WILLIAM EGGLESTON

A new appreciation of the colour photography pioneer



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Street style

How Trevor Lake gets his attention grabbing portraits

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Sigma 85mm F1.2
Sony 600mm F6.3



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Welcome





Trevor Lake views his street portraits, like this one, taken at a Classic Car Boot Sale, as 'insurance against time'. See our feature on page 32

In this issue's big feature, street portrait photographer Trevor Lake describes his work as 'insurance against time'. In our letters page a reader recounts how his wife modelled in her twenties for precisely this reason. William Eggleston's motive in documenting 1970s America may have been to show that colour photography was a valid art form but he was also capturing an era that is now gone. Our Dark Tales exhibition review includes Derek Ridgers' portrait of a barely recognisable, punky young Liz Hurley, deep in thought. Whatever she was thinking about she probably wasn't imagining the global fame she would one day achieve. Photography has an unequalled power to freeze moments in time for posterity that we arent always thinking about when we're taking photos, and sometimes the significance of what we're photographing doesn't become apparent till years later. Decades ago when I was shooting travel stock for what is now Getty Images the advice was always to try to avoid including people, cars or anything that could date my photos, as this would limit their commercial lifespan. In hindsight it was bad advice. It's precisely the things that date a photo that give them value later on. My soulless '80s photos of a empty Chichen Itza, Mexico, are nowhere near as interesting today as my rejects, with tourists clambering all over the Mayan pyramid. Especially since people are no longer allowed to climb on it.



Nigel Atherton
Group Editor

This issue's contributors...



Peter Dench

Peter has been busy interviewing Trevor Lake, and reviewing both the William Eggleston and Dark Tales exhibitions in London and Bristol.



John Wade

John's encyclopaedic knowledge of classic cameras focuses this issue on the history of Voigtlander, whose fascinating story goes back to 1756.



Angela Nicholson

Former AP Technical Editor and SheClicks founder Angela falls in love with Sigma's latest wide aperture portrait lens, the 85mm F1.2 DG Art.



Andy Westlake

Our Technical Editor heads to a local nature reserve with the delightfully compact, lightweight new Sony FE 600mm F6.3 GM OSS.



Tony Kemplen

Tony continues his exploration of cheap and quirky old film cameras with a look at the 1961 Kodak Brownie Super 27, which took 127 film.



Professor Newman

Apple just introduced a variable physical aperture on the new iPhone 18. Professor Newman takes a closer look to see how useful it is.

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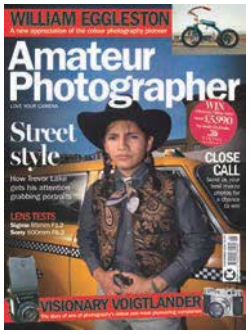


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Our cover image is by Trevor Lake. See more of his work on page 32

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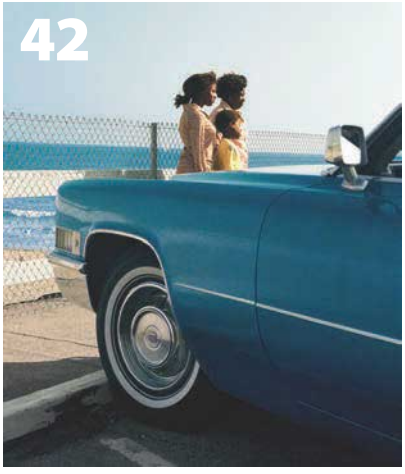
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©MARK HETHERINGTON

Mark Hetherington took this atmospheric shot from Black Crag, above Ambleside, in the Lake District. 'It was an incredible morning, with a cloud inversion all around the summit,' he recalls. 'I put my 300 mm lens on and waited until Wray Castle was just showing through the swirling mist.'
Sony A7 IV, Tamron 70-300mm lens, 1/320sec at f/7.1, ISO 100


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The Sigma FP2 is billed as the world's smallest full-frame mirrorless camera

Major updates for world's smallest full-frame mirrorless camera

Sigma has announced the FP2, which it's billing as the world's smallest full-frame mirrorless camera. It takes the same approach as the original fp from 2019, with a compact, modular design. But it now gains significant updates that could make it a much more tempting proposition for a wider range of users, for both photography and video.

Firstly, the camera now employs a 24.5MP partially stacked full-frame CMOS sensor. This promises significant performance gains, including faster autofocus, improved subject tracking, and continuous shooting at up to 20 frames per second. The camera can also record 6K open-gate video at 60fps, 4K at 60fps uncropped, or 4K 120p with a 1.5x crop, with a dynamic range of 14+ stops.

Externally, the camera looks much the same as before, with a plain box-shaped design. However, it gains a tilting rear screen that can be angled up or down for waist-level or overhead shooting. Inside, it gains 50GB of memory to complement the SD card slot. There's a new larger battery too, the BP-91, which is identical to the BLK-22 used by many current Lumix cameras. But remarkably, Sigma has fitted all this into a body that's even smaller than before, at just 112.8 x 69.9 x 41.8mm.

Add-on accessories include the HG-11 handgrip, HU-21 hot-shoe unit (which shares its protocol with Panasonic and OM System cameras), and the EVF-21 viewfinder, which boasts a 5.76m-dot panel and huge 0.88x magnification. The Sigma FP2 is set to be available from 11th November for £1899 body-only, £2399 with the EVF-21 viewfinder, or £2419 with the 50mm F2 DG lens.

Super-compact 50mm f/1.4 lens incoming

Sigma has also announced that it's developing a new, super-compact 50mm F1.4 CL DG lens. This will represent a new strand in its I-series line, which is characterised by compact, premium metal barrels and aperture rings. But that's now joined by a manual focus ring with distance and depth-of-field scales, too, giving a look reminiscent of classic manual-focus SLR lenses.

A new 'Rotary Direct Drive' autofocus motor is on board to keep the size down – Sigma hasn't disclosed the dimensions, but it looks very similar to the firm's existing I-series 50mm F2 DG. Optically the lens employs 8 elements in 6 groups, with 3 aspherical elements and a single FLD glass element. Sigma says the lens will 'achieve a gentle softness within the in-focus plane, smooth and attractive bokeh, and characterful background rendering', making it ideally suited to portraits and shapshots.

The 50mm F1.4 CL DG is scheduled for release in early 2027, and we're really looking forward to getting our hands on one and trying it out.



Sigma's 50mm F1.4 CL DG is due early next year and will feature a focus distance scale

Tamron 16-50mm F2.8 A

Tamron has announced an all-new lens, the Tamron 16-50mm F2.8 A (Model B091), a compact standard zoom lens with a constant f/2.8 aperture throughout the zoom range. It's made for APS-C cameras, with the lens being available in Sony E mount, Canon RF mount, Nikon Z mount, and Fujifilm X mount. The lens is equivalent to 24-75mm on Sony, Nikon and Fujifilm cameras, and 25.6-80mm on Canon cameras – due to Canon's use of a smaller APS-C sensor with 1.6x crop.



The Tamron 16-50mm f2.8 A is a new compact standard zoom for APS-C cameras

The lens is much smaller than Tamron's existing 17-70mm f/2.8 lens, measuring just 79.6mm long with a weight of only 305g, making it Tamron's smallest f/2.8 zoom. It's also cheaper than alternatives on the market, priced at £399 for Sony and Fujifilm versions, and £419 for Canon and Nikon.

With the constant f/2.8 aperture, Tamron say it is the ideal upgrade from the bundled kit lens that normally comes with cameras. It enables both wideangle shooting and telephoto portraits at f/2.8 with pleasing background blur, or bokeh.

There's also 'Moisture-Resistant Construction' with multiple seals, as well as a Flourine Coating on the front element. The aperture uses 7 blades and these are designed to stay circular up to two stops down from maximum aperture.

Sony and Canon versions will be available from the end of October, with the Nikon mount available from November 19, and the Fujifilm mount available from December 17.

Skylum launches Luminar on Web

Skylum, owner of leading photo editor Luminar, is claiming that its newly launched Luminar on Web is the first to bring 'serious' photo editing tools to the browser.

The pitch is that this is a web editor capable enough for advanced users, yet simple enough for beginners to use. With this latest expansion, its Luminar image editor (formerly Luminar Neo) can now lay claim to be a multi-platform product, as it joins pre-existing desktop and smartphone versions.

Until now, its originator suggests, web-based photo editors have chiefly only served beginners, with basic adjustments, templates and quick filters accessible. Luminar on Web, however, is said to be advancing things beyond that, in being the first browser-based editor to offer Light Depth technology, as well as the first to offer Presets and LUTs together. Cross-device sync and a shared Prime asset library are also core features.

Working on any device with a browser, Luminar on Web promises its users a creatively broad landscape, portrait and everyday editing toolkit. An additional claim is that, with this launch, Luminar now becomes the 'first and only' photo editor to offer a lifetime shared licence across desktop, mobile and web.

Of interest to beginners is that Luminar on Web offers what it calls 'high-grade editing without a steep learning curve', its creative tools including Light Depth technology plus RAW editing in the browser, which it claims is still uncommon among web editors. There's no need, for example, for powerful hardware, lengthy installations or subscription-only products.

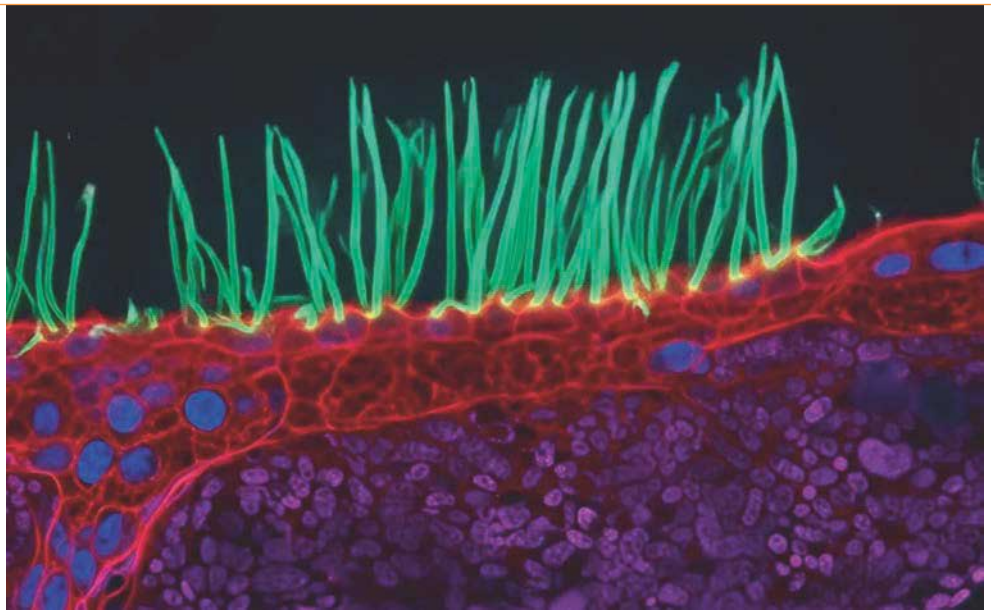


Luminar on Web is claimed to be the first online editor aimed at more advanced users

Luminar on Web's core feature set includes: GenErase, allowing the removal of unwanted objects from a photo; Photo Restoration, restoring and enhancing older or damaged photos; Light Depth, to adjust and shape lighting to add depth and dimension; an AI toolset governing Sky, Structure, Body and Bokeh; plus, the aforementioned RAW editing in the browser and across platforms. The latter allows users to work with high resolution photos and RAW files without maxing out their device's storage.

Luminar on Web is available now free of charge, albeit with limited functionality, or with full access for $69.

Nikon bars AI 'cheat'



Prompted by online furore, Nikon has re-examined the winning entry in its Small World in Motion 2026 contest, featuring digital time lapse photos and video taken through the microscope, following accusations of AI use, and has ruled that the winner, Dr Nin Xu, should be disqualified.

Eagle-eyed Internet sleuths from the scientific community had suggested the appearance of tiny 'cilia' hair-like structures in Dr Nin Xu's winning imagery had been faked using AI.

Dr Xu had argued that his usage was within the rules of the contest. But, as Nikon's Small World in Motion's own website states: 'Entries are judged based on originality, informational content, technical proficiency and visual impact.'

Dr Xu's defence that AI was used to 'distinguish and visualise' features in his reconstructed greyscale image and this was done 'mainly to improve the visual presentation, rather than provide an anatomical reconstruction' has now proved, ultimately, to be in vain.

The latest from Nikon is that, unsurprisingly, the winning entry did not comply fully with its competition rules. It is careful to add, however, that this is not a judgement on the entrant's professional standing nor scientific contributions.

The manufacturer is now reviewing the rules and procedures of its Small World in Motion competition, which has run for the past 15 years, previously without incident.

Dr Nin Xu's winning Small World in Motion entry was disqualified due to the use of AI in the processing of the photo



The Leica 0-series camera no 103 that just sold for £3.59m

Leica fetches £3.59m at auction

We're used to seeing huge price tags on Leica cameras but this particular Leica 0-series is something else entirely. At the eighth Wetzlar Camera Auctions in Germany, a Leica 0-series camera dating back to 1923 sold for a whopping €4.25 million euros (£3.59m/$4.75m).

In a neat bit of synergy, the camera bore the serial number 103, was listed as lot no 103 and was manufactured 103 years ago. The initial auction price was set at €2 million, so the sale far exceeded expectations.

The Leica 0 series were a small, very limited series of prototypes developed to test the concept of a lightweight 35mm stills camera, in the run-up to the development and release of the Leica I – a camera that truly did change everything. Only a handful were ever made – it's said to be between 22 and 25 – and just 16 are known to still be in circulation, though there may be more out there to discover.

Despite its staggering price, the Leica no. 103 isn't the most expensive camera ever sold – or even the most expensive Leica 0-series. In 2022, Leica no. 105 sold for an astronomical €14.4 million ($16 million / £12.1 million), more than triple the price of no. 103, because it was the personal camera of its inventor, Oskar Barnack, the grandfather of 35mm photography.

THE BIG QUESTION

Do you have any camera gear that you regret buying?

Martin Steele
My first camera 15 years ago, as it started an expensive obsession ever since

@mikecassellphoto
Too many camera bags

Matt Jerrams
Yeah, the Fujifilm GFX. Nothing wrong with it as a camera, but it was heavy, clunky and just wasn't the big difference with FF that I figured it might be.

Jerry Marcin
These are NOT bad cameras, I regretted them because they were just not for me. One was the Canon R50. Nice entry level beginners camera but too plasticky for me. The other was the Sony RX100 VII, nice dated vintage camera.

Hugh Maxwell Photography
Years ago as a cash strapped student I remember buying a camera backpack that was considerably cheaper than the rest. It was a real bargain with lots of space for my camera gear. It was a lovely dark green colour and looked the part but some of the stitching came apart on its first outing and then one of the main straps detached itself soon afterwards.



PHOTO BY E. BACON/TOPICAL PRESS AGENCY/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Back in Time 1925

Staybrite steel diving suit

Visitors inspect Joseph Salim Peress's revolutionary atmospheric diving suit at the 1925 Shipping Exhibition, London Olympia, an international showcase for British maritime innovation. Built from patented, corrosion-resistant Staybrite stainless steel, produced only in Sheffield, the 250kg suit was designed to protect divers from the immense pressures of deep water (down to a claimed maximum depth of 198m, or 650ft) while remaining flexible enough to work underwater. Peress would later develop the famous Tritonia suit, a landmark in deep-sea engineering which helped pave the way for modern atmospheric diving systems.

Did you know?

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Roger Fenton (1819-1869) is regarded as the world's first war photographer. In 1855 he travelled to the Crimean War with a horse-drawn mobile darkroom (pictured), using the wet-collodion process to produce around 360 large-format glass-plates. Each plate had to be coated, exposed and developed while still wet, forcing Fenton to work close to the battlefield in difficult conditions. Long exposure times of up to 20 seconds made action photography impossible so he focused on officers, soldiers, camps, artillery and battlefields, including the celebrated Valley of the Shadow of Death. Fenton's landmark photographs remain the first extensive photographic documentation of a war.

@steffi_shoots
Canon RF 18-150mm, didn't meet my sharpness and photographing in the dark standards.

Laura Anne Photography
No, but there is a lot that I regret not buying

Chris Nevard
Spending too much on digital gear in the early 2000s. It's all car boot junk now.

Jason Wetherell
A Nikon 2x teleconverter, a really heavy paperweight.

Rod Souza
No regrets. Some of the gear I didn't use as much as I thought but they all helped me freeze a moment in time, a loving memory and so on.

Jane Peters
One of those little tripod type clamps that clamped onto a car window. It didn't hold the weight of my camera like it was supposed to! This was a long time ago and I can't remember who it was made by, but was a nifty idea

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Godox flash for phones



The Godox G2 offers both flash and bi-colour continuous lighting for iPhones

While smartphone cameras get better all the time, one thing that remains stubbornly fairly low-grade is smartphone flash. Godox hopes to change that with its new A2 Xenon flash, a magnetically attaching flash unit that equips your smartphone camera with a pro-grade burst of illumination.

The Godox A2 features a guide number of 15 (ISO 100, meters) and is designed for close-range portraiture and still life – Godox recommends a distance of about 2m from the subject for best results. Featuring TTL and Manual modes, the A2 also offers high-speed sync at up to 1/8000sec for freezing fast motion, and various Auto modes.

The magnetic mount allows it to snap to the back of an iPhone via the MagSafe connector, and enables the G2 to be mounted onto other metal surfaces for off-camera flash. A 360° rotating mount is also available that attaches magnetically, and allows the flash unit to be swivelled around for selfies.

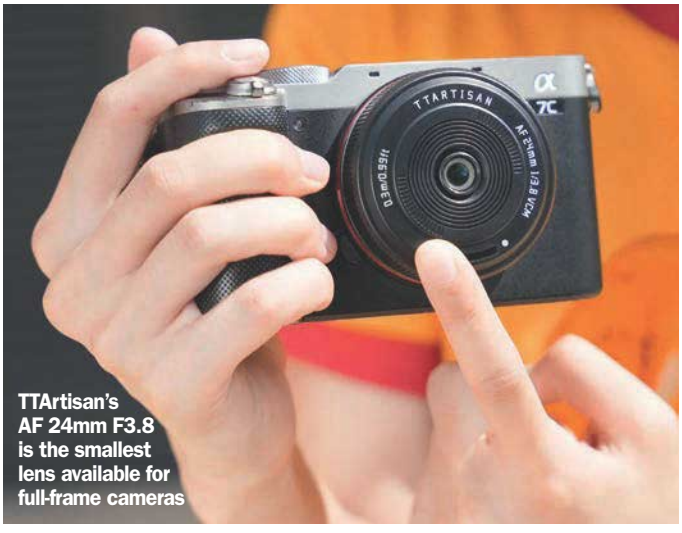
Bi-colour LEDs offer a colour temperature range of 2800-6000K, so it can also be used as a video light. Godox is clearly targeting content creators who switch between shooting both photos and videos on their phones.

It runs off a 500mAh battery that charges via USB-C – with a claimed 400 flashes from a full charge, or 30 minutes of running the LED at full brightness. Weighing just 93g, it's a lightweight addition to any smartphone setup, and comes in four colour options for those who are fussy about their kit's aesthetics.

Setup and connection are a via Bluetooth, assisted by NFC, with more granular control available from the Godox app. A soft carrying pouch and dome diffuser are included. Also available is a separate accessory kit that includes a snoot, gels, a bounce card, diffusers and a honeycomb grid.

The Godox A2 is priced at £64 from Godox directly. It's iPhone only for now, (iPhone 15 and later) but Godox says Android and HarmonyOS compatibility are in the pipeline.

TTArtisan debuts a tiny new wide-angle pancake lens



TTArtisan's AF 24mm F3.8 is the smallest lens available for full-frame cameras

The new TTArtisan AF 24mm F3.8 mini is extremely aptly named as it's the new smallest lens available for full-frame cameras. It beats the previous record holder, the Viltrox AF 28mm F4.5 FE, by just three grams. Measuring 16mm in width and 60mm in diameter, and weighing just 57g, it's currently only available for Sony E-mount mirrorless cameras. It's compatible with both full-frame and APS-C, on the latter of which it provides an equivalent focal length of 36mm.

The AF 24mm F3.8 mini provides an angle of view of 84° and a close focusing distance of 0.3m. The f/3.8 aperture in the lens name isn't just the maximum – the nine-bladed aperture is actually fixed at this setting, a trade-off for keeping the lens at such a ludicrously small size.

Its internal construction consists of six elements in six groups, with two aspherical and two extra-low dispersion elements, and it incorporates (somehow) a Voice Coil motor for autofocus. There's no option at all for manual focus, but it does support Sony's Eye and Face-detection autofocus modes. Also, some Sony bodies are listed as only supporting 'partial' compatibility, with limited autofocus – these are the original A7s, the A5100 and the A5000.

Unsurprisingly, the lens doesn't accept screw-on front filters. It doesn't even take a lens cap, instead sporting its own lever-operated cover, which the user can toggle on and off by flicking a switch on the front. This also means the lens can effectively function as a body cap.

It's currently available in Sony E-mount only, though TTArtisan says a Nikon Z-mount version is on the way – no word yet on other brands. The TTArtisan AF 24mm F3.8 mini is available from TTArtisan directly, priced at £75.

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Opinion
Gavin Stoker

Compacts are back on the table, but where are all the mid-range, affordable cameras?

You don't need me to tell you that smartphones originally destroyed the market for compact point-and-shoot cameras.

But now compact cameras are back on the rise, there seems to be a massive cost discrepancy between point and shoots produced by third parties licensing once respected brand names including Kodak, Yashica and Minolta, and the camera output of actual heritage brands like Canon and Panasonic. A price difference of currently as much as $700 / £600 is not unusual. And I can't help thinking that would have at one time bought a whole other camera – and one with a decent spec.

The lack of mid-range cameras could have something to do with the fall in market volume the segment once enjoyed at its height. With smartphones decimating compact sales, the major manufacturers pivoted to higher end, higher margin cameras. The effect has been that the major brands can't really be said to produce 'budget' camera models anymore or indeed offer a range to match all price points and skill sets.

This has led to a present-day camera market of pricing extremes. At the low end there are plastic-bodied snappers using licensed brands and tech that is at least a decade old (but often older still), such as the Kodak Pixpro FZ45 or FZ55 (around $100 - $130 respectively). And then there's quite a jump in price to premium devices with 1-inch sensors like the Canon PowerShot G7X III ($879) or Panasonic Lumix TZ300 ($899), even if those too are hardly revolutionary.

There are other options in-between, but with small sensors, like the retro Yashica FX-D 100, and Canon IXUS 285 HS, or cameras designed for specific use cases, like the vlogging Sony ZV-1F, and "film" Fujifilm X half. But there's a clear lack of serious mid-range cameras, as there used to be a time when you could buy a mirrorless camera with larger sensor and lens for around $500-800.



Yashica FX-D 100

© JOSHUA WALLER

Is the mid-tier digicam now our smartphone?

And there remains the thorny issue of the smartphone. Today's budget cameras produce images that are no better than – and often much worse than – average smartphone output. But that's the point. A young Gen Z crowd are buying them for a slightly questionable low tech 'retro' look.

If you are going to pay $800 to $1000 for a premium Panasonic or Canon compact, though, you are deliberately looking for something with a larger sensor that is going to give you results that, hopefully, better a phone snap.

Extrapolating from this, any theoretical digicam sitting in-between these two camera segments, price wise, is going to deliver something very similar to, or the same as, what a smartphone already provides. Hence why invest in a mid-tier digicam, should the option even be there?

As things stand today, memory chip shortages and global economic crises have made camera production more expensive and less profitable than it used to be. So at least part of the thinking seems to be 'why put these high value components into lower margin models?'

Yet because the big traditional camera brands have seemingly refused to lose money on developing mid-tier digicams, they've left the lower end of the market open to third party licensees, providing no competition for them whatsoever.

So, consumers face a stark choice if they want a brand new camera rather than secondhand. Go for a modestly priced, plastic bodied tiny sensor camera, or spend quite a bit more on an enthusiast model with a larger chip – or, if neither appeal, just stick with your iPhone / smartphone.

Gavin Stoker is a highly experienced photography journalist and magazine editor, and a regular contributor to AP

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send your thoughts in around 500 words and you could win a year's digital subscription to AP.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS COLUMN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER MAGAZINE OR KELSEY MEDIA LIMITED


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©PHOTOS BY CHRIS PORSZ FROM LONDON CALLING

I was there too!

A charming and well-packed volume by Chris Porsz is the photographer's latest "final book", **Peter Dench** discovers more

I admit to being a little irritated by Chris Porsz's photography. His subjects have a habit of acknowledging the camera rather than pretending it isn't there. I have a habit of trying to pretend Chris Porsz isn't there. It's impossible. He's relentless. *London Calling* is his 12th photography book. His previous one was supposed to be his last. But that wouldn't have been very Chris Porsz.

Its 352 pages form a love letter to the capital, built from more than 60 visits, hundreds of miles on foot and thousands of photographs. By the end I was disarmed. He may not be subtle, but his enthusiasm eventually sweeps away most objections. Before long both photographer and pictures are swirling in the mind's eye.

The images that survived the edit show a colourful capital in perpetual motion. People jump, smoke, laugh, flip skateboards, kiss, point, dance, cycle, march and occasionally get arrested. Tourists tangle with commuters, while characters appear as though they've wandered out of a fancy-dress, hen or stag party. Everyday life supplies the entertainment and Porsz is determined to document it. Every passer-by has the potential to become part of a photo. London's landmarks become his stage.

Street photography is often conducted from the shadows. Porsz has leapt from them lit up like a pinball machine. He engages rather than observes. The result is work with an anarchic energy: funny, sometimes touching, occasionally a little obvious, but rarely cold.

After declaring, 10 books in, that he was done, the 70-plus former paramedic was brought back to life by a December 2025 speech from the political defibrillator Donald Trump. Trump's criticism of London Mayor Sadiq Khan as a "national disgrace" destroying the capital was enough to get Porsz's shutter pumping again. Porsz's riposte was to embrace Dr Samuel Johnson's observation that when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life. He documented the city he loves, celebrating its energy, eccentricity and multicultural characters, many of whom would probably be blocked by Trump from receiving American visas.

Porsz has proved his point, although *London Calling* works best when it doesn't feel obliged to make one. The book's real strength lies in the simple business of being gloriously alive. London doesn't need to prove it is behaving itself to be defended, and Porsz captures the moments that make their own argument.

Broadcaster James O'Brien makes a similar point in the foreword, invoking Michael Bond's Paddington, a bear who finds a home in a city where everyone is different and anyone can fit in. O'Brien argues that Porsz captures the extraordinary in the ordinary, and the ordinary in the extraordinary. It's an eloquent assessment of the book's appeal.

London Calling's charm comes from a man who simply goes out and takes pictures that may brighten your day. It's both a visual chapter of the capital and an invitation to grab a camera and go for a walk. So much public conversation is designed to divide us. Porsz's insistence on looking *at* people, rather than looking away, feels like an admirable place to start.



London Calling by Chris Porsz £27, Self-Published, Hardback, 352 pages, ISBN: 9781036997991





Left: 2026 World Cup, England v Mexico. The George Inn, Southwark

Top right: The Ritz, Picadilly

London Naked Bike Ride, Southwark Bridge

Below: The Abbey Road zebra crossing, St John's Wood



What's On

Some dates for your photographic diary

Until 15 November EVENT *Bristol Photo Festival at* various city venues

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

25 November WORKSHOP
Birds of Prey, Owls & Hawk Workshop with Sony and WEX at BB Falconry Experiences, Derby

26-29 November EVENT
The Hoxton London Photo Show at Espacio Gallery, Shoreditch, London

28-29 November WORKSHOP
Introduction to Studio Photography at Leica Akademie UK, London

2-6 December EVENT
The Southbank London Photo Show at Oxo Gallery, London

2 December PHOTO WALK
Fujifilm Christmas Photo Walk with WEX at Greys Monument, Newcatle

5 December WORKSHOP
The Space Between: portrait photography masterclass at National Portrait Gallery, London

5-6 December EVENT
Brighton Art Book Fair at Phoenix Art Space, Brighton

13 Jan WORKSHOP
Step into Astrophotography at Jodrell Bank, Cheshire

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



Florida, USA, 1998



Disneyland, Tokyo, Japan, 1998

ALL IMAGES © MARTIN PARR / MAGNUM PHOTOS

Sausages, sandals and... sex toys

Common Sense by Martin Parr
The Welcome Building, Avon Street, Bristol
Until 15 November
Entry free

The colourful and influential world of Martin Parr is still on display as part of Bristol Photo Festival

From an astonishing lifetime legacy, Common Sense is one of the late Martin Parr's most ambitious and influential projects. First unleashed on the world in 1999, I remember giddily trotting along to the London exhibition. It was like jumping into a bag of Dolly Mixtures of lurid colours and peculiar shapes. Sausages, stockings, sandals and cigarettes jostled for attention alongside ear lobes, uncooked meat, pigeons and dildos wrapped in plastic. It was an assault on the eyeballs, slightly nauseating and utterly absorbing.

The reportage is being reprised as part of Bristol Photo Festival 2026. Unmistakably of its time, the impact remains potent. Our appetite for things has arguably intensified and social media has widened the playground for Parr's observations. He jabs his camera at what we purchase, consume, wear and throw away. Everyday abundance becomes a Technicolour stream. He treats unremarkable objects like police evidence. The doughnut and burger become monuments to excess. It's Parr on steroids. Nothing escapes his attention and nothing is quite as innocent as it seems.

Using a 35mm camera, ring flash and macro lens, Parr created his signature shadowless, hyper-saturated documentary style. The colour is almost indecent. Once you're slapped and seduced by it, the attraction begins to turn sour. What appeared tasty, bright and cheerful takes on a more sinister role. The cheapness becomes grotesque and the familiar ridiculous.

Attraction and repulsion are very Parr. We laugh at what we're shown, then wonder whether we should be laughing at the subject or ourselves. The discomfort comes from recognising our place in the world his photographs depict. They bear witness to globalisation, mass production and our appetite for novelty and tat. Common Sense magnifies those elements, making them impossible to ignore. It is occasionally affectionate, always merciless.

The exhibition I witnessed was displayed on inexpensive photocopies rather than precious limited-edition prints. This bargain-basement approach challenged conventional ideas about how photographs should be viewed, circulated and valued.

In 1999, *Common Sense* reportedly appeared in 41 galleries across five continents over a three-month period, becoming the largest simultaneous photography exhibition ever organised. Like a virus, it spread around the world. An accompanying book, published by Dewi Lewis, extended the experience.

Parr was artistic director of the inaugural Bristol Photo Festival in 2021 and remained on its board until his passing last year. The reprisal of Common Sense carries added significance as a tribute to his contribution to the festival's development.

The 2026 theme, Time Machine, explores how photography connects past and present. The appetite for excess, to have and to own, remains reassuringly, or depressingly, constant. Parr may be gone, but his kaleidoscopic sweet shop is still open for business. Step inside, feast your eyes, and expect to leave with that slightly queasy feeling.

Peter Dench



Miami, Florida, USA, 1998



Venice Beach, California, USA, 1998

Excitement, chaos and tragedy

The sublime images capture the reality of life on the gay scene in 1980s New York



Don't Worry Boys by Stanley Stellar
£52, Loose Joints, Hardcover, 192pages, ISBN: 9781912719808

Stanley Stellar didn't first pick up a camera until he was 31, in 1976. Born in Brooklyn and living in the West Village, he did what many amateur photographers do and turned his lens on his friends and community.

But Stellar quickly proved to have a real photographer's eye. His images, charged with the chaotic energy of the queer scene in 1980s New York, possess the matter-of-fact frankness of a born documentarian. The streets according to Stellar are messy and disordered, with the gay community congregating in found spaces like the abandoned piers on the Hudson River.

Stellar's work has been newly collected and reappraised in *Don't Worry Boys*, apparently named for a 'semi-mythical New York social club'. Edited by Jordan Hancock and introduced by novelist Andrew Holleran, the book chronicles two important decades in Stellar's career.

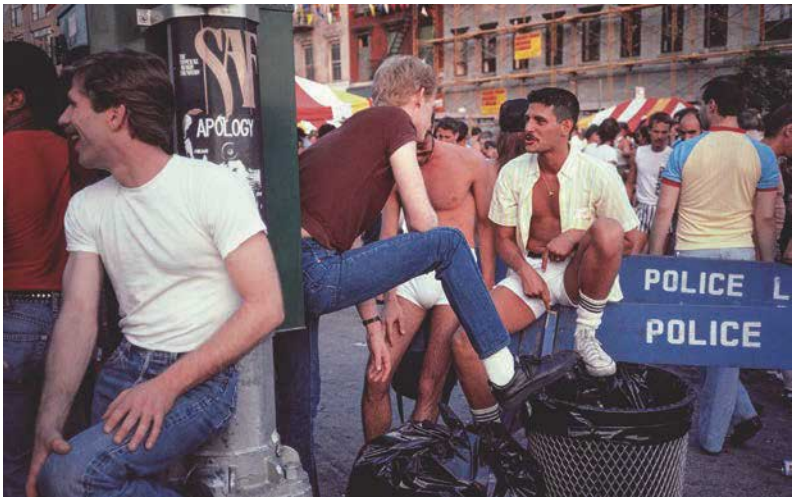
In these images, sex is a constant presence. Stellar didn't shy away from the hypersexualised reality of New York's cruising community; his subjects are shown enthusiastically enjoying themselves under the full glare of the daytime sun. Fashion, too, is important. Members of the queer scene often dressed meticulously just to walk to the corner store. Stellar's images are full of people who look good, and know it.

Stellar's talent was quickly noticed, and he became a regular contributor to publications including Christopher Street and New York Native. Earning a living as a commercial photographer, he took a pragmatic approach to documenting the queer scene, placing ads for nude models and selling the resulting images to the many gay skin magazines sustained by the city at the time.

Stellar captured the love, joy and chaos of queer New York life, but it's not an overly sentimental picture. His images cover the earliest Pride parades, where a sense of danger and defiance still lingers in the frame, with police officers often close at hand. For younger viewers used to today's sanitised corporate spectacles, the photographs provide a reminder that rights and acceptance are hard won.

And of course, Stellar was shooting in New York during the tragedy of the AIDS crisis. In the throes of the epidemic he turned increasingly to formal studio portraiture, producing hundreds of portraits that feel softer and more introspective than his earlier work. As Jordan Hancock recounts in the book's afterword, many of the men who sat for Stellar were already living with the disease. Some called him after receiving a diagnosis, asking to be photographed before illness altered their appearance. Many knew they did not have long to live, and several died within months.

Stellar, happily, is still living in Manhattan and still making work. Leafing through *Don't Worry Boys* can be a difficult experience, with the loss and devastation felt by many of its subjects readily apparent. But it is also a joy to spend time in the company of a photographer so clearly in his element.





ALL PHOTOS © STANLEY STELLAR 2026 COURTESY LOOSE JOINTS

Above: Gay Pride Day, 1983 © Stanley Stellar 2026 courtesy Loose Joints

Left: Clearly Loving, 1981 © Stanley Stellar 2026 courtesy Loose Joints

Your best Photos

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

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

* PRIZE IS VALID IN THE UK ONLY

Into the heart of the wave
by Jamie Mordue

DJI Mavic 4 Pro, 1/2000sec at f/2.8, ISO 125

I took this photo at South Fistral in Newquay. It's been a quiet summer in terms of surf here in Cornwall so it was great to finally see some swell coming in and people out on the waves again!
Instagram: @framebyjame

PRIZE WINNER





Moonrise
by Tom Hopkins

Fujifilm X-T1 Fujifilm 50mm F2, 1/170sec at f/8, ISO 200, -2 EV.

This photo was just a quick opportunistic shot from the bedroom window of our house. I saw how incredible the sunset light was and realised the moon was in the perfect position rising above the clouds.
Instagram: @mothopkins


PRIZE
WINNER



Your best Photos

Hurry up Dad I'm starving
by Lesley Martin

Canon EOS R5 Mark II, Canon EF 300mm F2.8 Mark II, 1/1600sec at f/2.8, ISO 2000

This was the first time I've seen a juvenile kingfisher and to be able to get some pictures was a special morning I'll not forget. I got this shot just as some thin clouds passed in front of the sun and produced this beautiful light. He dived and caught a fish but instead of feeding the youngster he flew upstream. But after a couple of failed attempts it managed to catch its own breakfast.

Instagram: @le5leymartin

Your best Photos



A Stroll Past Central Camera by Anthony Mance

Sony A7R III, Sony FE 70-200 mm F4 Macro G OSS II, 1/500sec at f/9, ISO 500

I shot this photo early morning on Wacker Drive in the Loop in Chicago. The overhead tracks of the "L" train always make for an interesting subject, but on this day, they caught the sunlight just right to create some dramatic interplay between light and shadow on the storefronts below.
Instagram: @aemance



Yellow and Blue by Christine Lundvall

Canon EOS R5, Canon RF 400mm F2.8 with 1.4x teleconverter, 1/1000sec, ISO 10,000, 560mm

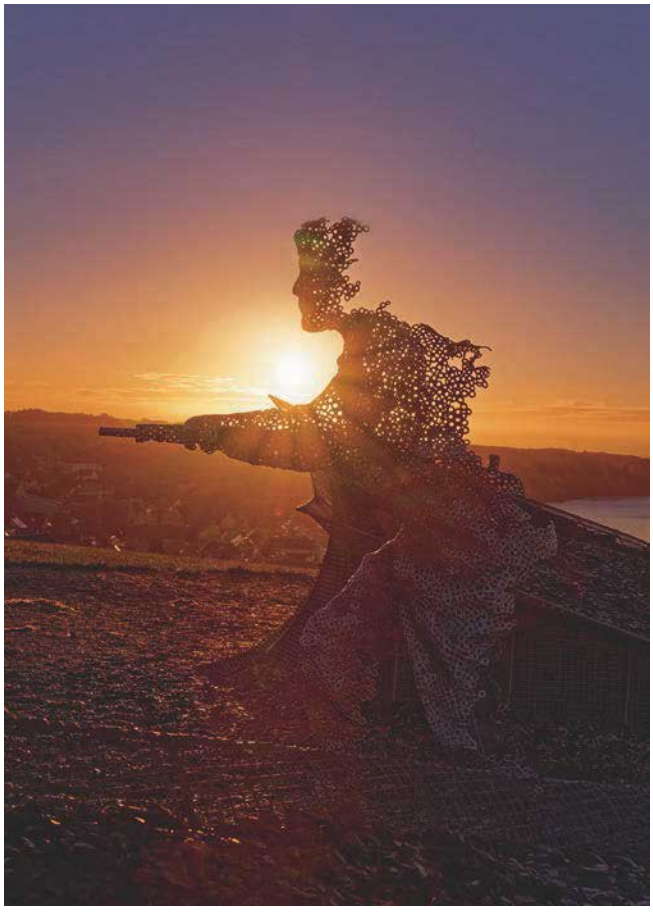
Each summer Indigo Buntings return to Southern Ontario in search of the massive blooms within sunflower fields. Tiny songbirds weighing just 15g and approximately 14cm long, buntings are found in Southern Ontario in the summer months and migrate up to 2,000 km to warmer climates for the winter.
Instagram: @chrislundvall
Website: clundvallphotography.com

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.

Your best Irys Photos

We've partnered with Irys to share your best photographs!

Irys is a new photography-first app, made by photographers for photographers. Designed to give images and the people who make them the space they deserve. For a chance to feature on this page: create an account on the Irys app, visit our profile and submit your images to the "Your Best Photos" group. Two images from the group will be selected for publication in every issue and on our social media. *You can find Irys in the Apple and Android app stores*



A Golden Tribute to the Fallen by Marc Eyckmans

Sony A7R III, Tamron 28-200mm F2.8-5.6 Di III R, 1/200sec at f/11, ISO 100

On a holiday in Normandy with my son, visiting all the museums of D-Day. I read an article about this D-Day monument erected for the 75th commemoration and we decided to go and have a look. Arriving there when the sun was setting, I made a lot of photos, and waited for the sun to set behind the statue to take this one.

Vero: marceyckmans
Irys: Marc7001

Hands Beneath the Nets by Monojit Dutta

Nikon Z 50, Nikkor Z DX 50-250mm f/4.5-6.3 VR, 1/320sec at f/6.3, 136mm

I took this photograph to transform an ordinary scene of workers weaving fishing nets into a visual story of livelihood and tradition. The rhythmic arrangement, vibrant blue nets, and traditional hats caught my attention. I wanted to highlight how everyday hard work, often unnoticed, can create patterns, harmony, and unexpected beauty.

Irys and Instagram: @kolkatarchobiwala



Amateur Photograp

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Round eight
Close-up and Macro

Close-up and macro photography invite us to look at the world differently. Familiar subjects can become odd, beautiful or surprisingly abstract, revealing details easily overlooked by the naked eye. A flower can become a landscape or an insect an extraordinary character. Textures, patterns and everyday objects take on a life of their own. Getting physically close is only part of the challenge. Composition becomes especially important when working within a small area. Look carefully at shapes, colours, textures and the relationship between your subject and its surroundings. A simple background can help reveal detail, while an unconventional viewpoint can turn an instantly recognisable subject into something far less obvious. At close range depth of feld can become extremely narrow, so think carefully about where you want the viewer's eye to land. Don't be afraid to experiment.



Your guest judge

Glasgow-based macro photographer David Hamilton, aka WeeMadBeasties, is fascinated by the tiny creatures hiding in plain sight. From Scottish gardens and woodlands to the rainforests of Ecuador and Malaysia, he explores miniature worlds, capturing spiders, beetles, fungi and other overlooked lifeforms that reveal nature's extraordinary diversity.

Plan your APOY 2026 year

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

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

YOUR FREE ENTRY CODE

Enter the code below via Photocrowd to get one free entry to Round Eight – Close-Up and Macro

APOY12889348



Snail

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To enter, just

ALL ABOUT APOY 2026

The camera club award

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

her of the Year

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APOY 2026

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What you win

APOY prizes

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

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

Young APOY prizes

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

Camera club prizes

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

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



© CHRISTIAN WIEDIGER VIA UNSPLASH

The Young APOY award

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

Picture Perfect

BEST SHOTS: CATS

One genre. Three photographers. Three standout images, each revealing how vision, timing and technique come together in a single frame. For this issue, AP invited three photographers known for their images of cats to share one image they consider among their best. From split-second decisions to carefully crafted compositions, they reveal the thinking, technique and experience behind the shot, offering insight into not just how the image was made, but why it matters

Tim Flach

Tim Flach is an internationally acclaimed photographer celebrated for his striking portraits of the animal kingdom. His distinctive images reveal the character, beauty and vulnerability of his subjects, including cats, forging an emotional connection between animals and audiences. His award-winning books and exhibitions champion empathy, wildlife and conservation.
Instagram: @timflachphotography

Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?
When we discovered this bandit-looking cat called Boy online, I knew he had to be the cover of my latest book, *Feline*. Cats live alongside us, yet they remain remarkably independent. His chance markings resemble a mask, alluding to their secret lives. We think we know them, but what lies behind the mask, and what does it really mean to be feline?

What was happening just before and after this frame?
I travelled to Borneo, Indonesia, just to photograph our cover star. He was a very relaxed cat and used to the camera, given that he was a social media sensation with millions of followers.

What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?
The main decision was to keep everything simple. Boy is extraordinary, so I wanted a clear, direct portrait. His gaze needed to connect immediately with the viewer, drawing you beyond his remarkable markings towards his individual character and personality.

Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?
We needed to travel light to Indonesia, so I contacted a local studio that kindly helped us with equipment. I shot it on my Canon R5 Mark II and worked with the flash equipment that they had available. The flash was relatively slow, so we had to work around that, but I really appreciated their help and our collaboration.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?
Perhaps the biggest challenge came afterwards, convincing people that Boy was real. His markings are so unusual that many assumed the image had been manipulated. We shared behind-the-scenes footage showing him on set, which went viral on TikTok and received millions of views. Within *Feline*, we included QR codes at the back of the book linking to behind-the-scenes footage of the shoot.

What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?
At a time when trust in images is being eroded, I wanted to celebrate the photograph as a document, a record of something that existed in front of the camera. With the visual landscape increasingly polluted by AI slop, behind-the-scenes material has become necessary to establish authenticity.

Was it luck or judgement?
With animals, there is always an element of not quite knowing what will happen. You might arrive with an idea and an instinct that something could work, but ultimately you have to respond to what happens in front of you, and often the most interesting moments are the ones you couldn't have planned.

What did this image teach you?
Making *Feline* meant reaching out to people across the world, and I was struck by how willing people were to help and connect us with others. At a time when so much of our lives is technologically mediated, the project was a reminder of the importance of real human connection and collaboration.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?
There's an old saying that dogs have masters and cats have staff. I think there's some truth in that. You can prepare everything carefully, but with cats you ultimately have to work on their terms. So perhaps most importantly, good luck!



Treat yourself to a subscription for Christmas. ***See page 80 for details***



Chohee Courtois

Chohee is a West London photographer specialising in portraits of pets and their people. Fascinated by the personalities of her subjects and the bonds they share with their owners, she aims to capture the character and connection that make each relationship special. Her work has won multiple national and international photography awards.

Instagram @choheecourtois.photo

Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?
This image, titled Soulmates, is a portrait of a cat and her owner, with a particular focus on their eyes. It's one of my favourite pet-and-owner portraits (and one of my clients' favourites, too) because it portrays the quiet yet profound bond between a cat and her owner in a unique and visually striking way. I love how the image emphasises the striking similarities between their eyes and expressions, despite them being different species, while beautifully capturing their distinct features and textures in detail.

What was happening just before and after this frame?
It was taken during a cat portrait session with a client. After photographing the cat on her own, I moved on to photographing the cat and her owner together, starting with a more traditional composition and finishing with more artistic and experimental ones. I then continued with family portraits featuring the whole family. This is my usual workflow, although the order can vary depending on the animal's temperament and the situation.

What were the key creative decisions you made in making this photograph?
I made sure I captured at least one well-focused, well-positioned shot of each subject so that I could combine them into a single image in which both subjects' eyes were in focus. I also made sure the lighting was of high quality, using a large light source positioned directly above and centred between the subjects to create symmetry, striking catchlights, and detailed irises. All these decisions were important in minimising distractions and helping viewers naturally focus on their eyes.

Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?
As mentioned, I took multiple shots of the two subjects and merged them in post-production. The camera settings were 1/125 sec, f/11, and ISO 100. I used a flash with a large octabox, which I believe was 150 cm in diameter, positioned close to the subjects.

The result was exactly what I had hoped for: a clean, impactful image created with a clear intention and meaning, rich in beautiful textures and details.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?
Getting the right expression and gaze from the cat was the biggest challenge. It required patience and a calm approach from both the owner and me. As you might expect, this is often the biggest challenge when photographing animals, and patience and calmness are among the most important qualities for handling such situations.

What does this photograph mean to you, and what would you like readers to take from it?
To me, this photograph is an example of how a message or meaning, such as the bond between a pet and its owner, can be conveyed in a more unconventional way. It shows that pet-and-owner portraits don't always have to feature smiles or kisses to communicate a deep bond. It encourages me to keep looking for different ways to convey meaning through my photographs, and I believe this is a valuable mindset for readers to adopt, too.

Was it luck or judgement?
It was mainly down to judgement, although I was lucky to have a calm and patient owner who was good at handling her cat.

What did this image teach you?
This image, along with many others, has taught me how even the tiniest details, such as a very slight change in head direction or a subtle change in expression, can make or break an image. I sometimes recreate this image with different subjects, and I've noticed that even very subtle changes can give the resulting images entirely different moods.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?
I would say that it helps to have a clear intention in mind when photographing: to think about how you want the final image to look, what feelings you want to evoke, and what message or meaning you want to convey through the photograph.



Alex Class

Alex Class is the photographer behind Paws Celebre, creating heartfelt portraits of pets and their people in the comfort of their own homes. Inspired by the life-changing bonds between animals and their owners, Alex takes a gentle, empathetic approach, offering sensory-aware sessions that celebrate the unique connection between pet and person.
Instagram @alexclass

Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?
This is Leia, photographed from underneath her owner's glass dining table. She lost her left back leg and much of her right hind foot when she was only a few weeks old, before being rescued from the streets of Jordan. Her owner described what Leia had brought into her life in one word: resilience. That became the idea. I wanted her disability to be visible without making the photograph about loss. I wanted resilience to look joyful, funny and completely Leia. Like you can stick your tongue out at adversity and challenges, making any situation you might be in, lighter.

What was happening just before and after this frame?
The setup was deliberately simple: Leia on the glass, me underneath, waiting for her natural movement to bring everything together. The tongue and expression existed together for a fraction of a second. We used a tiny bit of soft tuna paste on the table to get her tongue out.

What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?
The viewpoint was the key decision. Shooting through the glass revealed her body and the way she moves, while still letting her personality dominate the frame. I kept everything else very clean so there was nowhere for the eye to go except Leia.

Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?
I photographed through the owner's glass table with a flash at low power positioned to one side. The side light gave definition to her fur, paws and shape while keeping the setup simple. The glass created the unusual viewpoint and allowed the physical reality of her disability to become part of the photograph quite naturally.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?
Timing. You can design the idea, perspective and lighting, but you cannot choreograph a cat's expression to the millisecond. I had to be ready when Leia gave me the frame.

What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?
Leia's owner found her starving on the streets of Jordan and built a life around helping her live fully. Years later, when their London home flooded, she escaped with her bank card, phone and Leia. Almost everything else was lost, but Leia was safe. To me, this photograph is about that resilience and that bond. That sense of belonging and gratitude. I hope readers see what Leia has, not what she is missing.

Was it luck or judgement?
The concept, viewpoint and light were judgement, her tongue was a lucky moment that we created for her.

What did this image teach you?
I think the story teaches me more than the image. The image is just the vehicle to tell it. Resilience does not always have to look heroic. Sometimes it looks like a cat sticking her tongue out at you.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?
Start and stay with the story, not the technique. The glass-table viewpoint works because it says something about Leia. Without that reason, it is just a visual trick. Keep the setup simple, know what you want the picture to say, and leave enough room for the cat to give you something you could never have planned.

Treat yourself to a subscription for Christmas. ***See page 80 for details***

An Insurance Against Time

Self-taught street photographer Trevor Lake arrived relatively late to photography, but he brought a lifetime of looking, an instinct for people and an appreciation of the stories photographs preserve. **Peter Dench** finds out more...

There are many great theories about photography. Robert Capa's "If your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough." Cartier-Bresson's, "Your first 10,000 photographs are your worst." Trevor Lake suggests that photographs are not merely pretty pictures. They are "insurance" against time. That's a weighty philosophy for someone who is relatively new to photography. Having said that, photography has been hovering in his life for a while. There were cameras in his childhood. A brief dalliance with photography as a teenager. And years as a professional graphic designer laying out photos in magazines. Then came grief, a pandemic, a phone, a series of London protests and then eventually, a Fujifilm X-T4. Change happened quickly.

Never backwards

Today, Lake is a self-taught street and portrait photographer based in East London who works under the name Trey_creative. You might see him alone, wandering through Soho, Camden, Brick Lane, Whitechapel or Dalston. Camera poised, honed on faces, expressions, clothes and gestures. His work has already been recognised by Portrait of Britain, including a winning portrait of Paul Pulford. His reputation is becoming established and his ambition is on fire. 'I have never been backwards in coming forward. When I want something, I don't hesitate, I immediately start manoeuvring towards it,' he says.

It's not arrogance. The need for speed of progress has deep roots. Shortly before Covid shook the world, Lake's mother passed away. The loss in 2020 came when he was beginning to spend more time photographing protests and marches. He'd tag along with his photographer niece Fiona (@fifipicsie) who was already shooting events, and capture his own on a phone. His phone battery would become flat documenting the faces, banners, flags, anger, hope and movement. 'I thought this was interesting. There's loads of narratives unfolding in front of me,' he recalls.

A mother's death is dreadful to us all. Photography became a form of creative therapy during this tragic time. 'If the Thames Water network relied on my tears for water back then, there would've been a long-term drought,' he says. It's a revealing line. Lake can be deeply serious about photography without being solemn about himself. After diligent research he bought the X-T4 and began learning fast.

Faces from another time

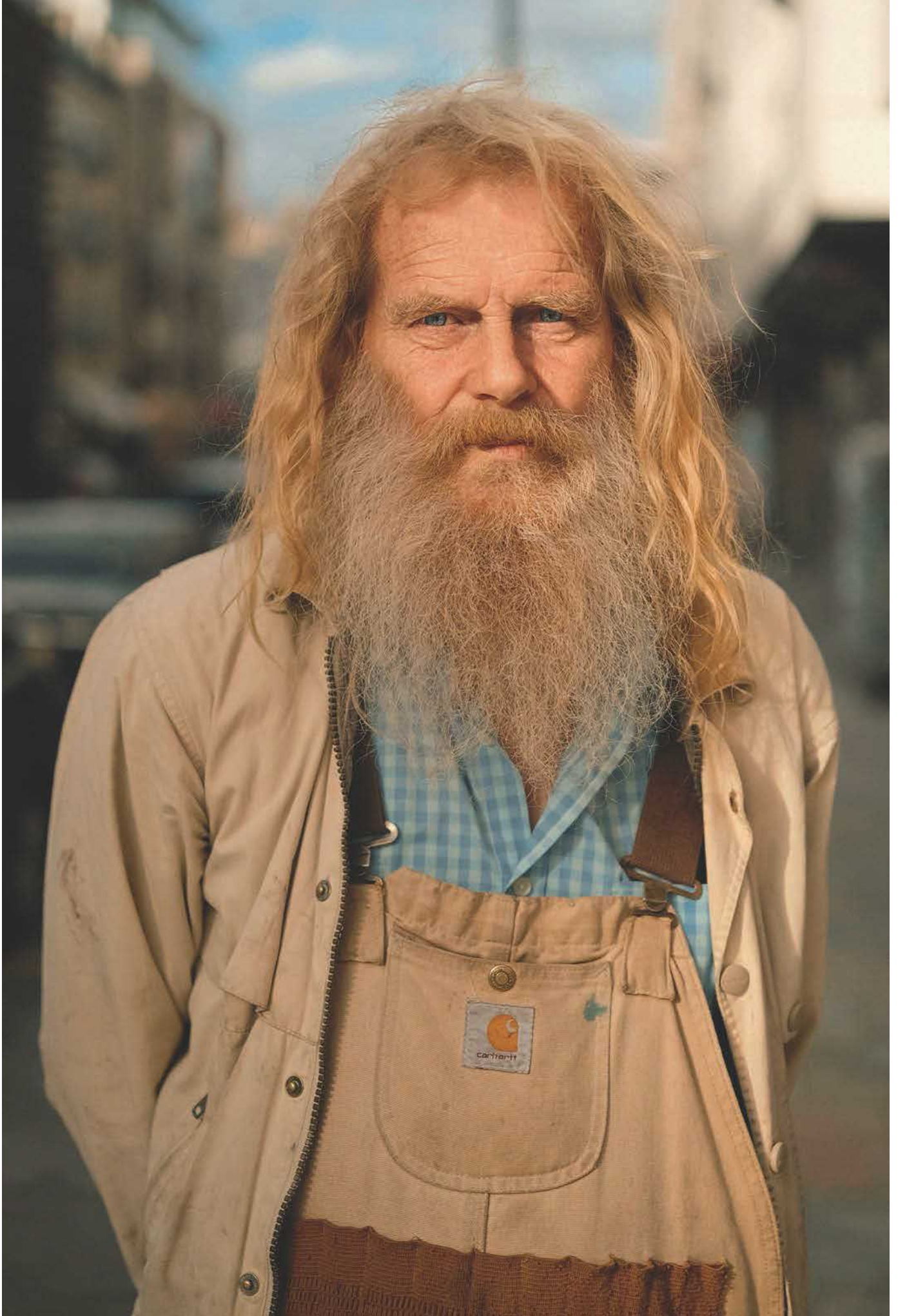
Perhaps inevitably, the protests and demonstrations became less frequent. His previous experience as an illustrator taught him to look more closely at the people within them. He noticed the way people walked, moved and reacted. Then there were the faces. A beard, expression, bold pair of sunglasses, flash of colour or swag bag of attitude can be enough to make him stop. 'I genuinely believe some people possess faces that belong to entirely different periods in time,' he says. 'I will cross paths with a stranger on a modern London street and realise their features flawlessly fit the 1600s, a medieval era, or an old Renaissance painting.' It's difficult to disagree. His subjects often look as though they have been dropped into contemporary London from another story altogether.



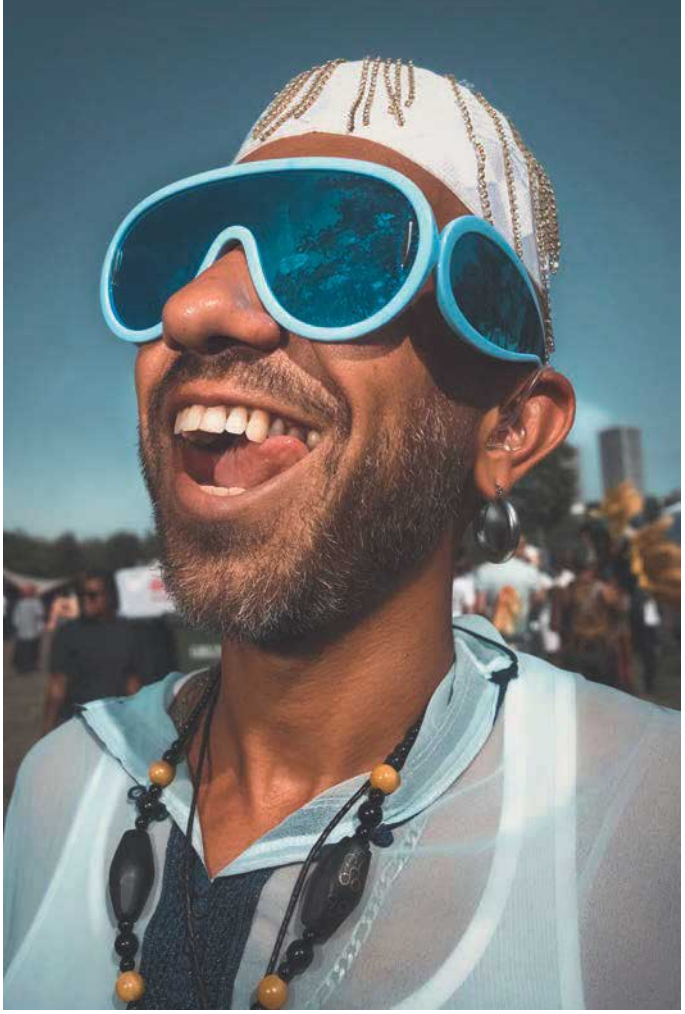
Above: A radiant Rachel Enguita, pictured enjoying a weekend trip to London

Right: The Gardener: Paul Pulford – the winning frame that went on to secure a place in *Portrait of Britain*

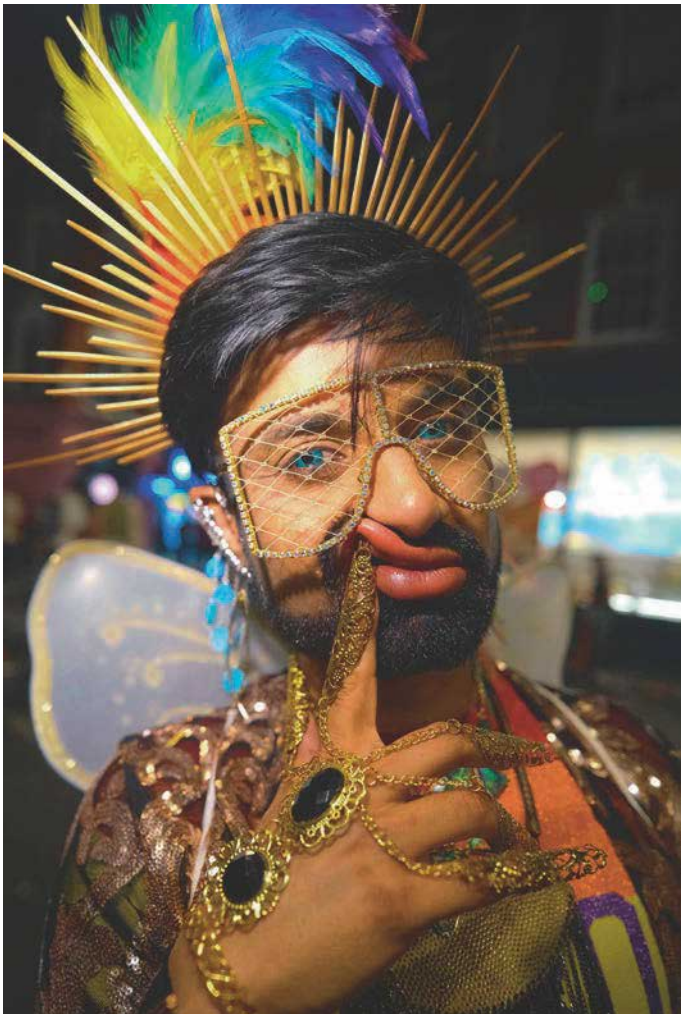
His photographs aren't just about appearance but what lies beneath. He is a hunter of places where people are willing to announce themselves visually - Soho,


carhartt









Camden, Brick Lane. Style hooks his attention, clothes are what he calls 'visual armour' but it is the person that interests him. 'The style gives the photograph its texture and time period feel, but the human emotion gives it its soul,' he says.

The stories we inherit

Heritage imbues Lake's way of seeing. His mother came from St Kitts and Nevis; his father from Antigua. There were legendary family stories but little visual record to back them up. He's acutely aware that ordinary civilians in the Caribbean were rarely the ones holding the camera. Photographic histories were frequently created by visitors, tourists or outsiders. The absence of those missing faces from his family archive has become part of his motivation. 'I can't travel back in time to photograph the earlier generations of my family, but I can make sure that the ordinary, extraordinary people walking the earth right now aren't erased by time,' he says.

Before Lake became a photographer, during a visit to St Kitts and Nevis, he met an elderly man. The story has stayed with him. The man had survived a shark attack while working on his boat. He had also once been spotted playing football by two Englishmen who invited him to come to Britain for a trial. His parents wanted him to become a doctor or teacher and refused to let him go. The man kept a box of old letters and photographs under his bed. The most cherished a signed picture of the two men that could have changed his life – footballing legends Bobby and Jack Charlton. Lake remembers the power of those surviving pictures but he also regrets that he never photographed the man.

Taking time

Lake's photographs provide a visual record of a life that might otherwise disappear. The realisation may be new but he was introduced to it much earlier than he realised. Aged around 14, Lake took a camera to a family wedding hoping it would relieve the boredom. He wandered around clicking without much agenda or idea. Weeks later it was revealed that the professional photographer's pictures failed to come out. Lake's snaps were elevated to the only hope. 'I started to panic,' he remembers, not thinking he had produced anything of worth. But they were something, and the family who saw them there were thrilled. It was another experience that has stayed with him. The realisation that a photograph can be important beyond its aesthetic qualities. It was an archive. It could be preserved.

Years later he would photograph a woman on a visit to London with her family. She may have used a wheelchair but was elegantly dressed in a black-and-white checked jacket and matching skirt. They chatted, joked and laughed before heading separate ways. Two years later, Lake received a message from her daughter, Mikala Enguita Pattison, asking for the photographs. Her mother had died. The pictures had suddenly become precious and for Lake, that is the point.

More than a photograph

As Lake's photography has developed, that same sense of connection has continued. In 2024 he met actor and campaigner Adam Pearson at Addiscombe Recreation Ground in Croydon. People called out to Pearson and he waved back. At the end of the photo-session they travelled together on the Croydon tram. The following day Pearson headed off to America to appear alongside Sebastian Stan in *A Different Man*. The encounter provided Lake with another reminder of the camera as an invitation rather than a barrier. 'The camera gives me the privilege to meet and capture these wonderful people, and each person helps me on my journey to the next person or meeting.'

For Lake, a portrait is not about a quick snap and dash like some of the more confrontational street photographers. It is about getting to know the person by listening attentively and looking deeply. In June 2025 he was invited by the photographer Sarah Eyton to photograph her 103-year-old father Anthony Eyton, a Royal Academician, who was Lake's oldest subject yet. At his London home, it became an unusual collective: two photographers with designer backgrounds and a celebrated artist, discussing light from their various perspectives.

People and memory are at the heart of Lake's craft. Asked whether his photographs are records of other people or of himself, he says, 'I'd definitely say it is a bit of both. I don't think you can separate the photographer from the photograph.' An example would be his winning Portrait of Britain image of Paul Pulford. A precise combination of light, colour and clothing: sunlight catching Pulford's blond hair, beige overalls and piercing blue eyes echoing the blue of his shirt.



Above: Designer and photographer Sarah Eyton alongside her father, the renowned artist and Royal Academician, Anthony Eyton.

Facing page

Top left: Singer, songwriter and actress Gia Lodge-O'Meally, captured in a raw moment at UK Black Pride 2025.

Top Right: A vibrant reveller soaking up the energy at UK Black Pride 2025

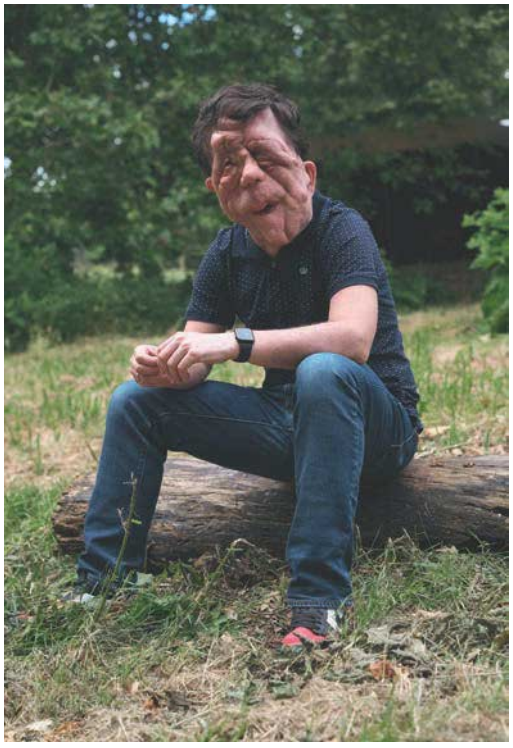
Bottom left: Issey, bassist & vocalist, enjoying a day out at the Classic Car Boot Sale.

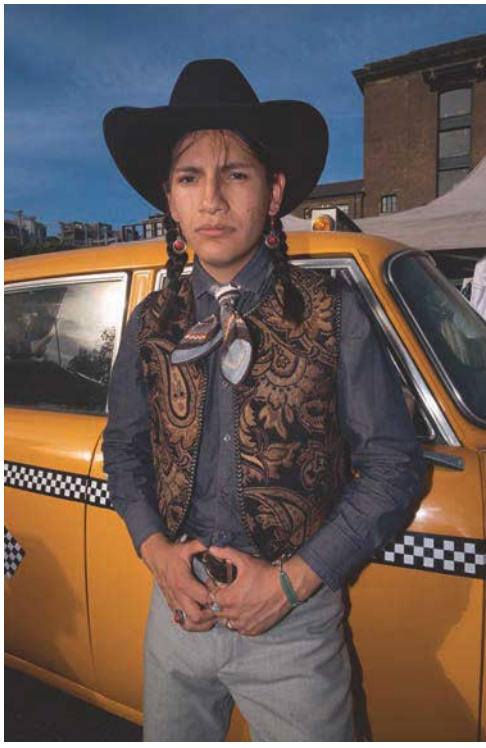
Bottom right: A colourful festival attendee enjoying his time at Pride.

Going against the crowd

Lake describes himself as a 'lone wolf' and estimates that he shoots on his own around 95 per cent of the time. Groups, he suggests, can create a 'hive mind.' 'I have never been one to be an acolyte,' he says. If everybody turns left, his instinct is often to go right. It's how many photographers choose to work and simply how Lake works best. Solitude streamlines instinct and anticipation. Stopping for a conversation requires no explanation. The street, he believes, is continuously churning out photographs, his job is to collect them. 'The vast majority







of my photography is about recognising a picture that is already happening, rather than me trying to manufacture one.'

Lake uses terms 'ruthless' and 'expeditious' when that tiny window opens and a picture appears. 'You need to snatch that scene directly from the jaws of time before it evaporates forever,' he says. That's easier said than done when it comes to photographing strangers. He once found himself surrounded by seven or eight men in Brixton who suspected he was an undercover police officer.

He once approached a group of skinheads outside a Camden pub while people inside frantically gestured at him to stop. He has been called weird and been rejected. He carried on talking to the Camden skinheads and discovered they were SHARP Skins – Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice. One of them later revealed a huge Jamaican flag tattoo across his scalp.

It's a classic lesson of not to judge a book by its cover. His camera can be a 'lightning rod for tension,' but it can also become a key to unlocking stories. The camera gets him through the door, but curiosity keeps him there. That willingness to engage with people can't always be taught. For Lake, it's perhaps the most important part of his photography.

A lifetime of looking

He spent many years looking at exceptional photographs working around magazines including Vogue, Cosmopolitan, GQ and Tatler. He studied layouts, cropping, colour, composition and the way an image has to instantly communicate. He absorbed it 'by osmosis.' He thinks like a designer looking through his camera's viewfinder. Thoughts overlap: where would this image sit on a page? How much negative space does it need? Is the composition clean or busy? The structured eye of the designer meshed with the spontaneous instincts of the street photographer perhaps indicates why Lake's photography has developed at speed. He has had a lifetime of looking waiting to be unleashed.

His approach is instinctive, but the equipment has evolved alongside it. His first lens was a Fujifilm 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6, offering the flexibility to react quickly during protests and marches. Today, he favours the Fujifilm 33mm f/1.4, which provides a field of view equivalent to a 50mm lens on his X-T4, switching to a 23mm when he wants more of the surrounding environment in the frame.

Flash is an important and experimental addition for Lake. He uses the Godox V1 for fast moving protests and festivals. He might opt for the more compact Godox iT32 on more stealthy street walks, using it to separate the subject from the urban clutter and enhance an expression or gesture. Lake says other photographers have been inspired by his work to buy the same Godox equipment.

Left: Kitty scanning the scenery and style at the Classic Car Boot Sale

Centre: Actor and advocate Adam Pearson, pictured at Addiscombe Recreation Ground in Croydon

Musician Gian Sequeiros, standing in front of a classic American yellow taxi from Dream Cars at the Classic Car Boot Sale

He may have arrived late but was far from empty handed. He brought stories inherited from his mother and a frustration at the photographs his family never had. He brought years of studying other people's pictures. He brought a fascination with faces and movement. And he brought the slightly obsessive confidence of someone who, in his own words, is never backwards in going forward.

Lake refers to his photographs as a diary. He has a belief in photography's ability to stop time. Each frame transports him back to where he was, how he felt and what he remembers about the person standing in front of him. There is visual character, light and composition in his photographs but they are ultimately less about looking than remembering. Lake is a lone wolf padding through the crowd, watching everyone, making sure people aren't forgotten, one photograph at a time. AP

Instagram **@trey_creative**

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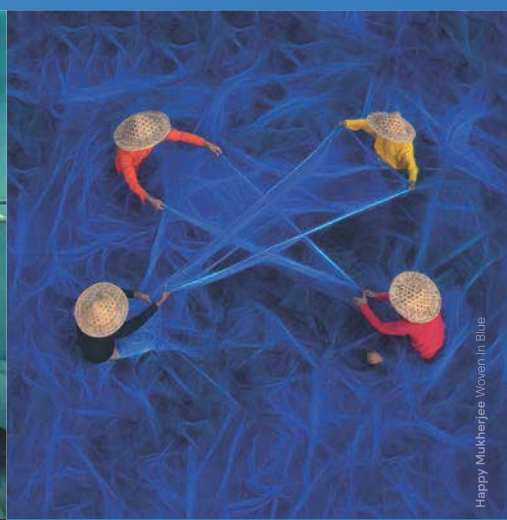




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The Dark Side of Documentary

Dark Tales explores the uneasy territory where British documentary photography meets the Gothic, revealing a world of strange encounters, unsettling places and stories hiding in plain sight. Peter Dench finds out more...

It's fair to say Britain has a long and foundational relationship with the Gothic. It has shaped its architecture, novelists and the Victorians through to modern times and the Goth subculture. Photographers have historically explored these themes - burnt out shops, suburban interior, prison cell or sweaty nightclub has conjured an archive of Gothic imaginations.

This is the provocation behind Dark Tales: British Documentary Photography and the Gothic, a forthcoming exhibition at Martin Parr Foundation in Bristol that brings together more than 80 years of photography depicting Britain from the post-war period to the present. Curator Isaac Blease has had a rummage through the Foundation's collection of over 5,000 prints and assembled an unsettling and at times playful portrait of a resilient yet haunted nation.

The exhibition includes work by a formidable roll call of British and international photographers including Bill Brandt, Lee Miller, Don McCullin, Martin Parr, Jo Spence, Anna Fox, John Myers, Donovan Wylie, Sarah Pickering and Derek Ridgers. The exhibition is cut into four chapters; The Castle, Domestic Bliss, Double Take and Night Creatures. As a whole it suggests something resembling a Horace Walpole novel than a conventional documentary photography survey.

When we read Gothic we may think of ghosts, monsters, mansions and the macabre. Blease is more interested in what happens when documentary photography makes the familiar strange. Historically, Gothic fiction has reflected the anxieties of its age. The exhibition argues photography similarly has recorded the troubled political, moral and social realities of the modern world. At a time when the idea of photographic truth is becoming increasingly challenged, it's an intriguing proposition.

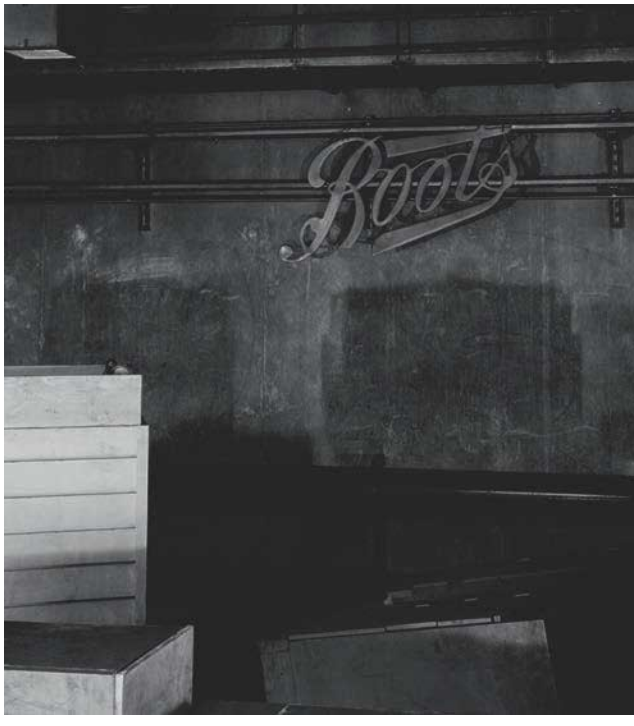
Contributor Sarah Pickering's photography is perfectly suited to the situation. Her Incident series, represented in the exhibition by Lift and Boots, was made in simulated environments used to train the emergency services. At first glance, they look like records of catastrophe. In reality, the spaces have been deliberately constructed to prepare police, firefighters and military personnel for the worst they might experience.

Pickering began making the work between 2004 and 2009, at a time when elaborate sets and constructed environments were increasingly being used within fine-art photography. Her response was to explore where documentary photography might sit within that context, particularly in the gap between the imagined and real-life extremes represented by simulations.

We recognise the places Pickering's black and white photographs depict which is precisely why they are



Right: Derry/ Londonderry, Northern Ireland, at around 4 PM on August 12, 1969. Photo: © Estate of Akihiko Okamura



Below: Boots, 2008. From the series 'Incident'. Photo: Sarah Pickering



© ESTATE OF AKIHIKO OKAMURA



© SARAH PICKERING

unsettling. Lift looks like an everyday car park, shopping centre or block of flats but something's not quite right. Similarly the photograph of High Street favourite Boots the chemist sign. 'As the spaces are blackened by smoke we are led to believe something awful has already happened in these spaces. The ordinary always holds the potential for something extraordinary to happen,' says Pickering.

Horror is often more effective when it hints at the familiar. That potential runs through Gothic. Pickering has been conscious of that possibility before the term Gothic was applied. 'It's an interesting moment to revisit the Gothic principle that horror thrives in proximity to the familiar. The emotional content of photography can be secondary to the representative qualities it has (that this is a photograph of something that exists in the real world),' she says. Her photographs are documents of something that exists, but what exists itself is a simulation. They occupy that awkward space between evidence and invention. Since Pickering made Incident, that ambiguity has arguably become more potent. In 2007, the idea that a photograph might not represent what we assumed it represented was largely an artistic and philosophical concern. Ai has now made that a daily concern.

The philosopher and artist Trevor Paglen's description of photography's shift from "an art of human vision and representation" towards automated infrastructure and social regulation resonates with Pickering. She says images are increasingly created by machines for other machines from facial-recognition systems, automated number-plate readers to AI training datasets. Additionally, photographs made by humans can themselves be absorbed into systems that generate new images. 'Viewers are looking at photographs trying to figure out what is real rather than assuming a photograph is authentic, all because of AI,' she says.

That makes Incident feel remarkably prescient. The photographs were already destabilising the relationship between reality and representation because the spaces they depicted were simulated training environments. Pickering deliberately reinforced their apparent authenticity through a straightforward documentary approach, shooting on 5x4 film and producing silver-gelatin darkroom prints. The prints are deliberately big, almost 150 x 125cm - a presence that is difficult to replicate on a screen. 'I hope a viewer would think about handmade images and machine-made images,' Pickering says.

Photography as something



© DON MCCULLIN. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HAUSER & WIRTH

that can make us question not only what we are looking at, but how and why we believe it, is an idea that runs through Dark Tales. Derek Ridgers approaches the problem from a completely different direction. His photographs of the legendary London nightclub the Batcave, associated with the emergence of British Goth culture, now look like other worldly historical documents. The clothes, make-up and hairstyles in Ridgers photographs have acquired an almost cinematic quality.

It's a mythology he's keen to question. 'When I started (in the latter part of the 1970s), I was just trying to take decent photographs of interesting looking people,' he says. He started to take the work more seriously and by the time he photographed the Batcave in 1982, saw himself as documenting youth subculture that wasn't necessarily the darkness suggested by the photographs' later reputation. 'The early Goths I encountered at the Batcave and at similar clubs like Astral Flight, were always pretty friendly. The young people I photographed and chatted to in those clubs were almost uniformly lovely,' he recalls.

Ridgers perhaps unexpectedly looks back on the 1980s under Thatcher as a golden age compared to now. Perhaps he's right. Subcultures were relatively easy to enter: the right coat, make up and hairstyle could transform you. As he suggests, 'The World was still your oyster.' It would be tempting for Ridgers to remember the Batcave as something it wasn't. 'Looking back there's always something nostalgic to romanticise but I don't think the Batcave was any more mysterious than any other club night from that time. Gothic novels or gothic architecture might be mysterious but the Batcave was just a really great club night named after something out of a kids comic,' he says.

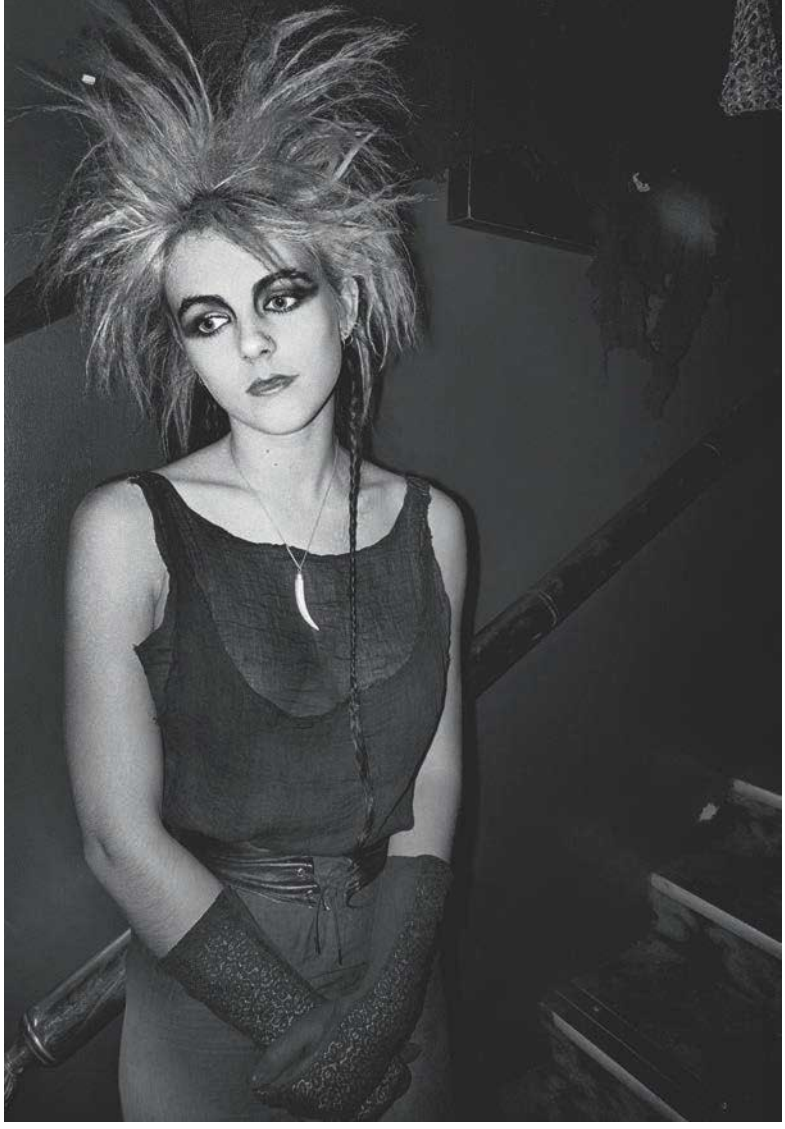
Ridgers photographs remind us that what now looks extraordinary may simply have been ordinary at the time. Pickering finds the extraordinary lurking inside the ordinary. That's a delicious contradiction in the context of Dark Tales and there are more platefuls. Perhaps the distance between what we know now and what was understood then is where documentary photography becomes Gothic.



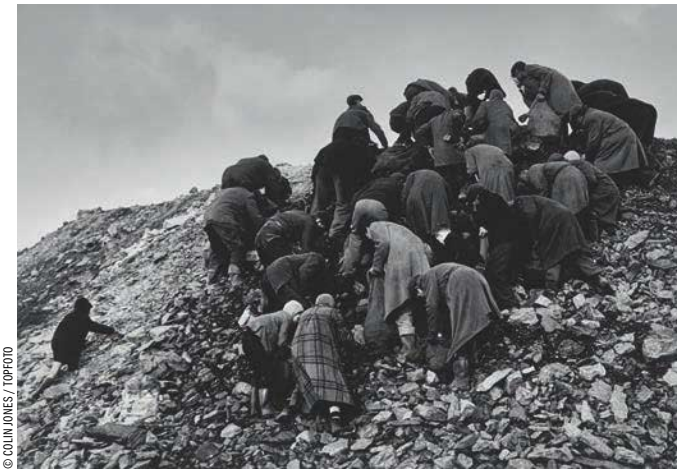
Top: Woman with pram, Consett, 1974. Photo: Don McCullin. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Above: Lift, 2008. From the series 'Incident'. Photo: Sarah Pickering

Social media has increased how photographs can acquire a life of







© COLIN JONES / TOPFOTO

their own and reconnected Ridgers with people he photographed at the Batcave all those years ago. Some have explained how his photographs affected their lives. Others told him who they were and what they were doing. 'But here's the thing. The photographs were a very brief moment in time and I think they need to remain that way. They ought to be able to tell their own story,' he says.

Central to Bleases's curation is the instinct to allow the photograph to resist a single explanation. He describes "documentary" as an imperfect term, acknowledging that some of the photographers in Dark Tales work firmly within the tradition while others actively contest and subvert it. His aim, he says, has been to lead with a visual search and conjure an atmosphere regardless of the different standpoints of the photographers.

It's a clever approach that allows the exhibition to meander from heavy industry and political conflict to domestic interiors and youth cultures without requiring everything to be beholden to a single definition of documentary. The exhibition throws up lots of questions and as it turns out, dark doesn't necessarily mean despair.

Above: Liz Hurley at the Batcave, 1984. Photo: Derek Ridgers

Top right: Andrew, Batcave, Soho 1983. Photo: Derek Ridgers

Above right: 'Sunderland, North East of England 1962'. Coal scavengers working on a mound. Part of the grafters collection. Photo: Colin Jones, TopFoto

Ridgers' photographs of young people at the Batcave were generally taken when they were having fun: 'Getting wasted, copping off and living their best lives. And they're usually taken at a point where everything is still possible for that person and most of the horrific realities of life haven't quite sunk in yet. So in that sense, the photographs are about something hopeful. I don't see anything dark about that at all,' he says.

Pickering is hesitant to describe Incident as hopeful. The photographs do have seductive qualities, but remain disturbing because of their references to real burned-out spaces. The training of emergency services preparing every day for the worst-case scenario might offer a reassuring subtext, but she sees the proposition as more complicated than a simple binary of darkness and hope.

Dark Tales may be concerned with unease, fear, uncertainty and the dark currents threading through Britain's photographic history but it's a fitting complication that the contributing photographers don't all agree on where the darkness lies. Is it in the photograph or what we imagine has happened? Sometimes it arrives when history has changed our reading of an image. For some time to come it may lie in the creepy question that Pickering's projects have been addressing for decades: how do we know that what we are looking at is real?

We used to rely, or over rely, on documentary photography offering the answer. The more interesting possibility asked by Dark Tales is that maybe it doesn't. AP

Dark Tales: British Documentary Photography and the Gothic runs from 17 September to 20 December 2026 at Martin Parr Foundation, Bristol. Admission is free. Dark Tales is part of the 2026 Bristol Photo Festival, more details on the full programme can be found at **https://bristolphotofestival.org**



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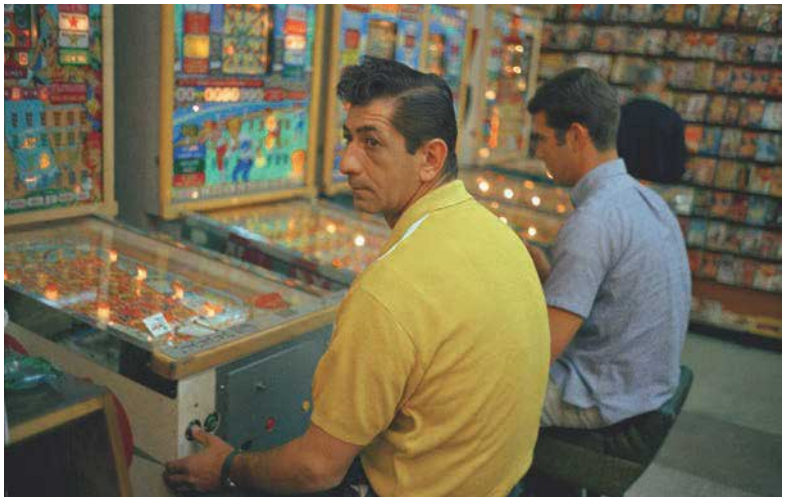
The Colour Pioneer



Fifty years after William Eggleston's Guide helped redefine colour photography, The Photographers' Gallery revisits the painstaking dye transfer prints that changed photographic history. Peter Dench finds out more

William Eggleston regularly appears in Greatest Photographers Ever lists. He was judged to be second in Amateur Photographer's 2025 survey after a panel of experts were asked for their top 10. He has unquestionably changed the course of photographic history with his photographs of the day-to-day. They have become so iconic that it's easy to forget how radical they were at the time. His book, William Eggleston's Guide, helped establish colour photography as a serious artistic force. Fifty years after publication, The Photographers' Gallery in London has curated an exhibition to celebrate this milestone of iconic and rarely seen dye transfer prints. An homage that reminds us why Eggleston's work still resonates.

It's also 50 years since the unimaginatively titled Photographs by William Eggleston exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, curated by American photographer and critic John Szarkowski. The photographs were not appreciated by everyone at the time but proved hugely influential. The everyday subject matter was dismissed by some critics, but history has reclaimed that view. Eggleston transformed colour photography from a commercial medium into a recognised art form.



Far left: Untitled, Santa Monica, from the series Los Alamos, 1971-74

Above: Untitled, Tennessee, from the series Los Alamos, c. 1971-74

Left: Untitled, Las Vegas, from the series Los Alamos, c.1971-74

Today Eggleston is widely regarded as a pioneer and The Photographers' Gallery exhibition features many of the images that have become uniquely identifiable as 'Egglestonian.' A child's tricycle towering against a pale sky and the unforgettable Red Ceiling made in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1973. The nostalgic photograph of a drink placed on a folded-down tray-table within the cabin of a plane and photograph of a long-haired woman holding cash at a counter. They allow lesser known photographs to be included from the late 1960s and 1970s when his visual language was still taking shape.

Where many photographers are asked 'what film or camera did you use,' Eggleston's name has become synonymous with the way they were printed as much as what they depict. His reputation is inseparable from the dye transfer printing process. This labour intensive technique was originally developed by the kings of colour, Kodak, intended







Clockwise from above:

Untitled, Memphis, from the series Los Alamos, c. 1971-74

Untitled, Memphis, c. 1971

Untitled, from the series Los Alamos, 1965-1974

Untitled, Memphis, from the series Los Alamos, c. 1971-74

Untitled, Memphis, 1970

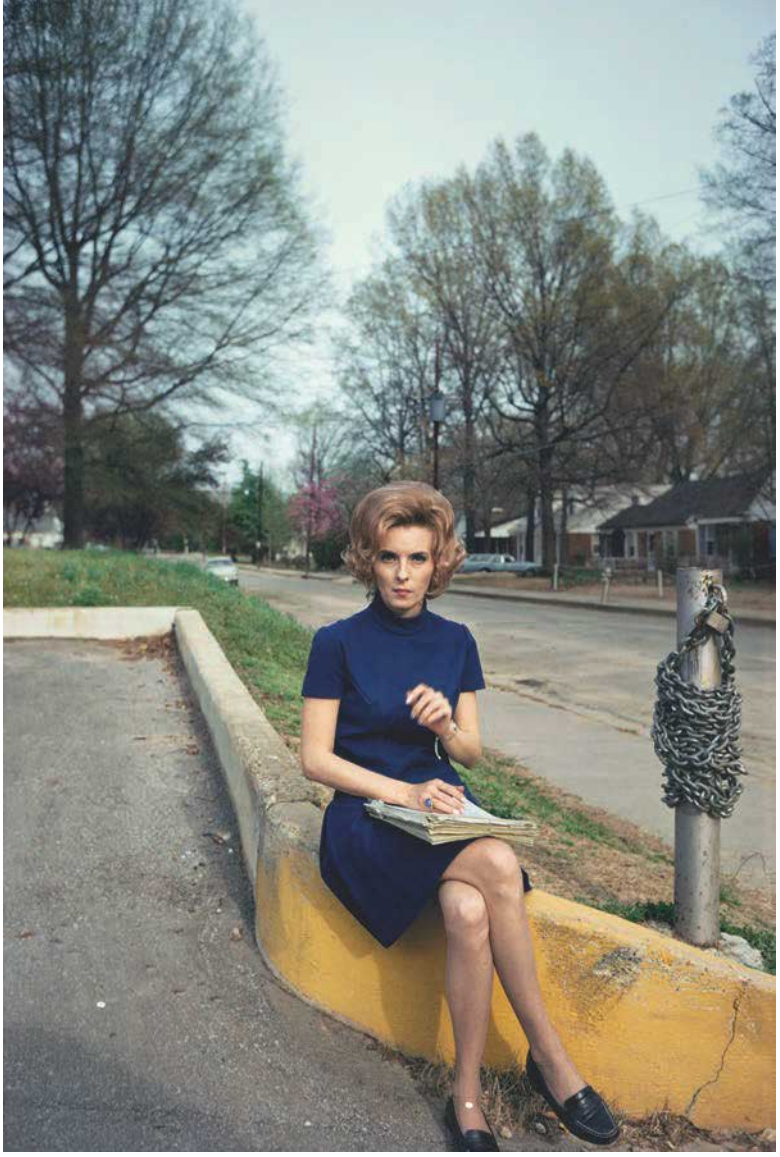
Untitled, Mississippi, from the series Los Alamos, c. 1971-74

All photos by William Eggleston From the Wilson Centre for Photography. © Eggleston Artistic Trust. Courtesy Eggleston Artistic Trust and David Zwirner

for advertising photography and commercial printing. Unlike conventional printing, dye transfer required three separate colour separations to be made from the original transparency. Each was transferred onto its own matrix before being immersed in cyan, magenta or yellow dye and painstakingly rolled onto specially coated paper. The registration had to be exact, with every stage completed by hand. The results were worth it - exceptionally rich rich colours with subtle tonal control and a remarkable archival permanence.

In a 1991 interview with editor Mark Holborn, Eggleston recalls, "I was reading the price list of this lab in Chicago and it advertised 'from the cheapest to the ultimate print.' The ultimate print was a dye-transfer… Every photograph I subsequently printed with the process seemed… better than the previous one."

The process had been embraced by visual culture long before Eggleston. Dye transfer played a starring role in the saturated Technicolor look of Hollywood classics including The Wizard of Oz (1939) and Alfred Hitchcock's North by Northwest (1959). The latter's bold use of colour profoundly influenced Eggleston's own picture production. Colour became an expressive element equal to composition or subject matter. A







red ceiling, glowing freezer, or pastel blue of an evening sky carried equal weight in an Eggleston capture.

All good things must come to an end and Kodak discontinued the specialised papers, dyes and matrix films needed for dye transfer printing during the 1990s. Like a shopaholic before Black Friday, Eggleston and his family acquired as much of the remaining material as they could before it disappeared. Those dwindling supplies allowed work to continue with master printers Guy Stricherz and Irene Malli, which eventually gave rise to The Last Dyes, a New York exhibition earlier this year that marked the final photographs ever to be printed using Eggleston's stockpile of original dye transfer materials.

The Photographers' Gallery exhibition is not built around those final prints alone but acts as a timely reminder that the original dye transfer photographs are themselves becoming increasingly rare. As photographers continue to manipulate colour with software sliders, these meticulously handcrafted prints speak of a slower, more exacting approach to photographic craft, where colour was interpreted as carefully in the darkroom as it was seen through the viewfinder. The colour saturation, extreme tonal depth, and tactile physical presence is unmatched by modern inkjet printing. This legacy analog method offers unique qualities that digital output still struggles to fully mimic.

Eggleston once famously described his approach to photography as "democratic." A lightbulb hanging from a ceiling, shoes under a bed, back of a woman's head or young man pushing shopping trollies deserved equal attention. He elevated the everyday to draw audiences in for closer inspection. In Eggleston's hands, the extraordinary richness of dye transfer printing transforms ordinary subjects into images that remain as compelling today as they were half a century ago. AP



1 Singing Ringing Tree by Mike Cook

2 Leeds Dock by Chris Booth

3 Cluck Cluck by Derek Smith

4 Flying High by Caroline Schofield







Join the Club

This friendly West Yorkshire camera club celebrated its 70th anniversary last year

When was the club founded?
Ossett District Camera Club was founded in 1955, and in 2025 we proudly celebrated our 70th anniversary — a remarkable milestone that speaks to the enduring appeal of photography and the club's ability to adapt, inspire, and connect through generations. From the earliest days, our club has welcomed all with an interest in the photographic arts, whether complete beginners or seasoned professionals.

Over the decades, we have grown both in numbers and ambition, consistently fostering an environment that is friendly, supportive, and inclusive. Our history is not just measured in years, but in the thousands of images we have created, stories we have told, and friendships we have kindled. The club has witnessed—and documented—the vast changes in photographic technology, from film and darkrooms to the digital revolution and beyond. What remains unchanged is our shared passion for capturing the world, both as it is and as we imagine it.

What does your club offer to new members?
Ossett District Camera Club has an ongoing commitment to recruiting new members and nurturing photographic talent. One of our most successful initiatives has been the offer of free introductory and refresher courses. Designed for newcomers and those returning to the hobby, these courses cover the basics of camera operation, composition, and photo-editing, ensuring everyone has the confidence to participate fully in club activities.

We also run hands-on workshops throughout the year, where members can practice techniques in lighting, portraiture, landscape, and macro photography, among others. The workshops are informal, interactive, and led by experienced photographers from within the club or invited external speakers. These sessions are a wonderful way for members to

experiment, learn, and share tips in a supportive setting.

Describe a typical club meeting
Theres no such thing. Our calendar is packed with activities designed to inspire and challenge members of all abilities. Each year, we host a varied programme that includes:
- Hands-On Workshops: Practical sessions exploring techniques such as low-light photography, studio lighting, creative post-processing, and more.
- Field Trips: Outings to scenic spots, historic sites, and events both locally and further afield, giving members opportunities to practice in new settings and develop real-world skills.
- Competitions: Friendly internal and inter-club competitions that encourage members to push their creative boundaries and receive valuable feedback on their work.
- Photo Critique Evenings: Constructive group sessions where members can present their images, share stories behind the shots, and learn from each other's approaches.

Do you invite guest speakers?
We regularly welcome guest speakers from the photographic community, giving members the chance to learn from accomplished practitioners. Our programme features talks spanning a wide range of genres – from wildlife and street photography to travel, documentary and fine art – offering fresh insight, creative inspiration and practical guidance. This valued part of our club calendar helps keep our members connected to the wider world of contemporary photography.

Do members compete in regional or national competitions?
Yes, our members actively take part in regional and national competitions. Most recently, the club submitted work to the Yorkshire & Humber Photographic Union's annual exhibition.

We didn't secure any placements this time, which isn't surprising given the exceptionally high standard across the region, but every round is a chance to learn, grow and come back stronger next year.

Several members also enter national competitions, including the Amateur Photographer of the Year awards, and one of our members was shortlisted in the 2024 Fuji Life As You See It competition. Some members also enter the online ePHOTOzine competitions and have received several daily and weekly theme winning placements.

How many members do you have?
We currently have 36 members.

Are there any residential trips or outings planned?
The club doesn't currently run residential trips, as our main programme takes place weekly from September through to the end of April, with a traditional summer recess. However, for the first time this year we've introduced a series of fortnightly evening camera walk catch-ups around the local area to keep members shooting and socialising throughout the summer months.

Alongside this, we organise special interest outings to events and locations across the region. Recent favourites include the Whitby Goth Festival, Haworth 1940s Weekend, Leeds city centre 'street' workshops and the Yorkshire Mining Museum – giving members plenty of opportunities to explore new subjects and enjoy photography together.

The club also supports local community groups by attending events such as the World Coal Carrying Contest and the annual Gawthorpe May Day Procession.

Do you have any funny club stories?
One member insisted that camera clubs don't do funny stories, then immediately proved himself wrong. He told us how, at 5.30am in an old cemetery, he lay under a full camouflage net waiting to photograph a little owl. All was quiet until a woman arrived walking her dog. The dog froze, growled, and made it clear something in the undergrowth was suspicious.

Faced with staying hidden or revealing himself, he threw off the net and stood up. The woman screamed, the dog lunged, and she let fly with language that would have made a docker blush. He apologised, explained he was photographing an owl rather than haunting the cemetery, got his shots – and, as he put it, "I never went back."

What are the club's future goals?
As we look ahead to the next chapter in our club's story, our aim remains the same as it was in 1955: to inspire, educate, and connect through the art of photography. We welcome anyone with a curiosity about cameras and a desire to explore the world through a lens.

AP

Club essentials

Ossett & District Camera Club

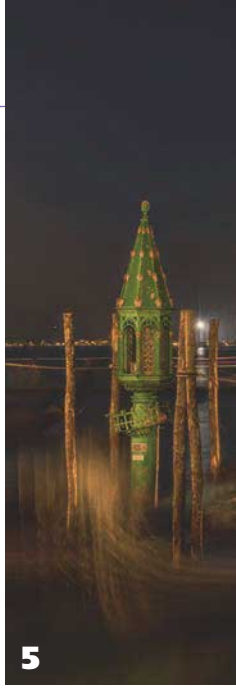
The Coach House, Ossett War Memorial Community Centre, Prospect Road, Ossett, WF5 8AN

Meets: Thursday evenings, September to May.

Membership: New Members (First Year): £30. Full Members (Full Year): £45. Social Members: £20. Junior Members (Under 18): £10

Contact: https://www.ossettdistrictcameraclub.com/

Website: https://www.ossettdistrictcameraclub.com/



5 The Movement of Gondolas, Venice by John Boothroyd

6 A walk into the Unknown by Susan Fritz

7 Walk This Way by Catherine Taylor

8 Metal Towers by Ronnie Moore

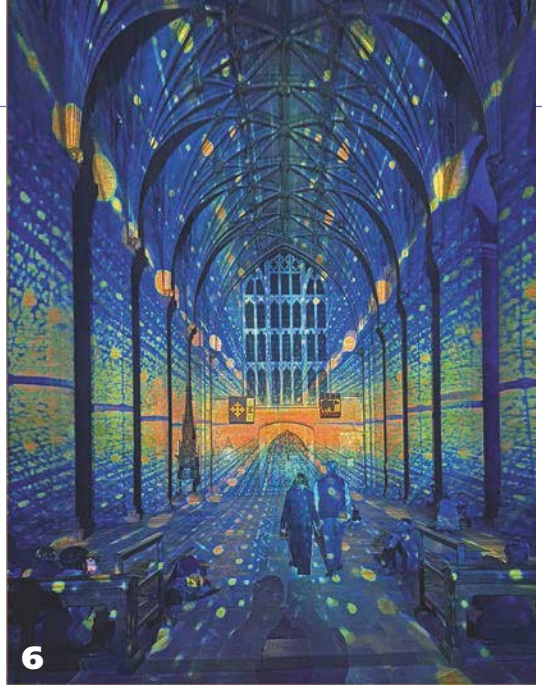
9 Early Evening Under The Humber Bridge by Steve Hook

10 Heavy Metal by Tom Stevens

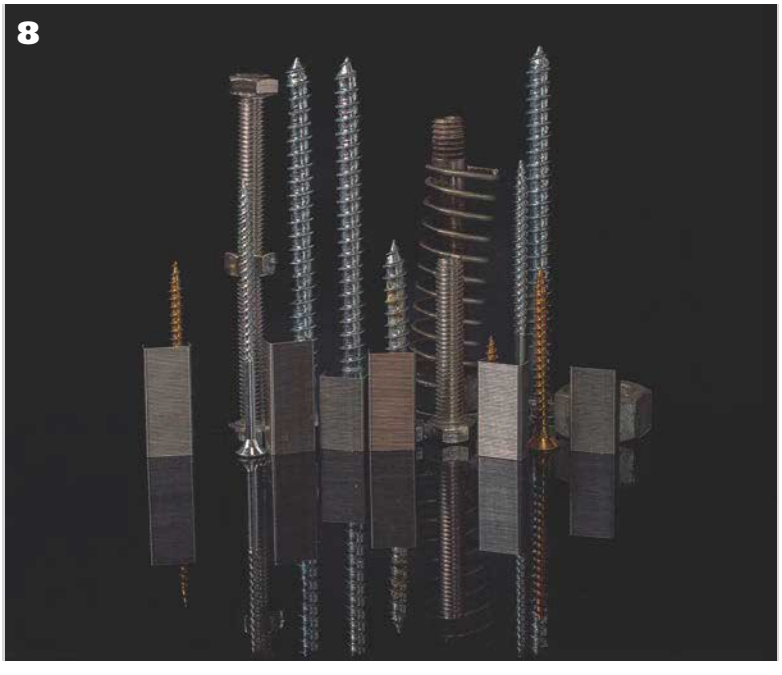
11 Kingfisher by Ian Wiper






6


7


8


10


11

Visionary, versatile Voigtländer

John Wade looks at a name from the past that is classic, collectable and still very usable



© LEITZ PHOTOGRAPHICA AUCTION, VIENNA

The first Voigtländer Daguerreotype camera, sold at auction recently for €192,000

Let's begin by getting the company name right. It's not Voightlander, it's Voigtländer – no 'h' and with an umlaut over the 'a'. The umlaut is there to shift the stress to the second syllable. So the correct pronunciation is not VOIGT-lander, it's Voigt-LAND-er. Okay, moving on...

Voigtländer is not only one of the most prestigious names in German camera manufacture, it is also one of the oldest. Founded in 1756 as a scientific instrument maker, it went on to make lenses for optical products. In 1840, working with mathematician Josef Petzal, the first mathematically computed lens was produced with an incredible f/3.7 aperture. The following year, the lens was used in Voigtländer's first camera, made for the daguerreotype process. In the years ahead, Voigtländer made hundreds of cameras, many of which included multiple variations. Today, collectors clamour for them, but the enduring reliability of their mechanics and optics make them of equal interest to classic camera users.

The following six pages gives a small indication of the vast output from this amazing company over more than half a century.



The Bijou, a very small SLR for its time

1908: Bijou

At a time when cameras in general, and reflexes in particular, were overly large, this is one the earliest miniature single lens reflexes (SLRs). Made of metal with a box-like shape that tapers towards the front, it supports a high hood to shield the focusing screen on top of the body and shoots 6x4.5cm plates. It came to be renowned for using a 10cm f/4.5 Heliar lens, a name that would go on to be synonymous with a great many quality Voigtländer cameras.



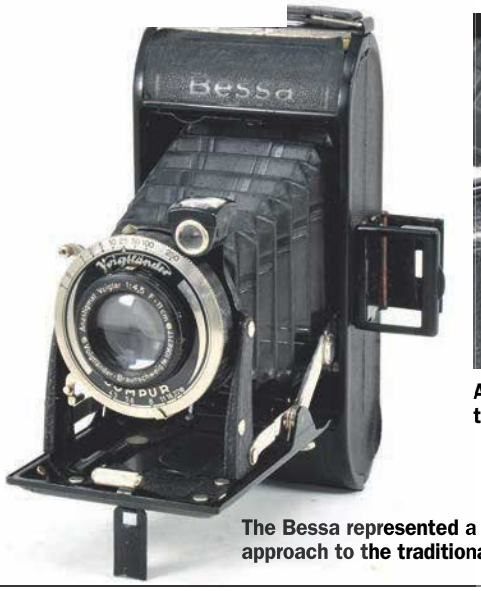
1914-1937: Stereflektascop

The Stereflektascop is a stereo camera that places twin Heliar taking lenses either side of another Heliar viewing lens, whose image is reflected up to a ground-glass screen under a hood on top of the body. A focusing knob to one side of the lens panel moves all three simultaneously for accurate focusing. Shutter speeds of 1–1/250sec are set by a dial on one side of the lens panel. Depending on the model, the cameras are found with 60mm, 65mm, or 75mm lenses, all with f/4.5 apertures. Two sizes of camera were sold for plate sizes of 45x107mm and 6x13cm, each of which uses a complicated plate-changing magazine fitted to the back of the body.

Stereflektascop stereo camera in its 6x13cm size

1929-1949: Bessa

When launched in 1929, the Bessa was Voigtländer's first attempt at a self-erecting folding camera. By the time this updated model was launched in 1935, it had become more hi-tech, with an 11cm f/4.5 lens in a Compur shutter speeded 1-1/250sec.
A feature that sets it apart from its rivals is the shutter release which unfolds from the bed of the camera as it is unfolded, enabling the shutter to be more easily tripped from the rear as it is held to the eye. This was a vast improvement on the then conventional method which involved the photographer having to awkwardly fumble around the side of the lens for the shutter release. The camera was updated in 1950 as the Bessa II, which reached its peak when fitted with an Apo Lanthar lens. That model today is the rarest, and the most valuable.



The Bessa represented a better than usual approach to the traditional folding design



Above: The unusual trigger shutter release that folds out from the Bessa's bed

An early Brillant (left) with the later version that coupled the shooting lens focusing to the viewing lens



A door on the side of the focusing Brillant opens to reveal a filter and extinction meter

1932-1948: Brillant

Okay, here comes another bit of pedantry. The camera is called the 'Brillant', German for 'brilliant', the name many mistakenly use. The first model was a twin lens reflex (TLR) style of camera whose upper non-focusing lens was there only to reflect its image to a brilliant glass viewfinder on the top of the body. But by 1938, the Brillant had transformed into a true TLR with twin lenses linked by gears for focusing. The Focusing Brillant, as it has come to be known, retains its brilliant glass viewfinder, but the upper lens focuses on a small, matt spot in its centre. A door in the side of the body opens to reveal a filter for the lower lens and a filter-shaped extinction meter which fits over the upper lens and whose numbers are then read by placing an eye close to the viewfinder. The setting indicated by the meter in this way is read off against a table inside the filter/meter compartment that translates the numbers into shutter speed and aperture combinations to be set manually.

Treat yourself to a subscription for Christmas. ***See page 80 for details***



The roll-film Prominent was a highly-specified folding camera

1933: Prominent

Here we have one of the best, now rare and valuable, folding roll film cameras ever made. Initially, it looks like any other folding camera of the period, but closer examination reveals a coupled rangefinder that employs four prisms and five glass elements in place of the pivoting mirrors more often utilised by rangefinders at this time. The camera also incorporates an unusual extinction meter. This is used by first setting an aperture, then looking through a window while turning a dial until a series of vertical lines disappear, at which point the correct shutter speed between 1-1/250ec has been set. Another unexpected feature is the way focusing can be adjusted with the camera in its folded position, with the setting retained on the lens when it is opened. In its day, the Prominent was a very sophisticated camera. It wasn't a great success.

1933: Superb

Initially, the Superb looks like most other TLRs of its time, but it has a few tricks up its sleeve that set it apart from its rivals. The first is the way the film runs horizontally through the lower part of the body, rather than in the more conventional vertical travel. Next come the speeds of 1-1/250sec which are engraved upside down and back to front on the rim-set Compur shutter. This is so that they can be read from above via a tiny prism beside the lens. Focusing is by turning the lower Color-Skopar 7.5cm f/3.5 taking lens which is linked via gears to the Helomar f/3.5 viewing lens. As the top lens rotates to focus on the viewing screen it also tips up and down to compensate for parallax. Film wind is by a lever on the side of the body which advances the film in a series of strokes, its numbers read through the red window at the rear. No other TLR incorporated all these peculiarities into a single camera.





Right: The Voigtländer Superb twin lens reflex

Left: The tiny prism to the side of the Superb's lower lens that enables shutter speeds to be read from above



Bessa 66, a small folding camera for shooting 6x6cm pictures

1938: Bessa 66

Folding roll film cameras in which the lens self-erected as the body was unfolded were nothing new in the 1930s. This one takes 120 film to produce 12 6x6cm pictures to a roll. But since this is a Voigtländer, there is bound to be more to it than that. The Bessa 66 has a trigger for the shutter in the baseboard, incorporates a yellow filter in a hinged frame that swings out from in front of the lens and adds a neat little foot that swivels forwards from the base to ensure the camera remains level when placed on a flat surface, rather than toppling forward on its lens as many others do.



The Vito II, a folding 35mm camera with its unusual shutter release mounted on one of the struts

1949-1951: Vito II

The Vito name was attached to more than a few Voigtländer cameras, but its first incarnation was in a series of 35mm folding models, including this one from 1950. Like most folding cameras, the Vito II relies on a bed that opens from the body on struts with a self-erecting lens that springs into place ready to shoot. It usually sports a 50mm f/3.5 Color-Skopar lens, but shutters vary to include a Prontor-S, Compur-Rapid or Synchro-Compur. One nice little touch is the shutter release in the form of a small plunger that sits on top of one of the struts to fall neatly under the right forefinger as the camera is held horizontally.

1950-1956: Vitessa

Vitessa cameras were typically Voigtländer in the way they took an off-beat look at traditional design. This one was the first of several models. Its folding design uses two barn doors that spring open as the shutter button is pressed and an Ultron 50mm f/2 lens springs forward behind them. At the same time, a long plunger shoots up from the top plate. Pushed down, it winds the 35mm film and tensions the shutter before springing up again. Focusing is controlled by a thumbwheel protruding from the rear to fall under the right thumb, racking the lens back and forth while rotating a dial on the top of the body to show focusing distances against a depth of field scale and, at the same time, linking with a rangefinder in the viewfinder window. The Vitessa name was resurrected in the 1960s for a series of 126 film Instamatic-type cameras.



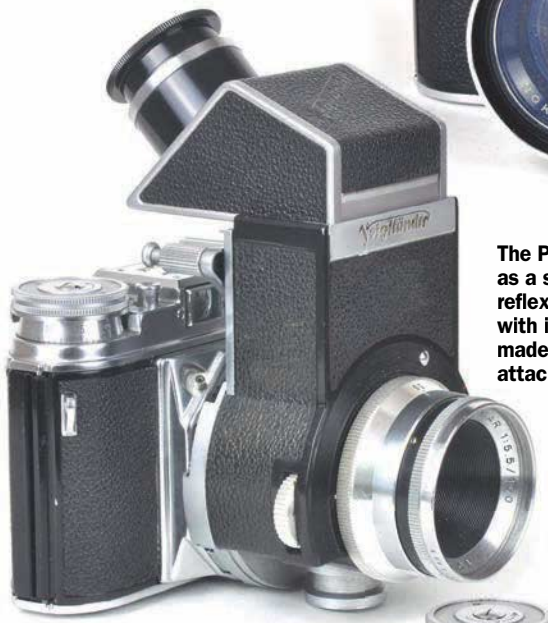


Above: The Vitessa, showing the plunger emerging from the top plate for a faster way to wind the film

Left: The Vitessa in its folded position



Prominent I, a prestigious 35mm coupled rangefinder camera, shown here with its Nokton f/1.5 lens



The Prominent as a single lens reflex, adapted with its purpose-made mirror box attached



The Prominent II that replaced the first model in 1957

1950-1957: Prominent I

Here we have probably the best, and possibly the most complicated, 35mm coupled rangefinder camera made by Voigtländer, defined by its comprehensive choice of lenses and accessories. Standard lenses include a Color-Skopar 50mm f/3.5, Ultron 50mm f/2 and Nokton 50mm f/1.5, focused by a ring around the rewind knob on top of the body and coupled to a rangefinder in the viewfinder window. A Skoparon 35mm f/3.5 wide-angle and a Dynaron 100mm f/4.5 telephoto also attach to the body via a bayonet, but do not move when focused by the top plate ring. Instead, the mechanism pushes a collar on the back of each lens in and out to change the distance between the lens's elements and achieve correct focus. A Super-Dynaron 150mm f/4.5 telephoto lens fits in a similar way but is focused by a ring on the barrel. The lenses are covered by accessory viewfinders called the Turnit 2 and Turnit 3, which cover fields of view by a clever combination of a fold-up mask and the ability to swivel through 180 degrees.

Close-up photography is covered by a special Repro-Skopar 50mm f/3.5 lens used in conjunction with the camera's normal lens and a close-up cradle. Yet another lens, the Telomar 100mm f/3.5 is used with a reflex housing that converts the camera to a single lens reflex. Other accessories included two Proximeters, each incorporating a close-up lens that covers the camera lens and a rectangular one that sits in front of the viewfinder and rangefinder windows to correct focusing and parallax. And there's an unusual flashgun built into an ever ready case. Several versions of the Prominent I were made until 1957, when the Prominent II was launched with a larger viewfinder containing bright frames for 35mm, 50mm, 100mm and 150mm lenses.

Treat yourself to a subscription for Christmas. ***See page 80 for details***

Film Stars

1954-1957: Vito B

The Vito name turned up again in the Vito B, a small rigid-bodied, fixed lens 35mm camera with a 50mm f/3.5 Color-Skopar lens and shutter speeds of 1-1/300sec. There's no rangefinder, but a separate one was sold to slot into the accessory shoe. Like many other 35mm Voigtländer cameras, the shutter is tensioned by the action of the film travelling over sprocket teeth as it is wound. This means the cameras cannot be used without a film on board. In 1957, the Vito B was upgraded with a natural-size viewfinder in an enlarged top case and the option of an f/2.8 lens.



Vito B with a Voigtländer accessory rangefinder attached



The Besssamatic SLR with its now legendary 36-82mm Zoomar lens

1959-1962: Bessamatic

The Bessamatic 35mm SLR has gone down in Voigtländer history for being introduced alongside the world's first zoom lens: the Zoomar 36-82mm f/2.8 whose variable focal length is changed by a ring that slides up and down the barrel. The camera was also among the first SLRs to use a leaf shutter behind the lens in place of the more usual focal plane type. Above the lens, a large Selenium meter cell feeds information to a moving needle in the viewfinder. Turning a knob on the camera's top plate moves an arm with a hoop at the end and, when this is matched with the needle, the correct aperture has been set against a pre-selected shutter speed. Thereafter, changing the shutter speeds automatically changes the apertures, so exposure remains constant. The standard lens is a Color-Skopar 50mm f/2.8 which, apart from the Zoomar, can also be interchanged with lenses from 35mm wide-angle to 350mm telephoto.

1960-1963: Vitomatic IIa

Many Voightländer cameras were defined by a single characteristic or lens. With the Vitoamatic IIa, it's the latter. Although originally sold with a 50mm f/2.8 Color-Skopar, it was the addition of an f/2 Ultron in 1961 that defined it for users and now collectors alike. This is a 35mm fixed lens camera with a coincident image rangefinder in the viewfinder coupled to the focusing ring. A selenium cell meter feeds information to the shutter speed and aperture controls. First the desired shutter speed is set, then the aperture ring is turned until a moving needle lines with an index mark in both the viewfinder and in a window on the top plate. Thereafter, as the shutter speed is changed, the aperture can be set to automatically change with it.



The Vitomatic IIa showing off its Ultron f/2 standard lens



The Ultramatic, an early form of auto exposure 35mm SLR

1962-1965: Ultramatic

Shutter-priority automation, often thought to have started in the 1970s, was alive and well back in the 1960s in the Ultramatic 35mm SLR. Although shutter speeds and apertures can be set manually, turn the aperture ring to its 'A' setting and the automation kicks in. Before exposure, the aperture is open at its widest setting and the leaf shutter is also open with the reflex mirror blocking light to the film. When the shutter release is pressed, a little magic happens: the shutter closes, the mirror swings up, the aperture closes to a setting dictated by light from the selenium cell above the lens, the shutter opens and closes again for its set speed, the mirror swings back and the aperture reopens to its widest setting. A tiny prism at the top of the meter cell is used to reflect aperture and shutter speed settings into the top of the viewfinder, while a needle at the side moves across an aperture scale to indicate auto settings in shutter priority mode. The camera shares its lens mount with the Bessamatic. The standard lens is a 50mm f/2.8 Colpor-Skopar, or a more sought-after f/2 Septon. A second model swapped the selenium meter for a CdS type and added through-the-lens metering.

1964: Vitrona

The feature that established the Vitrona as a landmark was its being the first camera to incorporate a built-in electronic flashgun, positioned beside the viewfinder. Because technology of the day demanded a lot more power than today to fire the flash, its batteries needed to be stored in a separate handle, fitted to the base of the camera, through which it made the necessary electronic connection. Other than this, the Vitrona, is a fairly standard Voigtländer 35mm camera, with a Lanthar 50mm f/2.8 lens and shutter speeded 1/30–1/250sec. The shutter release is on the front of the body beside the lens.



The Vitrona with its built-in electronic flash, whose batteries were housed in the attached handle.



Bessa-L, made by Cosina and equipped here with a 45mm f/2.8 Super Rokkor lens from a Minolta 35 and a 50mm viewfinder originally made for a Diax camera

How it all ended

In 1965 Voigtländer integrated with Zeiss Ikon, together producing cameras until 1972, when the Voigtländer name was sold to Rollei. In 1982, Plusfoto took over the name, but in 1995 Ringfoto bought Plusfoto and the Voigtländer brand. The name was subsequently leased to Cosina in Japan, who made a range of 35mm camera bodies with meters and Leica screw mounts, but no lenses, viewfinders or rangefinders. The idea was to use the bodies as a basis for building a system of choice, depending on tastes and subject preferences. The cameras – strangely engraved 'Voigtländer Germany, Made in Japan' – were sold under the Bessa name until 2006. That was the end of the road for Voigtländer as a camera brand, but the name still lives on with Cosina's current line of manual-focus lenses.

Treat yourself to a subscription for Christmas. ***See page 80 for details***



Need to justify the upgrade?

Selling makes the maths work

mpb



This lens is ideal for portrait photography, giving lovely blurred backgrounds
Sony A7R VI, 1/6400sec at f/1.2, ISO 100

Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG | Art



With its classic portrait focal length and unusually large aperture, this lens has plenty of appeal. Angela Nicholson finds out if it delivers.

Sigma already offers the 85mm F1.4 DG DN | Art for £979 in L-Mount and Sony E-mount, but the Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG | Art takes things a step further by opening up to f/1.2. That lets more light reach the sensor, enabling faster shutter speeds in low light, while also reducing depth of field for greater subject separation.

Interestingly, Sony doesn't currently offer an 85mm f/1.2 lens of its own. Its top-flight option is the Sony FE 85mm F1.4 GM II, which retails for around £1799. Consequently, at £1299, the Sigma gives Sony users a larger maximum aperture for considerably less money, although size and weight also come into the decision.

An 85mm lens is traditionally a popular choice for portrait photography because it gives a flattering perspective while allowing a comfortable working distance. You can shoot a tight head or head-and-shoulders portrait without crowding your subject, while equally, you don't have to move too far away to compose a full-length image.

Adding an f/1.2 maximum aperture makes the focal length even more attractive for portraits, weddings and social photography because there's greater scope to blur a distracting background and draw attention to your subject. Of course, an aperture that large also means the depth-of-field can be extremely shallow, so accurate focusing becomes critical.

Features

As part of Sigma's Art line, this lens is designed with image quality as a priority. Its optical construction includes



Eye detection helps get the focus exactly in the right place
Sony A7R VI, 1/100sec at f/1.2, ISO 500

two Special Low Dispersion (SLD) glass elements, which control axial chromatic aberration, along with three aspherical elements that help correct aberrations while keeping the lens relatively compact.

The lens uses a floating focus design, with two High-response Linear Actuators moving separate groups. According to Sigma, incorporating an aspherical element into one of the focusing groups has helped reduce the overall size. The floating focus system is also designed to minimise focus breathing, which will be good news for videographers.

There's no optical stabilisation, so the lens relies on the in-body stabilisation that's available in most Sony and L-Mount cameras. The lens has a dust and splash-resistant construction, and the front element has a water and oil-repellent coating. That's reassuring for those shooting outdoors when the weather is less than perfect.

L-Mount users also have the option to change the manual focus ring between linear and non-linear operation with compatible cameras, with the rotation angle being adjustable between 150 and 720 degrees.



There's no hint of distortion
Sony A7R VI, 1/125sec at f/5.6, ISO 100

Build and Handling

First impressions of the lens are very good. From the packaging through to the feel of the controls, it's apparent that this is a high-quality product. There's no getting away from the fact that this is quite a beefy lens, though. It's 87.2mm in diameter and 119.7mm in length in L-Mount, or 121.7mm in Sony E-mount. Both weigh 905g. In comparison, the Sony FE 85mm F1.4 GM II weighs 642g and is 107.3mm long.

To be fair, a full-frame 85mm f/1.2 was never going to be tiny. The Canon RF 85mm F1.2 L USM and Nikon Nikkor Z 85mm f/1.2 S, for example, both weigh more than 1kg. According to Sigma, this is the smallest and lightest autofocus 85mm f/1.2 lens available.

I tested the Sony E-mount version on the Sony A7R VI and while the combination is weighty, it feels good in the hand. I'd use a strap if I was carrying it for a long period and I'd think hard about what other lenses I was putting in my bag. But I can forgive the Sigma's bulk because of that f/1.2 aperture.

The broad focusing ring moves beautifully smoothly and has a pleasing level of resistance. It falls just where I naturally support the lens with my left thumb and index finger, although I can turn it with one finger if I need to.

Closer to the camera body, the aperture ring also has a lovely feel. With the click mechanism engaged, the clicks are distinct without being very loud or sticky. Flick the switch to the de-clicked position and the movement is super-smooth.

I particularly like the positioning of the two customisable function buttons. They're 90 degrees apart on the barrel, so one falls conveniently within reach whether you're shooting in landscape or portrait orientation. I set them to switch subject detection on and off. I find that useful in social situations when I might want to switch quickly between photographing people or animals and inanimate objects without diving into the camera menu.

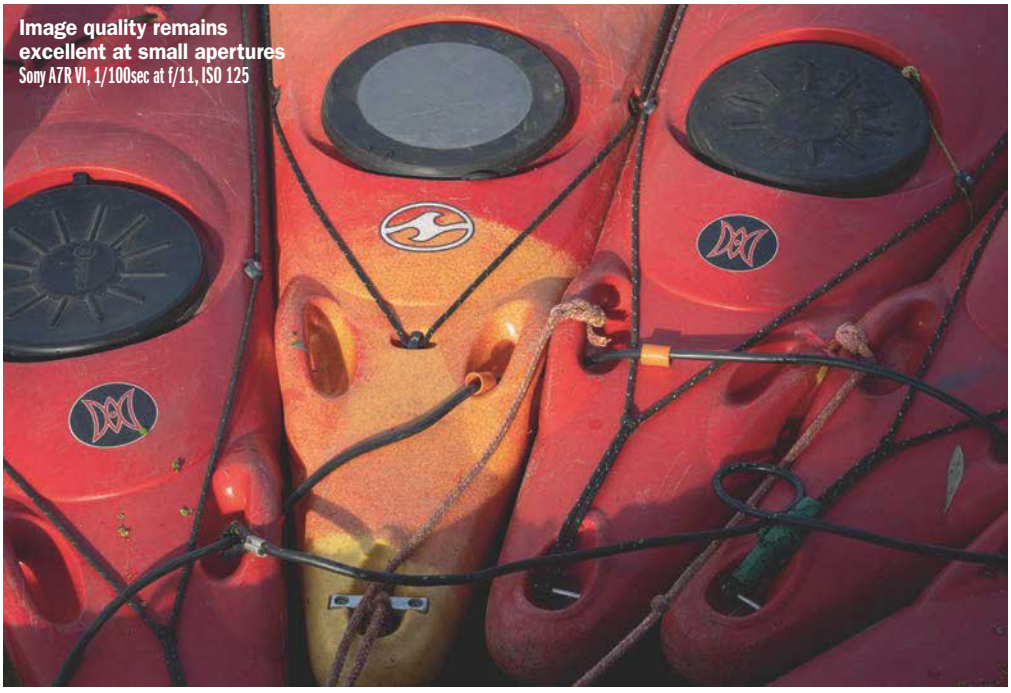


Image quality remains excellent at small apertures
Sony A7R VI, 1/100sec at f/11, ISO 125

Autofocus

The Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG | Art focuses in an instant on a camera such as the Sony A7R VI. The autofocusing is impressively quick, quiet and decisive, which makes the lens feel very responsive.

Naturally, it's compatible with Sony's subject detection AF system and that's a real bonus for portrait, event and social photography. I used the lens and Sony A7R VI to photograph some Reading Festival goers as they started their journeys home and the combination did a great job of finding an eye in the frame, even when my subject was some distance away. Even with a side view of a face, the focusing was right on the eye.

That's especially useful at f/1.2, because there's very little latitude for focusing errors. Having confidence that the camera and lens will find an eye means I can concentrate on the expression, timing and composition rather than repeatedly checking the focus.

As you'd expect from a premium lens, the manual focusing experience is also very pleasant. With the appropriate option selected in the camera menu, the area under the AF point enlarges as the focus ring is turned, for precise focusing.

Image quality

While this lens produces a very impressive degree of sharpness across the frame throughout its aperture range, I'm especially impressed by the amount of detail it captures at f/1.2.

You pay a premium for such a large aperture, so it needs to be good at that setting, and the Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG | Art puts a smile on your face. If you capture a head and shoulders portrait, you can expect to see enough detail to tell whether your subject is wearing contact lenses. Crucially, I don't feel there's any need to stop down simply to improve sharpness.

If you choose not to use the in-camera or processing correction profile, there's some vignetting at the widest apertures. It reduces as the aperture closes and is gone by f/2.8. With corrections applied, the files look evenly exposed with no obvious corner shading.

The Sigma lens also renders straight lines nicely and distortion isn't something that jumps out when you look at the images. However, switching the correction profile on and off in Adobe Camera Raw produces a slight shift that suggests it's correcting a very small amount of pincushion distortion.

Chromatic aberration is also very well controlled. I searched around high-contrast edges in my images at 100% on screen and was unable to find any obvious examples. I spotted a little colour around a few particularly bright out of focus highlights, but nothing dramatic.

Then there's the bokeh, which is one of the big reasons for buying an 85mm f/1.2 lens. At wide apertures, out-of-focus areas look wonderfully smooth and the fall-off in sharpness at f/1.2 is rapid. It makes it easy to separate your subject from a busy or distracting background.

Of course, that shallow depth-of-field needs some thought. If you're photographing more than one person, it's extremely unlikely that both pairs of eyes will be in exactly the same plane of focus. There are times when you need to resist the temptation to use f/1.2 and stop down a little to get both subjects acceptably sharp.

Most small out-of-focus highlights look very good, although, as is often the case with fast lenses, they become cat's eye shaped away from the centre of the frame. Overall, however, the Sigma 85mm f/1.2 gives the smooth backgrounds and strong subject separation that I'd hope to see from a lens of this type. AP

Verdict

The Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG | Art is a lens that makes you want to go out and photograph people. Its 85mm focal length gives you a comfortable working distance for portraits, while the f/1.2 maximum aperture brings a degree of subject separation that can give images a more distinctive look.

It's a substantial lens, and there's no getting away from the fact that it adds noticeable weight to a camera bag. However, I find that easier to accept when the handling, focusing performance and results are as good as they are here. The lens feels reassuringly well made, the controls are a pleasure to use, and it works very well with Sony's subject and eye detection.

For Sony photographers, there's also the attraction that Sony itself doesn't currently offer an 85mm f/1.2 lens. Its FE 85mm F1.4 GM II is smaller and lighter, but it costs around £1,800. This makes the Sigma's £1299 price look very competitive, especially if you want that extra aperture.

If you're into portraiture and perhaps looking for a lens to elevate your work with a full-frame Sony or L-Mount camera, the Sigma 85mm F1.2 DG | Art is sure to please. It gives you the tools to produce beautifully isolated subjects, but it still leaves the creative decisions firmly in your hands.

Data file

Price: £1299
Filter Diameter: 82mm
Lens Elements: 17
Groups: 12
Diaphragm blades: 13
Aperture: f/1.2 - f/16
Min focus: 0.84m
Length: 121.7mm
Diameter: 87.2mm
Weight: 905g
Lens Mount: L-Mount, Sony E-mount
Included accessories: Caps, hood



Amateur Photographer GOLD ★★★★★

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This remarkably lightweight lens combines impressive resolution with lovely bokeh
Sony A7R V, 1/250sec at f/6.3, ISO 640

Sony FE 600mm F6.3 GM OSS



Andy Westlake tests a remarkably compact and lightweight long telephoto prime

The Sony FE 600mm F6.3 GM OSS is one of a pair of long telephoto primes introduced at the same time, alongside an FE 400mm F4.5 GM OSS. The two are very closely related, not only in terms of their feature sets and physical designs, but also optically. As members of Sony's top-end G Master series, both promise uncompromising build quality, operability, and imaging.

However, this comes at a suitably premium price, with the 600mm f/6.3 costing £3300.

It might seem crazy for Sony to be charging so much, when zooms with the same telephoto spec are available for a fraction of the price. But a big difference lies with portability, with both lenses somehow weighing in at less than 1kg. That's about half the weight of either the Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS, or the Sigma 150-600mm F5-6.3 DG DN OS. It's also 2kg lighter than the Sony FE 600mm F4 GM OSS. As a result, these new primes should be ideal for photographers shooting such things as wildlife, sports, or aircraft, who require long focal lengths and top-notch optics in a package they can easily carry around all day.

Indeed to get some further perspective on just how remarkable the Sony FE 600mm F6.3 GM OSS really is, we just need to compare it to the most similar lens on the market, the Nikon Nikkor Z 600mm F6.3 S. Sony's offering is 400g lighter, 15mm shorter, and focuses considerably closer, too. It's all really impressive on paper, but how does the lens perform in practice?

Features

Looking first at the optics, Sony has built the 600mm f/6.3 using 24 elements in 17 groups. This includes one element



The autofocus was able to keep up with birds in flight
Sony A7R V, 1/2000sec at f/6.3, ISO 4000
20MP crop, 1000mm equivalent

made from extra-low dispersion (ED) glass and three from super ED glass to suppress chromatic aberrations. In addition, Nano AR Coating II is employed to minimize flare and ghosting.

Focusing is driven by two XD linear motors. This promises quick, quiet, and accurate AF, along with support for tracking focus at 120 frames per second, for both stills and video work. The minimum focus distance is 2.5m, which is unusually close for a 600mm prime.

Optical stabilisation is built-in, and works together with the camera's in-body stabilisation. It has three settings: Mode 1 is for normal use with static subjects, Mode 2 is for panning, while Mode 3 is designed for erratic subjects such as birds in flight.

With this being a pro-spec lens, it boasts dust and moisture-resistant construction. This includes an array of seals around all of the controls, plus of course at the mount. A fluorine coating helps keep the front glass clean of raindrops and fingerprints.

For those who need more reach the lens is also compatible with teleconverters. Fit the Sony FE 1.4x Teleconverter, and you get an 840mm f/9 combination; with the Sony FE 2.0x Teleconverter, it's a 1200mm f/13. Even with these small apertures, autofocus should still work normally.



Partial lunar eclipse
Sony A7R V, 1/15sec at f/6.3, ISO 12,800
26MP APS-C crop, 900mm equivalent

At the front, there's a 95mm thread for attaching filters. A deep cylindrical hood comes in the box, with a rubber bumper at the front to protect against knocks. It also has a locking button to stop it from coming off accidentally.

Build and Handling

What's most striking, when you first put this lens on your camera, is just how small and light it is for a 600mm prime. Of course, at 108mm in diameter and 263mm in length, it's not inconspicuous. That's compounded by the white finish – you're unlikely to pass unnoticed when wielding the lens in public.

Sony's headline 995g figure also only refers to the bare lens with no accessories. Fit the hood, and you're adding 1125g onto the camera, plus about 70mm additional length. Once you add in the caps and tripod foot, you'll be carrying 1250g in total. But that's still remarkable for a high-end 600mm prime, and I was entirely happy carrying the lens around for extended shooting sessions.

The lens is nicely balanced too, so it doesn't feel front-heavy on the camera. I found it nestled nicely in my hand, with the manual focus ring falling perfectly for operation by my thumb and front two fingers.

Four AF-hold/function buttons are arranged at 90-degree intervals around the lens towards the front. So one should always be accessible, no matter whether you're shooting horizontally or vertically. All four always have the same function, which can be assigned from the camera body.

Just behind them is a function ring that can be set to either Power Focus or switching between full-frame and APS-C crop shooting. I found Power Focus to be particularly useful on those occasions when the autofocus gets stuck at a particular distance. A twist of the lens ring will quickly drive the focus through its range, so you can set it to roughly the right



Using C-AF and subject detection helps get the focus exactly where you need it
Sony A7R V, 1/500sec at f/6.3, ISO 5000

position and then let the autofocus take over again.

An array of switches on the side controls the autofocus and image stabilisation systems. There's an AF/MF toggle, a focus distance limiter that restricts the minimum distance to 7m, and a full-time Direct Manual Focus (DMF) switch. When this is engaged, you can use the focus ring to fine-tune the focusing at any time. Finally, two switches turn OSS on/off and set the required mode.

One control you don't get, though, is an aperture ring. But I don't think it's a major problem, as you'll probably be shooting almost everything wide open.

The included tripod foot can be removed quickly and easily using a combination of a locking knob and a push-button release. However, it doesn't have an Arca-Swiss plate for mounting directly to a tripod or monopod.

Autofocus

With this kind of lens, excellent autofocus is essential. I tested it using the 61MP Sony A7R V, and while this doesn't quite represent the leading edge of AF technology, it's still no slouch.

In real-world use, I found the autofocus to be super-fast, silent, and consistently accurate. I felt it was limited mainly by the camera's ability to acquire focus on moving subjects, rather than by the lens itself. I did find the camera sometimes got stuck at the wrong distance, for example when photographing small birds with branches in the foreground. That's far from unusual with telephoto lenses, as out-of-focus subjects can easily become too blurred for the camera to understand. Here, switching to manual focus can be invaluable, and thankfully, it works very well.

Performance

Sony's GM lenses are known for their superb optics, and the 600mm f/6.3 continues in this tradition. Quite simply, it delivers superb sharpness right across the frame wide open. That's crucial for a long telephoto lens, with which you'll often be shooting distant and unpredictably moving subjects. It means you can crop your final image from anywhere within the frame and be confident of getting detailed results. This sharpness is also advantageous on the frequent occasions you find yourself shooting at high ISOs, as it gives noise reduction algorithms the best possible data to work with.

Sony cameras automatically correct for chromatic aberration, distortion and vignetting by default, so you won't see any of these in your JPEG files. Adobe software removes colour fringing during raw processing, too.

Even if you disable shading compensation, there's no problematic corner darkening, which presumably is aided by the relatively modest maximum aperture. There's a little pincushion distortion in uncorrected raws, but for most of the subjects you'll shoot with this lens, it won't be a problem.

This is a lens where you'll often find that large areas of your images are out-of-focus. Thankfully it renders bokeh very nicely, not just in the background, but in front of the focus plane too. That's great when you want to use tracts of defocused foreground to frame your subject.

I found Sony's optical steady shot performs very well, too. Crucially, it stabilises the viewfinder image sufficiently that you can compose your images confidently and place your subject where you want it within the frame. With static subjects, I was able to get sharp images hand-held at shutter speeds down to about 1/60sec, as long as I shot a few replicates. But going any slower resulted in visible blur pretty much every time.

AP

Verdict

Amateur Photographer GOLD ★★★★★

As you can probably tell, I've been immensely impressed by the Sony FE 600mm F6.3 GM OSS. It's remarkably portable while delivering superb image quality, and it's a real step up from a 600mm f/6.3 telezoom in almost every way. The ability to wander around with a high-quality full-frame 600mm lens, without having to worry at all about the size and weight, really has been an eye-opener.

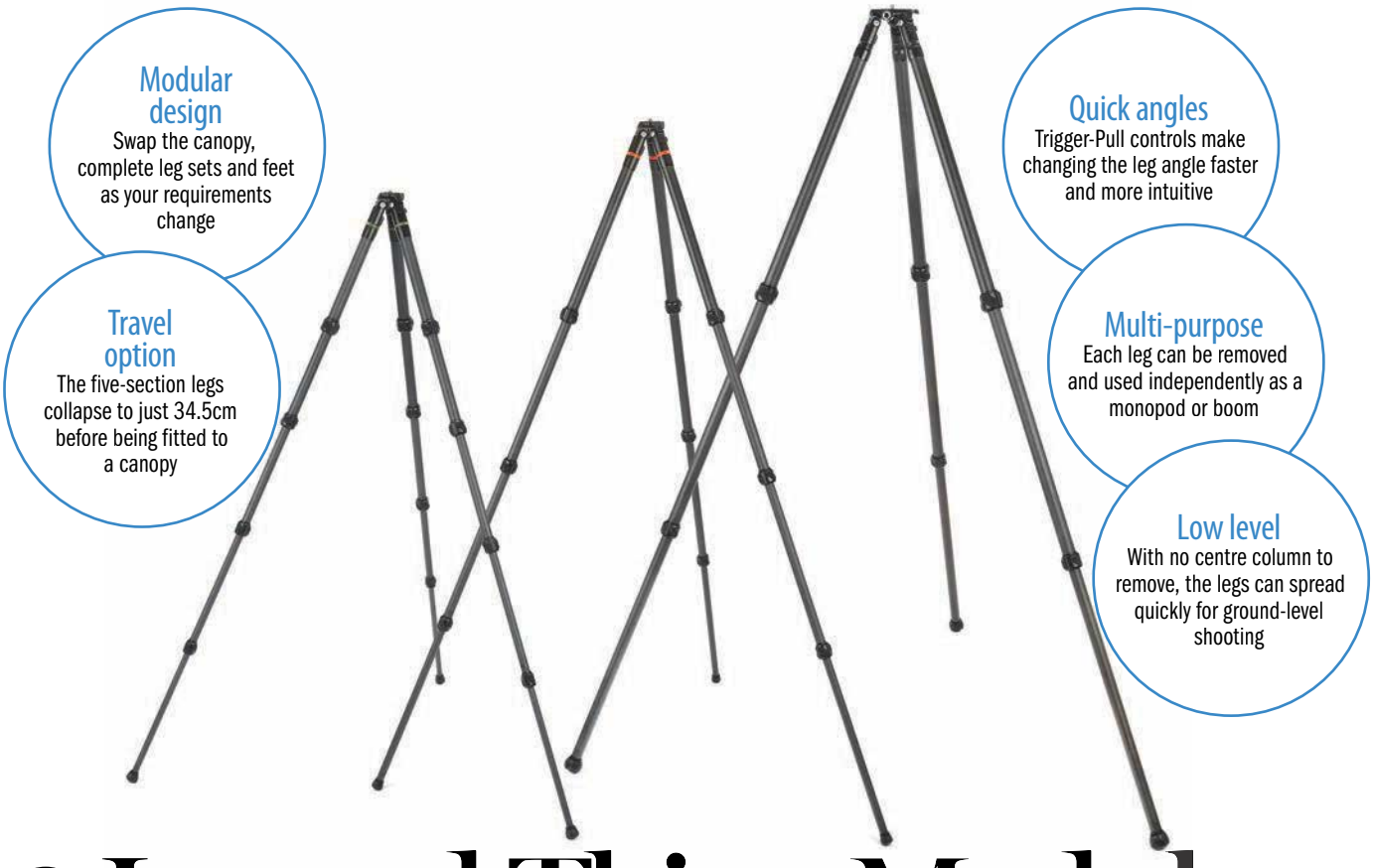
Indeed I'm struggling to find fault with this lens at all. It handles brilliantly, focuses rapidly and silently, and the stabilisation works really well too. In fact, it comes to something when my only real gripe is the lack of an Arca-Swiss plate on the foot, especially as this is a lens that I overwhelmingly used hand-held.

Unfortunately, though, while the price is nowhere near that of a 600mm f/4, it's still high enough that this lens will likely only find its way into the hands of the most committed sports, wildlife and action photographers. I guess that's just the consequence of such an uncompromising design – and Nikon's equivalent costs even more. But for those who can afford it, this really is a stellar optic.



Data file

Price £3300
Filter Diameter 95mm
Lens Elements 24
Groups 17
Diaphragm blades 11
Aperture f/6.3 – f/32
Minimum focus 2.5m
Length 263mm
Diameter 108mm
Weight 995g
Lens Mount Sony EE
Included accessories Tripod mount, caps, hood, case



3 Legged Thing Modular Tactical Tripod System

With interchangeable canopies, carbon-fibre leg sets and feet, this Modular Tactical Tripod System promises to be several tripods in one. Angela Nicholson investigates whether it makes sense for photographers.

Tripods are always a compromise. A small, lightweight model is easy to carry, but it may not be the support you want for a long lens or a breezy landscape. A larger tripod is reassuringly solid, but much less appealing when you have to carry it all day. 3 Legged Thing's Modular Tactical Tripod System tackles that problem by letting you swap around the tripod itself.

At its heart are two different-sized magnesium-alloy canopies, the James and the Jason, plus three interchangeable carbon-fibre leg sets with three, four or five sections. The James is 9cm across and weighs 356g, while the Jason is 14cm wide and weighs 419g. Both accept all three leg sets.

One tripod, several personalities

The five-section legs collapse to 34.5cm, weigh 807g as a set and taper to 14mm at the narrowest section. The four-section legs fold to 45cm and weigh 852g, but their thinnest section is 17mm. Meanwhile, the three-section set weighs 1.083kg and folds to 60cm, with larger-diameter tubes for greater rigidity.

In practice, the four-section legs feel like the natural all-rounders, while the five-section set is the one I'd pick for travel or a long day on foot. The folded diameter is slim enough for the tripod to fit into the water-bottle pocket of many backpacks. Even the three-section version fits, although its extra height can make the bag feel rather unbalanced.

The three-section legs are what I'd choose for a big lens or longer exposures in difficult conditions, especially when I don't have to walk far. They'd be my first choice for photographing field sports with a long lens when there's a

At a glance

£329.99 (James)
£379.99 (Jason)

- Two magnesium-alloy canopy options
- Three, four or five-section carbon-fibre legs
- Maximum load: 30kg
- Three leg angles: 23°, 55° and 80°
- Removable legs for monopod or boom use
- Interchangeable feet and accessories
- 3leggedthing.com

nearby car park.

Each leg can also be unscrewed and used as a monopod or boom, and the legs can be dismantled for cleaning, handy if, like me, you put tripods into sand, mud and seawater.

Better handling

The new Trigger-Pull leg-angle controls are a welcome improvement over the pull-out adjusters on older 3 Legged Thing tripods. I can hook a finger behind the control, squeeze it and move the leg between the 23°, 55° and 80° positions in one action. It's quicker and feels more natural, especially when repositioning the tripod with one hand.

The oversized twist locks give plenty to grip in cold weather. 3 Legged Thing says their helical shape helps direct airflow downwards to dampen vibration. That is difficult to isolate and test, but the locks themselves are quick and positive in use.



Leg angles are adjusted using a handy trigger button at the back of each leg



With no centre column, the tripods can quickly be set for low-level shooting



Adding optional Spikez feet to a canopy creates a mini tripod



There's the option of three, four, or five-section legs

There's no centre column on either canopy, which removes one common source of wobble and makes low-level shooting very quick. I rarely extend a centre column unless I have to, so I don't regard its absence as a major issue. However, some photographers may miss one for small height adjustments.

Both canopies have a standard 3/8in-16 mount, so you can use your preferred tripod head. Their different sizes naturally suit different heads, though: the James is a better match for compact heads, while the broader Jason is more at home under larger ball, geared or video heads.

The feet are interchangeable too. Spikez Long give extra purchase on soft or uneven ground, while the broad Flatz spread the load and should help prevent sinking on sand, snow and other soft surfaces.

Adapt it to the job

The tripods' performance depends on the configuration, which is exactly the point. The Jason with the three-section legs is the most substantial setup, but even the James with the five-section legs feels capable enough for long exposures with a medium-sized camera setup, especially if you use the QD socket to hang extra weight.

Pricing

James costs £329.99 for the canopy with any legset, while Jason costs £379.99. Adding another legset will cost you £249.99. The two canopies can also be bought individually, for £129.99 and £149.99, respectively.

AP

Verdict

Amateur Photographer GOLD ★★★★★

The Modular Tactical Tripod System takes 3 Legged Thing's long-standing enthusiasm for interchangeable components and turns it into a genuinely adaptable platform. It doesn't abolish the usual tripod compromises, but it does mean you don't have to commit to one set of them for years.

I see the four-section legs as the best all-round option, while the five- and three-section sets make convincing travel and stability-focused alternatives. It isn't cheap if you collect multiple components, but the ability to reconfigure rather than replace the whole tripod is very appealing. Bravo 3 Legged Thing!

For and against

- \+ Highly adaptable modular design
- \+ Excellent choice of three carbon-fibre leg sets
- \+ Trigger-Pull angle controls are quick and easy to use
- − Buying additional components soon adds to the cost
- − No centre column option (yet)
- − Number of possible configurations takes a little deciphering



The James or the Jason?

The choice between the two canopies is mainly about portability and the size of the equipment you plan to put on top. The James is 9cm wide and weighs 356g, so it keeps the folded tripod slimmer and suits travel-friendly setups. The Jason is 14cm wide and 419g, providing a broader platform for larger heads, long lenses and video equipment. Both work with all three leg sets, so choosing one now does not prevent you adding the other later, and both can be made into table-top tripod. That flexibility is one of the system's biggest attractions.



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Viltrox Spark Z3

Andy Westlake tests an affordable and uniquely styled on-camera flash

● £51.99 ● viltrox.com

The Viltrox Spark Z3 is a small on-camera flash that stands out from the crowd due to its bold 'Cyber Mech' styling. With a fixed forward-facing tube, it offers a choice of TTL auto or manual light output control. It's pretty affordable, costing around £52.

In terms of features, this unit is very straightforward. A three-position switch on the back turns it on and selects between TTL-Auto and Manual modes. In the latter position, you can adjust the power down to 1/64 via a chunky dial, but only in whole-stop steps; more sophisticated units offer finer control. In TTL, you can dial the output up or down from your camera's flash menu.

It's also possible to trigger the unit using another flash, via a built-in optical sensor. That might be handy in a multi-flash setup. There are two modes, S1 and S2, with the latter ignoring the pre-flash that many camera systems use for metering.

At 7.8 x 6.7 x 5.6cm and 144g, the unit is pretty small and easy to fit into a bag. This also means it doesn't feel too top-heavy on small cameras. Build quality feels reasonably solid, with a plastic shell that doesn't flex or creak.

As for the styling, you'll either love it or hate it. My review sample is the metallic green version, and I think it's rather fun, and a breath of fresh air compared to the usual black plastic blocks. A window on top revels the circuitry, including a couple of prominent capacitors. The optical trigger cell is under here, too.

Viltrox doesn't specify either the output angle or a guide number. But in my tests, it gave even coverage as wide as 28mm equivalent. The guide number is about 15m at ISO 100, which makes this unit more powerful than the super-small Vintage Z2.

With its fixed tube that's placed low above the lens, the Spark Z3 gives the characteristic flat, direct look of on-camera flash. That's something photographers used to go out of their way to avoid, but it's now become fashionable again. And dare I say it, on modern cameras that can meter flash very accurately, it gives much better images compared to the harsh and unflattering results we often got in the past.

Verdict

In a market full of small on-camera flash units, the Viltrox Spark Z3 stands out for its quirky and striking looks. But it's not only about style – it offers a decent feature set and power output too. If you're after a small, affordable on-camera TTL flash, it's well worth a look.

Status
An LED on tops glows red when the flash is recycling and green when it's ready. It also doubles up as a test button.

Battery
The internal Li-ion battery recharges by USB-C and should be good for 650 flashes.



Diffuser
The supplied translucent diffuser fits firmly in place and should give more even lighting indoors.

Lock
A large locking collar around the hot shoe secures the unit onto your camera.





Amateur Photographer Recommended ★★★★

At a glance

- On-camera flash
- 26Ws output
- TTL or manual control
- Gunmetal Grey or Tundra Green
- Canon, Fujifilm, Nikon and Sony versions

ALSO CONSIDER

If you like the idea of this flash's feature set but not its styling, Viltrox also offers the Vintage Z1 Pro for just a little more money (£57). It has a similar spec, but curvy retro styling, plus a touchscreen on the back that gives finer control over the output.



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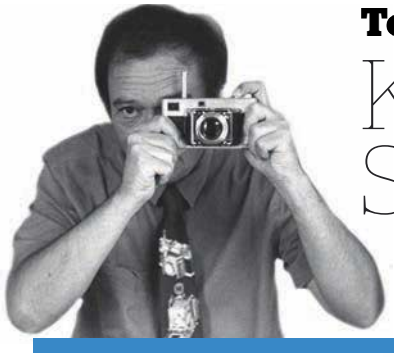
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Tony Kemplen on the ...

Kodak Brownie Super 27

A simple camera from 1961 that's styled to resemble a slide projector

Kodak used the name Brownie for around 200 different models over several decades. So if someone tells me they have a Brownie stashed away somewhere, it's anyone's guess as to which one it is.

The Brownie Super 27 uses 127 film, which was introduced in 1912, and was one of the mainstays of amateur photography through two world wars and well into the 1970s. Production was finally discontinued in 2012, although a few small manufacturers did reintroduce limited stocks, and it can be bought today, albeit at a premium price.

Not surprisingly given their longevity, Brownies went though a number of styles, reflecting the various design trends of the twentieth century. The first offerings were little black boxes, often made from cardboard. But as plastics entered the mainstream, curved designs became a possibility. Some of the Art Deco inspired Bakelite models in the post war years were particularly voluptuous. Gradually the curves were flattened out, however, and by the time the Brownie Super 27 arrived in 1961, straight edges were again the order of the day.



This is one of the more distinctive of the many Brownie designs

With its unusual horizontal design, you might think that this camera takes landscape format photos, but the negatives are actually square. The left side of the elongated design consists of a door which swings open to reveal a flash reflector, into which single-use flash bulbs were inserted.

The Super in the camera's name alludes to 'Super Slides' which allowed 40mm square images shot on slide film to be projected in a standard 35mm projector. These projected photos, if properly exposed, could be quite stunning. It has been said that the front of the camera was designed to resemble a basic projector of the era.

In order to get enough light onto the film indoors, flashbulbs were essential. In the early 1960s, many flashbulbs required an unusual and relatively expensive 22.5V battery. Fortunately for the casual user, the Brownie Super 27 was one of the first cameras to employ the widely available AA 1.5V batteries. Sourcing these today presents no problems, but manufacture of the single-use flash bulbs has long been discontinued. If you're a purist after the full retro experience, the little AG1 bulbs can be found on eBay from around £1.50 each. After use, the bulb is ejected by pushing a button next to the viewfinder.

There are two shutter speeds, 1/80th second and 1/40th. In a clever bit of design, the latter is automatically selected when the flash door is opened. Two apertures, labelled Sunny and Cloudy equate to f/11 and f/8 respectively, while a simple two position focus ring is marked 'CLOSE-UPS' and 'BEYOND 6FT'.

Loaded with Efke ISO 100 black and white film, I took it to some of my regular haunts in Sheffield. Efke film was notoriously curly, and even managed to escape the guide at the film plane intended to keep it flat. As a result, some photos have distinctly blurry sections, although this particular one, the Victoria Hall in the city centre, isn't too bad.



The camera takes square photos on 127 film

See more of Tony's photos on **Instagram @tonykemplen** or at **flickr.com/tony_kemplen**

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Professor Newman on...

The Eye of my Apple

Professor Newman considers the usefulness of the latest iPhone's physical aperture

The iPhone 18 Pro has been announced and its new big feature is an adjustable iris on the main camera. The range of apertures available runs from f/1.48 to f/4. I have seen content from a number of creators reacting to this product, the most favoured line being that the variable aperture is a gimmick, because it's meaningless with such a small sensor. In this article I will compare its capabilities with larger format cameras as a route to deciding how sensible this feature is.

First, the effect of the aperture on depth of field. A while ago I wrote an article on the object field method of determining depth of field. It produces the same results as the more common image field calculation, but relies only on the geometry in front of the lens. The variables in play are aperture diameter (size of the entrance pupil), subject distance, angle of view and 'disc of confusion', expressed as a fraction of the angle of view.

The focal length of the lens on the phone's main camera is 7mm, giving at entrance pupil size of 4.73mm at f/1.48, and 1.75mm at f/4. The angle of view is 84%. The sensor is a 1.28" type, with an image area of 10 x 7.6 mm, which is almost exactly the same size as a 16mm cine frame.

On a full-frame camera, the same angle of view would be given by a 24mm lens. In this case the 4.73mm entrance pupil would lead to an f-number of 5, and 14 for the 1.75mm closed aperture. The corresponding figures for Micro Four Thirds are 12mm, f/2.5, and f/7.0.



The iPhone 18 Pro's main camera now includes a physical aperture mechanism, which is a rarity on smartphones.

So, this phone's camera has the same depth of field characteristics as a 24mm lens on full-frame with an aperture range of f/5-14, or a 12mm lens on MFT with an f/2.5-7 range.

Moving on to diffraction blur, this is dictated by f-number multiplied by the enlargement to the viewed image size. The iPhone will need an enlargement factor of 3.4 times greater than a full-frame camera, and 1.7 times greater than a Micro Four Thirds camera. Thus, to produce the same diffraction blur in the viewed image it will need to use an f-number 3.4 time smaller than would a full-frame camera, and 1.7 times smaller the Micro Four Thirds. The range of diffraction blur values produced is this the same ranges as for depth of field: f/5-f/14 with full-frame and f/2.5-7 with Micro Four Thirds.

Next we come to the question of image noise. There are two major sources of noise to be considered. One is the read noise, which is unrelated to exposure, and is evident in the deepest shadows. There are many theories about how this might scale with pixel size, but the practical evidence does not show a strong connection, so we might reasonably assume that the read noise will be much the same as any up-to-date 48MP sensor.

That leaves the photon shot noise, which depends on the amount of light energy captured. Exposure is light energy divided by area, so the amount of light energy, and therefore noise, will be governed by exposure times sensor area. The largest exposure that the iPhone can accept is governed by its base ISO of 32. If we scale the exposure by sensor area, this is the same light energy (and therefore noise) as a Micro Four Thirds camera at ISO 100, or full-frame at ISO 400.

So the conclusion must be that the variable aperture is just as useful as a f/5-14 aperture on full-frame or an f/2.5-7 aperture on Micro Four Thirds.

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

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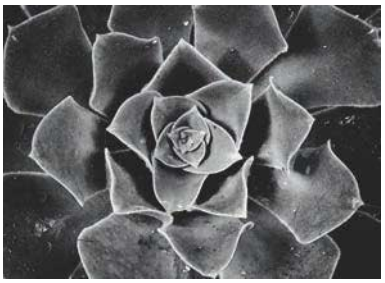
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Erik Csosza, Switzerland



Luca Sharabidze, United States



Paolo De Leo, Italy



Wills Beautiful World, United States

winners

GuruShots, the organisers of the world's greatest photography games and communities, recently gave its users two challenges – to send in their best images on the theme of Your Magazine Shot (see left page) and Tell a Story (see below). Amateur Photographer is now pleased to publish the eight highest-ranked pictures in both themes. See the Top 500 images at **amateurphotographer.com**. Visit **gurushots.com**

TELL A STORY



Micha Mettier, Switzerland



Jamil Badalov, Azerbaijan



Luca Sharabidze, United States



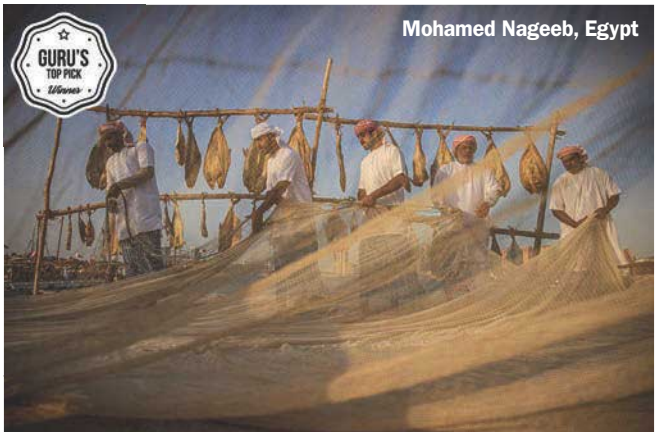
Daniel Calicchio, Portugal



Nicolae Ancuta, Romania



Shannon Bates, United States



Mohamed Nageeb, Egypt



Still Alive, France

Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them





Timea Ambrus, Hungary

About Timea
Timea is a nature photographer, see more of her work at Instagram.com/ambertimea.

How did you get into photography?
My interest in photography grew out of my love for nature. As a child, I spent a lot of time outdoors with my father, and those experiences had a strong influence on me. He gave me my first camera, an old analogue one, and at first I simply used it to capture moments from our trips. Over time, photography became much more than a hobby, and in 2019 I began to pursue nature photography more seriously after completing several courses.

What do you love about photography?
I love that photography allows me to get closer to nature and share the moments I experience with others. For me, photography is a combination of patience, observation and emotion. A successful image can bring back the atmosphere, silence and magic I felt in that moment.

Favourite subjects
My favourite subjects are wildlife, especially birds and animals in their natural environment. I love capturing their behaviour, movement and quiet, fleeting moments that people often do not get to see.

How and where do you find inspiration?
I find most of my inspiration in nature itself, through observing animals, birds, light and changing seasons. I am also inspired by other photographers, online portfolios, exhibitions and photo competitions. Seeing different approaches and unique moments helps me develop my own vision.

Big Jump

1 Over two years of observation, I followed the daily lives of several generations of little owls. One summer, I was fortunate enough to witness this funny moment, when a little owl moved from one branch to another by jumping instead of flying. Nikon Z9, Nikon Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S, 1/2000sec at f/2.8, ISO 1600

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Reader Portfolio winners receive a one-year subscription to the **Adobe 1 TB Photography Plan** worth £238.

Designed for photographers, the Adobe Creative Cloud Photography Plan includes Photoshop, Lightroom, Lightroom Classic (on desktop, mobile and web) plus 1TB of cloud storage and 1000 generative credits per month. It is worth £19.97 per month, or £239 annually.

Submit your images

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



Mother's Shadow

2 A mallard duckling moves across the water of a city park, surrounded by a delicate play of light and reflection. Above it, the shadow of its mother appears as a watchful presence. The image captures the fragility of new life, the quiet power of protection, and an intimate moment in nature.

Nikon Z9, Nikon Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S, 1/1000sec at f/3.5, ISO 1250



The gift

3 Two hoopoes in a striking moment of food transfer, surrounded by golden backlight and a natural setting. One of the birds holds a caterpillar in its beak, highlighting this special moment of feeding in the wild.

Nikon Z9, Nikon Z 400mm f/4.5 VR S, 1/5000sec at f/5, ISO 1250

What was your first camera?
Nikon Coolpix P900

Current kit
Nikon Z9
Nikon Z 400mm f/4.5 VR S
Nikon Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S
Nikon Z 180-600mm f/5.6-6.3 VR
Nikon Z 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S

Favourite lens
Nikon Z 400mm f/4.5 VR S

Favourite accessory
LensCoat® GroundPod

Dream purchase
Nikon Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S

What software do you use for editing?
Adobe Lightroom

Favourite photographers
I am inspired by many photographers whose work captures authentic behaviour, atmosphere and fleeting moments in a sensitive and individual way. They give me daily inspiration and help me continue developing my own vision. If I had to name one photographer, it would be Alan Murphy. I admire his elegant and sensitive approach to wildlife photography, and the way he captures natural behaviour and atmosphere.

Favourite photography books
I do not have one specific favourite photography book. Most of my inspiration comes from time spent in nature, the work of other photographers, photo competitions, exhibitions and online portfolios.

Favourite tips
I would advise beginners to enjoy nature first and take time to observe. It is important not to focus only on technical settings, but also to understand the subject, its behaviour and its environment. Photograph the moments that truly touch you, be patient, and do not be afraid to experiment.

About your pictures
Many of my best images are born from long hours of observation, patience and quiet moments in nature. One special story is a tawny owl I photographed in falling snow. I had seen it earlier in the forest and imagined the picture in snowy conditions, so I returned when the weather was right. After waiting quietly, the snow began to fall and the owl appeared in the same place. For me, that image represents patience, respect for nature and the quiet magic of the moment. AP



Who ordered butterfly!?

4 The ground squirrel's surprised expression and the butterfly flying above it meet at the perfect moment, as if nature itself has staged a humorous scene. The photograph captures a brief, natural moment where curiosity and movement meet, highlighting the quiet beauty and spontaneity of life in nature. Nikon Z9, Nikon Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S, 1/800sec at f/5, ISO 500







Up!

5 The image captures the kingfisher rising from the water just after its dive, a powerful and fleeting moment frozen in time. The soft, dreamy tones of the spring background enhance the scene's elegance, creating a harmonious blend of motion and nature's beauty.

Nikon Z9, Nikon Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S, 1/6400sec at f/5.6, ISO 2500

Give me a kiss

6 I spent three days photographing marmots in the Austrian Alps. In the very first hour of the first day, I captured what became the cutest photo of the entire trip: two young marmots gently touched noses, as if they were giving each other a kiss. In the following days, I saw and photographed many beautiful moments, but nothing surpassed this intimate scene for me, then or ever since.

Nikon Z9, Nikon Z 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S, 1/2000sec at f/5.6, ISO 640

Shake It

7 In the photograph, a Squacco Heron breeding plumage is captured as it shakes itself, its feathers elegantly surrounding it. Approaching the bird was a real challenge for me. The path leading there crossed a marshland that deepened quickly in places, which I navigated wearing chest waders on a hot summer day.

Nikon Z9, Nikon Z 180-600mm f/5.6-6.3 VR, 1/1000sec at f/7.1, ISO 1250

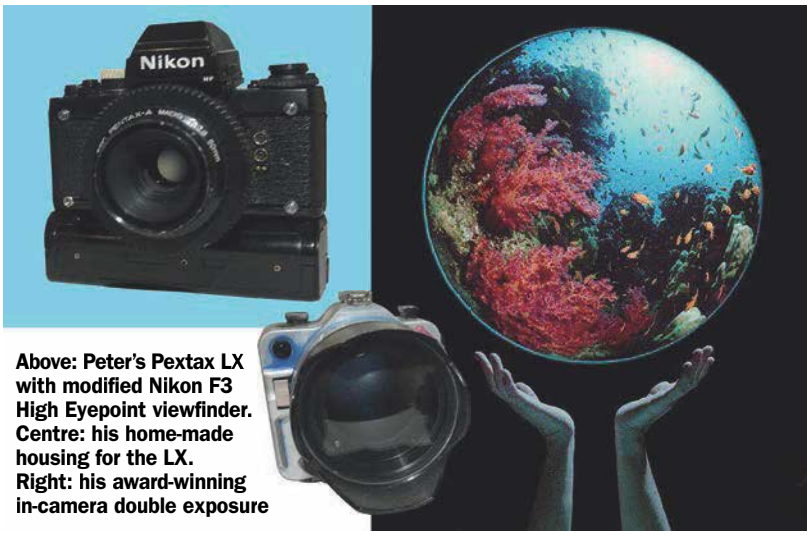




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Write to the Editor at **ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk** and include your full postal address. Please don't send letters in the post as there is no one in the office to receive them. Replies are from the Editor unless otherwise stated

STAR LETTER



Above: Peter's Pextax LX with modified Nikon F3 High Eyepoint viewfinder. Centre: his home-made housing for the LX. Right: his award-winning in-camera double exposure

Underwater Pentax

I read your Editor's letter on the Pentax LX with interest. I thought it might interest you that the LX was the camera of choice for top British underwater photographers of the era.

One reason was that it had the removable viewfinder. This meant it could be fitted with the Pentax Action Eyepiece, providing enough eye relief to allow the entire focusing screen to be seen through a facemask. Standard viewfinders are nearly unusable, as you can only see the centre of the focusing screen without a lot of eyeball gymnastics.

However, the most popular production housing at the time had its own viewfinder optics that simply docked with the camera body in place of the Pentax viewfinder.

But the more interesting reason it achieved cult status was because it was sprocket drive, so if you marked the film, it could be unloaded and reloaded and be frame perfect for making multiple exposures.

This is how Peter Scoones achieved his in-camera double exposure image that won the 1986 Blue Dolphin underwater photography competition. Peter's widow Georgette shot many of the underwater photos that the BBC used to publicise shows such as *Blue Planet* and *Life in the Freezer*, which Peter filmed using underwater camera equipment he invented. Peter chose to modify a Nikon F3 High Eyepoint finder to fit his LX. He had built his own housing with controls for the winder to allow him to rewind film underwater. **Steve Warren**

Thanks for sharing this fascinating anecdote, Steve.

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The 1956 Durst Automatica was the first camera with aperture priority exposure, says John Wade

Pentax ES

A big thank you to John Wade for his piece about Pentax (6th Oct). As ever his articles are an interesting reminder of times gone by, but on this occasion, he omitted to include the Pentax ES, a camera ahead of its time with the world's first aperture priority auto mode. It's impossible to include every aspect of the Pentax genre, but I believe the ES played an important part of the company's history.
Anthony Watkiss

John Wade replies: The problem with compiling an article like this is as much about what you are forced to leave out as what you can put in. Along with the Pentax ES I regret I couldn't have mentioned the LX, a superb pro 35mm SLR, or the wonderful Pentax 645D roll film reflex. But you can't win them all. By the way, the first aperture priority exposure camera was the Durst Automatica from 1956.

Flickr

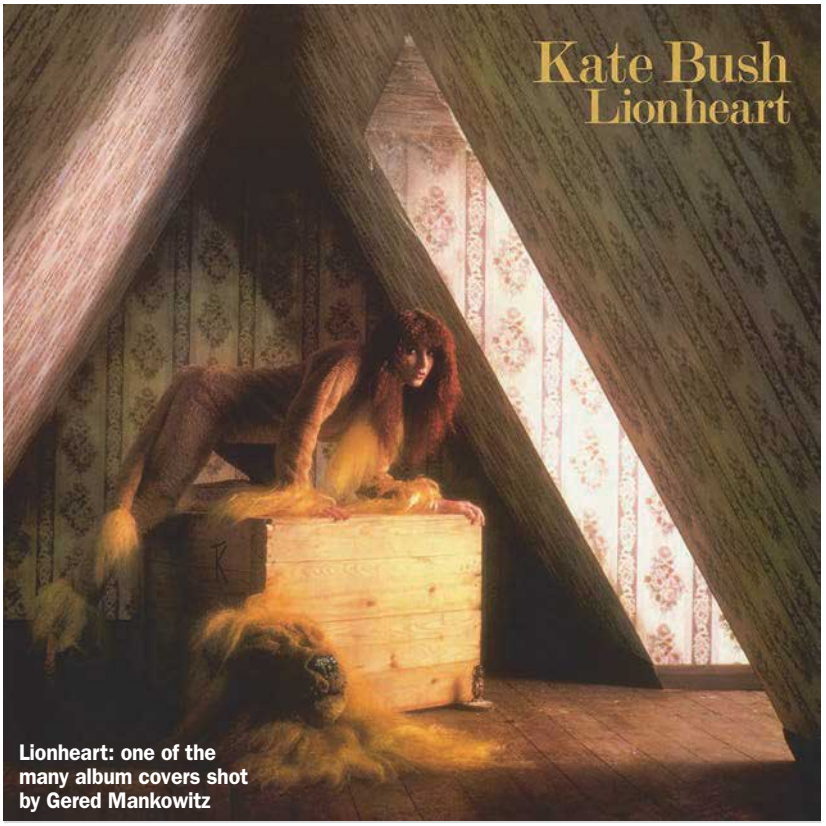
I know that Flickr might be considered old school by many people, especially compared to the more recent apps and websites. Although I would never use Flickr as a backup, (that happens on two portable hard drives), I do like the folder structure of Flickr, where people can see all of my pictures on a particular subject, and I also find that I get many more views and intelligent comment about my photography than anywhere else.
Stuart Neville

Stock fees

Further to David Crossland's article [6th Oct] about stock photography and general moan about mega photo agency Alamy.

Yes, I agree that fees could be better. During the era of film I would make around £4k a year via various agencies that would go to pay for other kit and trips. Now with Alamy, who I've been contributing to since 2010 on exclusive use, my earnings are more like £2-3k a year, but it helps to pay for internet, Lightroom and RPS fees. Yes the fees could be better but so could the other agencies like Getty and Shutterstock, and all are in the same market.

The dilemma is do we scatter our imagery net far and wide hoping for a good catch, or concentrate on one agency that may just may provide a reasonable amount of sales? The same can be said for publishing, where they also want a pound of your flesh. Better to earn something rather than having your images just cluttering your



Lionheart: one of the many album covers shot by Gered Mankowitz

hard drive earning nothing? For example, of my last two sales one was $2 for a photo of Blackpool, the other was $103 for a photo of Carlisle for corporate use. It's something you need to be constantly working on – last week in Scotland, next week Glastonbury (great for street photography).
Allan Hartley ARPS

Gered Mankowitz

Your Gered Mankowitz interview (22 Sept) inspired me to buy the book, which has brought back many memories of the music I've enjoyed listening to throughout my life. It seems he shot the covers of many of the albums in my collection. I am right now listening to Kate Bush's Lionheart album (one of Gered's covers) which I virtually wore out when it came out, but hadn't played for at least a decade. Thanks for the memories.
Tony Harman

Spirited defence

I applaud the editor for his spirited defence of fine art nude photography in reply to a snarky letter in the 6th Oct issue, that disparagingly referred to 'drooling men'. As any visit to the women's magazine section of the newsagent, or 10 minutes on social media will confirm, women also enjoy looking at partially undressed or 'sexy' photos of other women. It's human nature. During the 1980s my wife was a part-time model, and posed nude on occasion. She even had her photo in AP once – a feat I sadly never achieved! She was proud of her beauty (as was I) and used to joke that she wanted something to show her granddaughters that she was hot once. Years later, our teenagers saw her photos and said. 'Blimey mum, you were hot when you were younger!' Of course, to me she still is, 40-odd years on. Human beauty should be celebrated like every other kind of beauty. Don't allow jealousy and prudishness to dictate otherwise.
Pat McBride

Titillation

A letter in Inbox (6th Oct), refers to certain images being published for the 'titillation of drooling men'. I admit to being one of those males: I look forward every fortnight to the ads at the back of AP where I am titillated by, and drool over, my next fantasy camera and lens purchase!
Barry Shaw

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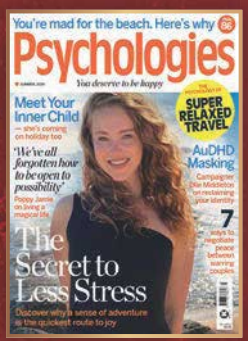
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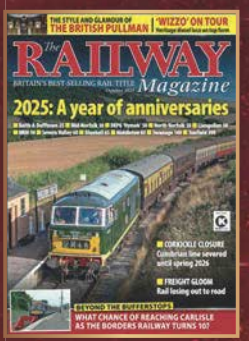
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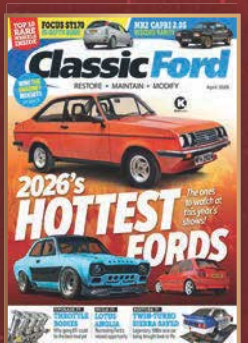


















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Buying Guide

111 cameras listed & rated

Our comprehensive listing of key camera specifications

Cameras

Cameras come in three types: DSLRs with optical viewfinders, mirrorless models with electronic viewing, and compact cameras with non-interchangeable lenses

Controls
Entry-level cameras tend to have simple, easy-to-understand controls, while more expensive models add lots of buttons and dials to give quick access to settings.

Viewfinder
The biggest difference between DSLRs and mirrorless cameras is that the latter use electronic, rather than optical viewfinders. Some advanced compact cameras also have built-in electronic viewfinders to complement their rear LCD screens.

Compact cameras
These range from small, pocketable models to large bridge-type cameras with long zoom lenses and SLR-style designs. In this guide, we're only including those with relatively large sensors for high image quality, raw format recording and manual controls.



Handgrip
DSLRs traditionally have relatively large handgrips, while some mirrorless models have much smaller grips to keep the size down. However, some can accept accessory grips to improve handling with larger lenses.

Lens mount
Each camera brand uses its own lens mount, and mirrorless cameras use different lenses to DSLRs even from the same brand. However, mirrorless models can often use DSLR lenses via a mount adapter.

ALMOST all serious photographers prefer to use cameras with interchangeable lenses, as this gives the greatest degree of creative flexibility. At one time, this meant digital single-lens-reflex (DSLR) cameras, but these have now been almost entirely supplanted by mirrorless cameras with electronic viewfinders. This brings major benefits, including faster shooting and more sophisticated autofocus.

Camera manufacturers offer a range of options, from simple, relatively inexpensive beginner-friendly designs, to sophisticated professional models. In the middle of the range you'll find enthusiast cameras with more-advanced control layouts. Meanwhile the term 'compact' refers to cameras with built-in lenses, regardless of their size. Many offer excellent image quality and full manual control.

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Mirrorless cameras

NAME & MODEL	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	SENSOR SIZE	RESOLUTION (MP)	LENS MOUNT	MAX ISO	VIDEO	MIC INPUT	SHOOTING					SCREEN				DIMENSIONS				
										AF POINTS	BURST MODE (FPS)	VIEWFINDER	BUILT-IN WI-FI	FLASH	SCREEN SIZE (IN)	ARTICULATED LCD	TOUCHSCREEN	BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)	WIDTH (MM)	HEIGHT (MM)	DEPTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
Canon EOS R1	£6999	4.5★	High-speed sports and action camera built for professional photographers	FF	24.1	Canon RF	409,600	6000	·	1053	40	·	·		3.2	·	·	1330	157.6	149.5	87.3	1115
Canon EOS RP	£1400	4★	Compact and affordable but over-simplified full-frame camera	FF	26.2	Canon RF	102,400	3840	·	4779	5	·	·		3	·	·	250	132.5	85	70	485
Canon EOS R3	£5880	5★	High-speed, pro-spec flagship model that's packed full of clever technology	FF	24.1	Canon RF	204,800	6000	·	4779	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	860	150	142.6	87.2	1015
Canon EOS R5	£4200	4.5★	Remarkable 45MP powerhouse capable of internal 8K video recording	FF	45	Canon RF	102,400	8192	·	5940	12	·	·		3.2	·	·	320	135.8	97.5	88	738
Canon EOS R5 Mark II	£4499	5★	Pro-spec all-rounder offers 45MP shooting at 30fps and 8K 60p video	FF	43	Canon RF	102,400	8192	·	1053	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	630	138.5	101.2	93.5	746
Canon EOS R6 Mark II	£2780	5★	Enthusiast-focused model with 24MP sensor and AI subject-recognition AF	FF	24.2	Canon RF	204,800	3840	·	4897	12	·	·		3	·	·	450	138.4	98.4	88.4	670
Canon EOS R6 Mark III	£2800	5★	Third-generation model gains 32.5MP full-frame sensor and 7K raw video	FF	32.5	Canon RF	102,400	6960	·	6097	40	·	·		3	·	·	620	138.4	98.4	88.4	699
Canon EOS R6 V	£2399	4.5★	Video-first hybrid camera that employs the same tech as the EOS R6 III	FF	32.5	Canon RF	102,400	6960	·	6097	40		·		3	·	·	640	141.8	83.3	97.7	598
Canon EOS R7	£1350	4.5★	Fast APS-C RF-mount model with sophisticated autofocus from the EOS R3	APS-C	32.5	Canon RF	51,200	3840	·	651	15	·	·		3	·	·	770	132	90.4	91.7	530
Canon EOS R8	£1700	4.5★	Lightweight full-frame camera that offers great image quality and autofocus	FF	24.2	Canon RF	204,800	3840	·	4897	6	·	·		3	·	·	220	132.5	86.1	70	461
NEW **Canon EOS R8 Mark II**	£1730		Much-improved entry-level model gains in-body stabilisation and joystick	FF	24.2	Canon RF	204,900	3840	·	4368	6	·	·		3	·	·	220	131.4	90.0	79.7	546
Canon EOS R10	£900	4★	Compact, lightweight yet highly specified RF-mount APS-C mirrorless model	APS-C	24.2	Canon RF	51,200	3840	·	651	15	·	·	·	3	·	·	430	122.5	87.8	83.4	429
Canon EOS R50	£790	4★	Small entry-level APS-C model with subject detection autofocus	APS-C	24.2	Canon RF	51,200	3840	·	651	12	·	·	·	3	·	·	310	116.3	85.5	68.8	375
Canon EOS R50 V	£729		Compact video-focused model based on the R50, but with no viewfinder	APS-C	24.2	Canon RF	51,200	3840	·	651	12		·	·	3	·	·	480	119.3	73.7	45.2	370
Canon EOS R100	£670	3★	Entry-level APS-C model that's designed to be a simple family camera	APS-C	24.2	Canon RF	25,600	3840	·	143	6.5	·	·	·	3			340	116.3	85.5	68.8	356
Fujifilm X-E5	£1299	5★	Attractive flat-bodied rangefinder-style model designed for enthusiasts	APS-C	40.2	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	8	·	·		3	·	·	400	124.9	72.9	39.1	445
Fujifilm X-H2	£1899	5★	High-resolution pro flagship model with same design as X-H2S	APS-C	40.2	Fujifilm X	51,200	7680	·	425	15	·	·		3	·	·	540	136.3	92.9	84.6	660
Fujifilm X-H2S	£2499	5★	Extremely impressive pro-spec high-speed flagship model	APS-C	26.1	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	40	·	·		3	·	·	580	136.3	92.9	84.6	660
Fujifilm X-M5	£799	4.5★	Compact, affordable hybrid model with no viewfinder or in-body stabilisation	APS-C	26.1	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	20		·		3	·	·	330	111.9	66.6	38	355
Fujifilm X-S20	£1249	5★	Excellent 26MP still/video hybrid camera that includes 6.2K video recording	APS-C	26.1	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	20	·	·	·	3	·	·	750	127.7	85.1	65.4	491
Fujifilm X-T30 III	£829	5★	Compact DSLR-style model with subject detection autofocus and film dial	APS-C	26.1	Fujifilm X	51,200	6340	·	425	20	·	·	·	3	·	·	425	118.4	82.8	46.8	378
Fujifilm X-T50	£1299	5★	Small 40MP model with in-body stabilisation and film simulation dial	APS-C	40.2	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	9	·	·	·	3	·	·	390	123.8	84	48.8	438
Fujifilm X-T5	£1699	5★	Retro-styled enthusiast model with 40MP sensor and subject-detection AF	APS-C	40.2	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	15	·	·		3	·	·	580	129.5	91	63.8	557
Leica SL3	£5920	4.5★	High-end full-frame model gains phase detection AF and tilting screen	FF	60.1	L-mount	100,000	8192	·	315	15	·	·		3.2	·	·	260	141.2	108	84.6	854
Leica SL3-P	£5150	4.5★	All-rounder with 44.9MP sensor, 40fps high-speed shooting and 8K video	FF	44.9	L-mount	200,000	8128	·	819	40	·	·		3.2	·	·	383	141.2	108.1	82.7	854
Leica SL3-S	£4500	4★	More videocentric version of SL3 with 24MP sensor and 6K recording	FF	24.6	L-mount	200,000	5952	·	779	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	315	141.2	108	82.7	852
Nikon Z5	£1719	4★	Simplified version of the Z6, comes with compact 24-50mm f/4-6.3 zoom	FF	24.3	Nikon Z	102,400	3840	·	273	4.5	·	·		3.2	·	·	470	134	100.5	69.5	675
Nikon Z5II	£1599	5★	Impressively highly specified entry-level model at a very attractive price	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	273	14	·	·		3.2	·	·	380	134	100.5	72	700
NEW **Nikon Z5IIc**	£1349		Simplified, smaller derivative of the Z5II with no viewfinder	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	273	14		·		3.2	·	·	350	134	80.5	72	620
Nikon Z6II	£1999	4.5★	Capable full-frame all-rounder but looking dated in 2025	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	273	14	·	·		3.2	·	·	410	134	100.5	69.5	705
Nikon Z6III	£2699	5★	Mid-range full-frame model boasts partially-stacked sensor for high speed	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	5376	·	273	20	·	·		3.2	·	·	380	138.5	101.5	74	760
Nikon Z7II	£2999	4.5★	Gains dual card slots, faster shooting, 4K 60p video and vertical grip option	FF	45.7	Nikon Z	102,400	3840	·	493	10	·	·		3.2	·	·	420	134	100.5	69.5	705
Nikon Z8	£3999	5★	Sensational all-rounder with all the Z 9's features in a smaller body	FF	45.7	Nikon Z	102,400	7680	·	493	20	·	·		3.2	·	·	340	144	118.5	83	910

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

Mirrorless cameras

NAME & MODEL	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	SENSOR SIZE	RESOLUTION (MP)	LENS MOUNT	MAX ISO	VIDEO	MIC INPUT	SHOOTING: AF POINTS	SHOOTING: BURST MODE (FPS)	SHOOTING: VIEWFINDER	SHOOTING: BUILT-IN WI-FI	SHOOTING: FLASH	SCREEN: SIZE (IN)	SCREEN: ARTICULATED LCD	SCREEN: TOUCHSCREEN	BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)	DIMENSIONS: WIDTH (MM)	DIMENSIONS: HEIGHT (MM)	DIMENSIONS: DEPTH (MM)	DIMENSIONS: WEIGHT (G)
Nikon Z9	£5299	5★	Stunning high-speed, high-resolution flagship with pro build and connectivity	FF	45.7	Nikon Z	102,400	7680	·	493	20	·	·		3.2	·	·	700	149	149.5	90.5	1340
Nikon Zf	£2299	4.5★	Lovely retro-styled full-frame mirrorless with all the latest technology	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	273	14	·	·		3.2	·	·	380	144	103	49	710
Nikon ZR	£2199	4.5★	Video-first hybrid model based on Z6III, and co-developed with RED	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	6048	·	253	20		·		4	·	·	380	134	80.5	49	630
Nikon Z30	£699	4★	Designed for vloggers, with articulated screen but no viewfinder	DX	20.9	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	209	11		·		3	·	·	330	128	73.5	59.5	405
Nikon Z50II	£849	4.5★	Updated APS-C model gains improved autofocus and brighter viewfinder	DX	20.9	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	209	15	·	·	·	3.2	·	·	250	127	96.8	66.5	550
Nikon Zfc	£899	4★	Lovely-looking retro-styled model with fully articulated touchscreen	DX	20.9	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	209	11	·	·		3	·	·	300	134.5	93.5	43.5	445
Olympus OM-D E-M10 IV	£699	4.5★	Compact, lightweight, enjoyable to use and takes great-looking pictures	4/3	20.2	Mic4/3	25,600	3840		121	15	·	·	·	3	·	·	360	121.7	84.4	49	383
OM System OM-1 Mark II	£2200	5★	Updated with larger buffer, improved AF, and extra computational features	4/3	20.4	Mic4/3	102,400	4096	·	1053	120	·	·		3	·	·	520	134.8	91.6	72.7	599
OM System OM-3	£1700	5★	Combines gorgeous retro design with most of the OM-1 Mark II's features	4/3	20.4	Mic4/3	102,400	4096	·	1053	120	·	·		3	·	·	590	139.3	89.9	45.8	496
OM System OM-5 Mark II	£1099	4.5★	Updated OM-5 gains USB-C charging port and some minor refinements	4/3	20.4	Mic4/3	25,600	4096	·	121	10	·	·		3	·	·	310	125.3	85.2	52.0	418
NEW OM System PEN	£849	5★	Affordable, attractive, portable and well-featured rangefinder-style model	4/3	20.4	Mic4/3	25,600	4096	·	121	8	·	·		3	·	·	410	125.8	74.5	43.3	393
Panasonic Lumix G9II	£1699	5★	High-end Micro Four Thirds model with phase-detection autofocus	4/3	25.2	Mic4/3	25,600	5760	·	779	14	·	·		3	·	·	390	134.3	102.3	90.1	658
Panasonic Lumix G97	£699	4★	Well-priced Micro Four Thirds camera is a minor update to the G90 from 2019	4/3	20.3	Mic4/3	25,600	3840	·	49	9	·	·	·	3	·	·	300	130.4	93.5	77.4	530
Panasonic Lumix G100	£590	4★	Small SLR-shaped camera specifically designed for vloggers	4/3	20.3	Mic4/3	25,600	3840	·	49	10	·	·	·	3	·	·	270	115.6	82.5	54.2	345
Panasonic Lumix GH5 II	£1499	4.5★	Video-focused high-end model with in-body stabilisation and 4K video	4/3	20.2	Mic4/3	25,600	4096	·	225	12	·	·		3	·	·	410	138.5	98.1	87.4	727
Panasonic Lumix GH6	£1999	5★	Impressive high-end video model with new 25MP sensor and 5.7K recording	4/3	25.2	Mic4/3	25,600	5728	·		14	·	·		3	·	·	330	138.4	100.3	99.6	823
Panasonic Lumix GH7	£1999	5★	Video-centric camera with phase-detect autofocus and internal ProRes RAW	4/3	25.2	Mic4/3	25,600	5760	·		15	·	·		3	·	·	330	138.4	100.3	99.6	805
Panasonic Lumix S1II	£2899	5★	Pro model with 24MP stacked-CMOS sensor for high-speed stills and video	FF	24.1	L-mount	204,800	5952	·		70	·	·		3	·	·	360	134.3	102.3	91.8	800
Panasonic Lumix S1IIE	£2299	4.5★	'Essentials' version of the S1II with a conventional sensor but slower speeds	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	5952	·		30	·	·		3	·	·	380	134.3	102.3	91.8	795
Panasonic Lumix S1R II	£2999	5★	High-end stills-video hybrid camera, with phase-detect AF and 8K recording	FF	44.3	L-mount	102,400	8128	·		40	·	·		3	·	·	350	134.3	102.3	91.8	795
Panasonic Lumix S5D	£1000		Affordable compact-bodied, enthusiast-focused hybrid camera	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	4096	·	225	7	·	·		3	·	·	450	132.6	97.1	81.9	714
Panasonic Lumix S5II	£2000	4.5★	Compact model with phase detect autofocus and unlimited video recording	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	5952	·	779	9	·	·		3	·	·	370	134.3	102.3	90.1	740
Panasonic Lumix S5IIX	£2300	5★	Video-specialist version of the S5II boasts higher-quality recording options	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	5952	·	779	9	·	·		3	·	·	370	134.3	102.3	90.1	740
Panasonic Lumix S9	£1499		Small, rangefinder-styled full-frame camera designed for vlogging	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	5952	·	779	30		·		3	·	·	470	126	70.8	46.7	486
Sigma BF	£1969	4★	Stunningly designed, relatively compact model for photographers	FF	24.6	L-mount	102,400	6016			8				3.2		·	260	130.1	72.8	36.8	446
Sigma fp	£1999	4★	Smallest full-frame mirrorless, but compromised features and handling	FF	24.6	L-mount	102,400	3840	·	49	18				3.2		·	280	112.6	69.9	45.3	422
Sigma fp L	£1999	4★	High-resolution version of the fp with 61MP full-frame sensor	FF	61.0	L-mount	102,400	3840	·	49	10				3.2		·	240	112.6	69.9	45.3	427
NEW Sigma FP2	£1899	4.5★	Likeable super-small full-frame model with tilting screen and modular add-ons	FF	24.5	L-mount	102,400	6016	·	49	20				3.2	·	·	370	112.8	69.9	41.8	460
Sony Alpha 6100	£830		Entry-level APS-C model with Sony's latest AF technology and 4K video	APS-C	24.2	Sony E	51,200	3840	·	425	11	·	·	·	3	·	·	380	120	66.9	59.4	396
Sony Alpha 6400	£1000	4★	Extraordinary new autofocus system, but in an outdated body design	APS-C	24.2	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	425	11	·	·	·	3	·	·	360	120	66.9	49.9	403
Sony Alpha 6700	£1450	4.5★	Boasts a 26MP sensor in a much-improved body compared to the A6600	APS-C	26	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	759	11	·	·		3	·	·	570	122	69	75.1	493
Sony Alpha 1	£6500	5★	High-end model with a remarkable combination of resolution and speed	FF	50.1	Sony E	102,400	7680	·	759	30	·	·		3	·	·	530	128.9	96.9	80.8	737
Sony Alpha 1 II	£6300	5★	High resolution, high-speed professional flagship model	FF	50.1	Sony E	102,400	7680	·	759	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	520	136.1	96.9	82.9	743

Mirrorless cameras

NAME & MODEL	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	SENSOR SIZE	RESOLUTION (MP)	LENS MOUNT	MAX ISO	VIDEO	MIC INPUT	AF POINTS	BURST MODE (FPS)	VIEWFINDER	BUILT-IN WI-FI	FLASH	SCREEN SIZE (IN)	ARTICULATED LCD	TOUCHSCREEN	BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)	WIDTH (MM)	HEIGHT (MM)	DEPTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
										SHOOTING					SCREEN				DIMENSIONS			
Sony Alpha 7 III	£1999	5★	Fine camera with 10fps shooting and 4K video recording	FF	24.2	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	693	10	·	·		3	·	·	610	126.9	95.6	73.7	650
Sony Alpha 7 IV	£2400	5★	Excellent all-rounder with 33MP sensor and fully articulated screen	FF	33.0	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	759	10	·	·		3	·	·	610	131	96.4	79.8	658
Sony Alpha A7 V	£2800	5★	Impressive 33MP enthusiast model with subject recognition and rapid shooting	FF	33.0	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	759	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	750	130.3	96.4	82.4	695
Sony Alpha 7C	£1900	3.5★	Compact full-frame design let down by poor handling and tiny EVF	FF	24.2	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	693	10	·	·		3	·	·	680	124	71.1	59.7	509
Sony Alpha 7C II	£2100	4★	Much-improved compact model, but still compromised in certain respects	FF	33.0	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	759	10	·	·		3	·	·	530	124	71.1	63.4	525
Sony Alpha 7CR	£3200	4★	High-resolution twin of the A7C II, with a 60MP sensor	FF	61.0	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	693	8	·	·		3	·	·	490	124	71.1	63.4	525
Sony Alpha 7R IV	£3500	5★	Superb high-resolution, full-frame mirrorless with 61MP sensor	FF	61.0	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	567	10	·	·		3	·	·	670	128.9	96.4	77.5	665
Sony Alpha 7R V	£4000	5★	61MP model gains subject detection, 8K video and 4-way articulated screen	FF	61.0	Sony E	102,400	7680	·	693	10	·	·		3.2	·	·	530	131.3	96.9	82.4	723
Sony Alpha A7R VI	£4500	5★	New stacked-CMOS sensor enables 30fps shooting and improved AF	FF	66.8	Sony E	102,400	7680	·	759	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	600	132.7	96.9	82.9	713
Sony Alpha 7S III	£3800	4.5★	Huge update gains fully articulated screen and new touch interface	FF	12.1	Sony E	409,600	3840	·	759	10	·	·		3	·	·	600	128.9	96.9	80.8	600
Sony Alpha A9 II	£4800		A9 gains professional connectivity options and an improved body design	FF	24.2	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	693	20	·	·		3	·	·	500	128.9	96.4	77.5	678
Sony Alpha A9 III	£6100	4.5★	World's first global shutter brings breathtaking speed – but at a price	FF	24.6	Sony E	51,200	3840	·	759	120	·	·		3.2	·	·	400	136.1	96.9	82.9	702
Sony ZV-E1	£2350	4★	Small full-frame vlogging camera, with articulated screen but no viewfinder	FF	12.1	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	759	10		·		3	·	·	570	121	71.9	54.3	483
Sony ZV-E10	£680	4★	Designed for vlogging, with high-end microphone and fully articulated screen	APS-C	24.2	Sony E	51,200	3840	·	425	11		·		3	·	·	440	113	64.2	44.7	343
Sony ZV-E10 II	£925	4★	Second-generation vlog camera with 26MP sensor and 4K 60p video recording	APS-C	26.0	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	759			·		3	·	·	610	114.5	67.5	54.2	377

DSLR cameras

NAME & MODEL	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	SENSOR SIZE	RESOLUTION (MP)	LENS MOUNT	MAX ISO	VIDEO	MIC INPUT	AF POINTS	BURST MODE (FPS)	VF COVERAGE (%)	BUILT-IN WI-FI	FLASH	SCREEN SIZE (IN)	ARTICULATED LCD	TOUCHSCREEN	BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)	WIDTH (MM)	HEIGHT (MM)	DEPTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
										SHOOTING					SCREEN				DIMENSIONS			
Canon EOS 2000D	£469	3★	Minor update to EOS 1300D gains 24.1MP sensor	APS-C	24.1	Canon EF	12,800	1080		9	3	95	·	·	3			500	129	101.3	77.6	475
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV	£3599	4.5★	Hugely accomplished workhorse model, but pricey	FF	30.4	Canon EF	102,400	3840	·	61	7 7	100	·		3.2		·	900	151	116	76	890
Nikon D780	£2199	5★	Superb all-rounder blends the best of DSLR and mirrorless technology	FX	24.5	Nikon F	204,800	3840	·	51	7	100	·		3.2	·	·	2,060	143.5	115.5	76	840
Nikon D850	£3499	5★	High speed and superb image quality make this the best DSLR yet	FX	45.7	Nikon F	102,400	3840	·	153	7	100	·		3.2	·	·	1,840	146	124	78.5	1005
Nikon D6	£6299		Latest pro-level high-speed sports camera boasts high-tech AF system	FX	20.8	Nikon F	3,280,000	3840	·	105	14	100	·		3.2		·	3,580	160	163	92	1450
Pentax KF	£849		Solid spec including fully articulated screen and in-body stabilisation	APS-C	24.2	Pentax K	102,400	1080		11	6	100	·	·	3	·		460	125.5	93	74	684
Pentax K-1 II	£1799	4.5★	Well-featured full-frame DSLR that's excellent value for money	FF	36	Pentax K	819,200	1080	·	33	4.4	100	·		3.2	·		670	136.5	110	85.5	1010

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

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

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Compact cameras

NAME & MODEL	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	SENSOR SIZE	RESOLUTION (MP)	LENS RANGE (MM EQUIV)	MAX ISO	VIDEO	MIC INPUT	SHOOTING: BURST MODE (FPS)	SHOOTING: VIEWFINDER	SHOOTING: BUILT-IN WI-FI	SHOOTING: FLASH	SCREEN: SIZE (IN)	SCREEN: ARTICULATED LCD	SCREEN: TOUCHSCREEN	BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)	DIMENSIONS: WIDTH (MM)	DIMENSIONS: HEIGHT (MM)	DIMENSIONS: DEPTH (MM)	DIMENSIONS: WEIGHT (G)
Canon G7 X Mark III	£699	4★	Lovely pocket camera that includes 4K video and YouTube live streaming	1in	20.1	24-100	25,600	3840	·	30		·	·	3in	·	·	265	105.5	60.9	41.4	304
Canon V1	£959	4★	Video-focused with ultra-wide zoom, but also interesting for photographers	1.4in	22.3	16-50	51,200	3840	·	15		·		3in	·	·	400	118.3	68.0	52.5	426
Canon V10	£429	3.5★	Unusual camera designed for vlogging, but has some significant limitations	1in	15.2	19	12,800	3840	·	na		·		2in	·	·	290	63.8	90.0	34.3	211
Fujifilm GFX100RF	£4699	4.5★	Surprisingly portable 102MP medium-format compact with 28mm equiv lens	MF	102	28	102,400	4096	·	6	·	·		3.2in	·	·	820	133.5	90.4	76.5	735
Fujifilm X half	£699	4★	Small JPEG-only camera that recreates experience of shooting half-frame film	1in	17.7	32	12,800	2160		na	·	·	·	2.4in		·	880	105.8	64.3	45.8	240
Fujifilm X100VI	£1599	5★	Superb classically styled camera gains 40MP sensor and image stabilisation	APS-C	40.2	35	51,200	6240	·	20	·	·	·	3in	·	·	450	128	74.8	55.3	521
Leica D-Lux 8	£1450	4.5★	Attractive design with Four Thirds sensor and 24-75mm equiv f/1.7-2.8 zoom	4/3	17	24-70	25,00	3840		11	·	·	·	3in		·	TBC	130	69	34	397
Leica Q3	£5300	5★	Lovely top-end compact with 60MP full-frame sensor and 28mm f/1.7 lens	FF	60.3	28	100,000	8192		15	·	·		3in	·	·	350	130	80.3	92.6	743
Leica Q3 Monochrom	£5800	5★	Variant of the Q3 with a modified sensor that only shoots in black & white	FF	60.3	28	200,000	8192		15	·	·		3in		·	302	130	80.3	92.6	746
Leica Q3 43	£5900	5★	Premium model with 60MP full-frame sensor and super-sharp 43mm f/2 lens	FF	60.3	43	100,000	8192		15	·	·		3in	·	·	350	130	80.3	97.6	772
Panasonic L10	£1299	4.5★	Advanced compact with multi-aspect ratio sensor and fully articulated LCD	4/3	20.4	24-75	25,600	5632	·	11	·	·		3in	·	·	410	127.1	73.9	66.9	508
Panasonic TZ300	£869	3.5★	'Travel zoom' with 1in sensor and 24-360mm equiv lens, but no viewfinder	1in	20.1	24-360	25,600	3840		10		·	·	3in		·	360	111.2	66.4	45.2	337
Ricoh GR IIIx	£899	4★	Pocketable APS-C advanced compact with 40mm-equivalent f/2.8 lens	APS-C	24.2	40	102,400	1920		4		·		3in		·	200	109.4	61.9	35.2	262
Ricoh GR IIIx HDF	£1099	4★	Variant of the GR IIIx with switchable Highlight Diffusion Filter	APS-C	24.2	40	102,400	1920		4		·		3in		·	200	109.4	61.9	35.2	262
Ricoh GR IV	£1199	4.5★	Pocket-sized advanced compact with APS-C sensor and 28mm equivalent lens	APS-C	25.7	28	204800	1920		4		·		3in		·	250	109.4	61.1	32.7	262
Ricoh GR IV HDF	£1299		Variant of the GR IV with switchable Highlight Diffusion Filter	APS-C	25.7	28	204800	1920		4		·		3in		·	250	109.4	61.1	32.7	262
Ricoh GR IV Monochrome	£1599	4.5★	Variant of the GR IV that only shoots black & white images	APS-C	25.7	28	409600	1920		4		·		3in		·	250	109.4	61.1	32.7	262
Sony RX1R III	£4199	4★	Small-bodied full-frame camera with 35mm f/2 lens	FF	61	35	102,400	3840	·	5	·	·		3in		·	300	113.3	67.9	87.5	498
Sony RX10 V	£2199	5★	Superb all-in-one with long zoom, fast shooting and excellent autofocus	1in	20.1	24-600	12,800	3840	·	30	·	·		3in	·	·	630	136.4	94.5	151.3	1111
Sony RX100 VII	£1200	4.5★	Pocket-sized travel zoom camera with long zoom and pop-up viewfinder	1in	20.1	24-200	12,800	3840	·	20	·	·	·	3in	·	·	260	101.6	58.1	42.8	302
Sony ZV-1	£700	4★	Designed for vloggers, with high-spec mic and fully articulated screen	1in	20.1	25-70	12,800	3840	·	24		·		3in	·	·	260	105.5	60	43.5	294
Sony ZV-1 Mark II	£870	4.5★	Updated vlog camera gains ultra-wideangle zoom and touchscreen interface	1in	20.1	18-50	12,800	3840	·	24		·		3in	·	·	290	105.5	60	46.7	292
Sony ZV-1F	£550		Simplified version of the ZV-1 with fixed 20mm equivalent prime lens	1in	20.1	20	12,800	3840	·	16		·		3in	·	·	360	105.5	60	46.4	256

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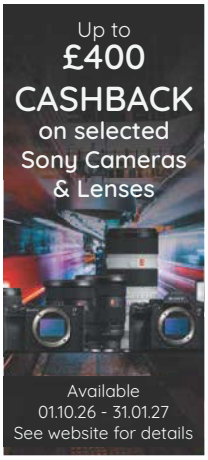
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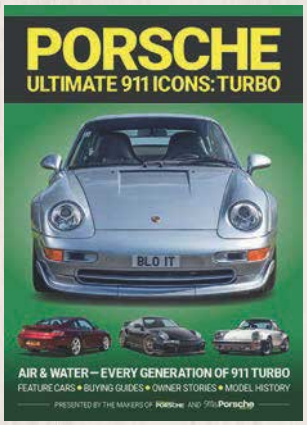
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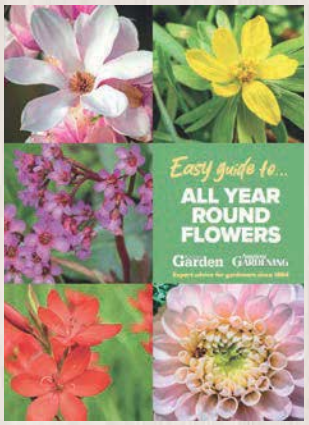
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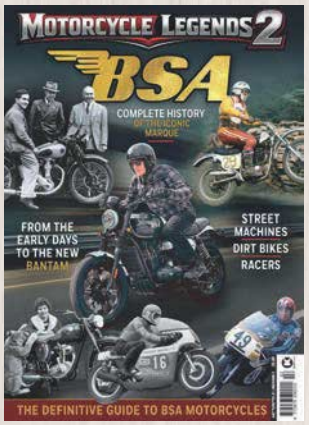
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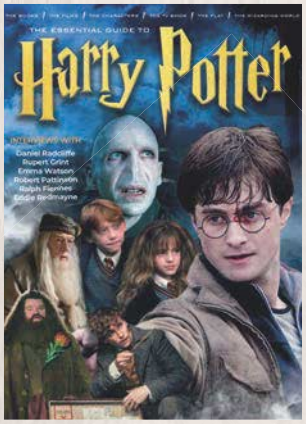
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Final Analysis

Tracy Marshall-Grant considers...

Clown and Buckets, The Circus Shed from Ray's Sheds by Jem Southam

Over the last number of years, I have had the pleasure of working with Jem Southam across several projects in Bristol, including Bristol Photo Festival and the major Royal West of England Academy exhibition A Bend in the River. In 2021 I also curated an outdoor exhibition of Jem's early Bristol docklands photographs at Underfall Yard and had the absolute joy of displaying the works on large billboard structures across the harbourside landscape which he himself had documented decades earlier. It was a great full circle moment for him and, for me, a real delight to work on.

For anyone who knows him they will know that spending time around Jem and his work you quickly realise that photography for him is never simply about a visual. It is about time, observation and a kind of quiet slow attentiveness to the world that very few photographers seem to possess. I have described being around Jem as like a version of a spa retreat – you leave him chilled, nourished and feeling very calm.

Which is perhaps why this image surprised me so much when I first encountered it through the team at RRB Photobooks recently.

Jem Southam, as we all know, is best known for his large format studies of landscape, rivers, ponds, rockfalls, trees, urban landscapes, roads, geese and fields photographed repeatedly over months or years as subtle changes unfold through season, weather and light. They breathe slowly, they make you pause, they ask you to stop and look carefully. But this image from his new body of work Ray's Sheds does very little of this. It feels entirely different at first glance. Instead of open landscape and calm we are confronted with clutter, claustrophobia and chaos. The frame is crowded with handmade figures, timber constructions, fragments of sculpture, ladders, wire, buckets, ropes and debris. A pale sculptural figure holding a metal tub dominates the foreground while another darkened figure looms above in the shadows of the shed roof. The eye barely settles before being pulled somewhere else entirely. Jem is taking us on a whole other Jem Southam experience.

The photographs are, for context, the documentation by Southam of the extraordinary studios – or should we say sheds perhaps more accurately – of the Cornish sculptor Ray Exworth, which Jem has returned to and photographed over many years. These structures were not simply workshops but immersive worlds of invention and obsession, crammed floor to ceiling with sculptures, objects, constructions and fragments of ideas accumulated across several decades.

What fascinates me about this picture is how, despite appearing so different from Jem's better-known work, it is actually deeply connected to the themes that have always run through his photography. He is still exploring landscape here, but just an interior chaotic psychological landscape rather than a geographical one. The use of colour also feels familiar too, with Jem's earlier landscape work often carrying a quiet tonal look and here the muted browns, greys and greenish shadows create an atmosphere almost similar in the tones.



Most importantly it has the slow, returning regularity and commitment of photographing over long periods of time – that patience and commitment we know and love in all Jem Southam projects.

The work forms part of Ray's Sheds, published through Southam's newly established imprint Raft in partnership with RRB Photobooks. AP

https://rrbphotobooks.com/products/jem-southam-rays-sheds

Tracy Marshall-Grant is an arts director, curator and producer. She has recently been deputy director of the new Centre for British Photography and director of development for the Royal Photographic Society. Previously she has worked for the Bristol Photo Festival, Look Photo Biennial 2019, Open Eye Gallery and Belfast Exposed Gallery. Tracy co-curated the award-winning Chris Killip Retrospective exhibition which was on show for five months in 2023 at the Baltic gallery in Gateshead and has since been on tour in Germany and the Netherlands.

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