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TRIED & TESTED

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Sony FE 400mm F4.5 GM



CONSTRUCTED IMAGES

Your best architectural shots from Amateur Photographer of the Year 2026



A black Canon printer is shown on a light-colored desk. A colorful printed image is emerging from the output tray. In the background, a green potted plant is visible near a window. The right side of the image is overlaid with a large red diagonal shape containing white text.

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Welcome



Do you ever wonder what is the point of being a photographer these days, and why you carry on? While this may seem an odd question to ask at the beginning of a magazine that's all about loving your camera, a lot of us, if we are honest, suffer from dips in motivation and morale from time to time. Maybe when we are feeling a bit 'meh' about

it all we need to remind ourselves of the many joys and benefits of photography – not only for physical and mental health, but also that it's a really worthwhile thing to do. I've been really moved and inspired by some of the great wildlife photography in this issue, for example, including the winners of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year contest on page 30. As well as being beautifully executed, these images teach us so much more about animal behaviour – I'd never given much thought to how female elephants deal with the death of a calf, for instance (don't miss Andy Rouse's stunning night shot of a black leopard on page 10 too!) And while it's easy to become cynical in an age saturated by Instagram images and bad news about the environment, the popularity of wildlife photography definitely helps to raise awareness of the importance of animal conservation. Just look at the success of the Remembering Wildlife book series, for example, or the important contribution that photo safaris make to eco-tourism. Anyway, if you enjoy this diverse and inspiring issue of *Amateur Photographer* why not subscribe? Check out our money saving Christmas offer on page 80 and get it delivered to your door.


Geoff Harris
Deputy Editor



A moving photo by Federico Veronesi. See more great wildlife photos on page 30

This issue's contributors...



Peter Dench

Peter looks at how three photographers approach minimalism. It's not just about taking long-exposure b&w shots of a pier, as you will see!



Amy Davies

Amy curates another selection of book reviews, covering dogs, 'American Girls' and rarely seen work by one of Africa's top photographers.



Jessica Miller

Jessica profiles this year's worthy winners of Wildlife Photographer of the Year, one of the world's greatest photo contests



Joshua Waller

Our online editor tests the new OM System PEN, which features one-handed operation, in-body stabilisation and weather sealing.



Andy Westlake

Our testing tsar checks out Sigma's latest 20-60mm full-frame zoom lens and an affordable, stylish on-camera flash from Viltrox



John Wade

John, our resident vintage camera expert, takes a trip down memory lane as he shares a picture of Exeter taken in 1900.



Need to justify the upgrade?

Selling makes
the maths work





Our cover photo by Audun Rikardsen is one of the winners from the 2026 Wildlife Photographer of the Year. See more on page 30

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LOVE YOUR CAMERA

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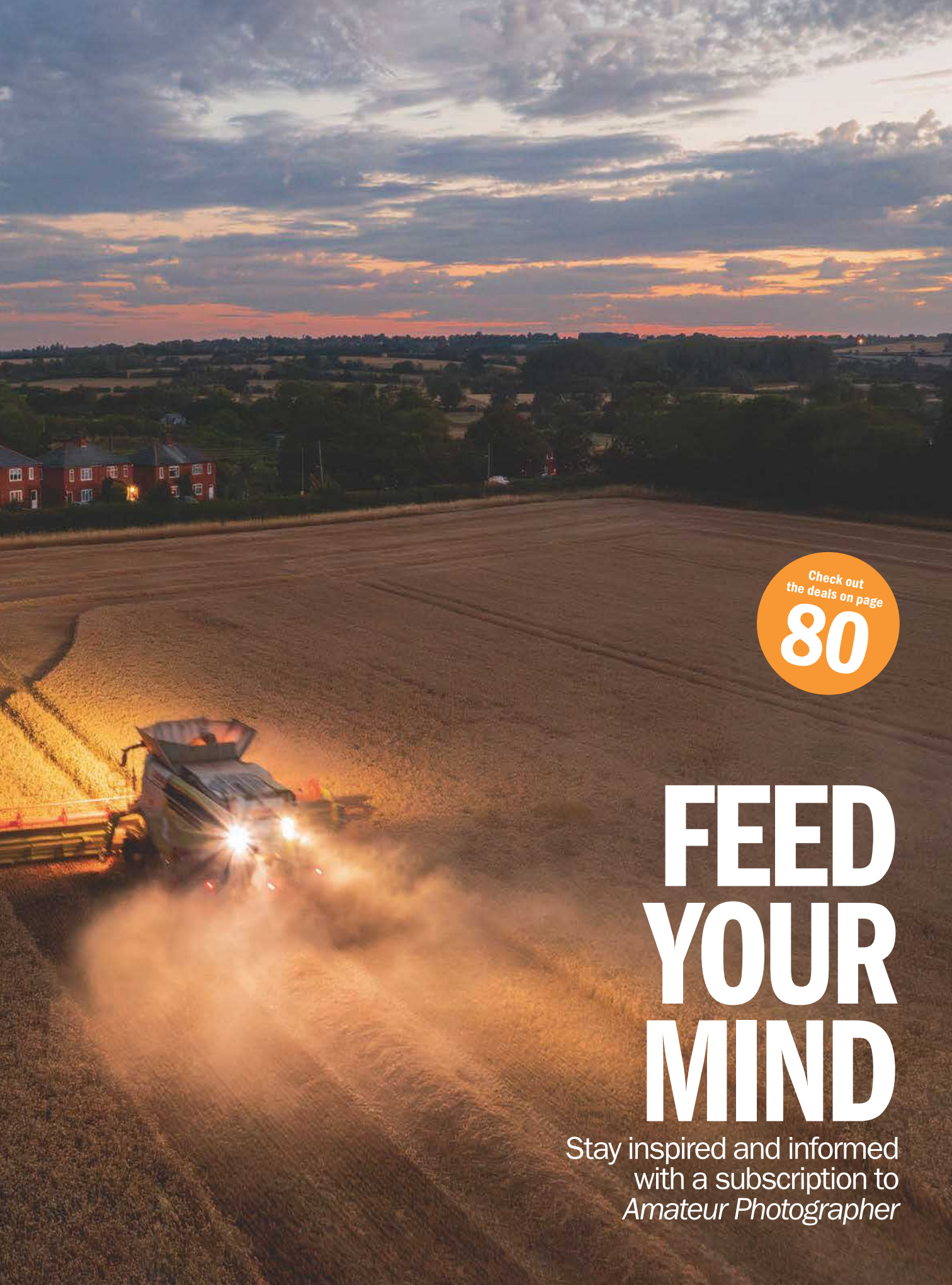
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we use it we'll send you an Amateur Photographer
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Harvest at dusk: racing the light to feed the nation, by Sean Goodhart.
This atmospheric drone shot is part of Sean's long-term project documenting the agriculture business. A slow shutter speed was chosen to capture the motion
DJI Mavic 2 Pro with Hasselblad L1D-20c camera, 1/4sec at f/9, ISO 1600



Check out
the deals on page

80

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Amateur Photographer

What's new



The new Sigma 50-120mm F2.8 DC OS lens

Tiny f/2.8 telezoom lens and more from Sigma

Sigma has announced two new lenses, starting with the 50-120mm F2.8 DC OS zoom for Sony E, Fujifilm X and Canon RF mounts. It slots into the firm's Contemporary line-up, joining the Sigma 10-18mm F2.8 DC DN and 18-50mm F2.8 DC DN lenses, both of which we've (very positively) reviewed.

Sigma claims the 50-120mm F2.8 DC OS lens is 'the definitive large aperture zoom for APS-C cameras,' covering a 35mm equivalent of 75-180mm. It's relatively light and portable too, measuring 99mm long and weighing 390g. Featuring a dust and splash-resistant lens

body, the optical construction comprises 18 elements in 13 groups, including one FLD glass element, three SLD glass elements and four aspherical elements. In addition to the high-speed AF, driven by a High-response Linear Actuator (HLA), optical stabilisation provides 6.5 stops of shake reduction at the wide end and 4.5 stops at the telephoto end. Focus breathing is also suppressed to facilitate video recording. The Sigma 50-120mm F2.8 DC OS goes on sale October 22nd for a competitive £699.

Zoom with a view

Next up, Sigma's 16-300mm F3.5-6.7 DC OS | Contemporary lens is now available in Nikon Z mount – it's already out there for Sony E and Fujifilm X cameras. The lens features a zoom ratio of approximately 18.8x – a first for an APS-C all-in-one zoom – which adds to its versatility for a wide range of genres. Other features include 6 stops of image stabilisation at the wide end and 4.5 stops at the telephoto end, while the mount is rubber sealed for use in a variety of environments.

Sigma adds that a control algorithm governing AF drive and optimising communication speed has been specially developed for its Nikon Z mount lenses. In addition to delivering high speed AF, the lens supports Continuous AF and in-camera aberration correction. On sale November 5th, for £599.



The Sigma 16-300mm F3.5-6.7 DC OS | Contemporary lens

Well-regarded Tamron lens now for Nikon Z

In more good news for Nikon owners, the Tamron 20-40mm F/2.8 Di III VXD lens is now available for full-frame Z-mount cameras. One of the smallest and lightest lenses in its class, this large-aperture standard zoom incorporates 12 optical elements in 11 groups, including four LD (Low Dispersion) glass elements, two GM (Glass Molded Aspherical) lenses, and one hybrid aspherical lens. Other features include a VXD linear motor which promises silent, responsive autofocus, and a nine-blade aperture for attractive bokeh effects. The lens has a moisture-resistant construction too, with a dirt-repellent fluorine coating on the front lens element. Onsale now for £614.99 (see our review of the Sony E-mount version of the lens at [shorturl.at/Gued5](https://www.amateurphotographer.com/shorturl.at/Gued5))



30th

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Forever a Snapshooter

Something of the night



© ANDY ROUSE/MONTPHOTO INTERNATIONAL NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

UK-based wildlife photographer Andy Rouse, who has appeared in Amateur Photographer numerous times over the years, has been named overall winner of the MontPhoto International Nature Photography Competition 2026 for this stunning image of a black leopard, photographed at night in Kenya. Rather than making a conventional portrait of one of Africa's most elusive predators, Andy wanted to produce something that captured the mystery and atmosphere of encountering a black leopard after dark. 'I have been working with this black leopard for a few years and wanted something different,' he explains. 'So when I saw this opportunity, taken at night with non-affecting red torchlight, I knew it was something special.' The MontPhoto International Nature Photography Competition is held in Spain and attracts nature photography from around the world. See the gallery of this year's winners at shorturl.at/Fbn17

Lomography gives us a swirl

Bokeh buffs take note – Lomography has announced the Joseph Petzval Métamorphose 35/1.8 Focus-Coupled Bokeh Control Art Lens. This manual focus lens is the newest member of Lomography's Petzval lens family – vintage-style manual glass for mirrorless cameras that creates a dreamlike swirling effect in the defocused areas of images. The strength of the distinctive bokeh effect in this latest lens can be set to seven levels, with the lowest creating only gradual softening at the edges of the frame, with distinctive 'soap bubble' bokeh textures, and the highest producing a dramatic optical-warp effect. Like other Petzval lenses, the Métamorphose supports the addition of aperture plates, which can be slotted in behind to give bokeh distinctive shapes like hearts, stars and snowflakes. The lens is suitable for video, too: its gear rings are compatible with follow focus systems, while stopless control rings allow for smooth focus and exposure transitions. The Joseph Petzval Métamorphose comprises six elements in five groups, with a 62° field of view and 67mm filter compatibility. Available in December in Canon RF, Nikon Z and Sony E mounts, it costs £479.



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A sample image from the new lens

THE BIG QUESTION

What book should all photographers read?



Mark Strevens
Road to Seeing
by Dan Winters.
Light: Science and
Magic by Fil Hunter



@steffi_shoots
The camera manual



@harvey_tomo
Homecoming by
Don McCullin



@andymcdonald_
bnwphotos
The Art of Photography
by Bruce Barnbaum



Roger Bailey
I read The Ilford Manual many years
ago. Learnt so much about
processes and many other things.



Kate Matthews
The photography storytelling
workshop by Finn Beales



Julian Slaughter
Understanding Exposure by
Bryan Peterson, it should
be compulsory reading



Samuel West Hiser
The Ongoing Moment
by Geoff Dyer



PHOTO BY CENTRAL PRESS/GETTY IMAGES

Did you know?

Mathew Brady was America's most celebrated 19th-century photographer, with portrait studios in New York City and Washington DC where he photographed presidents, politicians and public figures. His 1860 portrait of Abraham Lincoln was so influential that Lincoln himself said it helped him win the presidency. When the Civil War erupted, Brady invested his fortune in documenting it, dispatching teams of photographers to help him record the camps, battlefields and military leaders. He expected the government to buy his photos for the national archive after the war, but they were not interested, leaving Brady facing financial ruin. He died impoverished and in debt in 1896.



Back in time 1936

The Battle of Cable Street

4 October: British politician and Hitler admirer Sir Oswald Mosley inspects members of his British Union of Fascists in Royal Mint St, London, prior to a planned march through the largely Jewish East End of London. They met resistance from tens of thousands of protesters, including Jews, trade unionists, and leftists, who erected barricades and fought running battles as police tried to clear a route for the fascists. Eventually they ordered Mosley to abandon the march. The confrontation became known as the Battle Of Cable Street and is remembered as a powerful symbol of opposition to fascism, racism and antisemitism in Britain.



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photography

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David Noton's books



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How I Make Photographs
by Joel Meyerowitz



Richard Hardwick

On Being a
Photographer. It's a
small book and can
be easily read in a
few hours. It's a
transcript of
conversations
between David Hurn
and Bill Jay.



Pam Watson-Smith

On Photography by Susan Sontag
- the audiobook is great



Ray Deardorf

The Amateur Photographer's
Handbook, by Aaron Sussman -
1974 edition



Andrew Tomlinson

If you're into landscape
photography, it has to be
First Light by Joe Cornish.



Tod Bryant

Photographers on Photography
and Hold Still by Sally Mann

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and comments
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See page 6 for how
to contact us



Macro making you cross? Try Laowa's Acris

If you're in the market for a true macro lens, then you're looking for a 1:1 ratio. Chinese lens maker Laowa claims to have you covered, with what it calls the world's first full-frame 35mm f/2.8 lens with true 1:1 magnification. The Laowa Acris 35mm f/2.8 1x AF Macro APO is a wide-angle lens for full-frame cameras, available with autofocus for Sony E, Nikon Z, and Canon EF mounts, and with manual focus only for Canon RF and L mount. Other features include 13 lens elements in 10 groups, nine aperture blades for the AF version and 13 for manual focus, a 72mm filter thread, a minimum working distance of 48.6mm, macro focusing assistance and weather resistance. 'Featuring Laowa's signature Apochromatic (APO) optical design, the Acris 35mm f/2.8 virtually eliminates both chromatic aberration (CA) and colour fringing—even in high-contrast macro scenes or when shooting wide open at f/2.8,' says the company. The new lens is available now for £459.



The new Laowa Acris 35mm f/2.8 1x AF Macro APO lens



© ALESSANDRO PO

Hunter vs Hunter by Alessandro Po, Shortlisted in the Pets & Domesticated Animals category, British Photography Awards 2026

Major UK contest reveals big shortlist

The British Photography Awards (BPA) has revealed the 500 photographs shortlisted in its 2026 competition. Photographers of all levels based in the UK, and Brits further afield, were invited to enter their photography to 20 different categories. Over 40,000 photographers are now registered in the BPA community and the competition categories included Street, Documentary, Events, Fine Art, Self-Portrait, Sport, Weddings, Drone, Landscape, Land Animal and more. The winners of each category will be revealed at an event in London on November 1st – it's open to the public and tickets are available at tickets.britishphotographyawards.org.

Several Amateur Photographer contributors are amongst the shortlist, including fashion work by Amanda Akokhia, a sunrise landscape by Emily Endean and a portrait of Matty Healy (The 1975) by recently featured Emerging Talent, Neil Ferry. The judging panel included Amateur Photographer's deputy online editor Jessica Miller, so we will reveal the winners, including the People's Choice Award, when they are announced – in the meantime you can check out the 500 shortlisted photographers at: shorturl.at/9IsfN

Important notice

You may have seen recent news reports regarding the planned closure of a number of TG Jones stores, formerly WH Smith. At present, it remains unclear whether the store from which you currently purchase Amateur Photographer will be affected. To ensure you continue receiving future issues without interruption, we encourage you to consider one of the following alternative options should your local store close.

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Opinion Joshua Waller

**Add-on phone lenses are getting seriously good
– conventional lens makers take note!**

“

Once upon a time there was someone in your family, let's call him Uncle Alan, who wouldn't stop talking about the amazing deal he got on a camera with ALL the lenses, and by all the lenses, he meant the 0.7x wide-angle adapter he screwed to the front of his 18-55mm kit lens, and 3 different UV protective filters. He loves the versatility it added to his camera kit, but not the image quality.

Most people would avoid these lens adapters because they were far too cheap to be good, and adding un-branded

low-quality glass elements to the front of another lens system also added a range of additional image quality problems and distortions, and additional surfaces that were easily smudged with fingerprints.

But what if we've finally reached a point where add-on lenses are actually good enough, and perhaps even worth using on smartphones? Apart from a few Samsung phones, smartphones have rarely gone beyond 5x optical zoom (without using digital zoom), meaning they could never really compete with the long telephoto lenses available on modern cameras.

Things are changing, however, I've been using the new Vivo X500 Pro Max phone,

along with the Zeiss branded 400mm equivalent telephoto convertor. It's a 4.7x add on to the 85mm equivalent lens. (4.7x 85mm = roughly 400mm). It attaches neatly to a bayonet fitting on the case, meaning it centres properly, without the pain of screwing lenses onto things.

When combined with the 200MP sensor, the camera offers a 'lossless' 800mm equivalent (plus 1600mm, 3200mm, and even 8100mm equivalent). Each step beyond 1600mm gives a softer image, or AI enhanced images (with mixed results), but stick with 400 – 800mm equivalent and you get some really rather incredible images.

Devil in the detail

I thought I would give it a try on a wildlife shoot, and even a portrait shoot, and I was frankly blown away by the results.

In portrait images – there's a good amount of detail on the subjects face, and the background blur is something you very rarely see on a smartphone outside of artificially generated blur.

In wildlife shots, I was surprised by how much detail was captured, particularly in the eyes of a bird. Something that makes a photograph of a bird stand out, rather than leaving it looking flat and lifeless. (The same goes for portraits).

The other advantage of using these adapters with a phone, is that the camera lenses are, generally speaking, quite small, so the converters can also be relatively small. And with brands like Zeiss getting involved and putting their stamp of approval on the lenses, it really does seem like we've made a leap forwards in quality. You can see some of the images for yourself at shorturl.at/GLnV9. If, like me, you thought lens adapters were too much of a compromise in image quality, perhaps it's time to reconsider. If there is a quality adapter available and it works with your phone – then this additional reach is well worth reaching out for. I expect we'll be seeing more and more of this as new models are released, and with quality like this, it could make you reconsider the need for a big camera.

”



The quality of images taken with add-on phone lenses has really come on

Joshua Waller has been the online editor of Amateur Photographer since 2021 and has been reviewing cameras for longer than he cares to remember (since 2004, actually...)

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

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Dog Days

This charming little book is a must-buy for every canine aficionado, says **Amy Davies**

It's a given that everyone enjoys photographs of cats – the internet seems to be roughly 70% comprised of it (I'll leave it to your imagination to decide on the rest).

But what about their canine nemeses? A new collection of images by some of the world's best photographers aims to redress the balance, at least a little bit.

In this dinky little volume, there's some seriously gorgeous dog photography. If like me, you're more of a dog person than it's far more likely to float your boat than some of the (undeniably brilliant) cat photography books that have been published of late.

Included in the delightful collection are some very high-profile photographers, including Tim Flach, Gerrard Gethings, Marcel Heijnen, Martin Osborne, Dougie Wallace and Elke Vogelsang.

As a dog owner myself, I'd guess that the

majority of dogs are easier to photograph than most cats. Dogs will generally sit still and do what they're told – especially if a treat is involved. But that doesn't detract from the sublime imagery that is on display here.

Writing in the introduction, the book's editor Jilke Golbach makes the point perfectly, "If dogs have been at the centre of any medium, it is, of course photography. Iconic 20th-century photographers such as Elliott Erwitt and William Wegman pictured them in strange and familiar settings – on the streets of New York and Rome, or dressed up like people in a studio."

In the book we get a glimpse into how the best photographers out there today work with dogs. This new generation of image makers are working with a shared history of what's come before them, building on that using contemporary camera and image-making

techniques, as well as thinking carefully about animal behaviour – there's tonnes of humour, love and affection on display here.

Personally, I love the "portrait" style images, where dogs are elevated to the same status as their human counterparts (I'd probably put them even higher tbh) of Elke Volkesang and Tim Flach, but I'm also a little bit in love with the absurdist humour of photographers like Martin Usbourne.

You leave this book realising that there's so many different approaches to dog photography that your mind is blown a little. From street photography to action photography to documentary photography to portrait photography and kind of everything in between, there's something in this book for everybody.

Available at a lovely low price it's an affordable treat for the dog lover in your life whoever that is – whether it's you or someone else. Printed by Hoxton Mini Press also means that you get something which is deliciously made, albeit petite.

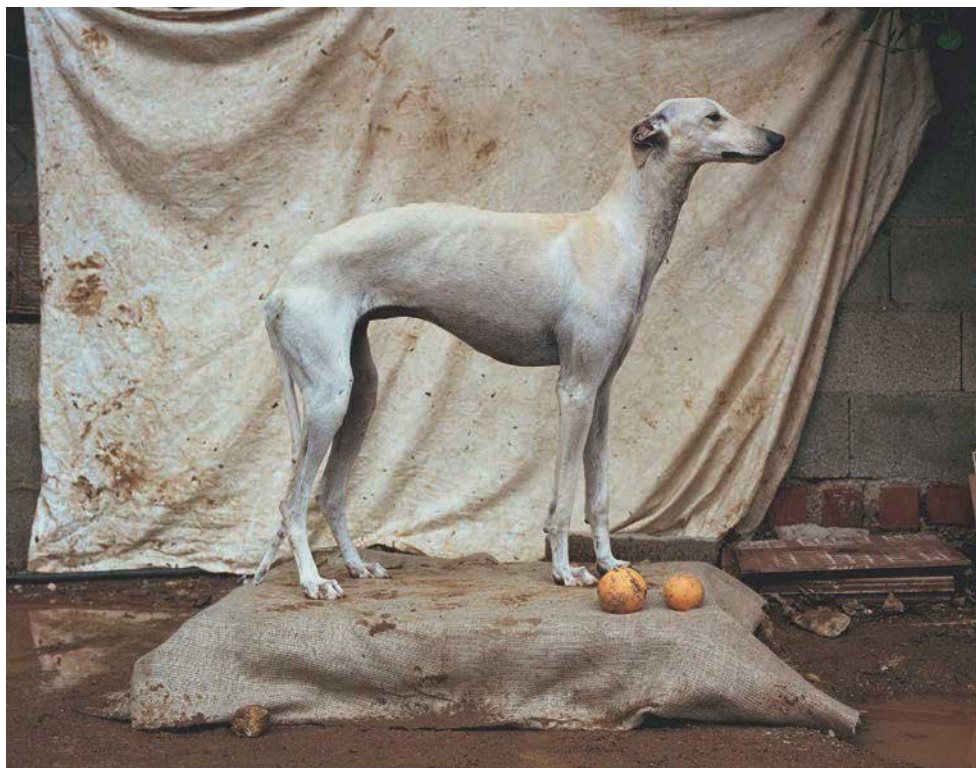


New Photography of the Dog £16.95.
Hoxton Mini Press
Hardback. 208
pages. ISBN:
9781917719490

Left: Maus, 2012,
from the series *The
Silence of Dogs in
Cars* by Martin
Usborne

**Right: From the
series *Well Heeled*,
2018, by Dougie
Wallace**

Below: Galga, 2014,
from the series
*Where Hunting Dogs
Rest* by Martin
Usborne



What's On

Some dates for your
photographic diary

Now - 1 November EXHIBITION

Catherine Opie: *To Be Seen* at
National Galleries Scotland,
Edinburgh

Now - 31 October EVENT

FfotoCymru: various venues, Wales

Now - 1 November EVENT

PhotoWorks Festival 2026 at
various venues, Brighton and Hove

14 October - 15 November

EVENT Bristol Photo Festival at
various city venues

16-29 October EVENT

Chester Photo Festival at various
city centre venues

31 October EVENT

Darkroom Magic: Alternative
Photography at The Art House,
Wakefield

3 November WORKSHOP

The Art, Craft & Process of
Landscape Photography with Julian
Calverley at Fotospeed Academy,
Calne, Wiltshire

6 November EVENT

Tim Walker: *In Conversation* at
National Portrait Gallery, London

6 November WORKSHOP

Intermediate Photography Workshop
with Jon Pear at Belton Estate,
Grantham, Lincolnshire

6-8 November WORKSHOP

Artist Masterclass with Olivia Arthur
at The Welcome Building, Bristol

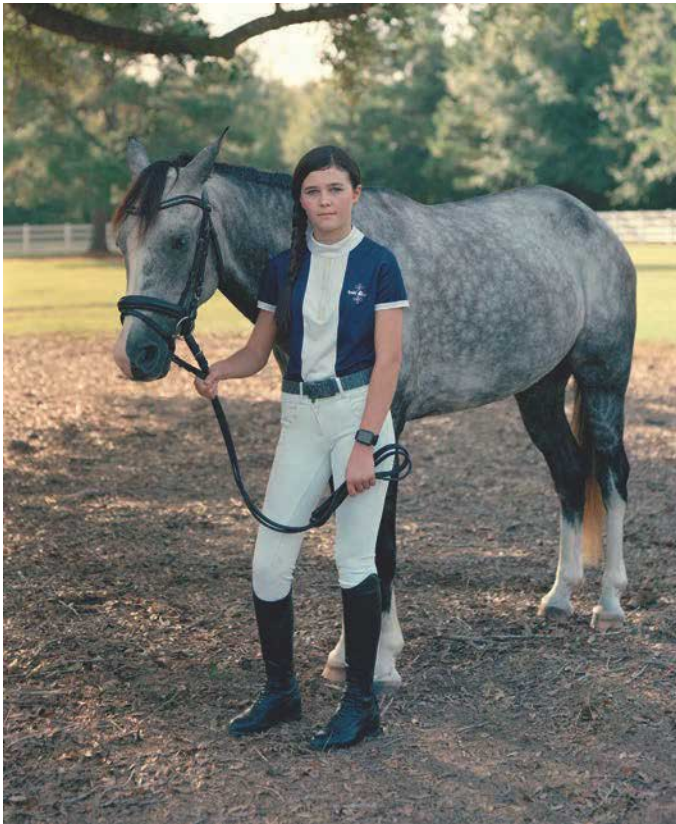
20 November EVENT

Photobook 101 - talks, workshops
and launches at University of
Brighton

21 November WORKSHOP

Full-day photography experience
with Phil Morley at Angelsey Abbey,
Cambridge

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at least a month in advance



ALL IMAGES © EVA VERBEECK, 2019



Above left: Cate, age 13

Above: Carmen and Jasmine, age 16

Girls on Film

Beautiful large-format portraits taken with a slow, mindful approach

Photographer Eva Verbeeck has covered a lot of ground. Over six years, she has crossed 28 US states, 4x5 and 8x10 large format cameras in tow, and has photographed more than 400 girls and young women in her quest to understand and interrogate what it means to be an 'American girl' in the modern era.

The resulting images have formed the basis of her first monograph, a series of stunning, stately portraits of girls and young women who are currently navigating an increasingly complex landscape of norms, expectations and challenges, filtered of course through the fractal lens of social media.

For Verbeeck, who is Belgian, the project has been as much an exploration of her own attitudes as of those of her subjects. Growing up, she was saturated with the image and the idea of the 'American girl', a mainstay of the movies and TV shows and pop music that surrounded her. A huge part of the project was exploring the tension between those constructed fantasies and the modern reality that she encountered.

The actual shoots were simple, unadorned – as you can see from the images on this page, they took place in classrooms, in gyms, in corridors, on the streets, in backyards. Verbeeck found the girls and young women through different means, including open calls, community events and outreach to local schools and youth groups. She didn't want to cast girls to fit a predetermined idea,

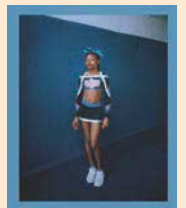
instead being interested to see who came to her.

The girls were given just one instruction prior to the shoot – they were asked to bring an object that had some personal significance to them, if they wished to; part of Verbeeck's desire for the project was the allow this generation, on the cusp of adulthood, to be heard, to express the things about which they were passionate. Some brought trophies or tiaras, others brought sports equipment, musical instruments or a uniform. An interesting tidbit that I noticed in Verbeeck's afterword for the book was that none of the girls chose to bring a piece of technology like their smartphone.

Verbeeck worked slowly; those large-format cameras don't let you work any other way. For this particular project, however, that extra layer of friction became an asset, allowing space for collaboration between photographer and subject. Says Verbeeck: 'The slowness of the process created space for conversation, vulnerability, and trust.'

I love the images. Having looked through the entire book, I think Verbeeck's work exists at a fascinating inflection point between documentary photography and something more painterly.

It's a wonderful book. Complex, intimate, unique – and of course, exquisitely photographed. I admit I'm a sucker for large-format photography, but all the same, the depth and tonality of these portraits is just beautiful. Whatever Eva Verbeeck does next – I'll be there. **Jon Stapley**



America's Girls, On the Edge of a Dream by Eva Verbeeck £45, GOST, Hardback, 104 pages, ISBN: 9781805980421

Unseen glory

Rarely-seen colour work by one of Africa's greatest photographers

In 1960, just after Upper Volta gained independence from France, photographer Sanlé Sory (b. 1943) opened Volta Photo Studio in Bobo-Dioulasso, the second-largest city in what is now Burkina Faso. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, thousands of people passed through the studio doors eager to record weddings, friendships, new fashions or simply the person they had become.

Over time, those black-and-white studio portraits and exuberant photographs of Burkina Faso's nightlife have gradually established Sory as one of Africa's great post-independence photographers.

Colour Years brings together a rarely seen selection from Sory's colour archive. While his monochrome images earned global acclaim, his body of colour work lurked in the shadows. This fresh appraisal expands on the work for which he is best known.

After Sory sat for his own identity portrait, he knew he wanted to be the other side of the lens. His love of photography led to a three year apprenticeship with a Ghanaian photographer, before going on to establish Volta Photo. The studio was modest but quickly became a go-to cultural landmark attracting customers from all levels of society.

Recognising this, Sory commissioned painted backdrops of Roman columns and city scenes and perhaps most famously, an aeroplane that allowed journeys to be imagined that the average Burkinabè could not afford. Portraits could be embellished with Sory's accumulated props – Air Afrique flight bags, suits and ties, radios, telephones, record players, lamps and even plastic guns. Long before Instagram filters and AI, what Sory offered was the chance for every sitter to leave feeling happier, smarter or more glamorous than when they entered.

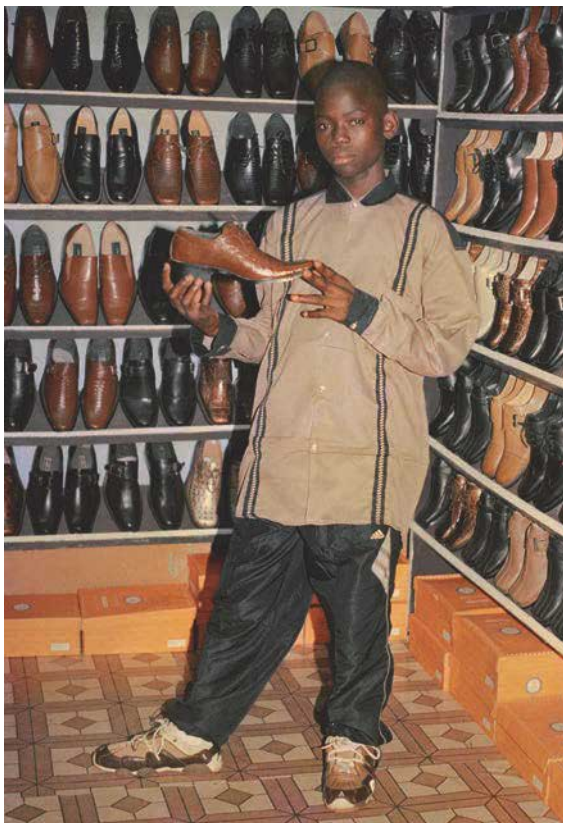
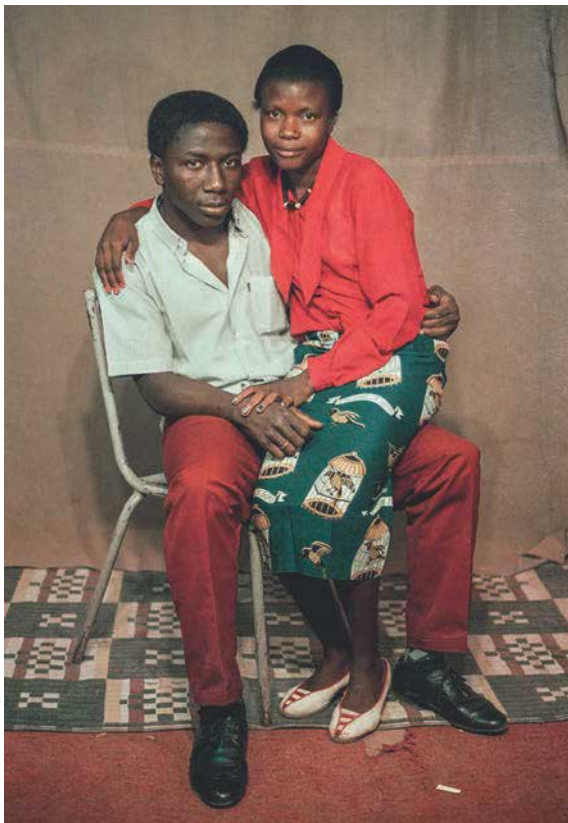
In the evenings, Sory would load black and white film into his

Rolleiflex twin-lens reflex camera and a Yashica-Mat and head to the bals poussières (dust-ball dances) to capture the vibrant and energetic youth culture that flourished there. Colour photography was reserved for specialist commissions and so have remained largely overlooked. This exhibition argues that his colour photos deserve equal attention, and have the same democratic spirit that defined Volta Photo.

Shot on 35mm colour film using Olympus and Konica cameras, Sory placed greater emphasis on capturing clothing, textiles and personal style. Each portrait is a collaboration. Visitors were encouraged to bring along meaningful possessions or mix and match with studio props, and to imagine themselves somewhere between local tradition and an increasingly connected modern world. In one portrait a man sits on a motor bike. In another, a man holds a phone to his ear. Shoes are polished, clothes are richly patterned or embroidered. The portraits become statements of identity. They are far from straight anthropological documents but a shared experience that collectively builds a picture of how a community is wished to be seen. They are aspirational without feeling overly staged. This collaborative approach perhaps explains why his photographs feel so contemporary.

That much of Sory's archive might never have survived adds an extra layer of appreciation. When French writer and record producer Florent Mazzoleni visited Sory while researching West African music in 2011, he found him burning his old negatives, convinced people didn't care about the old stuff. Mazzoleni convinced him otherwise and spent all night looking at photos under a flashlight.

Colour Years extends and broadens our understanding of one of Africa's most significant studio photographers. **Peter Dench**



Far left: Colour photograph of a couple. The man sits on a chair with his partner sitting on his leg.

Left: Colour photograph of a young boy inside a shoe shop holding a shoe.

Sanlé Sory: Colour Years

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Bee-eater Bandits by Amber McMartin

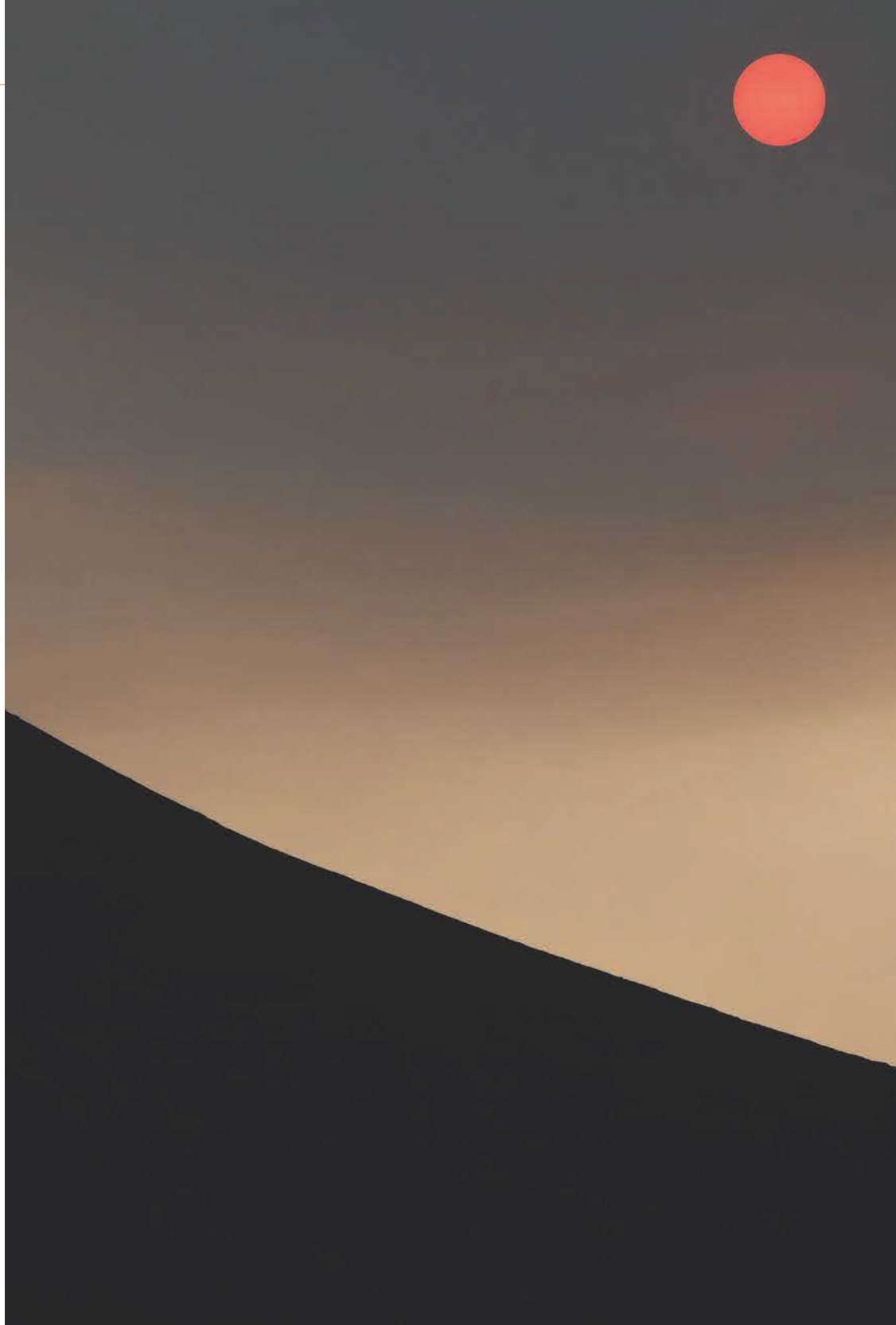
Canon EOS R50, Canon RF200-800mm F6.3-9 IS USM, 1/50sec at f/10, ISO 6400

On a windy day in the Kruger National Park, South Africa, these little bee-eaters (*Merops pusillus*) huddled together on a branch. The wind made it incredibly difficult to capture, but I sat watching them as they manoeuvred around, trying to balance their weight on the branch. These photos became my favourite from my whole trip.

Instagram and TikTok: [@amberskyephotography](https://www.instagram.com/amberskyephotography)



**PRIZE
WINNER**



Fire Eye by Steve Jennings

Canon EOS R5 Mark II, Canon RF 100-500mm, 1/1280sec at f/5, ISO 1250

Wildfire smoke had obscured many vistas during our time in Glacier National Park but on this morning it created an amazing moment of minimalism as the surreal orange sun emerged from behind the mountainside.

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



Your best Photos

Ghosts by Mark Elwick

Sony Alpha A7c R, Sony 40mm f2.5 G, 1/2sec at f/20, ISO 100

I'm often in London looking for interesting shots when I spotted this Graffiti, I liked the idea of holding onto ghosts of our past and I wanted to play on the idea of Ghosts using a slower shutter speed to make passersby look like ghosts walking through my scene.

Instagram:
@elwick_photography





An epic journey awaits by James Washington

Sony Alpha A1, Sony 200-600mm + 1.4
teleconverter, 1/640sec at f/9

Roughly only the size of a Robin, this female Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) is about to make an absolutely epic journey to her Wintering grounds in Sub-Saharan Africa. I watched her tirelessly running across the grassland taking advantage of the plentiful insects to fuel herself for her long journey ahead. For only a brief moment she stopped, and I pressed the shutter.

Instagram: @wheels_to_wildlife

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 6 for how to find us.

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A dying giant by Stephanie Weninger

Canon R6 Mark II,
50mm f1.8 STM,
1/160sec at f/13, ISO
3200

Shot in an 800-year-old ice cave system of the frozen giant, Vatnajökull—situated in Iceland, the largest glacier in Europe. The summer collapse of this cave system is a normal seasonal process. However, as the glacier retreats at a fast pace, it will disappear permanently. Captured to record nature at its best.

Instagram and Irys:
@steffi_shoots

Just a Shadow by Mike Welch

Sony RX100 Mark IV,
1/1600sec at f/5.6, ISO 125

I was with a friend in London, near Brick Lane, looking for street photography opportunities. I saw this piece of street art and knew that a silhouette of people walking past it would make a good juxtaposition. I waited in position and this couple appeared a few minutes later.

Irys: @SixByFour
Instagram:
@sixbyfour.photography



Picture Perfect

BEST SHOTS: MINIMALISM

One genre. Three photographers. Three standout images. AP invited three MINIMALIST photographers to share one 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.

Antony Zacharias

Antony Zacharias is a commercial and fine art photographer specialising in architecture, long exposure and minimalist photography. He is the author of seven photography books, including *The Minimalist Photographer* and *Mastering Long Exposure Photography*. His work can be seen at www.antonyzacharias.com and www.antonyz.com

Instagram: @antonyzphoto

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

This was shot at La Muralla Roja, an apartment building designed by Ricardo Bofill in Calpe, Spain. You're looking at one corner of the building at blue hour, where one wall frames another, which in turn opens onto another block of colour against the sky. I chose this frame because of the layering. Your eye moves through one opening, through to another with the deep blue sky holding everything together.

What was happening just before and after this frame?

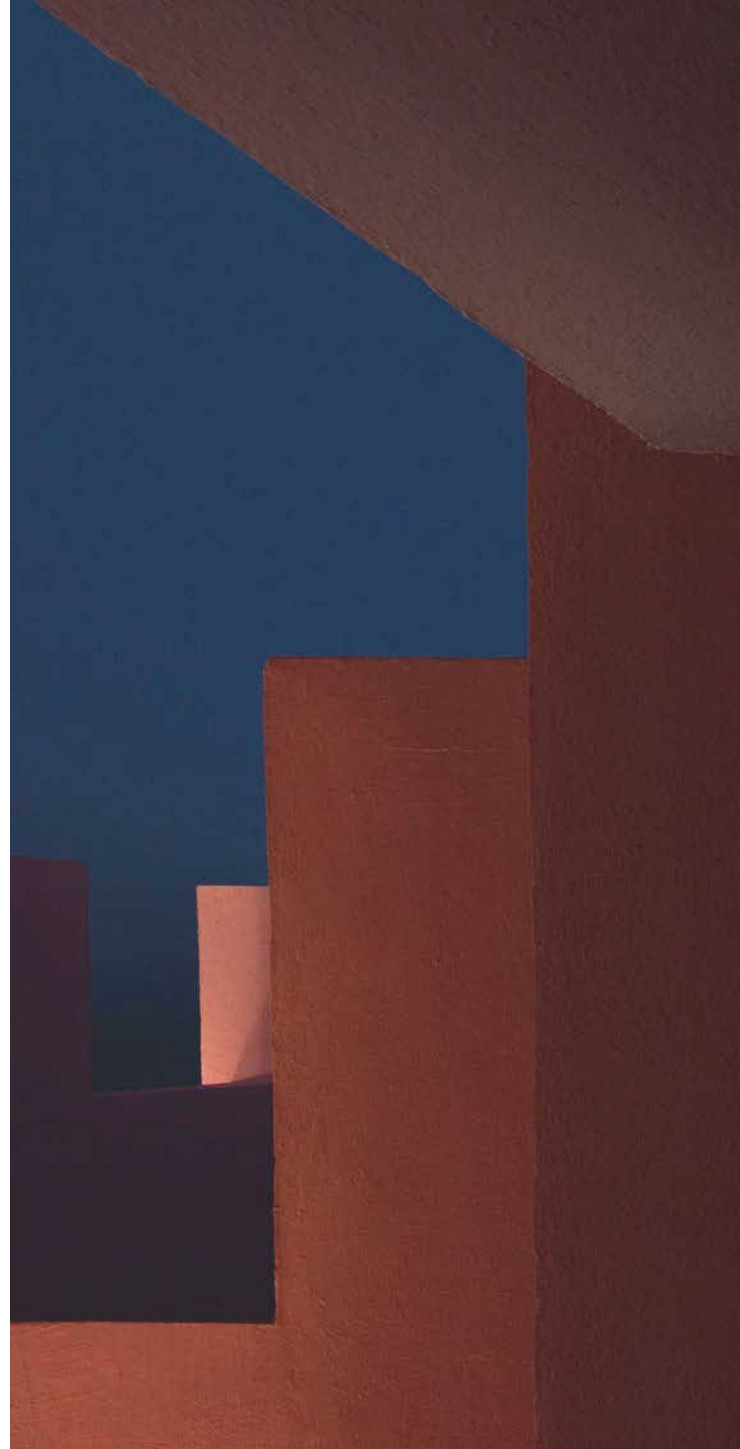
I had been walking around the same area for about twenty minutes, watching the artificial light on the walls change as the daylight faded. A few minutes earlier, the sky was still too bright and the colours felt flat. A few minutes later, the sky became so dark that the artificial lighting began to dominate. This photograph was taken during that very short window when the two balanced perfectly.

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

The biggest decision was simply where to stand. I wanted the edge of the wall to cut cleanly against the sky, while leaving enough open space on the left for the blue to breathe. I also placed the distant wall slightly off-centre rather than directly in the middle, encouraging the eye to move through the photograph. The geometry and colours were already there; my job was to find the right viewpoint.

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

I shot this with a Hasselblad X1D II 100C and XCD 21mm lens on a tripod during blue hour. The wide-angle lens allowed me to include the different layers of the building and the sky without making the architecture look unnaturally stretched. Medium format gave me the tonal range to hold detail in the shadowed near wall while retaining the rich blue of the sky.





What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?

Timing. Blue hour at La Muralla Roja can be very brief before the balance between the artificial light and the natural sky changes. I needed to know where I wanted to stand before that moment arrived, because once the light was right, there wasn't much time to experiment.

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

For me, the image is about reduction - stripping a building back until it becomes simply shape, geometry, colour and light. I'd like people to slow down and look at it that way, rather than thinking about it as a building. If it makes someone pause for a second longer than they intended, that's the point.

Was it luck or judgement?

Mostly judgement. I know the building well and had a good idea of

when and where this light would occur. But of course I couldn't control the exact colour of the sky that evening. So it was judgement that put me in the right place and a little luck that the sky did its part.

What did this image teach you?

It reminded me that returning to the same place is often where the real work happens. I had photographed this corner before, but never at this precise moment or in this particular light. The photograph only exists because I kept coming back.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?

Scout a location in daylight first, so you understand its shapes and forms before the light becomes difficult. Then return at blue hour, get there early and give yourself time to look. Don't only photograph the obvious view. Look at corners, doorways, gaps and openings - they can create layers and unexpected compositions.



Sandra Jordan

Sandra Jordan is an award-winning fine art photographer, known for her minimalist photographic meditations on transience, quietude, and the intrinsic beauty of the natural world. Her work is held in private collections across the UK, Europe, and North America.

Instagram @sandrajordanstudio

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

This was taken in Svalbard while I was working as an expedition photographer for Hurtigruten. I was drawn to the mountain's graphic qualities — the line, shape, form and shadow and I thought it would make a good black and white image.

What was happening just before and after this frame?

I was constantly scanning the landscape while also working onboard. My priority was talking to guests, answering photography questions and documenting different aspects of the journey for Hurtigruten but amongst that, I was always keeping an eye out for compositions that would work for my own portfolio.

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

The main decision was to simplify. I wanted the mountain to fill the frame without bringing in too much of the surrounding landscape. The image was always about line, shape, form and negative space rather than documenting a location.

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

I used a Canon EOS 5D Mark II with a Canon EF 70–300mm f/4–5.6L IS USM at 300mm, shooting at 1/1000 sec, f/11. We were quite a distance from the mountain, so using the lens at its longest focal length allowed me to isolate it and keep the composition clean without having to crop heavily afterwards. The fast shutter speed also helped because I tend to work handheld rather than with a tripod.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?

Being somewhere so visually extraordinary and resisting the urge to photograph everything. Knowing this might be the only time I would ever visit the region, I had to constantly remind myself to slow down, really study the landscape and choose the image before pressing the shutter.

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

My work is about creating visual meditations, so I'm repeatedly drawn to reducing a place to its essential form — removing distractions and creating something quieter and more

contemplative. I'd like readers to see that minimalism doesn't have to mean photographing a small subject. Sometimes it comes from choosing what to leave out. A vast landscape can still become a quiet, minimalist image.

Was it luck or judgement?

A bit of both. The luck was being in that extraordinary landscape in the first place, and being on a ship that gave me access to views I might never otherwise have seen. The judgement was recognising the graphic potential of the mountain, isolating it from the wider landscape and already knowing how I wanted the finished image to look.

What did this image teach you?

To trust simplicity and my gut. Sometimes the strongest image comes from simplifying the details.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?

Look beyond the subject itself. Compose the frame, then see what elements you can omit. Don't feel like you have to photograph everything in front of you. Slow down and look for the image before you take it.

Robert Bolton

UK-based photographer Robert Bolton explores the minimal, abstract and otherworldly, creating images that invite viewers to pause and wonder at the world around them. His minimalist approach has earned significant recognition, including Fine Art Photographer of the Year at the 2025 Minimalist Photography Awards, alongside numerous international awards, honours and exhibitions.

Instagram @quietlandscapes



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

This is Bandon Beach, Oregon, USA. Taken in October 2025. A place rich in sea stacks and there are some well-known ones here, including Howling Dog Rock, second from the left, and Face Rock at the back on the right. This was taken in the morning light that was just “kissing” the stacks and delivered the tones, which I have desaturated a little. The beach is enormous, a big distance between rolling surf, For Free Mags Check softarchive. is behind the sea stacks, and the edge of the water at the top of the beach where I was standing. I went to Oregon to photograph the sea stacks. I am often in or near water. But I also seek to capture a feeling of otherworldliness. For me, minimalism is about the essence of the place. The feeling, as much as what is there. It is about poetry versus prose. If you ask an AI what Titan looks like, one of the moons of Saturn, it will tell you it is lakes of methane and frozen hydrocarbons. On this morning that was what I saw. I call this photo Titan's Dawn.

What was happening just before and after this frame?

Immediately before this I had eaten a wonderful breakfast of Huevos Rancheros! Afterwards I took many more photos until the sun was too high in the sky.

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

The discipline of minimalism is to use the entire frame. I like to put the subject at the very top, as in this case, or the bottom or in the middle. Sometimes I use the rule of thirds but to be honest, minimalism gives me the freedom to ignore it. I also use longer exposures, in this case just 30 seconds, as I wanted some of that texture that we see in the foreground.

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

I use a Fujifilm GFX camera. This was with the GFX 45-100 lens which I use a lot. Other details: ISO 50, 47mm, f18, 30 seconds. With my wonderful tripod which is a Really Right Stuff tripod head on Gitzo legs. In processing I removed some stray rocks and distracting imperfections in the sand in the foreground. I also desaturated the tones and added a touch of linear grad top and bottom to add to the shading that was already present. I added a bit more contrast in the sea stacks to make them pop a bit.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?

One of the challenges was the way that the tripod sank in the sand. Challenging during long exposures. I had firmly pushed this into

the sand so there was no movement. But not always the case on this morning. The sand was swamp-like.

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

As mentioned, a sense of otherworldliness. Freedom from what is there to what is implied. Also, freedom from the tyranny of the rule of thirds – once one has learned them of course!

Was it luck or judgement?

Obviously both. I had not been to Bandon before. I was lucky to go there. The light was wonderful, as was the geography of the place. But my interpretation of these sea stacks is mine.

What did this image teach you?

A world class and well-known fine art and minimalist photographer once told me what makes a great photograph. He said that “it needs a star, maybe a co-star, and no extras”. I often find myself reflecting on this advice when taking my own images. Here the sea stacks are the star.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?

Go beyond traditional compositions. Especially the rule of thirds.

Wild at Heart

The latest Wildlife Photographer of the Year winners have been revealed. **Jessica Miller** takes a closer look at the successful images

Wildlife Photographer of the Year is always a huge highlight in my calendar. Developed and produced by the Natural History Museum, London, the prestigious competition attracts the very best wildlife photography. Now in its 62nd year, entry records have been broken once again with over 65,400 entries submitted from across 121 countries and territories.

Italian photographer Federico Veronesi has been announced as the overall winner with 'The Aftermath', a heart wrenching photograph of an elephant carrying a dead

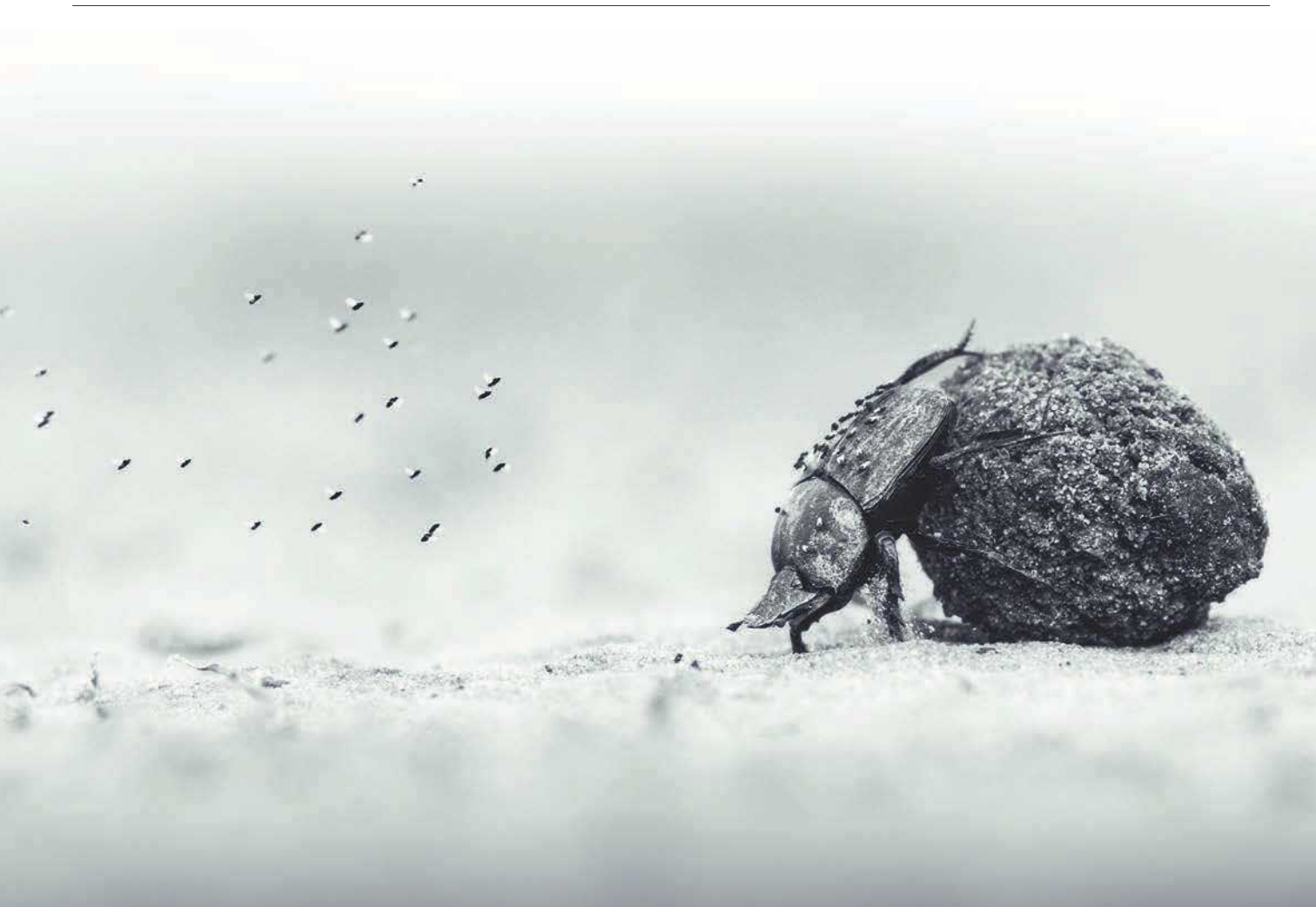
calf. The Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year title has been won by Oscar Whitfield with the photograph 'Labour of Love' of a dung beetle at work. Both adult and young winners were recognised for black and white photography, which has never happened before in the competition's 62-year-history.

Instilling a love for the natural world and a voice for wildlife and conservation through photography, Wildlife Photographer of the Year is presented through an exhibition of incredible images of animals, their environments and

important photojournalism stories. 100 photographs, including the overall winners and 19 category winners, is on show now at the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, London until 11th July 2027.

Entries to the 63rd Wildlife Photographer of the Year open on 19th October and close 11:30am GMT on 4th December 2026. Photographers aged 26 and under can enter for free. Visit nhm.ac.uk/wpy/competition for more information.

Now, let's look at some of the winners...





Labour of Love by Oscar Whitfield, Zimbabwe/UK Winner, Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year and 11-14 Years

Canon EOS R6 Mark II + Sigma 150–600mm f5–6.3 lens; 1/1250 at f6.3; ISO 3200

With more than 5,000 species of dung beetle found around the world, they play a vital role in their environments by breaking up dung and burying it. Doing so prevents the conditions required for methane production, reducing the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions.

Oscar lay flat on the ground to photograph the beetle at eye level, with the sunshine and heat creating dry dust all around him. A quiet scene that could easily be overlooked, Jasper Doest, Jury Member for the 62nd Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, says: "This is exceptionally well done. Photographing such a small, constantly moving subject is challenging, yet the image feels so intentional."

The Aftermath by Federico Veronesi, Italy Winner, Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2026 and Behaviour: Mammals

Nikon Z8 + 400mm f2.8 lens; 1/1000 at f2.8; ISO 72

Federico was tracking elephants when he came across an unusual pattern of drag marks in the sand of a dry riverbed. The source became clear when he caught up with a family group. A female emerged with a calf, its leg wedged between her tusk and trunk.

Behaviours centring on death have been observed in both Asian and African elephants, including guarding the dead, inspecting and handling bones, and carrying the deceased. Possibly indicating some understanding of death and displays of grief, it's an emotional and poignant winner.



**The Meeting Place
by James Lewin, UK
Winner, Animals in
their Environment**

Nikon Z 7II + 28–75mm f2.8 lens; 1/800 at
f7.1 (+1 e/v); ISO 800; camera converted to
infrared

James had to deal with harsh, unforgiving light whilst photographing a young bull elephant and a group of zebras at a waterhole in the Kenyan Chyulu Hills. He chose to soften the light using a camera converted to infrared, creating this dream-like scene.

Waterholes can act as vital lifelines during severe droughts. Larger animals, such as elephants, have priority over others for access. Although competition for access may also prolong herbivores' stay, they spend more time at these drinking spots when elephants are present, possibly because their size deters predators.

**Protective Pose by Anton Sorokin, USA
Winner, Behaviour: Amphibians and
Reptiles**

Nikon D850 + 8–15mm fisheye lens; 1/100 at f18; ISO 400;
Nauticam housing; Seacam 60D strobes

In this photograph, Anton documents a California newt laying its eggs as it clasps vegetation that already holds another newt's egg clutch. California newts interlock their back feet to protect the clutch, which are vulnerable to predation by other newts. They will stay like this until the gelatinous mass around the eggs has swollen too large to be eaten.



Scenes from the Swamp by Isak Pretorius, South Africa Winner, Behaviour: Birds

Canon EOS R5 + 500mm f4 lens; 1/2500 at f4; ISO 1250

Isak felt exceptionally lucky to see not one but two elusive shoebills whilst exploring a swamp via a narrow canoe. Likely a breeding pair gathering materials for their nest, the birds repeatedly pulled out vegetation and dropped it. These birds are closely related to pelicans and herons. Fewer than 5,300 mature shoebills survive across their entire range and their numbers are decreasing.

© ISAK PRETORIUS / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR



A Watchful Eye by Aaron Sanders, UK Winner, Animal Portraits

Nikon Z8 + 24–50mm f4–6.3 lens + Nauticam WWL-C wet lens; 1/40 at f7.1; ISO 125; Inon Z-240 and Z-330 underwater strobes

Aaron noticed the footprints of octopus suckers through a thin blade of kelp, and a single eye slowly emerging whilst diving near Porthkerris Beach in southwest England. 'We remained perfectly still, watching one another with a seemingly shared curiosity,' says Aaron.

Sightings of common octopuses have dramatically increased in this area. A species more frequently found in warmer Mediterranean waters, the influx has been linked to above-average springtime sea temperatures.

© AARON SANDERS / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR



Shifting Sand by Sitaram Raul, India Winner, Behaviour: Invertebrates

Nikon D750 + 105mm macro lens; 1/250 at f14; ISO 125; Godox flash

Here, Sitaram encounters a scorpion burrowing into one of the shifting dunes of the Thar Desert, near the village of Sam, Sitaram. As sunrise approached, the scorpion started burrowing to avoid the intense heat. Just one known species of Buthacus scorpion is from India. It uses its pincers to dig into large piles of sand.

© SITARAM RAUL / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR





Making Morays by Tony Wu, USA/Japan Winner, Under Water

Sony Alpha A1 + customised Nikon fisheye 13mm f2.8 lens; 1/320 at f11; ISO 500; 2x Backscatter Hybrid HF-1 strobes

This is likely the first time Abbott's moray eel courtship and spawning have been documented. Tony has been working with biologists to address a knowledge gap in the social behaviour of this eel species. Guided only by a dim red-light source to minimise disturbance, and using a customised fisheye camera lens, he has studied this male since 2024 as it visits females that dwell in crevices on the reef.

© TONY WU / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Wily Coyotes of San Francisco by Loren Elliott, USA Winner, Photojournalist Story Award

Sony Alpha A9 II + 20mm f1.8 lens; 1/800 at f5.6; ISO 250; 2x Pocket Wizard Plus III radio triggers

Loren documents the lives of the often-misunderstood coyotes in San Francisco. Around 100 of these urban-adapted wild canines live alongside more than 800,000 human inhabitants. Attitudes among them are mixed and whilst they can prey on domestic animals, they also bring benefits such as controlling disease-carrying rodents.

This photo 'On the Outskirts' from the winning portfolio, shows a coyote padding along a trail in Bernal Heights Park, overlooking the city. Loren invites us to reconsider our perceptions of these wild animals and their place in urban environments.

© LOREN ELLIOTT / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR



© ALEXIS TINKER-TSAVALAS / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Hidden Depths by Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas, Germany Winner, Rising Star Award

Fujifilm X-H2 + Laowa 25mm f2.8 macro lens; 1/200 at f5.6; ISO 320; Godox V860III flash + Cygnustech diffuser; focus stack of 45 images

By experimenting with focus stacking techniques, which involve combining multiple images with different planes of focus to increase the depth of field, Alexis wants to bring attention to species that often go unnoticed. Here he reveals the exquisite beauty of the tiniest of animals.

This photo from the portfolio, 'Wanderer in the Moss' shows a springtail, measuring just two to three millimetres long.



© FRANCISCO NEGRONI / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Warning Sign
by Francisco Negroni, Chile
Winner, Photojournalism

Canon EOS R5 + 70–200mm f2.8 lens; 1/640 at f3.2; ISO 100

This scene of a dead puma tied to a fence and presented as a hunting trophy, amid the rugged, beautiful landscape of Argentine Patagonia, was one Francisco had 'never witnessed or photographed before'. In 2025, Santa Cruz banned the hunting of pumas, but illegal persecution continues.

The Great Divide
by Alex Visbal, Colombia
Winner, Wetlands:
The Bigger Picture

Canon EOS R5 Mark II + 70–200mm f2.8 lens; 1/640 at f3.2 (-0.67 e/v); ISO 1250

This photograph is part of Alex's long-term project documenting the industrial footprint on bodies of water, it shows how a single engineered line can reshape an entire wetland. The distinctive pink colour on the left is caused by bright pink microbes that thrive in extremely saline water, which happens when an area is cut off from a supply of fresh water. Since this image was taken, the State of Utah has brought the area under conservation management.



© ALEX VISBAL / WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR



What Is Already There

Maria Khristenko won this year's EISA Maestro contest on the theme of travel with this superb portfolio of views from other people's windows

Sometimes we travel far to experience a sense of wonder, whilst others live right next to the same beauty and hardly notice it anymore. This series explores that contrast between discovery and familiarity. Taken in Turkey, Italy, Montenegro and the Netherlands, the photographs show what is an everyday view for someone else. One of the photographs was taken in Cefalù, at the home of a local host who apologised because, in his opinion, the room didn't have a particularly good view, even though the sea filled the entire window. In Taormina, I stayed at a family-run B&B, where the owner's elderly parents prepared breakfast every morning. They had lived there all their lives, always with the sea in view, but had never learnt to swim. The story behind every photo reminds me that travelling isn't just about seeing new places, but also about rediscovering the ability to marvel at 'what is already there'.





- 1 Taormina, Italy
- 2 Letojanni, Italy
- 3 Herceg Novi, Montenegro
- 4 Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- 5 Cefalù, Italy
- 6 Cefalù, Italy
- 7 Istanbul, Türkiye
- 8 Santa Cristina Gherdëina, Italy



Series Winner

Mariia Khristosenko Netherlands



I am a photographer based in the Netherlands with a passion for travel photography and cityscapes. I used to work as a pastry chef, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, I took up photography as a hobby. It became such a big part of my life that it eventually turned into my profession.

I pay close attention to composition, and to the way in which lines, shapes, colours and small details can make a scene visually interesting. For me, photography is also a way of remembering not only what a place looked like, but also how it felt to be there: the feeling of a moment, an unstaged slice of life. I try to capture that in my street and travel photography, but also in my work for clients, where I specialise in portrait photography in urban settings.

@rainbomash

Technicolour dreamboat

In his new book *Colour*, Niall McDiarmid turns his attention to the bright hues and visual harmonies hidden in plain sight across contemporary Britain - **Peter Dench** explains more

What do you see when you walk through a typical British town or city? Are the colours depressingly familiar – grey, white or black cars, pebbledash apartment blocks, taupe office developments, somber suited commuters? According to photographer Niall McDiarmid, life today has been drained of colour.

His new book, *Colour* is a reaction to what he sees as the greyscale homogenisation of contemporary Britain. For over 15 years, the Scottish-born photographer has traversed the UK searching for the pop of colour within an increasingly neutral visual landscape.

McDiarmid argues monochrome has taken over. 'So I went in search of full colour. Not just accents of colour here and there, but frames that were full edge to edge, corner to corner of the brightest tones I could find,' he says.

Whether you agree with McDiarmid's assessment of the Britain's drabness, the book delivers exactly what it says on the cover. 128 pages of glorious colour celebrating the saturated richness of the ordinary. Shot mostly in London, shopfronts, cafés, pubs, train stations, museums and street corners become McDiarmid's stages for carefully observed combinations of clothing, architecture, signage and urban texture.

The book's premise is deceptively simple, brave even, but *Colour* arrives at an intriguing moment in the culture of photography. For much of the medium's history, colour has been the less serious sibling. Black and white was the gravitational pull for serious documentary



Above:
Clerkenwell,
London, 2017



Left: Wimbledon,
London, 2021

Right: Charing
Cross, London,
2024





photographers and photojournalists believing it carried greater cultural prestige and better suited to serious subjects. Colour photography was for advertising and glossy magazines. During the latter half of the twentieth century that shifted. Photographers such as William Eggleston and Joel Meyerowitz helped establish colour photography as an artistic language in its own right. In Britain, colour became synonymous with Paul Graham, Tom Wood, Paul Reas and in particular, Martin Parr, whose saturated legacy defined a new commentary about consumer culture, class and Britishness.

McDiarmid sits within a different tradition. Less satirical and less concerned with social critique. What his images do do is delight in visual harmony and coincidence. He is alert to moments when a subject's attire matches the colour of a wall or clashes completely. A shop sign unexpectedly complements the jacket of a passer-by. Everyday objects fuse into subtle and at times, sophisticated compositions.

Light minded

McDiarmid understands British light. He doesn't chase dramatic sunshine, instead embracing the flat, overcast conditions that many photographers stay home and complain about. This soft light eases the shadows and contrast and allows colour to breathe. The images are both vibrant and understated. They celebrate the ordinary over the spectacular. Most photographs today are taken in colour but few are deliberately taken with colour in mind. McDiarmid doesn't find colour at major events, political rallies or social unrest but in modest, often overlooked areas. The visual pleasures he finds are modest but persistent. There is optimism rather than crisis.

Central to the book is the art of paying attention. The argument is that colour hasn't disappeared, people have simply stopped noticing. The most compelling images remind us that individuality survives despite the standardising forces of modern life. People remain gloriously inconsistent amid the

**Covent Garden,
London, 2024**

banal backdrops of shopping malls and predictable design trends. Anonymous environments are populated by bright coats, jazzy jumpers and eccentricity. Deciding whether to accept or reject McDiarmid's diagnosis of the colour crisis in Britain is beside the point. The book succeeds because it encourages viewers to look again at places they thought that they already knew.

Overall, McDiarmid's book is unapologetically pleasurable. It won't anger, confront, expose injustice, challenge political assumptions or reveal hidden truths. On a bookshelf often burdened with grand statements and theoretical frameworks, it may just refresh confidence in the visual experience itself. Colour questions that if modern Britain really is being desaturated, the antidote may not be found in changing the landscape but simply in paying closer attention to it. McDiarmid's photographs are evidence that colour can still be found. You just need to have the desire and know where to look.

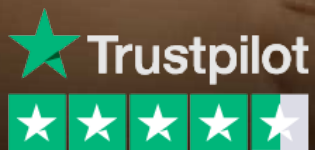
Colour by Niall
McDiarmid is published
by RRB Photobooks,
RRP £35. ISBN:
9781918715026.



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APOY
2026

IN ASSOCIATION WITH...

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amazinginternet **PARK**Cameras

Bob Books **THE SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

Amateur Photographer of the Year

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

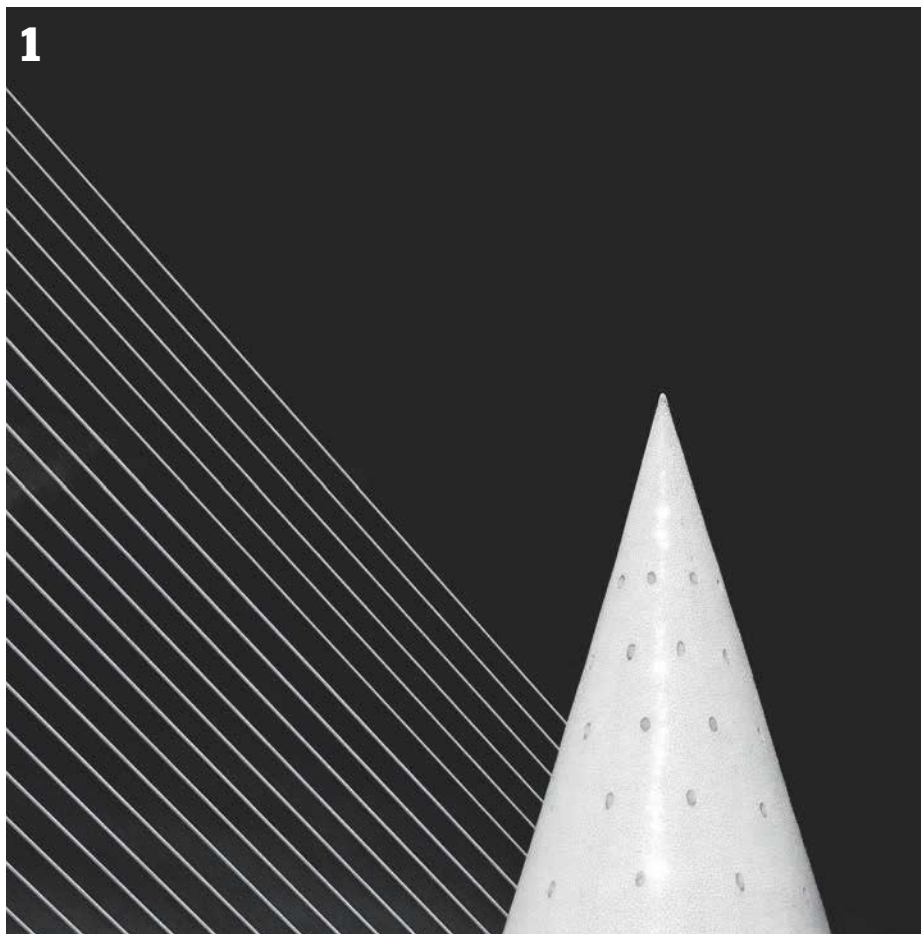
Round Five Architecture

Architecture is one of photography's great playgrounds. Buildings offer lines, shapes, textures, patterns and perspectives. Light can turn a familiar structure into something graphic, dramatic or unexpectedly beautiful. Photographing architecture successfully is about more than pointing a camera at an impressive building. The photographer has to decide what to include, what to leave out and sometimes, where to stand to make the structure reveal something new. The Architecture round attracted a fascinating variety of approaches. Some photographers embraced bold geometry and clean, graphic compositions, while others found moments in weathered surfaces, repeating details or the relationship between buildings and the people who inhabit them. Our Top 10 celebrates photographers who understand that architecture is about seeing the built environment differently.

1 Helen Trust Convergence 100pts

SONY DSC-RX100M7, 24-200mm at 34.64mm, 1/400sec, f/10, ISO 100

Helen turns architecture into an exercise in pure geometry with this striking study from Valencia's City of Arts and Sciences. The sweeping cables of Santiago Calatrava's Assut de l'Or Bridge slice diagonally through the frame to create a wonderfully complex arrangement of lines, curves and negative space. The photograph becomes all about shape, tone and structure. The black background gives the cables enormous graphic impact. There is also a strong sense of movement here. The lines appear to pull us into the frame, while the different elements compete for attention without ever losing their relationship to one another. Helen has looked beyond the grandeur of the architecture and found an abstract, sculptural photograph. It is a great example of seeing a building rather than simply photographing one.





2

2 David Davies Farm Cottage, South Africa 90pts

Canon EOS 20D, 24-105mm at 105mm, 1/500sec, f/8, ISO 100



Guest judge Jim Stephenson says:

The building in this photo isn't a famous piece of architecture, or some grand soaring contemporary structure, but it really doesn't matter as it somehow manages to evoke a whole story in a really simple image. There's bags of atmosphere. Technically it's beautifully composed and the light on the field is spot on, but it's the stormy sky and

the washing on the line that is asking all the questions. We can't help but make up a story about this house and the people that might live there and I think that's the building blocks for a really unforgettable photograph - when we've already filled in the gaps with our own story. I hope they got the washing in before the rain in those clouds came down.

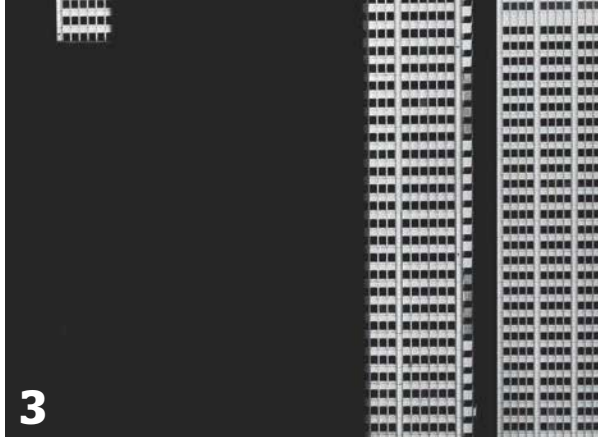


4

4 Chris Ellison Hidden in the Rocks 70pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 24-70mm at 70mm, 1/50sec, f/11, ISO 200

Chris has found a rather extraordinary piece of architecture hiding in plain sight. It immediately catches the eye because of the unlikely relationship between the rugged natural landscape and the small, seemingly vulnerable house tucked into it. The rocks dominate the frame, but the building refuses to disappear completely, giving the image a pleasing sense of discovery. There is also a lovely balance between solidity and reflection. The calm water in the foreground mirrors the rocky outcrop and architecture, almost doubling the scene while adding a sense of tranquillity. The muted palette and soft light suit the subject perfectly, allowing texture and form to do the heavy lifting. It is a photograph that reminds us that architecture doesn't always have to dominate its surroundings to make an impression. Sometimes the pleasure comes from finding it. Chris has made that act of discovery the central attraction of the picture.

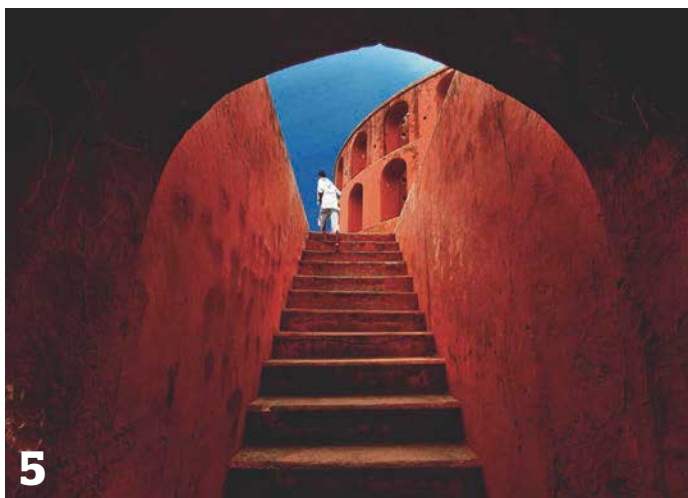


3

3 Cliff Spooner Shaded 80pts

Not supplied

There is something wonderfully graphic about Shaded. Cliff has taken what could easily have been an ordinary architectural detail and turned it into an exercise in rhythm, repetition and restraint. The black surroundings allow the pale geometric forms to dominate, while the strong verticals and horizontal lines create a satisfying sense of order. At first glance the image feels almost like a piece of minimalist abstract art rather than a photograph of a building. The small offset panel at the top adds another layer of interest, breaking the symmetry just enough to prevent the composition becoming predictable. Cliff has paid close attention to the relationship between light and shade, allowing the darker areas to become as important as the illuminated ones. It is a picture simple in its ingredients, but carefully constructed, with every line and block seemingly in exactly the right place.



5

5 Sirsendu Gayen Way to Heaven 60pts

NIKON D80, 1/320sec, f/9, ISO 100

This is a theatrical view found by Sirsendu of Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. The capture turns architecture into something otherworldly, the figure provides a wonderfully human sense of scale. It is a simple idea, but the geometry and colour make it remarkably effective. The intense terracotta tones of the structure contrast beautifully with the cool sky. The opening creates a natural frame within the frame. There is also a delicious hint of mystery - where exactly does that staircase lead and who is making the journey? Given Jantar Mantar's origins as an 18th-century astronomical observatory, the title adds another layer of intrigue, turning a piece of scientific architecture into an apparent route towards heaven. A graphic and playful image.

6 Linda Wride

Muralla Roja - Escher Stairs 50pts

NIKON D750, 24-120mm at 38mm, 1/100sec, f/5.6, ISO 400

Linda's photograph turns architecture into something that feels almost impossible to navigate. The vivid red and pale pink walls of Ricardo Bofill's La Muralla Roja create a maze of geometric forms, with the staircase appearing to twist and fold back into itself. There are echoes of the Escher staircase but Linda avoids simply documenting the architecture. Instead, she has found a viewpoint that transforms it into an abstract composition where perspective becomes deliberately confusing. The restricted palette helps emphasise the shapes, while the absence of people leaves us alone with the geometry. Just when you think you have worked out the route through it, the architecture seems to change direction again.



7 Ala Askool

Shibam.. Heart of the Caravan Trade 45pts

SONY ILCE-7M3, 24-70mm at 24mm, 1/1250sec, f/4.5, ISO 1250

Architecture and life are brought together in a single, beautifully balanced frame. The distinctive mud-brick towers of Shibam rise across the background like a miniature city of sandcastles, while the camel caravan provides a human and historical connection to the scene. The camels echo the ancient trade routes that once carried goods, ideas and culture through Hadramout, giving the photograph a sense of movement through time as well as space. The judges particularly liked the contrast between the apparently timeless architecture and the humpy procession passing in front of it. The low, warm light helps unify the scene, picking out the texture and colour of the buildings and desert. This photograph suggests how architecture, landscape, trade and tradition remain intertwined.

8 Yasser Alaa Moborak

Heydar Aliyev Centre 40pts

NIKON D5600, 18-55mm at 18mm, 1/400sec, f/14, ISO 100

The most is made of the extraordinary curves of Zaha Hadid's Heydar Aliyev Centre, creating an image that feels almost more like an abstract drawing than a photograph of a building. The sweeping white surfaces appear to fold and flow around the frame, while the lone figure provides both scale and a welcome human presence. There is a lovely tension between the organic architecture and the tiny, purposeful movement of the person walking through it. The monochrome treatment is particularly effective, concentrating our attention on line, shape, light and shadow. It also gives the photograph a slightly futuristic quality, as if the figure has wandered into a film set. A strong example of how architecture can become landscape, sculpture and abstract form all at once.





9 Rosetta Bonatti !!! 35pts

Not supplied

Sometimes architecture gives you all the punctuation you need. Rosetta's graphic image, simply titled !!!, reduces the scene to a striking arrangement of colour, shape and repetition. Three tall chimneys rise from the red-roofed buildings, each almost identical yet subtly different in position and form. Against the sky, they become bold architectural exclamation marks, making the title feel entirely appropriate.

The warm terracotta tones of the buildings provide a lovely counterpoint to the cool blue, while the absence of distracting detail allows the geometry to do all the work. There is something almost toy-like about the scene, with the simplified buildings resembling a miniature architectural model. It is a good reminder that you don't necessarily need a grand landmark to make a compelling architectural photograph: sometimes three chimneys and a patch of blue sky are enough!!!



10 Andrew Tandy Tenerife Skyline, Costa Adeje, Tenerife 30pts

TAMRON 16-300mm at 117mm, 1/80sec, f/20, ISO 250

Andrew turns a holiday disappointment into a good architectural photograph. The promised sea view may have

been replaced by a recently completed hotel, but instead of simply accepting defeat, Andrew found something worth photographing. The building's warm orange-brown facade is set crisply against the cloudless blue sky, while the changing light picks out subtle

variations across its surface, giving an otherwise straightforward structure plenty of visual interest. Judges liked the way the composition strips the scene back to essentially two elements: building and sky. There's no sea, no palm trees, no sunburnt Brits, just a hotel that has unexpectedly become the subject. Sometimes the architecture that gets in the way is the architecture worth photographing.

Winning kit from PARK Cameras

What gear did our top ten photographers use?



For her 1st place image Helen pulled out her SONY RX100 VII. A camera packed with everything it takes to deliver gorgeous images. A 24-200mm zoom lens, 0.02-sec. super fast AF, Real-time Tracking and Eye AF, enhanced image stabilisation and an external mic jack.. Available used from Park Cameras for £1,049.



For their 4th placed image, Chris opted for a Canon EF 24-70mm f/4L IS USM Zoom Lens Fast. The f/4 maximum aperture allows hand-held shooting in low light. Hybrid Image Stabiliser automatically detects panning and both angular and shift movements when in macro mode. Available used from Park Cameras for around £409.



In 6th place, Linda used a Nikon D750 available used from Park Cameras for around £499. Phenomenally sensitive AF performance. Full HD movie recording at 1080/60p. Metering / exposure control system equivalent to the higher end D4s and D810.

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

BEST OF THE CLUBS

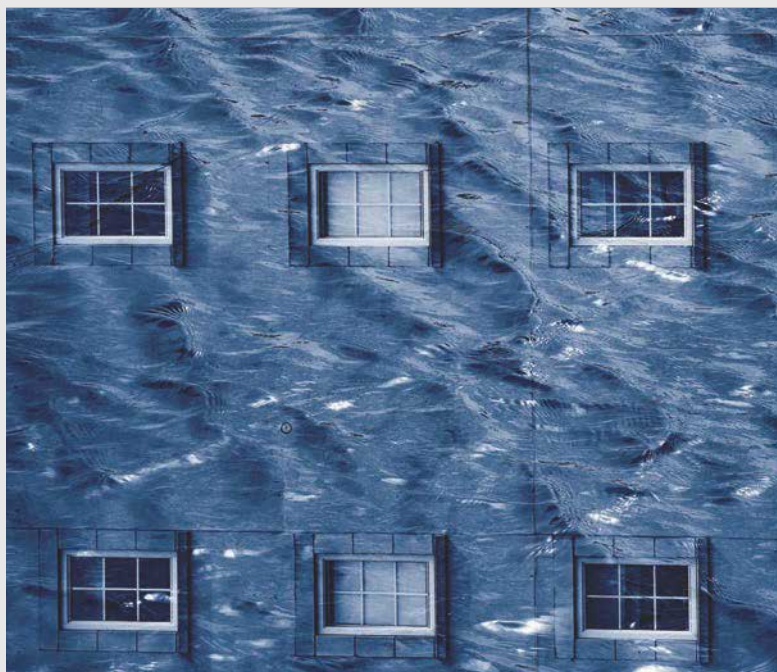
Each round, we shine a spotlight on a selection of standout entries from the many camera clubs taking part in APOY



Ian Smith, Launceston Camera Club
A World Beneath the Ceiling

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm at 24mm, 1/30sec, f/16, ISO 200

A wonderfully immersive architectural study with the near-symmetry and intricate ceiling detail drawing us into a mesmerising world of shapes and curves.



Phil Wilson, Mid-Somerset Camera Club
Watery Homes

Not supplied

Clever multiple exposure transforms an everyday marina scene into something wonderfully surreal, with the distorted water adding movement and mystery.



Erika Howard, London Hampstead Photographic Society
Iron Giants

Canon EOS R5, 24-70mm at 40mm, 1/800sec, f/7.1, ISO 250

Erika gives these weathered sea forts an imposing presence, beautifully balancing their battered industrial character against the soft sky and restless water to create a powerful architectural landscape.



Kim Benson, Kidlington (KCC) Photo Group
Flipping over Adams Plaza Bridge

Not supplied

Kim's inventive approach takes architectural photography somewhere altogether different, using symmetry, bold colour and geometric repetition.



Sarah Mawdsley, Crosby Camera Club
Milwaukee Art Museum

SONY DSC-RX100M6,
 1/125sec, f/4, ISO125

Sarah turns architecture into pure graphic minimalism, with the brilliant white structure, precise symmetry and beautifully controlled negative space creating an image of striking elegance.

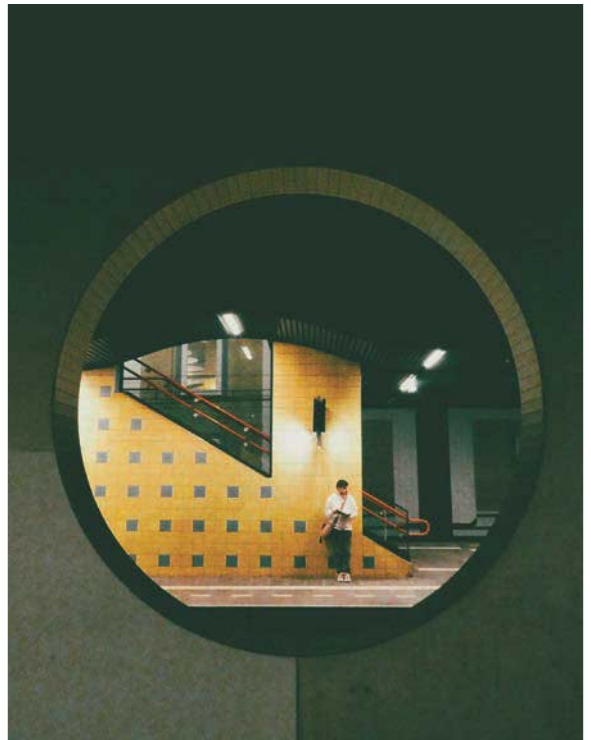
YOUNG APOY WINNERS



1 Kaian Wang Golden Spiral 100pts

Not supplied

Kaian's image is a beautifully controlled study of shape, line and colour. The viewpoint immediately draws us into the image, with the sweeping curves of the staircase creating an almost hypnotic spiral towards the centre. There is a lovely contrast between the cool, pale architecture and the warmth of the steps, while the repeated forms give the photograph a strong sense of rhythm. The image feels both precise and playful, demonstrating how changing your viewpoint can transform an ordinary architectural feature into something almost abstract. A confident, graphic photograph with a very satisfying sense of balance.



2 Mavie Diesel Untitled 90pts

Panasonic DC-TZ99, 1/40sec, f/3.5, ISO 3200

Mavie has found an unusual way to look at architecture, using the circle as a frame within the frame. The dark surrounding structure gives the photograph an almost cinematic quality, while the warm tiled wall and staircase provide a striking splash of colour. Most importantly, there is a human presence within that carefully constructed circle, giving the image scale and a focal point without becoming the whole story. We liked the way the different geometric elements interact with one another. There is plenty to discover in this image.



3 Esteban Carlier The Little World of Humans 80pts

SONY ILCE-6600, 18-50mm at 26.1mm, 1/1600sec, f/2.8, ISO 400

Esteban has created a surreal architectural photograph in which scale becomes the star of the show. The stark white surfaces and deep black geometric opening create an almost minimalist abstract composition, but then we notice the tiny human figure within it. That small detail completely changes our reading of the image, turning architecture into an unfamiliar world.



4 Eojin Hwang Inerwoven Flow 70pts

SONY ILCE-7M4, 24-70mm at 29mm, 1/50sec, f/2.8, ISO 200

Eojin has made excellent use of the sweeping curves of Dongdaemun Design Plaza to create a photograph that is as much about people as it is about architecture. The repeating staircases lead the eye through the frame, with each person occupying their own little space within this wonderfully complex structure. A pleasing contrast between architecture and people.

BEST OF THE REST

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

Jessica Miller, deputy online editor, chooses Curvy Staircase by Kacper Mulik

Nikon Z7 II, Nikon Nikkor Z 24-120mm F4 S, 1/125sec, f/4, ISO 140

Jessica says: Kacper has taken this shot of a staircase in K20 Kunstsammlung in Duesseldorf, Germany. It caught my attention in judging because of how seemingly simple it was. But less is more here. Shape, composition and minimalism are why this is a successful photo for me. I love the shape of the staircase and the flow that has been captured, both structurally and visually within the frame. The curves of the staircase offer a strong sense of movement and flow, the neutral beige feels calming and minimal, and the shadows of the physical structure and the darker lines of the handrails give it some contrast and shape rather than it being completely flat. The crop and positioning within the frame on this is great. With a curve that just kisses the left edge and lines that lead us round to the corners perfectly, this perspective makes an ordinary staircase more abstract.



Nigel Atherton, editor, chooses Nandgaon Temple by Azim Khan Ronnie

DJI Mavic 2 Pro, 28mm lens, 1/200sec at f/5.6, ISO 100

Nigel says: Nandgaon is a sacred pilgrimage town in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh, India, famous as the childhood home of Lord Krishna. I don't believe I've ever seen any photos of this town before but this extraordinary picture makes me want to visit. At the centre of

the town, high on a hill, stands the 18th-century Nandgaon Temple complex, which towers over everything around it. All of the other buildings emanate outwards from this North Star. Azim Khan Ronnie's aerial drone shot perfectly conveys the temple's dominance over the town but also tells an anthropological story about the power of religious faith in societies of all cultures, and how so many people's lives around the world revolve around it – quite literally in this case.



Geoff Harris, deputy editor, chooses **Tulip Staircase by Alan Magellan**

Not supplied

Geoff says: While this image won't win any prizes for originality of subject, I find it very satisfying and restful to look at. And what a subject – the sinuous shape of the Tulip Stairs, located inside the Queen's House in Greenwich, spectacularly echo the Fibonacci spiral or golden spiral, a type of logarithmic spiral commonly found in nature. With this image, the photographer has done a great job of capturing the exquisite shape of the stairs, along with the beautiful wrought-iron bannisters, to create an image I could look at all day. It also makes me want to visit the Queen's House to see these stunning stairs for myself!



Peter Dench, APOY project manager, chooses **Shadows of Industry by Harvey Tomlinson**

Hasselblad L2D-20c, 24.0 mm, 1/500sec, f/5.6, ISO 100

Peter says: I admit to feeling a little lacklustre when I saw it was time for the Architecture round. Buildings don't tell stories, people do, right? I braced myself for a stream of images of a camera pointed upwards. I was a fool. This round was packed full of images that told stories and excited the imagination. This contrast between the neat, quintessentially British home and the enormous cooling towers of Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station creates an instantly compelling picture. The story behind that juxtaposition really makes it sing. It speaks of home, community and the everyday, the power station dominates the skyline as a monument to Britain's industrial past and changing energy landscape. Shooting it in black and white feels entirely appropriate, giving the scene a timeless, documentary quality. What initially looks like a straightforward architectural landscape reveals plenty to think about and that's a good lesson in never judging a round by its title!

The 2026 leaderboards

APOY

1	David Davies	180
2	Azim Khan Ronnie	165
3	Sirsendu Gayen	150
4	Susan Hall	130
5=	Graeme Youngson	125
5=	Peter Baker	125
7=	Helen Trust	120
7=	Trevor Lake	120
9=	Charles Edward Ashton	100
9=	Cliff Spooner	100
9=	David Travis	100
9=	Erika Howard	100
9=	Karen Morris	100
9=	Lourdes Venard	100
9=	Paul Fine	100
9=	Richard Coulstock	100
9=	Yasser Alaa Mobarak	100

YOUNG APOY

1	Matteo Botta	170
2=	Adrian Kaletta	110
2=	Sam Morris	110
4=	Anaya Zeeshan	100
4=	Cavon Hajimiri	100
4=	Grace Learoyd-Hill	100
4=	Henry Salter	100
4=	Kaian Wang	100
4=	Mac Motz	100
4=	Mary Louise Kasper	100
4=	River Keats Kedzier-Hurst	100

CAMERA CLUBS

1	Mid-Somerset Camera Club	245
2	Launceston Camera Club	220
3	Visions Photography Club	195
4	Plymouth Camera Club	190
5	Royston Photo Society	135
6	Kempsey Camera Club	120
7	Leek Photographic Club	110

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



At a glance

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- 3inch, 1.04m-dot vari-angle touchscreen
- 4K 30p video recording

OM System PEN

This gorgeous-looking camera includes one-handed operation, in-body image stabilisation, and weather sealing. **Joshua Waller** puts it to the test

For and against

- + Cheapest weather-sealed camera available
- + High-speed shooting at 30fps, plus Pro Capture at full resolution
- + 5-axis in-body image stabilisation
- + Film recipes with new app
- + Built-in viewfinder
- Other cameras offer a higher resolution sensor and better video
- No built-in flash due to EVF - and no flash in box
- Silver body shows marks quicker than black body

Data file

Sensor	20MP Live MOS, 17.4 x 13.0mm
Output size	5184 x 3888
Focal length mag.	2x
Lens mount	Micro Four Thirds
Sensitivity	ISO 200-6,400 (standard), ISO 64-25,600 (extended)
Exposure modes	PASM, B., Auto, Scene, Art
Metering	Pattern, spot, centre-weighted, highlight spot, shadow spot
Exposure compensation	+/- 5EV in 0.3EV steps
Continuous shooting	30fps (electronic, S-AF), 8fps (electronic, C-AF)
Screen	3in, 1.04m-dot fully articulated touchscreen
Viewfinder	2.36m-dot, 0.62x magnification
AF points	121
Video	4K 30p, Full HD 120p
External mic	3.5mm stereo
Memory card	UHS-I SD
Power	BLS-7 Li-ion
Battery life	410 shots
Dimensions	125.8 x 74.5 x 43.3mm
Weight	393g (inc battery and card)

The OM System PEN is a new entry-level Micro Four Thirds model that aims to be the ideal everyday camera, thanks to weather-sealing, a relatively compact design, and a built-in electronic viewfinder. With a stylish retro look, will it do enough to impress die-hard PEN fans?

I've been reviewing Olympus PEN cameras for a long time now, since the first digital PEN, the E-P1 in 2009. I also reviewed almost every single PEN released since then, with standout designs including the E-P5 as a quality metal-built camera that I still use today, and the premium PEN-F from 2016, with its 20MP sensor and built-in viewfinder. The most recent E-P7 was released in 2021, but didn't quite live up to expectations. So can the new OM

System PEN correct this?

This latest version is part of OM System's range of weather-sealed cameras, and brings back the built-in viewfinder, after it was missing from the E-P7. There will be things it does that please some, whilst disappointing others. But the one thing that can't be argued with is the price; at £849 body-only, and £949 with weather-sealed kit lens, it's very competitive. It goes head-to-head with the likes of the Fujifilm X-T30 III, the Nikon Z50II and the Canon EOS R10 - many of these being more expensive than the PEN. It'll also be up against older models such as the Sony Alpha A6400, Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV, and Panasonic Lumix G97.

Features

The OM System PEN is the latest Micro Four Thirds mirrorless

The PEN gives great results at a really good price - and even includes pet recognition!
OM System PEN, 45mm f/1.8, 1/200sec at f/2.2, ISO 200



model. It's designed to be an 'everyday' camera, and for OM System, this means including weather-sealing, with a sealed kit zoom as part of the package. You can, of course, use any Micro Four Thirds lens, but you'll need a weather-sealed one to keep the sealing complete.

The 20MP Four Thirds Live-MOS sensor is not the stacked unit from the OM-1 and OM-3, which would have increased the cost of this camera. But instead, it's the same sensor as the OM-5 Mark II (which itself originally came from the E-M1 Mark III). This means you get on-sensor phase-detection autofocus, as well as up to 30fps continuous shooting. So, whilst it's not as fast as a stacked sensor would be, it's still easily fast enough to keep up with other cameras in this class and price point.

The PEN has an IPX1 rating, when combined with suitable lenses. OM System has been updating its lenses to make them splash-proof, and this includes an updated version of the small 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 zoom available in a kit with the PEN. In recent years, similar updates were made to the tiny 17mm F1.8 II and 25mm F1.8 II primes, which are now also splash-proof.

The IPX1 rating means it is protected against condensation or dripping water falling vertically. This is the lowest waterproof rating available, so shouldn't be expected to live up to the standards of the other OM cameras (which have the IP53 rating – including both dust and water). But it is at least an official rating, unlike other cameras at this price point.

Computational photography is

included, and this comes with a dedicated 'CP' button. These are designed to be advanced features that are built into the camera, so that the processing happens when you take the photo (or straight after). This makes them easier to use, without having to go and do further image editing or processing on a computer.

The main computational photography features are Hi-res shot (tripod or hand-held); LiveND (2 – 16 stops); focus stacking; HDR; and multiple exposure. To access these, you press and hold the CP button and turn the front dial to scroll through the options. But there's much more in the menus too, including a digital tele-converter, interval shooting, keystone compensation and fisheye compensation. OM's Live Bulb/Time/Composite mode is

another clever computational photography feature that fans of light painting (and low-light photography in general) will find impressive. If you're familiar with Olympus/OM cameras, then you'll know this has been around for a while now.

Video is recorded in 8-bit quality (rather than 10-bit), which will limit your ability to adjust the video colour profile or exposure after recording. However, the camera does come with a full-size microphone socket, and IBIS helps keep video steady. Face and eye detection AF is available while recording.

Build and Handling

Measuring 125.8mm wide, 74.5mm high, and 43.3mm deep, the PEN is ever so slightly larger than the PEN-F. But it's a little bit lighter in weight,





The front switch gives easy creative control - this is the Film B&W option
OM System PEN, 42mm, 1/320sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

weighing in at 393g with battery and memory card. There's not a great deal in it, as the camera still feels small and pocketable (when using a jacket pocket as a reference). With a compact prime lens, rather than the 14-42mm lens, it becomes smaller, and if size is all that matters, then you could even pair it with a body-cap lens.

It's been designed with one-handed use in mind, with all the controls on the right-hand side. This means you can easily use it even when you have the camera held up to your eye. There are front and rear control dials, which makes it quick and easy to change settings. The buttons on the camera can also be customised, so you can set up the camera to give quick access to settings and options if needed.

It really does feel good in your hand. Even though the camera is made of plastic, the construction feels reassuringly solid. The one negative comment that I do have about the build quality is that the black version does feel better, thanks to a speckled finish,

compared to the smooth finish of the silver version. However, I prefer the looks of the latter.

A rubberised grip on the back for your thumb, combined with a rubber grip at the front, makes holding the camera comfortable and reassuring to hold. Even if you don't use the provided strap you should be fine.

Even though the construction is plastic, the build quality is exceptional in parts where it matters, thanks to the dials feeling very well made and grippy, with knurled metal on the mode dial and front scroll wheel, and a grippy rubber dial at the rear. The weather sealing around the locking battery compartment and memory card slot (as well as all the other unseen weather-sealing) go a long way to add quality and dependability to the camera.

The design of the camera is a huge part of the PEN series, and in fact, of cameras in general. So whilst it is a shame that we don't see the Olympus logo any more, we do get a very nice-looking front, top and rear. The front grip

is a good addition, and something that has generally been quite minimal on previous PENs.

Looking at the top plate, there's a slight curve towards the left and right of the camera, which is reminiscent of older PEN models, such as the E-P1 and earlier film versions. This is a nice, but quite subtle design cue, that I'm a big fan of. In comparison, the Fujifilm X100VI and X-E5 have leaned heavily into a boxier design.

The mode dial gives a range of options, including the usual PASM positions, along with two custom modes for the more advanced users. There are also Auto, Scene and Art Filter modes for those looking to use it without having to worry about shutter speed and aperture settings. In fact, the scene modes do an excellent job of setting up the camera for some quite advanced shooting scenarios, such as light trails and stacked macro photos.

The PEN has a neat little dial on the front, which is a development of the dial on the original PEN-F and now the OM-3. This switch has two positions:

standard and Colour/Mono. Switching to Colour/Mono gets you to the custom Colour and Mono Film options, which are in addition to the standard colour

Image quality remains very good up to ISO 3200
OM System PEN, 30mm, 1/60sec at f/5, ISO 3200



profiles found in the normal shooting modes. This switch was also found on the Olympus PEN E-P7, but now these modes have new 'Film' names like 'Film Rich Color'. You can customise these profiles to suit your personal preferences, but then their names disappear.

In use, this switch falls easily to hand, making it really quick and easy to switch between the standard shooting mode, and the colour/mono 'film' of your choice. This can be done without looking away from the camera, for example when you have the camera up to your eye.

One thing to note when using these colour and monochrome modes is that you will very easily find yourself addicted to using them. I loved the colour options, and equally loved shooting in high contrast black and white with grain effects. You can leave JPEG+RAW switched on so that you always have the original raw file to go back to if you need it. Built-in raw/JPEG editing makes it easy to make quick tweaks to images in-camera if needed.

You can set film grain in the mono mode, but unfortunately it isn't an option on colour photos. However you could always increase the ISO speed, and get some real noise if you wanted.

Viewfinder and screen

The electronic viewfinder found at the top left gives a good view, with a reasonable magnification (0.62x) and 2.36m-dot resolution that matches other cameras at this price point. Dioptre adjustment is available, and optically the view is really crisp and clear. It looks great and can be really useful in bright sunny conditions where you might struggle to see the screen clearly.

The 3-in touchscreen gives good colour reproduction, but with just 1.04m dots, it's looking a little dated. It can be a little bit difficult to see in bright sunny conditions, and framing can become tricky.

The menus are colour coded and can be navigated using the touchscreen. The days of complaining about menus on OM cameras is thankfully long gone. You can store all your favourite menu settings in the 'My Menu' section. Another way to change settings can be found by pressing the OK button, and bringing up the 'Super Control Panel' which gives access to a range of common settings.

Autofocus

The camera includes human and pet face detection, which detect the subject's eyes in



Focal points

In effect, the PEN repackages many OM-5 II features into a compact, rangefinder-style body

Power

The camera uses an all-new battery, the BLS-7, which offers 410 shots. This battery is unique to this model.

Connectors

Micro-HDMI, USB-C, and 3.5mm microphone ports are included.

Storage

There's a side door giving access to the SD card, without having to go near the battery. This is also weather sealed with a rubber/foam gasket.



Lens mount

As part of the Micro Four Thirds system, there is a vast range of lenses available, although you'll need weather-sealed versions to maintain the IPX1 rating.

Colours

The camera is available in silver/black, as well as all-black, with the black version featuring a textured finish which gives a slightly more premium feel.

Weather sealing

The IPX1 rating means it's protected against condensation or dripping water falling vertically.



➤ order to focus correctly. You need to choose between the two before you take your photo. Automatic detection would be nice, but unfortunately it isn't included.

The camera does not include the other subject detection features of the OM-1 II and OM-3, which is a bit of a shame. But it's nice to see cat and dog detection AF has been added.

Performance

The camera switches on rapidly, and you can be ready to take photos quickly. The shutter sound is quite smooth and subtle, rather than a loud clack of some other cameras.

Continuous shooting gives some fast options, with 30fps available at the full 20MP resolution, although with fixed focus and metering. I was able to shoot 25 shots (Large, Fine, JPEG) before it slowed down. The camera continued shooting, but at a slower speed.

The new battery puts in a good showing. I was able to take over 300 photos and it still showed 2 bars of battery life. Your results will vary depending on what shooting modes you employ; for example, use 30fps continuous shooting and you could easily shoot thousands of photos.

In-body image stabilisation means the camera hums quietly when it's active. The sensor looks like it moves around freely, but you don't need to worry about either of these things as they're perfectly normal. It allows for steady shots at much slower shutter speeds than would otherwise be possible, and being in the camera means it can work with any lens attached. This includes manual lenses from other brands – simply set the focal length in the settings when needed.

In use, the stabilisation is very impressive. I was able to easily take sharp shots even when hand-holding the camera at shutter speeds as slow as 1/6sec when using the 14-42mm lens at 42mm. Your results may vary, but it's nice to know that you can rely on it when needed, using slower shutter speeds, and therefore lower ISO speeds.

Auto White Balance and colour are strong points of OM System cameras, which are inherited from Olympus. Metering is another thing that I found extremely reliable on this camera, and I used exposure compensation more for creative effect rather than to correct any error made by the camera.

In most situations, dynamic range is quite good. The camera gives pleasing looking images most of the time, but it can struggle when there is a high level of contrast in the frame, for example, when the sun is nearly in shot. Switching on the HDR mode gives great results by combining multiple shots taken in quick succession. Most of the time you won't need to use this, but it's nice to know it's available. If you shoot JPEG+raw then you can also recover shadows and highlights quite successfully from the raw files, without having to use the HDR multi-shot feature.

As for image quality, low ISO speeds will give the most detail, however as the sensitivity increases beyond ISO 3200, the level of detail that drops can seem more noticeable on this camera than other cameras with larger sensors. Colour doesn't really drop off till ISO 12,800. At the lowest ISO speeds of L64 and L100, dynamic range is reduced in the highlights, so these are best avoided.

Personally, I'd be happy to shoot all the way up to ISO 6400 without worrying too much. But your own personal preferences will come into play here, depending on what you find acceptable in terms of image quality. There are normally only a few ways to resolve this, by adding more light (flash, lighting etc), or using a slower ISO speed and shutter speed (thanks to the in-body image stabilisation, this latter option becomes quite realistic).

Of course, a brighter lens is also a great option if you have the budget, as a 45mm f/1.8 lens (for example) is far more capable compared to 42mm at f/5.6 on the kit lens. Another option is to shoot raw and use the latest AI noise reduction photo editing software to improve

your shots when needed.

If you want more resolution, then you can use the high-resolution multi-shot mode to get 25 and 50MP images. I got the best results using the tripod mode rather than the hand-held mode. However, even then it's quite useful to use the self-timer or the delay options in the menus, as pressing the shutter button can create shake. The camera will take a number of frames moving the sensor in between (at a sub-pixel level), and then combine them in-camera to give you a higher resolution JPEG and raw image.

This is best suited to still subjects, but it can also be used for landscapes, if you're prepared for any movement to show up in strange ways. You can also use this hand-held, although your results may vary. The results are impressive, considering how relatively easy it is to use this feature.

As for video recording, there will be some people who find this is good enough, and indeed some of the features are quite advanced. However, as content creation becomes more and more important, open gate video support would have been nice to see, as well as 10-bit recording. Although, at this price point it is still not that common.

Updated kit zoom

The OM System 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 III MSC kit zoom offers impressive close-focus performance. Indeed at the wideangle setting it can focus close enough to show individual RGB pixels on a computer screen. Telephoto close-up performance doesn't get as close, but is still very capable of giving sharp images, with some nice-looking background blur despite the relatively slow f/5.6 aperture.

Detail and sharpness are really quite impressive for a kit lens, whether shooting wide-angle or telephoto. The retracting design means that you can make the lens smaller when it's not in use, making it easier to store. However, it can slow you down if you forget about it when switching the camera on.





The updated 14-42mm kit zoom is great for close-ups
OM System PEN, 42mm, 1/200sec at f/9, ISO 200



Like all OM System and Olympus cameras, the PEN gives lovely colour rendition
OM System PEN, 27mm, 1/200sec at f/8, ISO 200

Verdict



The OM System PEN punches well above what's expected for an entry-level mirrorless camera. At this price point, none of its competitors offer either in-body image stabilisation or weather-sealing. You also get high-speed shooting up to 30fps. The PEN is much cheaper than its Canon, Nikon, and Fujifilm competitors, too.

In low light the camera and kit lens combo can struggle a little due to the slow aperture. But you can rely on image stabilisation to help, or add a bright prime lens. Speaking of lenses, there's a range of small primes that will work great on this camera. But if the kit zoom is all you've got, then it's still possible to take lovely photos, with particularly impressive close-focus performance.

There are so many features here that it's difficult to capture them all, so I've tried to focus on the most interesting ones. That's what makes this, and other OM cameras so interesting. If you can look past 'it's not full-frame' and 'it's only 20MP', then you'll find a camera that delivers high quality results, with genuinely useful features that are unique to the OM range. And the smaller sensor brings some huge benefits in system size, with smaller lighter lenses. Macro shooting also benefits from the smaller sensor, and with in-camera focus stacking, it that can deliver impressive results, without you having to jump on a computer and spend hours editing

Above all else, the PEN offers a complete package that gives both pleasing image quality and an enjoyable shooting experience. I particularly enjoyed using the color/mono switch and the electronic viewfinder on this rangefinder-style camera. All with easy one-handed operation.

Amateur Photographer
GOLD
★★★★★

FEATURES	9/10
BUILD & HANDLING	8/10
METERING	9/10
AUTOFOCUS	8/10
AWB & COLOUR	9/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	8/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	8/10



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Used wide open, this is a good lens for portraits
Panasonic Lumix S9, 1/50sec at f/2, ISO 250



Panasonic Lumix S 40mm F2.0

With an affordable price, and great looking images, is this the lens the Lumix S9 has been waiting for?

Joshua Waller finds out



The Panasonic Lumix S 40mm F2.0 is a compact, affordable prime lens for L-mount cameras. It could perhaps be a perfect option for use with the small Lumix S9 body, as well as other Panasonic cameras, if you're looking to make your setup more portable. At just £349, it's the firm's cheapest full-frame

autofocus lens.

Panasonic says that 40mm is 'close to the natural human field of view'. This is debatable, as the 'human field of view' includes peripheral vision out to almost 180° horizontally. But the 40-45mm lens range does give extremely natural-looking images, with neither telephoto compression, nor wide-angle

distortion. So while it may not, strictly speaking, represent a natural field of view as such, it does produce images with a very natural perspective, that human beings are very used to seeing.

Features

Optically, the lens is made up of 7 elements in 6 groups, with 3 aspherical lenses included to

suppress spherical aberration. This makes it a relatively simple construction, which no doubt helps with the smaller footprint. There are also 7 diaphragm blades that produce a circular aperture designed to give nicer looking background blur.

It's a nice combination of a small lens, and a bright-ish F2.0 aperture, which makes





Crystal Palace Park Dinosaurs - recently renovated and restored
Panasonic Lumix S9, 1/500sec at f/4.5, ISO 100

➤ it easier to keep your shutter speeds faster and your ISO speeds lower as your light levels drop. It also lets you throw the background out of focus more easily, compared to a standard kit zoom or slower lens.

There's a minimum focus distance of 30cm, with 0.17x magnification. This should give some nice-looking close-ups.

Build and handling

The Lumix S 40mm F2.0 isn't necessarily a particularly stylish looking lens, but functional

instead. It's not too snazzy, whilst also not being ugly. It gets the job done, and doesn't care too much about what it looks like.

It's incredibly lightweight for a full-frame lens of this focal length and aperture size, weighing just 144g. It's also impressively compact at just 40.9mm long, making it a great combination with the Panasonic Lumix S9, one of the smallest full-frame cameras available.

In comparison to what's available on other systems, Sony's FE 40mm F2.5 G weighs

173g which is both heavier than the Panasonic, and not as bright. Nikon's Z 40mm F2 is also heavier at 170g. Canon doesn't offer a 40mm lens for the RF-mount; however, the Canon RF 50mm F1.8 STM weighs 160g, so again heavier, but not quite a direct comparison.

There's a fluorine coating on the front element, designed to repel fingerprints, dirt and grime. The front element is relatively compact, and it's also recessed meaning that you have to try quite hard to get your fingerprints on it. This is welcome as there's no option to fit a hood, aside from the 62mm filter thread.

Like the businesslike design, the lens feels well built, and with a weather-sealed construction. It's designed to be dust, splash, and freeze-resistant down to -10C, so you can feel confident in the build-quality. This means you could quite comfortably leave this lens on the camera, and not worry too much about the conditions you're shooting in.

The focus ring is smooth to use, and in manual focus feels like it gives a good level of control. You can customise this,

choosing between linear and non-linear operation – set this to non-linear and the amount of focus shift varies depending on how fast you turn the ring.

There's no dedicated aperture ring, but the focus ring can be customised so that it can be used to adjust shutter and aperture settings, as well as a digital zoom/crop (although features may vary depending on the camera used, and the firmware version). This customisation is designed to be used with Panasonic cameras.

There's a customisable Focus (Fn) button – this can be set to AF lock, AF/AE lock, AF-On, and more. There's also an MF/AF switch to quickly switch between manual and auto-focus when needed.

Autofocus

Looking through over 100 photos I initially took with the lens, there was only one that missed focus – focusing on the background rather than the subjects. Whether this was a lens or a camera issue, I don't know. As this was a one-off, I decided I didn't need to spend much more time thinking



The background blur is rendered very pleasingly
Panasonic Lumix S9, 1/50sec at f/2, ISO 200

As an everyday lens, you can take nice photos as you walk around
Panasonic Lumix S9, 1/200sec at f/2, ISO 100



about it, and didn't notice any issues in any of the following images I took.

Focus speeds were completely adequate for my needs, as I used the camera for general photography (portraits, product shots, and general scenes). I didn't feel myself impatiently waiting for the camera and lens to focus.

The linear stepping motor is electronically controlled, and this is true when using manual focus as well. It's just that you're now controlling the focus, rather than the camera.

For video use, focus breathing appeared to be minimal for all intents and purposes. In my testing the focusing noise was very low too, and easily covered by general noise in the scene. There's also 'micro-step' aperture control that's designed to stop sudden exposure changes when recording video.

Performance

Sharpness is good in the centre of the frame at f/2, with some softness towards the corners. Stop down to f/4 and sharpness extends into the corners, and by f/5.6 you'll find crisp sharpness across the frame. Where you need sharpness and detail from f/4 onwards, you'll find it in spades. If you're shooting

portraits at f/2 with a subject in the centre of the frame, then the corner softness shouldn't matter.

If you are expecting sharpness across the frame when shooting wide open, then perhaps this isn't the lens for you. On higher-resolution Panasonic cameras, the levels of sharpness may be more or less apparent and stopping down may be beneficial, especially if you're of the pixel-peeping variety of photographer.

For the most part, chromatic aberration is barely visible, as Panasonic has been correcting these kinds of optical aberrations using software for a long time now. However, there were some images where I captured that elusive beast - the dreaded purple fringing monster. If needed this can be corrected in raw editing software.

Vignetting is strongest at f/2, and clearly visible even with vignetting compensation switched on in-camera. It's still quite strong at f/2.5, and gradually decreases as you stop down the lens, remaining slightly visible at f/3.2, and is completely gone by f/4.

When photographing brick walls or other uniform subjects, the vignetting is very clearly visible. But look at sample

photos taken at f/2.0, and you'll often find the vignetting isn't really that noticeable and depends heavily on the scene being photographed.

Distortion is automatically corrected in JPEG images, as well as with raw images when opening them in modern software such as Adobe Lightroom and Camera Raw. Even if you somehow manage to get uncorrected images out of the camera (perhaps by using some old raw processing software) the distortion is quite minimal.

There's minimal lens flare too, but it can be induced if you try. If you want an old-school lens with lens flare aplenty, then this is unlikely to be the lens for you, as it's so well controlled.

I really like the look of the background blur produced by this lens - I took a number of shots at the brightest aperture, and found the sharpness levels very pleasing (with crisp detail on the subject), and some smooth creamy bokeh adding to the look of the image. The results produced will vary depending on how close the subject is to the lens, and what's going on in the background. But it's pleasingly easy to throw the background completely out of focus when needed.



Verdict

Currently this is the only 40mm prime lens available in L-mount from Panasonic, Sigma, and Leica. There are the usual 30mm, 35mm, and 50mm options, as well as one 45mm option, but this is the only 40mm, making it somewhat unique, and combined with a compact size and bright F2.0 aperture I feel like we're on to a real winner. (Look outside these brands, and you'll find the 7artisans AF 40mm F2.5 prime lens too, as well as at least one dedicated CINE lens.)

40mm prime lenses are still relatively few and far between, so it's nice to see this option has a relatively bright F2 aperture, combined with a compact design. Add in an extremely affordable price point, particularly in today's market, and if you have good image quality too, then you're on to a real winner.

I can say I was certainly impressed with this lens, with sharpness in spades when used on the Panasonic Lumix S9 camera. Yes, there is strong vignetting when shooting wide-open, which doesn't completely go until F4. But if you're able to live with this for creative framing, or edit it out if it really needs it, then this lens should be high on your list. It's a lovely lens, and for me, 40mm is a happy place to be.

Data file

Filter diameter	Minimum focus
62mm	30cm
Lens elements	Length
7	40.9mm
Groups	Diameter
6	69.4mm
Diaphragm blades	Weight
7	144g
Aperture	Mount
f/2 - f/22	L-mount
	Included accessories
	Front and rear caps



Amateur Photographer
Recommended
★★★★★

RO S APS



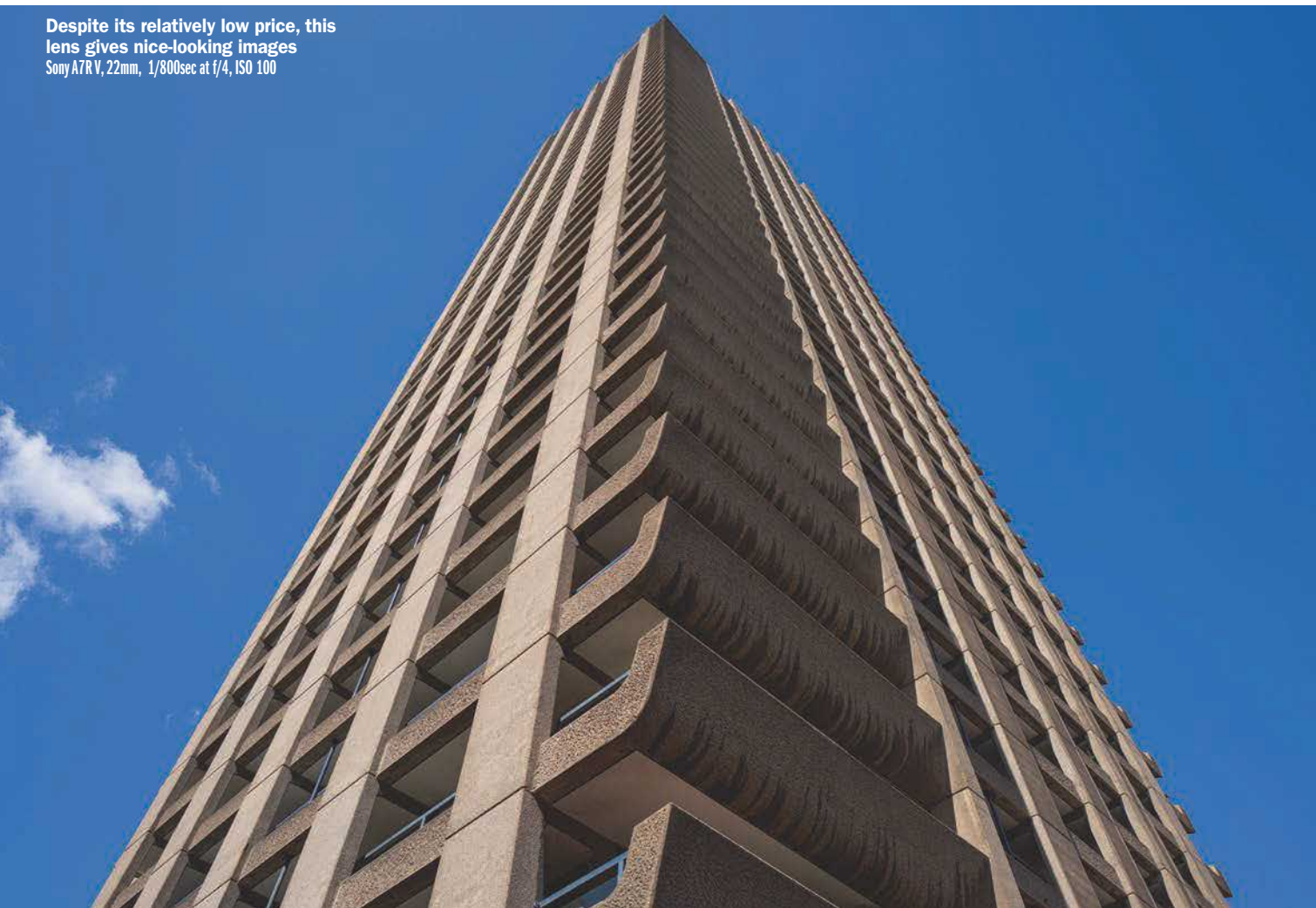
The **universal Arca compatible quick release system** allows you to use your preferred Arca compatible quick release plate and attach your camera to your tripod with ease.

Available as a **single harness** or **dual 2-in-1 harness**



The **Connect safety tether** offers an extra level of security with a Connect quick release system.

Despite its relatively low price, this lens gives nice-looking images
Sony A7R V, 22mm, 1/800sec at f/4, ISO 100



Sigma 20-60mm F2.8-4 DG | C

Sigma's latest full-frame zoom delivers a wider-than-usual start point in a remarkably small package.

Andy Westlake tries it out.

While full-frame cameras are extremely popular, one area where they are at a disadvantage lies with lens size. If you want a small and portable full-frame optic, it usually means compromising on zoom range, aperture, and other desirable features such as weathersealing. Sigma is aiming

to change that with its latest 20-60mm F2.8-4 DG, which combines an unusually wide-angle view and a large aperture in a remarkably compact size.

This lens is a small, lightweight standard zoom for everyday use. It could be particularly attractive for such things as landscapes, cityscapes, travel and video. As part of Sigma's Contemporary

line-up, it's designed to give strong optical performance at an affordable price. It's available in L-mount and Sony E versions, with both costing £749.

To get an idea of its appeal, we just need to look at the closest available alternatives. This lens is similar in size and weight to both the Tamron 20-40mm F/2.8 Di III VXD, and the Panasonic Lumix S



20-60mm F3.5-5.6. Arguably, it offers the best balance of zoom range and aperture of the three.

With its petite dimensions, this lens could be especially attractive to photographers using smaller full-frame cameras such as the Sigma BF, Panasonic Lumix S9, and Sony A7C range. It could also be used on APS-C cameras, but the Sigma 18-50mm F2.8 DC DN would likely be a better match. The real question, of course, is whether it's any good? ➤



Image quality is impressive throughout the zoom range
Sony A7R V, 46mm, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 100

Features

Sigma says that despite the lens's small size and light weight, it hasn't compromised on image quality. The optical design employs 16 elements in 13 groups, including 3 aspherical lenses to maximise cross-frame sharpness, plus 3 super-low dispersion (SLD) glass lenses to suppress chromatic aberration.

Autofocus employs Sigma's High-response Linear Actuator. This is used to drive a single lens element back and forth internally, which promises fast, quiet

autofocus. Focus breathing is suppressed optically.

While the minimum focus distance is just 15.8cm at the 28mm position, the maximum magnification of 0.43x is actually achieved at 35mm. Zoom to 60mm and the lens offers 0.34x at a 25cm focus distance.

The diaphragm is formed of 9 curved blades which produce a near-circular aperture, with the aim of delivering attractive bokeh. That f/2.8 maximum opening at 20mm drops to f/3.2 by 24mm, f/3.5 a little after 28mm, and f/4

at about 40mm. You can get some nice blur if you position your subject and backgrounds carefully, but overall, this isn't the best lens to choose if shallow depth-of-field is a priority.

At the front, there's a 67mm filter thread, which has become a popular size for compact full-frame lenses. A hood is supplied in the box, and reverses snugly back over the lens when it's not in use.

Build and handling

As full-frame zooms go, the Sigma 20-60mm is strikingly petite. It's just 88mm long in its E-mount incarnation, extending to 122mm when zoomed to telephoto. What's more, the 72.2mm maximum diameter only relates to the front-most section where the hood mounts, and the main barrel is actually a few millimetres slimmer. At just 375g, it adds little extra heft to your camera. I tested it on the SLR-shaped Sony A7R V, and it's refreshingly lightweight compared to more conventional standard zooms such as my usual 24-105mm f/4.

Build quality is in line with what

I'd expect at this price. The outer barrel is constructed of plastic and feels perfectly robust. It boasts dust-and-splash resistant construction, with seals around the lens mount, zoom and focus rings, and the front glass. The latter also features a water and oil-repellent coating, which makes it easier to keep clean.

There are just two controls, the zoom ring at the front, and the focus ring closer to the camera. You don't get such things as an aperture ring or AF/MF switch, but I guess this is forgivable given the small size and relatively low price. In a welcome touch that's something of a Sigma trademark, a ridged moulding around the lower part of the barrel between the two control rings provides positive grip when mounting or removing the lens.

The zoom ring rotates nice and smoothly, with about 80° travel required to get from one end to the other. As with most modern lenses, the manual focus ring operates electronically, rather than mechanically. Again, it's very smooth and nicely damped. Overall, the lens is very well-behaved, in operational terms.



Close-up performance is surprisingly good
Sony A7R V, 36mm, 1/250sec at f/4, ISO 500

This lens could be ideal for travel and cityscapes
Sony A7R V, 1/500sec at f/8, ISO 100



Autofocus

As for the autofocus, I found nothing to complain about. The lens focuses quickly, quietly and accurately, without any fuss. And while it's unlikely to be anyone's first choice for moving subjects, I found it kept up very well, especially when used with face and eye detection.

If you ever need to switch to manual focus, I was equally pleased with how this works. There's a nice, precise feel to the focus ring, and it's easy to get your subject pin-sharp. The lens fully supports the camera's focus aids, for example engaging magnified view if you want.

Performance

When it comes to image quality, the Sigma 20-60mm F2.8-4 punches well above its weight. Images look clean with plenty of fine detail, even when tested on the 60MP Sony A7R V. It can't quite match top-end lenses such as 24-70mm f/2.8s for absolute pixel-level sharpness under all conditions, but you'll have to stare closely onscreen, or print really large, to see this.

Indeed, looking back at the hundreds of images I shot with the lens, I'd be happy using pretty much any combination of focal length, aperture and focus distance. That's not to say it

doesn't have some optical weaknesses, of course. At the wideangle end, there's some visible blurring in the corners wide open, but this cleans up well on stopping down.

Likewise, I occasionally saw some slight softness wide open, particularly at longer focal lengths and close focus distances. But none of this was problematic, and when stopped down to its optimum apertures of around f/8 – f/11, the lens gives consistently sharp images from corner-to-corner.

I got some nice closeups, too, with impressive sharpness and lovely blurred backgrounds. However, it's worth noting that getting the maximum possible magnification at the 35mm setting requires placing the lens very close to the subject. This often means getting in your own light and casting a shadow on the subject. I gravitated more towards shooting close-ups at 60mm, which still gives decent magnification but with a more comfortable working distance.

It is, however, important to understand that the lens is dependent on software lens corrections to generate the final image. In particular, it's crucial to enable in-camera distortion compensation, if you want straight lines in the scene

to be rendered correctly in the output. Likewise, you'll need the requisite correction profiles for converting raw images.

Looking at uncorrected raw files, you'll see strong barrel distortion at 20mm, with a complex profile that recorrects to pincushion towards the corners. This effect reduces as you zoom in to a neutral point at 35mm, before switching to pincushion distortion at the long end. However, Sigma provided me with a lens profile compatible with Adobe Camera Raw that corrected this distortion perfectly to give properly straight lines. So it's not really a problem.

Likewise, fairly strong vignetting is visible at maximum aperture at either end of the zoom range. However, it pretty much clears up on stopping down to f/5.6. Again, it can be suppressed using in-camera compensation; for Sony users, this removes the shading from both JPEG and raw files.

One flaw that's noticeable by its absence is colour fringing around high-contrast edges due to lateral chromatic aberration. This is automatically corrected in-camera, and there's no sensible reason to ever turn this off. Adobe software fixes this flaw automatically during raw processing, too.



Verdict

Overall, the Sigma 20-60mm F2.8-4 DG is a really nice little lens that does what it's supposed to do with little fuss. It's small and easy to carry, focuses quickly and accurately, and delivers very respectable image quality. In fact, I struggled to find any real flaws.

Indeed, I've enjoyed using this lens more than I expected. Usually, I find standard zooms that top out at 60mm to be frustrating. But the versatility of the 20mm wideangle end makes up for that here. I used it to shoot landscapes and cityscapes and found it well suited to the task.

I could see this lens being particularly popular for travel photography. It's a refreshingly portable alternative to more conventional 24-70mm f/2.8 or 24-105mm f/4 options, for when you don't want to carry so much weight. It could also pair up nicely with a small telezoom such as the Tamron 50-300mm F/4.5-6.3 Di III VC VXD to give a lightweight kit with plenty of zoom range.

This is, however, a lens that leans heavily on software compensation for distortion. So if for some reason you object to this approach on principle, you should probably give it a miss. Personally, I think Sigma has got the balance pretty much right, and for full-frame users in search of a lightweight standard zoom, the 20-60mm F2.8-4 DG is a standout choice.

Data file

Price £749	Minimum focus 20-25cm
Filter Diameter 67mm	Length 88.0mm
Lens Elements 15	Diameter 72.2mm
Groups 13	Weight 375g
Diaphragm blades 9	Lens Mounts Sony E, L-Mount
Aperture f/2.8-4 - f/22-32	Included accessories Caps, hood, pouch



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Sony's new lightweight 400mm prime is ideal for wildlife
Sony A7R V, 1/500sec at f/4.5, ISO 100



Sony FE 400mm F4.5 GM OSS

With a useful focal length for distant subjects, this is a surprisingly versatile optic



Launched alongside a 600mm f/6.3 as one of a duo of super-tele primes designed for 'everyday shooting', Sony's new 400mm f/4.5 is the less expensive option, at £2400. But it's arguably the more flexible of the two, too.

The 400mm focal length allows you to get nicely close to subjects such as birds and wildlife, without being just that bit too close and

finding it difficult to frame your subject. Also, if you do need to get a bit closer, you can always shoot in APS-C mode anyway.

Primarily designed as a full-frame lens – I've been using it with the Sony A7RV – you can also use it with APS-C cameras. Being (relatively) lightweight, it's designed to be used on the go without weighing you down too badly – but let's see how it performs in the real world.

Features

If you're a wildlife or action photographer, a telephoto prime lens may be high on your wishlist. A nicely long optic like this is great for photographing subjects such as birds, planes, cycling and so on. It's also something you can conceivably use for portraits – providing you can get enough distance between you and the subject, to leave you with a nicely blurred background.

If that's the kind of photography you're into, it's also likely that you'll want the best possible image quality, with high sharpness and plenty of detail. As such, the fact that this is a G Master lens should be appealing, as it denotes that it's Sony's highest quality optic.

In terms of construction, this lens consists of 22 elements in 16 groups, including one ED (extra-low dispersion) plus





Autofocus works really well, especially when combined with subject detection
 Sony A7R V, 1/500sec at f/4.5, ISO 500

➤ three Super ED elements designed to reduce chromatic aberrations. Additionally, it has an 11-blade circular aperture to produce smooth and rounded bokeh.

The closest focusing distance is 2.5m, but as a lens that you'll mostly be using for distant subjects, that's more than fine.

Nano AR Coating II is included to suppress flare and ghosting. The front element has a fluorine coating to protect against water, oil and fingerprints, while the barrel is also fully weather and

dust sealed for use in less than favourable conditions. That's exactly what you need from a lens designed to be used to photograph wildlife.

It can be helpful to use the camera in APS-C mode if you need to get a bit closer to the action, giving you 600mm equivalent – but bear in mind that your resolution will drop. An alternative option is to use either a 1.4x and 2x teleconverter, giving you 560mm f/6.3 or 840mm f/9 respectively.

The lens is equipped with

Optical Steadyshot, which is designed to compensate for camera shake, and works in conjunction with the camera's in-built image stabilisation.

Build and Handling

Sony's new 400mm and 600mm lenses are the world's lightest super-telephoto lenses in their class, being under 1kg each (excluding the tripod foot). The 400mm is lighter than Sony's own competitors, even including the FE 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 GM OSS, which is nearly 50% more hefty at 1,395g.

In fact, it's extraordinary just how light the 400mm f/4.5 is to use. I walked around with it for several hours at a time and didn't end up with a terrible backache, which has got to be a good thing. I used it with the tripod foot attached to make it more comfortable to hold, but it's not a necessity – especially if you want to keep the weight down to an absolute minimum.

The lens has quite a few controls to take note of. There's a manual focusing ring, which is the largest ring found on the lens. It has no hard stops, but it has a

nice amount of give for when you're trying to make small or precise changes.

Next is the much smaller function ring. There are only two settings which can be assigned to this – Power Focus and switching between APS-C and 35mm. The former is manual focusing, but without the need to keep turning the focus ring. It can be useful for making quick changes without having to activate manual focusing with the switch on the side of the lens. It can also prove helpful if you need to abruptly switch from distant to closer focusing (or vice versa), if a bird has just flown to a nearer spot, for example.

Alternatively, being able to swiftly switch to APS-C crop is also quite useful if you're photographing subjects which are just a smidge out of reach, and want to quickly get closer.

A final ring houses four buttons which can all be used for Focus Hold, which locks focus on a specific spot without refocusing. This can be useful for bird and wildlife photography where you're anticipating the subject is going to appear in a specific location.



This is a lens that gives truly fabulous results
 Sony A7R V, 1/500sec at f/4.5, ISO 200

Sharpness is excellent, even at f/4.5, and out-of-focus areas are beautifully smooth
Sony A7R V, 1/500sec at f/4.5, ISO 125



There are five switches placed towards the mount. Some are self-explanatory, like AF/MF, but you've also got Full Time DMF On/Off – set this to On if you want be able to override autofocus manually. Then there is a switch for moving between full focus and 7m-infinity – this is very useful if you want to avoid the lens attempting to focus closer to you than the subjects you're trying to photograph.

The OSS switch is for switching on or off the optical image stabilisation, while finally you have a switch for choosing between stabilisation modes, with 1 being the standard option, 2 for panning shots, and 3 for when you want to keep up with erratic, fast-moving subjects.

A nice big lens hood comes in the box, which I find useful for making sure rain and other contaminants don't get on the front glass. It can be reversed to keep the size down for fitting more readily into your bag.

Autofocus

This lens features two high-thrust XD linear motors, which are designed to deliver fast and precise autofocus. If you're using it with a high-end camera such as the a9III, it promises to focus track at up to 120fps.

Although I was using it with an

A7RV, which is not necessarily what you'd choose for wildlife and action type photography, it was still able to keep up with moving subjects very well.

I switched on Sony's Real-time Tracking with Eye Autofocus, setting it to eye-AF and found it nailed it with most subjects almost all of the time. In slightly lower light conditions, or where the subject was very far away, it struggled a little more. But overall I was very impressed.

On top of that, it was also impressively quiet and quick, making it good for photographing wildlife. You do still have to get relatively close with a 400mm lens, and something quiet like this helps to ensure birds and other nervous creatures aren't too spooked by your presence.

Image Quality

As I would expect from a Sony G Master lens with a high price tag, the 400mm f/4.5 is capable of producing some absolutely beautiful results.

There's a lovely amount of sharpness and detail across the frame, and at different aperture settings. You'll probably get the absolute sharpest results stopping down a little to f/5.6, but I was more than happy with the results that I got at f/4.5 in pretty much every situation.

The 11-blade aperture produces some fantastic results. If you happen to have some catchlights in the background of your shot, then you can get some lovely circular bokeh. This makes for some lovely images of birds in trees, but it can also be useful for portrait photography too – and I can imagine events or wedding photographers finding a use for this reason too.

I struggled to find instances of chromatic aberration in my sample images, even when there were very high contrast areas in a scene. Indeed, if you're only looking at your JPEG files, problems such as chromatic aberration, distortion and vignetting are automatically corrected so you won't see any of it. In raw files, if you're using Adobe, then its raw processing will remove these kind of problems too. You could disable shading compensation in camera if you really felt so inclined, but with the reasonably narrow maximum aperture, it's not likely to be a big issue either way.

Looking at uncorrected raws you can also see some visible pincushion distortion. But for the typical subjects you'll be photographing with a lens like this, it's unlikely to be a problem.



Verdict

If you're in the market for a supertelephoto lens for your Sony camera, then this is a fantastic option. The thing I liked best about it was just how lightweight it is – shooting hand-held is more than possible, it's eminently sensible in order to keep up with your subjects. It's comfortable to shoot like this and it doesn't kill your back if you're shooting with it for a few hours. OK, the trade-off is a smaller aperture than you might ideally like to have, but I think it's worth it.

This is one of two Sony telephotos launched at the same time, the other being a 600mm. While I'm in no doubt that that is also a wonderful lens, I think the 400mm is more appealing for a couple of big reasons. First of all, it's simply more versatile for a wider range of subjects. You could conceivably use it not just for nature and wildlife, but also for events, sports, and even portraits. With a 600mm, I've often found I'm just that little bit too close, and can't quite get the framing I like.

Second of all there's the price. I'm not claiming that the 400mm is a cheap lens, but it costs significantly less than the 600mm making it a lot more affordable – especially if you consider that versatility giving you a lot more uses for your money.

Overall, this is a superb lens for Sony shooters, and it comes highly recommended.

Data file

Price £2400	Minimum focus
Filter Diameter 95	2.5m
Lens Elements 22	Length 242mm
Groups 16	Diameter 108mm
Diaphragm blades 11	Weight 994g
Aperture f/4.5 - f/32	without tripod foot
	Lens Mount Sony E
	Included accessories
	Tripod mount, caps, hood, case



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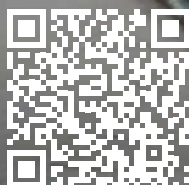


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Blast from the Past

Aires 35-V

John Wade enthuses about a Japanese Leica look-alike

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The Japanese Aires Camera Company was only in business for about 11 years, but in that time they made 35mm fixed lens coupled rangefinder cameras, 120 film twin lens reflexes and a couple of 35mm single lens reflexes. But undoubtedly the best camera to emerge from the factory was their last: the Aires 35-V

Launched four years after Leica's revolutionary M3, the 35-V exhibits design similarities with the German classic, but in some ways shows improvements. The most important of these is a built-in selenium meter to power a swinging needle on the top plate to indicate shutter speeds against apertures, which are then set manually on rings around the lens. The standard lens is a super-wide 4.5cm f/1.5, but slightly cheaper versions of the camera were originally available with f/1.8 lenses.

The V-35's bayonet mount is unique to Aires, so other makers' lenses cannot be used. Aires lenses made for the V-35 include



Aires 35-V, the best camera produced by the short-lived Japanese company

a 3.5cm wide-angle and 10cm telephoto. These are hard to find today. The viewfinder offers bright frames for the standard and tele lens, and the entire view surrounding the standard frame might approximate the 3.5cm view. The camera incorporates a large leaf shutter situated, not immediately behind the lens as is usually the case, but far back almost on the focal plane. It is speeded 1-1/400sec and, unlike a focal plane shutter, offers flash synch at all speeds. Focusing from 2.6 feet to infinity is coupled to a coincident image rangefinder in the viewfinder.

The meter is adequate for normal outdoor light. When light levels drop or for shooting indoors, an amplifying cell was made to fit into the accessory shoe, from where it made electrical contact with the main meter. These days the 35-V is a rare camera, but the meter amplifier is even rarer.

What's good Timeless design, ergonomically pleasing to handle and use.

What's bad Shutters can slow and selenium cells loose sensitivity with age.



The top plate showing its exposure setting system surrounding the rewind knob



The unusual and now very rare meter amplifier that couples with the camera via its accessory shoe

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Mercedes Diaz explores her Mexican heritage, folklore and history through her work 'Soul of Mexico'. She tells **Jessica Miller** more about it and her future goals...

When and why did you start taking photographs?

Raised by an artist, I discovered my passion for visual storytelling as a toddler, documenting my childhood with a toy Disney film camera. What began as an instinct to observe and capture everyday moments transformed into a career path in 2019 when I bought my first Canon digital camera and began studying photography formally. Today, I use my lens to challenge perspectives, see the world through a creative framework, and paint with light to connect deeply with people and my inner soul.

Which genre do you tend to work mostly in?

My practice centred primarily on portraiture, drawn to the creative freedom of building intentional sets that tell a subject's story. Through fine art photography, I construct conceptual realities to represent diverse peoples and cultures. Ultimately, my work aims to engage and educate viewers on vital themes, including cultural identity, environmental sustainability, and the deep spirituality found in nature.

Tell us a little bit more about your photographic training?

I recently graduated with a First-Class Honours BA in Photography from Norwich University of the Arts, where I dedicated three intensive years to studio practice. My decision

to study here stemmed from a desire to move abroad, experience a new culture, and expand my horizons, with the goal of working in London's vibrant creative sector. Leaving Mexico to build a new life in Norwich was a massive milestone, and photography became the tool that helped me shape my new identity. Through this technically rigorous course, I directed, styled, and shot weekly projects, collaborating closely with fellow creatives to bring my vision to life.

Tell us more about your work?

My recent project called "Soul of Mexico," which was exhibited at The Truman Brewery for Free Range 2026, has been my latest work based on my Mexican heritage. The project explores Mexican folklore and history inspired by my profound devotion to home which I have been expressing through my photographs due to being far away and maintaining that connection with art.

"Soul of Mexico" was further shaped by my photographic studies abroad, which taught me to embrace a more sustainable and collaborative practice. With input from other young artists, the sets involved handmade props, recycled backdrops and charity-shop items to support the community's principles. From this, I proudly shared my work as the product of multiculturalism and its potential to create art.

What kind of reaction has it had?

The project has received an incredibly positive response, ranging from the team involved in the photoshoots to external industry professionals, including creatives and the Association of Photographers. Seeing people

Right: La Catrina

Below: La Bandera







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FS Chrome Body
FT Chrome Body Only
FTN Body Only - Chrome
F4S Body Only
F5 Body Only
F6 Body Only
F65 Body Only - Silver
F + 50mm F2 Non AI
F Photomic Chrome Body Only
F Photomic FTN Chrome Body Only
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F2 Photomic Chrome Body Only
F3HP Body Only
FM Chrome Body Only
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engage so deeply with the vibrant colours and cultural narrative of Mexico truly motivates me to continue documenting cultural subjects.

Being named a finalist in the People category for the Student AOP Awards was an absolute honor. It also provided a wonderful opportunity to connect with established photographers like Rich Lakos, who shared invaluable feedback on my work. Ultimately, capturing Mexico's profound passion for artisanal crafts has been immensely rewarding, allowing me to collaborate with fellow creatives like Pacheco from Our Latin Thing and help expand the Latin American creative community.

What equipment do you use?

My technical foundation is built on adaptability, developed in large part through the extensive equipment resources at Norwich University of the Arts. My portfolio spans from

Pentax DSLRs to the Canon R5 mirrorless system. While the R5, alongside Elinchrom and Amaran lighting powers the majority of my imagery, my flower still-life series demands a different pace. For these, I step into a quiet space and use a Phase One camera that allows me to focus on absolute precision and deeply connect with my subject.

What are your hopes for your photography career in the future?

I am an aspiring Lighting Assistant in London looking to expand my experience across commercial and freelance projects. I aim to collaborate with diverse creatives, exchange innovative ideas, and contribute to the photographic sector while mastering advanced lighting techniques. My long-term goal is to launch a sustainable, culture-driven freelance business, with a focus on supporting environmentally conscious organizations like National

Below, left: Tulipa

Below, right: El Luchador

Geographic and exhibiting my work in galleries.

Do you have a dream assignment?

A dream assignment would be photographing stills for an environmental and cultural documentary film. To create a fine art production based on their theme to support their marketing in markets such as museums and educational settlements to expand their audience. As a lifelong admirer of educational cinema, inspired by impactful works like National Geographic's *The Secret of Bees* and John Chester's *The Biggest Little Farm*, I want to translate these vital stories into powerful key art. For me, the ultimate assignment is crafting the definitive billboard, book cover, or key image that brings an environmental narrative to the global stage.

AP

Instagram: @merdiazphoto



Inbox

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

STAR LETTER

RIP landscape photography?

Peter Fenech's article *The Long Game* (22 Aug) questioned if landscape photography is dead and noted that modern digital software allows for incredible manipulation of scenes that some might see as diluting the craft.

Having reflected on this I wish to make two comments. The incredible power of post processing software is not limited to landscape photography. Witness any major photo competition and you'll see many heavily manipulated photos of every genre competing for the judges attention.

Peter notes that it's easy to replace skies, adjust colours and manipulate light within a landscape scene. I would argue that whilst it is easy to do, it is far from easy to do well. The internet is



full of examples of mismatched skies, overblown colours and unrealistic light that simply don't fit the tone and colour of the original scene. And without a decent composition to start with, all the manipulation in the world cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

My personal view is that considered and subtle adjustments can enhance a landscape photograph and there is nothing wrong in that. **Richard Marsh**

Arguing about the use of Photoshop seems almost quaint now, in this new world of AI. The main disagreement now is in where to draw the line.

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Looking Back

When we look back through our imagery, we don't just see how our photography and styles have changed. We see moments in time, places we've visited, events we've witnessed, and memories that remind us just how fortunate we have been to experience such beauty. And perhaps even more importantly, we see the people who have shared those moments with us. Great friends we have made along the way, loved

ones we still hold dear, and memories that might otherwise have faded with time. Photography has a wonderful way of preserving more than just an image. It preserves a feeling, a place, a moment, a little piece of our journey. Sometimes, it's a good idea to spend the odd moment looking back, appreciating how far we have come, the experiences we have gathered, and the people who have helped make the journey so special.

Because when we look back, we may discover that the greatest photographs aren't always about what we captured, but about what those moments meant to us.

John Cuthbert

Super Ikonta

I was pleased to see in John Wade's Zeiss Ikon article (AP 8Sept) that he included the two Super Ikontas. My great uncle was in the European theatre during WWII and brought back the Model A

One of John Heywood's photos in the V&A collection, taken on the Super Ikonta



which, as John stated, 'takes 16 pictures on 120 film', which my young aunt inherited when my great uncle passed away.

In summer 1965, after leaving school at the age of sixteen, I joined the Royal Air Force as a photographer and my aunt gave me the Super Ikonta Model A to practice my future profession. The camera had been well used, but was still in perfect working order.

Although the rangefinder on the camera was very difficult to use, due to deterioration, and the focusing ring was marked in metres, I very quickly taught myself to judge my subject distance in metres and set the aperture to the hyperfocal distance which was indicated by a red dot.

As a professional, being able to judge my focusing distance saved the day many times when commissioned to

document dinner dances in very low light when focusing with SLRs was impossible.

173 of my black & white prints taken of my cousins with the Super Ikonta are held in the Victoria & Albert Museums' collection.

I last used the Super Ikonta when attending a 1940s event in 2018 and it never failed, which is impressive considering the camera's age.

John Heywood

Camera Hugger

I really enjoyed your Camera Hugger article. Forty years ago I had a Praktica and dreamt of Canons. Thirty years ago I got a job and bought a used Canon EOS 100. I kept the Praktica.

Then came digital and a Canon EOS 5D. Great camera, but a lump. Ten years later it was replaced by a 6D, basically a digital EOS 100. It was perfect. The 5D stayed, my son



AI mock-ups purporting to be of the mythical retro-styled Canon RE-1, which as far as we know doesn't actually exist

used it occasionally. The Praktica stayed. Over the years I added a crop-sensor Canon for wildlife and kids' sport, plus an IXUS the whole family uses. But the 6D is still my main camera.

Although I own three Canon DSLRs and a Canon compact I don't think Canon is any better or worse than anything else, but I know where the buttons are. They feel right.

Lately I've found myself hankering after a retro Olympus or Nikon. Not for features, but for the look: black and silver bodies, mechanical dials, echoes of the SLRs I lusted after in the 1980s. So when rumours of a retro Canon surfaced, I knew instantly that I'd buy one. Till I saw it. It wasn't retro. It didn't resemble the AE-1 I nearly bought from a Blackpool pawnbroker in 1992, nor the cameras I saw in the hands of McCurry, Bailey or the Bang Bang Club.

I wanted something that would look at home in a leather ever-ready case. The much-heralded RE-1 wasn't it. I don't want one.

And yes, looks are important in amateur photography: the feel, the nostalgia, the experience matter every bit as much as the images.

Had AP convinced me to buy Nikon instead of Canon thirty years ago, perhaps I'd now own one of those retro throwbacks and wear the beard to match. But I chose a brand, stuck with it, and I'm happy.

So I'll be keeping my Canons. And the Praktica. But with money already set aside for a new camera, can I justify adding a retro Olympus or Nikon with a 50mm f/1.8 and a brown leather ever-ready case? Maybe. Yep, I must be a camera hugger.

Mark Buckley

There is no evidence that the Canon RE-1 actually



Ian Dawson is excited by the arrival of the new PEN

exists and any photos you may have seen are AI generated speculation. The recently released R8 II is not retro styled, nor does it claim to be.

Not dead yet

I agree with Barry Shaw, the demise of high street shops that sell magazines and stationery is very sad.

However, less than ten years ago, the experts predicted the death of books and the imminent demise of Waterstones was confidently predicted in the business pages. Thankfully, they dodged the grave, and there are now a handful of new bookshop chains and startups which seem to be thriving. A few years ago the death of the film camera was stated as fact, but film seems to be all the rage again. A couple of years ago even AP was talking about the demise of the compact camera. But this year several new and quite exciting compact cameras to satisfy the sudden upsurge in demand.

I subscribe to AP because it is important to keep the magazines that we want to read, alive. Until such time as they too, become fashionable again. The experts don't always get it right, and

predicting the future is a bit of a mug's game.

David Price

We're grateful for your support, David. For readers who don't yet subscribe, check out our Christmas subscription offer on page 80.

The new PEN

I love the fact that OM System has updated the PEN but its shame they dropped the design of the PEN F and went for a more slab-like look. It's also a little dismaying that its plastic, not metal. But it's still a pretty camera and we should be grateful that the company is still defying the pundits and full-frame obsessives who said that Micro Four Thirds is dead. The new PEN will offer a cheaper alternative to Fujifilm's X100IV and X-E5, providing a similar shooting experience for a lot less money – albeit without Fujifilm's superior build quality. But in this age of tightening belts many will consider the trade off worth it. I await your review with eager anticipation.

Ian Dawson

Wait no longer, Ian. Our full review of the PEN is on page 50.

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V for Voigtlander

John Wade looks at a classic brand that is collectable and still very usable

New lens tests

Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG Art and Sony FE 600mm F6.3 GM OSS reviews



William Eggleston

How he transformed the perception of colour photography as a medium

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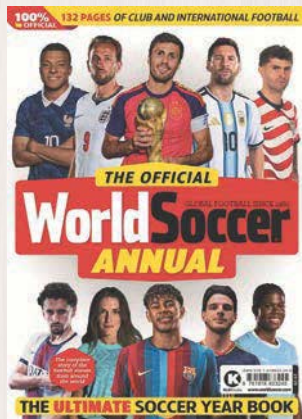
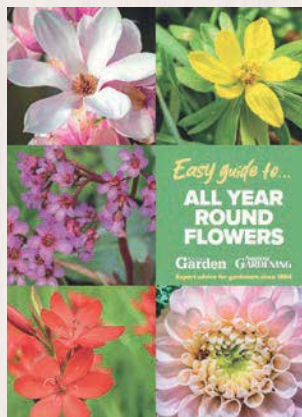
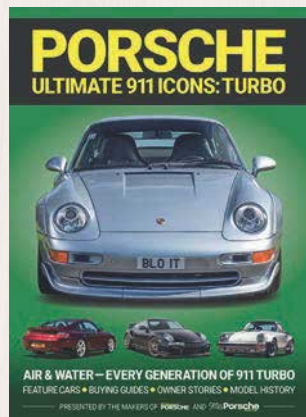


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A round-up of the AP testing team's favourite and most highly rated kit, including both cameras and all kinds of accessories, across a wide range of price points

OM System Tough TG-7

● £449 ● explore.omsystem.com

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

★★★★★ Reviewed 2 Apr 2024



Canon PowerShot G7X Mark III

● £819 ● canon.co.uk

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.

★★★★★

Reviewed 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.

★★★★★

Reviewed 23 Sep 2025



Sony RX10 V

● £2,199 ● sony.co.uk

With a huge 24-600mm equivalent zoom lens in front of its 20MP 1in sensor, this high-end bridge camera can tackle almost any kind of subject. Its autofocus is excellent, recognising people, animals and vehicles, and it can shoot as fast as 30fps. It handles really well, too. It's expensive, but there's nothing else quite like it.

★★★★★

Reviewed 11 Aug 2026



Fujifilm GFX100RF

● £4,499 ● fujifilm-x.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed 13 May 2025



Canon EOS R50

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

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
6 Jun 2023



Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

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

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
26 Sep 2020



Fujifilm X-T5

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

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Jan 2023



Nikon Z50II

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

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Feb 2025



Fujifilm X-T30 III

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

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
10 Feb 2026



Panasonic Lumix GH7

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

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Nov 2024



Fujifilm X-S20

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

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jul 2023



Panasonic Lumix G9 II

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

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
31 Oct 2023



OM System OM-1 Mark II

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

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

★★★★★

Review
12 Mar 2024



Nikon Z5II

● £1,379 body only ● nikon.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jun 2025



Nikon Z6III

● £1,959 body only ● nikon.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
8 Oct 2024



Sony Alpha 7R 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



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 Z9

● £5,299 body only ● nikon.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
22 Mar 2022



Leica M11 Monochrom

● £8,300 body only ● uk.leica-camera.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
16 May 2023



Nikon D780

● £1,999 body only ● nikon.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
4 Apr 2020



Canon EOS R6 Mark III

● £2,799 body only ● canon.co.uk

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



Fujifilm GFX100 II

● £6,999 body only ● fujifilm-x.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Nov 2023



Tenba DNA 9 Slim Messenger

● £110 ● uk.tenba.com

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

★★★★★ Reviewed 26 Apr 2022



Vanguard Veo Metro B25L

● £185 ● vanguardworld.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
12 Aug 2025



Wandrd Prvke 21 V4

● £281 (photography bundle) ● eu.wandrd.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
23 Sep 2025



NiSi NM-180s Macro Rail

● £105 ● nisioptics.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 Oct 2020



Cullmann Rondo 460M RB8.5

● £80 ● transcontinenta.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Mar 2020



Heipi W28S Travel Tripod

● £330 ● heipivision.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed 2 Sep 2025



Benro Rhino 24C tripod with VX25 head

● £250 ● uk.benroeu.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
28 Nov 2020



NiSi True Color ND-Vario 1-5 stops

● £89-£179 ● nisioptics.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 May 2022



Benro SupaDupa Pro MSDPL46C

● £189 ● uk.benroeu.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 Apr 2021



Godox iFlash iT30Pro

● £67 ● godox.com

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

An optional riser/bounce adapter adds further appeal.

★★★★★

Reviewed
11 Nov 2025



Hollyland Lark M2S

● £149 ● hollyland.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
1 July 2025



Hahnel ProCube 3

● £80 ● hahnel.ie

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

Versions are available for all the main camera brands.

★★★★★

Reviewed
4 Mar 2025



Datacolor SpyderPro

● £249 ● datacolor.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed 25 Jul 2023



Rotolight NEO 3 Pro

● £389 ● rotolight.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
15 Nov 2022



Peak Design Form Rope strap

● £45 ● peakdesign.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
13 Jan 2026



Kase Wolverine K9 100mm Entry-Level Kit

● £399 ● kasefilters.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Dec 2020



Intrepid Compact Enlarger

● £300 ● intrepidcamera.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jul 2021



Fujifilm Instax Link WIDE

● £140 ● instax.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jan 2022



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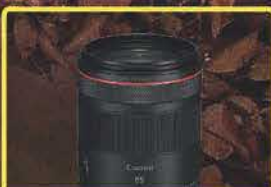
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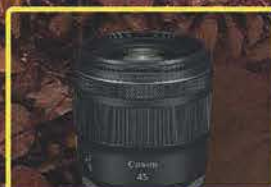
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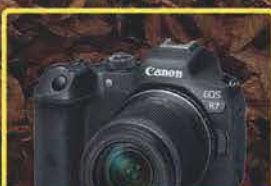
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The Sony a7 V brings professional-grade speed and intelligence to a compact full-frame body that's ready for any creative challenge. With AI-powered autofocus, 33 MP of stunning detail, and 4K 120p video, it delivers outstanding results for hybrid creators who demand both precision and freedom.



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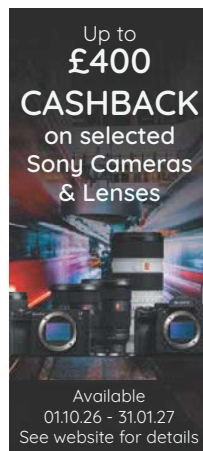
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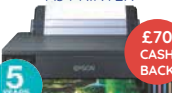
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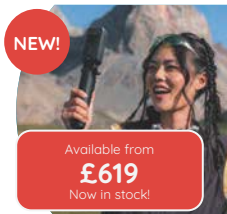
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5D MKIII body	£499
90D body	£799
80D body box	£499
700D body	£239
600D body box	£199
1300D + 18-55 box	£199
1200D body	£149
BG-E21/20/16/14/13/11/9/8/7	£EWB
CANON FLASH/ACCESSORIES USED	
MR14 IIE	£499
STE-3	£149
600EX RT	£229
580EX II	£169
580EX	£99

CANON AF LENSES USED

8-15 F4 USM box	£599
10-18 F3.5/5.6 IS STM EFS	£149
10-22 F3.5/4.5 EFS box	£199
14 F2.8 USM LII box	£599
15 F2.8 fisheye	£199
15-85 F3.5/5.6 EFS	£149
16-35 F4 USM IS L box	£399
17-40 F4 L USM box	£299
18-135 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS nano	£299
18-200 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS	£149
24 F1.4 USM MKII box	£599
24 F2.8 STM EFS	£169
24 F3.5 L TS-E box	£499
24-70 F4 IS USM L	£599
24-105 F4 IS USM L	£399
35 F1.4 USM LII box	£999
35 F2 IS USM box	£399
40 F2.8 STM box	£169

50 F1.4 USM box	£249
60 F2.8 macro EFS	£249
65 F2.8 MP-E macro	£699
70-200 F2.8 USM	£299
200-400 F4 IS USM LII box	£799
70-300 F4/5.6 IS USM L	£699
70-300 F4/5.6 IS USM II Nano	£499
85 F1.2 USM LII	£699
90 F2.8 TS-E	£499
100 F2 USM EFS	£299
100 F2.8 IS USM L macro	£699
100-400 F4.5/5.6 LII box	£999
135 F2 USM L box	£549
180 F3.5 L USM macro	£699
200 F2.8 L USM MKII box	£399
200-400 F4 IS USM L box	£4499
300 F4 IS USM L box	£599
1.4x or 2x extender MKII each	£249
25mm ext tube MKII	£99

SIGMA CAF USED

4.5 F2.8 DC fisheye box	£299
10-20 F3.5 EX DC HSM	£169
10-20 F4/5.6 DC HSM	£99
12-24 F4.5/5.6 II DG	£299
18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS box	£299
35 F1.4 Art DG box	£499
50 F1.4 Art DG	£499
105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS	£299
150-600 F5.6/3 DG OS sport	£999
150-600 F5.6/3 DG OS contemp	£799
TC1401 1.4x extender	£149
TAMRON CAF USED	
10-24 F3.5/4.5 DiII	£179
16-300 F3.5/6.3 II VC	£349
18-400 F3.5/6.3 DiII VC	£399
70-300 F4/5.6 VC USD	£249
90 F2.8 Di	£199
180 F3.5 SP Di	£249

Used Nikon



Used Nikon



Used Nikon



NIKON Z MIRRORLESS USED

Z9 body box	£2999
Z8 body box	£2499
Z6 body box	£499
12-28 F3.5/5.6 DX VR box	£299
14-30 F4 S box	£749
24 F1.8 S box	£599
24-70 F4 S	£449
24-120 F4 S	£699
24-200 F4/6.3 VR	£499
35 F1.8 S box	£599
50 F2.8 S macro box	£399
50-250 F4.5/6.3 DX VR	£169
70-200 F2.8 VR S box	£1399
85 F1.8 S	£499
100-400 F4.5/5.6 VR S	£1499
105 F2.8 macro VR S box	£599
180-600 F5.6/6.3 VR box	£1399
600 F6.3 VR S box	£3499
600 F6.3 VR S box	£2499
FTZ ada MKII	£229
FTZ ada	£149
Tamron 70-300 F4.5/6.3	£399

NIKON DSLR USED

D5 body	£1999
D850 body box	£1699
D780 body box	£1199
D750 body box	£599
D500 body box	£999
D7200 body box	£499
D7100 body box	£349
D5300 body box	£299
D3300 body	£199
D3200 body	£149
MBD-17 (D500)	£199
MBD-16 (D750)	£99
MBD-15 (D7100/7200)	£99
FLASH / ACCESSORIES USED	
SB-A400	£99
SB-900 box	£149
SU-800 commander	£149
DR-6 angle finder	£169
DR-5 angle finder	£169
DR-4 angle finder	£99
MC-36A remote	£149
MC-30A remote	£79

NIKON AF LENSES USED

10-20 F4.5/5.6 AF-P DX VR	£199
10-24 F3.5/4.5 AFS DX box	£199
12-24 F4 AFS DX	£199
14-24 F2.8 AFS box	£699
16-35 F4 AFS VR	£399
16-80 F2.8/4 VR DX	£499
18-35 F3.5/4.5 AFS	£299
18-55 F3.5/5.6 DX VR	£99
18-105 F3.5/5.6 VR DX AFS	£199
18-140 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR DX	£199
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX MKII	£299
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX	£149
18-300 F3.5/5.6 VR DX box	£449
20 F1.8 AFS box	£499
24 F2.8 AFD box	£249
24-70 F2.8 AFS VR box	£799
24-120 F4 AFS VR	£499
28-300 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR box	£499
35 F1.8 AFS DX	£99
35 F2.8 AFD box	£269

40 F2.8 AFS DX Micro	£199
50 F1.4 AFS G box	£249
50 F1.8 AFS box	£99
50 F1.8 AFD	£69
55-200 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR DX box	£99
55-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS DX VR	£229
58 F1.4 AFS	£799
70-300 F4.5/5.6 E AF P VR	£499
70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR	£249
70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS DX	£199
85 F1.8 AFS	£299
85 F3.5 AFS PX macro	£249
105 F2.8 AFS	£499
105 F2.8 AFS VR macro	£399
180 F2.8 AFS	£199
200-500 F5.6 E ED AFS VR box	£799
500 F5.6 E PF VR AFS box	£1999
TC14-EIII	£349
TC14-EIII box	£199
TC17-EIII box	£99
TC20-EIII box	£199

SIGMA NAF USED

8 F3.5 DC box	£299
10-20 F3.5 DC box	£169
12-24 F4 Art box	£699
12-24 F4.5/5.6 II HSM box	£299
18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS	£299
20 F1.4 DG HSM Art box	£499
24-105 F4 DG OS box	£499
35 F1.4 Art DG box	£499
50 F1.4 Art DG box	£499
70-200 F2.8 DG HSM Sport box	£799
85 F1.4 Art DG box	£599
105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS	£299
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TC-1401 1.4x extender	£149
TAMRON NAF USED	
16-300 F3.5/6.3 DiII VC box	£349
70-300 F4/5.6 VC USD box	£249
90 F2.8 Di VC	£299
90 F2.8 Di	£199

NIKON LENSES ALWAYS WANTED

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XT-5 black body box	£1199
10-24 F4 OIS VR box	£599
10-24 F4 OIS XF box	£349
16 F1.4 WR	£499
16-55 F2.8 XF	£299
18 F2 XF box	£299
18-55 F2.8/4 XF	£299
23 F1.4 XF WR	£349
27 F2.8 XF box	£349
30 F2.8 XF WR macro	£479
55-200 F3.5/4.8 R box	£349
60 F2.4 box	£299
Samyang 12 F2 man focus box	£199
X500 flash box	£199
EF-42 flash	£99
XT-2/XT-3/XT-4 grip each	£69

Olympus Used



OLYMPUS MICRO 4/3 USED

E-M10 MKIV body	£399
E-M10 MKIII body	£399
7-14 F2.8 Pro	£599
9-18 F4/5.6	£299
12-40 F2.8 Pro	£299
12-100 F4 IS Pro	£799
12-200 F3.5/6.3	£599
14-150 F4/5.6 ED MKII	£349
25 F1.8	£149
30 F3.5 macro box	£199
40-150 F2.8 Pro	£799
40-150 F4 Pro box	£599
60 F2.8 macro	£349
75-300 F4.8/6.7 MSCII	£299
100-400 F5/6.3 IS II box	£999

MIRRORLESS GEAR ALWAYS WANTED

Panasonic Used



PANASONIC MICRO 4/3 USED

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

Sony Used



SONY FE MOUNT DIGITAL USED

A7RV body box	£2199
16-35 F2.8 GM box	£999
20 F1.8 G box	£699
24 F1.4 GM box	£899
24-70 F4 ZA box	£499
24-105 F4 G OSS box	£599
24-240 F3.5/6.3 OSS box	£499
50 F1.2 GM box	£1299
50 F1.4 ZA box	£699
70-200 F2.8 GM OSS MKII box	£1799
85 F1.4 GM box	£799
100-400 F4.5/5.6 GM OSS box	£1499
200-600 F5.6/3 G OSS	£1299
Sigma 35 F1.2 Art	£599
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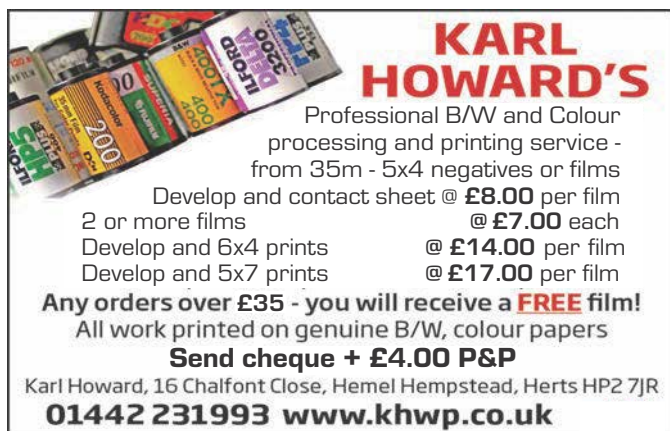
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Final Analysis

John Wade considers...
Exeter High Street c.1900

I don't always look at pictures in the same way as my fellow contributors to this page. Whereas they tend to look at the work of contemporary photographers, explaining context in content, revealing hidden meanings and so forth, I tend to look more at ordinary subjects, sometimes from unknown photographers, with an urge to know more of the story behind the pictures. For this, I often turn to the past, especially old snapshot albums. That's how I discovered this picture.

Initially, I had no idea of its location or date. So, first move: drop a scan into Google Images. That identified the street, and told me that the big ugly building on the left is the Guildhall. The similar picture discovered by Google Images, however, showed a tram and traffic lights. In my picture there are no tramlines or traffic lights. A quick Google indicated that the first tram ran in Exeter during 1905. So now I knew the picture was taken no later than that date, maybe a year or so before since it must have taken time to lay tramlines. Just discernible in the distance is a building with a sign that reads 'The Public Benefit Boot Company'. Google reports that this company had branches all over the



country, but the Exeter High Street one opened in 1897. So my picture was taken close to the Guildhall in Exeter High Street within a fairly tight timeframe between 1897 and, say, 1904.

Knowing now the where and when, I find myself drawn in, wondering how it would have been to wander along that street, bowler hat on head, air unpolluted with petrol or diesel fumes (though maybe redolent of horse manure), gazing into shop windows, popping into the local hostelry for a pint of Mild. Said hostelry I notice from the picture is called The

Turk's Head. I wonder if it's still there, and yes it is, and has been, according to ancient records, since about 1289. Many years later, as a young reporter, Charles Dickens drank there while covering an Exeter Election in 1835. It's reckoned that many of the characters in his novel *The Pickwick Papers*, published in 1837, closely resembled regulars. I couldn't help looking at my picture again under a magnifying glass to see if anyone in the street resembled Dickens. No luck.

But my closer examination led me to see something that had

previously gone unnoticed. The majority of the people in the picture appear to be men. Why so few women? Maybe most of them are at home, doing the cooking, cleaning and washing. Things seem to have been a little more chauvinistic back then.

What else can we pick up? How about the building next to The Turk's Head which has a sign on the side indicating that it's a bookstore? Another quick trip through Google reveals that in Victorian times (1837-1901), the area around the Turk's Head and Guildhall was one of

Exeter's principal book selling districts.

This one, according to the Exeter street directories, was called Eland Brothers, who were booksellers, stationers, newsagents, library and fine art dealers. How I would love to have roamed for a morning through that shop.

For some people, snapshot albums represent little more than faded and inexpertly taken pictures of forgotten family and occasions. For me, every snapshot album is like my own personal time machine. Remember that next time you pass one by at a boot fair. 

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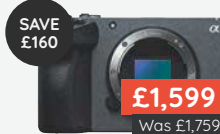
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