GERED MANKOWITZ

On his 65 years photographing the world's biggest music icons

Amateur Photographer

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NEW LOOK AND NOW EVERY FORTNIGHT

The long game

Ryszard Lomnicki's long-exposure landscapes

CREATIVE COLOUR

Amateur Photographer of the Year Round 4 winners

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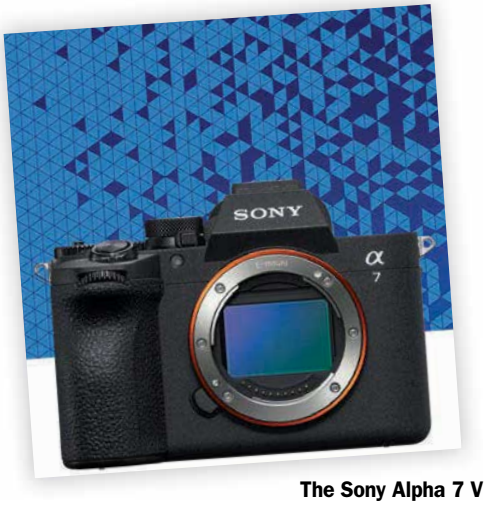

The Sony Alpha 7 V was voted the best camera of the year by the international EISA jury

Do you need a new camera? Probably not. Would you like one? Well that's an entirely different question. Last year the global camera industry shipped around 8.5 million new cameras, according to CIPA data. Of these, around 200,000 (3%) came to the UK. It's interesting to see how tastes and buying habits vary between countries. For example, the US prefers full-frame bodies and big tele-zoom lenses, with smaller formats less popular than in the rest of the world. Fujifilm is stronger in Britain than elsewhere, perhaps due to our fondness for tradition and retro design. Brits also buy proportionally more high end cameras and fewer entry level models than average, which could partly be attributed to our strong camera club culture, where regular exposure to other enthusiasts helps create a competitive 'arms race' for the latest models. So it's fascinating to get together with our fellow photo magazine journalists from around the world each year to debate and decide upon the best of the new kit launched in the past year. There is always some disagreement, but also consensus. Nobody needs any of the winning products. Most cameras have been great for at least the last ten years – much better than the cameras used to take almost all of the most iconic photos of all time. But for most of us photography is something we do for fun, and if using the latest tech inspires us and enhances that enjoyment then why not? And if our finances don't allow it, remember that today's new kit is tomorrow's used kit.

Nigel Atherton

Nigel Atherton
Group Editor

This issue's contributors...

Peter Dench

Peter talked to three top fashion shooters and compiled our round up of your best entries from the 'Colour' round of APOY 2026

Peter Fenech

Peter caught up with Polish born, Ireland based landscape photographer and EISA Maestro winner Ryszard Lomnicki on his stunning work

Steve Fairclough

Steve talks to one of the legends of music photography Gered Mankowitz, whose work you will almost certainly find in your record/CD collection

Andy Westlake

Our internationally respected Technical Editor casts AP's votes in the EISA Awards and put together this round up of the winners

Jon Stapley

Few things get Jon more excited than a new budget 35mm film camera, so he was very keen to get his hands on and test the new Pure 35

Angela Nicholson

Former AP scribe turned SheClicks founder Angela tests the Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO, a great value fast, short telephoto prime

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Our cover photo this issue of Kirkjufell, Iceland, is by Ryszard Lomnicki. See page 30 for more of his work

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Amateur Photographer

LOVE YOUR CAMERA

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Nigel Atherton

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©JACK COLLINS

This lovely leopard portrait was sent to us by 14 year old Jack Collins, who took it in Tarangire National Park, Tanzania, earlier this year. He describes himself as a beginner who is developing his skills, but judging by this effort he's a quick learner!
Canon EOS R7, RF100-500mm f/4.5-7.1, 1/2000sec at f/4.5, ISO 100

Check out the deals on page 80

TIME TO RELAX

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What's new

Canon EOS R8 Mark II

Canon's entry-level full-frame line gets a striking new look and some significant updates. **Andy Westlake** takes a first look.

At a glance

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- 24MP full-frame sensor
- ISO 100-102,400
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- 4K 60p video recording
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- 3in, 1.62m-dot touchscreen

Stabilisation
In a major update over its predecessor, the Mark II gains in-body image stabilisation

Grip
An optional EG-2 extension grip provides a more secure hold for those with larger hands

SD card
The card slot sits on the side behind its own door, rather than in the base beside the battery

Joystick
There's now a joystick on the back to reposition the autofocus point

Top controls remain the same, aside from the redesigned power/still/video switch

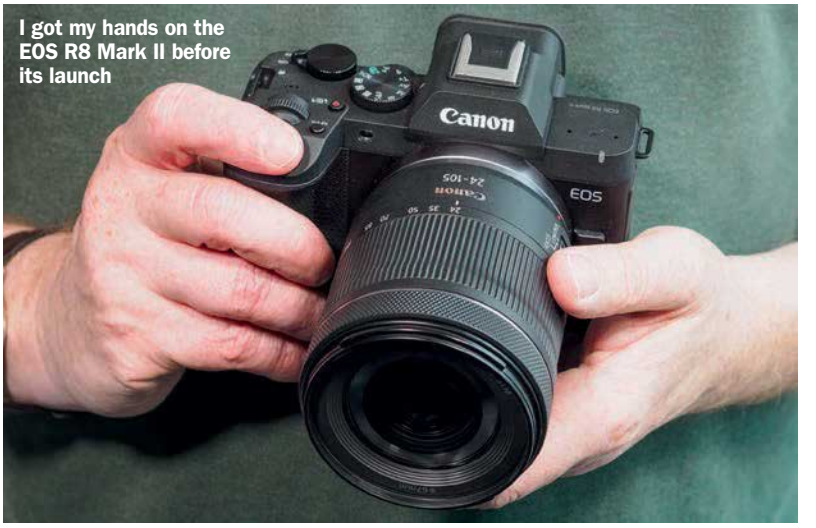
There's now a joystick on the back for focus point selection, with the AF ON button close beside it

Canon's EOS R8 Mark II is the latest model in the firm's entry-level line of full-frame mirrorless cameras. As an update to the EOS R8 from 2023, it slots into the line-up between its predecessor and the more advanced EOS R6-series models. But don't let that 'Mark II' label fool you into thinking this is a relatively minor upgrade – in fact it gains some very significant additions.

Firstly, though, let's address the most immediately visible change. Canon has stepped aside from its signature curvy design language and adopted a striking angular look, that apparently references its manual-focus 35mm SLRs from the 1970s and '80s. However, the EOS R8 Mark II isn't 'retro' in any meaningful way; it doesn't look like an old film camera, and it still works in essentially the same fashion as before. Indeed, I suspect many observers will be struck more by its undeniable resemblance to Sony's Alpha 7-series cameras.

Unsurprisingly, the Mark II re-uses many of the same proven components as its predecessor. This includes the same sensor, shutter, viewfinder, and rear screen (unfortunately you also get the same small battery). But it has an updated, specifically designed processor.

Most of the major specifications remain the same. The 24.2MP full-frame sensor provides a sensitivity range of ISO 100-102,400, with extended settings covering ISO 50-204,800. The shutter employs an electronic first curtain and offers speeds as fast as 1/4000sec, along with continuous shooting up to 6 frames per second. Engage the silent electronic shutter, and it'll go as fast as 1/16000sec, while shooting bursts at up to 40fps. Video recording is available in 4K at 60fps using the full sensor width, or Full HD at up to 180fps.



I got my hands on the EOS R8 Mark II before its launch

So what's actually new? Internally, the biggest upgrade is the addition of in-body-image stabilisation (IBIS). This promises up to 7.5 stops of shake reduction and works together with optically stabilised lenses, but results in a thicker and heavier body. As the R8 (and the RP before it) was the only mainstream full-frame model lacking IBIS, this is a very welcome update.

Autofocus now works in lower light levels, down to -7.5EV from -6.5EV before. Subject detection can recognise people, animals and vehicles, but Canon says the tracking performance has been improved. It's also added Registered People Priority, which allows you to record faces for the camera to concentrate its attention on.

In what's become the latest 'must have' feature, pre-burst mode is now on board for photographing unpredictable subjects such as wildlife. Here, the camera can continuously buffer 20 frames and then record them when the shutter button is fully depressed. The burst depth has also been increased, to 190 JPEG images or 73 raws.

Updated video features include a tally lamp on the front that indicates when the camera is recording, and 4-channel audio recording via the multi-function shoe. There's also a new feature for adding controlled defocus transitions.

Control tweaks

In control terms, the Mark II retains almost all the same buttons and dials as before. You get a mode dial on top, and two dials for changing settings. Pressing the small M-Fn button beside the shutter release cycles through assigning different pairs of functions to the dials, which provides quick access to the most important camera settings.

There's one big update though, which is the addition of a joystick on the back. Not only does this dramatically speed up setting the focus point, it also frees up the four directional buttons on the d-pad to give direct access to other functions. This should make the more advanced features easier to access.

Canon has also combined the R8's on/off and photo/video controls to a single switch on the top of the body within easy reach of your right thumb. This is a small change, but a genuine improvement in usability. It means all the key shooting controls are operated by your right hand, and you only have to use your left hand to access the menu.

You get the same viewfinder as before, a 2.36m-dot LED unit that offers 0.7x magnification. Below it there's a 3in, 1.62m-dot vari-angle touchscreen that can face in almost any direction. Broadly speaking, that's par for the course at this price point.

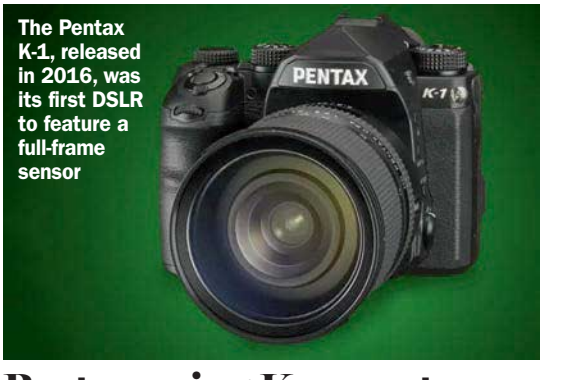
First impressions

When I reviewed the original EOS R8, I was impressed by its autofocus and image quality, but lamented its over-simplified controls and lack of IBIS. Canon has now addressed these frustrations head on. After a couple of hours with the EOS R8 Mark II prior to its launch, to me it feels just that much more grown-up, and a serious competitor to the likes of the Nikon Z5II and Panasonic S5II. I'm really looking forward to putting it through its paces when I get my hands on a sample for a proper review.

New Fujifilm 400mm f/4.5 X-system lens

Fujifilm has announced the Fujinon XF400mm F4.5 R LM OIS WR lens for its X-system cameras. Equivalent to 600mm in 35mm terms, the lens weighs just 1,245g (excluding the lens hood and caps). So it's well-suited to hand-held shooting of distant subjects such as wildlife, sports and action. To that end, there's also enhanced shake detection and an optimised stabilisation mechanism which promises to deliver up to 5.5 stops of image stabilisation. Other features include a 21-element, 14-group configuration with two Super ED elements and four ED elements. This is designed to minimise chromatic aberration, which can be an issue with super-telephoto lenses.

If you need to get even closer to the subject, you can use either the Fujinon Teleconverter XF1.4X TC WR, boosting the focal length to 560mm (or 840mm equivalent), or the Fujinon Teleconverter XF2X TC WR to give a length of 800mm, or 1,200mm equivalent. The Fujifilm XF400mm F4.5 R LM OIS WR is onsale from the end of this month for £2499.



The Pentax K-1, released in 2016, was its first DSLR to feature a full-frame sensor

Pentax axing K-mount DSLRs, what's next unclear

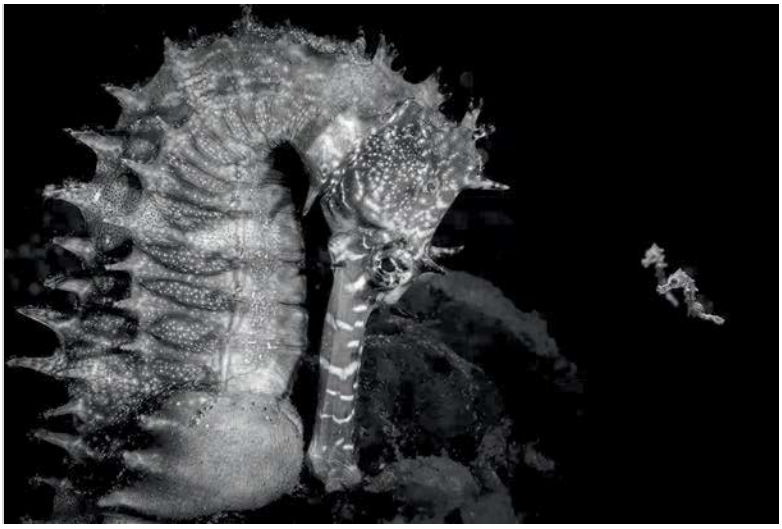
Ricoh Imaging Company, which owns the Pentax brand, has announced it is discontinuing production of Pentax K-mount digital SLRs, announcing it will develop 'a new series of digital SLR cameras based on an entirely new concept.' Considering Pentax's oft-repeated commitment to the DSLR format, this is big news, but it's not yet revealing any more details of this new camera concept. '(We) will continue to pursue the shooting style unique to SLR cameras and will endeavour to provide products that allow everyone with an interest in photography, and everyone who wants to try using a camera, to experience the distinctive enjoyment of SLR photography and discover the wonder of photography itself.' That's all we know for now, so watch this space for further Pentax news.

New Sony 8-14mm fisheye lens

Sony is releasing its first fisheye zoom lens for E mount, in response to 'many, many requests.' The Sony FE 8-14mm F3.5G has a constant f/3.5 aperture throughout the zoom range, along with a constant 0.15m focusing distance for frame-filling shots, a 0.22x magnification and a seven-blade circular aperture. This is now the widest lens in the full-frame E mount line up, and it's very small and light, weighing just 314g. Unlike some fisheyes – primarily cheaper optics from third-party manufacturers – the Sony 8-14mm includes AF, which includes two linear motors and 'breathing' is minimised for video work. To that end, it's aimed at those creating footage at events and festivals, while fisheye lenses are also popular with landscape, wedding, music photographers, amongst others. Available at the end of September for £1500 – see Amy Davies' full review at shorturl.at/UdZYY

© AMY DAVIES

The Sony FE 8-14mm F3.5G is the company's first fisheye zoom



© JULIEN ANTON

Julien Anton's winning image

Small fry win big in ocean contest

Julien Anton has won the Ocean Photographer of the Year 2026 competition with a striking black and white image of a male seahorse with two juveniles (known as 'fry'). This year's Ocean Photographer of the Year contest attracted over 15,000 entries from all over the world, with categories including Wildlife, Fine Art, Conservation, Ocean Unseen: Hidden Worlds, and more. 'When Julien Anton's image first appeared on screen, the judging panel fell silent,' said the competition's director, Will Harrison. 'It is an image that demands reflection, pause for thought, and… is full of quiet energy, even if some of that comes from us humans imprinting our own emotions on the photograph.' See the full list of winners and finalists at oceanographicmagazine.com/opy/

THE BIG QUESTION

What do you wish you'd known before you bought your first camera?

Chris McCown
Nothing. My first camera was above my skill level (which of course was "none", at first) and left room for me to grow. Canon Rebel SII film camera, circa 1994.

@theuncommittedphotographer
How addictive it is. There is no saving me

@davidtwomeyphotography
That comparison is the thief of joy in photography. Keep true to your process and you'll thrive

Helen Cherry
How much joy it would bring me; that I would photograph with my heart and hate all the technical stuff

Douglas Cherry
How much time I'd be spending in the darkroom printing and toning!

Buck Rogers
That buying a camera with a built-in flash is a gimmick

Larry H Shone
That I should have gone with Pentax

PHOTO: MACGREGOR/TOPICAL PRESS AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

Back in time 1924

Campbell's record-breaking Sunbeam

26th Sept: Capt. Malcolm Campbell's 350HP V12 Sunbeam being fitted with new wheels at Pendine Sands, near Carmarthen, after he beat the world land speed record at a speed of 146mph (235km/h) – his first of nine. For his final record, at Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah, on 3 Sept 1935, he was the first person to drive an automobile over 300 mph. Campbell, who was made an MBE, also set four world water speed records, his last being 141mph (228km/h) in the Blue Bird K4 on 19 August 1939 at Coniston Water, Cumbria. He died in 1948 after a series of strokes. This car is now on display at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu.

Did you know?

© THOMAS SUTTON

The world's first permanent colour photo was this one of a multi-coloured ribbon, made in 1861 by Thomas Sutton and based on the three-colour method suggested by Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell. Sutton took three separate b&w photos of the ribbon through red, green and blue filters. The three photos were then projected through the same filters and superimposed on a screen. Sutton also made the first wideangle panoramic camera using a glass sphere filled with water as a lens, and patented the first true single lens reflex camera in 1861.

@ariek.photography
Lenses matter, not the camera. You can have a great camera but a rubbish lens ruins it all

Ian Slater
Buy cheap, buy twice.

Dennis Bentley
My first camera was a Mamiya-Sekor 528DL in 1972. It was my dream camera, an affordable 35mm SLR. I'd been staring at it for months at the Montgomery Wards display case. I was not aware that the lens was NOT interchangeable.

Allan Dixon
That I was buying into a lifestyle, not just taking up a hobby

Caroline Webb
That photography is far too addictive and expensive

Omelko Paclawskyj
That 35mm cameras are better than disk cameras for picture quality.

Damien Lovegrove
Nikon FM was the one to get, not the Pentax Spotmatic F.

Share your photos and comments with us on social!
See page 6 for how to contact us

Keenly priced new PEN from OM System

A weather sealed camera and lens for under £1k – sounds a good deal to us

OM System has announced the new OM System PEN, an all-new camera design with a 20MP sensor, in-body image stabilisation and weather-sealing – when paired with a weather-sealed lens. According to OM System, the new PEN's weather-sealing and relatively small size (it weighs 414g) makes this is a camera you can take everywhere. Key features include a 20MP Micro Four Thirds sensor, 5-axis image stabilization, an ISO range of ISO200-6400 (64/100-25600 extended), a 3-inch, 1.04m-dot vari-angle touchscreen and 4K 30p video recording.

The new camera also enables 5-30fps continuous shooting (up to 30fps with fixed AF point). There's a wide range of advanced photo modes, as well as easy to use auto modes and scene modes; this includes a Color/Mono switch to get quick access to the creative colour modes. You'll also find an electronic viewfinder and built-in microphone socket. Furthermore, OM System has introduced a new weather-sealed 14-42mm F3.5-5.6 III lens to go with the new PEN. The whole package is competitively priced too: the camera costs £849 body only, or £949 with the new lens. Check out our full review at shorturl.at/bXbFw

Sigma releases high-end portrait prime lens and everyday zoom

Sigma has announced two new lenses for full-frame mirrorless cameras. The Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG | Art is an ultra-large aperture portrait lens which the firm first teased as being under development at the beginning of the year. It's joined by a super-compact standard zoom, the Sigma 20-60mm F2.8-4 DG | Contemporary. Both will be available in Sony E and L-mount versions.

Perhaps the more immediately eye-catching of the two is the Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG | Art. It's designed for portrait photographers shooting such things as fashion and weddings, with Sigma promising 'exceptional optical quality and stunning bokeh.'

Impressively, it's the smallest and lightest of its type, weighing in at 905g (Canon and Nikon's versions are larger and rather heavier). However, it's still more than 300g heavier than the Sony FE 85mm F1.4 GM II. The lens boasts splash-resistant construction, with a water and oil repellent coating on the front element. It incorporates a full set of controls too, including an aperture ring, two function buttons, and an AF/MF switch. It costs £1299 and you can see our full review at shorturl.at/ycFkn

Wide boy

While the 85mm F1.2 might grab the headlines, it's the second of the two lenses that's more likely to sell the most. The Sigma 20-60mm F2.8-4 DG | Contemporary is a surprisingly small and light standard zoom that, like the firm's recent 20-200mm F3.5-6.2 DG superzoom, offers an unusually wide-angle view. It should make for a great everyday standard zoom that'll be especially useful for such things as landscapes, architecture, travel and video.

The new Sigma 20-60mm lens (left) and the 85mm (right)

Again, the Sigma 20-60mm F2.8-4 boasts weather-sealed construction, plus a protective coating on the front element. It's just 88mm long and weighs 375g in its Sony E-mount incarnation, and accepts 67mm filters. The lens costs £749 and you can see a full review at shorturl.at/rw7gw

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iPhone 18 Pro offers variable aperture and more

The iPhone 18 Pro colour range

Apple recently announced its new iPhone 18 Pro series at a much-hyped event from its global headquarters in Cupertino, California. For smartphone photographers, the big news is the inclusion of variable aperture on the main camera of the iPhone 18 Pro and 18 Pro Max. There are four different settings from f/1.48 through to f/4, with f/1.8 and f/2.8 steps in-between. There are also six aperture blades.

Furthermore, Apple is introducing pro/manual controls for both stills and video, while photography styles have been updated to give additional control over texture and grain. Image authenticity is another feature of the new iPhones, with Apple introducing the 'Apple Reference Image' – this can prove a photo was taken with an iPhone 18 Pro, rather than generated or edited with AI, storing the original unedited file. Other key features include a 48MP wide camera – 24mm, f/1.48-f/4 variable aperture; a 48MP ultrawide camera – 13mm, f/2.2 aperture; a 48MP telephoto camera – 100mm f/2.8 aperture, 4x optical and 8x optical quality zoom; and an 18MP f/1.9 selfie camera. The iPhone 18 Pro and Pro Max are also able to record 4K video at 120fps. The 18 Pro's screen measures 6.3 inches, and the larger Pro Max is 6.9 inches. So you'll pay more for the Pro Max – the price starts from £1299 compared to £1199 for the Pro – with lots of contract deals available.

The iPhone Duo – the price probably won't be right if you are on a budget

Dynamic Duo

The big news didn't stop there, however. Apple also announced its first-ever folding phone, the iPhone Duo. The Duo's got the largest screen on any iPhone at 7.6 inches, with a dual camera setup on the back and a 'hidden' under-screen selfie camera (for when you need to Facetime using the larger screen, apparently). The camera specifications include a 48MP main camera, f/1.6, 26mm equivalent, with 2x telephoto (optical quality) and optical image stabilisation; a 48MP ultra-wide camera, f/2.2, 13mm equivalent (0.5x); a 12MP centre stage camera (outer screen); and a 7.6 inch inner screen/5.49 inch outer screen. The iPhone Duo can also record 4k video, and as with the 18 Pro and Pro Max, is powered by an A20 Pro processor. Sounds good, but you better start saving up – the price has been set at £1999 for the Duo with 256GB of storage. Pre-orders start on October 16th.

Important notice

You may have seen recent news reports regarding the planned closure of some TG Jones stores, formerly WH Smith. At present, it's unclear whether your local store will be affected. To ensure you continue to receive future issues of the magazine, we encourage you to consider one of the following alternative options, should your local store be one of those marked for closure.

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Bold, Dynamic, Definitive

This volume of contemporary work from across Africa is a must-buy for any street photography fan, says **Amy Davies**

If you only think of New York, London and Paris when your mind's eye contemplates street photography, then you're missing out on a huge diversity of different, but equally compelling, locations for this popular genre.

Indeed, this book represents a whole continent, and includes some of the most interesting contemporary photography I've seen in a long while.

Of course, Africa itself is incredibly diverse. With countries as uniquely different as Morocco, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda and South Africa, the images in this book can only hope to show a smattering of what the continent produces in any given period.

As such, it must have been a big challenge for the editors and authors of the book to select the 33 photographers included in the title. Writing in the foreword, Nadine Barth and Azu Nwagbogu, say these were chosen because they "captivated us through their visual language, their photographic approach, or their audacity – those who possess a distinctive, uncommon perspective."

And that is certainly borne out when looking through the work. It's arranged in six thematic chapters, which also work well if you just fancy picking up the book and dipping in for a short period, and then dipping in another time – or perhaps if you're looking for inspiration on a given topic.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter called "Passing By", which looks at serendipitous street encounters, but the "In Living Colour" chapter is also fantastic for its evocative use of bold and vibrant colour and patterns.

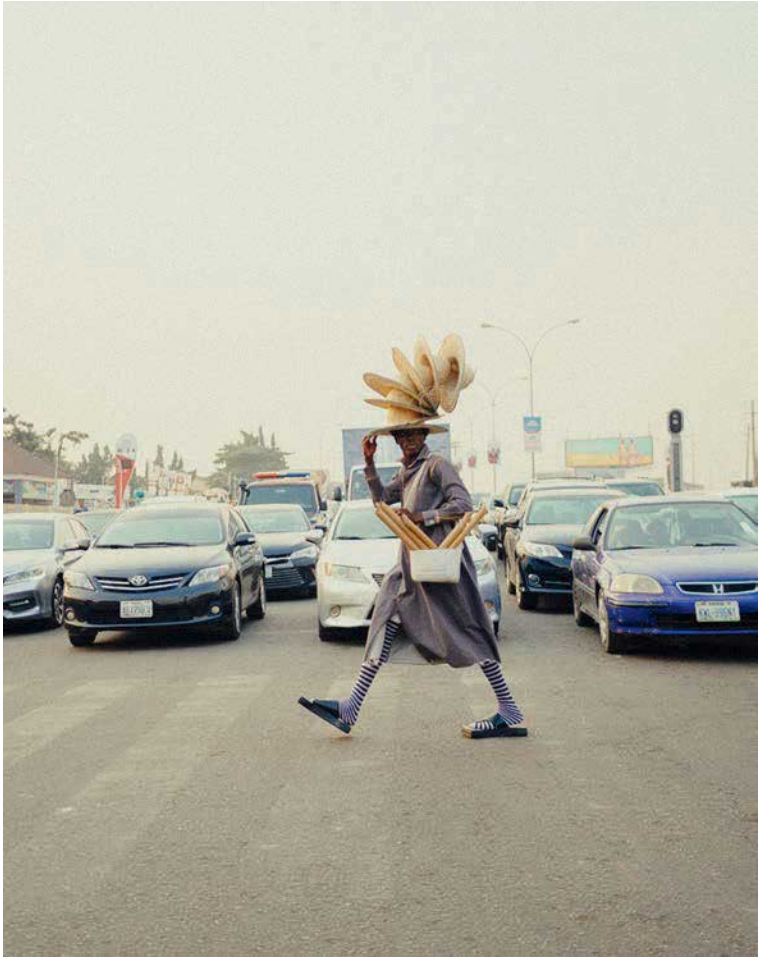
What's interesting is that you get a sense that the photographers here don't simply observe the street scenes and present them in a passive way, that they too are an active part of the culture, shaping how we understand urban life across the continent – whether from within it or outside of it.

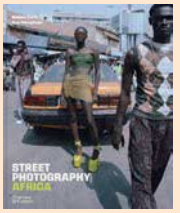
It's also brilliant to see photography from Africa made by Africans, for Africans. So many of our impressions of this vast continent – particularly historically – have been shaped by a very narrow subset of people, mostly white, and mostly male, so to have this perspective, if nothing else, gives us far more authenticity than we'd expect from a mere visitor or traveller to any of these countries.

Every year, there must be dozens of new books published about street photography. If like me, you feel like you've seen just about every photo of New York City there is to see and want to broaden your street photography horizons, this is a fantastic addition to any shelf and one I plan to return to many times.

Left: Salako Adedolapo, Lagos in Motion, Berger, Lagos, Nigeria, 2025

Right: Kothegrapher, We Dey Road Dey Come, Wuse Abuja, Nigeria, 2024





Street Photography Africa £45, Thames & Hudson, Hardcover, 256 pages, ISBN: 9780500030370

Above: Unavailable Photographer, Before the World Changes Us, Lagos, Nigeria, 2025

Left: Delali Ayivi, Looking Beyond, from the series Racines de l'Imaginaire, Lome, Togo, 2021

What's On

Some dates for your photographic diary

Now - 30 September EVENT
Stirling Photography Festival at various venues

Now - Until 4 October EXHIBITION *Cecil Beaton: Staging Icons* at Harewood House, Leeds

Now - 1 November EXHIBITION
Catherine Opie: To Be Seen at National Galleries Scotland, Edinburgh

2 - 31 October EVENT
FfotoCymru: various venues, Wales

2 October - 1 November EVENT
PhotoWorks Festival 2026 at various venues, Brighton and Hove

10 October EVENT
Photography Masterclass with Ajamu X: sensual activism and the Queer body at National Portrait Gallery, London

10 October WORKSHOP
Shooting & Storytelling on Your Smartphone with Dan Rubin at Leica Akademie UK, London

17 October EVENT
The Cambridge Photography Show 2026 at Graduate by Hilton

10-11 October EVENT
Ilfracombe Photography Festival at various venues

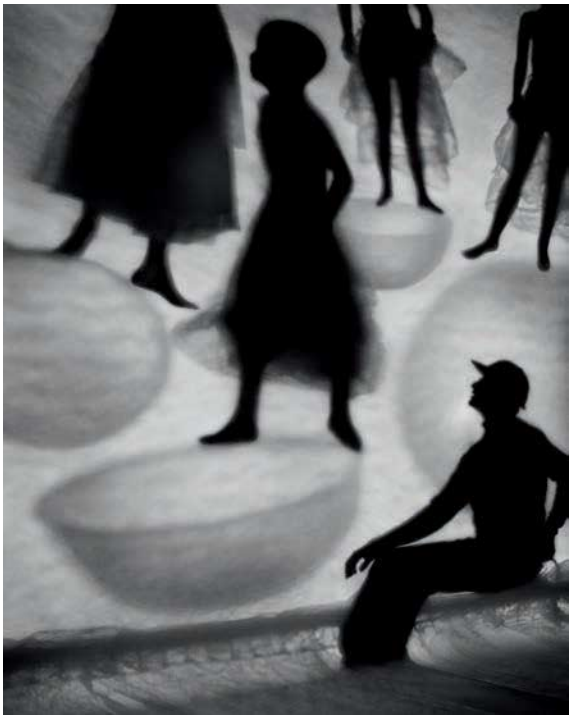
14 October - 15 November EVENT *Bristol Photo Festival at* various city venues

17 October EVENT
Cambridge Photography Show at The Graduate Hotel

16-29 October EVENT
Chester Photo Festival at various city centre venues

17-18 October EVENT
BOP 26 Photobook Festival at Martin Parr Foundation, Bristol

To be included in these listings, please email ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk at least a month in advance



Night Journey by Susan kae Grant, $70, MW Editions, Softcover, 164 pages, ISBN: 9781969303050

Far left: Idle Curiosity, 2005

Left: Disrupted Equilibrium, 2012

Below: Twilight Chi, 2012

Hauntingly beautiful

These surreal black and white dreamscapes are supremely crafted

Imagine you rise from a dream only to forget what story was unfolding in your mind the moment you awaken. I rarely recall what I've been dreaming about, but am often left with the feeling that I would like to revisit that realm or fleeting feeling. That is precisely what Susan kae Grant has done in her latest monograph, *Night Journey*, where she takes you down an uncanny rabbit hole with her surreal b&w dreamscapes.

Grant is fascinated by dreams and distant childhood memories, but she doesn't just photograph them, she aims to recreate the feeling of dreaming. She has worked with a sleep researcher to be awakened from deep sleep to record them while they are most vivid.

She photographs the shadows of her models and props, with the coiling silhouettes representing the unconscious mind and evoking the feeling of being immersed in a dream. Everything appears distorted, suspended in space, hovering in mid-air, like the sensation of flowing from one scene to another.

We can't see facial expressions or determine their identities; people are reduced to shapes, making each image obscure and mysterious as our minds attempt to fill in the missing details.

Grant becomes a shadow puppeteer, carefully controlling light, props and models to build scenes that exist somewhere between reality and imagination. Even though the photos look like fragments from a dream, in reality they are extremely controlled and painstakingly built.

Removing the usual horizon line, it becomes difficult to judge the scale. Shadows bend where the backdrop meets the floor, merging the scene into a boundless space.

Changing the distance of objects and sitters in relation to the background and light source creates sharper or softer edged shadows and the illusion of depth despite the fact that she's only photographing the flat canvas they are cast on. Objects appear disconnected from their surroundings as they cast unexpected shadows being illuminated by different lights from different angles.

The project has evolved over more than two decades, culminating in a photobook showcasing 90 images, which merge into one another through fold-out triptychs and transparent pages, creating a longer dreamlike narrative. **Aliz Kovács-Zöldi**

© CAROL ALLEN-STOREY

Defying the Myth by Carol Allen-Story £45, GOST, Hardcover, 104 pages, ISBN: 9781805980285

Left: Annalisa in her garden at the end of a challenging day, 2026.

The Whole Truth?

The most honest documentary photography emerges when photographers share the narrative with their subject

A romantic view of documentary photography is that a single frame can tell an entire story. That it's a unique language where the photographer occupies the role of narrator, inviting viewers to interpret lives through carefully observed moments, whether documenting poverty, conflict or domestic life. Contemporary photographers are increasingly questioning that assumption. Can photography truly convey another person's lived experience and if not, what would happen if those being photographed are invited to become the storytellers themselves?

For Carol Allen-Storey's latest project, those questions are at the heart – what if the people in front of the camera have something to add? *Defying the Myth* is an ambitious body of work exploring three single mothers and their families who are raising children with severe disabilities. Shot over a decade, Allen-Storey uses photographs and builds on the narrative using poems, diary entries, sketches, handwritten reflections and deeply personal testimonies contributed by parents, siblings and grandparents. By relinquishing some of the camera's authority, room is given for multiple voices to shape the story. It's a subtle but important shift.

Allen-Story's photography career has long been based on the understanding that great storytelling comes from an intimate knowledge and long-term relationship with her subjects. She understands the importance of moments many photographers would overlook: a mother adjusting an epilepsy helmet, bathing her son after another exhausting day, or embracing him between hospital appointments. They are images of the relentless labour of care that fills the ordinary days. They are not dramatic images pressing down on the pity button.

The monochrome images alone could never describe the emotional worlds that the drawings, handwritten poems and collages provide. They aren't decorative part of the narrative. One teenager's recurring nightmares become expressive sketches. Another's illustrations chart a developing artistic identity. They also reveal that lived experience extends beyond what any camera can capably observe.

Defying the Myth demonstrates what working collaboratively with your subjects can achieve. Allen-Storey positions her images alongside testimony, memory and personal reflection. Cumulatively the book feels more truthful than focusing on one medium to deliver the story.

What is modern documentary photography about? As audiences increasingly question single author narratives, participatory ways of working have become an outlet for practitioners. Oral histories, family archives, handwritten texts and community collaboration are becoming integral components of long-form documentary projects. Allen-Story is an award-winning documentary photographer but comfortable in amplifying other means of communication with it. She understands that photography doesn't have to shout the loudest. **Peter Dench**

© CAROL ALLEN-STOREY

Nightly, Mekhye is bathed by Shoulana, he enjoys the warmth of the water which relaxes his stiffened body when he has seizures. Given his daunting extreme acute neurological condition. The task of bathing must be highly supervised to ensure his safety, 2026.

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

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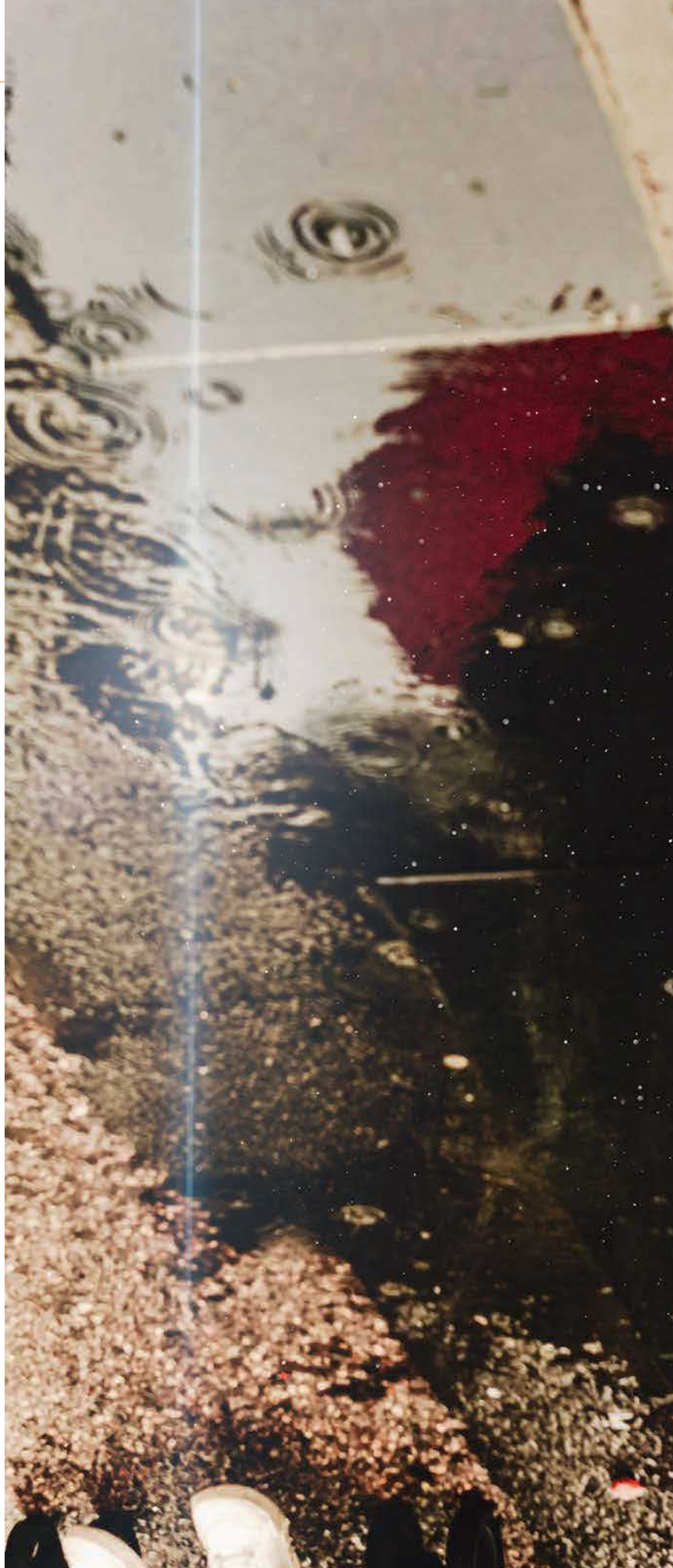
Reflections after the rain
by Daniel Dobrota

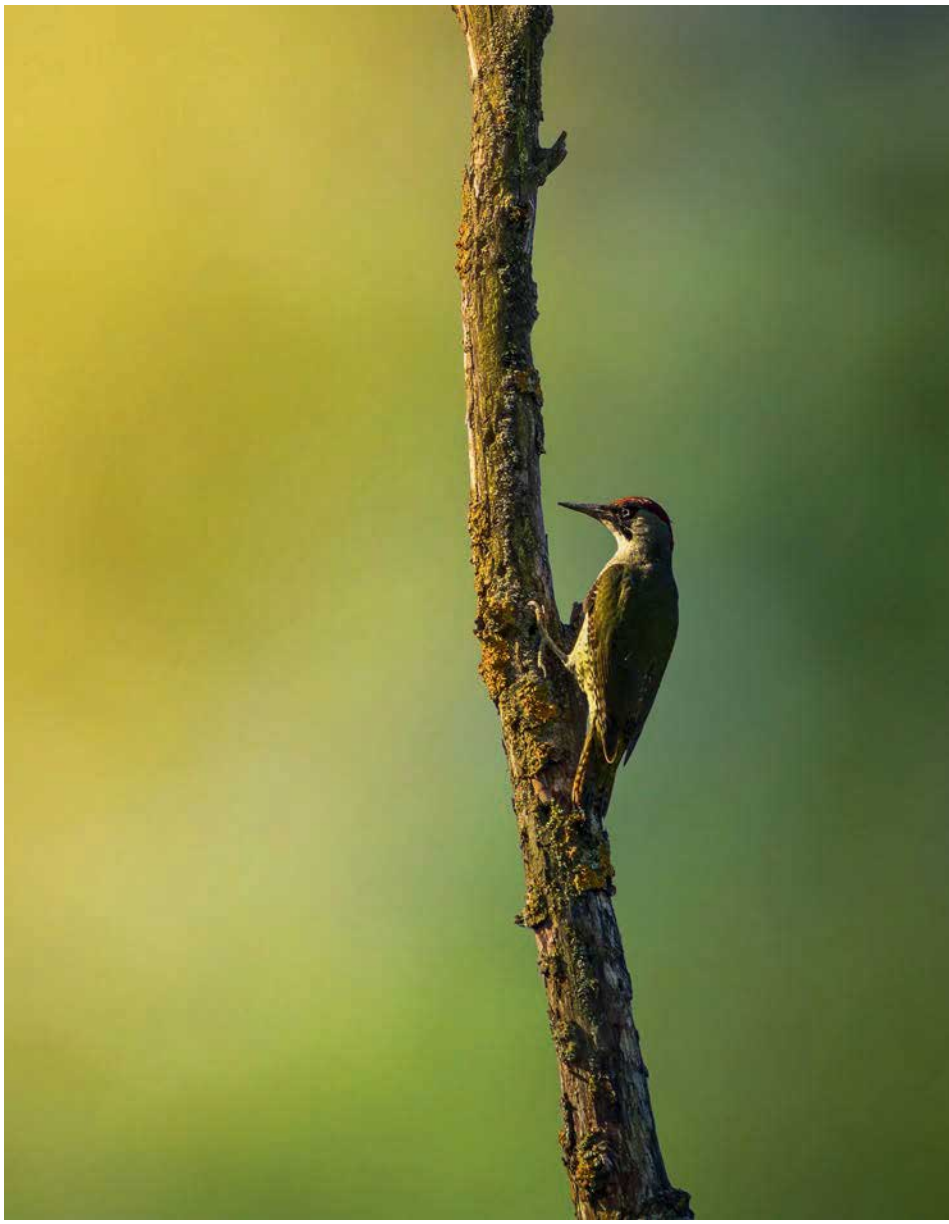
Nikon Zf, Voigtlander Nokton 40mm f/1.2, 1/250sec at f/2.8, ISO 200

This image transforms an ordinary puddle into an abstract landscape of light, color, and reflection. The red geometric shape contrasts with the dark silhouette, while raindrops create ripples that distort reality. It explores the beauty hidden in everyday moments, inviting viewers to look beyond the surface and discover new perspectives.

Instagram: @danieldobrot



PRIZE WINNER



A quiet moment in the golden light
by Gabor Gelencser

Canon EOS R50, Sigma 150-600 Contemporary (with Canon EF-RF adapter), 1/640sec at f/6.3, ISO 200, 600mm

Captured during the early golden hour, this European Green Woodpecker paused quietly on a weathered tree trunk, bathed in warm side light. The soft yellow tones and the bird's calm pose created a peaceful woodland scene. Moments like this reward patience, careful observation, and a little luck in wildlife photography.
Instagram: @GX2_Photo

Your best Photos

Cooler Climes by Malini Chandrasekar

Nikon Z9 Nikkor Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S, 1/1600sec at f/4.5, ISO 1600

I don't think we should underestimate a simple portrait. When there's nothing else to distract you, you start to notice the small details—the look, the character, the quietness. It's those little things that can make a moment stay with you.

Website: www.malinic.uk
Instagram: @thunderbolt

Street Poetry by Kiss Noemi

Fujifilm X-T30 II, Fujinon XC 15-45mm, 1/160sec at f/5.6, ISO 320

Unexpected, fleeting moments like this are exactly why my camera never leaves my side these days. Captured on the streets of Paris, this image preserves a sweet moment that lasted only an instant. It reminds me that the real magic often reveals itself when we take the time to notice.

Instagram/Threads: @ordinary.muses

Your best Photos

A Quiet Gaze
by Natalie Grant

Fujifilm X-T30 II, XF150-600mm F5.6-8 R LM OIS WR, 1/4000sec at f/8, ISO 1600

The lake sparkled beneath the summer sun, yet my attention settled on a single glance. In black and white, the familiar became timeless, proving that simplicity often carries the greatest emotional weight.
Instagram: @ncg_photos_

Exaggerated Shadow
by Antonis Antoniou

Sony Alpha 6400, Sony 35mm f/1.8, 1/3200sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

This photo was taken during an afternoon walk on the island of Antiparos. The diagonal line of shadow on the wall reminded me of Fan Ho's iconic image "Approaching Shadow". As Emma stepped into the light, the uneven texture of the wall exaggerated her shadow, resulting in our own version of this classic photograph.
Instagram: @antonis.antn

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

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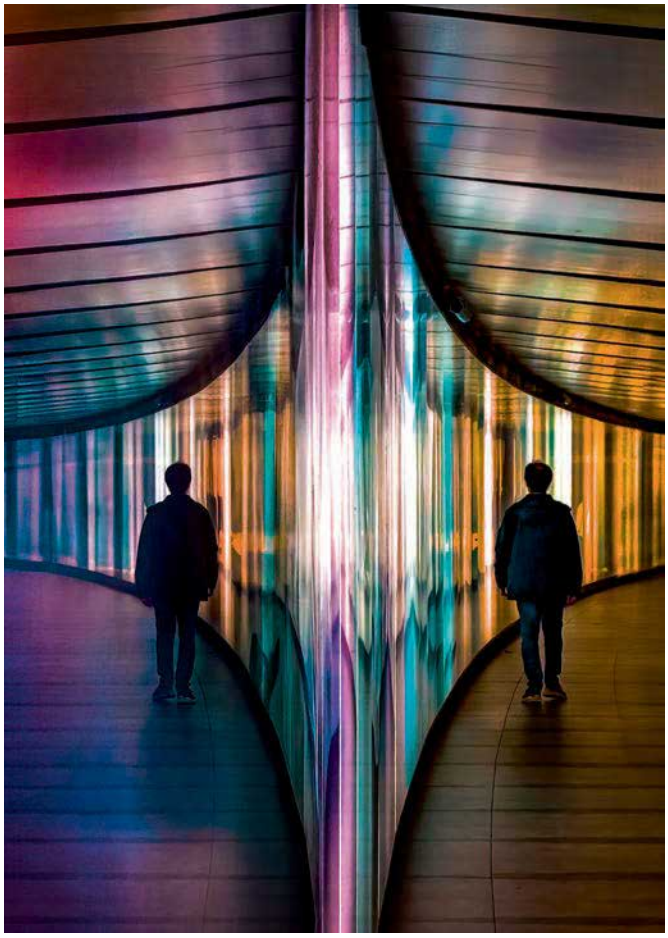


Crystaline by Imran Mirza

iPhone 13 Pro, F2.8, ISO200, 77mm, 1/100s

Kings Cross Station London. The tunnel appears to be black and white in real life, but while editing some slight colours came through, so I decided to really saturate them giving this other worldly crystal look. This is one of my favourite shots, so thank you for selecting it.
Irys: OriginalBob
Instagram: originalbob

Beam me up, or down, or anywhere by Meelis Veeremets

Leica M11, Summilux-M 1:1.4/50 ASPH, ISO 1250, aperture 4.5, shutter speed 1/60,

The camera is my sixth sense — part of how I experience the world, how I remember and make sense of it. Childhood is a project born with my children: moments both mundane and magical. Swimming goggles in the shower, to keep the soap out. Life is a game.
Instagram, Irys, Foto: meelisveeremets
Website: www.meelisveeremets.com

Picture Perfect

BEST SHOTS: FASHION

One genre. Three photographers. Three standout images, each revealing how vision, timing and technique come together in a single frame. For this issue, AP invited three photographers working in FASHION photography to share an image they consider among their best. They reveal the thinking, technique and experience behind the shot, offering insight into not just how the image was made, but why it matters.

Rokas Darulis

Rokas Darulis is a Lithuanian-born photographer specialising in fashion and portraiture. After assisting leading photographers including Ben Toms, Matt Irwin and Willy Vanderperre, he developed a distinctive, natural and stripped-back visual style. His work has appeared in Vogue, Harper's Bazaar and How To Spend It, alongside campaigns for Net-A-Porter and Harrods.
Instagram @rokasdarulis

Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?
This is an image of the model Giedrė Dukauskaitė shot in my home country of Lithuania, at a very magical place called Nida. I chose this image, not only because many years later I still feel this is a beautiful image, but also because it inspired my whole personal project called Wild and Free, which I shot many years later and it turned into a whole book.

What was happening just before and after this frame?
It was very quiet, a very, very early morning, we went up the dune where the sea just became visible, Giedrė sat down on the handrail of the wooden path and the early morning sun had just peeked through over the treetops. I quietly took a few frames and knew the light was just right. After that, we rushed on to take more shots, but looking at my viewfinder I knew I had it.

What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?
This image was one of many I took with a few friends that morning by the sea. I think one of the key decisions I made was to keep the make up and styling as natural as possible, I didn't want a team or any extra equipment slowing me down. It always takes a lot of time to set up the computer and then you're always tethered, limiting your movements, I always work like this when there is a client or a team present, but when I go rogue and shoot for myself, I allow myself the freedom to jump around, chase the light, change position on location at any second and just chase the feeling. It's very liberating.

Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?
Technically it's a very simple shot, super soft morning daylight, but it does require some planning and waking up very early. You have to be on location and ready to shoot as soon as the first rays on the sun comes up the horizon, that gives you that super soft ambient glow with some warm soft sunrays on the face. This was shot on a Canon 5D directly to card. I love working like this where I adapt to the light rather than try to change it, nature gives up beautiful light in the morning and the evening, I prefer to adapt my shoot to this light, rather than block the sun and add extra lights to combat the shadows mid-day.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?
As usually with these types of photos, for me it's waking up before 4am. In summer, the sun rises super early, so you have to get up an ungodly hour to make these shots happen.

What does this photo mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?
What I take away from it is that beautiful pictures sometimes don't require much, often they don't need to be overstyled or overproduced, often times it's the mood of the moment that makes or breaks it. After this shoot, I started doing a lot more shoots without big teams, just asking models that I really wanted to shoot with to collaborate and see what happens. Once you figure out what you look for in a shot that's not got much product, then it's just about adding some styling or jewellery to turn it into commercial work. Don't overthink it – start making nice simple portraits first.

Was it luck or judgement?
It's a mix of both, I always think a good image is when luck meets preparation. You need to get your ingredients right first – the casting, the location, the light, but then you also need some luck for it all to fall into place.

What did this image teach you?
This image taught me that it's the emotion that sells the image, not the technical bits or the styling. After I took this series of images, they kept showing up in my client's moodboards for a good while. I'd say I got a good amount of commercial fashion work booked because of this shoot. And ironically, there is barely any fashion or makeup there. But that's when I realised I didn't need to do full on fashion images to get fashion work, this was highly personal work that I felt connected to, I love natural beauty and tender moments. It was this that I needed to translate into my photos, the clothes and the product would only follow as an addition.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?
Technically I'd say shoot very early in the morning, with the sun behind you. Emotionally, figure out what photos would you take that would make you want to hang them on your own wall.

Han Yang

Han Yang is a visual artist, photographer and creative director whose fashion photography explores femininity, gender, the human body and technology. Combining oriental metaphors with abstract and surreal elements, her work uses a distinctive fashion visual language to explore emotion and psychology. A graduate of London College of Fashion, she has received recognition including the Sony Young Photographer Award.
Instagram @yanghanphoto

Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?
This image is from my Xenobotany series, which explores imagined relationships between the human body and non-human forms of life. Here, mushrooms cover the model's eyes, not simply as decoration, but as if they have become part of the body itself. I chose it because it captures a moment of transformation, where the boundary between human and non-human life begins to dissolve.

What was happening just before and after this frame?
Before this frame, much of the image had already been carefully constructed. The makeup, mushrooms, clothing, background and colour relationships were all developed as part of the same visual language. Once the model was in position, I concentrated on how these elements interacted with her face and body. The final gesture brought them together: the upward tilt of her head transformed the individual details into something that felt like a single, evolving organism.

What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?
Every element related to the idea of transformation. I kept the face relatively natural, while the red, caviar-like texture on the lips suggests seeds, reproduction and matter generating new forms. The garment was chosen for its organic, sustainably considered materials and plant-inspired imagery. Colour was equally deliberate: pink mushrooms, vivid red lips and warm orange clothing were set against a deep blue background.

Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?
I photographed this on a Mamiya RZ67 II using Kodak Portra 400 film. I used four flash heads: one to sculpt the facial features, one for the garment, another to define the shoulder line, and a fourth for the background. After developing the film, I made the image by hand in the darkroom, adjusting the colour balance during printing. The final darkroom print was then scanned, so much of its colour and tonal character was established through the analogue process.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?
The mushrooms were the most challenging element. Their size, shape and colour all had to work with the model's face and composition, while temperature could affect their condition and appearance. Positioning them around the eyes added another difficulty: they needed to remain stable enough to photograph while keeping the model comfortable and safe. Working with organic material always introduces an element of unpredictability.

What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?
For me, this photograph is about transformation and the possibility of becoming something beyond a fixed human identity. I'm interested in the body not as something separate or self-contained, but as something continually changing through its relationships with other forms of life. The mushrooms are not simply growing on the body; together they suggest a new, hybrid existence. I hope viewers might question where the human ends and the non-human begins, and perhaps see our relationship with the living world as one of connection rather than separation.

Was it luck or judgement?
Mostly judgement, but with room for chance. The concept, colour palette, lighting and composition were all carefully planned, but working with organic materials introduces an element you can never completely control. For me, photography becomes most interesting at that point: when careful preparation creates the conditions for something unexpected to happen.

What did this image teach you?
It reinforced for me that control does not mean controlling everything. I can carefully construct the concept, lighting and colour, but materials have their own behaviour, and the body responds in ways that cannot always be predicted. Sometimes the most interesting image emerges when you allow those elements to participate in the creative process.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?
Start with the idea rather than the visual effect. Every decision – material, colour, lighting, styling and technique – should have a reason for being there. When working with unusual organic materials, test them beforehand and allow enough time for experimentation, particularly when they interact directly with the body. Preparation gives you structure, but remaining responsive to what happens on set gives the image its life.

Calvin Chinthaka

Calvin Chinthaka is a British–Sri Lankan fashion photographer, filmmaker, and creative director whose work bridges high-end editorial imagery and cultural storytelling. Based in London, he is known for a cinematic, human-centred approach that blends fashion, identity, and contemporary diasporic narratives. He holds both a BA (Hons) and MA in Fashion Photography from the University of the Arts London and the London College of Fashion. **Instagram @fashion_calvin**

Tell us about this image.
It's from a project that explores the evolving nature of Sri Lankan cultural identity, viewed through a contemporary diasporic lens. it showcases how traditional Sri Lankan dress practices can be both preserved and reimagined using innovative technology.

We've integrated a range of multidisciplinary artistic practices here: photography, projection mapping, generative AI, and augmented reality. This approach challenges traditional imagery, transforming it into a dynamic dialogue between past and present. It encourages viewers to see heritage through a contemporary, global lens.

What were the key creative decisions you made?
I set up two projectors, getting them aligned and turning off all the lights in the room so that the projection would be clearly visible behind and overlaid on the model. I used a warm, directional ARRI HMI light with a snoot to light the model and create that gentle, almost "Rembrandt" style glow around her.

Can you share the technical details?
The photograph was created using a Hasselblad digital camera mounted on a tripod, which gave the image its clarity, stability, and medium-format depth. The light was positioned to shape the model's face and body, creating that warm, sculpted highlight.

At the same time, a front-facing 4K projector cast an image we designed onto the scene. Because the HMI light is stronger, it overpowers the projection on the model's face, keeping her expression clean and readable. But the projection still appears subtly on her hand and dress, creating a layered, hybrid visual language where traditional dress meets contemporary digital texture.

All of this was captured straight out of the camera with no post-editing, so the final outcome is entirely shaped by the physical lighting, projection, and in-camera decisions — producing an image that feels both modern and culturally rooted.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?
The biggest challenge was combining traditional photography with projection mapping, augmented reality, and generative AI, and getting all these techniques to sit together without overpowering one another. Balancing the continuous HMI light with the projected image required careful control, because each element affected the other.

The environmental and logistical pressures were also significant. The shoot took place in Sri Lanka, the day after arriving from the UK, with only 24 hours to organise the set, acclimatise to the heat, and settle into the workflow. You had to stay calm, cut out the noise, and get into a focused zone quickly.

What would you like readers to take from this photo?
To me, this photograph is about revisiting Sri Lankan cultural identity through the perspective of someone who grew up in London. It reflects a diasporic process of looking back at my heritage, understanding traditional dress practices, and reinterpreting them. Creating a modern aesthetic from these roots is a way of honouring where I come from while reshaping it for the present.

What did this image teach you?
This image taught me that there are no limits to photography or to creative vision. Working on this series exploring Sri Lankan traditional dress through a contemporary diasporic lens as part of my MA research at London College of Fashion showed me that I don't have to stay within one genre or one method. I can merge disciplines, overlay techniques, and build images through a hybrid process that includes photography, projection, AR, and generative AI.

It also taught me the value of iteration. The first attempt is rarely the final answer. By experimenting, repeating, refining, and pushing each idea further, the tenth or fifteenth iteration becomes the one that reveals something meaningful.

This photograph is a reminder that creative practice is fluid, multidisciplinary, and constantly evolving — and that the most rewarding results come from staying open, curious, and being willing to keep trying.

What advice would you give to aspiring photographers?
Find your own originality and understand your motivation. Recreating another photographer's work can be valuable, but only if you use it as a way to learn the underlying creative process rather than simply repeating the surface aesthetics.

Trying to copy an existing shot is a great way to deconstruct an image to break down its lighting, cultural context, multidisciplinary techniques, and conceptual reasoning. Once you understand those foundations, you can reconstruct them in your own way. That's where the real learning happens.

I'd also encourage anyone attempting a similar image to explore multidisciplinary practice: photography, projection mapping, augmented reality, generative AI, and traditional dress cultures. These layers teach you that creativity isn't confined to one genre. Experimentation is essential. Your first iteration won't be perfect, but your tenth or fifteenth might reveal something powerful.

Ultimately, the goal isn't to replicate the shot. It's to use it as a learning tool that sharpens your judgment, expands your technical vocabulary, and helps you discover your own voice.

The long game

Ryszard Lomnicki's long exposure landscapes have garnered attention and awards in equal measure. He speaks to **Peter Fenech** about his process and how understanding the emotion behind an image helps turn record shots into works of art

A concept that has been passed around for at least the past ten years is that landscape photography is dead. Admittedly, this is the type of comment you'd expect to find in online forums and whispered towards the end of post-camera club drinks, but sadly it has also found its way into general circulation in the photographic press from time to time. It's a negative outlook, but there is perhaps some small element of truth at its heart.

The digital age has brought with it an incredibly versatile range of shooting and editing tools, where skies can be easily replaced, colours manipulated, and even the lighting in a scene adjusted. This has been accelerated almost exponentially by the introduction of AI tools. The result is the perception that the craft of landscape photography has been diluted and that it's nearly impossible to create a truly unique landscape image in the present day.

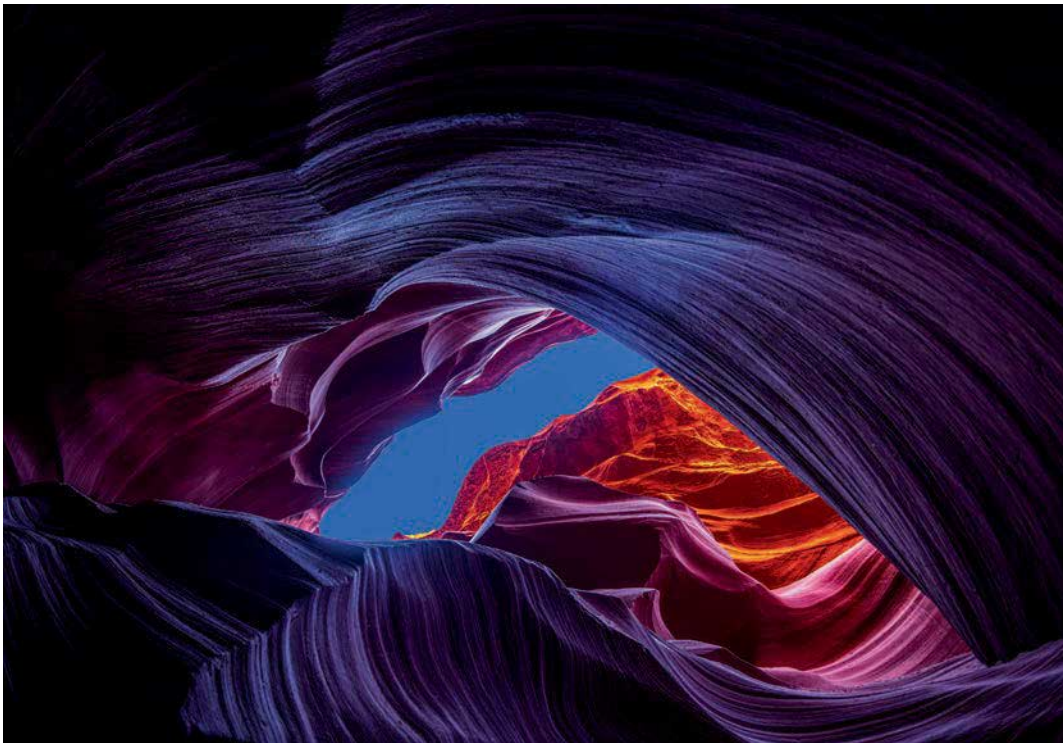
Above: Moonscape Overlook, Utah, USA

Right: Lower Antelope Canyon, Arizona, USA

Ryszard Lomnicki might disagree with this assessment, however. The Galway-based photographer has built a strong name for himself internationally for his ephemeral long-exposure landscape images. Far from being static record shots of scenic locations, his images manage to capture the atmosphere with great

intimacy and emotive power. The use of extended shutter speeds is nothing new, but Ryszard uses the technique as a defining feature of his style.

"My journey in photography began in the era of film. Back then, photography served primarily as a way to document places, emotions, and moments experienced along the trail, preserving memories of the landscapes and journeys that inspired me," he explains. "After several years away from the camera, I returned to photography in the digital age. It was during this time that I discovered the world of long exposure photography. I was immediately captivated by its unique atmosphere and by the way it could transform movement, light, and space into something timeless and expressive. I knew instantly that this was the photographic language I wanted to pursue".



Carving a niche

While many photographers

who have dabbled in landscape imagery will have at least attempted some long exposures, few have embraced it with quite as much dedication as Ryszard. Speaking to him over a Zoom call, it's immediately clear how passionate he is about the effect it has on otherwise literal interpretations of scenic locations.

"Long exposure photography allows me not only to capture landscapes but also to interpret and express the way I truly experience the world. Through my images, I seek to convey a sense of calm, emotion, and contemplation, creating photographs that often feel more poetic than the fleeting moments from which they originate," he explains. "Today, long exposure photography is much more than a way of recording a scene. It is a means of expressing my connection with nature and sharing the atmosphere and beauty that inspire me when I stand behind the camera".

Creating something different is a proven way to stand out in a crowded marketplace, but it is also helpful to understand why an image or effect is successful. This understanding of his audience's reaction to his landscape photography is, in many ways, Ryszard's secret weapon.

"Long exposure is, above all, a creative tool. It allows me to simplify a scene by smoothing the movement of water, softening clouds, and eliminating distracting elements. This helps to place greater emphasis on form, light, and composition," he tells me. "Long exposure photography also introduces a sense of the passage of time into a static image. Rather than freezing a single fraction of a second, it records movement over several seconds or even many minutes, creating photographs with a greater atmospheric and emotional character."

What this reveals is that long exposures – particularly those created by locking the shutter open for several seconds using Bulb mode – are able to show our environment in a way that we can never otherwise experience and would therefore never consider. This introduces a level of intrigue that would be missing if the photographer simply captured the scene as they found it, and to an extent, how anyone might see it, photographer or otherwise.

"What fascinates me most is the ability [of long exposures] to reveal the world in a way that is invisible to the human eye. By extending the recording of time, I can transform familiar landscapes into more minimalist, abstract, and poetic interpretations of reality. It is this ability to move beyond a literal representation of a scene that makes long exposure photography my preferred means of exploring a location, and my personal vision of the natural world," says Ryszard.

Courthouse Towers, Utah, USA

"I discovered the world of long exposure photography, and I knew instantly that this was the photographic language I wanted to pursue"

In the field

Having developed his signature look over many years, a style which he describes as cinematic, atmospheric, and minimalist, Ryszard tries to focus

on a limited palette of details in each scene he shoots, rather than trying to capture every detail visible through the lens. Lengthened exposures clearly help with this. Asked about his technical approach to camera work, he emphasises that while the impact of subject motion is prominent and awe-inspiring, simplicity is still key.

"My workflow is fairly methodical. I begin by composing the image without any filters attached and making sure focus is absolutely accurate. Once composition and focus are locked in, I switch to manual focus so nothing changes. I then calculate the required exposure after fitting the appropriate ND filter, usually using an app. I use a sturdy tripod and a remote release. Finally, I review the histogram rather than relying solely on the LCD, before making any fine adjustments".

With cinema having had the strongest influence on his photography, Ryszard reflects this in his initial assessment of a location and what he looks for when composing his shots and

Top: Horseshoe Bend, Arizona, USA

Above: Kirkjufell, Iceland

RYSZARD'S TOP TIPS FOR LONG EXPOSURE LANDSCAPES

1 Prioritise composition before thinking about exposure time

A strong composition is always the foundation of a successful photograph. The length of the exposure should support the image and enhance its character rather than become the main focus of the photograph.

2 Use high-quality filters

Use high-quality neutral density (ND) and graduated neutral density (GND) filters together with a reliable filter holder. They are among the most important tools in long exposure photography, allowing me to precisely control exposure times, create the desired motion effects, and balance brightness across the frame.

3 Invest in a solid tripod

Make stability your highest priority. A stable, high-quality tripod is essential for long exposure photography. It allows me to maintain maximum sharpness and detail, even when working with very long exposure times and challenging outdoor conditions.

4 Learn to read the weather

Outdoor conditions such as moving clouds, flowing water, wind, tides, and changing light can completely transform the character of a scene. The most compelling long exposures often happen when nature is constantly changing.

5 Experiment with shutter speeds

The longest exposure is not always the best one. Sometimes a two-second exposure can create a more powerful image than a two-minute exposure. The best duration is the one that most effectively communicates the atmosphere you want to express through your photography.

deciding on an exposure.

"The first thing I look at is the quality and direction of the light," he emphasises. "The light is what transforms an ordinary location into something memorable. I'll spend time observing how shadows move, how highlights develop, and if the weather is creating atmosphere.

"I also pay close attention to balance and visual weight within the frame. I ask myself where the eye naturally travels and whether every element contributes to the image. Sometimes removing distractions or choosing a slightly different viewpoint has a much greater impact than adding another foreground subject. Finally, I consider the emotional tone of the scene. Does it feel calm, dramatic, mysterious, or isolated? If I can identify that mood, I can build the composition around communicating it."

Top: Dunquin Pier, Dingle, Ireland

Top right: Ksiaz Castle, Poland

Above: Pine Island, Connemara, Ireland

Many of Ryszard's images feature rich colours and deep contrast. This is partly a result of him favouring the early morning and late evening for his shoots, as do many professional landscape photographers. In these cases, however, Ryszard stresses the importance of tonal consistency: because the lighting at these times of the day is so familiar to viewers, it's critical that neither the shooting nor the later editing work contradicts the expected balance of saturation and hue. This can actually create an increased challenge for long exposure photographers, thanks to the strong colour shifts often introduced by strong neutral density filters. So what is Ryszard's approach to colour control throughout his workflow?

"My approach to colour control starts with consistency and maintaining a natural look across my images," he begins. "When photographing in the field, I usually use the Daylight white balance setting, as it provides me with consistent colour rendering from one image to another, regardless of changing lighting conditions. Using a fixed white balance allows me to maintain the same colour character throughout a series of photographs and gives me a reliable starting point during post-processing. I prefer this approach because it helps me stay in control of the final look of my images rather than allowing the camera to automatically change the colour interpretation between different shots."

A winning formula

Over the years, Ryszard's work has proven highly successful, not just in its popularity online, but also in multiple international competitions. For example, he recently won the Single Image category of the UK National round of the EISA Maestro

RYSZARD'S PHOTO GEAR

Sony A7R III: Full-frame mirrorless camera with great resolution and dynamic range

Sigma 12–24mm f/4 Art: The foundation of much of my landscape photography, allowing me to create expansive compositions

Haida Optics filters: High-quality neutral density (ND) and graduated neutral density (GND) filters

Leofoto tripods: Provide the rigidity needed when working in challenging landscapes

Remote trigger: Helps eliminate camera shake and allows precise ultra-long exposures

Photo Contest with his image of Antelope Canyon in Arizona, USA. Far from this being a one-off win, it seems his formula is a reliable ticket to impressing judges. What exactly is it that he does to ensure his work is noticed with such regularity?

"Before entering a competition, I always recommend carefully selecting images that represent your best work. However, a technically perfect image is not always enough. What often makes a photograph stand out is the feeling it creates and the way it communicates something personal. Study and understand the competition you are entering. Every contest has its own character, judging criteria, and expectations. Choose images that fit the spirit of the competition you're entering while remaining authentic to your own photographic approach."

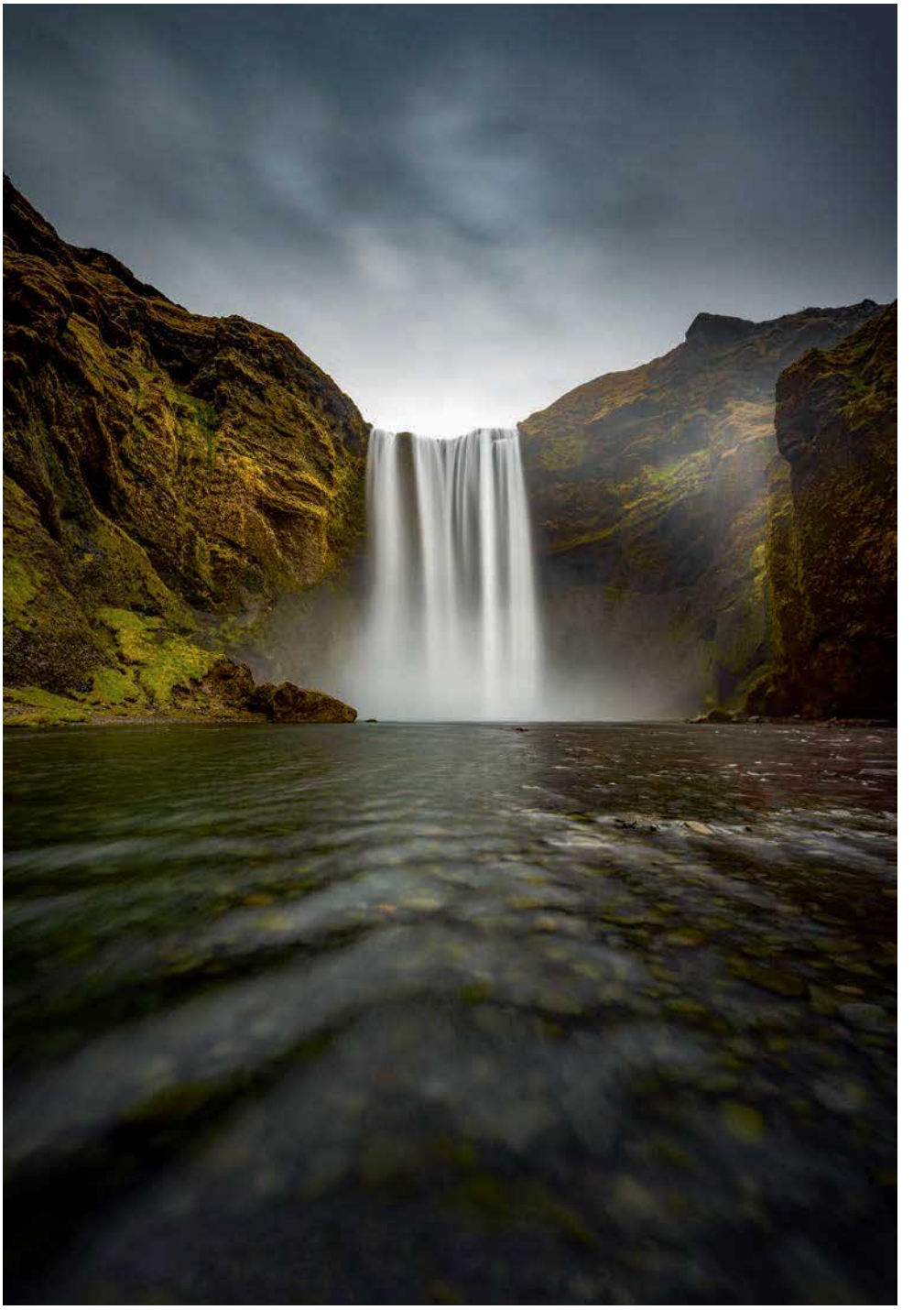
It can't be denied that Ryszard's images are eye-catching, but how much does he feel luck plays a role in his 'hit rate'?

"Success in photography competitions does not come from a single photograph or one lucky moment. It is the result of consistency, dedication, continuous learning, experimentation, analysing your own work, and constantly searching for new ways to express your vision. Building a strong portfolio and developing your own recognisable style over time is what truly leads to long-term success."

Many photographers become preoccupied with finding their own signature style, but as Ryszard's process has demonstrated, this rarely calls for a revolution in creative thinking. Long exposure photography is a common enough technique, yet the reason it has worked so well for him is because of how effectively it communicates what he wishes to say through his photography. His association with the look and feel it produces amongst his followers came later.

"I focus on capturing the elements that genuinely interest me, the details that help create emotion and tell a story," he elaborates. "I want viewers to feel as though they're stepping into a story rather than simply looking at a landscape".

It may have taken Ryszard since the days of film photography to truly find his signature, but as many readers will agree, it has been worth the wait. It is, after all, perhaps helping to keep landscape photography alive and well. AP



Above: Skogafoss, Iceland

"Long exposure photography also introduces a sense of the passage of time into a static image"

Mankowitz magic

The pictorial fruits of Gered Mankowitz's amazing 65-year career feature in his epic new book Photographs. **Steve Fairclough** spoke to him to find out more...

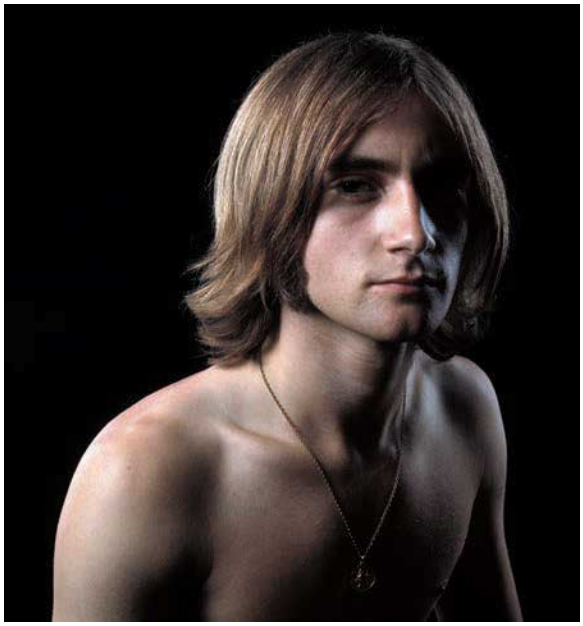
Not many people can attribute a 65-year photography career to the influence of film star Peter Sellers, but Gered Mankowitz can. Sellers was a friend of Mankowitz's parents and visited their house in Kent in 1958. Mankowitz recalls, 'It was Sellers who sparked my interest in photography. My Dad (playwright and screenwriter Wolf Mankowitz) was a bit of a celebrity and because we'd had photographers come to visit us to photograph the family at home from 1956 onwards, I was always really interested in the kit and the process.'

He continues, 'Then Peter Sellers arrived for Sunday lunch and he brought this Hasselblad 500C kit. He also brought a great, big Polaroid 110A, the foldout, 5x4 format Polaroid. We hadn't seen it in the UK… it was quite a rare and unique beast. Sellers proceeded to take pictures of me with my brother Jonathan, apparently standing in the palm of my hand a la Tom Thumb, which was the film Sellers had just been making. It was a magical experience and turned me on to photography. Sellers involved me with the camera and did it in such a way that I was weeping with laughter, so I associated cameras and photography with laughter and happiness.'

Once the actor had left, Wolf Mankowitz asked his then 12-year-old son Gered, 'How was that for you?' The reply was, 'It was fantastic. I want to be a photographer and I want to have a Hasselblad.' A couple of years later Gered Mankowitz was given a tour of Camera Press agency, by its founder, photojournalist Tom Blau.

Mankowitz recalls, 'I was 14. I'd taken some pictures on a school holiday to the Netherlands. We took one to show Tom Blau. Tom had photographed Dad many times. He showed us around Camera Press. It was an amazing place – a maze of passageways. Everything was lined with shelves of brown, manila boxes with these great names… Karsh or whoever. Tom Blau looked at some pictures I'd taken on this holiday and was very sweet. He said, "I like these pictures of Delft. We don't have pictures of Delft, so I'd like to buy this one from you for £5"… which was a fortune.'

On the spot, Blau promised Gered Mankowitz an apprenticeship at Camera Press, which he later undertook. He explains, 'That was that, really. I went home with Dad on the tube in a sort of buzz of excitement and it was decided almost then and there that I was going to leave school and become a photographer. That was the beginning of my career.'

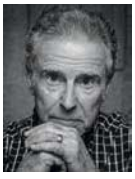


Path into music photography

Despite now being best known for his music photography work – capturing the likes of the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Elton John, Kate Bush and The Eurythmics – Gered Mankowitz's initial ambition was to be a theatrical photographer. He worked with theatrical photographer Jeff Vickers, and his images of a musical called Fiorello, shot at the Bristol Old Vic, were used as front of house publicity

Above: Phil Collins, Mason's Yard studio, 1969

Right: Annie Lennox, photoshoot for The Tourists' second album Reality Effect, 1979



Gered Mankowitz

Gered Mankowitz FRPS is an English photographer who has shot music, fashion, advertising, editorial and commercial work since the early 1960s. He has worked with many big names in the music world including the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, George Harrison and Duran Duran. His photographs have featured on album covers for the Rolling Stones, Elton John, Kate Bush, Slade, P.P. Arnold, The Jam, ABC and others. In 2020 he was the executive producer of the six-part TV series ICON: Music Through the Lens, which documented the history and cultural impact of music photography. **www.mankowitz.com**

ALL IMAGES © GERED MANKOWITZ / ICONIC IMAGES

Left: Mick Jagger and his Aston Martin, Bryanston Mews East, 1966

shots when the show transferred to the Piccadilly Theatre, London.

But Mankowitz's fledgling career soon took a turn. He reveals, 'Two of the actors I was working with, Chad Stewart and Jeremy Clyde, were also singers and asked me to photograph them as singers. The pictures were bought by the record company that had just signed them, Ember Records… suddenly, I was in the music business. I didn't give up on portraits of actors – I pursued that throughout the '60s – but I realised that photographing singers was more interesting, exciting and potentially more creative. I started working in the music business… and that's where I pretty much stayed.'

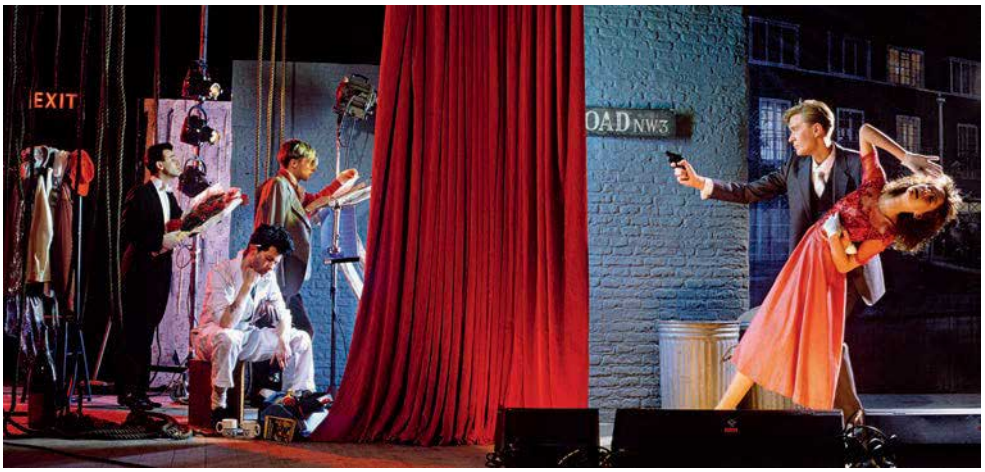
Ironically, Mankowitz's relative lack of experience was to prove a plus. 'We wanted our generation to get away from the sparkly teeth and glittery suit showbiz photography of the '50s. We wanted to be grittier, funnier and more dramatic. I was using available light and working in low light. I was trying to be creative and artistic. I was listening to the music, looking at the band and trying to find a way of visually expressing something that worked with the song, with the band or with the moment. It was also quite pragmatic because I wasn't that experienced. My studio skills were somewhat limited and I was working with a smaller palette, which grew as I got more experienced and evolved as a technician.'

Meeting the Stones

I point out to Gered Mankowitz that many photographers that I have interviewed of his vintage – he turned 80 in early August 2026 – often seemed to get breaks through

Right: Napoleon tableau created with the art director of Observer Living magazine, Janetta Lewin. Old Chapel Studios, 1983

Below: ABC, for the album cover of The Lexicon of Love, Old Chapel Studios, 1982



‘The Stones had been photographed by David Bailey... but Bailey couldn’t help but impart a sheen of glamour. I didn’t have those skills...’

luck or happenstance. He agrees. ‘I met Marianne Faithfull socially, then asked if I could photograph her. It didn’t occur to us we’d have to check in with her manager or agent. She was beautiful and funny and I wanted to photograph her. She immediately agreed. I picked her up a couple of days later and we started working together. We got on incredibly well and she really liked what I did. So, we continued to work and I did her first album cover.’

He adds, ‘She was managed by Andrew Loog Oldham, who also managed the Rolling Stones. He’d seen some photographs I’d taken of her and I was summoned to the office to meet him and the Stones. It was presented to me that maybe we could do a photo session together, so we did. Things happened like that in the ‘60s because everybody was looking to open a door and wanted to work with new talent. There were very established photographers who were awfully good, but they were perhaps quite stodgy and staid in their approach.’

Mankowitz’s first photo shoot with the band would produce the cover of the 1965 Stones album Out of Their Heads and he would later go on to shoot the cover of their 1967 LP, Between the Buttons, famously smearing Vaseline to his lens for striking results. ‘Andrew Loog Oldham has subsequently said to me that the Stones had been photographed by David Bailey a couple of times prior to me, but Bailey couldn’t help but impart a sort of sheen of glamour. I didn’t have those skills, so I was working with available light and getting grittier, harsher pictures, which Andrew felt suited the band at that time. It paid off because the cover I did for the Stones that came out of that first session, for Out of Our Heads, was quite a breakthrough cover. Over the decades people have said that it caught the moment particularly well... but that was because I didn’t know how to do it any other way!’

Element of trust

It’s perhaps an unfair question, but I ask Mankowitz if he has any favourite artists or bands he has worked with. He replies, ‘There’s a range of people. I loved working with the Stones, I loved working with Marianne Faithfull and others. In the ‘60s, and really up to the mid-70s, you established a trust because these people couldn’t see the photograph. They could look through the camera, but it was the wrong way round or upside down They couldn’t really see what you were doing until the pictures came out, so they had to trust you.’

He adds, ‘So, you had a relationship that was built on trust, openness and a loyalty with the managers and the record

Top: ‘Boxer – Refreshes the Parts Other Beers Cannot Reach’ for Heineken, Old Chapel Studios, 1984

Above: AC/DC, Old Chapel Studios, 1987.

company. If they liked you and liked what you did, they'd give you another session. Those were crucial elements in how I progressed and evolved. That's why I had a long relationship with the Stones – nearly three years. With Marianne, we remained friends till she passed. I'm still close to old friends like Jeremy Clyde, and P.P. Arnold is a dear friend. I'm still in touch with Suzi Quatro and Annie Lennox… with all of these people, with great luck and fortune, I've been able to stay in touch. But I don't have favourites. They're all my babies and they're all my children.'

Diehard Hasselblad user

One constant factor in Mankowitz's career has been his enduring love affair with Hasselblad cameras. 'I was a Hasselblad 500C photographer for years. I got one the moment I left school because my Mum and dad had taken out a little insurance policy when I was born. We cashed that in and I bought a Hasselblad and three lenses – a 50mm, 80mm and a 150mm. I bought a Rox metal case and everything went in that. I had an old Weston light meter and that was it for years.'

He continues, 'Later I had a Nikon FE as a back-up for when you're in a situation where you needed that extra bit of speed or just when 35mm was more appropriate. Otherwise, I did everything on the Hasselblad. I shot live photography with the Hasselblad, which was insane. Shooting at 1/15th of a second and f/2.8? Ridiculous! So that stayed with me.'

When Mankowitz started shooting commercial work he invested in a Horseman 5x4 camera, which he describes as 'excellent'. However, his Hasselblad camera journey continued from the 500C to the CM and he then ventured into digital with Hasselblad's H1D and the X2D. 'Basically, I'm a Hasselblad person and I've always loved Hasselblad. For me, it's the best camera in the world and I've always felt very comfortable with it. When I shoot digital I still shoot on a Hasselblad. So, it's been Hasselblad, Hasselblad… and then Hasselblad.'

A career retrospective

By my count, Photographs is Gered Mankowitz's 18th photography book – a series that dates back to the 1984 publication Pop Shots, which featured music performers and was a collaboration with photographer Harry Hammond. But the new tome, Photographs, is the first time all of Mankowitz's career has been covered in a single book. It's a hefty, 336-page coffee table book that takes you on a dazzling photographic journey through the different decades of his career. A shot from the famous Rolling Stones Between the Buttons shoot on Primrose Hill adorns the cover, but inside the sheer wealth and depth of work is astonishing – book jackets, commercial shots, advertising work, magazine commissions and a slew of his iconic music images.

Mankowitz explains, 'I work closely with a company called Iconic Images, who now manage my archive, and they work with ACC Art Books. Iconic Images and ACC asked me what I would like to do. I said "I'd like to do a full career retrospective". They said "great"… and that was that. I wasn't sure I'd ever get a chance to do this sort of book, but they gave it to me and ACC has produced the most beautiful book. It took a couple of years – my first edit was twice the size of the book now, so I had to chuck out stuff. I had a great deal of support and help. It was a lot of

work, a lot of fun and I'm thrilled with the result.'

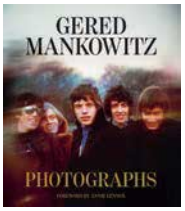
He adds, '65 years is a bloody long time to be doing anything. It was important to try and get across the feeling of what a professional career is like… of doing a range of different work simultaneously. I was terribly lucky because the music work kept piling in and kept me going pretty much for 20 years, but you were always trying to do other things when the opportunity arose. All of these interconnecting strands make who you are. The book covers all those strands of an extremely long, hard-working career.'

Important images

Given that he has been plying his trade for so long I ask Gered Mankowitz what he feels are the most important images from his lengthy career. He pauses, then reveals, 'There's so much that it's so difficult to pull things out. But Jimi Hendrix in '67… those images were important to me at the time, but weren't particularly successful at the time. For a long time, they became probably my most famous images, the biggest sellers and the most popular images. They have a life of their own. Jimi is a particularly important figure, is adored by millions of fans and a great many of them know my images and see Jimi as my images of Jimi. That session has a particular importance to me.'

He continues, 'Then, the work I did with Kate Bush (which included the cover of her 1978 album Lionheart) and the work I did with Slade. I did nearly everything with Slade throughout the '70s and into the '80s. I did nearly 40 sessions with them and most of their album covers. That's probably the longest lasting continuous working relationship.'

As our chat comes close to an end, Mankowitz sums up with an interesting point about the power of his images. 'Whenever I meet people or people look at my work, they say, "Oh, my God, you did the Smash Hits Wham! cover. I had that on my wall," or "You did The Jam album cover (This is the Modern World)". They know the work; they've had it in their lives. They just don't realise that it was me who did it, which is great – that's how it's supposed to be.'



The book Gered Mankowitz: Photographs (ISBN: 9781788843546) is published by ACC Art Books and has an RRP of £65.
www.accartbooks.com
You can order signed copies at: https://iconicimagesgallery.com/products/gered-mankowitz-photographs-signed-hardcover-preorder?variant=47844890968318

Clockwise from top left:

Wham! George and Andrew in a 'Club Tropicana'-inspired shot for the cover and pull-out poster of Smash Hits

Oasis, photoshoot for Mojo, Primrose Hill, 1994

Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor and director Joseph Losey having a drink on set during the filming of Boom!, Sardinia, 1967

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Amateur Photographer of the Year

Here are the top ten images uploaded to Photocrowd from Round Four, Celebrating Colour, with comments by the AP team and our guest judge.

Round Four **Celebrating Colour**

Colour is one of photography's most powerful tools, it can stop us in our tracks, settle a mood or transform an otherwise ordinary scene into something unforgettable. It can burn onto the retina with bold, saturated hues or offer balance with more subtle tones. Colour can make a photograph sing but it can just as easily overwhelm it. The photographer's judgement of when to push and when to hold back is crucial. The Celebrating Colour round attracted a wonderfully broad range of approaches. Some photographers embraced vivid, eye-popping combinations, while others chose a more restrained palette .Our top 10 celebrates photographers who understood exactly what colour brings.

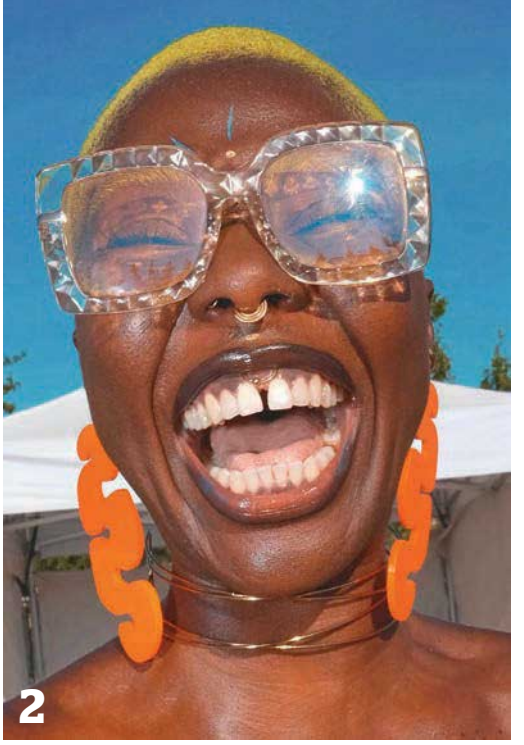
1

1 Trevor Lake
A Framed Glance 100pts

FUJIFILM X-T4, 85.0 mm, 1/125sec, f/1.8, ISO 2500

Guest judge Barry Lewis says:

This wonderful picture has a deceptive simplicity. The photograph, taken across a busy road, is focused on a woman, sitting in a cab, looking back at the photographer. This image, in fact, is anything but simple. Using colour and blur we are drawn into the intimacy of another life. We find ourself, the viewer, being carried to the closed cab window, where a young woman is returning our gaze. "What are you doing? Why are you doing this?" It's not a challenge, more a silent question. There is a serenity inside this hermetically sealed taxi, glass on all sides, reinforced by its soft blue tones. She is in her silent world, and you are on the outside, immersed in the warm noise of the street. Using both colour and differential focus to create this world within a world pulls the viewer straight inside the scene. Like in a great movie, we are standing on the pavement and become part of a dream, unfolding in muted, complimentary colours. This picture has what very few pictures achieve; a life outside the frame.



2 Trevor Lake Something to Laugh About

FUJIFILM X-T4, 13.0 mm , 1/250sec, f/10, ISO 160

Two in the Top 10 is quite an achievement for Trevor and this is a very different photograph from his first-placed image. This is an unapologetically direct and joyful celebration of personality and colour. The first thing that grabs attention is that extraordinary combination of dyed hair and giant orange earrings, but it's the expression that gives the photograph its real energy. Trevor has caught laughter dialled up full volume. The subject's open-mouthed grin and exuberant pose made it almost impossible not to smile back. The judges admired the way the strong colours complement rather than compete with one another, creating a bold graphic quality while still feeling entirely natural to the character of the portrait. The composition is simple and that works in its favour: everything is concentrated on the face, the colour and that wonderfully uninhibited moment. A lively, confident portrait that fizzes with personality.

3 Sirsendu Gayen Little Steps 80pts

NIKON D80, 35mm, 1/250sec, f/10, ISO 250

Sursendu has found an impactful way to make sense of the extraordinary geometry of Jaipur's Jantar Mantar. The architecture is the obvious attraction, but it's the tiny human figure that gives the image its scale, rhythm and sense of wonder. The figure appears almost dwarfed by the monumental forms around them, turning what could have been a straightforward architectural study into something more engaging. Judges particularly liked the way the strong yellow and orange tones dominate the frame, with the small figure providing a vital human counterpoint. The steps lead the eye into the image, while the openings, curves and shadows create a succession of shapes within shapes. The picture is equally pleasing and playful - the contrast between the scale of the architecture and those tiny footsteps negotiating it. Sursendu has resisted the temptation to simply record the grandeur of Jantar Mantar and instead used colour, geometry and human presence to give the remarkable setting a sense of life.

4 Charles Ashton Pink and Purple 70pts

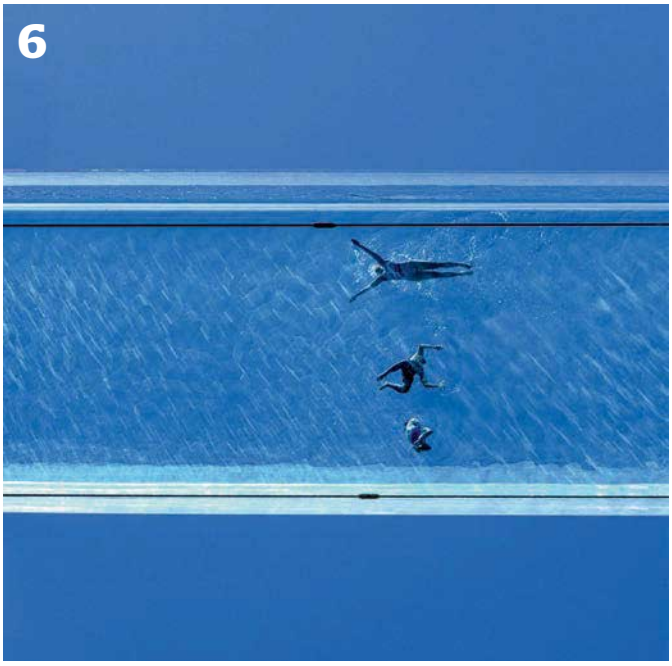
FUJIFILM GFX100S, GF32-64mm at 32mm, 1/320sec, f/4, ISO 1000

Charles has created a beautifully atmospheric image, showing just how much a colour photograph can succeed through a relatively restrained palette. The combination of pinks, purples and muted violet tones gives the scene an almost dreamlike quality, while the red of the doorway provides contrast. There is a lot going on within the frame yet the composition never feels cluttered. The woman standing in the doorway provides an important focal point, adding a sense of human presence and a little mystery. Charles has allowed the colour to emerge naturally from the everyday environment rather than relying on obviously saturated subjects. The result feels observed rather than overly constructed, with the complementary colours, textures and strong architectural framing working together to create a compelling scene. A lovely example of finding photographic potential in an apparently ordinary moment.

5 Natalie Weigum
Between Earth and Sky 60pts

NIKON Z 6_2, 24-70mm at 26.5mm, 1/8sec, f/7.1, ISO 100

Natalie has captured one of those landscapes where reality seems to give way to something altogether more otherworldly. The flooded Salar de Uyuni creates an almost perfect mirror for the vast expanse of sky above. The effect is both serene and slightly disorientating: it becomes difficult to tell where the earth ends and the sky begins. The delicate colours in the clouds and reflections give the image a wonderful sense of calm, but it is the central figure that really completes the composition. Standing alone in this enormous expanse, they provide a crucial sense of scale and make us appreciate just how immense the landscape is. Rather than filling the frame with detail, Natalie has allowed space, reflection and colour to do the work. The result is an image that is beautiful and minimal and gives a strong sense of what it must be like to stand in such a vast, extraordinary place.



6 Graeme Youngson
Study in Blue 50pts

FUJIFILM X-T50, 33mm, 1/1000sec, f/8, ISO 200

Graeme has taken a familiar subject and given it a wonderfully graphic twist. The blue square immediately catches the eye, turning the glass-bottomed swimming pool into an abstract composition of colour, lines and negative space. The swimmers appear almost suspended within the frame, their movement contrasting nicely with the rigid geometry of the architecture. The unusual viewpoint makes us momentarily question exactly what we are looking at. Graeme's patience also paid off: having visited the scene twice before he finally encountered swimmers to enter the frame and complete the composition. A striking example of how colour can dominate an everyday scene.

7 Peter Murrell
Colour Full 45pts

NIKON D700, 50.0 mm, 1/100sec, f/2, ISO 2500

Peter has produced a portrait that understands the power of colour. The image immediately draws us to the vivid red of the subject's lipstick and clothing, which contrasts beautifully with the cooler blues and muted tones surrounding her. The result is both striking and sophisticated, with the colours helping to pick out key details without overwhelming the portrait. There is a lovely sense of confidence in the subject's gaze, while the shallow depth of field keeps our attention firmly where it belongs. The simplicity of the approach: a strong face, a considered composition and just the right combination of colours impressed the judges. A confident, characterful portrait.

8 Jerry Wash Day Blues... and Reds 40pts

OLYMPUS E-M1X, 12-40mm at 18mm, 1/80sec, f/4, ISO 3200

Jerry has turned the humble and often humdrum launderette into a wonderfully graphic study in colour. The image takes an everyday setting and finds an almost cinematic quality in its bold combination of primary colours. The woman's red dress and shoes provide a striking focal point against the cool blue washing machines. The symmetry and repetition of the machines give the image a strong visual structure, while the figure adds a touch of character and humour. Jerry assures us that no AI was used to create the image. Quite right too. A playful, confident image with plenty of visual punch.

9 Azim Khan Ronnie Drying Incense 35pts

Hasselblad L1D-20c, 28.0 mm, 1/160sec, f/4.5, ISO 100

There's an extraordinary visual rhythm to Azim's image. The thousands of incense sticks laid out to dry create a wonderfully graphic pattern. The vivid colours transform what is essentially a traditional working process into an almost abstract composition.
The two figures are crucial, providing both human interest and a sense of scale amid the sea of colour. The contrast between the orderly arrangement of the sticks and the organic shape created by the worker moving through them impressed the panel. The result feels vibrant, industrious and unmistakably rooted in place. This is a striking example of colour, pattern and human activity coming together in one shot.

10 Dr. John Mihopulos A Blue Tit Among Rose Hips in Autumn! 30pts

Canon EOS R1, 600mm at 840mm (+ EXTENDER RF1.4x), 1/5000sec, f5.6, ISO 8000

John has captured a lovely seasonal contrast in A Blue Tit Among Rose Hips in Autumn! The delicate blue and yellow of the bird stand out beautifully against the warm reds of the rose hips. The bird is perfectly positioned, creating a sense of depth while keeping the eye firmly on the subject. There is also a pleasing balance between the softness of the background and the crisp detail of the bird. It's a reminder that celebrating colour doesn't necessarily require exotic subjects, sometimes the most effective combinations are closer to home, waiting to be noticed.

Winning kit from PARK Cameras

What gear did our top ten photographers use?

For his 1st and 2nd place winning images, Trevor Lake trusted the FUJIFILM X-T4, a powerful, weather-sealed hybrid mirrorless camera featuring a 26.1-megapixel APS-C X-Trans CMOS 4 sensor and built-in image stabilization. Available used from Park Cameras for around £799.

Featuring a constant aperture across the zoom range, Charles Ashton captured his 4th placed image using the Fujifilm GF 32-64mm f4 R LM WR, a versatile medium format lens with inner focusing using a linear motor for the GFX system. Available form Park Cameras for £1,925.

In 8th place, Jerry opted for an OLYMPUS M.12-40mm F2.8 lens. The OM System M.Zuiko Digital ED 12-40mm f/2.8 PRO II Lens is available from Park Cameras for £999 - a fast aperture standard zoom (24-80mm equivalent), with exceptional image quality, IP53 weather sealing, high-speed AF and weighs just 382g.

To see the full range, visit www.parkcameras.com

BEST OF THE CLUBS

Each round, we shine a spotlight on a selection of standout entries from the many camera clubs taking part in APOY

Andrew Knight, Plymouth Camera Club Celebrating Colour

SONY ILCE-7RM2, 28-75mm at 37mm, 1/40sec, f/6.3, ISO 400

Bold colour, strong graphic design and playful subject matter combine to make this an instantly eye-catching image, with the vivid red backdrop giving the riot of colour and intricate shadows real visual punch.

Steve Field, Bristol Photographic Society Les Cucaracha

Canon EOS R5m2, 24-70mm at 70mm, 1/160sec, f/9, ISO 200

The striking red hair immediately commands attention, while the unexpected inclusion of the insects adds an intriguing visual twist; the careful composition and restrained palette make this an imaginative celebration of colour.

Marriam Hughes, Littlehampton Camera Club A Carpet of Bluebells

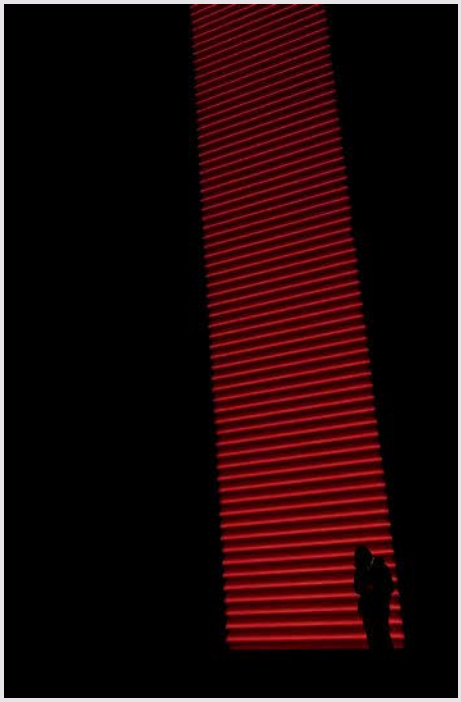
Canon EOS R6m2, 100-400mm at 400mm, 1/20sec, f/13, ISO 100

A carpet of vibrant bluebells transforms this woodland scene into a celebration of colour, with the repeating flowers creating wonderful depth in the framework.

Paul Powici, Eastbourne Photographic Society Yellow Wall

Not supplied

Stripped back to its simplest elements, the vivid blue sky and brilliant yellow foreground create a beautifully balanced graphic composition.



Gwen Berry, Ely Photographic Club Red Wait

Canon EOS R5, 35mm, 1/640sec, f/8, ISO 400

The dramatic contrast between the intense red lines and the solitary silhouette creates a memorable minimalist composition.

YOUNG APOY WINNERS

1 Adrian Kaletta A Bugs View 100pts

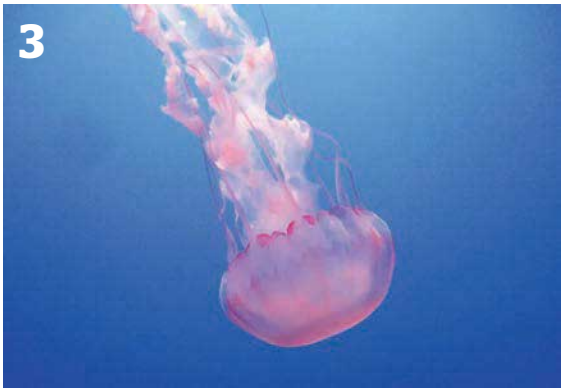
Canon EOS R7, 18-35mm at 18mm, 1/1000sec, f/9, ISO 400

A wonderfully playful interpretation of an art installation on the rail trail in Porepunkah, with the low viewpoint transforming these giant flowers into an almost otherworldly landscape. The bold palette is matched by strong composition, while the repetition of shapes and patterns creates plenty for the eye to explore. There's a lovely sense of discovery as though we've momentarily shrunk down and entered a miniature technicolour world. A joyous, imaginative image that makes superb use of colour and a deserving winner.

2 Andrew Sanfilippo Unititled 90pts

NIKON Z, 14mm, 1/500sec, f/5, ISO 200

A confident architectural image that demonstrates how powerful a dash of colour can be. The crisp white forms and striking green accent create a graphic, almost futuristic composition, while the upward perspective adds energy and drama. The palm tree and sky provide a welcome organic counterpoint to the geometric structure. Everything feels carefully considered, from the framing to the balance of colour and negative space. A sophisticated and beautifully controlled photograph.



3 Dorothy Slinkard Unititled 80pts

Canon PowerShot ELPH 180, 1/30sec, f/3.2, ISO 800

Colour and movement combine beautifully in this atmospheric underwater photograph. The jellyfish appears almost weightless against the intense blue background, the delicate translucent body and trailing tentacles provide a wonderful contrast. The simplicity of the composition allows the colour to do most of the work. An elegant photograph that turns a brief underwater encounter into something wonderfully ethereal.

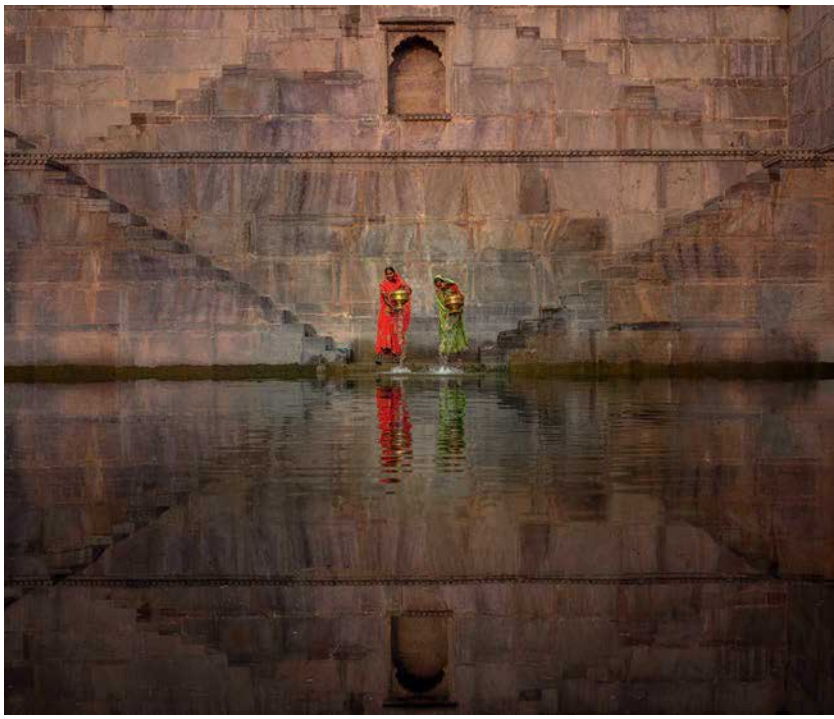
4 Lilien Bodo Passing Through 70pts

Canon EOS R50, 55-210mm at 108mm, 1/320sec, f/7.1, ISO 100

A striking use of silhouette, light and colour that turns an everyday moment into something cinematic. The intense orange and golden tones create an immediate sense of warmth, while the sharply defined figure provides a strong graphic focal point. There's also a pleasing ambiguity to the image: we know someone is passing through, but not where they are going or why.

BEST OF THE REST

APOY judges choose their favourite images that didn't make the top ten of our Celebrating Colour category



Geoff Harris, deputy editor, chooses **Women at the Stepwell by Erika Howard, London**

Canon EOS R5, 24-70mm at 70mm, 1/250sec, f/8, ISO 200

Geoff says: I was really taken with this image of two women getting water in Bundi, Rajasthan. It has a timeless quality, and there is nothing about it to suggest it was taken recently – quite an achievement in our depressingly homogenous and globalised world. The composition is spot on: I can imagine how long the photographer had to wait for the subjects to be placed so perfectly, with the tiered stone walls descending on both sides, and their reflections are perfectly captured. The editing is appropriate too, with the colours of their saris punchy and saturated without being garish. Deciding on a square crop was another smart move. It's a winner in my book!

Peter Dench, APOY project manager, chooses **The Girl in the Yellow Dress by Feldore McHugh, Belfast**

OLYMPUS E-M1, 35-100mm at 100mm , 1/80sec, f/2.8, ISO 2000

Peter Says: I love the immediacy and graphic quality of this image, with the vivid yellow of the girl's clothing set against the turquoise seats and deep blue-green pillar. It's the way those colours interact that makes the photograph particularly successful for me. The repetition of yellow in her clothes, hair clips and basket peeking from beneath the seats, gives the frame its strong visual structure. The battered, peeling surfaces provide a nice contrasting texture. The girl's direct, slightly quizzical gaze adds another dimension, both at ease and aware of Feldore's lens. The composition is balanced, the empty space around her and the sweep of the seats, gives the image room to breathe. A colourful photograph with character, texture and compelling human presence.

Nigel Atherton, editor, chooses **Leake Street Colours by Graeme Youngson, Aberdeen**

Fujifilm X-T5, 16mm F1.4, 1/1000sec at F1.4, ISO 500

Nigel says: Graeme deserves a shout-out for this cleverly composed shot of street art in London. Many street-art photos are simply reproductions of the artwork itself, with all the heavy lifting done by the art and no creative input from the photographer. The most obvious way to avoid that is to show an interaction between the artwork and its environment, perhaps by capturing an interesting juxtaposition with someone walking past.Graeme's photo takes a different route, and it initially confused me. At first, I thought it was a triptych, but on closer inspection I realised he had gone in close on a post, placed it dead centre, and shot wide open to blur the street behind, and create separation. The result is an in-camera triptych effect that is quite jarring, but I admire the lateral thinking behind it. I also like the way he has included a couple of street artists in the background, which humanises the scene.

Jessica Miller, deputy online editor, chooses **Dahlia by Yvone Kon, Pittsburgh**

Jessica says: Dahlias are my favourite flower. So naturally, when I saw this during judging I could feel myself transform into the 'heart eyes' emoji. Vibrant, bold and exquisite are all words I'd use to describe this. The lighting is beautiful, with the brighter section focusing around surrounding the centre and the open petals drifting into the shadows. The intensity of the purple cannot go unmissed with its contrast against the yellow. As purple and yellow are opposites on the colour wheel they complement each other well and are a great example of colour in harmony. I love that Evie has cropped this to square. The crop really emphasises the intention of drawing us into the centre of the bud; which is still tightly closed and the remaining petals only just starting to ease out. At any given time, the petals will burst open and I can feel the tension hitting the edges of the photograph. I've recently grown dahlias and feel inspired to photograph them differently too.

Amy Davies, features editor, chooses **Underrated Beauty by Jon Morris, Ellesmere**

Canon EOS R5, 500mm, 1/1250sec, f/4, ISO 2000

Amy says: What I love about this beautiful image is that it's showing a different or underappreciated side to a commonly seen bird. I didn't realise just how beautiful a starling can be before I saw this, and it's got me wondering if the same can be applied to other common feathered friends that we go out of our way to ignore – pigeons, seagulls, magpies and so on. It's taught me to try and look for the beauty in the mundane, and I think that's something we could all do with remembering.

The 2026 leaderboards

APOY

1	Azim Khan Ronnie	155
2	Susan Hall	130
3	Trevor Lake	120
4=	Graeme Youngson	115
4=	Peter Baker	115
6=	Charles Edward Ashton	100
6=	David Travis	100
6=	Lourdes Venard	100
6=	Paul Fine	100
10=	David Davies	90
10=	Erika Howard	90
10=	Karen Morris	90
10=	Richard Coulstock	90
10=	Sirsendu Gayen	90

YOUNG APOY

1	Matteo Botta	160
2	Adrian Kaletta	110
3=	Grace Learoyd-Hill	100
3=	Henry Salter	100
3=	Mac Motz	100
3=	River Keats Kedzier-hurst	100
3=	Sam Morris	100
8=	Andrew Sanfilippo	90
8=	Cavon Hajimiri	90
8=	Mary Louise Kasper	90
8=	Neel Anil	90
8=	Thomas Durrant	90

CAMERA CLUBS

1	Mid-Somerset Camera Club	175
2	Visions Photography Club	165
3=	Launceston Camera Club	160
3=	Plymouth Camera Club	160
5	Kempsey Camera Club	120
6	Royston Photographic Society	115
7	Leek Photographic Club	110
8=	City of London & Cripplegate PS	90
8=	London: Hampstead Photographic Society	90
8=	Maghull Photography Club	90

To see more images from APOY Round Four and Young APOY, visit **amateurphotographer.com/APOY**

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The year's best products

We reveal which cameras, lenses and smartphones emerged as winners of the prestigious **EISA Awards 2026-27**

Which are the best cameras, lenses and photographic accessories you can buy right now? The answer can be found right here, in the EISA Awards 2026-2027, as voted for by the magazines and websites that form the photography group within the Expert Imaging and Sound Association (EISA).

EISA is a group of 51 special-interest magazines and websites from 26 countries around the world, covering Hi-Fi, photography, mobile devices, in-car electronics, and home theatre and vision. Each member is a renowned expert within its subject area and known for the rigour and integrity of its testing.

As one of the organisation's founding members, *Amateur Photographer* is an integral part of EISA's Photography Panel. We work closely alongside 14 other magazines from Europe, India and the USA, all of which are among the most respected in their home countries. To ensure that the winning products are truly worthy of your hard-earned money, each one must have been tested in depth by multiple panel members. We don't give awards based on quick first looks, or on the basis of specifications alone.

While each country has its own particular preferences for which features and characteristics are the most important in different kinds of cameras and lenses, there is often a strong consensus as to which should be recognised with an award. Read on to discover the best photography products of the year!

Nigel Atherton, Editor

EISA
EXPERT IMAGING AND SOUND ASSOCIATION

What is EISA?

The Expert Imaging and Sound Association is a collection of photographic, audio and video magazines in which members pool their skills and knowledge to award the best products in a wide range of categories each year. The awards are intended as a guide for specialist consumers. *Amateur Photographer*, a founding member of the association, represents the UK for the photographic section of the awards.

Learn more about EISA at **eisa.eu**

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Roos Schouw

Les Numériques
France
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Paolo Namias

EISA AWARD Best Product 2026-2027 CAMERA OF THE YEAR Sony Alpha 7 V

EISA Camera of the Year 2026-2027

Sony Alpha 7 V

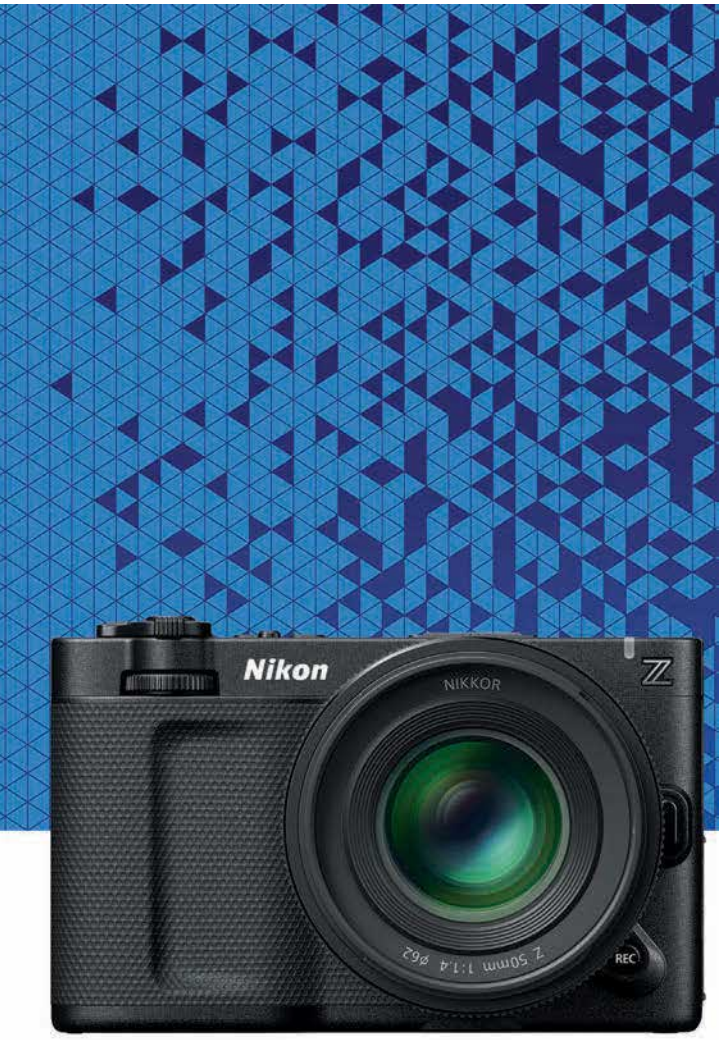
The Sony Alpha 7 V is a weather-sealed full-frame camera that's suitable for virtually any application. It combines tried-and-tested features such as 5-axis image stabilisation with cutting edge photographic technology. Its partially stacked Exmor RS CMOS image sensor delivers 33 megapixels while enabling shooting at 30 frames per second to provide blackout free continuous shooting. It employs Sony's latest BIONZ XR2 processor, with an integrated AI processing unit that supports autofocus with real-time subject recognition including human pose estimation. It's also a very good video camera that's capable of 4K recording at 60fps, or 120fps with a Super-35 crop. Whether in the studio or outdoors, the Sony Alpha 7 V is a reliable and high performance camera for discerning photographers.

EISA AWARD Best Product 2026-2027 BEST BUY CAMERA FUJIFILM X-T30 III

EISA Best Buy Camera 2026-2027

FUJIFILM X-T30 III

The Fujifilm X-T30 III packs classic centre-viewfinder handling and Fujifilm's celebrated colour science into a compact body weighing just 378g. Its 26.1MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS 4 sensor is paired with the latest X-Processor 5. This brings AI-powered subject-detection autofocus to the X-T30 line for the first time, with reliable tracking of people, animals, birds, vehicles and more. A newly added Film Simulation dial offers quick access to 20 film-inspired looks plus three custom recipe slots, while video steps up to 6.2K/30p and 4K/60p. A built-in flash, contoured grip and one-touch Auto mode make it welcoming for newcomers, yet it's capable enough to reward enthusiasts, too. It is an ideal step up from a smartphone.



EISA AWARD Best Product 2026-2027 PHOTO/VIDEO CAMERA Nikon ZR

EISA Photo/Video Camera 2026-2027
Nikon ZR

With the ZR, Nikon has created a dedicated video camera packed with attractive features at a reasonable price. Incorporating advanced video codecs and colour technology from Nikon-owned RED, videographers get a unique tool with access to the expansive Nikon Z system. Impressive video quality, excellent audio, built-in 7.5-stop image stabilisation, Nikon's advanced subject-tracking autofocus, and a huge, bright 4" screen provide solo creators and ambitious videographers with a complete, highly capable tool with extensive production potential.

EISA AWARD Best Product 2026-2027 COMPACT CAMERA Panasonic LUMIX DC-L10

EISA Compact Camera 2026-2027
Panasonic LUMIX DC-L10

The Lumix L10 is an advanced compact camera that's designed for enthusiast photographers. It employs a 20.4MP Four Thirds sensor, with a unique multi-aspect ratio design that encourages creative composition. This is combined with a 24-75mm equivalent, f/1.7-2.8 optically stabilized lens that's ideal for everyday photography, even in low light. The camera can also record 5.6K video at 60fps, and 4K at 120fps. Other highlights include fast and accurate subject detection autofocus, a high-quality electronic viewfinder, a fully articulated screen, and a large, long-lasting battery. The stylish design offers plenty of manual control, including an aperture ring on the lens. It's probably the best zoom compact camera yet made.

EISA APS-C Camera 2026-2027

FUJIFILM X-E5

The Fujifilm X-E5 brings the company's flagship imaging core to its rangefinder-style line, combining a 40.2MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS 5 HR sensor with the X-Processor 5. It is the first X-E model to feature in-body image stabilisation, offering up to 7 stops of compensation, while its AI-driven autofocus detects and tracks people, animals, birds and a wide range of vehicles. Beneath a machined aluminium top-plate sits a new Film Simulation dial, giving instant access to Fujifilm's 20 colour profiles plus three custom recipe slots. The camera records 6.2K video and adds a digital teleconverter for extra reach. Compact, beautifully built and effectively an interchangeable-lens take on the popular X100VI, it is a photographer's delight for street, travel and everyday shooting.

EISA Professional Camera 2026-2027

Sony Alpha 7R VI

With this high resolution camera, professional photographers gain a highly capable tool that enables them to deliver their projects and assignments to the highest standard. When detail is paramount, a brand-new full-frame Exmor RS CMOS sensor delivers 66.8MP resolution. This is supported by the BIONZ XR2 processor with an integrated AI processing unit, which enables continuous shooting at 30 frames per second, 8K video, and dramatically improved subject recognition and tracking. The camera offers enhanced RAW formats, flexible focus area settings, excellent video functionality, a longer-lasting battery and two card slots, which accept both CFexpress Type A and UHS-II SD cards. Image quality is outstanding, with exceptionally wide dynamic range.

EISA Lens of the Year 2026-2027

Nikon NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S II

Nikon has improved its fast standard zoom lens in a number of impressive ways. The Nikon NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S II is 130 grams lighter than its predecessor, and it's better suited for video thanks to internal zoom construction, which makes it easier to operate on a gimbal. Focusing has become even faster with minimal breathing, while sharpness has been improved at shorter distances. The anti-reflective coating is improved and is now class leading. Overall, this results in a top-class professional lens without any weaknesses. It's true workhorse for professionals and a real investment in image quality for photo enthusiasts.

EISA Standard Lens 2026-2027

Nikon NIKKOR Z DX MC 35mm f/1.7

The Nikon NIKKOR Z DX MC 35mm f/1.7 is a real jewel in Nikon's lens range. The optical construction is designed for DX (APS-C) sensors, and it functions as both a macro lens for close-ups, and a standard lens with relatively high brightness. Compact size, low weight and great sharpness are among its many attractive features. Linear distortion is almost unnoticeable and there's little vignetting either. Other practical features are weather sealing and inner focusing. The lens covers the same subject area as a 1:1 macro lens for full frame. It's the perfect second lens for owners of DX-format mirrorless Nikon cameras.

EISA Wide Angle Lens 2026-2027

Sigma 35mm F1.4 DG II | Art

The Sigma 35mm F1.4 DG II | Art is not the fastest 35mm lens Sigma makes, but it offers superior portability and is more affordable compared to its F1.2 sibling. Sigma managed to make this new 35mm lens substantially lighter and smaller than its predecessor, while at the same time improving the image quality, which was already very good indeed. Autofocus is fast and the bokeh is very pleasing. Build quality is excellent and the aperture ring can be declicked for video. With its relatively affordable cost, this 35mm lens raises the bar for other lenses in its class.

EISA Best Buy Lens 2026-2027

Canon RF 45mm F1.2 STM

Lenses with very large apertures are attractive, but they usually come with significant price tags. However, Canon has managed to design a standard lens with an impressively bright f/1.2 aperture at an affordable price. The Canon RF 45mm F1.2 STM is an excellent lens for those who want to take sharp portraits with a lovely creamy background blur. It is also very suitable for reportage photography in low light. Despite its brightness, the lens is very portable, measuring just 75mm in length and weighing 346g. This bright standard lens is a great complement to Canon's affordable zoom lenses.

EISA AWARD Best Product 2026-2027 MACRO LENS Sony FE 100mm F2.8 Macro GM OSS

EISA Macro Lens 2026-2027

Sony FE 100mm F2.8 Macro GM OSS

The Sony FE 100mm F2.8 Macro GM OSS is a true gem, as it's an almost perfect lens without any real weaknesses. The lens provides 1.4x magnification and is also compatible with teleconverters. Using a 2x teleconverter, magnification can be extended to 2.8x, allowing extremely small subjects to fill the frame. The lens also features weather sealing, fast autofocus powered by four XD Linear Motors, and improved image stabilisation that now works across five axes. With excellent sharpness from corner to corner, this is a lens that clearly deserves its premium 'G Master' designation.

EISA AWARD Best Product 2026-2027 PORTRAIT LENS Sigma 135mm F1.4 DG | Art

EISA Portrait Lens 2026-2027

Sigma 135mm F1.4 DG | Art

This unique lens from Sigma is the world's first to combine a 135mm focal length, a large F1.4 maximum aperture, and autofocus. Built for full-frame cameras in Sony E-mount and L-Mount, it provides a beautiful look for portraits, with flattering perspective and pleasingly blurred backgrounds. Image quality is superb, with excellent sharpness even at maximum aperture, and barely any colour fringing. It has all the controls photographers could want, too, including an aperture ring that can be set to either smooth or clicked operation. Dust- and splash-resistant build rounds off a truly superb, and very desirable portrait lens.

EISA AWARD Best Product 2026-2027 TELEPHOTO LENS Sigma 200mm F2 DG OS | Sports

EISA Telephoto Lens 2026-2027

Sigma 200mm F2 DG OS | Sports

This remarkable telephoto lens combines a large aperture and robust build with premium optics. Designed for full-frame mirrorless cameras, it comes in Sony E-mount and L-Mount versions. The super-bright aperture means it excels for indoor and low-light work, while providing excellent subject isolation. But it's built for outdoor shooting too, with dust- and splash-resistant construction, and thermal insulation paint that minimizes heat build-up on sunny days. Autofocus is fast and accurate, and optical stabilization is built in. Image quality is truly outstanding, with the lens producing impressively sharp results even at maximum aperture. It could be the perfect choice for sports and event photographers.

EISA Wide Angle Zoom Lens 2026-2027

TAMRON 16-30mm F/2.8 Di III VXD G2

The TAMRON 16-30mm F/2.8 Di III VXD G2 (Model A064) is an outstanding ultra wide-angle zoom that combines excellent optical performance with remarkable portability. Expanding the zoom range while maintaining a compact, lightweight design, it delivers consistently sharp, high-contrast images across the frame and throughout the focal range. Its fast, constant F2.8 aperture, rapid and accurate VXD (Voice-coil eXtreme-torque Drive) linear motor focus mechanism, and close-focusing capability make it equally at home with landscapes, architecture, interiors, travel, video and creative close-up photography. Moisture-Resistant Construction, internal zoom mechanism and compatibility with TAMRON Lens Utility application further enhance its versatility, make this lens an exceptional choice for demanding photographers and content creators alike.

EISA Photo/Video Lens 2026-2027

Canon RF 20-50mm F4L IS USM PZ

The Canon RF 20-50mm F4L IS USM PZ is a true hybrid lens, constructed for both video and stills photography. Thanks to a motor-assisted zoom ring, the lens provides both a smooth zoom action for video, and quicker zooming for stills. Its 20-50mm focal length range and constant f/4 aperture provides huge flexibility. It offers premium image quality, while focus breathing is optically suppressed. Weighing just 420g, the lens offers up to 8 stops of image stabilisation, enabling comfortable hand-held shooting and photography. The Nano USM system provides fast, quiet, and precise focusing. It's a lens that's ideal for vlogging, filming interiors, and capturing wide-angle shots and landscapes.

EISA Travel Zoom Lens 2026-2027

Sigma 20-200mm F3.5-6.3 DG | Contemporary

The Sigma 20-200mm F3.5-6.3 DG | Contemporary is a 10x zoom for full-frame cameras. However, where similar lenses start at 24mm, this one uniquely starts at 20mm, which makes it more versatile. That extended ultra-wide view isn't just useful for such things as landscape and interior photography, but also for video, where it helps maintain a truly wide view in cameras that offer active stabilisation. On top of that, the lens is lightweight, compact and dust- and splash-resistant, and offers very respectable image quality. This makes it perfect for travelling, as it can replace two or three lenses in your kit bag.

EISA Awards

EISA Standard Zoom Lens 2026-2027

TAMRON 35-100mm F/2.8 Di III VXD

The TAMRON 35-100mm F/2.8 Di III VXD (Model A078) is a compact standard zoom lens designed for full-frame Sony E-mount and Nikon Z mount mirrorless cameras. It covers the focal lengths that are most commonly used in portrait photography, 35mm, 50mm, 85mm, and 100mm, while maintaining a relatively fast F2.8 aperture throughout. The VXD (Voice-coil eXtreme-torque Drive) linear motor focus mechanism operates extremely effectively, supporting Hybrid AF and Eye AF systems. The lens has a very high resolution at both the centre and edges of the frame, while delivering beautifully smooth bokeh. Other practical features include Moisture-Resistant Construction and a USB Type-C Connector Port which allows for customization and firmware updates via the TAMRON Lens Utility application.

EISA Telephoto Zoom Lens 2026-2027

Nikon NIKKOR Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S II

This second-generation professional telephoto zoom boasts an impressive array of improvements over its already excellent predecessor. The Nikkor Z 70-200mm F2.8 S VR II is significantly lighter, focuses faster and closer, is perfectly balanced and ideal for both video and stills. With the uncompromising quality of Nikon's S series, improved coating and 11 aperture blades, this zoom delivers superb image quality and strikingly fine bokeh, whether you're shooting portraits or following fast athletes. The detachable tripod foot is now Arca-Swiss compatible, while the optical image stabiliser provides 6 stops shake compensation while working together with the camera's in-body stabilisation. It's Nikon's best zoom yet.

EISA Wildlife Lens 2026-2027

OM System M.ZUIKO DIGITAL ED 50-200mm F2.8 IS PRO

Zuiko lenses have always been known for their sharpness and contrast, and the new OM System 50-200mm F2.8 IS PRO does not disappoint. Focusing is fast and accurate, while optical image stabilisation gives a 7-stop advantage when used on an OM body. It delivers sharp images throughout the focal range, which along with the large aperture, allows shots to be taken in low light without any loss in image quality. The lens is weather sealed and has good close-focusing ability with a magnification of 0.25x. It's also compatible with 1.4x and 2x teleconverters for even longer reach. This all makes it an excellent choice for wildlife photographers.

EISA Analog Camera 2026-2027

Lomo MC-A 35mm Film Camera

A growing number of people are taking up analogue photography, which means that the prices of well-functioning pre-owned 35mm cameras have reached new heights. As brand-new analogue cameras start to emerge, the LOMO MC-A from Lomography stands out as the best news in a long time. This compact camera is solidly made of metal, and it can be used either automatically or manually, which makes it practical for both beginners and experienced photographers. With a built-in optical viewfinder, multiple exposure facility, and a flash with effects filters, the camera encourages creative photography. Supporting DX-coded film, it sports a good autofocus Minitar II 32mm F2.8 wide-angle lens that delivers sharp images.

EISA Analog Accessory 2026-2027

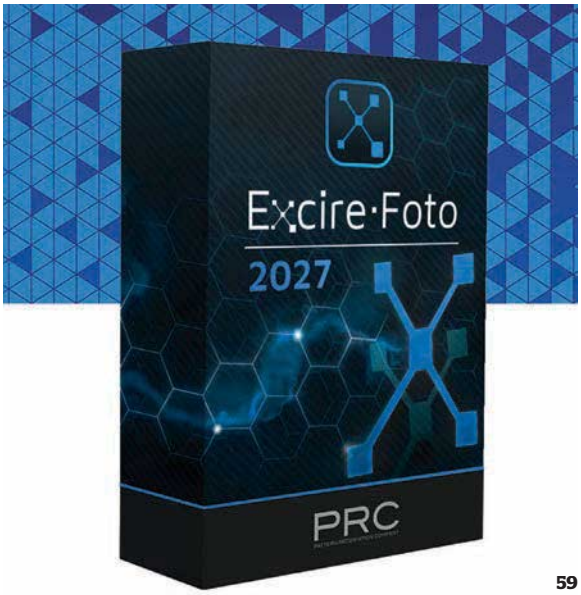
VALOI easy35 v2

With all the valuable negatives and colour slides found in people's homes, and the growing interest in analogue film photography, the new Valoi easy35 V2 is an ideal solution for scanning your own 35mm film using a camera. The device is designed so that you don't need a tripod, just a digital camera with a macro lens. With a new patent-pending LED light source, the film surface is illuminated with 99% uniformity. Its colour temperature is tuned to counteract the typical orange mask of negative colour film and better preserve the natural colours, aided by a colour rendering index (CRI) of 95+. It's a far more efficient way to digitise images than traditional film scanning.

EISA Photo Software 2026-2027

Excire Foto 2027

Excire Foto 2027 demonstrates how AI can make managing large photo libraries both faster and more intuitive, while keeping photographers fully in control of their data. Running entirely on the local computer without cloud processing or subscriptions, it combines privacy with powerful content recognition. Features such as intelligent text recognition, an integrated world map, a visual timeline and a refined interface significantly accelerate image retrieval and organization. Smart culling and evaluation tools further streamline the workflow, helping users identify and select their best photographs with remarkable efficiency. It's an outstanding solution for enthusiasts and professionals seeking intelligent, secure and highly effective digital asset management.



EISA AWARD Best Product 2026-2027
PHOTO & VIDEO SMARTPHONE
OPPO Find X9 Ultra

EISA Photo & Video Smartphone 2026-2027

OPPO Find X9 Ultra

OPPO's Find X9 Ultra raises the bar for smartphone photography with its uncompromising approach. An innovative camera system, developed in collaboration with Hasselblad, offers a 14mm–230mm focal length range for outstanding versatility, while the 230mm telephoto lens opens new creative possibilities for mobile photography – adding the optional teleconverter extends focal length to an exceptional 300mm. Thanks to this flexibility, plus intelligent shooting and image processing technologies, OPPO's flagship model is a competitor to super-zoom cameras. For photographers seeking the ultimate range, image quality and creative freedom in a smartphone, this is the place to look.

HI-FI EXPERT GROUP

EISA Floorstanding Loudspeakers 2026-2027
Paradigm Premier 820F V2

EISA Premium Floorstanding Loudspeakers 2026-2027
Radiant Acoustics Clarity 66

EISA High-End Floorstanding Loudspeakers 2026-2027
Wilson Audio Sabrina V

EISA Standmount Loudspeakers 2026-2027
Triangle Solstice 3

EISA High-End Standmount Loudspeakers 2026-2027
JBL Summit AMA

EISA Premium Standmount Loudspeakers 2026-2027
Arendal Sound 1610 Bookshelf 8

EISA Compact Loudspeakers 2026-2027
DALI KUPID

EISA Wireless Bookshelf Loudspeakers 2026-2027
Cambridge Audio L/R X

EISA Wireless Loudspeakers 2026-2027
Denon Home 200/400/600

EISA Loudspeaker Series 2026-2027
DALI SONIK
(shared with Home Theatre & Vision Expert Group)

EISA Premium Subwoofer 2026-2027
DALI SUB V-16 F

EISA Hi-Fi Compact Subwoofer 2026-2027
SVS 3000 Micro R|Evolution

EISA Lifestyle Music System 2026-2027
DALI VEGA
(shared with Home Theatre & Vision Expert Group)

EISA All-in-One System 2026-2027
Primare Allt-i-Ett
(shared with Home Theatre & Vision Expert Group)

EISA Tube Amplifier 2026-2027
Fezz Titania MK2

EISA Best Value Integrated Amplifier 2026-2027
NAD C 3030

EISA Integrated Amplifier 2026-2027
Musical Fidelity M6xi

EISA Premium Integrated Amplifier 2026-2027
MOON 371

EISA Best Value Streaming Amplifier 2026-2027
Pro-Ject Uni Box S3

EISA Multi-Room Amplifier 2026-2027
Bluesound POWERNODE
(shared with Home Theatre & Vision)

EISA Amplifier 2026-2027
Hegel H200

EISA Streaming Digital Amplifier 2026-2027
Lyngdorf TDAI-2210

EISA Smart Amplifier 2026-2027
NAD M33 V2

EISA Best Value DAC 2026-2027
LAiV Harmony µDAC

EISA DAC 2026-2027
Eversolo DAC-Z10

EISA Streamer 2026-2027
Volumio Primo Plus

EISA Digital Player 2026-2027
Eversolo T8

EISA Phono Cartridge 2026-2027
Dynavector ASKA-L

EISA Turntable 2026-2027
Pro-Ject Debut Reference 10

EISA Premium Turntable 2026-2027
Thorens TD 404 DD

EISA High-End Turntable 2026-2027
SME Model 35

EISA Phono Preamplifier 2026-2027
Pro-Ject Tube Box S3 B

EISA Gaming Headset 2026-2027
ASUS ROG Kithara
(shared with Mobile Devices Expert Group)

EISA Wireless Gaming Headset 2026-2027
Audeze Maxwell 2 ANC
(shared with Mobile Devices Expert Group)

EISA Over-ear Headphones 2026-2027
Loewe leo
(shared with Mobile Devices Expert Group)

EISA Premium Soundbar 2026-2027
CANVAS HiFi, CANVAS L
(shared with Home Theatre & Vision Expert Group)

EISA Accessory 2026-2027
Pro-Ject Wireless Box E

HOME THEATRE & VISION EXPERT GROUP

EISA Best Buy OLED TV 2026-2027
Philips 55OLED811

EISA Gaming TV 2026-2027
Hisense 65U7S Pro

EISA Premium OLED TV 2026-2027
Philips 65OLED+ 951

EISA Premium Mini LED TV 2026-2027
TCL 75C8L

EISA Giant TV 2026-2027
Hisense 100UR8S

EISA Statement TV 2026-2027
TCL 98X11L

EISA Best Buy RGB LED TV 2026-2027
Hisense 65UR9S

EISA Premium RGB LED TV 2026-2027
TCL 85RM9L

EISA Best Buy Mini LED TV 2026-2027
TCL 65C7L

EISA Lifestyle TV 2026-2027
Samsung 65S99H

EISA Home Theatre RGB LED TV 2026-2027
Sony K-75XR95M2 BRAVIA 9 II

EISA Premium HT Projector 2026-2027
XGIMI TITAN Noir Ultra Max

EISA Premium Smart Projector 2026-2027
Hisense XR10

EISA Best Buy UST Projector 2026-2027
Hisense PT1

EISA Best Buy Soundbar 2026-2027
Hisense AX5140Q

EISA Soundbar 2026-2027
TCL A65K

EISA Streaming Soundbar 2026-2027
Bluesound PULSE CINEMA & PULSE FLEX

EISA Wireless HT Audio System 2026-2027
TCL Z100 & Z100-SW

EISA Home Theatre Soundbar 2026-2027
Yamaha TRUE X SURROUND 90A

EISA Immersive Audio System 2026-2027
Focal Mu-so Hekla

EISA Lifestyle Music System 2026-2027
DALI VEGA
(shared with Hi-Fi Expert Group)

EISA All-in-One System 2026-2027
Primare Allt-i-Ett
(shared with Hi-Fi Expert Group)

EISA Premium Soundbar 2026-2027
CANVAS HiFi, CANVAS L
(shared with Hi-Fi Expert Group)

EISA Subwoofer 2026-2027
SVS SB-3000 R|Evolution

EISA On Wall Subwoofer 2026-2027
Perlisten D3is

EISA Best Buy Subwoofer 2026-2027
Argon Audio BERLIN SUB 10

EISA AV Receiver 2026-2027
Denon AVR-X2900H DAB
(USA: Denon AVR-X2900H)

EISA Premium AV Preamplifier 2026-2027
Marantz AV 20

EISA Multi-Room Amplifier 2026-2027
Bluesound POWERNODE
(shared with Hi-Fi Expert Group)

EISA Media Player 2026-2027
R_volution PlayerPro 8K TV

EISA UHD Blu-ray Player Upgrade 2026-2027
R_volution Chassis DIY-X700

EISA Loudspeaker Series 2026-2027
DALI SONIK
(shared with Hi-Fi Expert Group)

MOBILE DEVICES EXPERT GROUP

EISA Smartphone 2026-2027
Xiaomi 17T Pro

EISA Foldable Smartphone 2026-2027
HONOR Magic V6

EISA Photo & Video Smartphone 2026-2027
OPPO Find X9 Ultra
(shared with Photography Expert Group)

EISA AI Smartphone 2026-2027
Samsung Galaxy S26 Ultra

EISA Over-ear Headphones 2026-2027
Loewe leo
(shared with Hi-Fi Expert Group)

EISA In-ear Headphones 2026-2027
Samsung Galaxy Buds4 Pro

EISA Portable Loudspeaker 2026-2027
JBL Xtreme 5

EISA Gaming Headset 2026-2027
ASUS ROG Kithara
(shared with Hi-Fi Expert Group)

EISA Wireless Gaming Headset 2026-2027
Audeze Maxwell 2 ANC
(shared with Hi-Fi Expert Group)

IN-CAR ELECTRONICS EXPERT GROUP

EISA In-Car Head Unit 2026-2027
Pioneer SPH-EVO109DAB

EISA In-Car Sound Processor 2026-2027
HELIX NEXT DSP ULTRA XT

EISA In-Car DSP Software 2026-2027
ETON DSP Control Center

EISA In-Car DSP Amplifier 2026-2027
ESX VE1000.6SP

EISA In-Car Micro Amplifier 2026-2027
Musway M4nano

EISA In-Car Speaker System 2026-2027
Ground Zero GZ Reference K-165/M-80/T-26

EISA In-Car Subwoofer 2026-2027
Morel Ultimo Pro 104D

EISA In-Car High-End Component 2026-2027
BRAX MATRIX ML28 PRO / ML80 PRO / ML165 PRO

EISA In-Car Integration 2026-2027
Phoenix Gold ZD Series

EISA In-Car OEM Premium Audio System 2026-2027
Bowers & Wilkins Diamond Surround Sound System on BMW 7 Series MY2026

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Left: Podium legends Katie Wooding (centre), Chris Gavin (right) and Fujifilm UK's Carl Hare (left)

Below top: Media passes meant the participants could get great access to the track

Below centre: Access to the garage was handy for detail shots of cars

Below bottom: Carl brought along lots of Fujifilm bodies and lenses for Chris and Katie to try

Motorsports fun with Fujifilm School

The Fujfilm School recently organised a motosports photography workshop at Thruxton. How did it go?

Fujifilm School is the educational arm of the company, dedicated to offering something for every photographer – wherever they are on their photographic journey. It offers a mix of beginner courses and photography workshops, a good example being the Introduction to Motorsports Photography Workshop at the famous Thruxton circuit on August 25th.

The workshop was led by Carl Hare, a Fujifilm UK product specialist and highly experienced photographer who's as adept at travel, studio portraiture and landscapes as he is at motorsports.

The workshops have small group sizes, which allows participants to get a lot of feedback and one-to-one advice. There were two participants on this workshop, Chris Gavin and Katie Wooding. Chris and Katie are experienced Fujifilm users: as well as general motorsport events, Chris enjoys shooting classic car events and other genres, while Katie focusses on sports and action (and also shoots motorsports and other subjects on film). Carl brought along all the cameras, lenses and other equipment that Katie and Chris needed, which is typical of Fujifilm School workshops. You just turn up!

A varied day out

Thruxton is one of the fastest circuits on the UK, and Chris and Katie got to photograph a 'track day' rather than a race. Car owners turned up with a very wide range of vehicles.

Before hitting the track, Carl shared his best tips for motorsports shooting, including the tricky technique of panning (see box), and suggested some alternative approaches, such as shooting cars through gaps in the safety fencing. Chris and Katie were given media passes, so they were able to shoot from some great spots on the circuit.

As well as the track sessions, Chris and Katie got access to the pits/garages, enabling some interesting shots of the drivers, mechanics and details of the cars. As you can see the day was a great success – Deputy Editor Geoff Harris also went along. 'I was really impressed by Carl's passion and teaching skills, and both Chris and Katie took some fantastic shots!'

Fujifilm School has a full calendar of workshops, photowalks, courses and holidays running throughout the year and across the UK. For more information, please see www.fujifilm-houseofphotography.com/fujifilm-school

Chris & Katie's favourite shots

© CHRIS GAVIN

© KATIE WOODING

© CHRIS GAVIN

© KATIE WOODING

© KATIE WOODING

© CHRIS GAVIN

© KATIE WOODING

CARL HARE'S TIPS FOR BETTER MOTORSPORT SHOTS

1 The shutter speeds you choose will vary greatly, depending on the angle of the vehicle and the direction of travel. A head-on shot, where the wheels aren't visible, can be taken at a much faster shutter speed than a side-on shot where we want to show the vehicle in motion. 1/60th to 1/250th sec is ideal for panning, and will show some blur.

2 For fast cars, the best focussing mode is AF-C or Continuous Focus. Think carefully about where you want the camera to focus, too – you've got the choice of Single Point and AF-C (mainly used for panning) or Wide Tracking, when cars are smaller in the frame and you're further away.

3 Allow the car some space to move to or from. Give your image more room at the front or rear of the vehicle to replicate speed and space. See www.fujifilm-school.com for more tips!

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With its short telephoto view, this lens is ideal for portraits
Fujifilm X-E5, 1/4000sec at f/1.8, ISO 125

Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO

This short telephoto for APS-C promises sharp results, soft backgrounds and a light load, all for £319. **Angela Nicholson** puts it to the test on the 40MP Fujifilm X-E5

Viltrox's EVO range sits between the company's high end Pro series and its more affordable Air lenses. There are currently six EVO lenses with focal lengths running from 26mm to 90mm. Four of them are for full-frame cameras, while the Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO and AF 90mm F2.2 EVO are designed for APS-C models.

The two APS-C lenses are available in Fujifilm X, Sony E and Nikon Z mounts. With the 1.5x focal length magnification factor of these cameras, the 75mm produces a view equivalent to a 112.5mm lens on a full-frame camera. That puts it into short telephoto territory, making it useful for picking out details and more distant subjects.

Combine that focal length with the f/1.8 maximum aperture, and there's plenty of scope for isolating a subject against a soft background. The large aperture also enables relatively fast shutter speeds when light levels fall. At £319, the Viltrox looks attractively priced too, especially for Fujifilm photographers looking for a fairly compact telephoto prime.

Features

The Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO is constructed from 11 elements in nine groups, including two ED (Extra low Dispersion) elements and two HR (High Refractive index) elements. These specialist optics are

Sharpness is impressive even at maximum aperture
Fujifilm X-E5, 1/2900sec at f/1.8, ISO 125

designed to reduce aberrations while helping to keep the lens relatively compact.

Its aperture range runs from f/1.8 to f/16, with a nine-blade diaphragm forming the iris. The closest focusing distance is 0.74m and the maximum reproduction ratio is 0.12x. That means it isn't a macro lens, but it can get close enough for flowers, details and other small subjects while still throwing the background well out of focus.

As the focusing is internal, the barrel doesn't change length as the focus distance shifts. A stepping motor, or STM, drives the focusing group and there's a USB-C port for firmware updates.

Interestingly, there are some differences between the mount options. The Sony E and Nikon Z versions have an Fn button, an AF/MF switch and an aperture click switch. But none of these controls are present on the Fujifilm X version.

Diffuse flare can impart a summery feel to images
Fujifilm X-E5, 1/2400sec at f/1.8, ISO 125

I can understand why the AF/MF switch and Fn button might be omitted, as almost all Fujifilm cameras have focus mode switches on the body, and only a few XF lenses employ function buttons. But the lack of an aperture click switch is more puzzling. That control is entirely within the lens, so it seems a strange omission.

Build and Handling

At 69mm in diameter and 76mm in length, the Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO is quite compact for a short telephoto lens with an f/1.8 aperture. At 325g, it also feels light and reasonably well balanced on the Fujifilm X-E5.

If you're used to shooting the X-E5 with the tiny XF 23mm f/2.8 R WR kit lens, it takes a little getting used to, but it's hardly a burden. For context, Fujifilm's XF 80mm F2.8 R LM OIS WR Macro weighs 750g and measures 80 x 130mm. Of course, that Fujifilm optic offers 1:1 macro capability, but the comparison helps put the Viltrox's size into perspective.

As I alluded to earlier, the Fujifilm version of the Viltrox lens has a simple control layout, with an aperture ring near the camera body and a broad manual focus ring further forward.

As there's no click switch, the aperture ring is permanently 'clicked'. As a photographer, I'm perfectly happy with that, and I like the subtle feedback from the clicks. The ring also moves with a nice degree of resistance. But videographers may feel differently, as there's no option to make smooth and silent aperture adjustments while recording.

Also, there isn't an aperture ring lock, and the gap between f/16 and the A position isn't particularly large. Nevertheless, I found it pretty easy to tell when I'd rotated the ring too far.

The manual focus ring has a similarly high-quality feel and smooth action. It's tight enough not to move readily by accident, but loose enough that I can rotate it with a little pressure from one finger.

With Focus Check activated on the X-E5, the area under the AF point magnifies quickly when the ring is rotated in manual focus mode. If AF+MF is also switched on, the same thing happens in

Out-of-focus backgrounds are rendered pleasantly
Fujifilm X-E5, 1/2900sec at f/1.8, ISO 64

single AF mode when the shutter button is held down and the focus ring is turned. That can be handy when you're trying to focus through moving foliage, or on those rare occasions when the focus isn't quite where you want it.

Viltrox is fairly vague about weather resistance. There's a rubber seal around the mount and the front element has a coating to repel water droplets, dirt and fingerprints. But there's no mention of seals around the moving parts.

Autofocus

The Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO's autofocusing is generally fast and accurate. There are faster focusing lenses available, but it responds well enough for a wide range of everyday subjects.

I was able to get a few sharp images of insects investigating flowers, for example, which is pretty good going. They can move quickly and unpredictably, so it was encouraging to see the lens keeping up on several occasions. It took rowers powering along a river in its stride too.

While the Viltrox lens doesn't focus in complete silence, it's very quiet. I can hear a few subtle sounds as the internal elements move, but there's no obvious buzz or whir from the motor.

For relatively static subjects, the focusing gives little cause for concern.

Image quality

The Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO produces very impressive sharpness, even at f/1.8. That's good news because there's little point in buying a fast prime if you need to close the aperture before getting the image quality you want.

I'd be perfectly happy to use f/1.8 whenever the light level or the desired depth of field calls for it. That's especially encouraging given that the 40.4MP sensor in the Fujifilm X-E5 (and several other models) is quite demanding of a lens.

Sharpness remains strong as the aperture is closed down. Inevitably, diffraction causes a slight drop at f/16, but it isn't something I'd worry about in normal use.

I hunted around my images for chromatic aberration and was unable to find any significant problems as those exotic elements I mentioned earlier ensure coloured fringing is very well controlled.

Curvilinear distortion isn't an issue either and straight lines look nice and straight. That means I wouldn't think twice about using the Viltrox for subjects containing strong geometric shapes.

Vignetting, however, is more noticeable. There's fairly obvious corner shading at f/1.8 and it remains visible as the aperture is closed, disappearing at around f/5.6.

Depending upon the subject, it can go unnoticed and it may even help draw attention towards the centre of the frame. If it doesn't suit the image, it's easy to correct. I find taking Adobe Camera Raw's Vignette slider to around +7 delivers natural looking results.

When a strong light source such as the sun is included in the frame, there can be some flare, but I find it fairly forgivable. It usually appears as a diffuse glow rather than harsh hot spots or strange artefacts. In many cases, it helps impart a summer vibe.

The Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO also produces generally attractive bokeh. At f/1.8, small out of focus highlights look good, although, as is often the case, they become more cat's eye shaped towards the edges and corners. I don't find that especially distracting and overall, the out-of-focus areas are rendered pleasantly. AP

Verdict

There's quite a lot to like about the Viltrox AF 75mm F1.8 EVO. At £319, it's an affordable way to add a short telephoto prime to a Fujifilm X, Sony E or Nikon Z kit, while its 325g weight means you're unlikely to question whether it's worth carrying.

Its focal length won't suit every subject, but it's useful when you want to pick out details, shoot a portrait or separate a subject from its surroundings. The f/1.8 aperture helps here too, producing attractive background blur while also giving more scope for faster shutter speeds when the light level falls.

Most importantly, the lens produces very sharp images, even at f/1.8. Chromatic aberration and distortion are also controlled very well. There is obvious vignetting at the widest apertures, but it's straightforward to correct. I also find the autofocus fast and accurate.

My main gripe concerns the Fujifilm version rather than the optics. It seems odd that it misses out on the aperture click switch found on the Nikon and Sony versions. As a stills photographer, I wouldn't think twice about the permanently clicked ring, but videographers may not like it.

Overall, though, this is a nicely sized lens that delivers strong results without making too much of a dent in your bank balance or camera bag.

Data file

Price: £319
Filter Diameter: 58mm
Lens Elements: 11
Groups: 9
Diaphragm blades: 9
Aperture: f/1.8 - f/16
Minimum focus: 0.74m
Length: 76mm
Diameter: 69mm
Weight: 325g
Lens Mounts: Fujifilm X, Sony E, Nikon Z
Included accessories: Caps, hood, pouch

Amateur Photographer Recommended ★★★★½

Flash
The built-in flash can be triggered on and off using the sliding switch on the camera's front. It's powered by a supplied AAA battery

Three colours
The PURE35 is available in three colourways – Black Leather, Green Leather, Violet Leather (though it's not actually leather, just textured plastic)

Fixed, wide lens
The lens on the PURE35 is a 31mm, single-element optic, with a fixed focusing range of 1m to infinity

Optical viewfinder
The simple optical viewfinder at the top provides 70% coverage of the lens' field of view

PURE35

Distributed by Analogue Wonderland, the Pure35 is an ultra-streamlined and ultra-cheap film camera for those who want to get back to basics. Jon Stapley took it on a walk for our review

At a glance

£39.90
with two rolls of 35mm film

- Exclusively available from Analogue Wonderland
- Point-and-shoot 35mm film camera
- 31mm f/9 fixed-focus lens
- Shutter speed 1/125sec
- Built-in flash with manual trigger
- Optical viewfinder with 70% coverage

Pure Vibe. So goes one of many taglines for the new Pure35, a point-and-shoot 35mm film camera that's about as stripped-back as a camera of its type can possibly get. Some manufacturers attempt to differentiate their point-and-shoots from the pack by adding little bells and whistles, like the Kodak Snapic A1's automatic film wind-on mechanism, or the panoramic view of the Reto Pano.

Not so here. This is, as the name implies, as pure a film point-and-shoot as you're going to get. The Pure35 is an all-manual plastic box, with its settings completely fixed, save for a flash that can be toggled on and off. Exclusively distributed in the UK by film specialists Analogue Wonderland, at an asking price of £39.90 with two rolls of film included, it's one of the cheapest routes into analogue photography I can think of at the moment.

Clearly, Analogue Wonderland is hoping that this ultra-affordable and easy-to-use camera might tempt a few new users into shooting film. Will it? Let's take a look.

Classic design

I like the look of the Pure35. It's an all-plastic affair, naturally, but it's well sized and easy to grip with one hand. You have your choice of three natty colour trims – Violet Leather, Green Leather and Black Leather. The term 'Leather' here merely refers to the leather-like texturing of the coloured panel on the front – there's no actual leather used.

The lens is a fixed-focus 31mm optic, sticking out of the front and surrounded by a ridged ring that gestures at the idea of an aperture ring, but does not turn. No need, since the aperture is fixed at f/9. Shutter speed, meanwhile, is set to the point-and-shoot standard of 1/125sec. A sliding switch on the front activates the flash, which provides a potent burst of illumination when needed.

The shutter button on the top – in a colour to match the faux-leather trim – is quite exposed, to the point where I would recommend not winding the camera on if you plan to put it in a bag, since it'd be all too easy to knock and accidentally capture a very dark image of a bag's inner lining. Note how I'm using the conditional tense to avoid the implication that I did exactly this. It's not working, is it?

The small viewfinder is about what you'd expect for a camera

of this type – a little cramped, but adequate for composition – and there's a lug on the side to attach the supplied wrist strap. Film is easy to load, with dual take-up spools to ensure it catches.

So, it's not the most exciting camera you've ever seen in your life. But the Pure35 certainly achieves its stated goal of being a 'pure' shooting experience. As I strolled from location to location, camera held lightly in one hand, I had nothing to think about by raising the camera to the eye and grabbing the shot. Bliss. Zenlike. Pure vibe.

Black & white images have a retro feel

Image quality

I'll admit I was caught a little off guard by the look of my scans from the Pure35. The plastic lens on the front was obviously never going to be razor sharp, but at the edges it is extremely soft, to the point where the corners of images have such pronounced blur that images have almost a dreamlike vignette to them.

I suspect this was why I ended up significantly preferring my B&W images to my colour ones. In monochrome, the severely soft corners enhanced the retro look, imbuing images with that sought-after old-school vibe – whereas in colour, it often just looked a bit messy.

Shooting into the light can also be a bit fraught – the lens is very susceptible to flare, producing pronounced circular, eye-of-Sauron-style artefacts that could potentially work quite well in some contexts, but aren't to my taste.

Still, the Pure35 is just like any film camera, in that you have to get used to it – a piece of advice I give to anyone starting on their film journey is that you need to run a roll through your camera, and view the scans, before you shoot anything important. I already feel that I have a stronger sense of how to use the Pure35, and how not to, and I'm looking forward to spending some more time with it.

And on that point, one final note. I can't believe I'm saying this, but seriously – watch your fingers. I've used a lot of analogue point-and-shoots in my time, and for whatever reason, I ended up with more encroaching fingers in my Pure35 shots than any other. AP

The single-element plastic lens gives very soft results towards the edges of the frame

Verdict

The Pure35's real trump card is its price. Just £39.90, with two rolls of film packaged in, is insanely good for a decent point-and-shoot camera from a reputable brand. I can't think of many other ways to spend that little on getting started with film photography, and for that reason, if you're someone thinking about dipping a toe into film for the first time (or you're buying a present for that person), this is basically a risk-free way to do it. It's a long way from perfect, and if you take to shooting film you'll likely outgrow it quickly. But at this price – who cares?

Amateur Photographer Recommended ★★★★½

Patent Etui

John Wade unfolds a couple of slimline beauties

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Red Patent Etui and a blue Pocket Dalco name variant of the Etui that has faded to more like green over the years

The French word étui means a case for holding small objects. When the word found its way into the German language and applied to cameras it became associated with slim and extra-compact designs. Which sums up the Patent Etui perfectly.

Made by Kamera-Werkstätten Guthe and Thorsch, more usually known simply as KW, it was advertised as 'a real revolution... the thinnest and lightest of all cameras'. When folded, the body width is an ultra-slim 3.5cm. Then, opening the camera calls into action a fold-down bed incorporating an unusual triangular bracing structure. As the lens is pulled forward along rails to click into position at the end of the bed, everything is locked into an extremely rigid shooting position with the lens focus set at infinity. Releasing a small catch on one side of the bed and turning a milled wheel on the other side activates a hidden rack and pinion mechanism which advances the lens to focus down to 1.5m. Some models also incorporate a double extension facility to further advance the lens to approximately twice the distance.

The cameras were sold in colours that included black, grey, brown, red and blue covering with matching bellows. They were available with a variety of lenses and shutters. Both cameras shown here sport Tessar 10.5cm f/4.5 lenses in Compur shutters speeded 1-1/250sec. They shoot 6.5x9cm images on plates, cut film or 120 roll film used with a suitable roll film holder. A brilliant viewfinder sits on top of the lens mount and a wire-frame viewfinder folds out from the side. A larger version of the camera for 9x12cm exposures was also sold.

Rare versions of the Patent Etui can sometimes be found with the name variant Pocket Dalco, which was probably used for export purposes.

What's good Coloured versions are very collectable, still usable with a roll film holder.

What's bad Lenses can get cloudy with age, bellows might deteriorate.

The cameras fold into ultra-slim compact cases

From the rear, a hood folds out to protect and shield the focusing screen, shown with cut film holders and their blue case

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Create a compelling photography website with ISO100

Want to create a strong photographic portfolio that sequences and showcases your best work, but don't know where to start? The experts from ISO100 are here to help...

As any photographer worth their salt knows, ISO 100 is the ideal light sensitivity setting when shooting outside in bright, sunny conditions.

It also transpires that ISO100 – the online portfolio service for photographers of the same name – is exactly what's needed when seeking to sequence and showcase your best work from scratch, with the ability to upload your first 250 images for free.

ISO100 founder Elbert Alias believes that a strong portfolio is more than just a collection of good photographs. 'A portfolio is a deliberate edit that not only shows how you see the world but also illustrates why chosen pictures belong together.' He adds that while a portfolio might contain strong individual images, if sequencing is not given proper thought, it can still feel weak. Sometimes even a photograph that appears unassuming at first can be the glue that holds everything together.

Creating an online portfolio: it's all about the edit

ISO100's online portfolio app has been designed to let photographs breathe while providing viewers with clear direction. 'The photographs should lead and the design should support them; displaying work with care should not require becoming a web designer.'

Elbert makes the very valid point that most people will view your images without you around to explain; they won't know how difficult a picture was to make or why it matters – they have only your edit to hook them and reel them in.

Therefore, it's essential to showcase the right images in the right order. Thankfully for those puzzled where to begin, ISO100 allows users to gather a generous selection of shortlisted images into its portfolio editor.

Above: A bit of thought, combined with ISO100's intuitive portfolio-creation tools, can really show your photography at its best

Left: ISO100's Elbert Alias

'The work then becomes easier when you separate decisions,' says Elbert. 'Decide first what the portfolio needs to communicate and then edit for strength and relevance. Only after that should you structure the sequence, think about the cover and public presentation.'

ISO100's essential tips for your final edit

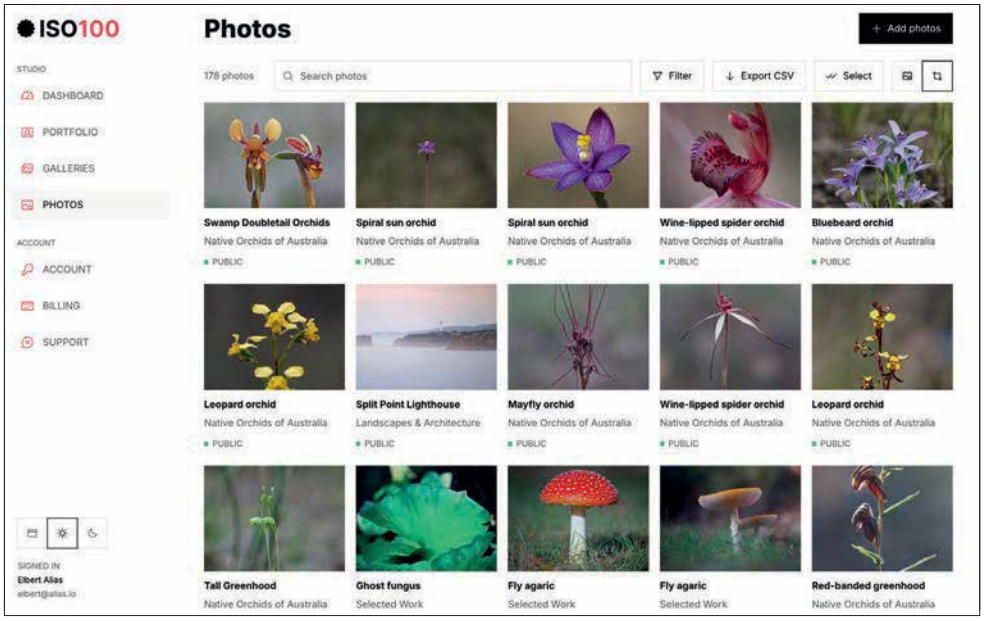
The future work test

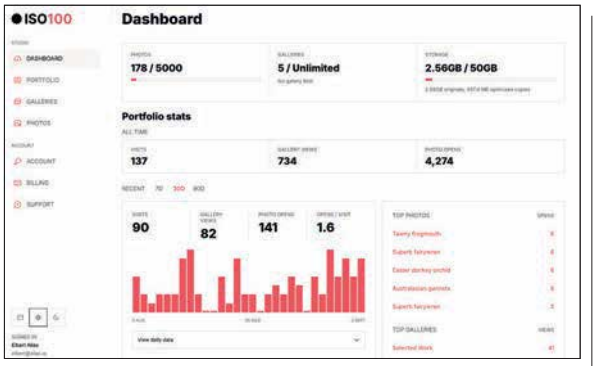
Think of one person you'd like to show your portfolio to. What should they understand about it and look to do next? If that person asked you to make more work in the same vein, would you want to?

Sometimes a favourite photo can represent a direction outgrown, while a more recent image may point to work that still interests you and is more fulfilling. If you still want to include both images, it might be worth considering two separate galleries, to avoid giving prospective clients mixed signals.

Keep an 'A' and 'B' edit

Stockpile two or three times as many images as you'll need for your portfolio. Then the 'A' edit is your shortest, defensible shortlist, while





the 'B' edit keeps alternatives close at hand.

'I still find it uncomfortable to leave a good photograph out,' Elbert admits. 'If an image is successful, it can feel like it has earned a place, even when another image is doing the same job.

But removing a photograph doesn't mean it's a failure; it gives the remaining work more space and makes the edit feel more effective and memorable. If considering two equally strong portraits, choose the one that potentially opens the door to different work.'

Top: Importing and organising images is straightforward

Above: ISO100's intuitive dashboard gives detailed information about your portfolio

Do the 'ask the neighbour' test

Imagine a portrait with the subject looking out of frame. Follow it with a second portrait looking back, not ahead, and the two may seem to meet the other's gaze. When building your photographic portfolio, take it one pairing at a time.

The first image can seem to tell one story, that the second image then enforces or flips. Some images can also act as hinges, changing subject, time or scale in a way that at first may seem arbitrary, but isn't.

Give particular care to your first five photographs: the opener establishes the visual terms, that those following should extend. A visual outlier can unwittingly make a promise that your portfolio cannot keep.

The image you end with need not be your second strongest image held back for a big finish. It may resolve an action, return to a visual motif or expand your viewer's reference points. Different endings can alter the memory of what came before.

Another way to help with sequencing is to give your images to someone else and see how they choose to arrange them. Another person's order can reveal more than their favourites – in fact, without our own memories attached to them, our strongest images can be revealed.

Find the silent notes

Try and avoid grouping too many similar images together; in a sequence of five densely packed frames, each new frame registers less. However, when every photograph demands equal attention, the sequence loses shape.

An understated picture lets the previous image settle and alters the way the next one appears – which isn't an excuse for padding. A good trick here is to try removing it and see if the sequence becomes abruptly interrupted. If it doesn't affect messaging or pacing, leave it out.

A strip of thumbnails can also help with pace and let us see immediately where our collection of images looks dense, and where the sequence needs room to breathe.

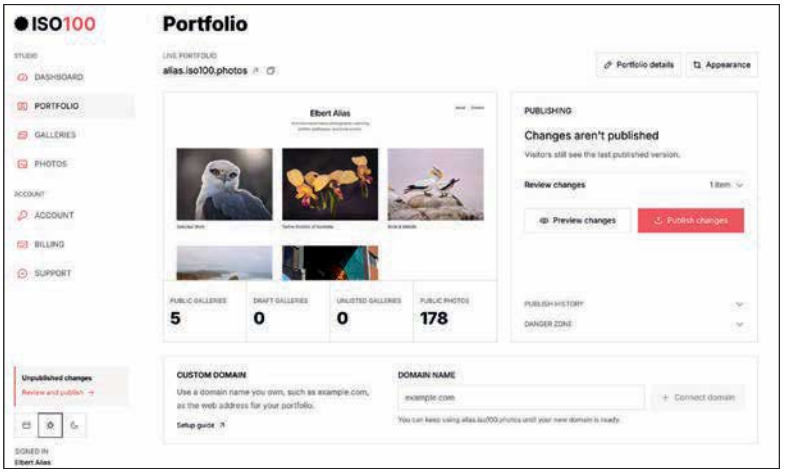
Test every way into a portfolio

A viewer may never see your home page. A gallery link can arrive in an email, application or social profile, so your portfolio must make sense as a standalone entity.

Your title, cover and opening photograph prepare the viewer for the work and should represent what follows. An edit that looks spacious on a laptop can appear crowded if viewed on a phone, so check images for both formats before publishing. Review the preview as a viewer, not an editor.

It can also be worth sending an image gallery to someone who has no prior knowledge – to test that they come away with the impression and narrative intended. Naturally nothing is ever set in stone in a digital world, so you can keep editing and swapping out images even after you publish.

So to conclude, ISO100 gives your photography a great online home, using either an ISO100 address or your own domain. To get started, go to **shorturl.at/W09eY**



Right: Once you have created a portfolio, it is easy to manage and expand it

Emerging Talent Shizza Majeed

Sponsored by Adobe

Shizza Majeed's award-winning graduate project, Babaji's Britain, explores her grandfather's sense of self and identity after 60 years in Britain. She tells Jessica Miller more...

When and why did you start taking photographs?
I started taking photographs at a very young age. I've always been a creative person. I was never particularly drawn to academic subjects at school, but as soon as the art and crafts came out, I was completely locked in.

Photography, however, was the one hobby that stayed consistent. It served as a therapeutic outlet for me. I haven't always been very good at expressing myself with words, and photography allowed me to do so in a language I understood.

What genres do you tend to work in, and what draws you to them?
I'm still very much experimenting with different genres. A lot of my work focuses on portraiture, often with a fine art element to it. My long-term projects tend to centre around photographing individuals and communities who I feel are often underrepresented in visual culture, and portraiture feels like the most direct way for me to explore those stories.

Tell us a little bit more about your photographic training?
My formal photography began by studying A-Level photography. Before that, my skills were completely self-taught through experimentation and YouTube tutorials. I wasn't thinking about photography as a career, especially growing up South Asian, where a career in the arts is usually discouraged. In college I was pushed to experiment with different styles. However, my journey was cut short due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and I never got to finish the course.

I picked up my photography journey again at Kingston University. University was more about having the time and space to develop my practice further in a safe environment, gaining a deeper insight into the industry, and building connections.

Tell us more about your graduate project
I created 'Babaji's Britain' in collaboration with my grandfather. Through a series of portraits, we explore how more than 60 years of life in Britain have shaped his sense of self and what that identity looks like today.

My grandfather migrated to Britain from Pakistan in 1962 in search of work. Originally intending to earn money and return home, he ultimately decided to stay, and East London became the place he now calls home. Over the decades, he has navigated immense change, from learning a new language, adjusting his appearance, and adapting to a completely new culture. Now in his late 80s, this series reflects where he is today.

The work plays with stereotypes and draws on experiences personal to him, contrasting elements from both British and Pakistani cultures to playfully visualise his hybrid identity.

What kind of reaction has the work received?
The series has received a much bigger reaction than I ever could have imagined.

The work went on to be shortlisted for and even win prestigious photography awards, as well as being recognised by people I admire within the industry, which was an incredible experience. But what meant the most to me was hearing from so many people who saw themselves, or their families, in my grandfather and connected with the story. It seemed to transcend age and ethnicity in a way I never expected. I think I'm still trying to take it all in even now.

What has been your biggest photographic obstacle to date?
The biggest obstacle I've faced, and something I still struggle

Right: Fish and Chips after Jummah

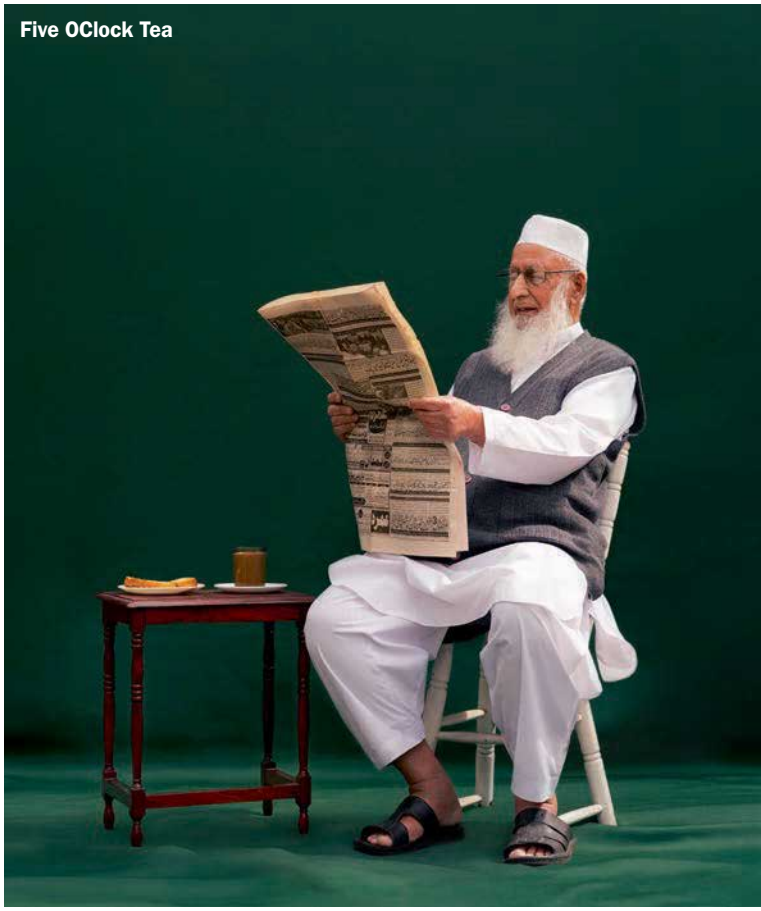
Below: A Familiar Taste

ALL IMAGES © SHIZZA MAJEED

Brown Thumbs

England vs Pakistan

The Three Lions


Five OClock Tea

with at times, is imposter syndrome. In the age of social media, it's so easy to constantly scroll and compare yourself to other people's work and achievements. It has led to huge creative blocks for me. I try to combat it by staying off social media as much as I can.

What equipment do you use?
I mainly use the Sony A7 III and Sigma 50mm f/1.4 Art lens. When I shoot on film, I use a Mamiya RB67. I also have the Ricoh GR III in rotation

What would be your dream equipment?
I would love to try a Hasselblad 500 C/M medium-format camera! It's such an iconic camera with a beautiful design. Also, the Ricoh GR IV. The Ricoh GR III is already a dream camera, so I'd love to try out the next iteration. What's one more camera to the collection!

What have been the highlights of your photography career so far?
At the top of the list would be having one of my images 'Babaji's Britain' featured on a billboard with Autograph ABP in Central London.

I have also been very fortunate to have my work shortlisted for a few photography awards, including the 40th Association of Photographers Awards, the Royal Photographic Society IPE 167, and the British Journal of Photography's Portrait of Britain Vol. 8.

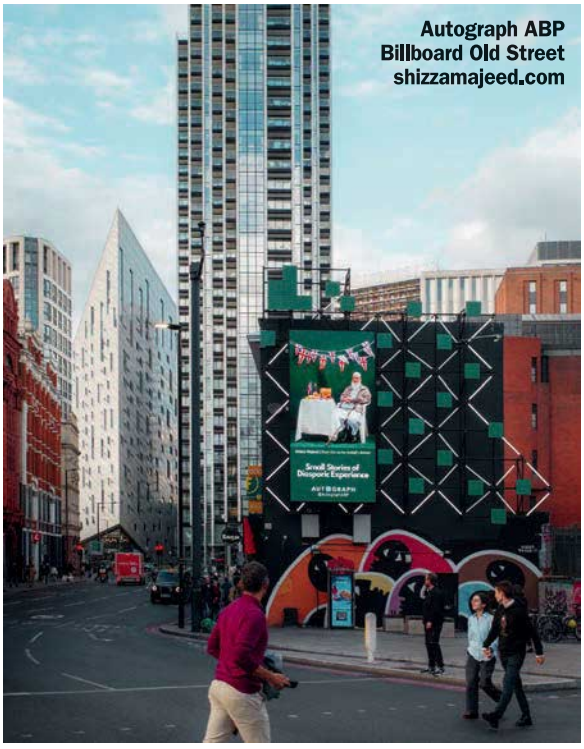
What are your hopes for your photography career in the future?
I'd love to be represented by an agency, have a solo exhibition, and publish a book. But more than anything, I just hope I'm still as excited about photography in the future as I am now, and that I continue to enjoy the process of making work.

Do you have any dream assignments?
Be commissioned to travel somewhere I've never been and make work documenting an individual/community I know nothing about. A lot of my personal projects are very centred around experiences I can relate to, but I'd love to step outside of that a bit more and challenge myself creatively and personally.

Another dream assignment, which is a little different, would be to shoot a fashion editorial commission for a major brand. It would be so cool to see the images in magazines and on billboards. I don't think you could ever get tired of seeing that!

What piece of advice would you give to other aspiring photographers?
"Outsource" your inspiration, close the social media apps and start conceptualising ideas through other mediums. I find a lot of inspiration just from everyday life — things like certain smells or words I've overheard in conversation.

Babajis Britain at Kingston University Degree Show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New anxieties

I am writing as a retiree returning to photography. I delayed my return in the mistaken belief that the digital world couldn't match the magic I experienced as a 13 year-old watching my images emerge through the dim red light in my makeshift darkroom. How wrong I was. Digital photography brings its own alchemy, and as a veteran of poorly exposed, and hence grainy, negatives, the sharpness and clarity of digital images never cease to delight me.

However, in spite of this progress, it seems that we merely exchange old anxieties for new ones, and if one were to believe certain sources, the 21 megapixels of my digital camera barely cut the mustard. Sure, a few extra megapixels might help but for my passion, street photography, it's more than enough. Some of the greatest street photographs were shot on cameras incapable of approaching the detail of even 'beginners' digital cameras today. But would Doisneau's Kiss by the Hôtel de Ville really look better in 60MPs?)

That said, I'm not completely immune to the allure of those high megapixel sirens. (Yes, it's you I'm talking about, Sony A7RV!). But, in the meantime, I'll keep saving the pennies, and the old discipline of getting it right in camera will help to make the most of my 21MPs. **Barry Moore**

Tongue in Cheek?

I was quite surprised when I saw on my iPhone the article by John Bridges. Was it meant tongue in cheek? I'm not sure if John knows that in the sound settings he can make his iPhone sound like a shutter click, if that's what turns him on.

More importantly, those of us that were avid photographers in our younger days loved our DSLR's. Unfortunately as older folks, health issues and disabilities can affect our ability to use "an old fashioned" camera vs. the ease and functionality of an iPhone. But it doesn't matter how or with what object a photo was taken. One of my favourite pictures is still the first black and white one that I took in my college photo class with a shoe box. **Jerry Garcia Jr.**

I've got it pegged

At 91 years old, I never expected to be learning a new form of photography! At this age I am no longer able to visit interesting places to take photographs. But this summer I was fascinated to watch my carer mixing chemicals in the shade of the car boot to paint on card. What on earth was she up to?

Cyanotype printing as it turned out! As I was so interested she let me try. I painted the mixture and put some pegs on top letting it sit in the light while I did another. I got up now and then to watch the colour change in the sun light. Here is one of the results, I think I've got it pegged.
Barry & Jill

Barry is learning about cyanotypes at the age of 91

Reply: Well done the pair of you. More proof that you're never too old to learn new skills!

No need for raw

Gavin Stoker's opinion piece questioning the point of shooting raw these days reflects what I believe is the state of modern digital photography. I agree jpeg is adequate for most of documentation of one's life. The popularity of Fujifilm's film simulations (and film photography) suggests people want a streamlined process from 'eye' to 'button' to 'look again'.

Rapidly rising storage prices also favour the economy of images with a smaller storage size. My one modification: use HEIF or HEIC instead of jpeg, for more editing latitude and even less storage. I do use raw (for weddings, important portraits etc) but it's much more intentional rather than the default.
I figured someone had to support Gavin's position before the raw militants took aim!
Sanjay Vijayanathan

Newsagents demise

You recently mentioned that a major chain of newsagents is planning to close some of their sites.

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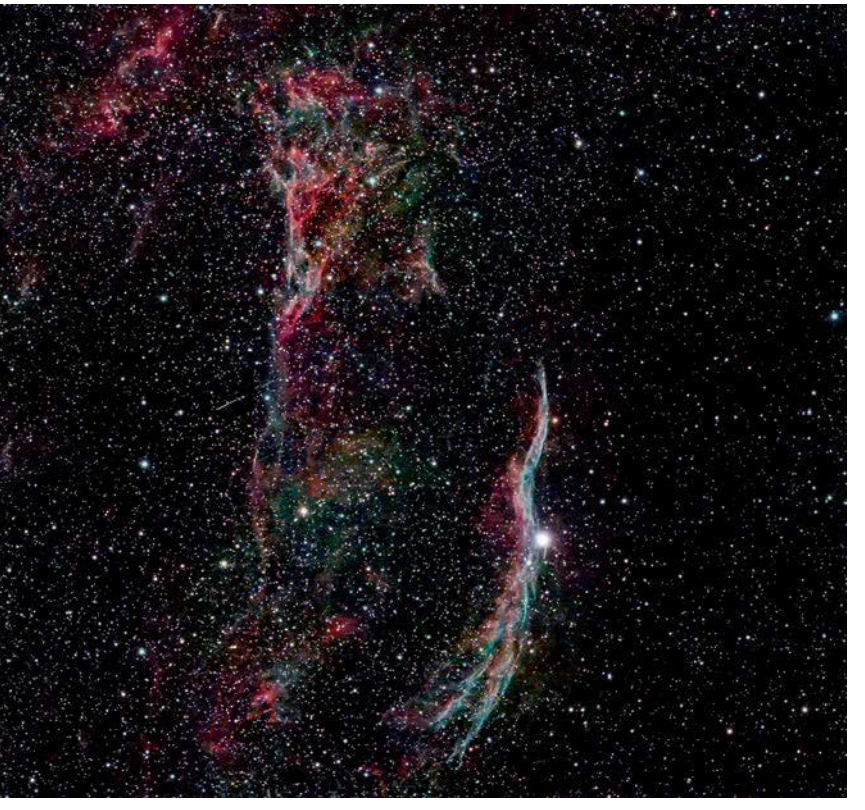
STAR LETTER

The final frontier

Growing up as a child in the 1980s, I was fascinated by the night sky and read a book "Travelers in Space and Time" by Patrick Moore, which was full of nebulae and galaxy images. I often wondered, back then, would I one day be able to visit the stars? Well that did not happen, but what did was smart telescopes. I have looked at full astro rigs on and off for years, and owned many telescopes, which never quite seemed to live up to the hype.

But I picked up a Dwarf Mini just over a month ago, and the images I am creating are so rewarding! I



never imagined I could create anything close to those old books, never mind better them with a £400 telescope.

I think this could well be the next revolution. Many folks are interested in the night sky, but they are put off by the complexity of viewing it. Now, you just need a £400 telescope, and a phone, and you get great results. Better still, if you are interested, you can learn to edit the images you capture to learn this aspect. I think the smart scope is the best invention of the 2020s. It certainly rekindled my childhood dreams of exploring space, from my garden!
Natalie Wright

Fabulous photo, Natalie! You might be right – we're starting to see some great photos taken with them

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Alas, one of my local branches now sports a 'closing down sale' sign. The demise of shops selling newspapers and magazines is one of the saddest victims of the smart phone explosion.

I'm doing my best to aid the survival of magazines by subscribing to those that reflect my interests: photography (of course), computers and jazz. I would therefore implore those regular AP readers who don't subscribe to it to do so post haste; if not, we may all forgo the pleasure of being informed, educated and entertained by this wonderful journal.
Barry Shaw

Thanks Barry! Readers looking to follow his excellent advice will find our latest offer on page 80

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Best wishes...

Nigel Atherton

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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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

● £499 ● 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 G7 X Mark III

● £819 ● 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

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.

★★★★★ **Review 9 Apr 2024**

Ricoh GR IV

● £1,199 ● ricohgr.eu

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.

★★★★½ **Reviewed 23 Sep 2025**

Sony RX100 VII

● £1,049 ● sony.co.uk

Sony has somehow crammed a 24-200mm equivalent zoom, pop-up electronic viewfinder, tilting screen, 20fps 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.

★★★★½ **Reviewed 5 Oct 2019**

Panasonic Lumix L10

● £1,299 ● panasonic.com

Panasonic's latest advanced zoom compact combines a bright 24-75mm equivalent lens with a 20MP Four Thirds sensor that uses a clever multi-aspect ratio design. You get a fine electronic viewfinder, a versatile fully articulated screen, and a long-lasting battery. Subject detection autofocus and 30fps shooting round off a really impressive package.

★★★★½ **Reviewed 14 Jul 2026**

Canon EOS R50

● £859 with 18-45mm lens ● 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.

★★★★½

Reviewed 6 Jun 2023

Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

● £749 with 14-42mm ● 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.

★★★★½

Reviewed 26 Sep 2020

Fujifilm X-T5

● £1,599 body only ● 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

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.

★★★★½

Reviewed 25 Feb 2025

Fujifilm X-T50

● £1,299 body only ● fujifilm-x.com

Fujifilm's mid-range line takes a major step up, with a 40MP sensor and in-body image stabilisation. Traditional analogue dials control exposure settings, while the firm's peerless Film Simulation colour modes get their own selection dial for the first time. The compact body is ideal for travel.

★★★★★

Reviewed 30 Jul 2024

Panasonic Lumix GH7

● £1,699 body only ● 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-E5

● £1,199 body only ● fujifilm-x.com

Fujifilm's rangefinder-style X-E line gets a trumphant reinvention, with a 40MP sensor and in-body image stabilisation. Traditional analogue dials control exposure settings, while the Film Simulation colour modes get their own selection dial. The body sports an electronic viewfinder and flip-up screen, and its compact size is ideal for travel.

★★★★★

Reviewed 16 Sep 2025

OM System OM-5 Mark II

● £1,099 body only ● explore.omsystem.com

This small, fully featured and weather-sealed mirrorless camera is both a pleasure to use, and capable of great results. Its petite body finds space for an extensive complement of controls, along with class-leading 5-axis in-body image stabilisation, yet weighs in at just 418g. On-chip phase detection enables fast, decisive autofocus.

★★★★½

Reviewed 5 Aug 2025

OM System OM-3

● £1,699 body only ● explore.omsystem.com

Don't be fooled by the retro-styled body, as the OM-3 sports many of the same high-end features as the flagship OM-1 Mark II. This includes the same 20MP stacked-CMOS sensor that offers up to 120fps shooting. Practical features such as subject detection AF are complemented by some compelling creative options, including a colour mode dial on the front.

★★★★★

Review 4 Mar 2025

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Nikon Zf

● £1,729 body only ● nikon.co.uk

This lovely-looking full-frame mirrorless model combines plenty of substance with its classic retro styling. It boasts tactile top-plate dials for shutter speed, ISO and exposure compensation while delivering lovely image quality in both JPEG and raw. There's some cutting-edge technology on board too, including impressive subject detection autofocus.

★★★★½

Reviewed 9 Jan 2024

Sony Alpha 7 V

● £2,799 body only ● 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 D850

● £2,699 body only ● nikon.co.uk

This brilliant professional all-rounder provides a winning combination of high resolution and speed. Its 45.7MP sensor produces fine results at high ISOs, and the autofocus is incredibly responsive and accurate. Build quality and handling should satisfy the most demanding of users. It's an absolutely sensational camera capable of tackling any type of subject.

★★★★★

Reviewed 21 Oct 2017

Nikon Z7II

● £1,769 body only ● nikon.co.uk

Nikon delivered a sensible update to its high-res full-frame model, with an additional SD card slot and slightly faster shooting. As before, its 45.7MP sensor gives stunning image quality, backed up by 5-axis in-body image stabilisation and fast, accurate autofocus. The viewfinder is superb, and F-mount SLR lenses can be used via the FTZ adapter.

★★★★½

Reviewed 6 Feb 2021

Nikon Z8

● £3,789 body only ● nikon.co.uk

This stunning camera takes all the best bits of Nikon's flagship Z9 and places them in a smaller, less-expensive body. Combining high resolution, rapid speed, cutting-edge autofocus and pro-level build, it's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's a stunningly capable camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed 11 Jul 2023

Canon EOS R6 Mark III

● £2,799 body only ● canon.co.uk

Based around a 32.5MP 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

Sony Alpha 7R VI

● £4,399 body only ● sony.co.uk

If you want the very best image quality available from a full-frame camera, this is it. Its 66.8MP partially stacked sensor combines superb resolution, low noise and immense dynamic range, while supporting shooting at up to 30fps and 8K video recording. It also boasts a huge, blackout-free viewfinder and a new long-lasting battery housed in its large, comfortable handgrip.

★★★★★

Reviewed 30 Jun 2026

Leica M11

● £7,299 body only ● leica-camera.com

Leica's 60MP full-frame rangefinder is a beautful anachronism – a camera type that has been obsolete for decades, yet which still remains an object of desire for many photographers. This elegant mix of the old and the modern offers triple-resolution raw recording, including 36MP and 18MP options, and vastly improved battery life. It's a really lovely camera that can deliver stunning results.

★★★★½

Reviewed 8 Mar 2022

Fujifilm GFX100S II

● £4,999 body only ● fujifilm-x.com

Fujifilm's third-generation super-high resolution camera places a 102MP medium-format sensor in a body the size of a full-frame DSLR. It gains much-improved AF, including subject recognition, while in-body stabilisation allows easy hand-held shooting. It's perfect if you need to shoot in the field without compromising image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed 20 Aug 2024

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Billingham Hadley Pro 2020

● £326 ● billingham.co.uk

The latest model in this iconic line of British-made satchel-style bags includes some well-considered updates, such as a detachable shoulder strap. It's impeccably constructed from premium materials to keep your kit protected, including Billingham's signature triple-layer canvas that's impermeable to water. It's pricey, but will last for decades.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 5 Oct 2019**

Vanguard Veo Active 42M

● £160 ● vanguardworld.co.uk

Vanguard's VEO Active backpacks are designed for hiking. This model is small enough to carry on a plane, but still has space for a camera and three lenses, plus a 13in laptop and personal items. It offers excellent protection thanks to its metal frame and padded insert.

★★★★★

Reviewed 19 Jul 2022

Tenba DNA 16 backpack

● £199 ● uk.tenba.com

This a two-section backpack lets you carry plenty of personal items alongside your camera, with its roll-top design. Uniquely, it unzips and pulls open from the front, which lets you get at your kit from above while the bag is upright. There's space for a camera and 3 or 4 lenses, plus a laptop up to 15in.

★★★★★

Reviewed 21 May 2024

Essential Film Holder Kit

● £90 ● clifforth.co.uk

Many photographers either still enjoy shooting film, or have old negatives and slides that they'd like to digitise. Probably the best way to do this is to copy them using a DSLR or mirrorless camera. This easy-to-use device holds film flat over a lightbox for copying. It gives excellent results and is much quicker than using a scanner. ★★★★★

Reviewed 29 Aug 2020

NiSi Compact Filter Kits

● £42-85 ● nisioptics.co.uk

Users of compact cameras with built-in lenses have rarely had the option to use filters creatively, so it's great to see NiSi address this with an inexpensive range of specially tailored kits. They're available for Fujifilm X100-series cameras, the Sony RX100 VI or VII, and the Ricoh GR range.

★★★★½

Reviewed 31 Oct 2020

Novo Mantis T3 Mini Travel Tripod

● £70 ● ukdigital.co.uk

This neat 27cm-tall mini tripod has two-section carbon-fibre legs that can be set to three different angles, and chunky rubber feet that unscrew to reveal ground spikes. The matched MBH-25 ball head (£60) provides impressive strength, and an optional centre column is available for £30.

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Feb 2021

Sirui Traveller X

● £109-170 ● store.sirui.com

This remarkable travel tripod manages to combine a useful 1.5m maximum height with an extremely light weight, and without compromising too much on stability. It achieves this feat by using 5-section carbon-fibre legs that employ a 'single twist lock' mechanism. It's sold in kits with several different ball heads, or a pan-and-tilt option for video.

★★★★½

Reviewed 29 Oct 2024

Benro GD3WH

● £229 ● benroeu.com

This relatively lightweight and portable geared head employs an Arca Swiss type quick release. Three large control knobs, one for each axis of movement, drive the camera directly in the corresponding direction, allowing highly accurate setting of composition. With its sturdy magnesium alloy construction, it's rated to support a 6kg load.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 26 May 2018**

Vanguard VEO 2S AM-264TR

● £90 ● vanguardworld.co.uk

This unusual monopod boasts an extended height of 1630mm, a folded height of 565mm and a maximum load capacity of 6kg. Three foldable legs at the base provide a tri-stand platform, and are linked to the four-section carbon fibre leg via a ball joint that allows smooth panning and tilting motions.

★★★★★

Reviewed 30 May 2015

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Adaptalux Studio Nature LED Macro Combo Pack

● £400 ● adaptalux.com

This clever modular LED system is perfect for lighting small subjects creatively. The pack includes a control pod with a built-in rechargeable battery, four flexible lighting arms (two white, one blue and one green), plus three diffusers and two colour filters. Always-on LED lighting makes it easy to visualise the results in real time.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 20 Sep 2022**

RØDE VideoMicro II

● £83 ● rode.com

RØDE's updated compact on-camera video microphone brings a number of welcome improvements. Along with a much-improved Helix shock-mount, it comes with cables for use with both cameras and smartphones, plus a choice of foam or furry windshields. Audio quality is a dramatic improvement over most cameras' built-in mics, too.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 20 Jun 2023**

Tenba Tools Cable Duo 4

● £20 ● uk.tenba.com

Not all handy accessories have to cost a fortune. This well-designed tech organiser pouch features a dual-compartment layout, with a shallow space on one side for cables, and a deeper one on the other for such things as battery chargers or computer mice. The simple rectangular design fits easily into a bag and the tough transparent covers make it easy to see what's inside.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 20 Sep 2022**

Peak Design Pro Tripod

● 799 ● peakdesign.com

This may well look like an insane amount of money to spend on a tripod. But for serious photographers shooting with high-end kit, it's the best tripod we've tested for a very long time. It's quick to set up, extremely stable, and will hold heavy cameras and lenses without breaking a sweat.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 22 Jul 2025**

Calibrite ColorChecker Studio

● £519 ● colourconfidence.com

Previously known as X-Rite i1 Studio, this kit enables users to adopt a completely colour-managed workflow, from capture through display to print. It allows profiling of cameras, scanners, monitors, projectors and printers, and works with both Mac and Windows computers. It's a great tool for any photographer who likes to print at home.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 19 Jan 2019**

Kase Revolution Plus Magnetic Circular Entry Kit

● £210-£500 ● kasefilters.com

These clever kits include circular polarising, 3-stop and 6-stop neutral density filters that snap magnetically onto adapters that screw into your lens. This considerably speeds up the process of using filters and encourages you to use them creatively. Kits are available in sizes from 67-112mm, with adapter rings from 49mm up.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 21 Feb 2023**

Epson Expression Photo XP970

● £249 ● epson.co.uk

An update to the XP960, which won our coveted gold award, this impressive multifunctional unit provides A3 printing ability while retaining a compact footprint. Along with a conventional USB connection, it can print over Wi-Fi, or directly from an SD card or USB stick, controlled using the excellent colour LCD touchscreen. Other useful features include an A4 scanner and double-sided document printing.

★★★★★

Biolite Charge 80 PD

● £85 ● ubioliteenergy.com

Powerbanks can be invaluable when you want to keep shooting for longer. This device houses a 20,000mAh Li-ion battery, which is capable of replenishing the average camera battery up to ten times. It can also be used to power certain cameras directly.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 10 Jul 2021**

Fujifilm Instax Mini Link 3

● £115 ● instax.co.uk

Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery, this smart little printer connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. It's small enough to slip into a coat pocket or bag, and delivers gorgeous little prints with fine detail and vivid colour.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 3 Dec 2024**

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Final Analysis

Aliz Kovacs-Zoldi considers...

Harry Keita as Delphinium Fairy, 2022 by Tim Walker

Everyone has a photography crush; mine is Tim Walker. I remember visiting his exhibition in London just before I started my degree and falling in love with the magical sets and fairytale-like images that he conjures up.

His images always felt like I was looking at the sketchbook of a children's book illustrator. Some of the images were elaborate sets with bigger than life-sized props serving as a fully finished scene. In contrast, others, like Harry Kieta as Delphinium Fairy here, were photographed in front of a plain white backdrop using far fewer props, reminiscent of a visual character study.

Harry's image is whimsical and transports the viewer instantly to the pages of a fantasy book, rather than feeling like a traditional portrait.

The longer I look, the more there is to discover. There is a tiny bee tucked among the flowers, a pink petal that reminds me of Apollo's winged shoes, as Harry appears suspended in mid-air, grasping the blue Delphinium's stalk. The delicate wings look as though they might once have belonged to a dragonfly.

The simple white room is an important part of the illusion. Walker uses an ultra-wide-angle lens to exaggerate the narrow walls, textured floor, and architectural trim, creating a skewed perspective that draws our eye toward Keita in the centre.

He plays expertly with scale and takes the illusion one step further. Rather than compositing the image digitally, he physically overlays flowers and other materials on the photographic print and photographs the resulting collage again. I love this approach because it gives the fantasy something tangible. The flowers have texture, imperfections and a more three-dimensional physical presence. Had Walker made the collage digitally the result would have felt flat.

That sense of make-believe is something I have always loved about Walker's work. I was actually quite late to discovering fantasy books. It took me a while to convince my very practical, adult brain that there was nothing wrong with reading about completely made-up worlds. Ever since the pandemic, though, fantasy has become a quintessential escape for me from the everyday.

Walker's photographs give me that same feeling of being immersed in a good fantasy book. But this image offers more than simple escapism. Harry Keita as Delphinium Fairy establishes who gets to inhabit these fantasy worlds. By portraying a Black queer man as a fairy, Walker plays with traditional ideas of masculinity and turns otherness into something joyful and spectacular. Keita looks delicate, but never weak. And there's no question whether he belongs in this space; he just is.

Walker's work is wonderfully strange, meticulously constructed and completely unmistakable. Walker has created a visual language so peculiarly his own that you would be hard-pressed to mistake one of his photographs for anyone else's.

You can see Harry as Delphinium Fairy as part of Walker's latest exhibition, a culmination of a five year long project where Walker invited a variety of activists, performers, artists and writers to be his sitters and created a world that celebrates queer activism, community and love, a place where everyone enjoys the freedom to be themselves.

Fairyland: Love and Legends in the National Portrait Gallery will open from 9 October 2026 – 7 February 2027 AP

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

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