a fan of Erwitt's work but haven't seen much of his colour output, this is a must-buy for your shelf. Personally, while I love his black & white stuff, I think this book, with its bold and vibrant slides, is much more joyful to behold.

The beauty of what remains



Close-up
Photographer
of the Year

The results of the CUPOTY CHALLENGE: Death & Decay, are in and everything from parasitic wasps to tree stumps and fishing spiders were put before the judges. The winner and a selection of finalists share their tips and techniques with competition co-founder **Tracy Calder**

Death and decay are natural states, and yet we rarely take the time to notice how these stages might contain moments of rare beauty. Our eyes are often drawn to flowers at their peak, polished paintwork and flawless fur, but the truly observant know that just as much beauty can be found in decomposing petals or insects wrapped in suffocating blankets of spider silk. Refusing to look away from moments of ageing,

fragility or decomposition can lead to powerful pictures that draw attention to our natural life cycle, urging us not to shy away from subjects that remind us of our transient nature.

For the latest CUPOTY CHALLENGE our subscribers chose Death and Decay as the theme. The callout was answered with photographs of parasitic wasps, tree stumps, wilting flowers and fishing spiders, among many other things.

Congratulations to Willem Kruger for taking the top spot with his emotive photograph of a hyena carrying its prey back to its den.

If you would like to stay up to date with the latest CUPOTY news, including details of this year's main competition, please sign up to the CUPOTY newsletter. To see the shortlisted and winning entries for the CUPOTY CHALLENGE: Death and Decay, visit www.cupoty.com.



© WILLEM KRUGER | CUPOTY.COM

Overall Winner **Willem Kruger** **Hyena Portrait Zebra**

Nationality: South African

Website: willemkruger.wordpress.com

'Early one morning during a game drive in Kruger National Park, South Africa, my wife and I came across three spotted hyenas walking along the road. One was carrying the head of a zebra, presumably from a nearby lion kill, and was heading straight towards us. We parked at the roadside as the hyena approached and then walked past our vehicle. We followed for a while, hoping it would lead us to the den. After a short distance, the hyena left the road and melted into the bush. In nature, almost nothing goes to waste – even hyenas have a family to feed, and they do so with remarkable commitment.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Go on early-morning game drives – the golden hour produces amazing light, and animals tend to be active during this time.
- 2 Know the behaviour of your subject. Understanding how an animal is likely to move allows you to anticipate the shot.
- 3 A long lens and window mount allowed me to photograph the hyena without disturbing its natural behaviour. Respecting wildlife must be your first priority.

Camera: Nikon Z6
Lens: Nikkor 600mm f/4 ED AF-S VR
ISO: 800
Aperture: f/4
Shutter speed: 1/2000sec



Camera: Canon EOS 6D
 Lens: Canon 70-200mm f/2.8L USM
 ISO: 200
 Aperture: f/6.3
 Shutter speed: 1/640sec

© JUAN JESUS GONZALEZ AHUMADA | CUPOTTY.COM

2nd Place Juan Jesus Gonzalez Ahumada True Love

Nationality: Spanish

Instagram: @jgahumada

'When the breeding season arrives, common toads congregate in ponds to mate. Often, several males court a single female, and sometimes she can die from suffocation,

unable to surface for air amidst the throng of males surrounding her. In this case, several males had courted the female unsuccessfully and when tragedy struck, they all abandoned the scene. Only he remained, embracing her body – his true love.'

TOP TIPS

1 Luck plays a large part in nature photography, but you have to be out there to get lucky. Visit breeding ponds regularly

during spring.

2 Take the time to observe before you shoot. Watching how animals behave helps you to anticipate moments and find the most compelling subjects.

3 Master the controls on your camera until operating it becomes second nature. When a fleeting moment presents itself, you need to react instantly.



© GAËL MODRAK | CUPOTTY.COM

3rd Place Gaël Modrak Dead Chick of the Pond

Nationality: French

Instagram: @oceanographismes

'We were diving in a pond near Paris, and I was searching for interesting subjects in this rather barren setting when I discovered the body of a waterfowl chick lying on the bottom. The scene, though macabre, inspired me. I used a wideangle lens to capture the sombre atmosphere, positioning myself to incorporate rays of light filtering down through the murky water, lending a mystical quality to the image. There's a strange beauty in finding something so small and still in such an unexpected place.'

TOP TIPS

1 Explore unusual underwater environments. Freshwater ponds, lakes and rivers can yield extraordinary subjects.

2 Beauty can be found everywhere, even in death and decay. Stay open to subjects that might seem to be unpromising at first glance.

3 Place your subject within a wider scene to tell a story and create atmosphere.

Camera: Nikon D300s
 Lens: Nikon 10.5mm fisheye
 ISO: 640
 Aperture: f/13
 Shutter speed: 1/60sec
 Accessories: Hugobol underwater housing, two Ikelite underwater strobes

Finalist G Ramaprasad The Fly Wing Trophy

Nationality: Indian

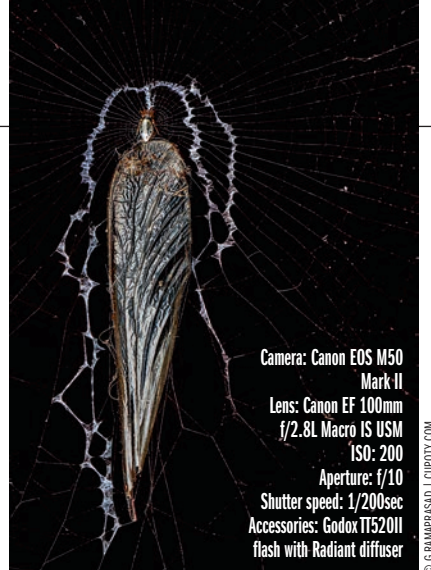
Instagram: @ramprasad.g_photography

'While searching for insects to photograph in my backyard in Honnavar, Karnataka, I came across a fascinating trashline orb weaver spider. These spiders have always captivated me with their intricate, uniquely designed webs. On this occasion, the spider had incorporated the delicate wing of a fly into its web, almost as if it were a trophy from a recent hunt. The scene felt like a natural work of art, showcasing

both beauty and predation in perfect harmony.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Mount your camera on a tripod. Trashline spiders are tiny and require high magnification, which makes keeping them in focus extremely difficult, with any movement amplified.
- 2 Use flash with a diffuser for even, balanced light on small subjects. Without flash, you'll struggle to get enough light at the small apertures required to maximise depth of field.
- 3 A shutter speed of 1/200 to 1/400sec (with flash) will render the background black, perfectly isolating the spider and its web against a dark canvas.



Camera: Canon EOS M50 Mark II
Lens: Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM
ISO: 200
Aperture: f/10
Shutter speed: 1/200sec
Accessories: Godox TT520II flash with Radiant diffuser

© G RAMAPRASAD | CUPOTY.COM

Finalist Juan Jesus Gonzalez Ahumada The Souls of the Swamp

Nationality: Spanish

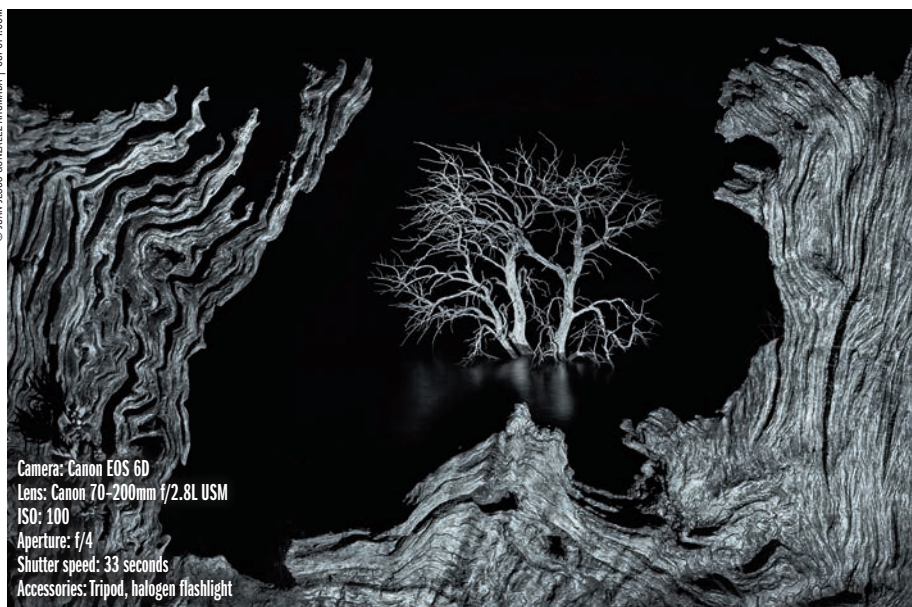
Instagram: @jgahumada

'On the edge of the Zahara de la Sierra reservoir in southern Spain, the remains of a fallen tree take on the appearance of a gnarled, talking face. Beyond it, standing in the dark water, another dead tree rises like a ghostly apparition – its counterpart on the shore seemingly praying for its soul. To capture this image, I employed a complex in-camera technique, combining two focal lengths in a single long exposure. Working on a completely dark night with no moon or light pollution, I began at 70mm, using a halogen flashlight to illuminate the foreground wood. Then, in total darkness, I zoomed to 200mm and lit the distant tree for a few seconds, giving it greater prominence in the frame.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Master the technique before you go out. Combining focal lengths in a single exposure requires practice.

© JUAN JESUS GONZALEZ AHUMADA | CUPOTY.COM



Camera: Canon EOS 6D
Lens: Canon 70-200mm f/2.8L USM
ISO: 100
Aperture: f/4
Shutter speed: 33 seconds
Accessories: Tripod, halogen flashlight

- 2 Plan around the lunar cycle. A moonless night with no light pollution is essential for this kind of work – check the phase and weather forecast before heading out.

- 3 Let your imagination guide you. Look for shapes, faces and narratives in natural forms – a gnarled stump can become a character in a story if you frame it with intention.

Finalist Alex Pansier A Warning from the Wild

Nationality: Dutch

Website: alexpansier.com, Instagram: @alexpansier

'I was photographing the structures and textures of old fishing nets in Iceland when I noticed a crow's foot emerging from the tangled ropes. At first glance, the scene appeared as an abstract composition of lines and patterns, but the dark claw revealed a more unsettling detail. The contrast between the sharp black foot and the pale woven nets transforms the image from a study of texture into a subtle reminder of how wildlife and human activity intersect in unexpected ways.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Look closely at textures and patterns. Strong stories are often hidden in small details that are easy to walk past.
- 2 Explore man-made environments near nature. They can reveal unexpected and powerful interactions between wildlife and human objects.
- 3 Keep the composition simple so that one key element draws the viewer's attention. In this case, the single dark claw against the pale nets says everything.

Camera: Sony A1
Lens: Sony FE 24-70mm f/4
ISO: 5000
Aperture: f/14
Shutter speed: 1/400sec

© ALEX PANSIER | CUPOTY.COM



Finalist Emanuele Biggi Eyed Food

Nationality: Italian

Website: anura.it, Instagram: @emanuele_biggi

'I was photographing tadpoles and froglets around a shallow stream pool on the island of Nosy Komba, Madagascar, when I caught a rapid movement out of the corner of my eye. I turned to see this large fishing spider (Nilus sp.) clutching a freshly caught froglet. I began shooting this tiny but dramatic scene of predation in the middle of the Malagasy forest. The spider fed from the back of its prey, so the lifeless eye of the froglet remained visible almost to the end of the feast.'



© EMANUELE BIGGI | CUPOTY.COM

Camera: Nikon Z8
Lens: Nikon Z 50mm Macro
ISO: 64
Aperture: f/22
Shutter speed: 1/100sec
Accessories: Flash with custom diffuser

TOP TIPS

1 Stay focused on what you're doing, but be aware of what's happening around you. This photograph only happened because I saw a

flicker of movement in my peripheral vision.

2 Follow the action and be patient. Stay with your subject long enough to find the best angle.

3 Use a large diffuser with bounced flash. It makes all the difference on tiny, shiny subjects like spiders – you get soft, even light instead of harsh specular highlights.



© DAVID SILSBEE | CUPOTY.COM

Camera: Canon EOS R5
Lens: Canon 24-70mm
ISO: 1600
Aperture: f/11
Shutter speed: 1/80sec

Finalist David Silsbee The Grip of Winter

Nationality: American

'Walking along a river on a cold January morning in Connecticut, I had planned to photograph the icy water. Instead, my attention was drawn to swirling patterns of ice in woodland pools away from the river. The ice was unsupported in places where the

water had receded and was extremely fragile – I couldn't step on the edge or even slide a tripod out without it cracking or collapsing. The challenge was to lean out as far as I could over the ice to photograph it from above without breaking anything. I couldn't compose carefully in that awkward position, so I shot wider and cropped afterwards.'

TOP TIPS

1 Go out regardless of the weather. A cold,

grey January morning might not sound promising, but such conditions can deliver interesting subjects.

2 Keep your eyes open and don't fixate on what you think you're looking for. I went out to photograph a river and came home with a picture of a leaf in a pool of water.

3 If you can't get into the perfect position, shoot wider than you need to and crop later.

Finalist Jacek Hensoldt Parasite

Nationality: German

Website: macrobyphotojack.de,

Instagram: @macro_by_photojack

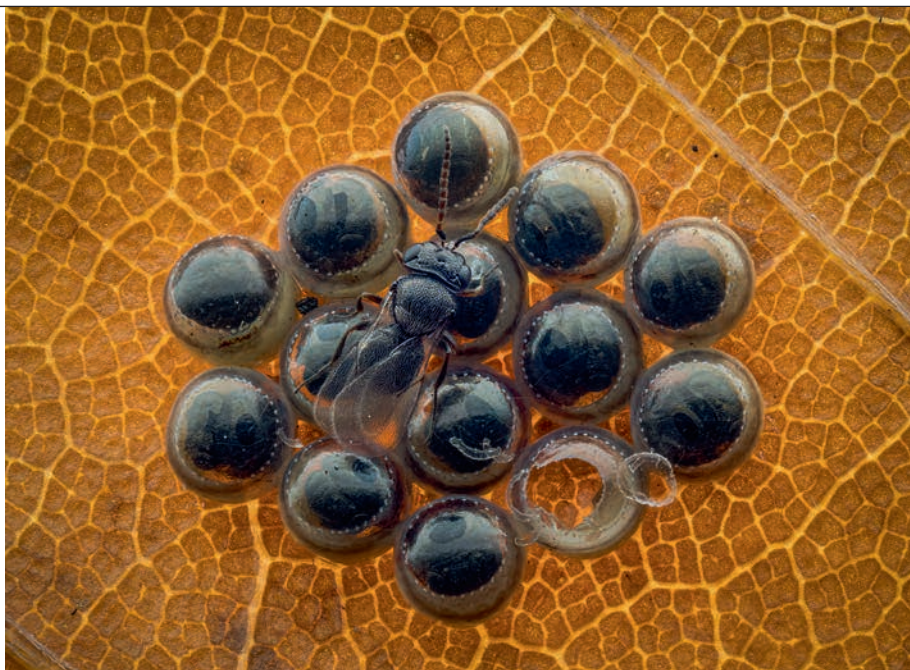
'This is a cluster of shield bug eggs parasitised by the wasp *Trissolcus semistriatus*. The females lay their eggs inside the host eggs, where the larvae feed on the contents – the death of one becoming the prerequisite for the life of another. Through the translucent eggshells, the tiny heads of the developing wasps are already visible; in some, you can even distinguish compound eyes and antennae. One adult has already emerged but seemed in no hurry to leave without its siblings, which allowed me to photograph the scene at a relaxed pace. The adult wasps are only 0.9-1.3mm long and completely harmless to humans. What fascinates me most is how symmetrically the eggs are arranged. The final image is a focus stack of 32 frames merged in Helicon Focus.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Slow down, observe and be patient. Rather than frantically searching for subjects, let them reveal themselves to you.
- 2 Interesting subjects can be found almost

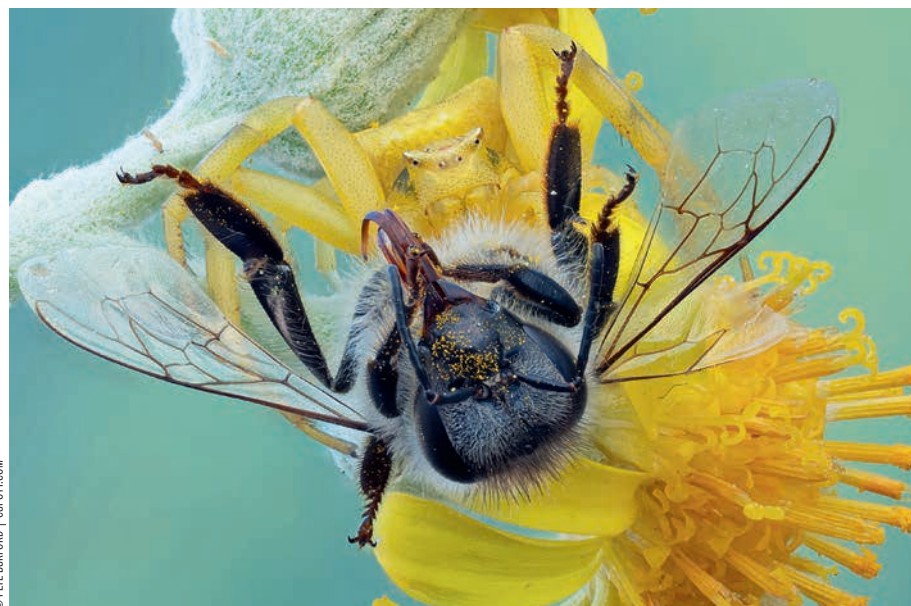
everywhere, often right outside your front door. I found these parasitised eggs in my garden in Solingen, Germany.

- 3 Stay curious and take time to learn about your subjects. Understanding the biology behind what you're photographing helps you to tell a richer story.



© JACEK HENSOLDT | CUPOTY.COM

Camera: Olympus OM-D E-M1 Mark III
Lens: M.Zuiko Digital ED 90mm f/3.5 Macro IS + MC-20 2x teleconverter
ISO: 200
Aperture: f/13
Shutter speed: 1/50sec
Accessories: Godox V860III flash with diffuser



© PETE BURFORD | CUPOTY.COM

Finalist Pete Burford Bee Meal

Nationality: British

Instagram: @pbmacro

'Near the beach by my hotel in Crete, I discovered a cluster of flowers inhabited by several flower crab spiders (*Thomisus*

onustus). These spiders can change colour to match their surroundings, and bees were constantly visiting the flowers for nectar, giving the spiders the perfect opportunity to ambush any that ventured too close. When I found this particular spider feeding on a bee, I wanted to capture the moment from the bee's point of view as most crab spider predation shots focus on the spider, not the

Camera: OM System OM-D E-M1 Mark II
Lens: OM System 60mm Macro
ISO: 200
Aperture: f/5.6
Shutter speed: 1/200sec
Accessories: Godox V3500 flash with Cygnustech diffuser, background card

prey. Because both spider and bee were hanging downward, I flipped out my LCD screen and positioned the camera directly underneath, shooting upward to frame the bee head-on. The Cretan sunlight was so intense it blew out the background completely, so I used a card behind the flower to control the backdrop. Focus stacking was challenging in the sea breeze, and I had to time each burst carefully between gusts.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Change your shooting angle. Getting underneath this spider and bee gave a completely different perspective from the usual top-down macro shot.
- 2 Cover your subject with your own shadow to block direct sunlight, then light it with flash and a diffuser. This gives you far more control than fighting harsh natural light.
- 3 Be patient and wait for the subject to settle into the perfect position before starting a focus stack.

Finalist Ken Bluma Marionette Serenade

Nationality: American
Instagram: @kbmacroart

'While exploring my local state park in Illinois, I noticed a small object hanging in the vegetation at the edge of the trail. After a closer look, I could see it was an acorn weevil, or rather what remained of one. Looking through the macro lens revealed it had died some time ago and all that was left was its hollowed-out exoskeleton, suspended on a strand of silk. The scene slightly resembled a string puppet performance,

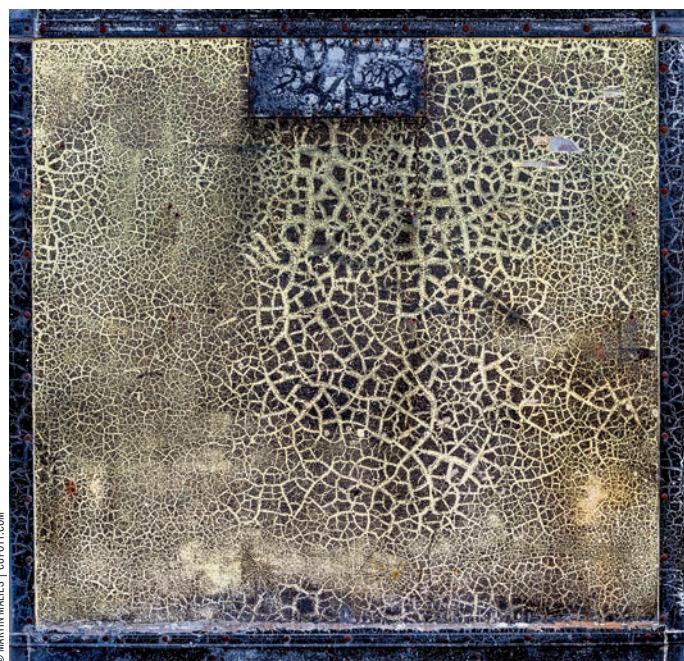
the tiny body twirling gently in the breeze. I kept my lighting low, which I felt matched the sombre mood of the picture.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Explore, explore, explore. The best macro subjects are often things you stumble upon rather than things you set out to find.
- 2 Experiment with lighting. It's probably the most important element in macro photography and can transform the mood of an image.
- 3 Check old, abandoned spider webs for interesting objects left behind. Webs are natural collectors of tiny treasures that most people walk straight past.

Camera: Olympus OM-D
E-M1 Mark III
Lens: M.Zuiko 60mm Macro
ISO: 200
Aperture: f/10
Shutter speed: 1/160sec
Accessories: Godox V350
flash with Cygnustech
diffuser

© KEN BLUMA | CUPOTY.COM



© MARTIN MALIES | CUPOTY.COM

Finalist Martin Malies Crazed Paint

Nationality: British

'This is part of an abandoned shipping container on Dungeness Beach, Kent. I was fascinated by the chaotic, abstract patterns of the dilapidated paintwork, which were conveniently and very effectively framed by the dark metal edges of the container. The cracked and peeling surface had taken on a life of its own, with layers of colour and texture that felt more like an abstract expressionist painting than the side of a rusting box.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Devote plenty of time to exploring and experimenting with all the potential photographic opportunities a location offers. Don't rush to take the obvious shot.
- 2 Photograph in soft, overcast lighting to maximise detail and preserve natural colour saturation.
- 3 Use a tripod and cable release, as this will slow down the process, and encourage more considered compositions.

Camera: Nikon D750; Lens: Nikkor 70-200mm f/4G; ISO: 100; Aperture: f/8; Shutter speed: 1/125sec

Finalist Jason Gilbody Feathers in the Wind

Nationality: American
Instagram: @jgwildphoto

'This American kestrel and its family reside in a cemetery in Massachusetts. It habitually hides its prey in the flowerpots placed at the gravestones. On this occasion, the kestrel pulled a sparrow from one of those pots and brought it to a nearby gravestone to feed. It was a windy day, so as it plucked the sparrow, the feathers floated away in the breeze, a fleeting, almost poetic scene set against the stillness of the cemetery.'

TOP TIPS

- 1 Be patient and don't rush in on your subject, let it come to you. This kestrel was accustomed to its routine, and waiting quietly allowed me to capture a natural moment.
- 2 Regular visits to the same location build familiarity. I knew this kestrel's routine of stashing prey in flowerpots, which meant I could anticipate the action.
- 3 With natural light and a fast-moving bird, there's no time to adjust, so get your position right from the start.

© JASON GILBODY | CUPOTY.COM



Camera: Canon EOS R5; Lens: Canon EF 600mm f/4L IS II USM; ISO: 320; Aperture: f/4; Shutter speed: 1/4000sec

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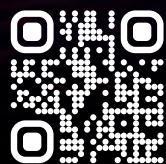
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Analogue in the age of digital

What is the state of analogue photography in our increasingly digital world?

John Gilbey takes a look around and presents his findings

The advert for this year's Photography and Video Show got me thinking. When did I last go to a major photo show? After some head-scratching I deduced that it must have been 2008 – a worryingly long time ago.

Looking back, that world now

seems oddly alien. Smartphones were few and far between, and still a long way from supplanting dedicated cameras for casual snappers. Film itself was still popular, and I'd taken advantage of the show offers to fill my bag with supplies. According to my diary, I paid £2 for 36-exposure rolls of Ilford XP2 Super

Above: The Photo and Video Show, held at the NEC in Birmingham in the middle of March, was a major event

Below: I had plenty of company at the show

– and I bought quite a lot. Please stop whimpering at the back...

In 2008 I'd gone to look at the latest DSLR offerings, but today I'm more interested in seeing how the analogue photography market is holding out against the flood-tide of digital technology.

So with this as my historical perspective, and after a seriously good Birmingham breakfast, I presented myself at Hall 5 of the National Exhibition Centre recently just before the show opened for the day. I had a lot of company. While there were a lot of people who looked like me – male, old, bearded, backpack, sensible shoes – there was a much better balance of folk represented than at previous shows I've been to.

New 35mm cameras

My first call was at the Ricoh Imaging stand, where their half-frame Pentax 17 35mm camera was gathering a lot of interest.





into my hands. With a solid and precise build quality plus some cutting-edge technology – a LiDAR module for the autofocus – this camera immediately impressed me. Given the good selection of auto and manual functions I can see a role for this as a first film camera that you won't grow out of quickly. The price is close to the Pentax at £449, but it buys you a lot of versatility.

New directions

New, more specialist, cameras were also on offer, as I found when I stopped to chat with Dave Faulkner of Alfie Cameras.

'We're a UK-based camera manufacturer. We developed our first camera, the Alfie TYCH, three years ago which we've been selling ever since – it's a half-frame 35mm film camera. Our new camera at the show, the first prototype, is the Alfie BOXX – a very traditional 6x9cm film camera. It has develop-in-the-film-back with wet chemistry and we're promoting it with a black & white reversal process. So you take your image on black & white film or paper, and develop it in front of your eyes. It's our own film back that we've developed, it's magnetically connected together so that it's really easy to put your photographic paper in there. Then we have a syringe port so you can connect a syringe of chemistry to go through your process steps.'

Intriguing stuff, and definitely one to look at more closely. Immediately adjacent to Alfie Cameras, James

➤ I tried it on for size, and found it neat, snug in the hands and a good fit for street photography. The portrait format of the frame seems ideally suited to those young social media folk who are used to this orientation, but for the money – a shade under £500 – I was personally hoping for a bit more sophistication, especially some focusing assistance. Still, it has some interesting creative modes, and will be economical to run at 72 frames per 36-exposure film.

I found an interesting competitor to the Pentax 17 when AP's own Andy Westlake introduced me to some people from Lomography, who immediately thrust their new 35mm full-frame offering, the Lomo MC-A,



Above: Roni from Ricoh Imaging demonstrating the Pentax 17

Below left: The diminutive and extremely well-featured Lomo MC-A

Right: Dave Faulkner of Alfie Cameras showing off his latest BOXX design



Lane of Zone Imaging was offering a new, and refreshing, take on film processing.

'Our chemicals are environmentally friendly and give very different results than older film developers, and we are actively researching into new chemicals with a dedicated R&D team.

'We focus on reliability and consistency so all our liquid products are multi-year shelf life and our flagship developer gives the finest grain and longest tonality than any other developer on the market, yet retaining full film speed and high acutance. People tend not to believe this until they try it out!'

I made a mental note to test their offerings when time allows.

Refurbished and second-hand

A number of companies had solid displays of second-hand and refurbished film cameras, which were on occasion quite a struggle to get close to – such was the interest from the show-goers. I managed to grab a word with Joshua Richardson of JFR Film about his wares.

'We're a vintage camera shop specialising in repairing and refurbishing cameras from the 1950s up to the early 2000s.' He had a fine selection of that 1970s classic the original Olympus Trip for sale, nicely updated with coloured leatherette. 'They're our most popular camera. We fully strip them down, repair them and then personalise however you like.' So who buys them? 'It's a real mix, I think. These are really popular with the younger generation, perhaps people who didn't shoot film initially when they were younger. People seem to love them!'





Left: JFR Film and some of their refurbished classics

Right: Ilford's Michelle Parr presenting on the Analogue Stage

Below: Harry Oliver and friend on the Orwo stand

Bottom left: Jack Bramley of Ag Photolab

Bottom right: Richard Perry of Paterson Photographic



Finding film

Happily, I was able to find plenty of stands selling film, and while I was replenishing my stocks I enquired how things were going.

Michelle Parr from Ilford Photo was enthusiastic: 'What's really exciting is the range of people we're seeing. We see some faces every single year, which is brilliant. But we are seeing students, people who are a bit older, their kids have grown and

left home, and they're coming back to us and setting up darkrooms in what was the kids' bedroom! So it's really exciting.

'Ilford is known for black & white, and that is something we are always going to do. We launched the Harman colour films in 2023, and last year we brought out four – and there's definitely more to come. Phoenix was the first new colour film in 20 years, and the community have really got behind the whole colour journey.'

Harry Oliver from Orwo had a similar story. 'It's just amazing to see the interest and people's engagement with the film world still. I've been running the social media for Orwo and people are really getting engaged and talking about them processing themselves and it's just exciting to see that the craft is still alive.'

many people have come to see us and have wanted to try using us as a film processing lab. Especially in the last couple of days, we've had a lot of students and young people coming in and saying "I want to start shooting film", then asking for advice and a way into it. It's been really nice. The best story so far, there was a lovely lady who came to us and said that we had processed a film for her that she'd found in her great-aunt's camera. It was 50 years old and it was pictures of her great-aunt at 20... We processed that film and it made my week!"

Paterson Photographic, long-term purveyors of traditional darkroom equipment such as enlargers, developing tanks and trays, had a wide range of products on display. I talked to director Richard Perry about the current state of film processing technology.

'Well, up until about ten years ago things were on a serious decline, and then we noticed a younger demographic getting involved. They'd never seen it before, didn't understand it and wanted to play with it. Schools and colleges asked us to quote for darkrooms



Labs and home darkrooms

When you shoot film, you need to process it – or have it processed for you. Jack Bramley of Ag Photolab talked to me about his experience at the show. 'My first impression is that analogue is booming. I'm really quite taken aback this year by how





➤ to go back in. That started just before Covid, then when Covid came along people were looking for a hobby because they'd got nowhere else to go. Since the pandemic it has plateaued out a little bit, but it has stayed a good 30% higher than it was prior. It's a nice niche business – we sell worldwide, Australia, Canada, USA, Japan, China even.'

Teaching and demonstrating

If you are looking for training, Rachel Brewster-Wright of Little Vintage Photography helps folk learn film skills and guide their journey into analogue photography. 'I set up my business during the digital tsunami, and I've always wanted to get back to something tactile, practical, hands-on, craft-based. I set up one of the first female-run darkrooms in the UK, and I've basically been teaching people how to shoot with film, how to process by hand, how to print in the darkroom for 12 years now – and it's never lost its magic. I've only seen it grow, really.

'I have my darkroom based in Liverpool, but I travel all over the country, all over the world when needed. I create ready-coated cyanotype kits, I work with anything from the mid 1800s through to early 2000s in terms of process, I just absolutely love the magic of darkroom. It's been incredible, especially since the pandemic when people found a camera at the back of

the cupboard and wanted to get back to that offline kind of world.'

Perhaps the crowning glory of the show was the astonishing, shed-sized, walk-in camera obscura and darkroom operated by Brendan Barry. With this monumental camera, a large format Nikkor lens and a set of powerful studio flashes, he captured huge wet-chemistry paper negative portraits of fascinated punters. The line never seemed to get shorter, and he was clearly worked off his feet. It formed a real statement piece, and a great talking point for analogue photography.

Absent friends

Perhaps surprisingly, Leica didn't have a presence at the show. Nonetheless, I thought it was important to get an impression of the state of analogue photography, and its future, from the company that defines an important part of it. Stefan Daniel, Executive Vice President of Technology and Operations at Leica Camera AG, answered my request for comments. I asked him, after 100 years of Leica 35mm cameras, how do you see the future of film?

'Film photography remains a niche, but it has evolved significantly in recent years. We see a growing number of photographers – especially younger generations – rediscovering film as a way to slow down and engage more consciously with the image-making process. For Leica, film is part of our DNA, and we are confident it will continue to exist alongside digital as a complementary medium, valued for its authenticity and distinctive aesthetic. The response to Leica

Left: Rachel Brewster Wright of Little Vintage Photography

Below: Brendan Barry's camera obscura

Monopan 50 during last year's centenary celebrations has been extremely encouraging – perhaps even one of the biggest surprises. It clearly demonstrates a strong and growing interest in high-quality black & white film. Feedback from photographers worldwide has been consistently positive, both in terms of rendering and overall experience. For us, Monopan 50 was not just a product launch but a clear statement of commitment to the analogue photography community. We see film as part of a broader ecosystem rather than a one-off initiative.'

Summary

On the train back to town, and the promise of a pie and a pint, I thought back over the comments I'd heard during the day. Certain words and phrases had kept coming up in conversation: Community, collaboration, engagement, craft-based, hands-on, skill, cooperation, ecosystem... All highly positive sentiments that show distinct promise.

Clearly, there is a strong, enduring interest in analogue photography in the UK, one which is bolstered by a new cohort of film photographers with youth and a wealth of new ideas on their side. I came away vastly encouraged by what I'd seen and heard – and looking forward to the next round of developments in this field. Analogue photography will probably remain a niche market, but is one where the enthusiastic smaller players can make a big difference.

AP

John Gilbey is a writer and photographer based in west Wales





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EOS 400D Body Only

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EOS 450D Body Only

EOS 550D Body Only

EOS 550D Body Only

EOS 5D Body Only

EOS 5D IV Body Only

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35GT + FC35 Flash

MB Touring

Nikon Lite Touch Zoom 70W

Olympus 35RC Rangefinder

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FILM STARS

Made in Ilford (almost)

The name is familiar on films, but what do you know about their cameras? **John Wade** investigates

Mention the name Ilford and you think of film and printing papers. In those fields, Ilford once stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Kodak. But the Ilford name also appeared on a small but select range of

cameras, renowned among professionals and amateurs alike.

Ilford, however, didn't make the cameras. Some were straightforward rebadged versions of other companies' products. Several were commissioned by Ilford from outside

designers, then built by independent engineering companies. But whatever their origins, the Ilford name on a camera offered guaranteed quality, regular innovation and inevitable ease of use. Here's a selection of the company's best-known cameras.

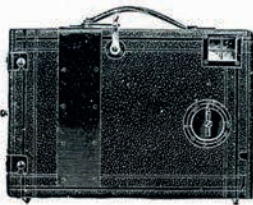
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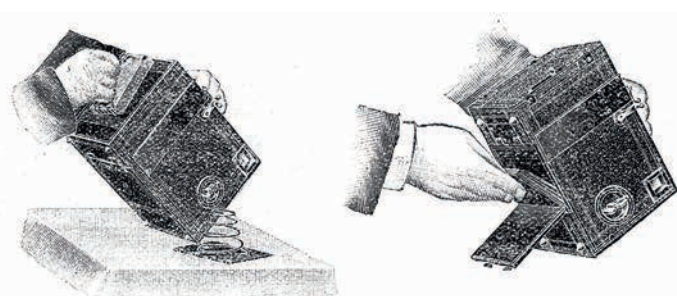
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From the British Journal of Photography Almanac for 1902:
How the Magazine Camera was loaded (left) and unloaded

The Ilford Magazine Hand Camera

Alfred Harman was an English photography pioneer who began making photographic dry plates in 1879 at his Britannia Works Company in Ilford, then a village in Essex, these days part of a Greater London Borough. Then, in 1899, Harman took on a camera offered to him by its designers and patentees, Arthur Charles Smith and Albert Arthur Smith. He called it the Ilford Magazine Hand Camera, it was made in Germany and it went on sale in 1902. Which was when Harman changed the company name to Ilford Ltd.

The camera was box shaped, and took 40 sheets of quarter plate size (4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in) cut film at a single loading, which needed to be loaded and unloaded in a darkroom. Like similar so-called magazine cameras of around this time, an internal mechanism, operated from outside the body, allowed individual sheets of film to be moved and stored after exposure as a new piece of film was positioned ready for the next picture. The camera was sold with either a Bausch & Lomb or a better quality Ross Anastigmat lens.

ORIGINAL COST: £5 or £8 8s (£8.40) according to the lens.

VALUE NOW: £60-100

A 1902 advertisement for the Ilford Magazine Hand Camera

Ilford Witness

Before World War II, Britain had never made a 35mm camera. Following the war, Ilford stepped up to be the first. The camera was designed by two Jewish refugees from Germany, Robert Sternberg and Werner Julius Rothchild, who had previously worked for Leitz and Zeiss Ikon respectively. Their camera adopted and combined the best features from their previous employers' designs. It was called the Ilford Witness.

The Witness was a coincident image, coupled rangefinder camera with an extra-long rangefinder base for more accurate focusing. The body was sleekly designed, with a dust cover that slid into place over the accessory shoe flush with the top plate when not in use. A combination of screw and bayonet lens mount was taken from Leica and Contax designs. The screw part of the mount used a 39mm thread so that it accepted Leica lenses, but three slots cut into the thread meant that Witness lenses could be removed and attached quickly with a bayonet movement. The focal plane shutter was speeded 1-1/1,000sec, the slow speeds from 1/25sec down operated by a separate control on the front of the body, similar to the Leica.

Camera production was initially carried out at Rothchild's own company, Northern Scientific Equipment Ltd in Lancashire, where the camera's first lens, a 5cm f/2.9 Daron, was also produced. Once production got going, manufacture was shifted to Peto Scott Electrical Instruments, a television and radio maker in Surrey, and the lens was changed to a 2in f/1.9 Dallmeyer Super-Six.

Although designed in 1947, it was 1951 before a working prototype was produced and the camera didn't hit the market until 1953. Less than 350 were made and, even before it first appeared, Ilford had turned its attention to a more practical and less complicated 35mm camera designed to appeal to a larger, and less sophisticated, audience.

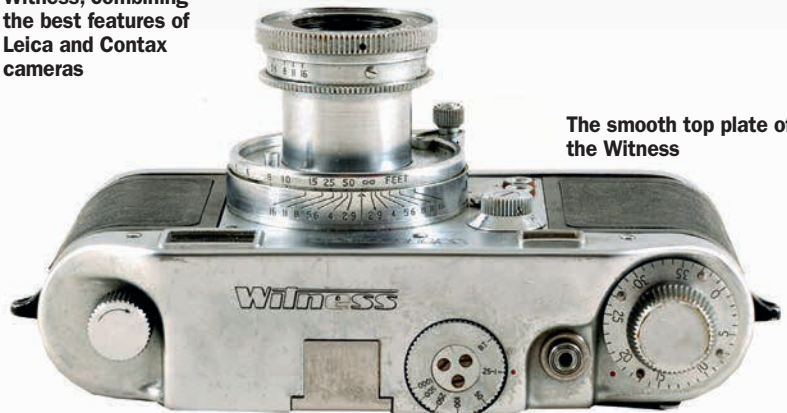
ORIGINAL COST: £121 16s 8d (about £121.83)

VALUE NOW: £4,000-10,000, depending on condition and lens



COURTESY OF TIM GOLDSMITH

Above: The Ilford Witness, combining the best features of Leica and Contax cameras



COURTESY OF TIM GOLDSMITH

The smooth top plate of the Witness



COURTESY OF TIM GOLDSMITH

A screw and bayonet lens mount were combined in the Witness



The second version of the Advocate equipped with a Wray Lustrar lens

Ilford Advocate and variants

Although designed after the Witness, the Advocate reached the market four years before in 1949, making it the first British 35mm camera. It was made, under contract from Ilford, by Kennedy Instruments whose works were at Balham in south London.

This was a 35mm camera with a die-cast aluminium silicon body in an attractive ivory colour. The first model used a Dallmeyer f/4.5 lens, but when the Advocate II was launched with a synchronised shutter in 1953, some now rarer models were equipped with Wray Lustrar f/3.5 lenses. Rarest of all is the Advocate with an f/3.5 Ross lens. Apart from these differences, the basic specification of all Advocate models is much the same. Lenses were of 35mm focal lengths, which gave a wide-angle, rather than a standard view on 35mm film. When, at the end of shooting a 35mm cassette the film needed to be rewound the mechanism was freed, not by pressing the usual button on the



How the Advocate was adapted for use as a microscope camera

© WWW.PETERLOV.COM



The Advocate adapted as an oscilloscope camera



Ilford Craftsman

In the same year that the Advocate was launched, Ilford also introduced the nearest it would get to a twin lens reflex (TLR). Although looking a lot like a true TLR, the taking and viewing lenses were not linked for focusing, the upper one being there merely to reflect its image to a bright lens-type viewfinder under a hood on top of the body. The lower lens focused down to 4ft and offered only two apertures of f/9 and f/18. Shutter speeds were limited to 1/25sec and 1/75sec.

Despite its meagre specification, the Craftsman was a handsome camera, made of shock-resistant plastic grained to look like leather and with an attractive art deco styled metal faceplate. It accepted both 120 and 620 size roll films to produce 12 6x6cm pictures. Evidence suggests that this camera was actually made by Ilford.

ORIGINAL COST: £7 10s 6d (£7.52½)

VALUE NOW: £20-30

base of the body, but by depressing the film wind knob. The shutter, speeded 1/25–1/200sec, was released by an unusually-placed lever at the front of the top plate, and the cable release connection was in an equally unusual position at the base of the front of the body to one side of the lens.

The Advocate was also adapted by other manufacturers to make specialised models. Among these, the London firm of RJ Beck took the body, removed the lens and replaced it with a threaded mount that accepted a microscope adapter. This contained its own shutter and a beam splitter that directed light to the film as well as to a periscope type reflex viewfinder. Another variation, this time made by Kennedy Instruments, used a huge and very fast Wray f/1 lens, made to fit to, and photograph the screen of, an oscilloscope. Full frame and half frame versions were produced. A very few now super-rare Advocates with all-black bodies were also made by Kennedy Instruments employees for their own use. Kennedy Instruments became a wholly owned subsidiary of Ilford Ltd in 1958.

ORIGINAL COST: £26 17s 6d (£26.87½)

VALUE NOW: £150-250 – more with Wray lens



© DAVID GARDNER

The Ilford Craftsman was a pseudo twin lens reflex

Ilford Sportsman and Sportsmaster

Back in the 1950s, many first-time amateur photographers aspired to owning an Ilford Sportsman because, unlike the snapshot models that had probably whetted their early appetites for photography, the Sportsman looked and behaved like a 'proper' camera. There was a range of models made for Ilford by Dacora in Germany, all rebadged versions of that company's Dignette cameras.

The original Sportsman, launched in 1957, used a Dignar 45mm f/3.5 lens that focused down to 3.3ft (an imperial translation of the Dignar's metric 1m), a shutter synchronised for flash with speeds of 1/50-1/200sec and a simple direct vision viewfinder. In the years ahead, the Sportsman's specification was improved in a range of models that added coupled rangefinders before building in Selenium cell meters with match needle metering.

ORIGINAL COST (first model): £13 17s 4d (about £17.87)

VALUE NOW: £10-25 (depending on model)

In 1961, the Sportsmaster arrived. As well as a coupled rangefinder and built-in meter, the Sportsmaster's curious feature was having four shutter release buttons coupled to the lens's focusing mechanism.

At the moment of exposure, each button selected an appropriate focusing distance for different subjects: landscapes, infinity; groups, 13ft; full length portraits, 8ft; and head and shoulders portraits, 5ft.

ORIGINAL COST: £28 9s 8d (about £29.48)

VALUE NOW: £10-20



Above: The rangefinder version of the Ilford Sportsman



Left: The Sportsmaster with its unusual four shutter releases

The Ilford Envoy was a simple snapshot-type camera



Envoy cameras

Envoy cameras were made by Photo Developments Ltd in Birmingham. Introduced in 1953, the Ilford Envoy was made of Bakelite in a kind of streamlined box camera style to take 120 or 620 size roll film. The shutter speed and aperture were both fixed and the only form of control was the focusing with instructions around the lens that stated, 'Views, push in - portraits, pull out.' In other words, pulling the lens out a little way from the body allowed focus down to 4ft, while leaving it pushed in gave focus to infinity. It shot eight pictures 6x9cm.

ORIGINAL COST: £1 19s 9d (about £1.99)

VALUE NOW: £5-10



The Envoy Wide-Angle took wider-than-normal pictures on 120 roll film or cut film

The other camera from Photo Developments was the Envoy Wide-Angle, made in 1950. Although never identified as an Ilford camera, it was sold by the company and listed in its catalogues.

Based on the principle of putting a much wider than normal focal length lens on a roll film camera, the Envoy Wide-Angle produced pictures with an 82° angle of view. The lens was an Envoy 64mm f/6.5 and, on the basic model, shutter speeds were from 1/25-1/125sec. Two other models were available with better specified shutters. The camera took eight 6x9cm pictures on 120 size film, but had a special back for cut film. The viewfinder was no more than a wire frame, but incorporated parallax adjustment on the rear sight.

ORIGINAL COST (basic model): £33 4s 9d (about £33.24)

VALUE NOW: £40-60

➤ Ilford Monorail cameras

Now we enter the world of professional photography and monorail cameras. The monorail is possibly the simplest type of camera design, consisting of no more than a lens and shutter mounted on a front panel, linked by bellows to a film holder on a rear panel. The front and back panels move back and forth for focusing along a rail onto which they are locked into position. In some models the front and back panels can also slide and twist in ways that give the camera movements like rise, fall, shift, swing and tilt. Movements like these are used to manipulate specialised aspects of the image. In architectural photography, for example, shifting the lens vertically can help to record a tall building in its entirety without tilting the camera; in other scientific applications, camera movements might be used to bring multiple planes within a scene into simultaneous focus. (For those seeking a fuller explanation of such movements, try Googling 'the Scheimpflug principle'.)

Traditionally such cameras were made for large format work, and the one advertised and sold by Ilford in 1953 was typical of the type, using 5x4in glass plates or sheet film. It was made for Ilford by the English engineering company Photographic Instrument Manufacturers (PIM) and was capable of required movements on both the front and back panels. Apart from the lens panel and locking knobs, the camera was built from an aluminium alloy that made it lighter and easier to use than some other monorail cameras.

ORIGINAL COST: £53.

VALUE NOW: £112 (recent auction sale).

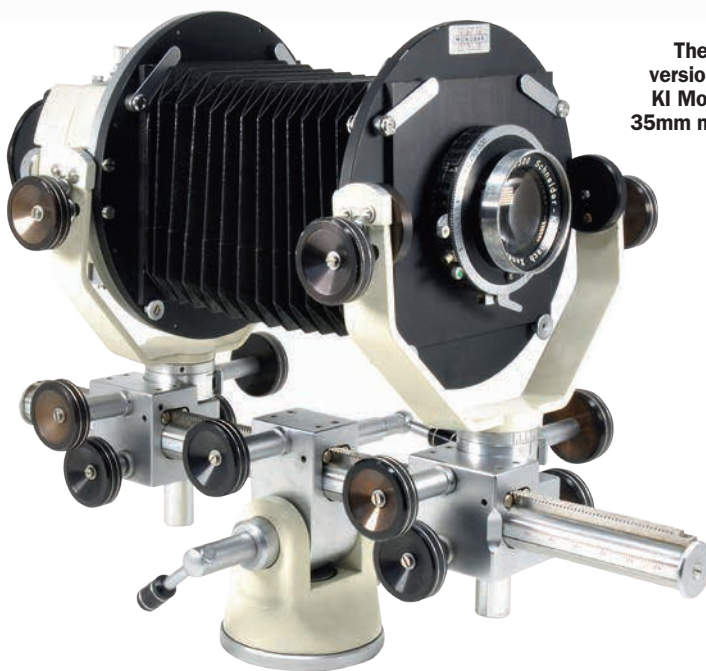
About this time, 35mm film was beginning to make headway in the professional world, particularly in the light of the quality that came with Kodachrome, unavailable in medium or larger formats. The problem was that monorail cameras invariably used large format film, and even if they were equipped with a roll film back it invariably took 120 size film for medium format images. So if work demanded the use of full camera movements, photographers were stuck with unwieldy monorail cameras and their attendant medium or large format films. What was needed was a small monorail camera made exclusively for 35mm. Enter the Ilford KI Monobar in 1954, designed by two medical photographers, Charles Engel and Dr Peter Hansell, and beautifully engineered for Ilford by Kennedy Instruments. Two models of the Monobar were sold.

The first model, termed the Type U, held the front and back panels that supported the lens and film holder in U-shaped clamps made in a cream stove-enamelled finish similar to that of the Advocate camera body. A series of complicated knobs freed or locked the two panels in the required positions. Both allowed rise and fall over a range of 75mm, plus horizontal and vertical tilt or swing through 30°, calibrated in 10° and 5° increments. The two panels could be moved independently of each other along the rail, or locked together and moved simultaneously. At the front end, several lenses were available, but the camera was principally seen with Dallmeyer or Schneider lenses in Synchro Compur shutters speeded 1-1/500sec. The lens to film distance could be adjusted from 5cm to 27cm, catering for every type of subject from infinity-



COURTESY OF FLINT'S AUCTIONEERS

The Monorail camera made for Ilford by Photographic Instrument Manufacturers



The Type U version of the KI Monobar a 35mm monorail camera



The magnifier that covered the focusing screen at the rear of the Monobar (left) and, with the focusing screen plus magnifier withdrawn, the film holder dropped in place

focused landscapes down to extremely close macrophotography.

At the back end, a small, 24x36mm ground-glass screen covered by a magnifier was used to focus the image. When ready, the magnifier and screen were slid backwards along their own rail and a film back pre-loaded with 35mm was slotted into the film plane. A thumbwheel in the film back slid a mask in front of the film to prevent fogging when camera and back were separated and moved aside when the back was mounted on the camera. The rear panel with film back rotated through 90° for horizontal or vertical subjects. Accessories included a right-angle viewfinder attachment, bag-type bellows and a bulk film holder for loading up to 100ft of 35mm film.

ORIGINAL COST with Dallmeyer 2in f/3.5 lens: £209

VALUE NOW: £300-400



How the camera movements could be adjusted for specialised photography

The second model of the Monobar, introduced in 1958, was termed the Type F. This was very similar in style to the Type U, involving the familiar front and back panels to hold the lens and film. Movement back and forth along the rail for focusing were the same, as was the film loading and focusing procedure. The difference was that the Type F did not provide the rise and fall, tilt and swing movements that made the Type U so versatile. The Type F, therefore, was perfect for those who required a less complicated camera but one that was perfect for close-up and macrophotography.

ORIGINAL COST with Dallmeyer

2in f/3.5 lens: £149

VALUE NOW: £150-250



The Monobar's film holder open and ready for loading

The Type F version of the KI Monobar



Ilford cameras today

Over the years, Ilford went through changes of ownership until, in 2004, with the rise in popularity of digital cameras and the consequent decline in film sales, the company went into administration. A management buy-out, however, came to the rescue and the black & white division was relaunched under the name Harman Technology. The new name was in reference to the man who founded the company nearly 150 years ago, while the old Ilford brand is still seen alongside the new Harman name on cameras, film and printing paper.

Today, single-use disposable film cameras alongside reusable models carry on the Ilford legend. It is, however, unlikely that those who buy one of these will realise the significance of the name Harman subtly displayed on the front of the camera.

STILL AVAILABLE: £15.99 (Amazon)



Still available today: a Harman black & white disposable camera preloaded with Ilford HP5 film



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The 35mm displays great levels of sharpness
Nikon Z50II, 1/60s at f/2, ISO 100



Nikon Nikkor Z DX MC 35mm f/1.7

Amy Davies finds out if this small and lightweight macro lens is useful for more than just close-ups



The first macro lens for the Nikon Z DX (APS-C) format, the MC 35mm f/1.7 is also designed as a great everyday walkaround lens, with a versatile focal length for a variety of subjects. As it is designed to be used on crop-sensored (APS-C/DX) cameras, such as the Nikon Z50II or the Nikon Zfc, it gives a 52.5mm equivalent field of view. This makes it work well for street,

portraits, events and even for some aspects of things such as landscape photography.

Although at £399, it's fairly highly priced for a DX lens, being able to use it for such a broad range of subjects makes it better value than it might first appear. It would make a good complement to one of the zoom lenses that's available for Nikon Z DX, particularly the new 16-50mm f/2.8 lens.

Features

For its macro credentials, the MC 35mm f/1.7 lens boasts 0.67x magnification, making it equivalent to 1:1 life-size magnification in the 35mm (full-frame) format. It also has close-focusing ability of 0.16m, so you can get very close to a subject to fill the frame.

A large aperture of f/1.7, along with 9 aperture blades, promises beautiful background bokeh.

Meanwhile, being able to shoot at such a large aperture is helpful when working in lower light conditions – especially considering that the lens does not have optical stabilisation built-in, and none of Nikon's DX-format cameras has in-body image stabilisation. By being able to select a large aperture, you should be able to keep ISOs fairly low and the shutter speed reasonably fast. ➤



Edge-to-edge sharpness is great
Nikon Z50II, 1/60s at f/4, ISO 560

➤ The lens construction consists of 8 elements in 7 groups, including 1 aspherical ED element. This is a fairly simple optical design, but it's what we'd expect at this price point and the small size of the lens.

Dust and drip resistance provides some reassurance that you can use the lens outdoors without worrying too much about inclement weather. That's always good news for macro lenses, where you might want to

photograph flowers after a rain shower, for example.

Of course, this being a modern lens, some thought has been given to how it will work during video work. As such, autofocus is promised to be fast and quiet,

while there's also suppressed focus breathing for more natural-looking focus transitions, plus a silent control ring which can be used to adjust settings while filming.

Build and handling

Weighing in at just 220g, this is an incredibly lightweight lens which pairs nicely with Nikon's DX cameras for everyday usage. The focal length makes it an ideal walkaround lens, so you could conceivably use it as your only lens for the day. But it's also so small and light that it's a good lens to pop into your camera bag just in case, while using other lenses, too.

The outward design is relatively minimal, with no buttons or switches included. Most settings changes will need to be made via the camera body itself, which is not surprising for a lens of this type and size.

That said, the control ring, which takes up nearly 50% of the lens barrel, can be assigned to adjust something other than focus if you're not one for manual focusing. The options you have



The focal length makes for a great everyday walkaround choice
Nikon Z50II, 1/60s at f/1.8, ISO 280



The focal length of around 50mm equivalent also makes it useful for portrait work
Nikon Z50II, 1/600s at f/1.8, ISO 100

instead are aperture, exposure compensation and ISO sensitivity. You could also set it to control absolutely nothing at all, if you feel perhaps you're prone to accidentally knocking it out of place.

Being contoured, the control ring is nice to handle, with its relatively large size meaning it doesn't feel awkward or fiddly to use. There are no hard stops at either end for focusing, but with mirrorless cameras it's so easy to turn on things like focus peaking to help with manual focusing that this doesn't feel like the drawback it might once have been. The ring feels nicely smooth to turn, with just the right amount of resistance, too.

The lens can be used with 52mm filters. It's worth noting, though, that no hood is supplied in the box. However, it is compatible with the HN-43 hood (£18), if you would like to purchase one separately.

A metal lens mount is a nice touch for a lens like this, though for the relatively high price, perhaps it's fair enough. It helps to make the lens feel like it will withstand multiple mountings and dismountings with ease.

Autofocus

For the most part, focusing is quick and also impressively

quiet. I've been using it with the Nikon Z50II and found that it copes well across a range of situations, without throwing up too many instances of false confirmations of focus.

You can just about hear some focusing noise if you hold the camera directly next to your ear in a silent room, but it's otherwise very discreet. If you set the camera to silent mode it's almost impossible to audibly tell it's in use, making it useful for street photography or in quiet places such as churches and museums.

When light is very low, it can take the lens a little bit longer to successfully lock onto focus. But it's not disappointingly slow, and can be helped along by switching on the AF lamp where appropriate.

Image quality

As you'd hope from a macro lens, the MC 35mm f/1.7 lens produces pleasingly sharp images – both in terms of the overall impression and when you zoom in closer to look at fine details.

Sharpness is maintained into the corners of the frame, making those close-up shots look great across the whole image. Being able to get nice and close to the subject also

helps to create some impressive frame-filling images, too.

Being able to shoot at f/1.7 means you can also get some beautiful blurred background effects. The quality of the bokeh is lovely, being creamy and smooth. I like it for portraits for this reason, but it's useful too for other subjects where you want to highlight the subject strongly.

With the standard lens profile corrections applied, vignetting isn't an issue. If you switch those off and look at the raw files, you can see that there is some vignetting present when shooting at the very widest aperture. But it is not especially obtrusive.

I wouldn't really expect much of a problem with distortion with a lens like this. Again, with the standard correction profile left on, there's nothing to report. If you switch it off, you can see a very slight amount of pincushion distortion, if you're really looking for it.

Chromatic aberration or colour fringing doesn't seem to be apparent even when shooting in fairly bright circumstances, and even when you're zooming in closely to look for it.

Overall, this is a zoom lens which is capable of taking some great images across a range of situations.



Verdict

IF YOU'VE got a Nikon DX format camera and you're looking for a fantastic, everyday prime lens for a range of situations, then this is perhaps the best one you can buy right now. At 35mm, you get close to the classic 50mm equivalent focal length, making it well-suited to many different applications. The fact that it can produce good quality macro shots is arguably almost a bonus, rather than the main selling point.

This is a lens that I could happily use on its own for a trip or an outing, if I felt so inclined. It's great for portraits, street scenes, travel, close-ups, still-life and more besides. If you want more flexibility, it would be a great partner to a zoom lens if you wanted a dual-lens setup.

Arguably the lens is a little on the expensive side, especially for something which is relatively simple in construction. But I think considering the versatility it gives you is important – it's great value even though it is fairly high priced.

My only gripe is that optical vibration reduction would have been welcome, especially considering Nikon DX cameras don't have it in-body. But being able to shoot wide open negates some of that problem.

On the whole, this is a lens which I'd recommend as a must-buy for almost anybody shooting with a Nikon Z APS-C camera today.

Data file

Price: £399	Min focus: 0.16m
Filter diameter: 52mm	Length: 72mm
Lens elements: 8	Diameter: 70mm
Groups: 7	Weight: 220g
Diaphragm blades: 9	Lens mount: Nikon Z
Aperture: f/1.7-f/16	Included accessories: Front and rear lens caps



Akara Labs Slim Skin Case for Fujifilm X100VI

Andy Westlake investigates a minimalist 3D-printed camera body case

● akaralabs.com ● £34 with grip, £28 without

The Akara Labs Slim Skin Case for Fujifilm X100VI is, as its name implies, a minimalist protective body case that's custom-made for Fujifilm's popular APS-C compact. According to the maker, it's designed to provide extra grip, along with protection for the camera's baseplate – the part most likely to get scratched or scuffed. Unlike other fitted half-cases, it's 3D-printed from plastic.

The case comes in two variants, either with or without a moulded handgrip. It fits very snugly onto the camera, with a moulded plug that pushes into the tripod socket and holds it in place surprisingly effectively. It fits around the strap lug on the handgrip, with Akara Labs sensibly recommending that you secure it in place by attaching a strap here.

Alternatively, for an extra £2, you can get a variant with a hole in the bottom, which comes with a tripod screw to fix it in place. This is also designed so you can attach a camera plate underneath, either for fixing onto a tripod, or for use with a camera clip such as Peak Design Capture. However, this version won't sit flat on a table.

I have the gripped, no-screw variant for my X100VI. I like the fact that's very simple and discreet – unlike a coloured leather case, it won't attract a second glance. The good-sized finger-grip and small moulded thumb hook on the back provide a surprisingly secure hold, aided by the finely textured surface. It's perfect for when I want to carry the camera one-handed ready for use, secured by a wrist strap. I also find it to be an excellent option when using one of the X100VI's screw-on lens converters – especially the larger and heavier teleconverter.

The only slight caveat with the design is that you can't directly access the battery and SD card compartment when the case is in place. Instead, you have to pull the case off the base of the camera. The good news is that this is easy to do even with the case fixed on via a strap, thanks to the flexibility of the plastic.

Verdict

I really like the Akara Labs Slim Skin Case for the Fujifilm X100VI. It's simple, lightweight and discreet, and does a good job of protecting the base of the camera. I'd definitely recommend getting the gripped version, too, as it improves the camera's handling significantly, for only a nominal extra cost.



Fixing

The case fits via a 'plug' that pushes into your camera's tripod socket. Alternatively for another £2, you can get a version that uses a tripod screw.

Versions

As well as the X100VI version reviewed here, Akara Labs makes similar cases for the Fujifilm X-E5, Nikon Zf and Zfc, and most Leica M and Q-series cameras.



Grip

The case comes in two distinct versions, either with or without a handgrip.

Battery access

There's no cutout or hinged door, so you need to partially remove the case to access the battery and memory card.



At a glance

- 3D-printed plastic body case
- Gripped and grip-free versions
- Optional tripod screw fixing
- Available for a range of cameras

HALF CASE ALTERNATIVE

For a more traditional alternative for the X100VI, I like this leather half-case by Muziri Kinokoo. It includes a useful finger grip and provides unobstructed access to the tilting screen and all the controls, with a flap at the bottom for the battery / SD card compartment. It comes in black, green, coffee, or brown, and costs £52.99 from Amazon.





Professor Newman on...

Protection

Professor Newman speculates about the strange case of third-party lenses and the Sony A7 V

In my previous article I wrote about patent protection particularly of the Nikon Z system. Andy Westlake recently (9 February 2026) produced a piece on the strange incompatibility that has occurred with some third-party lenses when used on the new Sony A7 V, which raises IP issues with that system. This is 'strange' because Sony offers lens makers a free licence for the E-mount. This licence gives access to the 'basic specifications' of the lens mount system without royalty payment. I take 'basic specifications' to mean base-level protocols, which should allow operation with all E-mount cameras, but not later and more advanced versions of the protocol, which provide for extra functionality and faster operation.

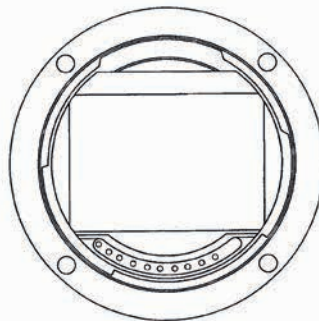
In preparation for this article, I did a quick search for Sony autofocus patents, which revealed very little – only mechanical arrangements where the novelty was, bizarrely, having a mount not quite large enough for a full-frame sensor (US9131134B2). That's not to say that there aren't any more, but the same search with the word 'Sony' replaced by 'Nikon' or 'Canon' turned up hundreds. So it would appear that patenting is not Sony's major route to protecting its autofocus IP.

In general, there are two ways other than patents which are used to protect IP. One is copyright, but this is problematic when it comes to programs and protocols. There is some case law which has upheld this kind of copyright claim, but the

circumstances have been quite particular. This leaves the third route to protection, which is trade secrets. Simply, detailed information is never disclosed generally. For this reason, what will follow in this article is purely informed speculation, since Sony will not tell us exactly what has happened.

For those that didn't read the article, it appears that some third-party lenses failed to work in AF-S, AF-A and DMF when fitted on the A7 V camera. Andy suggested that the makers of these lenses had perhaps reversed engineered the protocols rather than obtaining a licence. But since the licence is free, and would give them access to full implementation information, I think that it's more likely that the A7 V has failed to operate with the 'basic' form of the protocol. Some third-party manufacturers' (the Japanese companies) lenses did operate satisfactorily, which I would take as an indication that they are using a higher level of the protocol than the free 'basic' one – very likely it entails a paid licence. However, these lenses are limited to operation at 15 frames per second, which suggests that there is a further level of protocol which is exclusive to Sony. I'll discuss what the technical details might be in a later article.

Another question is 'how did this arise?' Whilst we don't know for sure, I can think of two possibilities which fit the observed facts. One is that the engineers writing the firmware for the A7 V simply made a mistake,



The electronics of the E-mount are quite simple, with a single bi-directional communications channel between camera and lens. The simplicity brings limitations, which doubtless lead to protocol updates as camera performance increases.

and coded these functions in a way that didn't work with the basic protocol. The second is that some part of the protocol definition was unintentionally ambiguous, and was interpreted differently by the Japanese manufacturers on one hand and the Chinese and Koreans on the other. In any case, we can deduce that it was not intentional, since the different lens manufacturers issued corrective firmware very quickly and at the same time, as if they have been issued with the know-how by Sony.

The outstanding question is why Sony did not correct the firmware in the A7 V. Again, we do not know, but it occurs to me that to do so could have been a considerable undertaking for them, and also a possible admission of liability for the mistake. Far simpler to update (or clarify) the 'basic protocol' specification and let the lens vendors do the required work.

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

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THE EISA PHOTOGRAPHY MAESTRO CONTEST 2026

This year's theme: Travelling

Scope and Contest Rules:

The competition has two categories.

Single: You may submit one picture based on the theme of 'Travelling'.

Series: You may submit a total of 5-8 pictures as part of a portfolio based on the theme of 'Travelling'.

Photographers may compete in one category only. All entries must be in digital format (camera or scanned film originals) and must not have won a prize in any other competition. AI-generated images and pictures older than 2023 are excluded.

PRIZES:

SINGLE PICTURE

€1000 & EISA Maestro Trophy

PICTURE SERIES

€2000 & EISA Maestro Trophy



NATIONAL DEADLINE: MAY 15TH 2026

Email your entry (single image OR series) to: ap.Maestro@kelsey.co.uk. Images must be JPEG and a minimum of 2000 pixels on the longest side. AP will choose the winners and publish them in a July issue. The first-placed winners will receive a one-year digital subscription to AP and go forward to the International round.

National Maestro winners will also be published on Facebook at the end of June for the EISA Public's Choice competition. Prize for Single and Series winners: €500



INTERNATIONAL JUDGING: JUNE 2026

The winning entries from each of the 15 participating EISA countries will then be judged together at the Association's General Meeting in June 2026. The final results of the International Maestro contest will be celebrated at the EISA Awards Gala in September 2026 and revealed, online, alongside the EISA product Awards on August 15th 2026.

The winning photographs will be published in the Sept/Oct issues of all 15 EISA photo magazines/websites.



For further details, terms and conditions visit www.eisa.eu/maestro and www.amateurphotographer.com

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Image makers vs. takers

Here's a simple question. What's the difference between picture makers and image takers? The answer seems to be that picture makers apply clear 'pre-thought' before pressing the button, while image takers press the button then think about what they have later. Makers usually spend time applying post-capture editing to achieve a desired result, whereas takers are content to share their results as they are,

among chosen parties.

All of this has nothing to do with kit choices generally speaking; though the continued, unstoppable rise of smartphones plays more into the hands of takers than makers.

If the quality of the results is what counts most, then picture makers probably will win. Some image takers have developed a taste for adaptation and are content with their finished product. **Kevin Jackson**

What do other readers think of Kevin's analysis? Do you consider yourself an image maker or image taker, and why?

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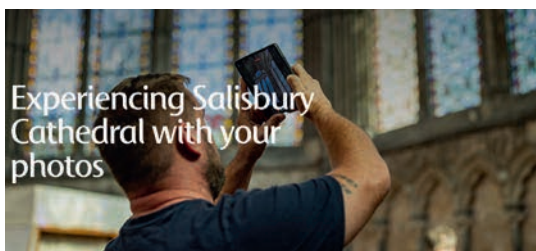


'Spiritual nudges'

I was delighted to see Paul Sanders' mindfulness photography featured in your recent issue. He is such an inspirational photographer! You might in a similar vein be interested in an innovative resource I've recently created for Salisbury Cathedral: salisburycathedral.org.uk/

photography-guide/ It's a webpage that people can dip into as they take photos in the Cathedral, and is a mixture of photo ideas and gentle spiritual nudges. **Revd Dr Philip Richter**

This is a great idea, Reverend Richter, so we hope visitors will take advantage of this valuable resource.



Visit: salisburycathedral.org.uk/photography-guide

Focus please

Whilst it is impossible to judge a photographer's work on the basis of just three photos, I must nevertheless do so in the case of Simon Roberts, based on the three images you published on page 10 of the AP 24 March issue.

I am very fond of ICM and abstract photography. However, in those images I see nothing special apart from the blurring: neither the light, nor the subject, nor the composition. They are classic tourist photos, simply out of focus. My Aunt Mary could have taken them by getting the focus wrong. To me, it seems like a quest for strangeness for the sake of strangeness.

Take an example: the façade of a church photographed by my Aunt Mary. But it's upside down. Maybe we could say: 'this original stylistic choice is not an act of desecration, but an invitation to radical contemplation. In an age of visual overload, sacred iconography risks becoming a visual habit that no longer stirs the soul. Flipping the perspective means stripping the structure of its architectural function to reveal its geometric and spiritual essence etc etc.' As you can see, any nonsense can be given a theoretical basis. (And AI helps a lot too!)

Choam Goldberg

Spare a Bob?

I enjoyed reading your commemorative article about the great Bob Carlos Clarke. I remember AP publishing some of Bob's photographs years ago and I, too, was saddened at the time to learn of his premature death. One thing was missing from your article. Younger readers might ask 'who was this man?' A photo of Bob would have given a more complete picture. **Alan Newall**

If anyone else is curious what this divisive but hugely talented figure looked like, here you go...



The late Bob Carlos Clarke with model Caprice at a private view of his work

© GETTY IMAGES

THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

If you could take photos in any location in the world, where would it be?

You said...



Mhairi Chambers

Lofoten Islands. It's a bucket list destination for both photography and golf!



Sarah Peak

I'd love to see Switzerland, the Grand Canyon or Cappadocia. Those are out of reach right now so I'd settle to see the puffins on Skomer Island.



@makkai_adam

Jasper National Park in Canada or Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia.



Oddy Barber

Alaska on the Yukon River photographing the bears catching the salmon in the river... top of my bucket list.



@nigelwoodphotographs

I'd love to do wildlife in the Galapagos Islands.



Ian sproat - MJE photography

Death Valley under a clear night sky during a new moon.



@shropshirewandering

Lake District, always.



Linda Wride

Lencois Maranhenses, Brazil.



@chavaliraghuvamsh

Algonquin Park, Canada.



@barrieharwood

Malaysia.



Mark Buckley

Kenya, Iceland, Nepal, Lake Bled, Monaco Grand Prix, Venice.



David Kelly

Yosemite in the autumn.



Yiorgos Mpeloyiannis

In Messini, Greece.



Pippa Ross

Costa Rica, Cuba or Japan.



@the_silvershutter_photographer

Brazil and Madagascar.



Tim Smith

The Black Isle, Scotland.



@_ramirez_nathan_

Antarctica.



JC NE Art Photography

South Island, New Zealand.



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It's good to share

Our favourite photos posted by readers on our social media channels this week

AP Picture of the Week



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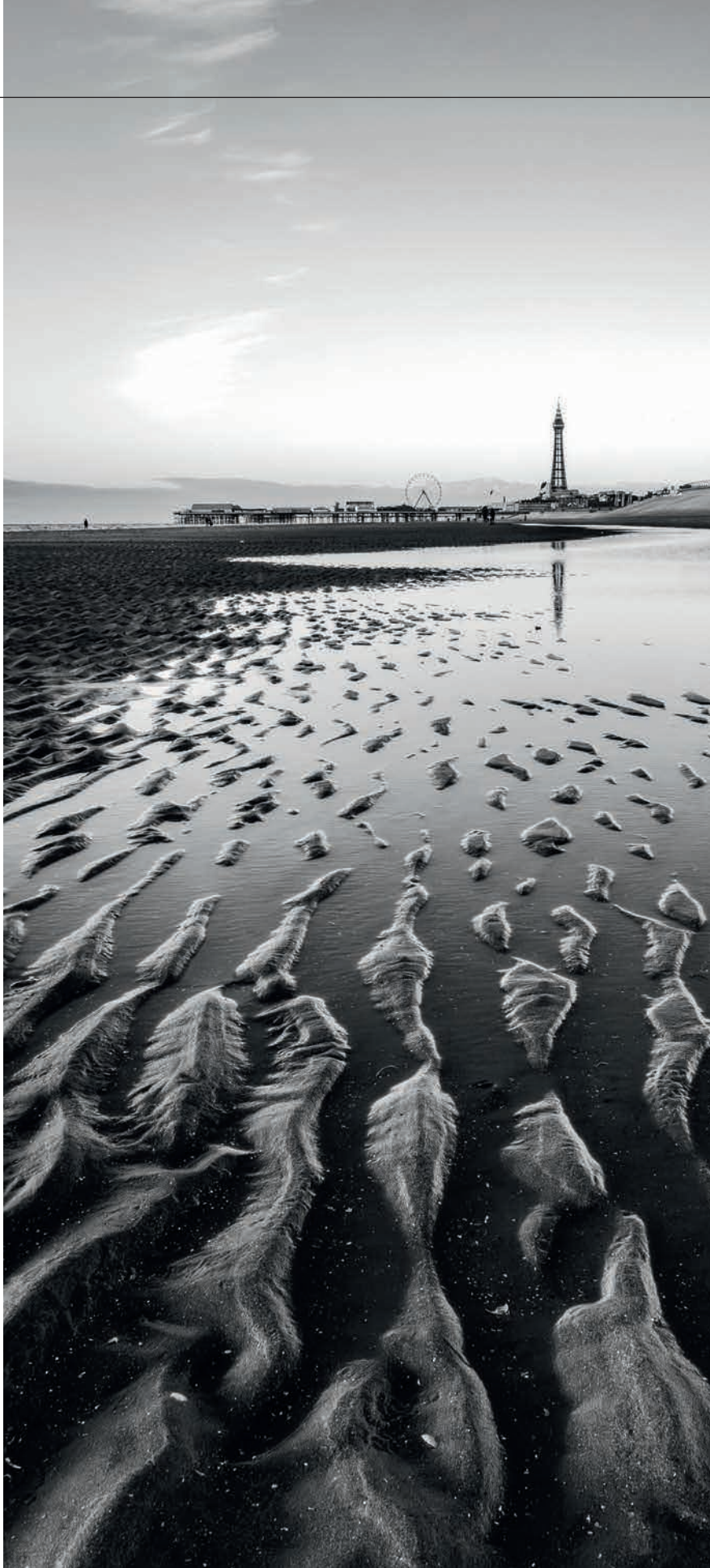
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Ripples by Paul Dixon

Sony A6400, Sony 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6, 1/50sec at f/16, ISO 500

'After a disappointing sunset on the beach at Blackpool, I turned my attention to the ripples in the sand leading towards Blackpool Tower in the distance. Crouching low, I made the ripples the main subject, while a black & white edit emphasised the forms and textures of the sand.'

Instagram: @pauldixonphotography





Reed Bunting Portrait – Winter into Spring by Kara Rennie

Sony A7C II, FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS,
1/640sec at f/6.3, ISO 2000, 600mm

'During a recent visit to a nearby nature reserve, I was delighted by the flurry of reed buntings. The day was mostly sunny, interrupted by a sudden downpour, with nowhere to take shelter. Pressing on with my walk proved worthwhile, capturing this charming male in the soft winter afternoon light.'

Instagram: @kararenniephotography



**It's good
to share**

Gimme Shelter by Andrew Gimblet

iPhone XS Max, 1/121sec at f/1.8, ISO 64

'This photo was taken on a photo walk near Canary Wharf in London. It started to downpour, and we ducked into a pub to stay dry and grab a pint. It was on the upper storey that I captured this scene outside the window with my iPhone. The street is my happy place where light, shadow, and atmosphere converge to tell endless stories. I'm always waiting for that fleeting moment: a gesture, a glance, a figure moving through space.'

Instagram: @wolfdogz_



We also liked...



In the Shadows by Chi Chi

Nikkor 50mm F1.4

'This image was captured in the midst of the harsh midday light resulting in a dark silhouette being cast against a colorful background.'

Instagram: @thruherlens1

Want to see your pictures here? Simply share them with our Instagram or Facebook communities using the hashtag **#appicoftheweek**. Or you can email your best shot to us at **ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk**. See page 3 for how to find us.

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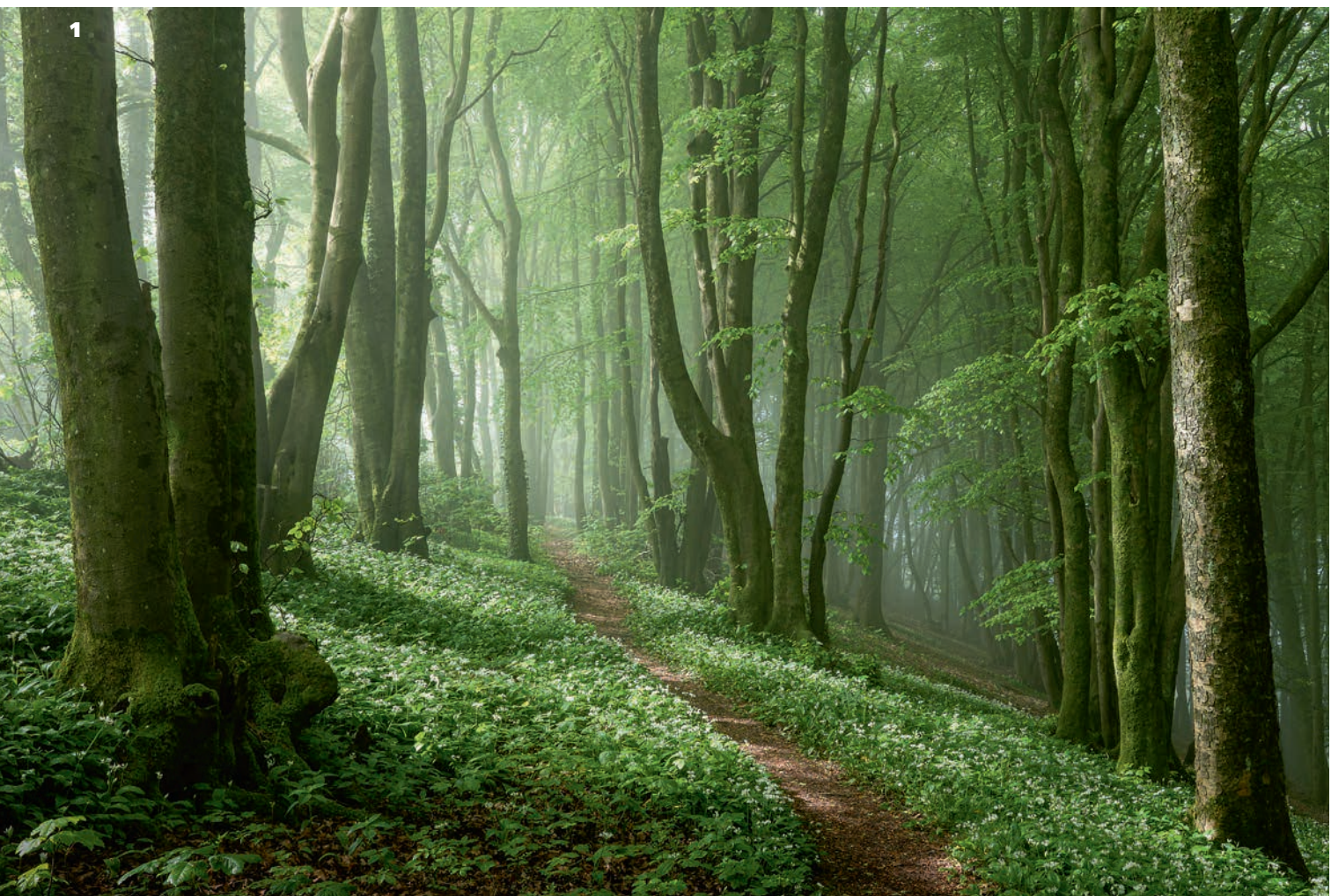
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Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them



Matthew Dixon, Ringwood



About Matthew

Matthew is a Business Relations Manager. More of his photography can be seen at Instagram/[mattidixonphotography](#)

How did you get into photography?

I was drawn into photography after we bought a Springer spaniel puppy in 2016. I started taking photos of him on my phone on our walks in the forest, and slowly started editing them. Eventually I got more and more interested in it, I then kept noticing nice scenes/lighting and weather conditions on our walks and very quickly fell down the rabbit hole. Cue

5am alarms and sunrise chasing!

What do you love about photography?

Photography has changed my life! It has given me some incredible experiences that I never would have had otherwise – whether that is peering into a misty glade at the crack of dawn as deer trot past, or freezing to the bones on a hillside at 2am as the Milky Way glides silently overhead. It has given me focus, endless hours of learning and enjoyment, but also I love the sense of peace it gives me, an escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

Favourite subjects

I still have a penchant for portraiture (particularly dogs), but my heart now

The Dorset Hills

1 The start of the garlic blossom deep in the Dorset countryside.

Nikon Z6II, Nikkor 35mm f/1.4, 1/13sec at f/14, ISO 125

belongs in the woodland. Being based on the edge of the New Forest, I have an absolute treasure chest of ancient and veteran trees to discover, as well as simpler, more peaceful scenes. After nearly a decade of exploring the locations on my doorstep, I feel I still have so much to discover – as well as the ever-changing nature of the forest. I love to capture the same scene through the seasons, as well as documenting some of the incredible characters I come across.

I also have a deep affinity for wide-field astrophotography. Although the opportunities for this have been limited since becoming a parent in 2022, I find that there is something quite incredible about the process and outcomes of this



Reader Portfolio winners receive a one-year subscription to a **Gold Portfolio Series website** worth £300. UK domain name included.

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Submit your images

See page 3 for details of how to submit. You could see your photos here in a future issue! Please note: the prize is subject to change.



Spring Mornings

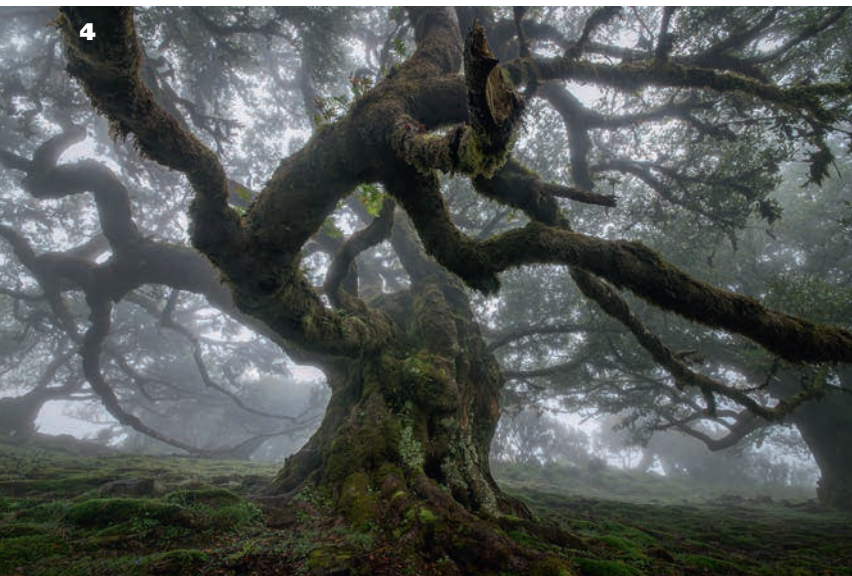
2 In this scene I particularly liked the mirrored shapes of the trunks, and the contrast of this one outlier: growing the opposite way to the others in the scene.

Nikon Z6II, Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8, 1/2sec at f/14, ISO 250

The Sloden Oak

3 This ancient and well-known character in the New Forest is a personal favourite of mine. I tried to capture the overarching branch towering over the path, inviting the viewer to step into the scene.

Nikon Z6II, Nikkor 35mm f/1.4, 1/5sec at f/11, ISO 2500



➤ style of photography that I will always love.

How and where do you find inspiration?

I find inspiration from exploring, reading and learning more about photography and editing. Exploring the local area as well as new locations gives me most of the inspiration I need, but also meeting other photographers and seeing their work inspires me to try to push myself to try new things.

What was your first camera?

My first proper camera was a second-hand Nikon DF with a 50mm f/1.8 kit lens.

Current kit

Nikon Z6II, Nikkor Z 24-120mm f/4, Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8, Sigma 20mm f/1.8, Sigma 12-24mm f/4.5-5.6, and the Nikkor F-mount 85mm f/1.4.

Favourite lens

For practicality, my 24-120mm stays on my camera 90% of the time. The versatile focal range is perfect for my usual landscape subjects. But for portraits, the 85mm f/1.4 has a special place in my heart!

Favourite accessory

Sky Watcher Star Adventurer Star Tracker.

Dream purchase

Nikkor 400mm f/2.8.

What software do you use for editing?

Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom.

Favourite photographers

I've been heavily influenced by photographers local to me – I've found a lot of inspiration from fellow south coast photographers Leigh Dorey and Martin Dolan, whose approach to composition and editing I have always been amazed by. I think seeing the work they could put out in my local area made photography seem much more accessible on a daily basis. Other photographers whose work I really admire include Neil Burnell, Daniel Laan and Max Rive.

Favourite photography books

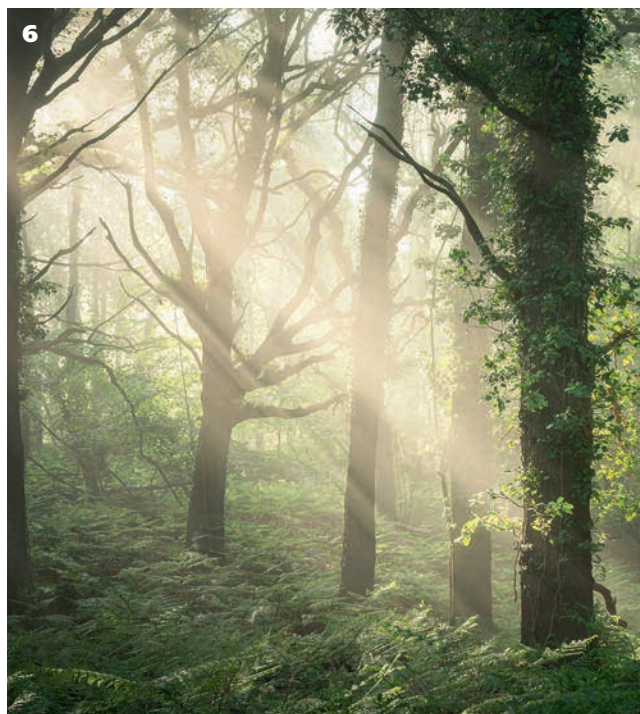
Mastering Composition by Richard Garvey-Williams was a huge help to me.

Favourite tips

My first tip would be to learn the importance of light in an image. It can really make the difference between an okay image and a great one. It took me far too long to learn this! The second would be to just go out and have fun with it. If the weather looks grim or grey or uninspiring, go out and have a look anyway. Some of my favourite images have been taken on days where I was on the fence about going out. My photographer friends and I have a saying: 'You don't know unless you go!'

About your pictures

There's no particular story to this series other than the sense of exploration of my local area and capturing moments.





Madeiran Mist

4 Taken on an incredible trip to the island last year, this ancient laurel is full of character. I tried to capture a different perspective here, shooting much wider than I usually do to capture those sprawling arms in all their glory.

Nikon Z6II, Sigma 12-24mm, 1/100sec at f/14, ISO 800

A Winter's Walk

5 A rare visit of snow to the south coast, I tried to again draw the viewer into the scene using the tracks leading to the gate.

Nikon Z6II, Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8, 0.8sec at f/16, ISO 160

The Birthday Present

6 Taken on my birthday in 2025, this was an absolute gift of a morning. Driving past this small patch of woodland, at just the right time, I hastily pulled over and managed to grab a few minutes of this incredible but fleeting light.

Nikon Z6II, Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8, 1/100sec at f/8, ISO 320

Untitled

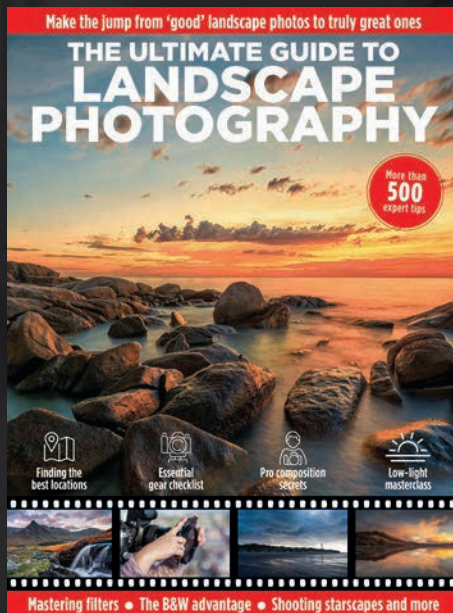
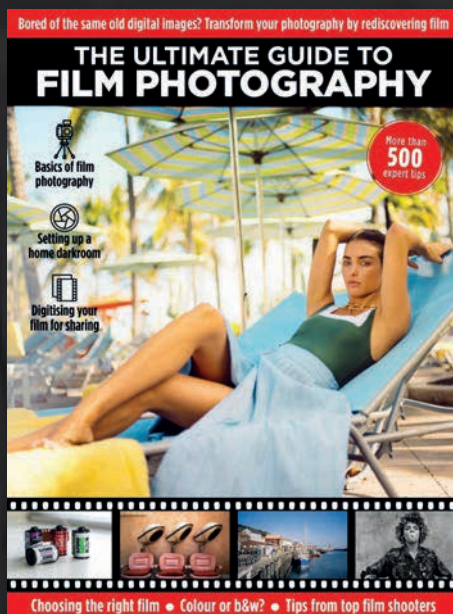
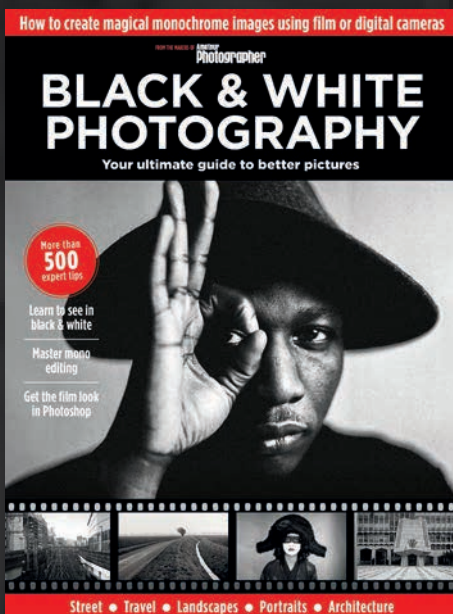
7 It's pretty rare that I sit for an extended period waiting for the light to be just right. I tend to be on the move quite a lot, especially when conditions are like this. But on this morning, I stayed in this spot for around 30 minutes, waiting for the light to hit - and when it did, I wasn't disappointed!

Nikon Z6II, Nikkor 24-120mm f/4, 1/40sec at f/11, ISO 400



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Our comprehensive listing of key specifications for DSLR lenses

DSLR Lenses

Interchangeable lenses come in a huge array of types for shooting different kinds of subjects

IN GENERAL, the easiest way to expand the kinds of pictures you can take is by buying different types of lenses. For example, telephoto lenses let you zoom in on distant subjects, while macro lenses enable close-ups of small objects. Large-aperture lenses allow you to isolate subjects against blurred backgrounds, or shoot in low light without having to raise the ISO too high. Meanwhile, all-in-one superzooms cover a wide range of subjects, but usually with rather lower optical quality.



Lens mounts

Each manufacturer has its own lens mount and most aren't compatible with one another. For example, a Canon DSLR can't use Nikon lenses, although you can use independent brands if you get them with the right mount.

Built-in focus motor

Most lenses now incorporate an internal motor to drive the autofocus, although some are still driven from the camera body. DSLR lenses often use ultrasonic-type motors for fast focusing, but some now have video-friendly stepper motors as widely used in mirrorless systems.

Filter thread

A thread at the front of the camera will have a diameter, in mm, which will allow you to attach a variety of filters or adapters to the lens.

Maximum aperture

Wider apertures mean you can use faster, motion-stopping shutter speeds.

OUR GUIDE TO THE SUFFIXES USED BY LENS MANUFACTURERS

AF Nikon AF lenses driven from camera	DC Sigma's lenses for APS-C digital	ED Extra-low Dispersion elements	LM Fujifilm Linear Motor	SP Tamron's Super Performance range
AF-S Nikon lenses with Silent Wave Motor	DG Sigma's designation for full-frame lenses	EF Canon's lenses for full-frame DSLRs	MP-E Canon's high-magnification macro lens	SSM Sony Supersonic Motor lenses
AF-P Nikon lenses with stepper motors	Di Tamron lenses for full-frame sensors	EF-S Canon's lenses for APS-C DSLRs	OIS Optical Image Stabilisation	STF Sony and Laowa Smooth Trans Focus
AL Pentax lenses with aspheric elements	Di-II Tamron lenses designed for APS-C DSLRs	EF-M Canon's lenses for APS-C mirrorless	OS Sigma's Optically Stabilised lenses	STM Canon lenses with stepper motor
APD Fujifilm lenses with apodisation elements	Di-III Tamron lenses for mirrorless cameras	EX Sigma's 'Excellent' range	PC-E Nikon tilt-and-shift lenses	TS-E Canon Tilt-and-Shift lens
APO Sigma Apochromatic lenses	DN Sigma's lenses for mirrorless cameras	FA Pentax full-frame lenses	PF Nikon Phase Fresnel optics	UMC Ultra Multi Coated
ASPH Aspherical elements	DO Canon diffractive optical element lenses	FE Sony lenses for full-frame mirrorless	PZD Tamron Piezo Drive focus motor	USM Canon lenses with an Ultrasonic Motor
AW Pentax all-weather lenses	DX Sony lenses for APS-C-sized sensors	G Nikon lenses without an aperture ring	RF Canon full-frame mirrorless lenses	USD Tamron Ultrasonic Drive motor
CS Samyang lenses for APS-C cropped sensors	DX Nikon's lenses for DX-format digital	HSM Sigma's Hypersonic Motor	S Nikon's premium lenses for mirrorless	VC Tamron's Vibration Compensation
D Nikon lenses that communicate distance info	DS Canon's Defocus Smoothing technology	IS Canon's Image-Stabilised lenses	SAM Sony Smooth Autofocus Motor	VR Nikon's Vibration Reduction feature
DA Pentax lenses optimised for APS-C-sized sensors	E Nikon lenses with electronic apertures	L Canon's 'Luxury' range of high-end lenses	SDM Pentax's Sonic Direct Drive Motor	WR Weather Resistant
DC Nikon defocus-control portrait lenses	E Sony lenses for APS-C mirrorless	LD Low-Dispersion glass	SMC Pentax Super Multi Coating	Z Nikon's lenses for mirrorless cameras

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DSLR Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY															MOUNT																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	</
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ALL PRICES ARE RRP'S. STREET PRICES MAY VARY

We've tried our hardest to ensure that the information in this guide is as complete and accurate as possible. However, some errors will inevitably have crept in along the way: if you spot one, please let us know by emailing ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk. Unfortunately we don't have space to list every single product on the market, so we don't include the most expensive speciality items. **Before making a purchase we advise you to check prices, along with any crucial specifications or requirements, with either a reputable retailer or the manufacturer's website.**

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DSLR Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY														DIMENSIONS
LAOWA DSLR																	
12mm f/2.8 Zero D	£899		Ultra-wideangle lens for full-frame DSLRs that exhibits minimal distortion		•	•		•	•		•	18	77	74.8	82.8	609	
14mm f/4 Zero-D DSLR	£499		Relatively compact and lightweight ultra-wideangle manual focus prime that promises low distortion			•		•			•	15	67	72.5	75	320	
15mm f/4 1:1 Macro	£449	4★	Unusual wideangle lens that offers 1:1 Macro together with vertical shift movements on APS-C cameras		•	•		•	•		•	12	77	83.8	64.7	410	
15mm f/4.5 Zero-D Shift	£1249	4★	The world's widest-angle shift lens offers +/-11mm movement in any direction			•		•			•	20	n/a	79	103	597	
20mm f/4 Zero-D Shift	£1139		Wideangle shift lens that offers +/-11mm movement and promises zero distortion			•		•			•	25	82	91	95	747	
24mm f/14 2x Macro Probe	£1599		Unique specialist macro lens with submersible front barrel and built-in LED lights			•		•			•	47	n/a	38	408	474	
24mm f/14 2x Peri Probe	£2449		Development of macro probe design with swappable straight and 90° periscopic front sections			•		•			•		n/a	61.3	408	770	
25mm f/2.8 Ultra Macro 2.5x - 5x	£399		Unusual lens designed solely for ultra-close-up shooting, with magnification from 2.5x to 5x			•		•	•		•	17.3	n/a	65	82	400	
60mm f/2.8 2X Ultra Macro	£319	3.5★	With 2:1 Macro, an all-in-one option for normal portrait photography as well as ultra-macro		•	•		•	•		•	18.5	62	95	70	503	
100mm f/2.8 2:1 Ultra Macro APO	£469		Full-frame macro lens with twice-life-size magnification and apochromatic design			•		•	•		•	24.7	67	125	72	638	
105mm f/2 (f3.2) STF	£649	4★	Designed for full-frame DSLRs, and features an apodisation element that renders lovely bokeh		•	•		•	•		•	90	67	98.9	76	745	
180mm f/4.5 1.5x Ultra Macro APO	£499		Unique long telephoto macro includes autofocus from infinity to 1.5m and electronic aperture setting			•					•	30	62	67.6	88.4	484	
200mm f/2 AF FF	£1999		Remarkably lightweight and affordable ultra-large aperture telephoto lens with autofocus			•					•	150	105	118	148.3	1588	
NIKON DSLR																	
10-20mm f/4.5-5.6 G VR AF-P DX	£330	3.5★	Inexpensive wide zoom for DX DSLRs has effective image stabilisation but rather average optics		•			•				22	72	77	73	230	
10-24mm f/3.5-4.5 G ED AF-S DX	£834	4★	MTF performance is good from wide open to f/11, only breaking down past f/22					•				24	77	82.5	87	460	
18-140mm f/3.5-5.6 G ED VR AF-S DX	£579		A compact and lightweight DX-format zoom, this lens is a great all-rounder		•			•				45	67	78	97	490	
18-300mm f/3.5-6.3 G ED VR	£849		New DX-format 16.7x zoom with super-telephoto reach – a compact walk-around lens		•			•				48	67	78.5	99	550	
35mm f/1.8 G AF-S DX	£208	5★	Designed for DX-format DSLRs, a great standard prime lens					•				30	52	70	52.5	200	
40mm f/2.8 G AF-S DX Micro	£250	5★	A budget-priced macro lens that delivers the goods on multiple fronts					•				20	52	68.5	64.5	235	
85mm f/3.5 G ED AF-S DX VR	£522		DX-format Micro lens with a 1:1 reproduction ratio, VR II system and ED glass		•			•				28	52	73	98.5	355	
8-15mm f/3.5-4.5 E ED Fisheye AF-S	£1299		Fisheye zoom for full-frame DSLRs that gives a circular view at 8mm and full-frame coverage at 15mm					•			•	16	n/a	77.5	83	485	
14-24mm f/2.8 G ED AF-S	£1670	5★	A remarkable piece of kit, producing sharp images with little chromatic aberration					•			•	28	n/a	98	131.5	970	
16-35mm f/4 G ED AF-S VR	£1072	5★	A fantastic lens that deserves to be taken seriously, with very little CA throughout		•			•			•	28	77	82.5	125	685	
20mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£679		A fast FX-format prime lens that's compact and lightweight					•			•	20	77	82.5	80.5	335	
24mm f/1.4 G ED AF-S	£1990	5★	Nothing short of stunning. Aside from its high price, there is very little to dislike about this optic					•			•	25	77	83	88.5	620	
24mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£629		Fast FX-format lens that aims to appeal to landscape, interior, architecture and street photographers					•			•	23	72	77.5	83	355	
24-70mm f/2.8 E ED VR	£1849	5★	Nikon's latest pro-spec standard zoom looks like its best lens yet		•			•			•	38	82	88	154.5	1070	
24-85mm f/3.5-4.5 G ED VR	£520	5★	FX-format standard zoom with Auto Tripod detection and VR		•			•			•	38	72	78	82	465	
24-120mm f/4 G ED AF-S VR	£1072	5★	Constant maximum aperture of f/4 and the addition of VR makes this a superb lens		•			•			•	45	77	84	103	710	
28mm f/1.4 E ED AF-S	£2080		Boasts a dust- and drip-resistant build for reliable shooting in challenging weather conditions					•			•	28	77	83	100.5	645	
28mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£619	5★	If you crave a wide aperture and prefer a single focal length then this Nikon prime delivers					•			•	25	67	73	80	330	
35mm f/1.4 G ED AF-S	£1735	5★	A Nano Crystal-coated lens designed for the FX range					•			•	30	67	83	89.5	600	
35mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£479		Fast FX-format prime lens with bright f/1.8 aperture. Versatile and lightweight					•			•	25	58	72	71.5	305	
50mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£376	5★	Internal focusing and superior AF drive makes this a good alternative to the D-series 50mm f/1.4		•			•			•	45	58	73.5	54	280	
50mm f/1.8 D AF	£135		Compact, lightweight, affordable prime, will stop down to f/22					•			•	45	52	63	39	160	
50mm f/1.8 G AF-S	£200	5★	A cut-price standard lens for FX shooters or a short telephoto on DX-format DSLRs					•			•	45	58	72	52.5	185	
58mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£1599	4★	FX-format full-frame premium prime lens with large f/1.4 aperture					•			•	58	72	85	70	385	
70-200mm f/2.8 E FL ED VR AF-S	£2650		Latest update to Nikon's pro workhorse fast telephoto zoom brings electronic aperture control		•			•			•	110	77	88.5	202.5	1430	
70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 E ED VR AF-P	£750		Nikon's first full-frame lens to feature a stepper motor for autofocus		•			•			•	1200	67	80.5	146	680	
80-400mm f/4.5-5.6 G ED VR AF-S	£1899	5★	Successor to the 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6D ED VR, focusing is excellent at tracking fast-moving subjects		•			•			•	175	77	95.5	203	1570	
85mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£1532	5★	Fast mid-tele lens with an internal focusing system and rounded diaphragm					•			•	85	77	86.5	84	595	
85mm f/1.8 G AF-S	£470	5★	Rear-focusing system and distance window in this medium telephoto lens					•			•	80	67	80	73	350	
105mm f/1.4 E ED AF-S	£2049		A 105mm FX-format prime lens with bright f/1.4 aperture, ideal for portraiture					•			•	100	82	94.5	106	985	
200-500mm f/5.6 E ED VR AF-S	£1179		A super-telephoto zoom lens compatible with Nikon FX-format DSLR cameras		•			•			•	220	95	108	267.5	2300	
300mm f/4 E PF ED VR AF-S	£1230	5★	Light, compact AF-S full-frame telephoto lens with ED glass elements					•			•	140	77	89	147.5	755	
19mm f/4 E ED PC	£3300		Super-wideangle tilt-and-shift lens for architecture and landscape photography					•			•	25	n/a	89	124	885	
24mm f/3.5 D ED PC-E	£1774		Perspective Control lens with Nano Crystal Coating and electronic control over aperture					•			•	21	77	82.5	108	730	
45mm f/2.8 D ED PC-E Micro	£1393		Perspective Control (PC-E) standard lens used in specialised fields such as studio and architecture					•			•	25	77	82.5	112	740	

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PENTAX DSLR													
DA 10-17mm f/3.5-4.5 HD Fisheye ED	£499		Updated fisheye zoom lens gains refreshed cosmetic design, new optical coatings and removable hood				•		14	n/a	70	67.5	317
DA* 11-18mmF2.8 ED DCAW HD	£1399		Premium fast ultra-wideangle zoom, includes all-weather construction and innovative focus clamp				•		30	82	90	100	704
DA 15mm f/4 smc ED AL Limited	£820		Limited-edition lens with hybrid aspherical and extra-low-dispersion elements						18	49	39.5	63	212
FA 15-30mm f/2.8 ED SM WR HD	£1500		Weather-resistant ultra-wideangle zoom with fast maximum aperture and fixed petal-type hood				•	•	28	n/a	98.5	143.5	1040
DA* 16-50mm f/2.8 ED PLM AW HD	£1500		All-new premium large-aperture standard zoom with updated optics and electromagnetic aperture control				•		30	77	84	117	712
DA 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6 ED DC WR	£600		Weather-resistant, this zoom features a round-shaped diaphragm to produce beautiful bokeh				•		35	72	78	94	488
DA 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 smc AL WR	£229		A weather-resistant construction and an aspherical element, as well as SP coating				•		25	52	68.5	67.5	230
DA 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 DA ED DC WR	£600	3.5 ★	A weather-resistant mid-range zoom lens				•		40	62	73	76	405
DA 20-40mm f/2.8-4 ED Limited DC WR	£829		With state-of-the-art HD coating, a completely round-shaped diaphragm, and weather resistant				•		28	55	68.5	71	283
HD-FA 21mm f/2.4 ED Limited DC WR	£1499		Ultra-wide addition to the premium Limited line-up, with aluminium barrel and electromagnetic aperture motor				•	•	18	67	74	89	416
DA 21mm f/3.2 smc AL Limited	£600		This limited-edition optic offers a floating element for extra-close focusing				•		20	49	63	25	140
FA 24-70mm f/2.8 ED SDM WR	£1149		Full-frame-compatible premium standard zoom - includes a HD coating to minimise flare and ghosting				•	•	38	82	109.5	88.5	787
FA 28-105mm f/3.5-5.6 ED DC HD	£549		Standard zoom lens for the K-1 full-frame DSLR that's much more affordable than the 24-70mm f/2.8				•	•	50	62	73	86.5	440
HD-FA 31mm f/1.8 Limited	£1100		Premium aluminium-bodied wideangle prime boasts an aperture ring plus HD and fluorine coatings				•	•	30	58	69	65	341
FA 35mm f/2 HD	£399		Latest version of venerable Pentax fast prime features a multi-layer HD coating				•	•	30	49	64	44.5	193
DA 35mm f/2.4 smc DSAL	£180	5 ★	A budget-priced prime lens for beginners				•	•	30	49	63	45	124
DA 35mm f/2.8 smc Macro	£640	4.5 ★	Despite slight edge softness, this lens performs excellently and is a pleasure to use				•		14	49	46.5	63	215
DA 40mm f/2.8 smc Limited	£450		Pancake lens with SMC coating and Quick Shift focusing system				•		40	49	63	15	90
HD-FA 43mm f/1.9 Limited	£650		Classic full-frame fast prime with perfect focal length for everyday use				•	•	45	49	64	27	155
FA* 50mm f/1.4 SDM AW HD	£1200		Premium fast prime with dustproof, weather-resistant design and electromagnetic aperture				•	•	40	72	80	106	910
FA 50mm f/1.4	£399		Updated large-aperture prime with HD coatings and refreshed cosmetic design				•	•	45	49	65	40.5	223
FA 50mm f/1.4 smc Classic	£449		Compact fast prime with film-era optics, aperture ring, and coatings designed to give 'rainbow flare'				•	•	45	49	65	37	216
DA 50mm f/1.8 smc DA	£249	4 ★	Affordable short telephoto lens ideal for portraits				•		45	52	38.5	63	122
D-FA 50mm f/2.8 smc Macro	£550		Macro lens capable of 1:1 reproduction and with a Quick Shift focus mechanism				•	•	19	49	60	67.5	265
DA 50-200mm f/4-5.6 smc ED WR	£210		Weather-resistant construction, Quick Shift focus system and an SP coating				•		n/a	49	69	79.5	285
DA* 55mm f/1.4 smc SDM	£800	4.5 ★	Despite questions about the particular sample tested, this lens scores highly				•		45	58	70.5	66	375
DA 55-300mm f/4.5-6.3 ED PLM WR RE	£400		Compact weather resistant telephoto zoom has video-friendly fast and silent autofocus motor				•		95	58	76.5	89	442
DA 60-250mm f/4 smc ED IF SDM	£1450	4.5 ★	With a constant f/4 aperture and an ultrasonic motor for speedy focusing				•		110	67	167.5	82	1040
DA 70mm f/2.4 smc AL Limited	£600		Medium telephoto lens with an aluminium construction and a Super Protect coating				•		70	49	63	26	130
D-FA* 70-200mm f/2.8 ED DCAW	£1850		Fast telephoto zoom in Pentax's high-performance Star (*) series developed for best image rendition				•	•	120	77	91.5	203	1755
D-FA 70-210mm F4 ED SDM WR	£1199		Compact telephoto zoom with constant f/4 maximum aperture and weather-resistant construction				•	•	95	67	78.5	175	819
HD-FA 77mm f/1.8 Limited	£800		Renewed version of short telephoto portrait prime that features a traditional aperture ring				•	•	70	49	48	64	270
D FA* 85mm f/1.4 SDM AW	£1999		Upcoming large-aperture short telephoto prime promises premium optics and weather-sealing				•	•	85	82	95	123.5	1255
HD-FA 100mm f/2.8 ED AW Macro	£699		Updated 1:1 macro lens boasts improved optical formula and all-weather construction				•	•	30	49	65	80.5	348
FA 150-450mm f/4.5-5.6 ED DCAW	£2000		Super-telephoto lens with weather resistance, designed to produce extra-sharp, high-contrast images				•	•	200	86	241.5	95	2000
DA* 200mm f/2.8 smc ED IF SDM	£1000	4.5 ★	SDM focusing system on the inside, and dirtproof and splashproof on the outside				•		120	77	83	134	825
DA* 300mm f/4 smc ED IF SDM	£1300		This tele optic promises ultrasonic focus and high image quality thanks to ED glass				•		140	77	83	184	1070

SAMYANG DSLR																
8mm f/3.5 UMC Fisheye CS II	£274		Wideangle fisheye lens designed for digital reflex cameras with APS-C sensors									30	n/a	75	77.8	417
10mm f/3.5 XP MF	£950		World's widest-angle rectilinear lens promises 130° field of view with minimal distortion									26	n/a	95	98.1	731
10mm f/2.8 ED AS NCS CS	£429		Features a nano crystal anti-reflection coating system and embedded lens hood									24	n/a	86	77	580
12mm f/2.8 ED AS NCS Fisheye	£430		Fisheye ultra wideangle prime lens for full-frame DSLRs									20	n/a	77.3	70.2	500
14mm f/2.4 XP MF	£899		High-end ultra-wideangle prime with premium optics and large maximum aperture									28	n/a	95	109.4	791
AF 14mm f/2.8	£649	4.5 ★	Samyang's first AF SLR lens features very decent image quality and weather-sealed construction									20	n/a	90.5	95.6	485
14mm f/2.8 MF Mk II	£439		Ultra-wideangle manual-focus prime with weather-sealing and de-clickable aperture ring									28	n/a	87	96.3	641
16mm f/2.0 ED AS UMC CS	£389		Fast wideangle lens for digital reflex cameras fitted with APS-C sensors									20	n/a	89.4	83	583
20mm f/1.8 ED AS UMC	£430		Large-aperture manual focus wideangle lens for full-frame DSLRs									20	77	83	113.2	520
24mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£499		Fast ultra-wideangle manual-focus lens comprising 13 elements arranged in 12 groups									25	77	95	116	680
24mm f/3.5 ED AS UMSTS	£949	3 ★	Tilt-and-shift wideangle lens for a fraction of the price of Canon and Nikon's offerings									20	82	86	110.5	680
35mm f/1.2 XP MF	£719		Ultra-large aperture, manual focus prime with premium optics									34	86	93	117.4	1106
35mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£369	4.5 ★	While manual focus only, this prime impressed us in real-world use, making it something of a bargain									30	77	83	111	660
35mm f/1.2 XP MF	£639		Large aperture manual-focus prime promises 50MP resolution									45	86	93	117.4	1200
50mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£299		Manual-focus fast standard prime for full-frame DSLRs									45	77	74.7	81.6	575
85mm f/1.2 XP MF	£899		High-end manual focus lens sports an impressively fast maximum aperture									80	86	93	98.4	1050g
AF 85mm f/1.4	£599	3 ★	Autofocus fast short telephoto portrait lens for use on Canon or Nikon full-frame DSLRs									90	77	88	72	485
85mm f/1.4 MF Mk II	£389		Large-aperture short telephoto manual-focus prime is weather-sealed and the aperture can be de-clicked									110	72	78	72.2	541
100mm f/2.8 ED UMC Macro	£389		Full-frame compatible, the Samyang 100mm is a true Macro lens offering 1:1 magnification									30	67	72.5	123.1	720
135mm f/2 ED UMC	£399		Manual focus portrait prime has fast aperture for subject isolation and background blur									80	77	82	122	830

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

DSLR Lenses

DSLR Lenses													IMAGE STABILISATION	SONY ALPHA	CANON	FOUR THIRDS	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)			
LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY										MOUNT															
SIGMA DSLR																												
12-24mm f/4 DG HSM A	£1649	5★	Premium full-frame wideangle zoom designed to have minimal distortion in its wideangle imagery												•		•		•	•	24	n/a	101	132	1150			
14mm f/1.8 DG HSM A	£1679		World's first f/1.8 ultra-wideangle prime lens for full-frame DSLRs													•		•		•	•	27	n/a	95.4	126	1170		
14-24mm f/2.8 DG HSM A	£1399	5★	Pro-specification fast ultra-wide prime for full-frame DSLRs includes weather-sealed construction														•		•		•	•	26	n/a	96.4	135.1	1150	
18-35mm f/1.8 DC HSM A	£799	5★	Said to be the world's first constant f/1.8 zoom; DoF equivalent of constant f/2.7 on full frame														•		•		•	•	28	72	78	121	810	
20mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	An outstanding wideangle fixed-focal-length lens														•		•		•	•	27.6	n/a	90.7	129.8	950	
24mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	The latest addition to Sigma's 'Art' line of high-quality fast primes														•		•		•	•	25	77	85	90.2	665	
24-70mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM A	£1399	5★	Latest premium fast standard zoom for full frame includes optical image stabilisation											•		•		•		•	•	•	37	82	88	107.6	1020	
24-105mm f/4 DG OS HSM A	£849	4.5★	Serious full-frame alternative to own-brand lenses at a lower price, with no compromises in the build												•	•	•		•	•	•	•	45	82	89	109	885	
28mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1099	4.5★	High-quality, weathersealed fast wideangle prime for full-frame DSLRs														•		•		•	•	28	77	82.8	107.1	865	
35mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	Superb large-aperture prime; first lens in company's 'Art' series													•	•		•	•	•	•	30	67	77	94	665	
50mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£849	5★	This lens has a unique design that pays off in truly excellent image quality													•	•		•		•	•	40	77	85.4	100	815	
50-100mm f/1.8 DC HSM A	£829	5★	This APS-C-format lens aims to cover the focal lengths of three prime lenses in one														•		•		•	•	37.4	82	93.5	170.7	1490	
70-200mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM S	£1349	5★	Superb large-aperture telephoto zoom shows high sharpness and minimal chromatic aberration												•		•		•		•	•	120	82	94.2	202.9	1805	
85mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1199	5★	Optically stunning fast short telephoto prime is the ultimate portrait lens for DSLR users														•		•		•	•	85	86	95	126	1130	
105mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1499	4.5★	Sigma's 'bokeh monster' super-fast portrait lens is weathersealed and comes with a tripod foot															•		•		•	•	100	105	115.9	131.5	1645
105mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM Macro	£649	4.5★	An optically stabilised macro lens, this super-sharp lens is one of our favourites													•		•		•	•	•	31.2	62	78	126.4	725	
120-300mm f/2.8 DG HSM S	£3599		First lens in company's 'Sports' series; switch enables adjustment of both focus speed and focus limiter														•	•		•	•	•	•	150	105	124	291	3390
135mm f/1.8 DG HSM A	£1399	5★	Super-fast portrait prime designed to provide sufficient resolution for 50MP DSLRs															•		•		•	•	87.5	82	91.4	114.9	1130
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM C	£1199		Budget 'Contemporary' version of Sigma's long-range telephoto zoom is smaller and lighter													•		•		•	•	•	280	95	105	260.1	1930	
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM S	£1599		This portable, high-performance telephoto zoom from Sigma's Sports line is dust and splashproof													•		•		•	•	•	260	105	121	290.2	2860	
VOIGTLANDER DSLR																												
28mm f/2.8 Aspherical Color-Skopar SL II-S	£499		Manual-focus wideangle prime for Nikon F-mount SLRs boasts high-quality metal construction																	•		•	15	52	66.3	32.8	205	
40mm f/2 Ultron SL II-S	£470		Compact, manual-focus "pancake" prime designed for use with Nikon full-frame DSLRs																		•	•	25	52	66.3	37.5	260	
55mm f/1.2 Nokton SL II-S	£549		Manual-focus standard zoom lens for Nikon SLRs with super-large aperture and aperture ring																		•	•	45	52	69	48.1	365	
58mm f/1.4 Nokton SL II-S	£518		Large-aperture manual focus standard prime for Nikon SLRs, including classic film cameras																		•	•	45	52	67.6	45.5	320	
90mm f/2.8 APO-Skopar SL II-S	£529		Remarkably small and lightweight manual-focus short telephoto portrait prime																		•	•	90	52	66.3	41	260	
ZEISS DSLR																												
15mm f/2.8 Milvus	£2329		This super-wideangle lens has an angle of view of 110° and uses an advanced retrofocus design																		•	•	25	95	102.3	100.2	947	
18mm f/2.8 Milvus	£1999		Compact super-wideangle lens with premium optics including a floating focus system for close-ups																		•	•	25	77	90	93	721	
21mm f/2.8 Milvus	£1299		Premium wideangle lens with complex optics designed to be free of distortion																		•	•	22	82	95.5	95	851	
25mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1999	5★	Optically excellent, large-aperture manual focus wideangle lens with weather-sealed construction																		•	•	25	82	95.2	123	1225	
35mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1699		Large aperture, premium-quality manual-focus prime with weather-sealed construction																		•	•	30	72	84.8	124.8	1174	
35mm f/2 Milvus	£829		Compact, moderate wideangle manual focus prime																		•	•	30	58	77	83	702	
50mm f/1.4 Planar T*	£559		Classic double-Gauss design manual focus standard prime for full-frame SLRs																		•	•	45	58	71	71	380	
50mm f/1.4 Milvus	£949	5★	An exceptionally good lens offering sharpness, detail, clean edges and a great user experience																		•	•	45	67	82.5	94	922	
50mm f/2 Milvus Macro	£949		Manual-focus macro lens with half-life-size magnification and stunning optics																		•	•	24	67	81	75.3	730	
85mm f/1.4 Planar T*	£989		Classic portrait prime designed to give smooth, rounded bokeh effects																		•	•	100	72	78	88	670	
85mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1379	5★	Fast 85mm manual-focus prime lens that's perfect for portraiture																		•	•	80	77	90	113	1280	
100mm f/2 Milvus Macro	£1299		A manual-focus macro lens with absolutely superb optics and half-life-size reproduction																		•	•	88	67	80.5	104	843	
135mm f/2 Milvus	£1899		Telephoto lens with a large aperture and smooth bokeh, ideal for medium-distance portrait photography																		•	•	80	77	129	132	1123	

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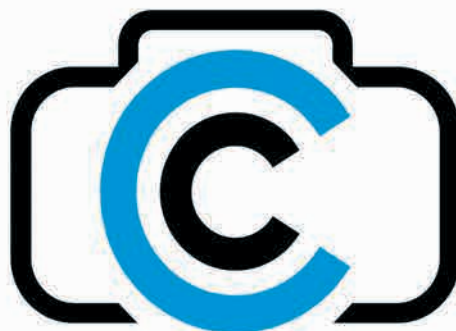
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180-600 F5.6/6.3 VR box	£1499
400 F4.5 S VR box	£2199
600 F6.3 VR S box	£3999
TC 2x tele converter box	£479

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D5 body box	£2299
D850 body box	£1699
D800 body box	£399
D780 body box	£999
D750 body box	£599
D500 body box	£599/999
D7200 body box	£399
D7100 body box	£299
D5300 body box	£299
D5100 body box	£169
D300/D3200/D3300 body ea	£149
MBD-17 (D500)	£99
MBD-16 (D750)	£99
MBD-15 (D7100/D7200)	£99
MBD-12 (D800/D810)	£99

FLASH / ACCESSORIES USED

SB-400	£99
SB-700 box	£99
SB-900 box	£149
SB-910	£199
SU-800 commander	£99
DR-6 or DR-5 angle finder each	£99
MC-36A rem.	£149
MC-30A rem.	£79

NIKON AF LENSES USED

10-20 F4.5/5.6 AF-P DX VR	£199
10-24 F3.5/4.5 AFS DX box	£199
12-24 F4 AFS DX	£199
14-24 F2.8 AFS box	£699
16-35 F4 AFS VR	£399
16-80 F2.8/4 VR DX	£499
18-35 F3.5/4.5 AFS	£299
18-55 F3.5/5.6 DX VR	£99
18-105 F3.5/5.6 VR DX AFS	£199
18-140 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR DX	£199
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX MKII	£299
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX	£149
18-300 F3.5/5.6 VR DX box	£449
20 F1.8 AFS box	£499
24 F2.8 AFD box	£249
24-70 F2.8 AFS VR box	£1199
24-120 F2.8 AFS box	£499
24-120 F4 AFS VR	£499
28-300 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR box	£499
35 F1.8 AFS DX	£149
35 F2.8 AFD	£269

40 F2.8 AFS DX Micro	£199
50 F1.4 AFS G box	£249
50 F1.8 AFS box	£99
50 F1.8 AFD	£69
55-200 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR DX box	£99
55-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS DX VR	£229
70-200 F2.8 E FL AFS VR box	£1199
70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR	£499
70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR	£299
85 F1.8 AFS box	£299
105 F2.8 DC	£499
105 F2.8 AFS VR macro	£399
180 F2.8 AFS	£149
200-500 F5.6 E ED AFS VR box	£749
300 F2.8 E FL ED VR	£2999
500 F5.6 E PF VR AFS	£1799
TC14-EIII	£349
TC14-EII box	£199
TC17-EII box	£99
TC20-EII box	£199
TC20-EI	£99

SIGMA NAF USED

8 F3.5 DC	£299
10-20 F3.5 DC	£169
12-24 F4.5/5.6 II HSM	£349
18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS	£299
20 F1.4 DG HSM Art	£499
24-105 F4 DG OS	£499
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50 F1.4 Art DG	£499
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150-600 F5.6/6.3 DG OS sport	£999
150-600 F5.6/6.3 DG OS contemp	£749
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TC-1401 1.4x extender	£149
TC-2001 2x extender	£299

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70-300 F4/5.6 VC USD	£229
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90 F2.8 Di	£199

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XF



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F5.6/6.3 GM OSS



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X Pro 1 body	£399
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16 F1.4 WR	£349
16-55 F2.8 XF	£499
16-80 F4 WR	£399
18 F2 XF box	£299
15-55 F2.8/4 XF	£299
23 F1.4 XF WR	£349
27 F2.8 XF	£349
30 F2.8 XF WR macro	£479
55-200 F3.5/4.8 R box	£349
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90 F2 XF WR	£399
X500 flash box	£199
EF-42 flash	£99
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E-M10 MKIII body	£399
7-14 F2.8 Pro	£599
9-18 F4/5.6	£299
12-40 F2.8 Pro	£399
12-200 F3.5/6.3	£599
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25 F1.8	£249
30 F3.5 macro box	£199
40-150 F2.8 Pro	£899
40-150 F4 Pro box	£649
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8-18 F2.8/4 box	£599
9 F1.7 DG	£439
12 F1.4 Summilux DG	£599
12-60 F3.5/5.6	£199
14 F2.5	£149
14-42 F3.5/5.6	£99
14-140 F3.5/5.6	£299
25 F1.4 box	£399
45 F2.8 DG macro	£399
45-175 F4.5/5.6	£249
45-200 F4.5/5.6 box	£149
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Samyang 12 F2 man focus	£179
Sigma 16 F1.4 DC DN	£299

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A7 MK III body box	£899
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24-70 F4 ZA	£449
24-105 F4 G OSS box	£599
24-240 F3.5/6.3 OSS box	£499
50 F1.2 GM	£1199
50 F1.4 ZA	£699
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100-400 F4.5/5.6 GM OSS box	£1499
200-600 F5.6/6.3 box	£1199
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910321	Canon 24-105mm f4L IS II USM EF Lens	£649
910265	Canon 24-105mm f4L IS USM EF Lens	£349
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909909	Canon 24-70mm f4L IS USM EF Lens	£479
910195	Canon 28-300mm f3.5-5.6L IS USM EF Lens	£839
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910493	Canon 70-300mm f4-5.6L IS USM Lens	£399
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910407	Canon EOS 2000D DSLR Camera & 18-55mm IS Lens	£349
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910420	Fujifilm 18-55mm f2.8-4 R LM OIS XF Lens	£299
910035	Fujifilm 18mm f2.8 Prime Lens	£299
910480	Fujifilm 27mm f2.8 XF Lens	£199
909451	Fujifilm 50-140mm f2.8 R LM OIS WR XF Lens	£749
910129	Fujifilm 50mm f2 R WR XF Lens	£299
910055	Fujifilm X-E2 Mirrorless Camera Body (Black)	£399
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907558	Nikon 105mm f1.4E ED AF-S NIKKOR Lens	£999
909920	Nikon 18-140mm f3.5-5.6G ED AF-S DX VR Lens	£149
910665	Nikon 18-70mm f3.5-5.6G ED-IF DX AF-S Lens	£99
910448	Nikon 200-500mm f5.6E ED AF-S VR Lens	£799
910452	Nikon 24-120mm f4G ED VR AF-S NIKKOR Lens	£399
907549	Nikon 24mm f1.8G ED AF-S NIKKOR Lens	£349
910285	Nikon 35mm f1.8G AF-S DX NIKKOR Lens	£89
910298	Nikon 40mm f2.8G AF-S DX Micro NIKKOR Lens	£159
907509	Nikon 50mm f1.8 AF-D NIKKOR Lens	£99
910284	Nikon 55-300mm f4.5-5.6G ED DX AFS VR Lens	£179

910457	Nikon 70-200mm f2.8G ED AFS VR II Lens	£599
910422	Nikon Coolpix P900 Bridge Camera	£449
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910088	Nikon D3500 DSLR Camera & 18-55mm Lens	£399
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908705	Nikon Z 14-30mm f4 S Lens	£849
909964	Nikon Z 20mm f1.8 S Lens	£749
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908121	Nikon Z 24-70mm f2.8 S NIKKOR Lens	£1699
908648	Nikon Z 24-70mm f4 S Lens	£359
910244	Nikon Z 2x Teleconverter	£449
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900412	Nikon Z 85mm f1.8 S Lens	£799
910401	Nikon Z5 Mirrorless Camera Body	£549
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910012	Panasonic Lumix S5 II Mirrorless Camera Body	£1099
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910289	Sigma 10-18mm f2.8 DC DN Contemporary Lens (Canon EF-M)	£149
910406	Sigma 105mm f2.8 EX DG Macro Lens (Nikon FX)	£179
910198	Sigma 12-24mm f4 DG HSM ART Lens (Canon EF)	£619
902609	Sigma 14mm f1.8 DG HSM ART Lens (Sony FE)	£749
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910329	Sony A1 Mirrorless Camera Body (1,000 Shutter Count)	£2999
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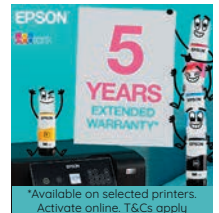
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Final Analysis

Alíz Kovács-Zöldi considers...

Charlotte and Dolly, 2026, by Vanta Coda III



‘Para-pastoral, instead of romanticising rural life, opens a conversation about the state of our natural world’

This quiet yet striking image taken at the 100th State Fair of West Virginia won photojournalist Vanta Coda III, the Sony World Photography Awards Lifestyle category this year.

A serene moment caught between events, a young girl, Charlotte, lays down in a barn beside her cow Dolly to seek refuge from the sweltering heat outside. It's difficult to make out the surroundings with this tight framing so our eyes are drawn to the closeness of the two. Phone in hand, earbuds in, Charlotte leans against Dolly with a familiarity that suggests a profound level of trust.

But this moment is as gentle as it is ambiguous. It can be interpreted as evidence that technology doesn't diminish our ability to meaningfully connect to nature. Even though our lives are centred on technology, our fundamental, biological

need to connect to nature persists.

The way Charlotte's attention is absorbed by her phone, can also suggest rather the opposite. That even in a pastoral setting, modern life has the power to pull us away from being fully present in the moment.

Amusing illusion

Dolly the cow, looking straight at the camera, is seemingly more aware of what's happening; while Charlotte's attention is absorbed by her phone, she seems mentally elsewhere. The second phone in her lap looks almost as if meant for Dolly, an amusing illusion that further underscores the irony of the scene.

In classical painting and literature the pastoral portrays an idealised version of country life, a calm sanctuary where you can escape to. At first sight that's what came to mind seeing this image. But the undeniable tension because of the

presence of technology prompted me to investigate further.

The ambiguity of the image links it to a newly emerging art trend, para-pastoral. Evolving from the roots of classical pastoral, instead of romanticising rural life it opens a conversation about the state of our natural world and the issues it's facing. The author's aim, to bring awareness and make viewers think about our connection to animals and agriculture, is beautifully executed.

In the end, whether Charlotte is escaping into her screen or simply finding a moment of calm is up to you to decipher. But the image definitely leaves me wondering: can we still be part of the landscape like we used to, or are we just visitors with high-speed internet?

This fascinating image will be on display at the Sony World Photography Awards exhibition at Somerset House, London until 4 May.

AP

Alíz Kovács-Zöldi studied photography at Anglia Ruskin University where she specialised in fine art portraiture and product photography and graduated in 2022. She works as a freelance photographer and writes for Amateur Photographer.

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