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# Amateur Photographer

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on their striking light  
painting shots

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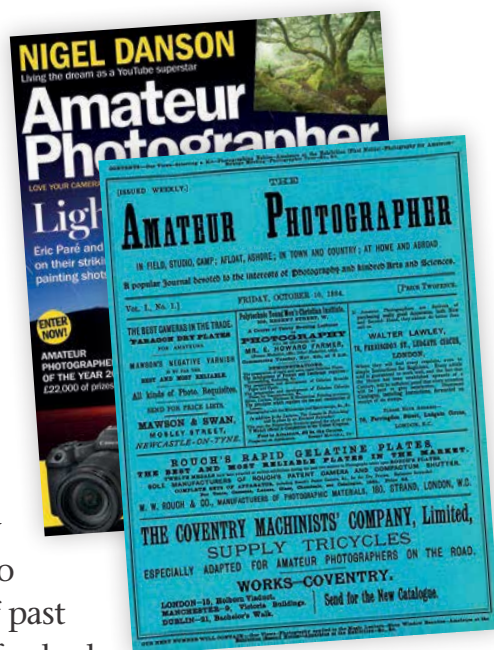
You are holding in your hands the new-look *Amateur Photographer*. It has been 12 years since our last redesign and much has changed in that time. Our surveys told us that you wanted us to be less frequent but larger, so we are now fortnightly and every issue is 100 pages. We have a bold new logo

which is both modern and, at the same time, contains echoes of past logos from our illustrious heritage. The cover design has been refreshed and the production upgraded to a higher-quality, staple-free format. Inside though you'll still find your favourite features, plus a few new ones.

It's worth reminding the world that the word 'amateur' comes from the Latin word for 'lover' (amator) and describes someone who pursues a pastime for the love of it. Today, photography has become democratised. Millions earn some income from photography, many through social media, but few make enough to actually earn a living from it. Most 'pros' now need a side hustle to make ends meet. But nobody takes up photography because they have to, they do it because they love it. In that sense everyone is an amateur, and *Amateur Photographer* is their natural home, however they pay their mortgage. I hope that you enjoy the new look. Do write in and tell us what you think.

*Nigel Atherton*

Nigel Atherton  
Group Editor



Then and now. This issue compared to the launch issue, 10th October 1884

## This issue's contributors...



**Kingsley Singleton and Matty Graham**

Canon EOS R5 Mark II vs Nikon Z8: pros Kingsley Singleton and Matty Graham on which is better for nature pictures



**Peter Fenech**

Photographer and YouTube star Nigel Danson tells Peter how overcoming challenges has made him into a better artist



**Graeme Green**

Eric Paré and Kim Henry create stunning light paintings together. Graeme Green interviews them to find out more



**John Wade**

Our expert on vintage cameras and camera history, John examines Praktina: the first 35mm SLR system camera and its accessories



**Geoff Harris**  
Deputy Editor

Geoff talks to accomplished photographer Sue O'Connell who shares her tips for Travel POTY success



**Ailsa McWhinnie**

Ailsa presents the grand launch of our annual prestigious photography contest APOY 2026, and the very first round, Street. Enter now!

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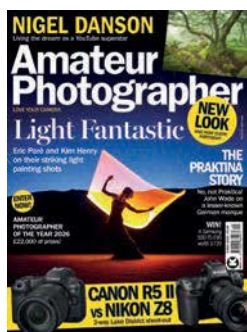


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Cover image by Eric Paré and Kim Henry. Read our feature on page 42

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# Amateur Photographer

LOVE YOUR CAMERA

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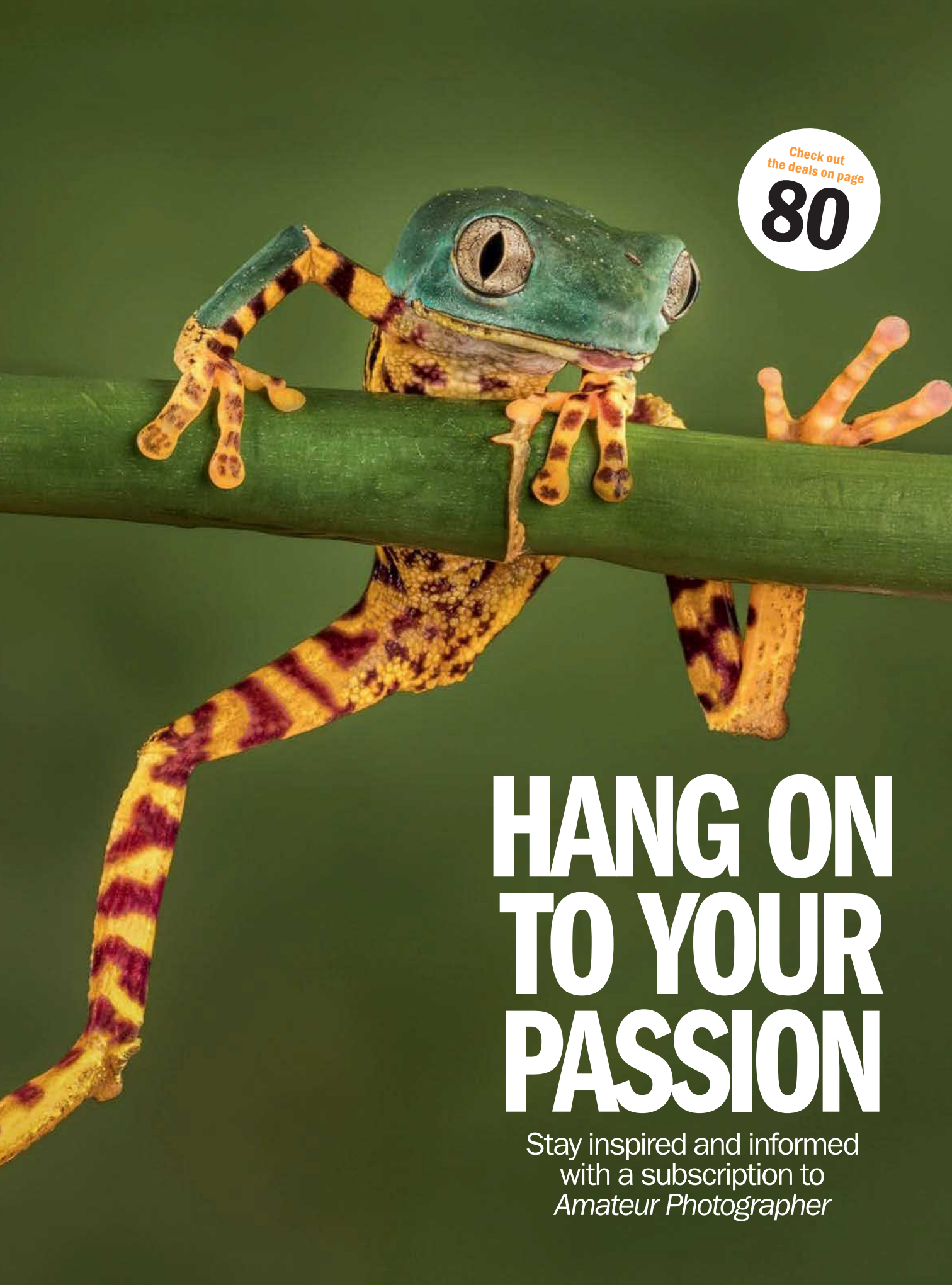
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Photo of a Tiger Legged Monkey Frog by Tonbridge Camera Club member David Godfrey. See more work by fellow club members on page 74





Check out  
the deals on page

**80**

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# What's new

The Viltrox AF  
35mm F1.2 LAB N  
FE full-frame  
autofocus prime



## Fast new AF prime lens for Sony FE mount

The ever-industrious Chinese lens maker Viltrox, has launched the AF 35mm F1.2 LAB N FE, a fast, full-frame autofocus prime optic for Sony FE mount.

Sitting alongside the original AF 35mm F1.2 LAB, the new lens has a more streamlined appearance, eschewing a display. It has a traditional aperture ring with marked stops for a more tactile experience, and features a 15-element, 10-group optical structure (including 3 HR, 5 ED, and 2 UA elements) to maintain edge-to-edge sharpness and control chromatic aberration in high-contrast or backlit scenes.

An 11-blade diaphragm delivers a smooth, rounded bokeh, Viltrox claims, while smooth and fast autofocus performance is provided by the company's Quad HyperVCM AF system. The lens is sealed against dust and moisture, with a water- and smudge-resistant front coating, while the full-metal housing and brass mount provide extra durability. The minimum focusing distance is 0.34m to facilitate detailed close-up shooting.

It's available now for £869. More details can be found at [bit.ly/viltrox35](http://bit.ly/viltrox35)

## What a good sport

With the World Cup starting next month it promises to be a great summer of sport – and the winners of the first Canon Emerging Talent Award in the World Sports Photography Awards have also been announced. This Canon award showcases the work of the world's best sports photographers under 30, and Tom Weller took the top prize for a portfolio spanning basketball to winter sport. Eight other young photographers worldwide were also honoured, with the Emerging Talent Award attracting more than 1,700 entries from all over the world.

'Tom Weller's portfolio captures what struck me most about this inaugural competition: this is not a generation waiting to arrive,' said Canon Europe's Richard Shepherd. 'His work has a confidence and range that would stand

© TOM WELLER



out at any level, and he is not alone in that. These photographers are already here, driving the standard for all.'

You can see the full list of winners at [worldsportsphotographyawards.com](http://worldsportsphotographyawards.com).

**Congratulations to Tom Weller for getting a slam dunk in this inaugural Canon competition**

An interesting perspective on Paris, taken by Antony Zacharias



# My name is Maximalist...

Paris has been photographed to death, but this detailed and dramatic image gives an interesting perspective on the 'city of light.' It was taken by Antony Zacharias, the author of a new book from Hachette UK/Orion Publishing called *The Maximalist Photographer*.

If you are wondering what this even is, maximalist photography is about capturing a 'more-is-more' aesthetic in your work, from saturated colours and layering to post-processing techniques, such as collages. Other noted exponents of maximalism include Lindsay Adler and Horst P. Horst, so the book

is a useful primer if you want to create bold, vibrant photographs that capture beauty in chaos. The full title is *The Maximalist Photographer: 50 Techniques for Capturing Beauty in Excess* and it goes on sale on 23 July, but we will be returning to this interesting genre before then.

## Last chance to be a travel Maestro

The UK National round of the 2026 EISA Maestro Photography Contest closes for entries on 15 May, so don't miss the deadline for this free-to-enter competition on the theme of 'Travelling.' You can enter a single image or a portfolio of five to eight pictures (but not both), and they must reflect the travel theme. Photographers entering the UK National round of this competition must also be UK residents. First-placed winners will receive a one-year digital subscription to Amateur Photographer and go forward to the Maestro International round with a chance of winning up to €2,000 for a portfolio or €1,000 for a single image. Visit [eisa.eu/maestro](https://eisa.eu/maestro) for terms, and email your entries to [ap.maestro@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:ap.maestro@kelsey.co.uk). For some last-minute travel photography tips, see our Sue O'Connell interview on page 48.

EISA Maestro is looking for your best travel photos



KIT

## DWARF Mini Smart Telescope

The latest release from an established name in 'smart' telescopes, this features a 1/2.8-inch Sony IMX662 sensor, 150mm f/5 telephoto lens and built-in astro, dark frame and narrow band filters, enabling it to capture a range of subjects from meteor trails and lunar detail to brighter deep-sky objects. The DWARF Mini Smart Telescope also features a 360-degree motorised mechanism for automated object finding but is relatively compact, weighing in at 820g. With up to 90-second exposures and app-based control, it offers a streamlined alternative to traditional telescope setups.

**Price: £359**

**Web: [bit.ly/minidwarf](http://bit.ly/minidwarf)**



## DJI Power 1000 Mini

Do you ever need to use high-powered kit, such as lights, out on location? One solution is a portable power 'station.' The DJI Power 1000 Mini is the company's most portable 1kWh power station to date and comes with a 1008Wh battery capacity optimised for low-power efficiency. The unit is chargeable by USB-C or car/solar top-ups, and weighs in at a manageable 11.5kg. The square design doesn't look too industrial either, and it should also prove useful on camping trips or excursions into the back of beyond.

**Price: £449**

**Web: [store.dji.com](http://store.dji.com)**

For this issue's in-depth accessory reviews, turn to pages 69 and 71.



## Vanguard Alta Sky

The new Alta Sky range of smart and capacious camera backpacks feature tough 1000D polyester exterior and padding to protect your camera kit, while Vanguard's harness system eases the load on your back and shoulders. Six new models are available, starting with the Alta Sky 42 at £180, through to the Alta Sky 69 at £300. The latter backpack (shown) can accommodate particularly long lenses such as the Canon RF 1200mm F8 L IS USM.

**Price: varies according to model**

**Web: [bit.ly/newaltasky](http://bit.ly/newaltasky)**

## Westcott S18 Mini Flash

This cute, sub-£40 flash gun may only offer manual control, but it's got some enticing features, including 18Ws flash output, a tilting head, and a built-in rechargeable battery. The flash output, with a guide number of 16 (ISO 100), is significantly more powerful than most cameras' built-in flashguns; you can adjust the power manually across 19 steps in a 7-stop range (3.0-9.0) with 0.3-stop increments. 'The Westcott S18 Mini Flash mounts to most Canon, Nikon, Sony, Fujifilm, Panasonic Lumix, Olympus, and Leica cameras via a universal single-pin hot shoe,' said the company.

**Price: £39**

**Web: [bit.ly/westminiflash](http://bit.ly/westminiflash)**



## LomoChrome ClassiColor film camera

This fun, re-usable film camera is handy for a day out when you don't want to haul bigger camera gear around, or a good way to get kids interested in analogue photography. It's pre-loaded with LomoChrome Classicolor colour negative film, which the company claims offers natural-looking colours and blushing skin tones, and will take any 35mm film after that. Features include a fixed 31mm, f/9 lens with a 1/120sec shutter speed, and a built-in flash with a range of coloured gel filters. Power is supplied by a single AA battery.

**Price: £19**

**Web: [bit.ly/lomocolour](http://bit.ly/lomocolour)**



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## Celebrating Martin Parr's last big commission

With the world of photography still coming to terms with the loss of the irreplaceable Martin Parr, the National Trust has announced a major exhibition of his projects on the storied village of Lacock in Wiltshire. Lacock was the home of photographic pioneer William Fox Talbot (1800-1877), and Martin Parr first photographed his home, Lacock Abbey, and the picturesque village in the 1980s. He returned in 2025, in what proved to be his last major commission before his death the same year.

'From VE Day events to the annual flower show and scarecrow trail, visitors will encounter moments of local celebration, community gatherings and the quieter details of everyday life that Parr captured with



© MARTIN PARR / MAGNUM PHOTOS

both affection and acuity,' said the National Trust. 'Seen together, they form a vivid portrait of contemporary Britain as experienced through a single Wiltshire village.'

The National Trust will also publish an accompanying book with a foreword

by Martin's widow Susie, reflecting on the significance of Lacock in her husband's life and creative journey. A short film made during the project will also be shown. The exhibition runs from 27 June 2026 to 27 June 2027.

For full details, see [bit.ly/mplacock](https://bit.ly/mplacock)

**Scarecrow Festival. Lacock, Wiltshire, England, 2025**



Earn your drone wings with the Lito range (Lito X1 shown)

## New beginner-friendly DJI Lito drones

Drone giant DJI has announced a new range of 'accessible' drones, the Lito X1 and Lito 1, aimed at content creators who are new (or relatively new) to these devices.

The Lito X1 features a 1/1.3in, 48MP CMOS sensor and f/1.7 aperture optics, along with 5-lux omnidirectional obstacle sensing and forward-facing LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology.

Reflecting its lower price, the Lito 1 includes a 1/2in 48MP CMOS sensor, f/1.8 optics and 5-lux omnidirectional obstacle sensing, rather than LiDAR.

On both drones, intelligent filming tools – such as ActiveTrack, QuickShots, MasterShots, Hyperlapse, and Panorama – aim to lower the learning curve for newbies.

The DJI Lito 1 retails for £299 and the Lito X1 for £369. Fly More Combo kits are also available for both models.

## THE BIG QUESTION

*What makes a photo truly powerful?*



**Andrew Knight** The story. I think it separates a good shot and an excellent shot. It pulls you along and engages you. The story can be fun and uplifting but equally a powerful thought-provoking image is great.



**@chavaliraghuvamsh** Subject in the photograph.



**@gr.nrth** When a photo stops you and really makes you look at it. Especially in these days of info overload.



**Tyler White** The message being said without words having to say it.



**T Selley Photography Cheltenham** The subject and the light.



**@sheffershane** Being technically imperfect, while capturing a moment/emotion really well.



**@me.unseenarch** If it can make me feel something.



## Back in time **1933**

### **Book Burning On The Opernplatz, Berlin**

10th May 1933: A crowd of 40,000 people watch 'un-German' books – by authors not considered to conform to Nazi ideology – being burned in the Opernplatz, Berlin, 10th May 1933. The crowd was addressed by Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels.

(Photo by Fine Art Images/Heritage Images via Getty Images)

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Portraying the feeling of physically being there.



**Daisy May Defined - Food Photographer**

When it makes people stop scrolling.



**Lindy Evans**

An image that evokes some depth of emotion from the viewer.



@allfields\_photography

Tells 1,000 words in one shot.



**Omelko Paclawskyj**

Shock value; something in the picture that conveys a sense of awe.



**Sam Draper**

The feeling and expression it brings, excitement and story, the moment in the captured memory.



**Mhairi Chambers**

Tells a story with instant impact.

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## Opinion Gavin Stoker

Our regular columnist wonders if the 'travel camera' is dead, or just resting

“On holiday with friends recently, I fished a compact travel zoom camera out of my pocket. 'Huh, you don't see many of those any more,' one remarked. Their point being that, as almost everyone is content to use a smartphone for travel snaps, it seemed eccentric to use an actual digital camera. I get it; a phone typically provides the quickest and easiest way to capture an image and share it. Yet 15 years ago the travel camera was a burgeoning, dedicated market segment. The term was used for pocket-sized, largely point-and-shoot cameras with ever-increasing zoom power: 10x, 12x, 20x, and so on.

These compacts justified their existence because they offered something different from the smartphone – namely the propelling optical zoom lens on the front – which delivered a variety of framing options. One of the major players was

Panasonic, which had its own dedicated 'TZ' for 'Travel Zoom' range, at the time offering a capable, portable product at a fair price. It introduced its first 10x Lumix TZ1 camera in 2006 and arguably led the charge thereafter.

Despite this, the inexorable rise of smartphones meant most other big camera makers lost interest in this segment. The pandemic, when we weren't travelling at all, appeared to be the final nail in the coffin. Add in the shortage of sensors and components at the time, and the travel camera was dead.

Jump forward to now and a quick internet search will reveal various travel camera round-ups. But buyers' guides are typically made up of bigger-bodied, larger sensor models like Fujifilm's ever-popular X100V or X100VI. The closest equivalents to what was once termed a travel camera are not only more expensive but they've evolved beyond simple point-and-shoots with long focal lengths that any member of the family



The Panasonic Lumix TZ99 with the lens fully retracted

could pick up and use from scratch.

So-called travel cameras are now just enthusiast-targeted cameras that happen to be small enough to carry around easily. That's what makes them possible options to travel with. Not their features per se.

### Are you experienced?

There's now also overlap with cameras targeted at vlogger/content creators, spear-headed by Sony with its 'ZV' series. These models are deliberately compact and portable, while enabling you to shoot wide and cram more into the frame. We're now easily able to show both ourselves and our surroundings when recording with the camera at arm's length, lens facing us.

With travel photography today defined by sharing our personal experiences and interactions as much as the destination itself, what we demand from a camera on our travels has evolved. Or it could just be that the major camera firms' thirst to jump on the content-creator camera bandwagon is further driving that change.

Maybe I'm premature in declaring the demise of the old-school travel compact. In a surprisingly nostalgic move, doubtless emboldened by current social media fervour for used compacts like the Nikon Coolpix, Panasonic has broken its decade-long drought and launched the 30x optical zoom Lumix TZ99 and more recently, the TZ300, with 15x zoom and a 1-inch sensor. Is this the start of a revival of the category?

Time will tell. Just don't let my friends know that there is now a fresh alternative to their phones for capturing heart shapes or V-signs in front of a sunset.

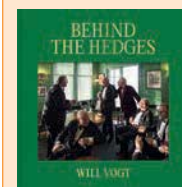
Gavin Stoker has been writing about and reviewing all things photographic for the best part of 25 years.

What we demand from a camera on our travels has evolved



**Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest?**

Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the email address on page 6 and win a year's digital subscription to AP.



**Behind the Hedges**  
by Will Vogt  
£40, Schilt  
Publishing,  
Hardback, 112  
pages, ISBN:  
9789053309674

**Left: Third Friday in May**

# American elites

## An insider's portrait of privilege

Photographer Will Vogt's second monograph is both a vivid behind-the-scenes reflection of his own privileges, while capturing the lifestyle of his friends and family.

*Behind the Hedges* shifts between the lavish lives of the wealthy and the more startling and concerning side of this environment. An image of a lone Black guest at a party, and a bone yard stacked with the remnants of years of hunts are just two disconcerting examples.

Vogt's photographs span over 50 years, predominantly shot in Watch Hill, on his family's ranch in South Texas, but include other locations Vogt visits on a regular basis, both at home and abroad. The book is accompanied by an essay by artist and editor Jennifer Garza-Cuen who is also a professor at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

From children playing carefree on a golf course, to teenagers enjoying lavish parties and events, to the older generation partaking in the more traditional hunting escapades, Vogt's photographic approach allows the viewer to be able to get an insight and to immerse themselves.

Clever wide interior and exterior shots of mansions are carefully composed. An inviting leading line leads you towards Lainston House with various tables and chairs set out front, a swimming pool at the foreground of another lavish house by the sea.

The lavishness and dark side of the upper class is expertly captured by Vogt, an unfiltered look into this world that many do not experience. **Craig Blackley**



**Above: Children at Play**



**Left: Whistle**



**The Boys Experiencing What it Would be Like to Have Cleavage, 1993**

## Family fortunes – a look at one family's life

**This collection of authentic black & white images is a blend of intimacy and humour, says Craig Blackley**

Photographer Melonie Bennett's debut monograph *Holy Cow* is a true and unfiltered account of her family life, from 1990-2011. The book takes the reader on a rollercoaster of emotions and laughter that may resonate and hit close to home with some.

Bennett grew up in Maine on a dairy farm in America alongside her brother and sister. She studied Photography at Maine College, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. She then worked as an assistant to photographer Judy Glickman Lauder in 1991.

Bennett is the oldest of her siblings which meant she had to be the responsible one. No misbehaving, partying or skipping school,

unlike her siblings who did the opposite.

During high school she took a darkroom class which is where the inspiration for capturing her family life began. Because around the same time, she became the designated driver for family and friends to parties.

This presented the photographer with the perfect opportunity to carefully curate the chaotic nature of her family life while being expertly nestled in the background.

Between Bennett's astute timing, positioning and composition, she allows the reader to be a fly on the wall while flicking through the images in the book. As the reader you are able to see and live through the

photographer's life. Her images are a natural depiction of a family's experiences which are cleverly captured by her ability to be at the right place at the right time.

In the book there are many moments of humour, intimacy, joy and affection. The images are striking, thought-provoking, well-lit and most importantly, they are all contextually meaningful in one way or another. This is why the images chosen work so well together and represent such authenticity, a raw depiction of one's family told through Bennett's lens.

We see everything from drunken escapades to college antics, to a giggling young girl spraying a hose pipe, to a tender image of Bennett's father receiving a birthday cake. This book reveals the true reality of family life, carefully capturing an array of emotions that the photographer wants to show the reader about her life and what kind of things she has witnessed regularly growing up.

**HOLY  
COW!**

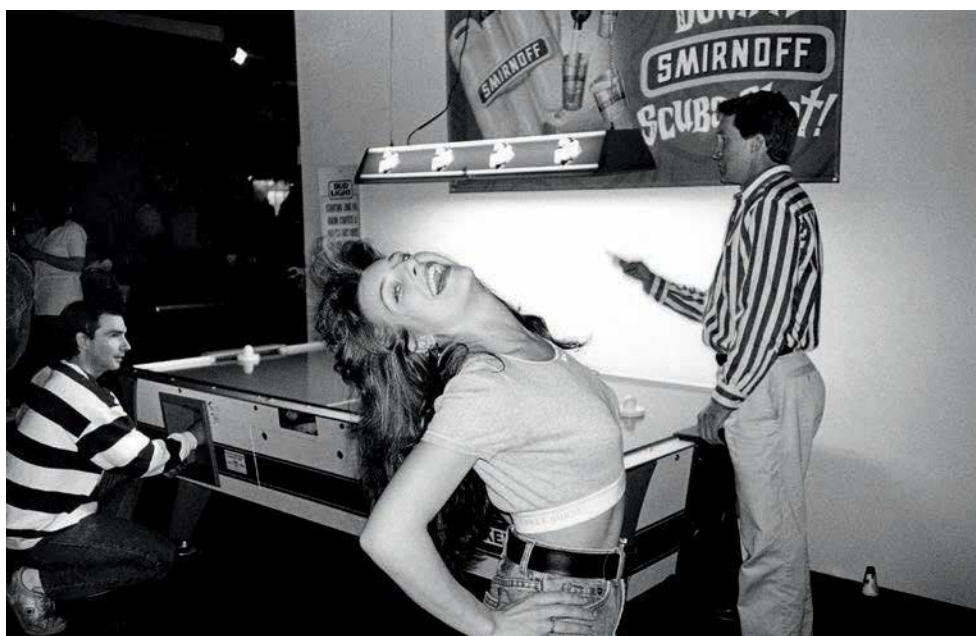
**Holy Cow! by  
Melonie Bennett**  
£40, GOST, £40,  
Hardback, 176  
pages, ISBN:  
9781915423696



**Wyatt, Merritt and Cinderella, Halloween, 2010**



**Monique Instigating the First Water Fight of the Season, 1993**



**Suzie, Bahama Beach Club, 1996**

## What's On

Some dates for your  
photographic diary

### 9-10 May EVENT

*FotoFest: Visual Expo* at various  
venues, Walsall

### 12 May WORKSHOP

*RPS: Capturing London  
Architecture* with Nigel Wilson

### 12 May TALK

*Jane Evelyn Atwood*, shortlisted  
*Deutsche Börse Photography Prize*  
at The Photographers' Gallery,  
London

### 14-17 May EVENT

*Photo London*, National Hall,  
Olympia

### Until 27 May EXHIBITION

*Care & Defiance – the female  
photographic gaze* at Centrala  
Gallery, Birmingham

### Until 5 June EXHIBITION

*Bird Photographer of the Year* at  
Rugby Art Gallery

### Until 24 May EXHIBITION

*The Last Resort: 40 Years On* by  
*Martin Parr* at Martin Parr  
Foundation, Bristol

### 18-20 June EVENT

*Wales & West Photography Show*,  
at International Convention Centre  
Wales, Newport

### Until 12 July EXHIBITION

*Wildlife Photographer of the Year*  
at Natural History Museum,  
London

### 17-19 July EVENT

*Summit Photo 2026*, Royal  
Geographical Society, London

### Until 3 August EXHIBITION

*Astronomy Photographer of the  
Year 17* at National Maritime  
Museum, London

### 24 October EVENT

*Photo Book Fair* at Ffotogallery,  
Cardiff

**To be included in these listings,  
please email [ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk)  
at least a month in advance**



At Home on Useful Island - Jean Robson FRPS

# Outdoor exhibition comes to Inverness

**RPS Landscape Group Outdoor Exhibition**  
Until 17 May  
WASPS, Inverness

## More than 80 images feature from the RPS Landscape Group

The latest stop-off in this touring exhibition – the RPS Landscape Group Outdoor Exhibition – is at WASPS in Inverness. In the exhibition, there are more than 80 landscape images displayed across boards of almost 30 metres in length.

Organised into different categories, comprising Land & Sea, Urban & Rural, Colour & Mono, it's an excellent opportunity to look at some beautiful landscapes, all without having to worry about opening times or exhibition tickets. Of course, it's also hoped that the images will catch the attention of those who happen to be passing by.

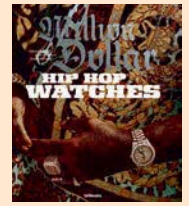
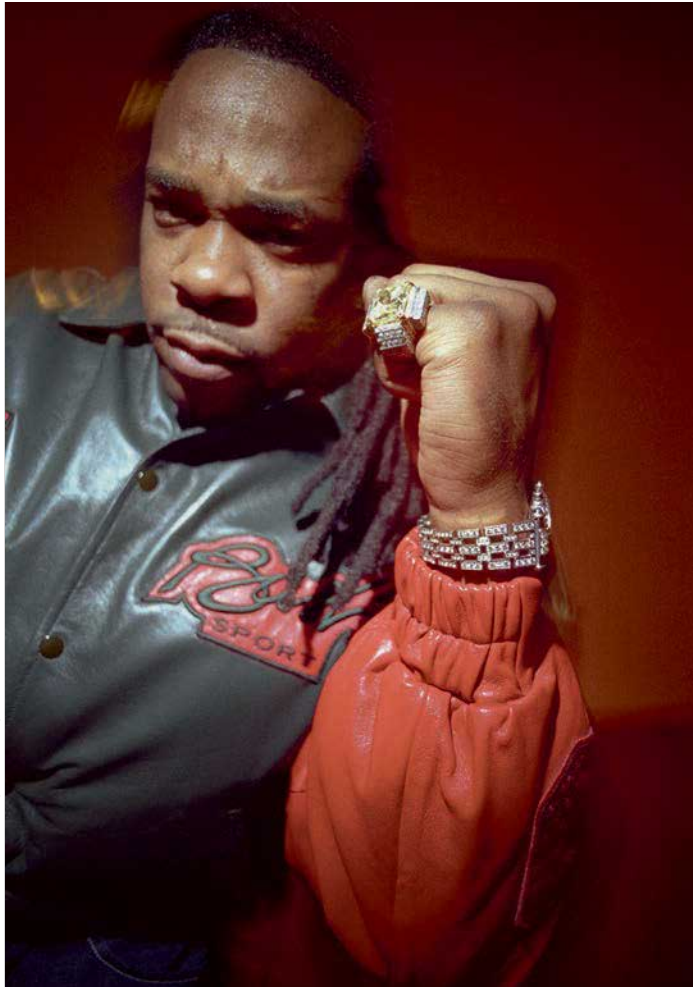
Having already travelled around the country to locations including London, Nottingham and Chester, the exhibition will continue on to further venues once it leaves Inverness. Exact details are yet to be announced.

If you haven't come across one of the exhibitions yet, there is also an online gallery where you can take a look at the work instead. There's also links to all of the photographers included, which is a great way to find new inspiration.

Take a look at [rps.org/Landscape-EXP025](http://rps.org/Landscape-EXP025) for more details, to see the online galleries, and to be kept updated about further touring locations.



Edinburgh - Morag Forbes



**Million Dollar Hip Hop Watches**  
£89.95, teNeues, Hardcover, 320 pages, ISBN: 9783961716968



**Clockwise from left: Busta Rhymes.** Watch is notable for its iced-out bracelet featuring visible gabs between the links. 2002.

**Tee Grizzley.** Wearing a Jesus piece and a bust-down Audemars Piguet Royal Oak. 2018.

**Ski Mask the Slump God.** Iced-out Royal Oak. 2024.

# The ludicrously blingy world of hip-hop jewellery

## This exploration of rap stars and their watches is a visual treat

From renowned hip-hop legend 2 Pac's rare 18k yellow Karat gold Rolex Datejust, to Jay-Z's \$5million Hublot, this book sheds light on the significant correlation between rap culture and luxury watches, from hip-hop's origins to the modern day, told and represented through powerful imagery.

*Million Dollar Hip Hop Watches* is a 320-page book produced by Leon Schafers, Jeanette Lang and Tobias Kargoll, which smartly explores the history of rap music through the industry's most defining watches. This book is a visual treat which features a pleasing blend of music, art and luxury that flows naturally and is well executed throughout.

It features rap stars such as Travis Scott,

Pharrell Williams, A\$AP Rocky, Eminem, Rick Ross, and many more. Every image includes their beloved luxury watches captured in various environments, from festivals to studio settings. These are all beautifully shot by photographers David Cabrera, Mika Vaisanen, negativebynature, and Kenneth Lesley, who took the front cover image.

The intriguing images are a mix of portraits, action shots, and close-ups of artists and their luxury timepieces, spread over 20 enticing chapters. Using both colour and black & white imagery, from single pages to eye-opening double page spreads.

From rap's journey from the Bronx to eventual worldwide appeal, this book connects the dots between the cultural

impact and the fascination of rappers and their watches.

Not only do these images highlight the significance that these luxury watches have, but they also show appreciation to the craftsmanship of the brands who made them. Sit back and marvel at the slick designs and intricate details that will fascinate even the casual fan of jewellery and watches.

Well-known watch brands such as Rolex, Audemars Piguet, Patek Philippe, Cartier, Hublot and Richard Mille feature in the book.

Overall, it's a great read for hip-hop enthusiasts, general collectors, jewellery-lovers, or even if you'd just like to show off the eye-catching front cover design on your coffee table. **Craig Blackley**

# What's new



## Your best Photos

Our favourite photos posted by readers on our social media channels. To see your photo here post it on Instagram or Facebook with the hashtag

### #appicoftheweek



**WIN!** Every issue, Europe's leading photo printing company CEWE will be giving two AP Pic of the Week winners a total of £100 each in vouchers to spend on CEWE's exceptional photo products. Visit [cewe.co.uk](http://cewe.co.uk)

\* PRIZE IS VALID IN THE UK ONLY

### The Sea Parrot by Jamie Simmons

Sony A1, 200-600mm, 1/1600sec at f/6.3, ISO 640

I am a travelling wedding photographer and always look for places to visit along the way. This is Skomer Island. I decided to spend a day on the island capturing the puffins in photo and video form. But they move fast and can be unpredictable. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed an inquisitive puffin watching me. So, I stopped trying to photograph the birds diving off the cliff ready to capture food for their young, and focused on the puffin watching me. I snapped away to ensure I got the drama before the puffin changed stance or retreated.

Instagram: @jsphoto\_explares @jsphoto\_weddings

PRIZE  
WINNER



## **Vetrarbrún: Winter's Edge** by Hana Soar

Nikon D750 24-70mm f/2.8, 1 sec at f/16, ISO 100, 27mm

Photographed on Fellsfjara Beach, this scene transforms chaos into calm. Jagged ice fragments scattered against black volcanic sand with powerful waves evoke an otherworldly stillness. Braving the winter storms, I took this long exposure which captures a volatile, shifting shoreline revealing the raw, untamed beauty and haunting atmosphere of Iceland's coastal wilderness.

**Website:** [soarcreative.uk](http://soarcreative.uk)

**Instagram:** [@soar.raw](https://www.instagram.com/soar.raw)

# What's new

   
**Your best  
Photos**

## **Silent Structures, Loud Visions** by Kelly Bowden

Google Pixel 8 Pro,  
1/1404sec at f/1.7, ISO 30

This photo was taken at the hotel where I was staying, during a trip to Schaumburg. As I looked out the window, the building's minimalist structure caught my eye, exuding a sense of calm, stillness, and a slightly futuristic vibe. The view allowed my mind to wander, especially after such a busy and loud weekend.

**Instagram:**  
**coffeecoatedfilm**



**PRIZE  
WINNER**



## **The Singing Wren**

by Lucy Wilson

Sony A7C, 70-350mm G OSS, 1/500sec at f/6.3, ISO 1000

A wren balances on a thin branch, calling among early catkins. The plain background makes its shape and plumage easy to see. I photographed it near a local pond, where wrens are often active and vocal. It was a simple, close-range moment that shows their everyday behaviour clearly.

**Instagram:** [@lucylegram](https://www.instagram.com/lucylegram)

**Etsy:** [lucylephoto.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/lucylephoto)

# What's new



## Your best Photos

### Yosemite Valley, Lower Falls by Jake Poe

Pentax 6x7, Pentax 75mm f/4.5, Yellow 12 + ND64 filters, Ilford PanF 50, 4sec at f/16, 50 Film speed

With the mist of Lower Yosemite Falls drenching everything it can reach, I had to make sure everything was ready to go, so that my camera only had to be in that mist during the length of my exposure. I metered my scene and adjusted for the filters. I walked over with my tripod and set it up in my desired spot, fine-tuned the composition, made sure focus was in check, and Mother Nature did the rest.

**Instagram:** @JakePoePhotography

**Website:** JakePoePhotography.com

**Etsy:** JakePoePhotography.Etsy.com



### Jungle Cat with the Prey by Jayesh Bhatt

Nikon Z9, 600mm F4 Z, 1/2000sec at f/4, ISO 1400, 600mm

I was lucky to capture this jungle cat in the golden backdrop of the dry summer grass returning with the prey for her pups. To me this was a wonderful rare sighting!

**Instagram:** @jayeshbhatt.photography **Facebook:** JayeshBhatt.photography

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](mailto:ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk). See page 3 for how to find us.

# WIN!

## The Samsung Portable SSD T5 EVO

Running out of photo storage space? You need to enter our exclusive competition

With the spread of high-resolution mirrorless cameras, it's easy to get low on storage space for your photo archive, particularly if you shoot raw or video. We recommend storing your pictures in a range of places for extra security, and this capacious 8TB portable SSD drive from Samsung is a great option – 8TB should easily swallow most readers' photo collections with room to spare. So, we have teamed up with Samsung to offer you the chance to win one of these handy drives. See the panel below for entry details. For more details of the prize, simply visit: [samsung.com/uk/memory-storage/portable-ssd](https://samsung.com/uk/memory-storage/portable-ssd)

### T5 EVO key features

- Sequential read/write speeds up to 460 MB/s for fast file transfers
- Works with Macs, PCs, laptops & Android devices; and massive 8TB capacity for storing large files, photos and videos
- USB 3.2 Gen 1 connectivity for easy plug-and-play use
- Durable design with shock resistance

### How to enter

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning this great prize, worth £720, is to visit: <https://shorturl.at/ncPaG> or point your phone camera at this QR code, then enter your details. One lucky winner will be selected at random. Closing date: midnight on 5 June 2026.



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Enter  
today!

# Amateur Photographer of the Year Competition

# £24,000

## of prizes to be won

Our annual competition is back, with ten rounds that will test your creativity, and some fantastic prizes to be won



# APOY 2026

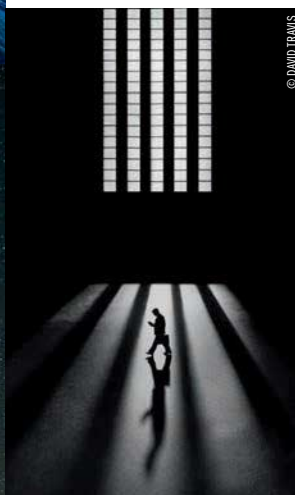
In association with

**DxO**

For the passionate photographer.

**amazinginternet** **PARK**Cameras

**Bob Books** **THE SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY**



Once again, AP is championing the best in image-making with the launch of this year's Amateur Photographer of the Year award (APOY), where the best non-professional photographers in the world compete over ten rounds to win some fantastic prizes.

We are excited to announce DxO as our headline sponsor, For Free Mags Check sastatus.com with prizes for each round winner and the overall winner. Our other sponsors are Park Cameras, Amazing Internet, Bob Books and School of Photography.

Together, they are giving away a massive £24,000 worth of vouchers, software and products. In addition, we are excited to reveal that there will be a touring exhibition and

book featuring the winners of each round and a selection of runner-up images.

We are also pleased to announce that all our prizes are available to every entrant, wherever in the world they may be based\*.

You might submit images to only one or two rounds, or you might set yourself the challenge of entering them all – it's up to you. Once again, we are also running our Young APOY competition, open to photographers aged between 13 and 21 by the closing date. And we are delighted once more to encourage camera club members to enter and accumulate points for their society.

**Turn over for details on how to enter Round One**

To enter, visit  
**[www.amateurphotographer.com/apoy](http://www.amateurphotographer.com/apoy)**

## DxO PhotoLab

DxO PhotoLab delivers outstanding image quality with its powerful RAW engine, intelligent corrections, precise optical calibration, and advanced AI-driven tools like DeepPRIME noise reduction. DxO FilmPack complements PhotoLab by bringing the timeless aesthetic of film photography to the digital workflow. It integrates seamlessly with PhotoLab or can be used as a standalone application. Visit **[shop.dxo.com/en](http://shop.dxo.com/en)**

## Park Cameras

For over 50 years Park Cameras has forged a reputation as one of the top independent photo retailers in the UK. Park Cameras offers a massive selection of cameras, lenses and accessories, and they provide honest and friendly expert advice to customers, both online and in-store. Visit **[parkcameras.com](http://parkcameras.com)**

## Amazing Internet

Amazing Internet, a multi-award-winning company, designs, builds and hosts amazing websites for creative people and companies. It has specialised in creating websites for photographers since 1999 – and whether you need a simple template-based site for £60 per year or a fully bespoke site, they've got you covered. **[AmazingInternet.com](http://AmazingInternet.com)**

## Bob Books

Bob Books is one of the UK's most well-respected firms for designing and printing photo books. Choose from an exceptional range of premium photo papers and binding styles. Through its online bookshop, Bob Books supports photographers by ensuring they can self-publish and showcase their work. Visit **[www.bobbooks.co.uk/amateur-photographer-of-the-year-awards-2025](http://www.bobbooks.co.uk/amateur-photographer-of-the-year-awards-2025)**

## School of Photography

The School of Photography is an award-winning online video-based learning platform covering all genres, at all levels. It offers student critiques, monthly assignments, competitions, Q&As, and Webinars as well as thousands of video tutorials. It reaches photographers all over the world. Visit: **[theschoolofphotography.com](http://theschoolofphotography.com)**

\*PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY WINNERS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK WILL BE LIABLE FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S IMPORT DUTIES AND COSTS

# Amateur Photographer

Your chance to enter the UK's most prestigious competition

## Round one Street

The beauty of street photography is it takes almost no organisation – you simply grab your camera, walk out of your front door and start seeking opportunities for a shot. Using a wideangle lens within the 'action' will often produce a dynamic and exciting shot, while a longer lens will allow you to isolate your subject from its surroundings, concentrating on expression and pose. Whether you're drawn to the aesthetics of a place or how people interact with their environment, this category offers huge scope to create all manner of creative shots.



### Your guest judge

Dawn Eagleton is a renowned British street photographer. She captures authentic depictions of her subjects in unguarded moments and uses expressions, subtle gestures and mannerisms to create relatable images. Her photography has been exhibited internationally and has featured in many publications. Her debut book is *Through the Glass*. [www.dawneagleton.com](http://www.dawneagleton.com)

## Plan your APOY 2026 year

Below is a list of all this year's rounds, including when they open, when they close and the dates the results will be announced in AP

| THEME              | OPENS             | CLOSES       | SHORTLIST    | RESULTS         |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Street             | 5 May 2026        | 25 May 2026  | 10 June 2026 | AP June 30 2026 |
| Black & White      | 26 May 2026       | 22 June 2026 | 8 July 2026  | AP July 28 2026 |
| Animal Kingdom     | 23 June 2026      | 20 July 2026 | 5 Aug 2026   | AP 25 Aug 2026  |
| Celebrating Colour | 21 July 2026      | 17 Aug 2026  | 2 Sep 2026   | AP 22 Sep 2026  |
| Architecture       | 18 August 2026    | 14 Sep 2026  | 30 Sep 2026  | AP 20 Oct 2026  |
| People & Portraits | 15 September 2026 | 12 Oct 2026  | 28 Oct 2026  | AP 17 Nov 2026  |
| Landscapes         | 13 October 2026   | 9 Nov 2026   | 25 Nov 2026  | AP 15 Dec 2026  |
| Close-up and macro | 10 November 2026  | 30 Nov 2026  | 16 Dec 2026  | AP 26 Jan 2027  |
| Night & Low Light  | 1 December 2026   | 4 Jan 2027   | 20 Jan 2027  | AP 9 Feb 2027   |
| Open               | 5 January 2027    | 1 Feb 2027   | 17 Feb 2027  | AP 9 Mar 2027   |

### YOUR FREE ENTRY CODE

Enter the code below via Photocrowd to get one free entry to Round One - Street

# APOY58885011



Phil Tomlinson came in fourth place in last year's Urban Life round with this quiet moment in a demonstration

© PHIL TOMLINSON

To enter, just

## ALL ABOUT APOY 2026

### The camera club award

Do you belong to a camera club or photographic society? You can accumulate precious points for your society when you enter Amateur Photographer of the Year. And after all of the ten rounds have been completed, the club that has gained the most points overall will win a free website build from Amazing Internet, worth £1,500.



# her of the Year

petition for amateur photographers



£24,000  
worth of  
prizes

visit [www.amateurphotographer.com/apoy](http://www.amateurphotographer.com/apoy)



## The Young APOY award

Now a well-established part of APOY, the Young Photographer of the Year competition encourages our up-and-coming snappers. Entrants should be 21 years old or younger by the competition's final closing date of 1st February 2027. All the categories are the same as for the main contest – simply select the Young APOY option on Photocrowd when you upload your images. Entry is free. Each round winner and two runners-up in each round wins prizes, with the overall winner after ten rounds receiving vouchers from Park Cameras and Bob Books.

# APOY 2026

In association with



For the passionate photographer.

amazinginternet PARKCameras

Bob Books THE SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

## What you win

### APOY prizes

The winner of each round of APOY 2026 will receive free DxO software (DxO PhotoLab 8 and DxO FilmPack 7) worth £340, a £300 voucher to spend on anything at Park Cameras, an annual subscription to The School of Photography worth £120, and a £50 voucher for Bob Books.

The two runners-up in each round will receive a free DxO Nik Collection licence worth £146 and a £25 voucher for Bob Books. The top ten entries from every round will also be published in AP. The overall winner after ten rounds wins £1,000 to spend at Park Cameras and a £100 voucher for Bob Books.

### Young APOY prizes

The winner of each round of Young APOY receives free DxO PhotoLab and FilmPack licences worth £340, a £100 voucher to spend at Park Cameras, an annual subscription to The School of Photography worth £120, and a £50 voucher for Bob Books. The two runners-up in each round will receive a free DxO Nik Collection licence worth £146 and a £25 voucher for Bob Books. The overall winner of Young APOY will receive a £250 voucher to spend at Park Cameras and a £100 voucher for Bob Books.

### Camera club prizes

The winning club after all ten rounds receives a beautiful new website build from Amazing Internet, worth £1,500.

\*PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY WINNERS OF PARK CAMERAS VOUCHERS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK WILL BE LIABLE FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S IMPORT DUTIES AND COSTS

# Picture Perfect

## BEST SHOTS: STREET

One genre. Three photographers. Three standout images. AP invited three photographers working in the Street photography genre to share one image they consider among their best - each revealing how vision, timing and technique come together in a single frame, says **Peter Dench**



## Dimpy Bhalotia

Dimpy Bhalotia is an award-winning photographer and creative director based between London and Mumbai. She is internationally recognised for her distinctive approach to street photography, portraiture and documentary work, marked by emotional depth, strong visual rhythm and an unwavering sensitivity to human presence. Dimpy is also the founder and curator of Pure Street Photography®, an internationally respected platform dedicated exclusively to street photography.

Instagram @dimpy.bhalotia

### Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?

'Flying Boys' captures a day-to-day activity of young boys living in Varanasi, India. These boys were jumping off a man-made ghat into the river to beat the heat during the Indian summer. It is pure, honest, and full of life. I chose this frame because it represents everything I look for in photography. Spontaneity, movement, emotion, and a moment that cannot be repeated.

### What was happening just before and after this frame?

Just before this frame, I saw that the boys were repeatedly climbing up and jumping into the water, full of excitement and energy. They were racing amongst themselves, and the challenge was who could jump the highest and fastest. This whole moment made me very happy.

I noticed the rhythm and began observing their movement carefully. I waited for the perfect alignment where all three boys happened to jump almost together, appearing layered in space. Right after this moment, they disappeared instantly into the water. The scene returned to normal within seconds, but this very moment did not repeat. The three boys never jumped again in such beautifully layered sync, which is why this photograph feels even more fleeting and special.

### What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?

The most important decision was choosing the angle. I wanted the energy to be felt strongly without any distraction. I decided to shoot from a very low angle so the sky became a clean background. This removed distractions and allowed the bodies to form graphic shapes.

I also waited for layering. I did not want just one person jumping. I wanted a visual rhythm with multiple figures suspended in space. Timing and patience were essential. I waited until the spacing between them felt balanced and dynamic.

### Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?

This photograph was made on an iPhone X using purely natural light. I exposed for the sky, which simplified the scene and emphasised form, gesture, and motion. The fast reaction time of the phone allowed me to capture the exact split second when the three boys aligned perfectly. And the simplicity of the tool helped me to stay instinctive and responsive.

### What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?

The biggest challenge was timing. The jumps happened very quickly and unpredictably. The boys were very fast and energetic. I had to anticipate movement, understand their rhythm, and be ready at the exact moment.

I was standing and bending at a very low angle, so I could not always see when they were going to jump. I relied on hearing their running footsteps and excited voices, which helped me predict that they were about to leap off the ghat into the river. Even a fraction of a second earlier or later, and the composition would not work.

### What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?

To me, this photograph represents joy, innocence, hope, and the beauty of everyday life. The boys become symbols of fearlessness and freedom. It shows how ordinary moments can become extraordinary when seen with attention and patience.

I hope viewers feel the energy, movement, and happiness in the frame, and are reminded that powerful photographs often exist in simple, real life moments.

### Was it luck or judgement?

It was both. Luck placed me in front of the scene. Judgement allowed me to recognise the potential of the moment, choose the angle, wait for layering, and capture the decisive instant with right composition.



## Nick Turpin

Nick Turpin is an internationally renowned street photographer who started his career with *The Independent* newspaper in London at the age of 20. He is now one of just a handful of photographers worldwide who shoot commissioned street photography for advertising, design and editorial clients. In 2000 Nick founded the influential iN-PUBLiC Street Photographers group that played a significant role in the contemporary resurgence of interest in the approach. **Instagram @the\_nick\_turpin**

### Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?

This picture was shot in the financial district during the Covid lockdown in 2020. The City was empty, billions of pounds' worth of real estate was just sitting, devoid of people, except a few maintenance and security staff.

I wanted to record this event, this time, the architecture juxtaposed with the few sparse figures passing through the Square Mile. I had been a street photographer for over 30 years, but I had recently felt a duty to move the genre on. And this project that I called Exodus, became the first series that I shot with handheld tilt shift lenses, that I usually used for my architecture and interiors clients. I wanted to 'cross pollinate' street images with the ways I worked in my commercial work. You will see that this scene has perfect geometry, the perspective is controlled by the tilt shift lens that lets me look up and down without tilting the camera's sensor.

### What was happening just before and after this frame?

I glimpsed this scene as I passed the end of the street and knew immediately it was significant, a single figure leans against a

window lit by Edward Hopper's lighting man. There was a feeling of beautiful melancholy with a lovely colour palette. I took a frame, moved closer, took a second frame and kept going until I felt the composition was working. As a photographer with *The Independent* in the '90s I learned there is a big difference between a photograph and a picture, and that you could elevate one to become the other with the decisions you made. Often that meant identifying where in the scene the picture actually was and framing that.

### What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?

In many ways the creative decisions here were made before I left the house, choosing to work with an unusual lens, choosing to document a unique time in the City. I would walk around the City to see where the sun was lighting an area or where it was bouncing from a glass building down to street level. Before I took a single frame, I did a recce of the area to make sure I was in the best spot.

### Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?

I used a Canon EOS 5DS R with a 24mm TSE

lens. The camera's big sensor gave me lots of detail; the lens allowed me to render the architecture in a controlled but cinematic way.

### What was the biggest challenge?

When you come across a ready-made picture like this, the challenge is to record it as quickly as possible before the elements pass away – that's why I took my first frame from a distance and then tried to improve on it.

### What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?

The image marks a turning point in the way I record the public realm. It took courage to separate myself from the traditional way of working and I have gone on to work with many different approaches on the street. I also love images that reference fine art or history. I carry a mental encyclopaedia of fine art in my head and a lot of my pictures echo famous paintings or artistic styles.

This is a quiet picture but it has a wonderful beauty and atmosphere for something so simple and mundane. For me that is the joy of street photography, the elevation of the ordinary into something special.

### Was it luck or judgement?

Spotting this scene was luck, but recording it drew on decades of experience; it has taken me 30 years to mature and evolve as a photographer. It's a cliché, but we make our own luck on the streets. You have to be out making good street photographs to be able to occasionally make an exceptional one.



## Danny Jackson

Danny Jackson is an Essex-based photographer with a skill for capturing the unique and often humorous moments of everyday life. His work has been featured in exhibitions and publications throughout the United Kingdom and abroad. Danny is a founding member of Street Badass, starting that Facebook Group in 2022 and has interviewed hundreds of photographers on Street Badass live.

Instagram @\_barksey\_

### Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?

I've been shooting Purim, the joyous Jewish holiday in Stamford Hill, for the past five years. Stamford Hill in north London is home to one of the largest Orthodox Hasidic Jewish communities in Europe, and Purim is something to behold. The vibe on the street

is electric and chaotic, with people busying themselves taking gifts to neighbours and getting the children ready for the day.

One of the reasons I love photographing this festival is the costumes the children wear, some taking months to put together. This is not like Halloween or a children's themed party, this is on a whole different

level. I have taken around 80 portraits during the past five years in the Children of Stamford Hill series.

Sometimes photographs just appear in front of you – it's a rare occurrence where you literally just have to click the shutter. This happened during Purim in 2024. First, I saw the boy sitting in his Noddy costume, I looked up to ask the parents but then I saw the bigger picture. You see, Purim is enjoyed by the whole family, and although the Hasidic families are close-knit, they live quite separately. The men are told to drink to excess, and give to charity during the day. The Hasidic women are the organisers, often spending months of preparation on the children's costumes and always looking on.

### What was happening just before and after this frame?

This was at about 2pm so it was right in the middle of a long day's shoot.

### What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?

Expanding out and looking at the bigger picture really made the photo for me. This photograph seemed to encompass the three roles really well, showing the family separate but together in celebration.

The composition also really works as a photograph, with the three subject matters layered nicely.

### Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?

The photo was taken on a Nikon D750 with a Sigma 50mm Art lens. I believe it was shot at around f/2.8 which I had to change from my normal f/1.8 which I was using for the Children of Stamford Hill project.

### What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?

I suppose in street photography the challenge is always to take photos of people. You have to be confident enough just to take photos on the street. I've been shooting for about ten years, and sometimes I get in the wrong frame of mind to do it.

### What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?

It really is a way of showing the Hasidic community during Purim in one photo, which makes it a perfect showcase for my work with them.

### Was it luck or judgement?

Luck to find, and a little judgement to take it.





# New heights

Photographer and YouTube star Nigel Danson is no stranger to adversity. He tells **Peter Fenech** about how overcoming challenges has made him a better artist, and that success may be just over the next mountain

**M**any photographers hesitate when asked to define their creative style. It's often something they haven't thought too much about, or they find it difficult to articulate their creative vision using words. Nigel Danson, on the other hand, is quite confident in identifying how others might describe his signature look, although he doesn't like to overthink it.

'Today, my images have a very painterly look,' he says. 'I work in multiple photographic genres including mountains, seascapes and others, but I'm especially drawn to

woodland. This is also what I'm probably most known for. My favourite outdoor activity is to hike a mountain at sunrise, but people would most likely be able to recognise my work from my painterly woodland images.'

Danson, whose colourful and pastel-like landscapes have gained over 230,000 followers on Instagram, speaks of his style as a work in progress, having once been a devotee of black & white imagery. 'I don't think I ever used to consider my style other than focusing on black & white. I used a lot of Ansel Adams' techniques – the zone



**Left: If you are struggling with landscape composition, Nigel recommends using a telephoto lens to cut back the detail and simplify the frame**

➤ system for example – so that influenced the look of my images. That has since developed a lot, and my work looks nothing like that now.'

Having first picked up a camera at around the age of 14, Danson has enjoyed a long and varied journey in photography. As an avid hiker, landscape photography became an inevitable passion for him, which he quickly turned into a business, selling prints of his work as posters. While this was his first paid photography job in what has grown into a successful career, Nigel has never placed commercial gain ahead of his own creative interests and integrity. He explains that photography has played a critical role in his development and as a means of expression.

'I'm very dyslexic, so writing and reading have always been a challenge. Therefore, pictures have always been important to me, and I really connect with them and their creation. For me, photography is more about the process than the result.'

### **A life-changing event**

For several years, Nigel ran a software company in the United States, where he lived. It was after a severe car accident and his associated health concerns that he decided to make photography his full-time occupation.

'In 2016 my heart stopped while I was driving in Yosemite National Park and as a result, I had a crash where the car rolled over three times. While I wasn't critically hurt, I had to have a pacemaker fitted, and the experience made me realise that life is short and I wanted to do something I was really passionate about. I'd grown the company from nothing to around 150 people, and that was a good time to exit it and do what I love.'

While many people might have chosen to hold onto the stability of an established job, Nigel used the challenge as his motivation, despite the potential risks of hiking up mountains with a heart condition. While capturing these craggy landscapes alone is a practical challenge that Nigel must be aware of, there have also been creative difficulties in his woodland photography that he has had to address over the years.



**‘Pictures have always been important to me, and I really connect with them and their creation. For me, photography is more about the process than the result’**

‘Woodland landscape has grown as a sub-genre within the landscape photography umbrella,’ he tells me. ‘People often think of woodland as difficult because it can be very chaotic, and this happened to me when I started. But people who are new to the genre visit woodland locations at the wrong time of day. If you go in the middle of the day, you’ll find harsh shadows and an overload of detail, because these are not ideal conditions. I discovered that if you find a particular subject, such as an individual tree, that speaks to you and has character, it helps you see through the chaos.’

Given that he has made one of the most difficult landscape types such a major part of his recognised repertoire, I ask Nigel how he approaches a wooded location and adapts his technique to match.

‘I’m always thinking about the mood I’m trying to portray. If I find myself in a gnarly, oak woodland, I’m looking to capture those details.

I try to imagine the final edit so I can adapt my process in the landscape. For example, there’s a shot of mine called “Enchanted Oaks”, taken before sunrise. It was quite dark, with lots of blue tones, so I knew it was going to be a cold and mysterious image. But if I am in a brighter silver birch woodland, I’ll see that as a lower-contrast, painterly scene. It’s probably going to be a softer, pastel-like final image.’

It’s this intent that allows Nigel to use the most photographically challenging features of woodland to his advantage. Observation and understanding of what makes a subject and scene work sets the content of an experienced pro apart from that of a beginner. I ask him what advice he would give his younger self to unlock the quality we can see in his images today.

‘Slow down. When I first began, I’d do what many photographers do and immediately start shooting images when I arrived on



**Above:** Nigel uses ND filters and polarisers, but never grad filters as he feels exposure blending preserves lens sharpness more effectively

**Left:** Nigel owns the standard trinity of landscape lenses, including a 14-24mm, 24-70mm, and a 70-200mm

**Right:** Sunrise is Nigel’s preferred time of day to shoot landscape images as he loves the atmospheric weather conditions, such as mist, that often come with it





## Nigel's four-step system to great landscapes

### 1 Isolate a subject

Find a character within the scene, especially a busy one like a woodland, to be the centrepiece of your shot. Build the rest of the scene around this so that each frame has substance.

### 2 Wait for the light

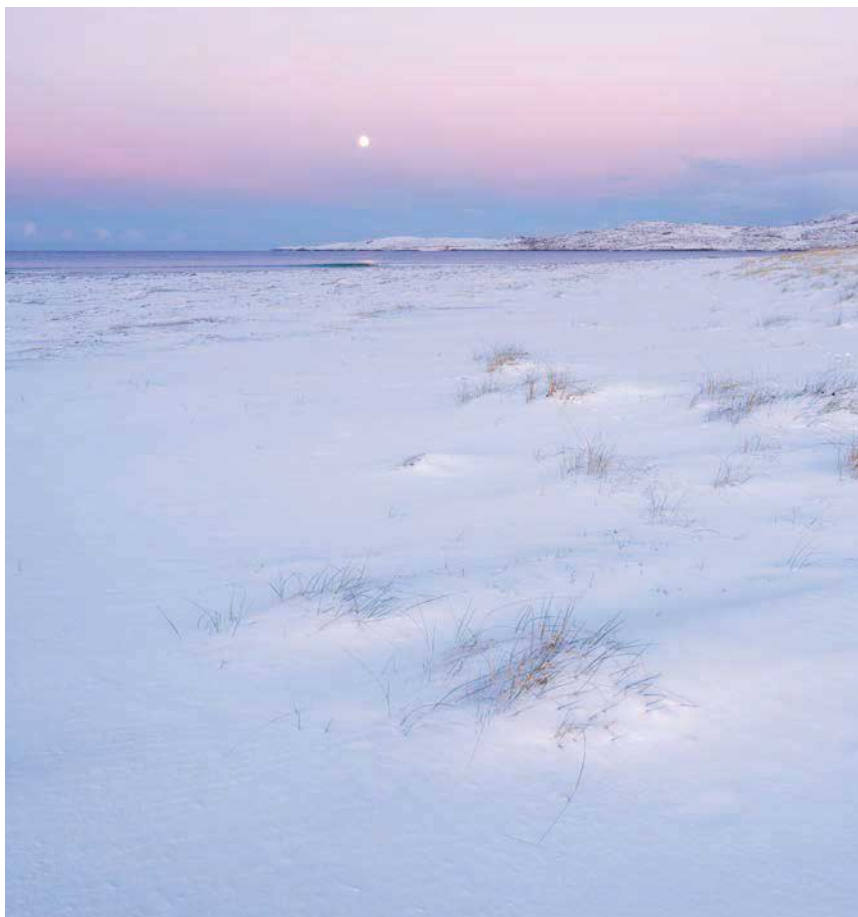
I used to see great light and use it without a good subject, which rarely works, but light should complement the subject matter. Great light is critical for controlling the atmosphere in your shots.

### 3 Thoughtful composition

I don't usually like the main 'rules' of composition, but they are a good starting point. I like to use diagonals in my shots, either obvious ones like leading lines or subtle ones in the negative space between objects.

### 4 Time your shots

Where possible, capture the same subject in different light and weather conditions. Even on a single shoot, don't just capture a few frames and move on; waiting to see how shadows and detail change can be powerful.





**Top left:** Nigel doesn't often adhere strictly to the usual compositional devices, but he does sometimes use the S-curve concept, which is used to highlight diagonal lines in the image

**Above:** Selecting the correct white balance for each shot is vital, as this affects the harshness of colour gradations, that he often aims to smooth out

**Left:** Nigel uses Cloudy White Balance as his baseline setting and adjusts colour temperature in raw editing software to customise the balance for each image

location. Today, when I arrive somewhere I settle in, explore, eat and take my time to find what makes the scene work.'

He adds, laughing, 'I tend to name trees! My favourite is called "Groot", in Cannock Chase, and this is why I refer to them as characters. I now find woodland photography much easier because this isolation of a single, strong subject simplifies the creative process and the landscape.'

### The YouTube revolution

Many readers will have first become aware of Nigel's work through his YouTube channel, which has amassed over half a million followers. This platform has become a huge asset for Nigel's business, but it is primarily a way for him to engage with the community that he has built.

'I've always liked filmmaking, which I've done a lot of over the years. I thought I'd try to combine photo and video, and it turned out I got into it at just the right time. I'm quite natural on-camera too, I

suppose. I show my true self, and I get very excitable about things – I'm like a kid in a candy store when out shooting and hiking – and people seem to like that.'

For many photographers, navigating the rules and trends of social media is intimidating, but Nigel thrived in the spotlight.

'While I have a good Instagram presence, most of my work sales come via YouTube,' he explains. 'The reason for this is that people buy into other people. Yes, they might like the art, but what they really connect with is the artist.'

By using his videos to demonstrate his approachable personality, Nigel has been able to grow a community of loyal followers who watch his content not just for the great imagery and behind-the-scenes access to shoots, but for technique advice, which flows into bookings for his workshops. A common gripe many content creators have today is that the main social channels are saturated and that it's impossible for newcomers to become established. I ask Nigel if he





agrees with this assessment. 'No, not at all,' he quickly responds. 'YouTube is never going to be saturated. Anyone who says it's hard to build a following doesn't understand how it works. In Hollywood, there are always new actors coming through, and

similarly, on YouTube there are always new opportunities.'

So, what is Nigel's best advice for anyone thinking of starting a YouTube channel for their photography, given that it can become such a time-consuming part of their daily workflow? 'The most

**Often described in his YouTube videos, Nigel believes in controlling the 'flow' in his shots, guiding the viewer from front to back**

important thing for a YouTube video to be successful is for viewers to start at the beginning and watch through to the end. Watch time is all YouTube cares about. Be quick and concise with your script; people tend to waffle too much, which doesn't keep viewers engaged.

### Using the challenge

In almost every aspect of his personal and professional life, Nigel has demonstrated the power of using potential adversity for good. Starting with his health concerns, rather than letting them hold him back he has used them to inspire the direction of his photography. Similarly, in an apparently crowded social space, he defies expectations by offering more through his videos than competitors.

‘Viewers know and understand that I now sometimes struggle with my back too, which limits the kit I can carry with me on mountain hikes, but I look like I know what I’m doing when providing the technical tuition side of my videos, and that’s what they come for. I also stay connected off-platform as much as I can, on other social media, email, and at shows like The Photo and Video Show.’

It is quite appropriate that Nigel likes climbing mountains for his craft. Arising before dawn and hiking with his kit into the landscape might



**Nigel is possibly most recognised for his ethereal woodland imagery, and while he loves this type of landscape, he works across multiple genres, from coastal long exposures to videography**

not be easy, but it affords him a perspective that many of us fail to appreciate. As he says in one of his

recent YouTube videos, pushing yourself is worth the effort every time.



**Nigel carefully controls layers in his compositions since he understands that viewers will often start their visual journey at the bottom of the frame**

# In the heat of the night

Working together, Eric Paré and Kim Henry create stunning light paintings. **Graeme Green** talks to them about their processes – including how to stay warm!

**W**orking at night in wild, remote locations means there's usually a lack of human interruptions to Eric Paré and Kim Henry's creative process. But that doesn't mean they're not ever disturbed. 'We were shooting in sand dunes in Morocco one time and we heard a noise,' recalls Eric Paré. 'We looked around and saw a cute little fox. But that cute little fox tried to pee on my sandals and on our gear.'

Pee is better than poison, though. 'We've had a few animals who were curious during the night,' adds Kim Henry. 'In Utah in the United States, we also had scorpions. We were in a desert, on a rock. I pulled up my dress so I could change position and I saw a scorpion walking on the rock. This is the moment I decided I would always work with my boots on. These are the little things you learn along the way...'

Paré and Henry have learned many other invaluable lessons during more than a decade working together in

outdoor light-painting photography, a collaborative technique that involves moving a light source in a dark environment while taking a long-exposure. The genre gets hundreds of millions of views across TikTok, Facebook and Instagram every year.

'It's all about being outdoors, making art, travelling...' explains Paré. 'We were looking for a reason to be outdoors the whole night. Sometimes we see little frogs in the middle of the night while we're shooting, and we're so happy.'

## Special

'There's something very special about being outdoors at night,' says Henry. 'It's usually more quiet, and you can witness things you wouldn't otherwise, because you have to wait for the right moment. For instance, if you're waiting for the Milky Way to be at the right angle, you have to spend an hour or two, just being there, which is special in itself.'

The artform's other major appeal, she explains, is that 'the process

means being physically involved, by light-painting within the scene. We're creating with the landscape. Whereas landscape photography is more about seeing something and capturing that, we're also contributing to the landscape.'

Both hailing from Montreal in Quebec, Canada, Henry's background is as a contemporary dancer and performer, while Paré has worked in photography and software development, including campaigns with Adobe, HP, Facebook, Canon and Microsoft. Paré owns Xangle Studio in Montreal, where he and his team work on multi-camera projects for adverts, campaigns and

**Above: Working in remote and isolated environments requires a lot of forward thinking**

**Right: Behind the scenes at a shoot**





films, including bullet-time, light-painting, 3D Gaussian Splatting and multi-camera photography.

The pair met in 2013 on the set of one of Paré's complex shoots. As a couple, as well as a professional partnership, they travel the world, collaborating on light-painting creations. Previously, they've produced cityscapes, including Montreal, New York and Shanghai, but they now focus on remote natural locations, from the Atacama Desert in Chile and Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia to beaches in the Bahamas, as well as national parks in the United States and at home in Canada, with images featuring a

range of landscapes, skies and lighting, including the Blue Hour, stars and the Northern Lights. The results have been popular – Paré has more than a million followers across his TikTok, Instagram and YouTube channels.

### New book

The duo's also now produced a book, *Outdoor Light-Painting Photography*, a field guide with detailed instructions on mastering different techniques and scenarios, including camera settings, composition and editing.

With a camera mounted on a tripod, Paré uses remote triggers, not just to ensure steady, crisp exposures,



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but because he's often also front-of-camera with Henry, helping produce the light displays, from circles to abstract patterns. 'It's often just the two of us out in the wild,' he explains. 'I'm often behind Kim and have my light-painting tube in my right hand, my remote in my left hand. I do a countdown, so she knows when I'm going to trigger, and she's going to take a breath. We stop breathing at zero, then I press the button, so the camera starts the exposure for 2-8 seconds.'

The couple mainly use portable light tubes, which they make themselves. They now have a team producing and selling light tubes online (other brands can also be found online, too), but they also teach people how to make their own. 'It's very simple,' explains Henry. 'It's a flashlight, sometimes a tactical flashlight, for strobe mode or power, and we insert it into a plastic tube. We then have endless possibilities to change the colours or to reflect light.'

### Make do and mend

There's an 'anything goes' attitude with creating lighting effects, though – the couple have used feathers, sparklers and even a simple piece of A4 paper combined with a torch. 'For anybody who enjoys arts and crafts, experimenting with things, building things, there's no limit to what you can make as a light tool,' suggests Henry. 'A good flashlight is useful, and then you play around with different colours and textures. It's all part of the fun.'

The other essential kit is warm clothing. Henry is often photographed wearing light dresses, even at night in deserts. 'When we shoot in the cold, I wear many, many layers, and I make sure every time Eric goes back to the camera, I cover myself,' she explains. 'I have battery-powered heaters, socks and gloves. When people work in teams, I always recommend having someone holding the coat to get that on efficiently between takes.'

Paré also works to combat the cold. 'It starts way before the clothes,' he tells me. 'We both practice breathwork. We do cold plunges every day. It's something we train for because we know it's difficult to shoot in winter in cold nights in the desert. Sometimes it's below freezing point – maybe minus 25, or minus 35



Celsius with wind. Even if I'm not the one wearing the little dress, to be able to be efficient at night with the buttons of the camera and keep my head straight is something that I train for.'

In its most basic form, light-painting photography can be done at home in front of a black sheet, whether inside a house or in a

**Above: Even in the dead of night, light dresses are the order of the day**

garden. But nature provides more spectacular settings.

### Two's company

There's also nothing to stop someone working alone, creating both the front-of-camera performance and lighting effects, as well as triggering the cameras. 'We love the collaborating aspect because



**Above: The back of Eric's camera showing typical settings used**

**Left: The duo take an anything goes approach to creating the final image**

**Below: Atmospheric conditions can mean that settings need to be changed**

we each bring the best of what we know and what we can do,' explains Henry. 'It's more complex technically to do it alone, but totally doable.' Other practitioners might work in large teams – family, friends, fellow artists... – creating collective artworks. 'It becomes a way to connect with other people and with nature,' Henry says.

Paré and Henry always scout locations in daylight, carefully composing images to make the most of the landscape, with extensive planning for weather conditions and the positions of the stars and moon.

Long exposures are altered, depending on the conditions. 'Two seconds is usually for the start of the Blue Hour, when it's still quite bright outdoors and you can still see pretty much everything,' Paré explains. 'That seems perfect to get the glow of the Blue Hour, with the flashlight on full brightness to leave a light-painting trace. As it gets





➤ darker, you increase the shutter speed, up to eight seconds, such as for the Milky Way, but decrease the power of the flashlight from max to very dim. The settings go inversely between exposure time and brightness of flashlight.'

For other non-standard shoots, Paré might work on dual captures (using two cameras), or utilise timelapse or multiple exposures. Whatever the set-up, the approach requires a spirit of experimentation, with lots of trial and error.

Often the pair start with a specific idea in mind, but the clouds or other weather conditions don't play ball. 'The beauty is that we scout locations, choose a perfect composition and get into place, then the clouds change and we need to adjust,' says Henry. 'The more we master the technique, the more we can improvise and play with how things are unfolding. That's the joy of working outdoors – it's impossible to control the environment. It's about having a mindset of not trying to hold on to what we want the shot to be, but being ready to capture what it can be. This is when we get the most beautiful surprises with magical moments.'

In that way, they see outdoor-light-painting photography as a three-way relationship, Paré and Henry spending their nights in a kind of creative ménage à trois with nature, never sure what the stars, clouds or Northern Lights might bring to the party. 'It's a dance between Eric, me and the landscape, and what the landscape has to offer in that moment,' says Henry. 'The best images we've created were mostly when we allowed ourselves to play during the process. It's about having fun, playing around, being curious... What if I do this? What will it look like?'

## The real deal

It's common that people who view their images think the final result is the product of Photoshop trickery. Paré does use Adobe Photoshop to process individual images and Adobe Lightroom to batch-process images for timelapses or star trails, as well as Topaz Photo AI and StarStaX as needed. Depending on how complex the image is, he can spend from one minute to two days editing a single picture, sometimes fixing individual stars or combining multiple frames.

But the majority of the images in the book, he says, were created in-camera with a single exposure. 'I get so much satisfaction when the back of the camera is the same thing as the final result,' he says. 'Even with the crop, if I can keep the exact composition I had, I'm happy. Sometimes a footprint or a rock disturbs the image, so I edit. And for star trails, we do multiple shots and let the camera roll on timelapse mode, with more editing. I come from the editing world and I can go deep with editing sometimes. Sometimes, it's as simple as colour-grading, but sometimes I work with the background, or the clouds aren't exactly where I want them to be, so I cheat a little bit. There is a lot of discussion about this in the light-painting world, but my answer is: "Do what you want to do and I'll do my thing".'

'There is a nice spectrum of possibilities, as far as editing skills go,' Henry adds. 'Someone who is starting photography and knows very little about editing can still get incredible results if they really focus on the technique itself. But if people want to get crazily creative with the editing, why not?'

Such conversations about issues like retouching or composites might



**The majority of the images within the book are created with a single exposure – but there are some exceptions**

soon be brushed aside, as AI (Artificial Intelligence) programs threatens to make light-painting humans actually taking photos unnecessary. But that would miss the joy of the creative process. 'There's no way to go back with AI,' says Henry. 'Very soon, if not already, it'll be possible to prompt an image that's pretty much like we do. It's getting better and better. But there will always be within us humans a desire to go out and master something, to create, to be involved in the process. A beautiful image is a beautiful image, but there's so much more that's possible within the experience of actually creating that image.'

Paré is also cautiously hopeful, suggesting that 'true experience is never going to be replaced by AI.'

*Outdoor Light-Painting Photography: The Essential Field Guide* by Eric Paré & Kim Henry is out now (Ilex Press, £26). See [ericpare.com](http://ericpare.com) and [kimhenry.dance](http://kimhenry.dance)



# The roads less travelled

While not a professional, Sue O'Connell is a regular prize winner in big travel photography competitions and a highly sought-after speaker and pundit. **Geoff Harris** taps into her wanderlust wisdom

**D**espite the ongoing problems in the Middle East, travel photography has never been more popular. Indeed, with the rise of Instagram, social media influencers and over-tourism, many travel photographers are now reluctant to share images of their most cherished locations, for fear the locations will be totally overrun. As you'd expect, the bar is much higher in the big travel photography competitions too, making entrants work extra hard just to get shortlisted, never mind walk away with the big prizes.

That said, it is still very possible for talented amateur photographers to do well in travel competitions, and it's still a great way to raise your profile, achieve much-needed recognition or get prize money to pay for the next trip. Sue O'Connell is a perfect example of this; as well as five awards in the particularly tough Travel Photographer of the

Year (TPOTY) contest, she's received plaudits from the World Food Photography Awards, *Wanderlust* and *National Geographic Traveller* magazines, and more. We caught up with Sue to find out how she manages to be so consistently successful, given the tough competition (pardon the pun). First, we wondered why she still puts in the hard work to compete at a high level when she's already done so outstandingly well?

## The remoter the better

'You're right, I still do enter quite a few competitions. The excuse I like to give is that I find them a useful touchstone for my work – like many photographers I'm not the best judge of my own images. But the bigger reason is probably that I just enjoy the challenge of competitions. And if there's success at the end that's a bonus. Persistence really pays off here too. As well as the prizes, some of my



**Above: As light fades at the annual Candlelight Festival in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the atmosphere is one of deep devotion**

successful images have been included in exhibitions at amazing venues like the Royal Geographical Society or the Museum of the Home in London. Three even made an appearance in a BA in-flight feature.'

Like many travel photographers, Sue's always had a bad case of wanderlust – and the further and more remote the location, the better. 'Somehow your senses are sharper when you're in unfamiliar territory, so I suppose it's natural to want to capture the special experiences and the feelings. But while it's true that most of my images are taken in foreign lands,



## About Sue O'Connell

Sue is a highly accomplished travel photographer who's won a shopping list of major awards, including being a category winner in Travel Photographer of the Year. Her work has been exhibited at the RPS and Royal Geographical Society, and in many prestigious publications, and she has more photo society distinctions after her name than we have room to print. Sue's also much in demand as a speaker and judge. [sueoconnell.photography/About-Me](http://sueoconnell.photography/About-Me)



they do embrace a fairly wide range of genres, well beyond the sometimes narrow definition of travel photography, so I prefer to think of myself as a “photographer who travels” rather than a travel photographer.’

### Inspiration from Art

A pivotal moment for Sue came when she attended a photo trip to Myanmar with the US photographer Art Wolfe in 2013. ‘Before that I’d been an enthusiast, but with limited technical knowledge and a scattergun approach. Art’s inspirational teaching caused me to significantly up my game ➤

**Right: The weekly head-shaving routine for novices at a nunnery near Yangon in Myanmar**



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➤ on all fronts. After that I threw myself headlong into the world of photography, climbing the slippery distinctions ladder with a range of organisations. I also fell in love with the art of printing – I'm now a Fotospeed Ambassador and a member of the PSA Pictorial Print Board.'

Returning to the hugely popular and challenging TPOTY contest, to what does Sue attribute her continued success – and does she have any tips for other wannabes?

'I first entered TPOTY in 2014 and with beginner's luck, came second in the Monochrome section,' she explains. 'I was hooked and I've entered every year since, reaching the finals ten times now. What I particularly like about TPOTY is its very broad take on travel photography.'

TPOTY is a hugely inspiring competition and the best tip that I could give to readers would be to immerse themselves in the wonderful work of previous winners and finalists on the TPOTY website. You should definitely register for the free online magazine Eye for the Light, and be inspired.'

### Love local, too

Travel photography has changed a lot, particularly with the rise of smartphones and influencers. Has it become harder for Sue to stand out, particularly as she doesn't have an astronomical social media following?

'That has never been a concern. I travel to see, to understand, not to tick boxes. And I tend to visit places that are not on the common radar.'

Not every AP reader can afford to jet off to exotic destinations, and with the Iran situation and the cost of living, many don't want to at the moment. What advice does Sue have for getting great travel shots closer to home?

'Years ago I did a project focusing on my own neighbourhood in Bristol, somewhere I've lived forever, and it was a revelation. It's amazing what you see when you turn your photographer's eye on familiar subjects. In general, I would say: think like a visitor from a far-away place, seeing things for the first time. And try working on projects, producing sets of images which work together to tell a story. Four of them might even make a TPOTY portfolio.'



**Top: Pilgrims at the Kumbh Mela Festival in India, which is the world's largest religious gathering**

**Above: Girls of the Ovankhumbi tribe in Southern Angola, their distinctive cartwheel hairstyle marking their transition to adulthood**

### More than just a hobby

Sue's energy and continued enthusiasm for travel are indeed admirable. We hesitate to use the phrase 'bucket list' but are there any destinations she'd still love to shoot?

'I think I've visited about 76 countries at the last count which is an amazing privilege, especially as some of them are no longer on the tourist map. Colombia was on my wish list for a long time so it was great to get there recently. Another on the list was Yemen, which is unlikely to happen now, sadly.'



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## Sue's choice of camera gear

'Some years ago when my old gear was beginning to take its toll weight-wise, and on the recommendation of three photographer friends (thanks Gabriel O'Shaughnessy et al!), I switched to Fujifilm, and I've been with the system ever since. I now carry two Fujifilm X-T5 bodies, and my current go-to lenses for travel are a Fujinon XF 16-80mm f/4 and an XF 50-140mm f/2.8. Depending on the trip, I might also include a wide angle (XF 10-24mm) or a long lens (XF 100-400mm). As you can see, the attempt to save weight was doomed to failure!'

➤ Mainly, though, I think of places I'd love to go back to and learn about more deeply. Top of that list is Japan, which blew me away the first time. We're actually due to head for northern Pakistan later this year, and I so want that to go ahead. But who knows, at the moment?'

For Sue, photography is an artistic outlet, rather than a way to make money or get work. 'It's a mental workout, and a reason to meet up with interesting, like-minded people. What better hobby could there be? Between travels I'm pretty busy giving talks and also judging, at home and abroad – a great way to keep up to date in a fast-moving photographic world. I've never been particularly commercial but since my TPOTY success there's been interest in buying my images, which is an unexpected bonus, and something I plan to follow up on.'

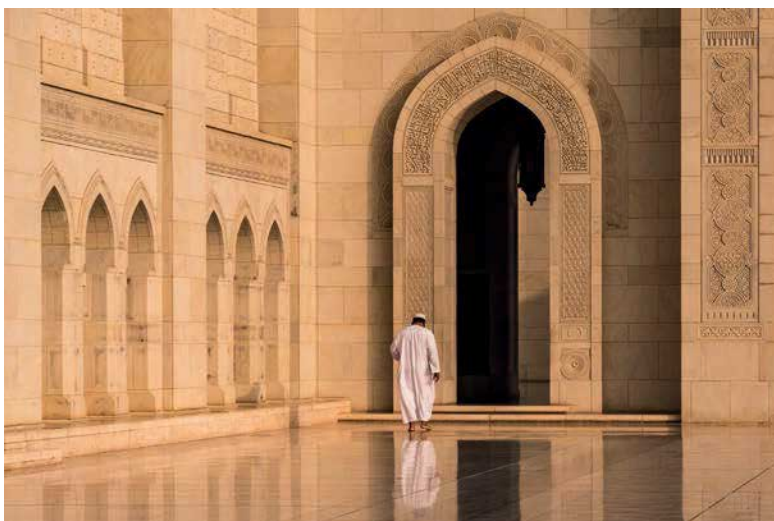
Video has now become a vital part of any travel photographer's toolkit, and Sue is also raising her skills in this area. 'I've found video clips are a wonderful asset in a photo talk. Still images of, say, an Ethiopian tribesperson can look unrealistically serene but a video clip dramatically recreates the experience of being there, with all the noise and chaos of the village context.'



**Above: A young herder with her flock of cashmere goats on the Mongolian steppe**

**Right: The Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Muscat, Oman, an icon of modern Islamic architecture**

**Bottom: They're off – the explosive start of a local camel race in Oman**



# Avian impressionism

Bird photography is wonderful, but your pictures can end up looking like everyone else's. **Andrew Fusek Peters** reveals how slow shutter speeds can create more interesting and distinctive shots

As regular readers will know, Andrew Fusek Peters is the go-to guy for advice and expertise when it comes to photographing wildlife. As well as appearing in the UK press more regularly than any other wildlife photographer, he's often invited on national TV and has published a small library of books – his latest, *Garden Safari*, is full of amazing pictures of birds and animals taken in people's gardens.

Usually Andrew's pictures are a technical tour de force, pin-sharp and expertly exposed. But for a recent bird project, partly inspired by the interminably wet winter, he tried a more abstract and experimental approach in his garden, deliberately slowing his shutter speed for creative effect.

'Shooting this way works perfectly well in pouring rain and heavy cloud,' Andrew explains from his base in Shropshire. 'Instead of seeing "bad" weather as a limitation, I started thinking of it as an opportunity to see what sort of shots I could get. For these pictures I used the OM System OM-1 Mark II and a 300mm F4 lens. I shot at the maximum f/4 aperture, generally

from 1/250sec – this is much slower than I'd use for "sharp" bird shots. I used a slower ISO too, anywhere from 200 to 1600 depending on the light.'

## It's all a blur

As Andrew notes, some form of pre-burst or pro-capture method is vital for this kind of work as this helps capture the moment of wing flare, take-off and mid-air fight. 'If you are just relying on the speed of your shutter finger you will miss the moment – the constant buffering of photos means you can have up to a second of delay before you react.

You also need good bird autofocus, as they take off in all sort of directions and your camera needs to follow the action. Your choice of shutter speed depends on the effect you're after – the slower the shutter, the more abstract and dreamy your shot becomes but it can also then be difficult to understand what species it is, or what is going on. Finally, remember that blur will magnify the strong colouration of a bird – hence the gorgeous richness of the nuthatch shown here, the "impression" of its beak and the orange hues standing out from the background.'

AP



## About Andrew Fusek Peters

Based in rural Shropshire, Andrew is an award-winning nature, wildlife and landscape photographer and OM System Ambassador. His books include *Garden Safari*, *Butterfly Safari*, *Hill and Dale* and more. See [fusekphotos.com](http://fusekphotos.com)



**Clockwise from  
main image in the  
centre:**

**Goldfinch,  
1/125sec at f/4,  
ISO 320**

**Nuthatch,  
1/60sec at f/4,  
ISO 500**

**Siskin in the Rain,  
1/125sec at  
f/4.5, ISO 1600**

**Greenfinches,  
1/125sec at  
f/4.5, ISO 1250**

**Greenfinches,  
1/125sec at f/4,  
ISO 1600**

**All pictures  
@ Andrew Fusek  
Peters**





## Canon EOS R5 Mark II vs Nikon Z8: which wins for nature photography?

It's the ultimate landscape and nature photography camera battle, but who will come out on top, the Nikon Z8 or Canon EOS R5 Mark II? We sent two pro photographers to the Lake District to find out

### Canon EOS R5 Mark II

**£4,499** body only

- 45MP stacked-CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-51,200 (standard)
- Up to 30fps shooting
- 8K 60fps video recording
- 5.76m-dot, 0.76x viewfinder
- 3.2in, 2.1m-dot fully articulated LCD
- 138.5 x 101.2 x 93.5mm, 746g

### Nikon Z8

**£3,999** body only

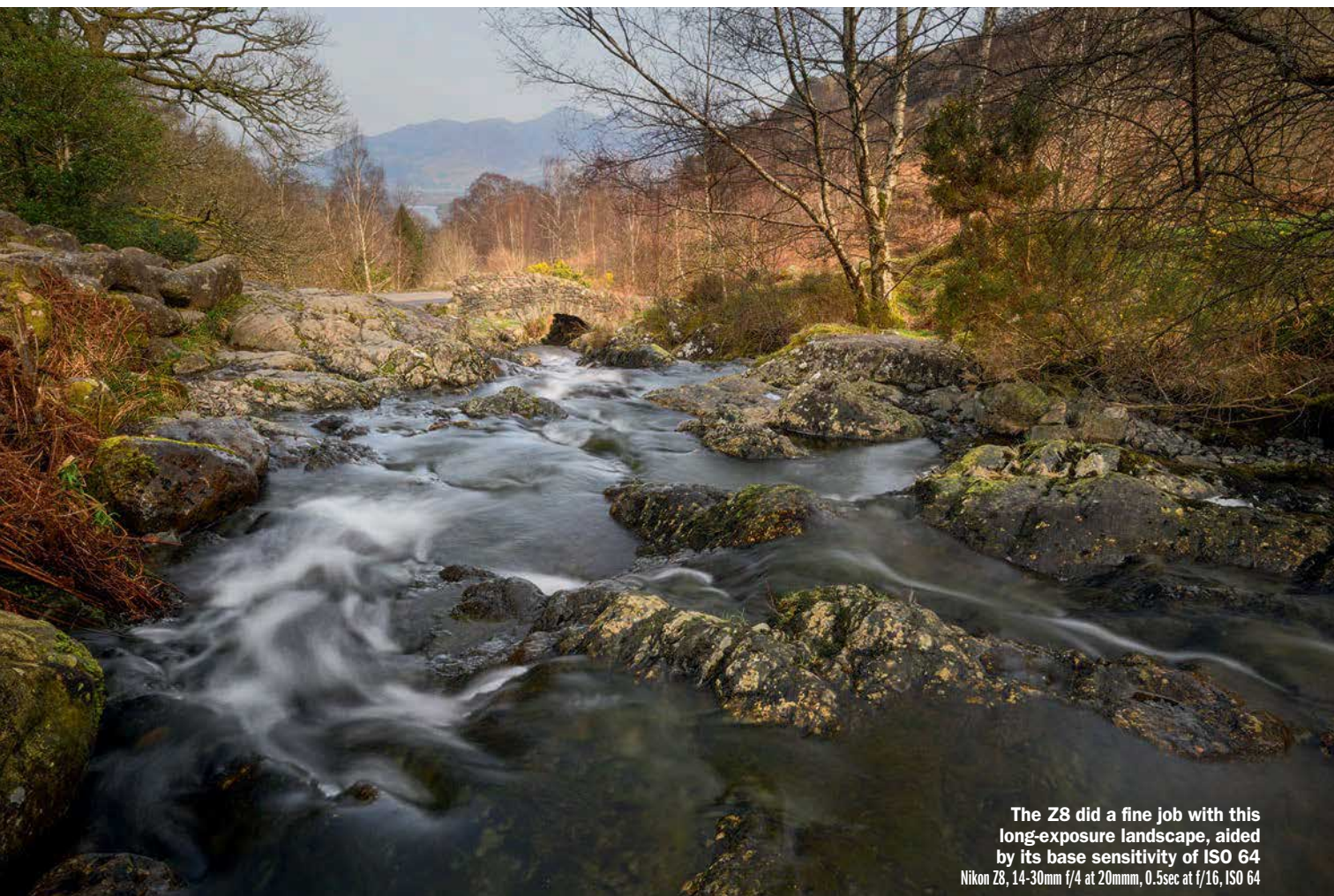
- 45.7MP stacked-CMOS sensor
- ISO 64-25,600 (standard)
- Up to 20fps RAW, 30fps JPEG
- 8K 30fps video recording
- 3.69m-dot, 0.8x viewfinder
- 3.2in, 2.1m-dot 3-way tilting LCD
- 144 x 118.5 x 83 mm, 910g

Although Nikon and Canon's official full-frame flagship cameras are the Z9 and EOS R1 respectively, in the real world, these expensive deep-gripped bodies are mainly the preserve of sports and news photographers. For everything else, including landscape, nature and wildlife photography, there are two cameras at the top of Canon and Nikon owners' wishlists... the Z8 and EOS R5 Mark II. But what are the real differences between the models, and which one would suit you best? To cut through the spec sheets and hype, and find out what these cameras really have to offer, we sent two

professional photographers, both long-time users of the respective brands, to the Lake District for a day of landscape and nature photography.

### The authors

Professional dog photographer and starvation risk Kingsley Singleton has wasted the best years of his life writing techniques and reviews for numerous photo magazines. Since dropping his Zenit-10 SLR in the sea in 1999, he has almost exclusively owned Nikon bodies, from DSLRs like the D200, D700 and D850 to mirrorless cameras including the Z7II, Z9, Z8 and Zf. In 2022, he even bought an F2, the loon.



The Z8 did a fine job with this long-exposure landscape, aided by its base sensitivity of ISO 64  
Nikon Z8, 14-30mm f/4 at 20mm, 0.5sec at f/16, ISO 64

Matty Graham's Canon journey started with the EOS 3000 film SLR in the late '90s before progressing to digital cameras via models including the EOS 90D and 5D Mark IV, along with plenty of lenses featuring a red band around the barrel. More recently, Matty has owned the R6, along with cinema cameras, including the C70. A former photo magazine editor, Matty's images have graced the covers and pages of magazines and websites for over 25 years.

### Design and handling

**Matty says:** The Canon EOS R5 Mark II achieves a rare sweet spot. While packing a 45MP fully stacked CMOS sensor (the original R5 offers a non-stacked 45MP sensor), excellent autofocus and many other pro-territory features, the camera's footprint is compact – after all, the days of bulky

cameras are well and truly over.

Despite being compact, the Canon allows for a decent and reassuring grip, which will be appreciated in wetter weather conditions. The layout is an improvement over the original R5, with the awkwardly placed On/Off switch being relocated to the right side of the top plate. Buttons and dials continue the Canon tradition of being fairly pronounced so you can locate them easily, even if you are out shooting landscapes in winter and are wearing gloves.

Tipping the scales at 746g, the EOS R5 Mark II is lighter and smaller than the Z8 (910g), and although this isn't a huge difference, that extra weight could be noticeable during a long day moving from location to location, like our experience in The Lakes.

A dedicated Stills/Video switch is useful, but the real gold is to be found when composing the imagery because the electronic



Matty Graham with the Canon R5 II and Kingsley Singleton with the Nikon Z8

viewfinder is both excellent and much higher resolution than the Z8 – after trying Kingsley's Z8, I really could see a difference. What's more, although the Z8 features a tilting LCD, the mechanism simply can't match the ease and versatility of the EOS R5 Mark II's fully articulated

screen for me. These sound like minor differences, but they really do make a difference to the user experience.

In my opinion, early Canon mirrorless cameras lacked the robust feel that landscape photographers came to expect from Canon, but the





The EOS R5 Mark II is no slouch for landscapes, either  
Canon EOS R5 Mark II, 15-35mm f/2.8 at 19mm,  
3.2sec at f/14, ISO 100

➤ R5 Mark II is a model where you can feel where your money is being spent, and you'd have no quibbles about using this device in adverse weather conditions. I'll go even further; the R5 Mark II has the robust feel of a camera like the 5D Mark IV – something that's missing from the R6, which has been in my kit bag for a couple of years now.

**Kingsley says:** The Z8 has rightly been called 'a mini Z9.' It has the same stacked BSI 45.7MP sensor and almost all of its big brother's grade-A features. 'Mini' does not mean it's particularly small or light by mirrorless standards, however, the body being notably 'taller' than models like the R5 II. This isn't a problem for me, because unlike Matty, I have proper-sized hands. And though weight is a factor, I'm not convinced that 150g makes much of a difference. It's three

Mars bars, for Christ's sake.

Having used the Z9 previously, and a gripped Z7II before that, I thought I might not like the shorter handling, but the opposite is true. The Z8 is one of the best-designed cameras I've used. It has a deep, comfortable grip, and its inputs are superbly placed, numerous and highly customisable, with the 'i' menu home to most things you can't map to a button.

The Z8's EVF certainly lags the opposition in resolution and framerate, but it's slightly higher in magnification compared to the R5 II's and the view has never bothered me even after a full day's shooting. Being a snob, it's important to me that the viewfinder eye cup is rounded, too.

The LCD is extremely useful for landscapes, and I tend to compose using it most of the time. Different in design to the R5 II's 'selfie' screen, the Z8's

four-hinged version can be tilted for high or low angles without pulling out wide of the body. I remember it feeling odd at first, but now I think it's awesome.

In terms of build, there's less metal than on the Z9, but despite thinking it had a less-premium feel when I bought it, I've now smashed it around for several years and I have no complaints. The sensor shield closes on power off, so you have to remember to switch the camera off before changing lenses.

## Features

**Matty says:** In my opinion, the EOS R5 Mark II (and the even newer EOS R6 Mark III) draws a line under Canon's previous range of mirrorless cameras, and these devices represent the new generation, pushing technology and build further than before. I've already touched upon the blackout-free EVF, and there is also the presence of Eye Control AF – a headline feature for the EOS R5 Mark II upon launch, though in reality, this is one for wildlife and action photography and I steered away during more

measured landscape photography. A big difference between the cameras is the fact that the Canon offers both mechanical and electronic shutters, while the Z8 relies solely on an electronic shutter. Personally, I still like to hear that familiar click during landscape photography, and although this limits the burst rate to 12fps, switching to electronic shutter increases this rate to 30fps, more than enough for wildlife photography.

Anyone who has used a Canon camera before will know how intuitive the menu system is, and picking up the EOS R5 Mark II feels like a familiar friend, with the menus easy to navigate, ensuring you find what you're looking for quickly. As with any camera, there are various quirks and niggles to contend with; hot-swapping with memory cards isn't possible, although this will only affect those shooting video rather than stills. From a wider viewpoint, the price of RF lenses is still relatively high, though this can be mitigated by making use of an RF/EF adapter to pair up EF

**'These devices represent the new generation, pushing technology and build further than before'**

glass. EF lenses are now far more affordable, especially if purchased from used dealers. The 5-axis In Body Image Stabilisation (IBIS) works like a dream and with 8.5-stops of compensation, this provides the reassurance needed to work hand-held most of the time, eliminating the need for a tripod unless you are shooting long-exposure landscapes.

**Kingsley says:** The fact that Nikon crammed so many flagship features into the Z8 is impressive. The blackout-free EVF and advanced autofocus were the real drivers for me, and while obviously these don't contribute much to the landscape side of things, they are vital in other nature subjects and any dog or person that wanders past.

Its speed is partly aided by the fact that the Z8 has no mechanical shutter, which is something you soon forget about. The sensor has such a blistering read-out speed that there is no rolling shutter effect at all, and if

you want noise, you can pick from several decent shutter sounds and some rubbish ones. Whether it's landscapes or anything else, I really enjoy the ability to shoot in a completely silent way, too, a simple flicker of the frame border telling you an image has been made. If you can trust an electronic shutter, as the Z8 ensures you can, a mechanical version is just something else to go wrong.

The Z8's shooting speed is capped at 20fps in RAW, or 30 in JPEG. I rarely use anything other than the former, as I like the security it offers. And if you can't get it right at 20fps, when can you? I feel similar about IBIS. I've seen the Z8's 5-axis system rated at 5.5 stops, but practically this depends on so many variables, not least the conditions, focal length and amount of alcohol in the user's bloodstream. I find I can get acceptably sharp images down to around 1 second at normal focal lengths like 50mm or shorter, which brings hand-held landscapes into play. But the real

**'Whether it's landscapes or anything else, I really enjoy the ability to shoot in a completely silent way'**

benefit is in pixel-level sharpness at more regular speeds and when using longer lenses.

## Performance

**Matty says:** The Dual Pixel Intelligent AF is clearly one of the EOS R5 Mark II's biggest headlines and those picking up the camera for the first time will be shocked by how quick and accurate this system is. But that's only half the story, because Canon enables users to really fine-tune the autofocus to their liking and for specific situations and scenarios. While tempting to set to default and let the camera do the work, spending the time to explore the various AF menus and features will pay dividends.

In everyday landscape photography environments, though, what you really need to know is that the EOS R5 Mark II

possesses a fiercely accurate system that won't let you down, even in high-contrast and tricky lighting conditions. Many will weigh up this camera for wildlife photography as well as landscape work, and the maximum burst rate of 30fps (up from 20fps on the original R5) will complement the AF system.

What's more, despite working the camera hard, I was impressed by the battery performance. Though the battery's the same size as the regular LP-E6, the R5 II uses the newer LP-E6P, which supports higher power drain demands, and this is needed for features such as 8K video recording. With a rating of 630 shots on a single charge, that's a decent return for a camera of this standard, though this figure will dip with prolonged EVF use.



### The Z8 boasts excellent subject recognition and tracking

Nikon Z8, 180-600mm at 430mm,  
1/1000sec at f/6.3, ISO 320



➤ **Kingsley says:** Although the main focus of this comparison was landscapes, where I believe the question of AF is moot, the Z8 does claim a superior low-light acquisition rating of -7EV. This is handy for nightscapes, but I often still find myself using the distance scale on the LCD there. It's worth noting the Z8's light-up buttons and warm-colour display mode also help out night shooters.

I also often use the Focus Shift Mode to obtain maximum depth-of-field in landscapes, and this can be combined with Nikon's Pixel Shift setting to create a truly dizzying level of detail of something like 180MP. As far as I know the R5 II lacks the latter, instead using an AI upscaling route which, as we all know, is cheating.

Away from the landscape focus, the Z8 has elite AF subject tracking and recognition, and when you're comfortable with the settings, it's tough to miss a shot. I limit the AF area size to

aid subject acquisition, and sometimes also switch into DX crop mode where obviously there's less view to cover. It's easy to cycle through Mode and Area, and I have the specific subject-detection modes linked to the Fn2 button.

It's also worth noting that, although the Z8 maxes out at 20fps RAW, it can do this for pretty much as long as you have space on the card. As I understand it, the R5 II's buffer is more limited. Battery life is rated at 340 shots, but practically I usually get three times that. If in doubt, buy another battery.

## Image quality

**Matty says:** With the EOS R5 Mark II, you really see where your money is going. Detail from the 14-bit RAW files is huge with that fully stacked 45-megapixel sensor serving up maximum file sizes of 8192 x 5464 pixels. This unlocks big benefits, not only enabling users to make huge prints, but also to crop heavily

into their frames without compromising image quality.

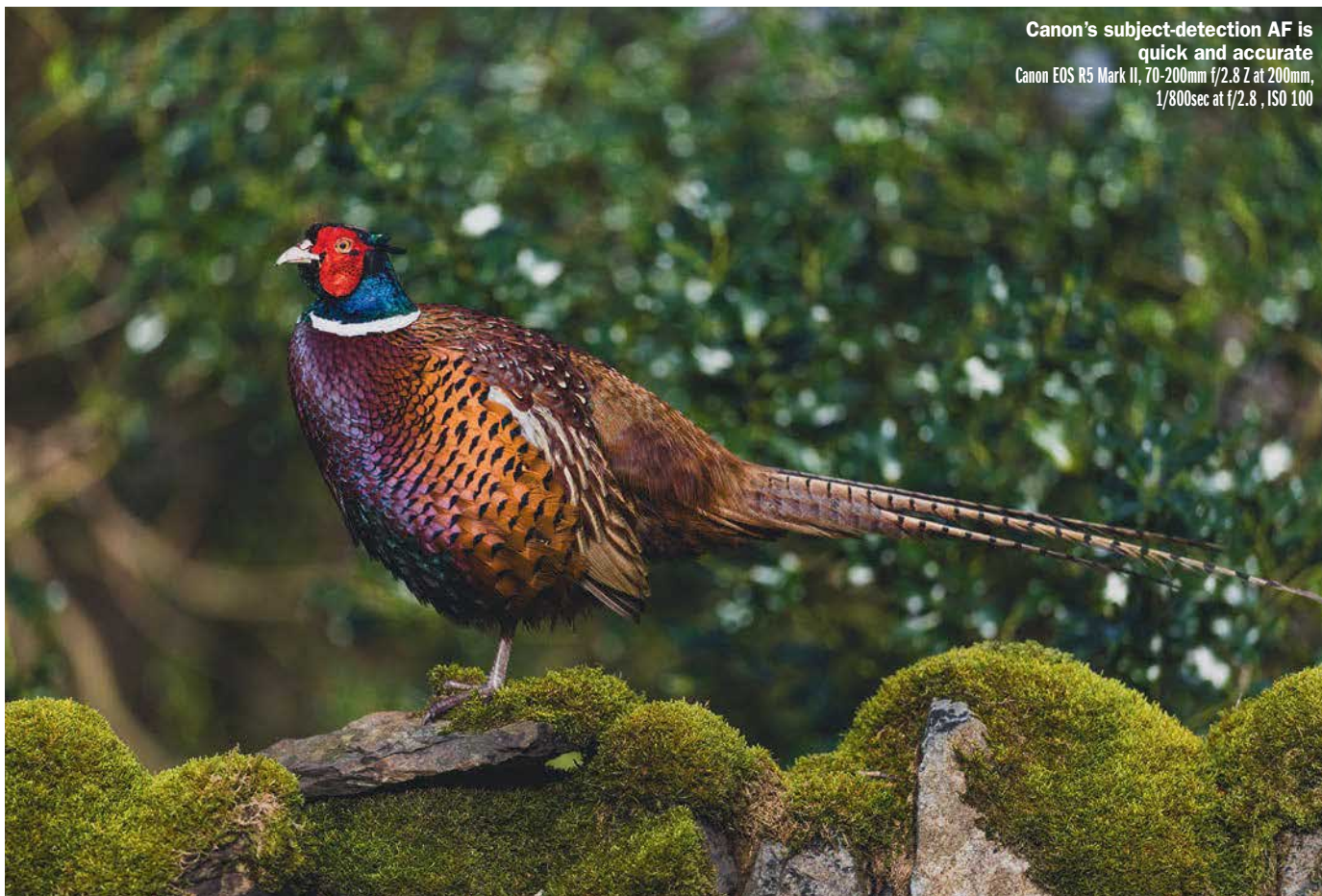
If your destination for the images is social media, the amount of cropping you can achieve and still end up with a usable frame is mind-blowing. The Canon colour science that has brought me back to the brand year after year is still present, but imagery feels richer in colour and clarity. Equally impressive is the dynamic range on offer from this camera, with high amounts of tonal data captured from RAW files enabling Highlights to be recovered and shadows to be revealed from high-contrast scenes presented in tricky lighting conditions. Image noise is very well controlled, giving photographers the ability to work up to ISO 3200 with confidence and even further with noise reduction in post.

**Kingsley says:** The Z8 makes beautiful images. The sensor is fractionally higher-res than the R5 II's, but not so much as it'd make

a practical difference. Unlike the R5 II, it also lacks an anti-aliasing filter, which should aid sharpness, but comparing images side-by-side it's tough to spot a difference. As mentioned, there's a hi-res Pixel Shift Mode. It's only for the stillest of subjects, but it is tremendous when it works.

I've read that stacked sensors can affect dynamic range, but looking at online tests made by people with far higher boredom thresholds than me, the Z8 achieves some very high numbers. All I know is that I can push shadows and pull highlights in the 14-bit Raws with great freedom, so much so that it makes grad filters far less of a requirement.

If it's out-of-camera JPEGs you want, the Z8 does a lovely job, especially in Natural Light Auto white balance, and of course you can tweak the profile to your liking. ISO performance is stellar, to the point where I let it swing in Auto between 64 and 6400 without even thinking about it.



**Canon's subject-detection AF is quick and accurate**  
Canon EOS R5 Mark II, 70-200mm f/2.8 L at 200mm,  
1/800sec at f/2.8, ISO 100



**Ducks with the Z8**  
Nikon Z8, 600mm, 1/640sec at f/6.3, ISO 320.



**Water abstract with the R5 II**  
Canon EOS R5 II, 142mm, 6sec at f/16, ISO 100

## Testing the opposition

**Matty says:** Swapping cameras and trying out the Z8 was an interesting experience, though I didn't get to experiment for an extended period of time. Although I could feel the extra weight, I have to admit I was impressed by the robust build quality of the body. One thing that would take more time to adapt to however, is the LCD mechanism – this may be fine for some, but I much prefer the more standard articulating design from the EOS R5 Mark II. I much prefer the layout of Canon's menus and I do feel the AF system in the R5 Mark II is a shade keener and, from my time using the Z8, less likely to be distracted. What I will say, however, is that Nikon users get a whole lot of bang for their buck.

**Kingsley says:** We didn't have long to try each other's cameras, so a definitive opinion is impossible. However, the last time I used a Canon, the on/off switch was about three miles away from the shutter button, so at least there's been an improvement there. The R5 II is smaller than the Z8, but that actually made it less comfortable for me. Retaining the mechanical

shutter also makes it quite 'thick'. I tried out Canon's much-hyped Eye Control AF, but I found the idea of a camera knowing what I'm looking at disconcerting, and I couldn't get it to work anyway. The regular AF system, once I'd got up to speed, was very impressive, but could I say it would give me more sharp shots than the Z8? Not really.

## Overall Verdict

**Matty says:** There's no substitute for spending time in the great outdoors, forming real-world opinions about photo gear, and there's no doubt in my mind that the EOS R5 Mark II edges past the Z8 in many categories you'd use to assess a high-performance landscape and nature photography camera.

While the resolution is closely matched, the Canon's keener autofocus and lighter build reflect the fact that the Z8 is a year older and in this industry, a year of R&D can make a big difference. As a professional tool, the R5 Mark II ticks all the boxes, delivering first-class results to creatives who are likely to make money from their imagery or who take their photography seriously.

Of course, all this technology comes at a price and, depending on where you shop, the Canon can come in considerably more expensive – ouch! In this regard, while I'd say the Canon is the 'better' camera, I have to concede that the Z8 is the better value. Personally, I think that although it's pricey, if you can afford the EOS R5 Mark II then you will likely not regret spending the money – it's a joy to use and

delivers results you will consistently be impressed with.

**Kingsley says:** For many years, I've believed that Canon cameras were designed by a secret cabal of alien fiends in order to torture photographers. The fact is, I just didn't know how they work, but judging by the way Matty was checking his bank balance, it seems Canon users will covet the EOS R5 II. In reality, this is an awkward comparison, because although both are current, the cameras are quite far apart in age – by the time the R5 II is as old as the Z8, there'll probably be a Z8 II. The R5 II's AF system is apparently excellent, and if it had a fractional edge over the Z8 that wouldn't be a surprise given that it's a year and a half younger. But I'd defy anyone to be disappointed by the Z8. If the question is about switching to an entirely new system, I think there would be too many variables to make a clear call, one of which is of course spelled 'Sony A7RV'. I couldn't pick the better model, and in fact, I don't think the question is fair. It should be, 'Are these two of the best cameras ever made?' The answer to that would be 'yes.'

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**Watch the video:** Visit our YouTube channel to watch the full film of Matty and Kingsley's trip to The Lakes.



**The two cameras felt evenly matched at the end of this test**

# Praktina: a forgotten landmark

**John Wade** examines the first 35mm SLR system camera and its accessories

**Q**uestion: What was the first 35mm single lens reflex (SLR) designed to sit at the heart of a system that included several cameras, nearly 50 lenses of varying focal lengths, two motor drives, extension rings for close-up photography, bellows for macrophotography, interchangeable focusing screens, a choice of four viewfinders and a bulk film back? If you are leaping to your buzzer and shouting 'Nikon F', stand aside. Because six years before the Nikon emerged from Japan, another camera whose system included all of the above and more was produced in East Germany. It was aimed at professional photographers who wanted the versatility of a 35mm SLR with the flexibility that comes with having a comprehensive system behind it. Enter the Praktina.

Kamera-Werkstätten Guthe and Thorsch, more usually known simply as KW, was founded in Dresden in 1909 by camera repairer Paul Guthe and entrepreneur Benno Thorsch. For nearly a century, the company underwent numerous changes of ownership, mergers and names culminating in its playing a major role within VEB Pentagon. During that time, production included plate and sheet film folding cameras, medium format roll film reflexes, an unusual folding twin lens reflex and several ground-breaking 35mm SLRs. Of these, the Praktina became the name destined to evolve and gain fame in the 35mm SLR world all the way through to the early 21st century. Unfortunately the Praktica name has overshadowed the now largely forgotten Praktina.

## Praktina FX

The Praktina legend began in 1946 when a young camera designer named Siegfried Böhm, aged only 24, transferred from Zeiss Ikon to KW. Initially his brief was to design an improved version of the Praktiflex, which was the company's then current SLR. But Böhm had other ideas. He wanted to produce a completely new kind of 35mm SLR and, by 1950, he had a team of about 30 involved in the design of the camera and the numerous accessories that he also visualised. The dream became a reality when a prototype was shown at Photokina, the big German trade fair, in 1952. It came to the market in 1953 as the Praktina FX.

The camera is a solidly built 35mm SLR with a horizontally-moving, cloth focal plane shutter whose speeds run in a way that was common at the time, but unusual today: 1, 2, 5, 10, 25, 50, 75, 100, 200, 500, 1,000. These are set by a ring around the film advance knob and released by an angled button on the front of the body. On the opposite end of the top plate, the rewind knob is surrounded by another ring of numbers that rotates to act as a film speed reminder. Beside the lens, a lever sets a self-timer. Twin flash sockets offer electronic or flashbulb synchronisation. The reflex mirror drops into place as the film is wound but does not return automatically after exposure.

Lenses for the Praktina were made by top names that included Carl Zeiss, Meyer-Optik, Angenieux, Isco, Kilfitt, Schneider and Steinheil. Standard lenses include a 58mm f/2 Biotar, 55mm f/1.9 Steinheil Quinon and 50mm f/2.8 Tessar. Other focal lengths range from 24mm wide-angle to 1,000mm super-telephoto, and



**Praktina FX**  
with eye-level  
pentaprism  
viewfinder

**Just five of the many lenses made for the Praktina system: The Zeiss Flektagon 50mm f/2 standard, Zeiss Tessar 50mm f/2.8 standard, Enna Lithagon 35mm f/3.5 wideangle, Zeiss Triotar 135mm f/4 medium-tele, and Meyer-Optik Primotar 180mm f/3.5 telephoto**



even include an Enna-Werk 85-250mm Tele-Zoom that was extremely rare for its day. Manual lenses require the aperture to be set prior to exposure, which obviously darkens the viewfinder. This contingency is catered for by a separate direct vision viewfinder that sits beside the reflex finder.

All lenses fit to the body by a breachlock system, which was unusual in its time. Instead of a screw or bayonet mount, the lens is placed in position and a ring on the camera body rotated until it is tight. The design ensures that neither body or lens become worn however many times lenses are attached or removed, as can be the case with more conventional bayonet mounts. The system was later taken up by other camera manufacturers, most notably by Canon with its FL and FD lenses.

There were a couple of variations of the Praktina FX with minor improvements, but better was yet to come.



The Praktina's unusual breach-lock lens mount

## Praktina IIa

In 1958 KW introduced the Praktina IIa. Its design is very similar to the original camera, but the shutter speed range now follows the more conventional geometric pattern: 1, 2, 4, 8, 15, 30, 60, 125, 250, 500, 1,000. The IIa was launched with what was then a new range of lenses that offer fully automatic aperture control. This allows focusing at full aperture, with a mechanism that stops the iris down to the required setting as the shutter is released. Three forms of flash synchronisation from a single socket are selected by a lever beneath the rewind knob. Four versions of the camera were available with very minor differences.



The Praktina IIa with metered viewfinder

## Viewfinders and focusing screens

With the launch of the Praktina IIa, KW also released a full set of accessories for use with both the IIa and the FX, including an impressive metered viewfinder that sat alongside three other non-metered types.

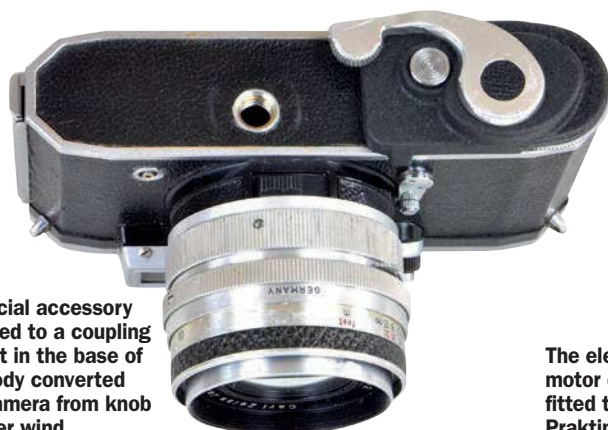
Removing and attaching the Praktina's interchangeable viewfinders is a difficult task for the unwary because they appear to be permanently fixed with no sign of a button or lever in their vicinity to release them. In fact, it's necessary to search beneath the lens, where a small catch is pushed sideways, at which point the finder slips easily off. The most popular viewfinder, usually supplied with the camera, is an eye-level pentaprism type. Next comes a waist-level finder with a flip-up hood and a magnifier that folds forward over the focusing screen. Also available is a high-magnification

viewfinder that magnifies the image by six times when the screen is viewed with the eye close to the eyepiece of a chimney-like tube. This viewfinder is favoured for shooting close-ups with bellows or extension rings. The best of the viewfinders is the metered version incorporating an exposure meter with a selenium cell on the front to activate a needle on the top. Numbers indicated by the needle are set on a dial which then indicates the required shutter speed and aperture to be manually set on the camera. A right-angled viewing attachment also fits the eye-level finders.

The view through any of the viewfinders varies according to the focusing screen in use. Six are available: straightforward matte, matte with split-image rangefinder, matte showing vertical and horizontal lines, matte with a crosshair in a clear glass centre circle, matte with cross centre lines and millimetre scales, clear glass with cross centre vertical and horizontal lines.



The four viewfinders produced for Praktina cameras, left to right: eye-level prism, waist-level, high magnification and metered prism



A special accessory screwed to a coupling socket in the base of the body converted the camera from knob to lever wind



The electric motor drive fitted to a Praktina Ila

## Film advance and motor drives

Although film is advanced on both the Praktina models with a knob on the top plate, a special coupling socket on the base of the body allows for other options. The first is a neat little lever that screws in place and converts the camera to lever film wind. Two motor drives can also be used, fitted by screwing into the coupling socket, along with a second screw into the camera's tripod bush to keep everything

tight and secure. Each one incorporates a button on an arm that hovers over the camera's shutter release. Pressing the button on the drive fires the shutter and activates the motor to wind the film.

The first motor drive is clockwork, wound by a huge knob on the base. Fully wound, it allows ten pictures to be taken in succession. The second motor drive is battery driven. It can be used in conjunction with cables for remote control from up to 80ft away.



Praktina FX with eye-level pentaprism viewfinder, clockwork motor drive and film back for 450 exposures

## Bulk film back

That coupling socket on the base of the body is also called into use with the camera's bulk film back, which is attached to the camera in place of its usual removable back. Two huge film chambers, one at either end of the back, flank the body and hold approximately 17m of film to take 450 exposures at a single loading. An adapter, screwed into the coupling socket and coupled to the film back by a belt, enables the extra-long film length to be wound by the camera's usual advance knob.

## Close-up accessories

Extension rings to fit between the lens and body provide Praktina cameras with the opportunity for close-up photography. Variations include straight rings without any coupling between lens and body for manual operation of apertures; auto rings that couple the body to the stop-down mechanism in the lens; and one in which the lens stop-down movement is operated as the shutter is fired using a double cable release to the shutter button and the extension ring. Between them, the rings offer extensions between 12.5mm and 50mm.

Bellows, which also fit between the body and lens, give even more scope. Three types can be used with pre-set lenses only, pre-set plus semi-auto lenses and pre-set plus semi-auto and fully-auto lenses. Extensions of between 7.7mm and 55mm are possible. Special macro extension tubes can also be found for use attached to the bellows and with the lens reversed.



Praktina Ila with eye-level viewfinder and standard lens fitted with extension tubes for close-up photography



Praktina Ila close-up bellows, high-magnification viewfinder and Triotar 135mm lens

## Stereo photography

The most unusual and now very rare accessory is one designed to turn the Praktina into a stereo camera. It was made for KW by Carl Zeiss and is very similar to a stereo device made for Exakta cameras. In use, a beam splitter screws to the front of a standard 50mm lens, while a special viewfinder is slid in place of the camera's usual eye-level or waist-level finder. The beam splitter produces twin stereo images on a single frame of film, while the twin eyepieces of the special viewfinder show the photographer just one single image.

## The end of the line

Between them, the Praktina FX and IIa, along with their minor variations and the system of accessories that supported them, built into one of the most impressive 35mm SLR systems seen up to the end of the 1950s. Production of all models ended in 1960 when increasing production costs of the complex cameras and their consequently high prices failed to survive against the emergence of Japanese cameras, in particular the Nikon F. It fell to the more competitively priced, and soon to be abundant, Praktica cameras to lead the way into the following decades.



Stereo beam splitter attachment and twin eyepiece viewfinder fitted to a Praktina FX

## MORE FROM KW

Praktinas were far from the only cameras made by KW. The company, and the various incarnations that evolved from it, were responsible for a huge range of camera types. Here's a quick round-up that represents just some of the cameras that were important in various different fields.

### 1921: Patent Etui

This was a masterpiece in economic design. It's a folding camera in which a bed drops down and the lens is pulled out on bellows along rails. Unfolded, it shoots pictures 6x9cm on glass plates or cut film. The camera illustrated has a Tessar 10.5cm f/4.5 lens and a Compur shutter speeded 1-1/250sec. Other lens and shutter combinations were also sold. What sets the camera apart from similar folding models of the time is that, when folded, the body width is an ultra-slim 3.5cm. The Etui, which can sometimes be found with its variant name Pocket Dalco, was originally available in blue, red, brown, grey and black, each with matching bellows. A slightly larger version for 9x12cm images was also made.

Blue version of the Pocket Dalco, a name variant of the Patent Etui



Pilot Reflex, an unusual folding TLR



### 1931: Pilot Reflex

Only four folding TLRs were made by different manufacturers in the 1930s, and the Pilot Reflex is the smallest. As a catch is pressed on the side, the lens panel springs forward, the taking lens on bellows and the viewing lens on an extending tube. A knob on the side moves the two lenses back and forth to focus them simultaneously. The camera shoots 3x4cm pictures on 127 roll film running top to bottom. To load it, the film is wound until the first number appears in the red window. Thereafter, two strokes of a lever on the side advances the film one frame, counted in a tiny window below the lever. The counter runs to 18. Cleverly incorporated into the mechanism is a device that compensates for the increasing thickness of the take-up spool, keeping negatives evenly spaced. A fold-up optical viewfinder on the side allows the camera to be held horizontally.



# Film Stars

## 1933: Reflex Box

Looking more like a box camera with a focusing hood stuck on top than the traditional concept of an SLR, the Reflex Box takes 120 roll film and produces eight horizontal pictures 6x9cm. The Steinheil 105mm f/4.5 lens is rotated to focus and a lever above it changes apertures. Three shutter speeds of 1/25-1/100sec are controlled by a lever on top of the body that moves in a straight line and drops into a slot for each speed, a bit like the gear lever on an automatic car. The shutter is tensioned and the mirror lowered by a lever on the side. Today, the Reflex Box is rather rare.

**Reflex Box, a now rare roll film SLR for 120 film**



## 1939: Pilot Super

This was the third and best version of a camera originally called the Pilot 6 launched three years before. The Super version adds an extinction meter. All cameras take 12 6x6cm exposures on 120 roll film, but the Super offers the facility for also taking 16 exposures of 4.5x6cm, by use of a mask at the film plane. A sliding plate on the camera back reveals either one red window for 12 exposures, or two red windows for 16 exposures. The shutter is speeded 1/20-1/200sec and the interchangeable lens is an Ennastar Pilotar 7.5cm f/2.9.

**Pilot Super, another roll film SLR**



## 1939: Praktiflex

The Praktiflex was an important landmark, being only the third 35mm SLR produced by any manufacturer. (The first two were the German Kine Exakta and Russian Sport.) The first model uses a 40mm lens mount and only Praktiflex lenses can be used. But in 1947, KW initiated the M42 mount for the camera that went on to become an industry standard for subsequent 35mm SLRs from many other manufacturers. Nearly a dozen variants, all using waist-level viewfinders, were introduced before and after World War II up until 1954, when the Praktina took over the starring role in the KW 35mm SLR stable.



**An early Praktiflex from 1939**

COURTESY OF MIKE ESMAN

### 1956: Praktica FX2

The first Praktica was introduced in 1949 as the natural successor to the Praktiflex, which it much resembled. But seven years later, with the introduction of the FX2, it was time for a major landmark because this was the first SLR with fully automatic aperture stop-down built into the body. The camera takes its name from its dual flash synch system: 'F' for high-speed bulbs and 'X' for electronic flash. It accepts M42 mount lenses and the standard lens is usually a 50mm f/2.8 Tessar. The camera also has an unusual method of producing 1/2-1/500sec speeds using two speed dials. One selects the speed, the other switches from fast to slow speeds. The mirror is not instant return. The camera's waist-level viewfinder is not ideal for the 35mm format, but a pentaprism accessory to slot into place over the viewing screen improves its use tremendously.



**Praktica FX2, an early form of the camera that went on to be an extremely popular 35mm SLR**



**Pentacon Six with eye-level and waist-level viewfinders**

### 1966: Pentacon Six

In 1957, while the company was under state ownership following World War II, the Praktisix introduced medium format film size and quality in a camera that resembled an extra-large 35mm SLR. It was followed by the Praktisix II and IIa with minor cosmetic changes and finally became the Pentacon Six. It features an eye-level pentaprism viewfinder which can be swapped for a waist-level finder. Both are non-metered, but a metered prism finder can also

be used for through-the-lens metering. Seven interchangeable focusing screens offer plain viewing, rangefinder focusing and a selection of specialist types for technical photography. Carl Zeiss Jena and Schneider are among the prestigious names that made lenses for the camera, ranging from 30mm wide-angle to 1,000mm telephoto, all interchangeable via a breech-lock mount. Bellows and extension tubes offer facilities for close-up and macro photography.



**Noblex 135, an unusual 35mm panoramic camera**

### 1992: Noblex 135

Panoramic cameras fall into several types, and the Noblex is a swing-lens model in which film is loaded around a curve and, during exposure, the lens swings in an arc, building up its image on the film as it moves. The Noblex is among the best of this type of camera. It uses a battery-driven motor to turn the lens, contained within a cylinder which rotates 360 degrees, but with the movement beginning before the start of the actual exposure. This ensures that, by the time the exposure begins, the mechanism has accelerated to its optimum speed and the resulting picture is more evenly exposed across its width. The Noblex 135 shoots 19 24x66mm images on 35mm film. A larger version was made to shoot six 5x12cm images on 120 roll film.



## What to pay

**Praktina FX:** £30-35

**Praktina IIa:** £75-100

**Patent Etui:** £70-100

**Pilot Reflex:** £300-500

**Reflex Box:** £25-50

**Pilot Super:** £50-75

**Praktiflex:** £100-150

**Praktica FX2:** £30-50

**Pentacon Six:** £100-150

**Noblex 135:** £250-300

### Come to Photographica

If you like classic cameras, you'll love Photographica, Britain's biggest camera collector's fair where you'll find everything from wood and brass cameras to early digital and everything in between. Organised by the Photographic Collectors' Club of Great Britain, it happens next week on 17 May at The Royal National Hotel, 38-51 Bedford Way, London WC1H ODG. More information at [pccgb.net](http://pccgb.net)



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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](http://www.eisa.eu/maestro) and [www.amateurphotographer.com](http://www.amateurphotographer.com)

# Arzopa Z3FC

**Andy Westlake** tests a well-spec'd and neatly designed portable monitor

£159.99 • arzopa.com

The Arzopa Z3FC is a portable monitor with a 16.1in screen, that's designed to be used with laptops, tablets, smartphones and gaming consoles. With a slimline, lightweight design, it's easy to carry around. For photographers, it's likely to be most useful as a secondary screen when editing photos and videos on a laptop.

There are plenty of portable monitors around, though, so why this one in particular? Firstly, the Z3FC offers a decent colour gamut, which Arzopa describes as 107% sRGB. In contrast, many cheap screens don't even specify a gamut, which likely means poor colour rendition that's unsuitable for photography work. Secondly, the 2560 x 1440-pixel resolution means it can display detail just that bit more finely than regular 1920 x 1080 screens.

I also really like this monitor's streamlined design. It's essentially a flat slab measuring 336 x 228 x 9.3mm, with no protrusions thanks to its neat fold-away kickstand (see lower right). I've found it'll fit into pretty much any of my bags that are advertised as holding a 15-in laptop. A padded protective sleeve is included, although slightly disappointingly, it doesn't have a separate pocket for the cables.

With most laptops, this monitor will work simply by plugging it into a USB-C port, from where it will draw both signal and power. But with other devices, it will likely need an additional 5V, 2.4A USB-C input. That could be either a mains power supply or a powerbank.

You get a full set of good-quality cables in the box that should cover pretty much every eventuality. One of the USB-C cables has a 180° connector, which is particularly neat if you want to place the screen to the left of your laptop. The other is for power supply only and not a video signal, which caught me out the first time I tried to use.

Using the DataColor Spyder colorimeter, the screen achieved its advertised colour gamut and calibrated to a good match for my laptop screen. In practice, I've found it particularly useful for running Adobe Bridge while I was editing photos in Camera Raw on my main screen. Colours and fine detail are both displayed very nicely.

## Verdict

If you'd like a portable monitor for photo editing, the Arzopa Z3FC fits the bill nicely. It's easy to carry, easy to use, and displays your images nicely. Best of all, it's affordable, and regularly available on Amazon with significant discounts, too.

## Compatibility

This screen can be used with laptops, tablets, smartphones, and gaming consoles



**Amateur Photographer Recommended**  
★★★★★

## Stand

A fold-out kickstand is integrated neatly into the back and supports the monitor at a wide range of angles

## Contents

A soft fabric protective case is included, along with an HDMI cable and 2 USB-C cables – one for display and the other for power only

## Connectors

You get one mini-HDMI and two USB-C input ports. The second USB-C is used to power the monitor with low-power signal inputs



## At a glance

- 16.1in screen size
- 2560 x 1440 QHD resolution
- 107% sRGB colour gamut
- 400nits brightness, 180Hz refresh
- 336 x 228 x 9.3mm, 780g

## ALSO CONSIDER

Arzopa makes a wide range of portable monitors with different size and spec panels. For example if you're on a tighter budget, the 16.1in Z1C offers 100% sRGB coverage and 1920 x 1080 resolution for £100. Alternatively if size is more important, the A1M is 17.3in, 1920 x 1080, and 103% sRGB for £150. All have much the same neat design.



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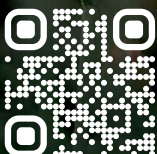
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# Polaroid Hi-Print 3x3

**Jon Stapley** tries out a fun, kitschy little photo printer

● £99.99 ● polaroid.com

The Polaroid Hi-Print 3x3 is the latest member of Polaroid's instant-printer family, sitting in between the Hi-Print 2x3 and the larger Hi-Print 4x6. However, unlike either of those models, it also offers a way to display your images once printed. On top of the printer is a square indent, into which you can pop your latest masterwork, holding it in place with a clear plastic cover. Voila – instant frame!

It connects via Bluetooth and works through the Polaroid Hi-Print app, and only the app (don't try to connect directly; it won't let you). You can send the printer images directly from your phone's camera roll, touch them up with the built-in editor if needed, and once happy, send them to print.

I was quite excited to try out the Hi-Print 3x3, so it was a little disappointing when my first print paper-jammed. This necessitates a reset, and means one of your limited prints has to be discarded. Not a great start.

Fortunately, the remaining prints came off without a hitch. The app interface is very straightforward, and aside from a tendency to turn your prints sideways on first upload, the process runs smoothly. You can nip into the edit panel if needed; the crop tools will probably get heaviest use, though there are also options to adjust brightness, contrast and saturation with sliders, and you can add stickers and text if desired.

The prints themselves impress on first blush – the colours are poppy and vivid, with none of the washed-out look that can plague cheap instant printers (which makes sense, since at £100 this isn't exactly a cheap printer). Up-close inspection reveals that fine details aren't the clearest, though. There can be a bit of ghosting around the edges, and one of my shots came out with a small amount of moiré patterning that wasn't present in the original.

## Verdict

Overall, I find the Polaroid Hi-Print 3x3 rather charming. That poppy, vibrant colour really does it for me, and I can see the appeal of being able to regularly swap out prints – I would have loved this for my student bedroom. I like the way it works so seamlessly with my phone's camera roll, and I can see it becoming quite addictive. The lost print was a shame, but I can see myself finding a spot for this little display at home.



## Power

A built-in, USB-C charging battery means there's no need to mess around with disposable AAs, and the printer can gas up fairly quickly

## Classic format

The square aspect ratio just screams 'Polaroid', but you'll have to make peace with the edges being chopped off your phone photos

**Amateur Photographer**  
**Recommended**  
★★★★

## Freestanding

Although it prints horizontally, the device can free-stand vertically, meaning your photos can easily be displayed on a shelf or desk

## Quick

The Hi-Print will have a finished print in your hands within 50 seconds of sending, and it adds a protective layer



A selection of prints, including the unfortunate misprint

## At a glance

- Dye-diffusion thermal transfer printer
- Built-in frame
- Print speed: up to 50sec
- Rechargeable battery
- 103 x 131 x 30mm, 390g
- Works with iOS and Android

## PRINTING COSTS

Paper for making 10 prints is included in the box to get you started. After that, you can buy 30-print cartridges for £22.99, which equates to 77p per print. Buy in bulk and the price drops, with 5 packs costing £100 for 150 prints, or 67p per print.



# Blast from the Past

## Yashica 44LM

John Wade looks at a smaller-than-usual twin lens reflex

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Think of twin lens reflexes (TLRs) and you might recall slightly bulky cameras for 120 roll film. But in 1957, Franke and Heidecke in Germany introduced an upgraded version of its pre-war Baby Rolleiflex, small in size, light in weight and made to shoot 12 4x4cm exposures on 127 film.

Almost immediately, Japanese manufacturers jumped on the bandwagon. Yashica's offering began with the Model 44, followed by a slightly stripped-down version called the 44A and finally the top-of-the-range 44LM.

A TLR uses two lenses, traditionally set one above the other. The lower lens shoots the picture, the top one reflects its image up to a focusing screen under a hood on the top of the body. To this basic concept, the Yashica 44LM adds a selenium

**The Yashica 44LM, one of several Japanese cameras that followed the introduction of the Baby Rolleiflex**

cell exposure meter.

Once the film is loaded and the back is closed, a knob on the right side of the body is wound until '1' appears in a red window on the back. A small button is pressed to set an exposure counter to '1' in a window on the side and, thereafter, simply pressing the centre of the wind knob and turning it until it stops winds the film to the next frame. The meter, mounted above the top lens, activates a needle to indicate a number. Setting that number on a dial embedded into the wind knob reveals a choice of shutter speed and aperture combinations for correct exposure, which are then set manually via knobs between, and either side of, the lenses. A knob on the left of the body racks the lenses and back and forth in tandem for focusing. The shutter is tensioned by a



View from the top, looking down onto the focusing screen

lever to the side of the lower lens and released with a button below.

If you fancy giving one a go, you can buy mono and colour slide 127 film at Analogue Wonderland ([analoguewonderland.co.uk](http://analoguewonderland.co.uk)). For processing 127, try Photo Hippo ([photohippo.co.uk/](http://photohippo.co.uk/) 127-film-processing)

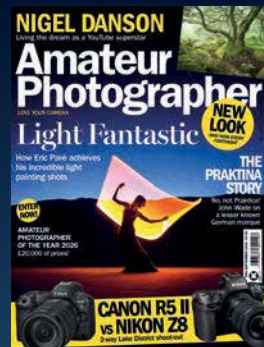
**What's good** The 4x4cm images can be viewed using a 35mm slide projector.

**What's bad** Buying and processing 127 film is expensive.



The wind knob that doubles as an exposure indicator

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Sunset by Derek  
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**2** Osprey with  
Fresh Catch by  
David Godfrey

**3** Just Another  
Day in Paradise by  
Tony Sharp

2





# Join the Club

**This friendly club has regular outings as well as fascinating speakers who give practical tips**

**When was the club founded?**  
Tonbridge CC started in 1966.

**What does your club offer to new members?**

Socialising with friendly people in a splendid new venue. Before, we were in a school hall, and meetings felt like a school assembly. We now meet in a smaller venue with a bar, tables where you face each other. This means a warmer welcome to new members.

Learning new skills. Our club offers a wide array of subjects so members can get advice on most photo styles.

Exhibiting your pictures. We have two exhibitions a year where you can display and sell your work. There are visitors' feedback forms so you could see if the public liked your shots.

Taking part in practical sessions, everything from macro to portraiture.

Enjoy outings to places of photographic interest. These are a great way to try different photo styles.

Enjoying a varied programme of weekly meetings.

Participating in club competitions. There are open contests and themed ones, covering various subjects.

Gaining assistance if working towards recognised awards. We have very competent photographers who are happy to assist in your goals.

**Describe a typical club meeting**

No two meetings are the same. There will normally be announcements, reminders of competition dates, any club news. Judges and guest speakers are welcomed. There is time for questions at the end of presentations.

If there is a practical evening the purpose will be explained and members can then try their hand. There are also online sub meetings for Image Discussion (for those who want advice on an image prior to entering it to a competition) and Audio Visual (for people who want to



► put a sequence of images or video to music or dialogue).

'Not a cat in hell's chance' is an evening where members show photos that they feel would not do well in competitions but like them anyhow. Social evenings include Play Your Prints Right, where members submit images and they are voted on by the other members. Meetings are always friendly and light-hearted. We break for 20 minutes for members to socialise.

## Do you invite guest speakers?

Yes, we have a wide range of speakers from street photography to a lady specialising in photographing polar bears in the Arctic. She gave practical advice on keeping your batteries warm and what to do if confronting a polar bear. Counter-intuitively, you need to stay calm and ask, 'How are you today, Mr Bear?' The bear will then not get alarmed and see you as a threat. Additionally, who knew they have a polar bear prison in Churchill, Canada. This is for any bears that wander into town. They are given water but no food so they don't associate the town with food. After a few days they are flown or driven some distance away in the hope they do not return.

One speaker talked about commercial food and glamour photography. It was fascinating how food and images are manipulated for advertising. He showed a beautiful black & white image of a model's torso in the rain. We then saw the panned-out shot with the model standing in a bowl with the assistant using a watering can from above.

One gentleman spoke about taking images underwater. Speakers will often give tips on equipment, camera settings and the need for patience. The advice from these professionals can really help improve your images.

Some can be really inspiring. There was a wildlife photographer who took close-ups of wild African elephants without a zoom! He stayed with the elephants until they trusted him. That enabled him to get close enough to capture some beautiful imagery. It also gave insight into magazine photos as he had to consider space for text and titles to go over the image.

Our members who specialise in a given area also give talks. One gave an excellent talk on how he saved up for a camera and film and the excitement of taking his first shot. Unfortunately, he could not afford the developing costs so never saw how it turned out.

Another member spoke about how to take shots of the night sky. He brought his tripod in, which was fitted with a device that turned your camera at the same speed as the Earth. This stopped stars from blurring.

## Do members compete in regional or national competitions?

Some of us do enter external contests.

## How many members do you have?

We have 52 members.

## Are any trips or outings planned?

We have regular outings to churches, museums and historic buildings. Recent visits included the V&A Museum and Brompton Oratory, then Holland Park to photograph peacocks. A popular trip was to Leighton House, the former home and studio of Victorian artist Frederic Leighton.

We also visit parks for wildlife photography, such as Knole Park to photograph deer during rutting season. Informal member-led trips have included shooting the Underground, light trails, and walking the Thames Path from Woolwich Ferry to London Bridge – producing striking urban landscapes (and a few sore feet).

A WhatsApp group allows members to organise spur-of-the-moment trips.

## Do you have any funny stories?

A guest speaker told us about the time when as a young photographer he was doing a shoot for Fortnum & Mason. When he'd finished photographing the cream cakes he was told to throw them in the bin. They looked too delicious to throw away so he took a big bite. It was then he realised they were filled with shaving foam.

## What are your goals for the future?

We hope to increase our membership and we have a publicity officer trying to expand our profile. We hold two exhibitions a year to showcase our work. The club is hoping to continue to bring in interesting speakers, try new competitions and plan more outings, possibly incorporating visits to photo exhibitions. Some members have taken pictures for other community groups' publicity. This is something we hope to continue and grow. The Tonbridge annual triathlon also asks us to help photograph the event.

We want to attract new members, as belonging to a club can give you focus and a good reason to carry on snapping.



## Club essentials

### Tonbridge Camera Club

Tonbridge Wells Football Club, the Ridgemont Pavilion, The Ridgeway, Southborough, Kent, TN4 0BD

**Meets:** Thursdays (Sept to May) 7-10pm. (Actual meeting starts at 7.45 but socialising starts from 7pm)

**Membership:** £72

**Contact:** 07969854894/ [membership@tonbridgecameraclub.org.uk](mailto:membership@tonbridgecameraclub.org.uk)

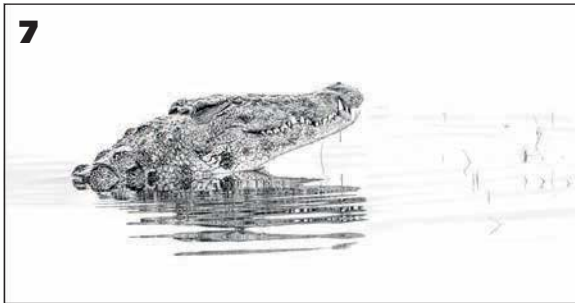
**Website:** [www.tonbridgecameraclub.org.uk](http://www.tonbridgecameraclub.org.uk)

**4** Fritillaries on Jacob's Ladder by Alan Cork

**11** Farm Girl by David Lucy



AP



**5 Colours of North Uist** by Sue Lane

**6 Lethal Weapons** by Kenneth MacIver

**7 Crocodile** by Simon Lane

**8 Running for a Train** by Philip Smithies



**9 Moonlit Meander** by Nicola King

**10 Preparing to Jump** by Lesley Burnand

**12 Sunset over Dungeness Power Station** by Julie Salwey



**13 Feeding Hoopoe Young** by David Godfrey

# Inbox

Write to the Editor at [ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk) and include your full postal address. Please don't send letters in the post as there is no one in the office to receive them. Replies are from the Editor unless otherwise stated

## STAR LETTER



Ian was attracted to the colours of these colourful spades on Horsea seafront

## New hobby

Having retired at the age of 74, I decided to have a go at photography; I wanted a hobby that would get me out and about, so I bought a new camera and started taking pictures. I purchase AP every week to help learn. I like to take close-up detail pictures, as well as street, urban and travel photography, so I have a lot to have a go at this summer.

I captured this image while walking along Hornsea seafront in East Yorkshire. The colours caught my eye. I used a Canon SX70HS, 1/200sec, f/8, ISO 100.

**Ian Cheesman**

**Nice photo, Ian. I'm delighted you have chosen AP to accompany you on your new journey. I hope you find your prize of a Samsung memory card useful for storing all the pictures you'll be taking.**

## Win! SAMSUNG

A Samsung 256GB PRO Plus MicroSDXC memory card with SD Adapter offers up to 180MB/s read and 130MB/s write speeds, ideal for high-res photos and 4K video. 6-proof protection (water, temperature, X-ray, magnet, drop, wearout) and a 10-year limited warranty. Visit [www.samsung.com/uk/memory-storage-devices/](http://www.samsung.com/uk/memory-storage-devices/)



## Bad advice

I do not intentionally use AI for anything, but my Google searches now regularly prompt initial advice from AI. The

intelligence is artificial in the sense that it trawls the internet, simply lifting what seems to be a general consensus about the topic of interest. But

what happens when there is no consensus or almost nothing relevant out there in the ether?

A month ago, I finished shooting a roll of film in an

old Canon rangefinder. I looked at the base plate for a small black button to release the film-winding ratchet, like on almost every SLR camera ever made. There wasn't one. The AI suggestion for how to release the film and rewind it began 'First, open the back of the camera.' Instinctively, I realised that this was the wrong thing to do.

Mike Butkus has some six thousand camera instruction manuals online, but I found the manual for mine was in what could only be called Japanese-English. The instructions for loading and unloading film were on the same page and not easily comprehended. AI, Artificial Incompetence, managed to lift several sequential steps from the page and improve the colloquial English, although the instructions it gave me made almost no sense. Fortunately, from the manual I was able to locate how to release the winding ratchet (on a ring around the shutter release!) and

was able to rewind my film before opening the back.

**Ross Samson**

## Makers vs takers

I read with great interest Kevin Jackson's letter about Image Makers vs Takers (AP 14 April). I'm in agreement with most of what Kevin says but in the genre that most interests me – street photography – you sometimes have to react instantaneously when something suddenly happens, and you press the shutter immediately without really thinking.

That said I am firmly in the 'pre thought' image maker category.

With the attached photograph (above) I had checked out the location beforehand, pre-visualised the type of image I wanted to achieve, set the camera exposure to emphasise the highlights more than the shadows and then had to wait for about 20 minutes before this woman and her dog came into view. I couldn't quite work out who was walking who!

**Graeme Youngson**





Graeme Youngson's photo is proof that patience pays off. See 'Makers vs Takers'

It was worth the wait, Graeme. Don't forget to enter the new *Amateur Photographer* of the Year competition, which we're launching in this issue on the theme of **Street Photography**. See page 26 for details.

## Sportsman memories

Looking through today's AP (14 April) when it dropped through the letter box I see the *Made in Ilford (almost)* article with the Ilford Sportsman. Oh joy! The Ilford Sportsman was my second camera after a Kodak box camera that I got when I was 8. I was about 12 when I got the Sportsman, from the Co-op chemist in Motherwell – it was the only shop locally that sold cameras.

The pharmacist was the president of the local camera club and he told me that the Ilford Sportsman had a better lens than the similarly priced Halina. I used it till I was 19 years old and won a few prizes in the local camera club with it. Initially I had one of the

plastic Johnston exposure calculators but after a couple of years I bought a Hanimex Sekonic meter. The rest of the kit was a push-on lens hood that held filters. I had a 3x yellow green filter and a 3-dioptre close-up lens for 'macro'.

I once took a colour slide photo of a friend on the Ilford Sportsman through the yellow / green filter, called it woodland portrait and entered it in the club colour slide competition. It caused much discussion but nobody guessed what I had done! It did not get very far before it was eliminated. Both the box



Roy McCunn reminisces about the Ilford Sportsman

camera and the Ilford Sportsman still work.

Thanks for a great magazine.

**Roy McCunn**

## Heavy lifting

I have been an enthusiastic amateur photographer since the age of seven and I am now almost seventy-six. I have used everything from a Kodak Brownie 127 to a Sony A7R V. I have witnessed many changes in the cameras and the image processing in that time. I often hear people saying things like 'modern cameras and processing take the skill out of photography'. To that I say, rubbish. That would be like saying that using power tools takes the skill out of being a carpenter.

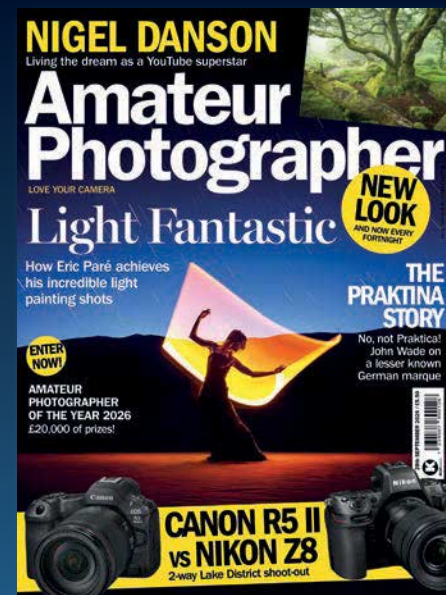
There is only one skill that really matters in photography. The ability to 'see' an image and then make it come to life on film or digital media. If you cannot do that, it makes no difference what camera you have in your hand or what processing software you have installed on your home computer.

I love my modern cameras and the wonderful software available for post processing. They do the heavy lifting for me and give me more time to think about the artistic and creative aspects of photography.

**Alan Moss**

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear reader,

Welcome to the new and improved **Amateur Photographer**! As you can see, we have a brand-new look (with 100 pages in every single issue), new content and more of the features that you love. From the world's best photographers to the newest kit, plus valuable insights and stories from the masters of the craft, we have everything photography related covered in a new and improved fortnightly package.

Best wishes,

*Nigel Atherton*

**Nigel Atherton**, Editor

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## EVERY ISSUE INCLUDES

- The very best in photography, with features and interviews
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# Best Buys

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



A round-up of the AP testing team's favourite and most highly rated kit, including both cameras and all kinds of accessories, across a wide range of price points

## OM System Tough TG-7

● £449 ● [explore.omsystem.com](https://explore.omsystem.com)

This latest model in a long line of class-leading rugged cameras is waterproof to 15m, shockproof against a 2.1m drop, crushproof and freezeproof. The 25-100mm equivalent lens is paired with a 12MP sensor, with in-body stabilisation to combat shake. Viewing is via a 3in LCD. The TG-7 is also one of the few cameras of its type that can record raw files.

★★★★★ Reviewed 2 Apr 2024



## Canon PowerShot G7X Mark III

● £819 ● [canon.co.uk](https://canon.co.uk)

This lovely little pocket camera provides a good range of features for both photography and video. You get a 20MP 1in sensor, 24-100mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 zoom lens, 4K 30p video recording, and a tilting rear screen. It's ideal for those who'd like more advanced controls than on a smartphone.

★★★★★ Reviewed 28 Sep 2019



## Fujifilm X100VI

● £1,599 ● [fujifilm-x.com](https://fujifilm-x.com)

The sixth version of Fujifilm's charismatic rangefinder-styled compact boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor in front of its fixed 23mm f/2 lens. It also gains in-body stabilisation while barely increasing in size. Traditional analogue control dials are joined by a unique hybrid optical/electronic viewfinder and a tilting touchscreen on the back. It's a truly fabulous camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed 9 Apr 2024



## Ricoh GR IV

● £1,199 ● [ricoh.gr.uk](https://ricoh.gr.uk)

A favourite of street photographers, the GR IV combines a 26MP APS-C sensor and a sharp 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens in a slim, pocketable body. It offers sensitivities up to ISO 204,800 and 4fps shooting, with in-body image stabilisation helping to keep images sharp. Viewing is via a fixed 3in rear LCD, while battery life and controls are improved compared to its predecessor.

★★★★★

Reviewed 23 Sep 2025



## Sony RX100 VII

● £1,049 ● [sony.co.uk](https://sony.co.uk)

Sony has somehow crammed a 24-200mm equivalent zoom, pop-up electronic viewfinder, tilting screen, 20 fps shooting and 4K video recording into a body that you can slip into a jacket pocket. With the firm's latest AF technology also on board, it's without doubt the most accomplished pocket camera on the market.

★★★★★

Reviewed 5 Oct 2019



## Fujifilm GFX100RF

● £4,499 ● [fujifilm-x.com](https://fujifilm-x.com)

It's anything but cheap, but the world's first medium-format compact camera offers an unparalleled combination of image quality and portability. It combines a 100MP sensor with a 28mm equivalent f/4 lens, while viewing is via an electronic viewfinder or a tilting touchscreen. A unique aspect ratio dial encourages a creative approach to composition.

★★★★★

Reviewed 13 May 2025



## Canon EOS R50

● £859 with 18-45mm lens ● [canon.co.uk](https://www.canon.co.uk)

With the EOS R50, Canon has fitted some impressive technology into a compact and lightweight body. It boasts highly capable subject recognition autofocus coupled with rapid continuous shooting. Image quality is very pleasing too, with attractive files direct from the camera. It also works well with EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
6 Jun 2023



## Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

● £749 with 14-42mm ● [explore.omsystem.com](https://www.explore.omsystem.com)

With a charismatic retro design, fine handling, highly effective in-body stabilisation and attractive JPEG output, Olympus has made a camera that's more pleasant to use than its entry-level competitors. Its 20MP sensor delivers good results up to ISO 3200 at least, and its tilting screen can be set to face forwards beneath the camera.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
26 Sep 2020



## Fujifilm X-T5

● £1,599 body only ● [fujifilm-x.com](https://www.fujifilm-x.com)

Fujifilm's latest X-T model is a great choice for serious enthusiast photographers. It boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor housed in a retro-styled body covered with traditional analogue control dials. Subject-detection autofocus, in-body stabilisation and Fujifilm's lovely colour modes round off an extremely desirable package.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
3 Jan 2023



## Nikon Z50II

● £999 with 16-50mm lens ● [nikon.co.uk](https://www.nikon.co.uk)

Nikon's Z50II is a very capable camera that offers the most advanced feature set in its class. It handles really well too, while giving excellent output in both JPEG and raw. Some users might be put off by its 20MP resolution, but in reality this counts as little practical difference to 24MP or 26MP cameras. With Nikon now offering a decent range of DX lenses, it's a great option as a first serious camera.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
25 Feb 2025



## Fujifilm X-T30 III

● £999 with 13-33mm lens ● [fujifilm-x.com](https://www.fujifilm-x.com)

This lovely little camera provides excellent performance, while preserving the charm of the X-series. It's a great all-rounder, and handles exceptionally well thanks to an intuitive interface based around traditional analogue dials. Image quality is superb in both raw and JPEG, with Fujifilm's peerless Film Simulation colour modes accessed via their own dial.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
10 Feb 2026



## Panasonic Lumix GH7

● £1,699 body only ● [panasonic.com/uk](https://www.panasonic.com/uk)

Panasonic's flagship Micro Four Thirds camera is aimed at videographers, but holds its own when capturing stills as well. Its 25MP sensor delivers plenty of detail, while enabling 5.7K recording at 60fps, or 4K at 120fps. Autofocus is much improved over the firm's older models, too. Pro-spec video functionality and effective in-body stabilisation round off a fine package.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
5 Nov 2024



## Fujifilm X-S20

● £1,149 body only ● [fujifilm-x.com](https://www.fujifilm-x.com)

Styled like a mini DSLR, the X-S20 uses electronic dials for changing exposure settings, as opposed to the X-T series' analogue controls. But you still get Fujifilm's signature fine image quality, along with in-body image stabilisation. It also boasts an array of advanced video features, making it a great choice for vloggers and photographers alike.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
25 Jul 2023



## Panasonic Lumix G9 II

● £1,699 body only ● [panasonic.com/uk](https://www.panasonic.com/uk)

Panasonic's high-end Micro Four Thirds camera provides an impressive set of features. It can shoot 25MP still images at up to 75fps, and 5.7K video at 60fps. You get an excellent control layout, incredibly effective in-body stabilisation, and very capable subject recognition autofocus. A good range of small, excellent Leica-branded lenses is available to match.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
31 Oct 2023



## OM System OM-1 Mark II

● £2,049 body only ● [explore.omsystem.com](https://www.explore.omsystem.com)

Updated version of this high-speed powerhouse gains some handy new features. It's capable of shooting at 120fps with focus fixed, or 50fps with AF, but now with double the buffer for extended bursts. AI subject detection recognises vehicles, animals and birds. It also boasts IP53-rated weather-sealing and includes class-leading stabilisation.

★★★★★

**Review**  
12 Mar 2024



## Nikon Z5II

● £1,379 body only ● [nikon.co.uk](https://www.nikon.co.uk)

Nikon's entry-level full-frame model redefines what we can expect from a camera at this price point. It's packed full of features, including subject-detection autofocus, in-body image stabilisation and a fully articulating screen, while its 24MP sensor delivers excellent image quality. It's an excellent all-rounder at a tempting price.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
17 Jun 2025



## Nikon Z6III

● £1,959 body only ● [nikon.co.uk](https://www.nikon.co.uk)

This mid-range model is one of the finest all-round cameras for enthusiast users on the market. It marries excellent autofocus and super-fast continuous shooting with solid build quality and a refined control layout. The viewfinder is particularly bright, and joined by a fully articulated touchscreen. It's at least a match for any other camera in its class.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
8 Oct 2024



## Sony Alpha 7R V

● £3,999 body only ● [sony.co.uk](https://www.sony.co.uk)

With its 61MP full-frame sensor, the A7R V provides class-leading image quality while adding a whole array of improvements over its predecessor. These include subject-detection AF, a larger, more detailed viewfinder, and a more flexible rear LCD design. For those whose needs are more about image quality than speed, it's probably the best full-frame camera you can buy.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
17 Jan 2023



## Sony Alpha 7 V

● £2,799 body only ● [sony.co.uk](https://www.sony.co.uk)

Sony's enthusiast-focused full-frame model employs a new 33MP partially-stacked sensor. Not only does it deliver excellent image quality, but it can also shoot at 30fps. Its subject-detection AF can recognise birds, humans, animals and vehicles. A large, clear viewfinder and fully articulated touchscreen round off the package.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
3 Mar 2026



## Nikon Z9

● £5,299 body only ● [nikon.co.uk](https://www.nikon.co.uk)

Without doubt Nikon's finest camera yet, the Z9 combines high resolution, breathtaking speed, subject-recognition autofocus and pro-level build. It's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps for 1,000 frames, and 11MP JPEGs at 120fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's probably the most capable camera around.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
22 Mar 2022



## Leica M11 Monochrom

● £8,300 body only ● [uk.leica-camera.com](https://www.uk.leica-camera.com)

Within its own specialist niche, this monochrome-only manual-focus rangefinder is almost perfect. Its build quality is stunning, and the pared-back design allows you to immerse yourself completely in the process of taking pictures. Most importantly, the 60.1MP sensor produces fantastic results, reaching a new pinnacle in black & white image quality.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
16 May 2023



## Nikon D780

● £1,999 body only ● [nikon.co.uk](https://www.nikon.co.uk)

This highly accomplished 24MP full-frame model shows that there's life in the DSLR yet. It's superbly built with extensive weather-sealing, handles brilliantly, and gives excellent results in any conditions. It'll provide top-level service to photographers who want to keep using their F-mount lenses and still prefer an optical viewfinder.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
4 Apr 2020



## Canon EOS R6 Mark III

● £2,799 body only ● [canon.co.uk](https://www.canon.co.uk)

Based around a 24MP full-frame sensor, this brilliant all-rounder will do almost anything you might ask it to. It combines reliable subject-detection AF, rapid continuous shooting, and effective image stabilisation in a body that handles well and gives great results. It also works well with adapted EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
27 Jan 2026



## Fujifilm GFX100 II

● £6,999 body only ● [fujifilm-x.com](https://www.fujifilm-x.com)

Fujifilm's super-high resolution medium-format camera places an updated 102MP sensor in a pro-spec modular body. Subject-detection autofocus is on board for animals, birds and vehicles, while in-body image stabilisation helps keep handheld shots sharp. It's the ideal camera for serious photographers who demand the ultimate in image quality.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
21 Nov 2023



## Tenba DNA 9 Slim Messenger

● £110 ● [uk.tenba.com](http://uk.tenba.com)

If you'd like a small shoulder bag to carry a camera and a couple of lenses, this is among the best you'll find. Measuring 28cm wide by 20cm tall, it's well suited to holding a mirrorless camera or a compact DSLR. The quality of materials and construction is excellent, and there are plenty of handy pockets for organising accessories.

★★★★★ Reviewed 26 Apr 2022



## Vanguard Veo Metro B25L

● £185 ● [vanguardworld.co.uk](http://vanguardworld.co.uk)

This good-looking backpack will hold a camera and up to 4 lenses, with separate sections for a 16in laptop and personal items. It offers a good level of protection for your kit, while being packed full of useful pockets and clever design details. It's also comfortable to carry when full.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
12 Aug 2025



## Wandrd Prvke 21 V4

● £281 (photography bundle) ● [eu.wandrd.com](http://eu.wandrd.com)

Wandrd's compact backpack offers sleek style for everyday use. Durable and comfortable to carry, it provides access from the top, side and back. Different-sized camera cubes can be used for smaller or larger kits, or the bag can be used on its own. Dedicated sleeves hold a tablet and laptop.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
23 Sep 2025



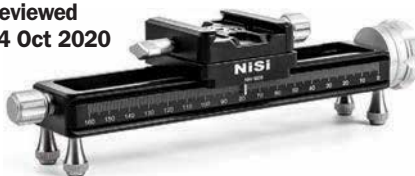
## NiSi NM-180s Macro Rail

● £105 ● [nisioptics.co.uk](http://nisioptics.co.uk)

One of the best macro focusing rails available right now, the NM-180s combines excellent quality build with super-smooth operation. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame SLR while offering up to 130mm of travel, with a large knob facilitating fine adjustment. It also boasts extensive compatibility with the Arca Swiss quick release system, with a dovetail profile along its base and a rotating clamp on top.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
24 Oct 2020



## Cullmann Rondo 460M RB8.5

● £80 ● [transcontinenta.co.uk](http://transcontinenta.co.uk)

If you want a fully featured tripod kit on a budget, this is a great choice. Four-section aluminium legs provide a max height of 160cm, while packing down to 43.5cm. It's rated to support a 4kg load, weighs 1.46kg, and one leg can be combined with the centre column to form a monopod.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
21 Mar 2020



## Heipi W28S Travel Tripod

● £330 ● [heipivision.com](http://heipivision.com)

This compact tripod employs a space-saving design, with a unique detachable 'three pillar' centre column that can also be used as a standalone table-top tripod. The ball head is impressively large and strong, too. It boasts lots of other neat features, while being well made and unusually stable. It's probably the best example of this kind of travel tripod.

★★★★★

Reviewed 2 Sep 2025



## Benro Rhino 24C tripod with VX25 head

● £250 ● [uk.benroeu.com](http://uk.benroeu.com)

Benro has got pretty much everything right with this sturdy, well-designed tripod and head that'll support a substantial load. This four-section carbon fibre model offers a maximum height of almost 1.7m, while folding down to 49cm and weighing 1.74kg. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame DSLR with a telephoto zoom. Quite simply, it's a fantastic kit for the money.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
28 Nov 2020



## NiSi True Color ND-Vario 1-5 stops

● £89-£179 ● [nisioptics.co.uk](http://nisioptics.co.uk)

This high-quality variable neutral density filter is ideal for regulating the amount of light entering your lens, without introducing any colour cast. It's optically excellent, boasts an oil and water-repellent coating, and includes a handy and accurate density scale. It's available in sizes from 40.5mm to 95mm.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
24 May 2022



## Benro SupaDupa Pro MSDPL46C

● £189 ● [uk.benroeu.com](http://uk.benroeu.com)

It may have a ridiculous name, but this five-section carbon fibre model might just be the best monopod we've ever tested. One clip leg lock provides easy length adjustment, while the lower twist locks are waterproof. On the top there's a clever bowl head with an Arca-compatible clamp. It's a great choice for those who regularly shoot with large telephotos.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 Apr 2021



## Godox iFlash iT30Pro

● £67 ● godox.com

This tiny flash unit from Godox is both portable and affordable, while offering a comprehensive feature set. There's a choice of TTL auto or manual power setting, and the built-in Li-ion battery conveniently charges via USB. It can even work as a 2.4GHz wireless trigger for the firm's larger flash units.

An optional riser/bounce adapter adds further appeal.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
**11 Nov 2025**



## Hollyland Lark M2S

● £149 ● hollyland.com

This excellent wireless mic stands out due to the clever design of the transmitter units. Only the tiny microphone section is visible, with the rest of the electronics hidden away behind the subject's clothing. The kit comes with one transmitter that plugs into the USB-C port of a smartphone or computer, and another that's designed to be used on your camera. Sound quality is really very good.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
**1 July 2025**



## Hahnel ProCube 3

● £80 ● hahnel.ie

This USB-C-powered dual battery charger employs interchangeable plates that each accept a pair of batteries. An LCD display shows progress, while a 2A USB-A output allows phones or tablets to be charged once the camera batteries are full.

Versions are available for all the main camera brands.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
**4 Mar 2025**



## Datacolor SpyderPro

● £249 ● datacolor.com

If you like to post-process your images, you need to be sure that your monitor is showing colours accurately. Datacolor has designed the Spyder to calibrate your display faster than ever before, with the process taking about two minutes. For most photographers, the Pro version makes most sense.

★★★★★

**Reviewed 25 Jul 2023**



## Rotolight NEO 3 Pro

● £389 ● rotolight.com

LED lighting technology has advanced in leaps and bounds over recent years. Rotolight's compact on-camera NEO 3 Pro offers a unique feature set thanks to its full colour RGBWW LEDs, with the ability to provide either continuous light or flash in 16.7 million colours. This firm has also programmed in the characteristics of 2,500 colour filters, and it works brilliantly. Power is provided by an NP-F type Li-ion battery.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
**15 Nov 2022**



## Peak Design Form Rope strap

● £45 ● peakdesign.com

This minimalist rope strap is, like all Peak Design's products, expensive compared to similar-looking alternatives. But it's extremely well made from high-quality materials, and it works brilliantly. It comes in a choice of three lengths and three colours, and is perfect for carrying small mirrorless or compact cameras.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
**13 Jan 2026**



## Kase Wolverine K9 100mm Entry-Level Kit

● £399 ● kasefilters.com

With this top-quality filter system, Kase has carefully rethought every component. The slimline, low-profile holder benefits from extensive light-sealing, while the 82mm polariser clips into place magnetically; it's also easy to adjust from behind the camera. All of the filters use top-quality glass, and everything fits together into a single case. The result is a top-quality set-up that's easy to use and delivers superb results.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
**5 Dec 2020**



## Intrepid Compact Enlarger

● £300 ● intrepidcamera.co.uk

For film photography enthusiasts wishing to make prints at home, this compact and affordable unit includes lots of handy features. Based around full-colour LED technology, it supports both mono and colour printing. It's perfect for those who don't have space for a permanent darkroom.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
**17 Jul 2021**



## Fujifilm Instax Link WIDE

● £140 ● instax.co.uk

This brilliant portable printer produces great-looking 6x10cm prints on Fujifilm's Instax Wide film. It connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery and available in white or grey, it'll slip easily into a bag.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
**25 Jan 2022**



"The exact product I was searching for, in stock, good price and very carefully packaged up with super fast delivery. Excellent service!"



"Very informative the guys really know their stuff. Nothing was too much trouble."



"Great service as always. My go-to store for all my camera needs."



"This is how internet shopping should be!"



"Highly recommend popping in if you need anything camera related, old or new."



"Never seen a camera shop with so many varieties of camera from film to digital, clearly shows a lot of passion and hard work!"



"Quick delivery and great products!"



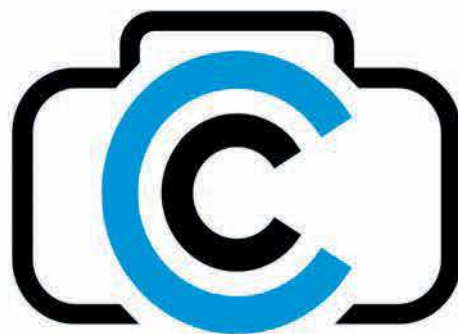
"Really helpful staff and a fantastic selection of kit. Definitely going back. Still smiling."



"Great customer service, and would recommend to anyone, thank you guys"



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| 910530 | Canon 15-45mm f3.5-6.3 IS STM EF-M Lens        | £99   |
| 910482 | Canon 16-35mm f2.8 L II USM EF Lens            | £499  |
| 910266 | Canon 17-40mm f4L USM EF Lens                  | £219  |
| 910443 | Canon 17-85mm f4-5.6 IS USM EF-S Lens          | £119  |
| 910370 | Canon 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 IS STM EF-S Lens       | £149  |
| 910265 | Canon 24-105mm f4L IS USM EF Lens              | £349  |
| 909909 | Canon 24-70mm f4L IS USM EF Lens               | £479  |
| 910719 | Canon 28-300mm f3.5-5.6L IS USM EF Lens        | £999  |
| 910208 | Canon 28mm f1.8 USM EF Lens                    | £259  |
| 910532 | Canon 35-80mm f4-5.6 USM EF Lens               | £59   |
| 910661 | Canon 50mm f1.8 STM EF Lens                    | £79   |
| 910439 | Canon 55-200mm f4.5-6.3 IS STM EF-M Lens       | £199  |
| 910309 | Canon EF to EF-M Mount Adapter                 | £69   |
| 910374 | Canon EOS 100D DSLR Camera Body                | £199  |
| 910754 | Canon EOS 1100D DSLR Camera & 18-55mm Lens     | £199  |
| 910687 | Canon EOS 1300D DSLR Camera & 18-55mm III Lens | £279  |
| 910796 | Canon EOS 2000D DSLR Camera & 18-55mm IS Lens  | £349  |
| 910251 | Canon EOS 200D DSLR Camera & 18-55mm Lens      | £379  |
| 910573 | Canon EOS 550D DSLR Camera & 18-55mm IS Lens   | £199  |
| 910741 | Canon EOS 60D DSLR Camera & 18-55mm Lens       | £299  |
| 910660 | Canon EOS 6D DSLR Camera & 50mm f1.8 Lens      | £419  |
| 910193 | Canon EOS 70D DSLR Camera & 18-135mm IS Lens   | £449  |
| 910491 | Canon EOS 77D DSLR Camera Body                 | £399  |
| 908768 | Canon EOS 80D DSLR Camera Body                 | £439  |
| 906899 | Canon EOS 850D DSLR Camera & 18-55mm IS Lens   | £799  |
| 910612 | Canon EOS M50 Mark II Camera & 15-45mm Lens    | £499  |
| 910737 | Canon EOS R6 Mirrorless Camera Body            | £999  |
| 910807 | Canon EOS RP Mirrorless Camera Body            | £549  |
| 909666 | Canon Extender EF 2x III Teleconverter         | £219  |
| 910655 | Canon Powershot SX740 HS Compact Camera        | £699  |
| 910719 | Canon RF 24-50mm f4.5-6.3 IS STM Lens          | £149  |
| 910260 | Canon RF 24-70mm f2.8 L IS USM Lens            | £2299 |
| 910628 | Canon RF 35mm f1.8 Macro IS STM Lens           | £479  |
| 910616 | Canon RF 50mm f1.8 STM Lens                    | £149  |
| 910258 | Canon RF 70-200mm f2.8 L IS USM Lens           | £2049 |
| 910659 | Canon RF 85mm f1.2L USM Lens                   | £2099 |
| 908392 | Canon RF-S 55-210mm f5-7.1 IS STM Lens         | £339  |
| 908980 | Canon Speedlite 320EX Flashgun                 | £99   |
| 910638 | Canon Speedlite 430EX II Flashgun              | £119  |

### Used Fujifilm

|        |                                            |       |
|--------|--------------------------------------------|-------|
| 910735 | Fujifilm 16mm f2.8 R WR XF Lens (Silver)   | £249  |
| 910734 | Fujifilm 18mm f2 XF Prime Lens             | £279  |
| 909451 | Fujifilm 50-140mm f2.8 R LM OIS WR XF Lens | £749  |
| 910129 | Fujifilm 50mm f2 R WR XF Lens              | £299  |
| 910419 | Fujifilm X-A2 Mirrorless Camera Body       | £279  |
| 910055 | Fujifilm X-E2 Mirrorless Camera Body       | £399  |
| 909233 | Fujifilm X-M1 Mirrorless Camera Body       | £299  |
| 910733 | Fujifilm X-T4 Mirrorless Camera Body       | £899  |
| 910128 | Fujifilm X-T5 Mirrorless Camera Body       | £1249 |

### Used Nikon

|        |                                               |       |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
| 907547 | Nikon 10-24mm f3.5-4.5 ED AF-S DX NIKKOR Lens | £229  |
| 907558 | Nikon 105mm f1.4E ED AF-S NIKKOR Lens         | £999  |
| 910753 | Nikon 28-105mm f3.5-4.5 D AF Lens             | £119  |
| 910740 | Nikon Coolpix P950 Bridge Camera              | £649  |
| 910111 | Nikon D3100 DSLR Camera Body                  | £149  |
| 909566 | Nikon D5100 DSLR Camera Body                  | £179  |
| 907289 | Nikon D7200 DSLR Camera Body                  | £439  |
| 910791 | Nikon D780 Original Strap                     | £5    |
| 909964 | Nikon Z 20mm f1.8 S Lens                      | £749  |
| 908121 | Nikon Z 24-70mm f2.8 S NIKKOR Lens            | £1699 |
| 910745 | Nikon Z 24-70mm f4 S Lens                     | £369  |
| 910630 | Nikon Z 50mm f2.8 MC Macro Lens               | £529  |
| 900412 | Nikon Z 85mm f1.8 S Lens                      | £799  |
| 910629 | Nikon Z 1c Mirrorless Camera Body             | £549  |
| 910591 | Nikon Z30 Mirrorless Camera & 16-50mm Lens    | £599  |
| 910631 | Nikon Z6 II Mirrorless Camera Body            | £999  |
| 910536 | Nikon Z6 Mirrorless Camera Body               | £599  |
| 910496 | Nikon Z9 Mirrorless Camera Body               | £3199 |

### Used Panasonic

|        |                                                  |       |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 909934 | Panasonic 12-35mm f2.8G X Vario OIS Lens         | £399  |
| 909708 | Panasonic 12-60mm f2.8-4 Leica DG OIS Lens       | £479  |
| 910749 | Panasonic 15mm f1.7 LEICA DG SUMMILUX ASPH. Lens | £359  |
| 910022 | Panasonic 200mm f2.8 Leica DG POWER OIS Lens     | £1299 |
| 910750 | Panasonic 200mm f1.7G II Lens                    | £199  |
| 910748 | Panasonic Lumix G9 Mirrorless Camera Body        | £399  |
| 910709 | Panasonic Lumix S 20-60mm f3.5-5.6 Lens          | £199  |
| 910708 | Panasonic Lumix S 50mm f1.8 Lens (L-Mount)       | £299  |
| 910707 | Panasonic Lumix S 85mm f1.8 Lens (L-Mount)       | £379  |
| 910490 | Panasonic Lumix S5 II Mirrorless Camera Body     | £999  |

### Used Sigma

|        |                                                     |      |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------|------|
| 909940 | Sigma 10-20mm f3.5 EX DC HSM Lens (Canon EF-S)      | £129 |
| 909722 | Sigma 10-20mm f4-5.6 EX DC HSM Lens (Canon EF-S)    | £99  |
| 910198 | Sigma 12-24mm f4 DG HSM ART Lens (Canon EF)         | £619 |
| 902609 | Sigma 14mm f1.8 DG HSM ART Lens (Sony FE)           | £749 |
| 909700 | Sigma 18-200mm f3.5-6.3 DC MACRO OS Lens (Nikon DX) | £129 |
| 910540 | Sigma 19mm f2.8 DN ART Lens (Sony E)                | £119 |
| 908140 | Sigma 24mm f1.4 DG HSM ART Lens (Nikon FX)          | £599 |
| 910685 | Sigma 35mm f1.4 DG DN Art Lens (Sony FE)            | £449 |
| 909687 | Sigma 50mm f1.4 DG DN Art Lens (Sony FE)            | £649 |
| 910524 | Sigma 85mm f1.4 DG HSM ART Lens (Nikon FX)          | £599 |
| 909108 | Sigma 85mm f1.4 DG HSM ART Lens (Sony FE)           | £579 |
| 910649 | Sigma MC-11 Canon EF to Sony E Mount Adapter        | £149 |

### Used Sony

|        |                                               |       |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
| 910714 | Sony 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 G OSS FE Lens         | £1499 |
| 910713 | Sony 12-24mm f4 G FE Lens                     | £999  |
| 910539 | Sony 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 E OSS Lens             | £349  |
| 910715 | Sony 2x FE Teleconverter                      | £379  |
| 908302 | Sony 35mm f1.4 ZA Distagon T* FE Lens         | £549  |
| 910538 | Sony 50mm f1.8 E OSS Lens                     | £179  |
| 905699 | Sony 50mm f2.5 G Lens                         | £399  |
| 903432 | Sony 85mm f1.4 GM FE Lens                     | £899  |
| 909505 | Sony 85mm f1.8 FE Lens                        | £299  |
| 910712 | Sony 90mm f2.8 Macro G OSS FE Lens            | £499  |
| 910587 | Sony A6500 Mirrorless Camera & 16-50mm Lens   | £649  |
| 910525 | Sony A6700 Mirrorless Camera Body             | £1149 |
| 906999 | Sony A7 II Mirrorless Camera Body             | £499  |
| 910683 | Sony A7 III Mirrorless Camera Body            | £799  |
| 910710 | Sony A7CR Mirrorless Camera Body & GP-X2 Grip | £1999 |
| 907259 | Sony A9 II Mirrorless Camera Body             | £3999 |
| 910506 | Sony Cyber-Shot DSC-HX400V Bridge Camera      | £229  |
| 909131 | Sony Cyber-Shot RX10 II Bridge Camera         | £649  |
| 910291 | Sony Cyber-Shot RX10 IV Bridge Camera         | £1799 |
| 910205 | Sony ZV-1 Vlog Camera & GP-VPT2BT Grip        | £489  |

### Used Tamron

|        |                                                    |       |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 910228 | Tamron 10-24mm f3.5-4.5 Di II LD Lens (Canon EF-S) | £169  |
| 909557 | Tamron 11-18mm f4.5-5.6 Lens (Nikon DX)            | £79   |
| 909885 | Tamron 35-150mm f2-2.8 Di III VXD Lens (Nikon Z)   | £1099 |

### Used Film Cameras

|        |                                             |       |
|--------|---------------------------------------------|-------|
| 910405 | Leica M6 Classic 35mm Camera & 50mm f2 Lens | £3499 |
| 910607 | Nikon F301 35mm Camera & 35-70mm Lens       | £199  |
| 910409 | Nikon TW Zoom 35mm Compact Camera           | £129  |
| 910272 | Olympus OM10 35mm SLR Camera Body           | £99   |
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| SQB, 80, WLF, 120 back        | £699    |
| 50 F3.5 S                     | £299    |
| 80 F2.8 PS                    | £299    |
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| 150 F4 PS                     | £299    |
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| 501C body black             | £999     |
| PM 90 prism                 | £369     |
| WLF chrome                  | £399     |
| A12 magazine                | £199/499 |
| Winder CW box               | £299     |
| Macro bellows & hood        | £299     |
| 40 F4 CFE                   | £1699    |
| 50 F4 CF                    | £599     |
| 50 F4 CFE                   | £999     |
| 120 F4 CF macro             | £599     |
| 135 F5.6 CF                 | £599     |
| 150 F4 CFI                  | £899     |
| 150 F4 CF                   | £499     |
| 150 F4 Black T*             | £399     |
| 180 F4 CF                   | £699     |
| 250 F5.6 CF                 | £499     |
| 250 F5.6 black T*           | £299     |

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|--------------------------------|------|
| 45 F4 early box                | £499 |
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| 75 F4.5 latest box             | £399 |
| 90-180 F5.6                    | £399 |
| 120 F3.5 soft focus            | £299 |
| 135 F4 macro                   | £299 |
| 165 F2.8                       | £199 |
| 165 F4 leaf                    | £379 |
| 200 F4 late                    | £249 |
| 200 F4 early                   | £99  |
| 300 F4 latest                  | £199 |
| 400 F4 early                   | £299 |
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| RF 70-200 F2.8 L IS USM box             | £1099 |
| RF 15-30 F4.5/6.3 IS STM box            | £249  |
| RF 15-35 F2.8 L IS USM box              | £1499 |
| RF 24-70 F2.8 IS USM box                | £1899 |
| RF 24-105 F4 L IS                       | £999  |
| RF 35 F1.8 IS macro box                 | £369  |
| RF 50 F1.2 L USM box                    | £1299 |
| RF 70-200 F2.8 L IS USM box             | £1899 |
| RF 100 F2.8 L IS USM macro              | £1099 |
| RF 100-400 F5.6/8 IS USM                | £599  |
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### CANON DSLR USED

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| 6D MKII body                        | £599  |
| 6D body box                         | £399  |
| 5Ds body                            | £699  |
| 5D MKIV body box                    | £1399 |
| 5D MKIII body box                   | £399  |
| 80D body box                        | £499  |
| 600D body box                       | £199  |
| 1300D + 18-55 box                   | £199  |
| BG-E2/20/16/14/13/11/9/8/7.....£WEB |       |
| <b>CANON M MIRRORLESS USED</b>      |       |
| M50 MKII + 15-45 box                | £399  |
| EF-M 18-55 F3.5/5.6 IS STM          | £99   |
| EF-M 18-150 F3.5/6.3 IS STM         | £249  |
| EF-M adapter                        | £49   |
| <b>CANON ACCESSORIES USED</b>       |       |
| MR14 IIEX.....£499 STE-3            | £149  |
| 600EX RT.....£229 580EX II          | £169  |

## Used Canon



£1399 £4499 £3499 £3499

### CANON AF LENSES USED

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 8-15 F4 USM                 | £599 |
| 10-18 F4.5/5.6 IS STM EFS   | £149 |
| 14 F2.8 USM LII             | £599 |
| 15 F2.8 fisheye             | £249 |
| 15-85 F3.5/5.6 EFS          | £199 |
| 16-35 F4 USM IS L box       | £399 |
| 17 F4 TSE USM L box         | £999 |
| 17-40 F4 L USM box          | £299 |
| 18-135 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS nano | £299 |
| 18-200 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS      | £199 |
| 24 F1.4 USM MKII box        | £599 |
| 24 F2.8 STM EFS             | £169 |
| 24 F3.5 USM LII TSE box     | £999 |
| 24-70 F2.8 USM LII box      | £999 |
| 24-70 F4 IS USM L           | £599 |
| 24-105 F4 IS USM L          | £399 |
| 35 F1.4 USM LII box         | £999 |
| 35 F2 IS USM box            | £399 |

400mm F4 DO IS USM III

## Used Canon



£399 £1399 £499

### SIGMA CAF USED

|                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| 4.5 F2.8 DC fisheye box      | £299 |
| 10-20 F3.5 EX DC HSM         | £169 |
| 12-24 F4.5/5.6 II DG         | £299 |
| 18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS box    | £299 |
| 35 F1.4 Art DG               | £499 |
| 50 F1.4 Art DG               | £499 |
| 105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS        | £299 |
| 150-600 F5/6.3 DG OS sport   | £999 |
| 150-600 F5/6.3 DG OS contemp | £799 |
| TC1401 1.4x extender         | £149 |
| TC2001 2x extender           | £299 |
| <b>TAMRON CAF USED</b>       |      |
| 10-24 F3.5/4.5 DiII          | £179 |
| 16-300 F3.5/6.3 Di VC        | £349 |
| 18-400 F5/6.3 DiII VC        | £399 |
| 70-300 F4/5.6 VC USD         | £249 |
| 90 F2.8 Di                   | £199 |
| 180 F3.5 SP Di               | £249 |

## Used Nikon



£2299 £1499 £1499

### NIKON Z MIRRORLESS USED

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Z9 body box                   | £2999 |
| Z8 body box                   | £2299 |
| Z6 MKIII body box             | £1499 |
| 14-24 F2.8 S box              | £1399 |
| 24 F1.8 S box                 | £749  |
| 24-70 F2.8 S box              | £1099 |
| 24-70 F4 S                    | £399  |
| 24-120 F4 S                   | £749  |
| 24-200 F4/6.3 VR              | £599  |
| 35 F1.8 S box                 | £599  |
| 50 F1.8 S                     | £399  |
| 50 F2.8 S macro               | £439  |
| 70-200 F2.8 VR S box          | £1499 |
| 85 F1.8 S                     | £599  |
| 100-400 F4.5/5.6 VR S box     | £1699 |
| 180-600 F5.6/6.3 VR box       | £1499 |
| 400 F4.5 S VR box             | £1999 |
| 800 F6.3 VR S box             | £3899 |
| TC 2x tele converter box      | £479  |
| FTZ adapt MKII £199 FTZ adapt | £149  |
| Tamron 70-300 F4.5/6.3        | £399  |

### NIKON DSLR USED

|                                 |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| D5 body box                     | £1999    |
| D4s body box                    | £999     |
| D3x body                        | £799     |
| D850 body box                   | £1699    |
| 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     |
| D1500 body box                  | £149     |
| D300/D3200 body each            | £149     |
| MBD-17 (D500)                   | £199     |
| MBD-16 (D750)                   | £99      |
| MBD-15 (D7100/D7200)            | £99      |
| <b>FLASH / ACCESSORIES USED</b> |          |
| SB-400.....£99 SB-700 box       | £99      |
| SB-900 box.....£149 SB-910      | £199     |
| SU-800 commander                | £199     |
| DR-6 or DR-5 angle finder each  | £99      |
| MC-36A rem.....£149 MC-30A rem  | £79      |

## Used Nikon



£749 £1999 £1799

### 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 |
| 24-70 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  |

## Used Nikon



£1699 £599 £1999

### SIGMA NAF USED

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 8 F3.5 DC                   | £299 |
| 10-20 F3.5 DC               | £169 |
| 12-24 F4.5/5.6 II HSM       | £299 |
| 18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS       | £299 |
| 20 F1.4 DG HSM Art          | £499 |
| 24-105 F4 DG OS             | £499 |
| 35 F1.4 Art DG              | £499 |
| 50 F1.4 Art DG              | £499 |
| 70-200 F2.8 DG HSM Sport    | £799 |
| 85 F1.4 Art DG box          | £699 |
| 100-400 F5/6.3 DG OS        | £599 |
| 105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS       | £299 |
| 150-600 F5/6.3 DG OS sport  | £999 |
| 150-600 F5/6.3 DG OS contem | £799 |
| 180 F2.8 OS macro           | £499 |
| TC-1401 1.4x extender       | £149 |
| <b>TAMRON NAF USED</b>      |      |
| 16-300 F3.5/6.3 DiII VC     | £349 |
| 70-300 F4/5.6 VC USD        | £229 |
| 90 F2.8 Di VC               | £299 |
| 90 F2.8 Di                  | £199 |

## Fujifilm Used



£799 £499

### FUJIFILM DIGITAL USED

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| XT-4 body black          | £799 |
| X Pro 1 body             | £399 |
| 10-24 F4 OIS XF box      | £299 |
| 16 F1.4 WR               | £349 |
| 16-55 F2.8 XF            | £499 |
| 16-80 F4 WR              | £399 |
| 18 F2 XF box             | £399 |
| 18-55 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 |
| 60 F2.4 box              | £299 |
| 90 F2 XF WR              | £399 |
| X500 flash box           | £199 |
| EF-42 flash              | £99  |
| XT-2/XT-3/XT-4 grip each | £69  |

## Olympus Used



£799 £899

### OLYMPUS MICRO 4/3 USED

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| OM-1 body             | £799 |
| E-M10 MKIII body      | £379 |
| 7-14 F2.8 Pro         | £599 |
| 9-18 F4/5.6           | £299 |
| 12-40 F2.8 Pro        | £399 |
| 12-100 F4 IS Pro      | £799 |
| 12-200 F3.5/6.3       | £599 |
| 14-150 F4/5.6 ED MKII | £349 |
| 25 F1.8               | £249 |
| 30 F3.5 macro box     | £199 |
| 40-150 F2.8 Pro       | £899 |
| 40-150 F4 Pro box     | £649 |
| 45 F1.2 Pro ED        | £599 |
| 60 F2.8 macro         | £379 |
| 75-300 F4.8/6.7 MSCII | £349 |
| HLD-10 grip           | £299 |
| HLD-9 grip            | £99  |

## Panasonic Used



£499 £599

### PANASONIC MICRO 4/3 USED

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| G9 body box             | £499 |
| G7 body                 | £299 |
| G5 body box             | £399 |
| GX7 body                | £299 |
| 7-14 F4                 | £599 |
| 8-18 F2.8/4 box         | £439 |
| 9 F1.7 DG               | £599 |
| 12 F1.4 Summilux DG     | £599 |
| 14 F2.5                 | £149 |
| 14-42 F3.5/5.6 HD       | £99  |
| 14-140 F3.5/5.6         | £299 |
| 25 F1.4 box             | £399 |
| 25 F1.7                 | £149 |
| 45 F2.8 DG macro        | £299 |
| 45-175 F4.5/5.6         | £249 |
| 45-200 F4.5/5.6 box     | £249 |
| 100-300 F4/5.6 MKI      | £299 |
| Samyang 12 F2 man focus | £179 |
| Sigma 16 F1.4 DC DN     | £299 |

## Sony Used



£2799 £8999

### SONY FE MOUNT DIGITAL USED

|                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| A7 MK III body box          | £899  |
| A7S body box                | £499  |
| 16-35 F2.8 GM box           | £999  |
| 24 F1.4 GM box              | £899  |
| 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  |
| 70-200 F2.8 GM OSS MKII box | £1799 |
| 85 F1.4 GM box              | £1799 |
| 100-400 F4.5/5.6 GM OSS box | £1499 |
| Sigma 35 F1.2 Art           | £599  |
| Tamron 150-500 F5/6.7 VC    | £699  |
| Voigtlander 50 F2 APO MF    | £499  |

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\*was £2,499

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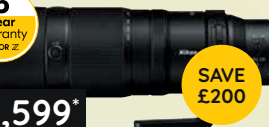
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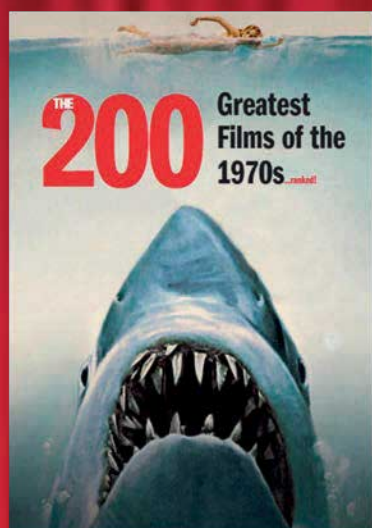
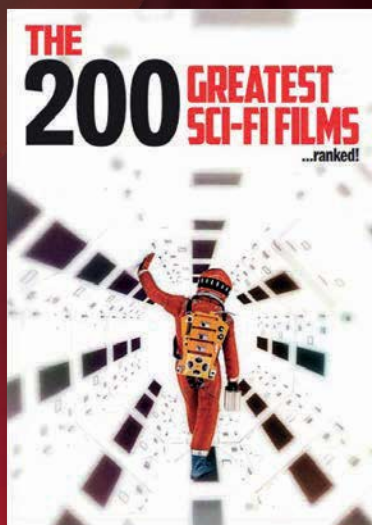
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# Final Analysis

**Peter Dench considers...**

**Fish Eyes by Sophia Spurgin, 2025**

**S**ometimes you don't have to analyse a photograph with the integrity of Susan Sontag. Sometimes a photograph just ambushes your senses and gives your eyes a pleasant wiggle – a moment of recognition and disruption. Sophia Spurgin's winning portrait of a fisherman on a boat in Hoi An, Vietnam, does just that. It's a gag, yes, but there's also something more sophisticated going on.

From birth we are hardwired to look at the eyes and trust what they have to say. We seek meaning, affirmation, intent. Remove them, obscure them or here in Spurgin's case, substitute them and the image shakes up what we seek. We are forced to look longer than we otherwise might. To find clues elsewhere – in the set of the fisherman's mouth, jaw, the lines of his face.

© SOPHIA SPURGIN



## Visual mischief

Photography and art have a long lineage of understanding this disruption and obscuring the expected. René Magritte's 'The Son of Man' perhaps most famously with an apple in the face. And portrait photographer Philippe Halsman was often up to visual mischief too, often in collaboration with Salvador Dali.

The late great photographer Martin Parr amassed images of visual incongruities that were perfectly timed. He understood the value of photographing people wearing sunglasses. AP regular Harry Borden photographed former CEO of Cadbury, Todd Spitzer, holding Liquorice Allsorts Coconut Rolls to replace Spitzer's peepers.

**'It's a shared moment of humour that the fisherman offers as a willing participant. You get a sense of the rapport'**

Spurgin's photo, shot on a Canon EOS R5 Mark II, sits within this tradition. It's simple but not derivative. There's an authenticity that emerges, as Spurgin says, from 'the playful end of the photography session.' It's a shared moment of humour that the fisherman offers as a willing participant. You get a sense of the rapport that has built up beforehand during the more formal act of documenting.

The fishing net draped behind offers a lovely texture and detail which reminds us of his

livelihood and offers a sense of place. Without it, the image risks drifting into gimmickry. The fish aren't frivolous props but part of the world that the fisherman inhabits daily. That connection grounds the absurdity.

Humour can be a powerful tool in photography but difficult to get right – humour can cross into becoming sneering. This image has universality. You don't need to be familiar with fishing culture or Hoi An to understand it. It's a childlike instinct to transform

your face into something else by holding something over it. It's a joke that traverses cultures, language and age.

Retired teacher Spurgin remembers the moment as 'genuinely entertaining.' That sense of enjoyment is embedded in the frame. Arguably a brave decision for the judges to award it overall first prize winner of the London Camera Exchange Photographer of the Year 2026.

In an age when there's pressure to overthink and over-explain an image (as I have just done!) this is a refreshing example of one that trusts in a simple, historic idea; and shows that humour, when handled lightly, can be as revealing as a Susan Sontag essay.

AP

Peter Dench is a photographer, writer, curator and presenter based in London. He is one of the co-curators of Photo North and has been exhibited dozens of times. He has published a number of books including *The Dench Dozen: Great Britons of Photography Vol 1*; *Dench Does Dallas*; *The British Abroad*; *A&E: Alcohol & England* and *England Uncensored*. Visit [peterdench.com](http://peterdench.com)



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