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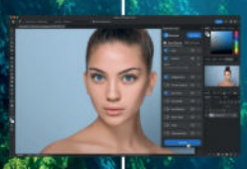
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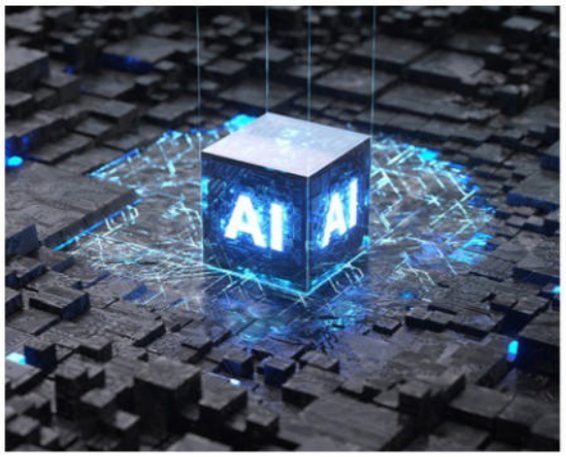
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ISSN 0004-9964

WHO REALLY OWNS YOUR IMAGES?



GETTY IMAGES

MIKE O'CONNOR, EDITOR

I've been following the growing debate over what happens when photographs posted online are used to train commercial AI systems, potentially without the photographer's consent or compensation.

Back in September, a leaked report revealed that Australian photographers and other creatives could face an opt-out system for having their work used to train AI models under copyright proposals being considered by the federal government. As independent senator David Pocock put it at the time: "The burden should not fall on Australians to defend the rights they already hold over content they create and own and invest in."

This is a concerning prospect for photographers like you and me, whose work is increasingly valuable as training material for technologies that could also compete with them.

Anyone who uploads photographs to a website, shares work on social media or contributes to an online photography community could potentially find their images being used in ways they never anticipated. While the details depend on the technology, the terms of use and the applicable law, the broader question is straightforward: should making a photograph publicly available mean giving up control over how it can be used?

There's also a fundamental difference between someone viewing, sharing or licensing a photograph and a company using it to train a commercial system capable of generating new images. The latter raises difficult questions about consent, ownership and compensation, particularly when the resulting technology can produce images that draw on styles, subjects and visual approaches developed by photographers over many years.

AI companies argue that training models on large quantities of material is essential to developing useful technology, and that overly restrictive rules could limit innovation. There's some merit to that argument, but photographers also have a reasonable expectation that their creative work shouldn't simply become a free resource for commercial enterprises, particularly when those enterprises may ultimately compete for the same clients.

The concern is that an opt-out system would place much of the responsibility on individual creators to identify how their work is being used and take steps to prevent it. For photographers with thousands of images scattered across websites, portfolios and social media platforms, that could be an enormous task. It also raises a question of fairness: why should creators have to actively defend rights they already hold, rather than companies being required to establish whether they have permission to use the work?

Photography has always evolved alongside technology, and AI offers plenty of creative possibilities. There's no denying that these tools can help photographers work more efficiently and explore new creative directions. But there's a difference between embracing new technology and accepting that the work we create can be used without our knowledge or consent.

I suspect we haven't seen the end of this debate, and the decisions made over the next few years could have lasting consequences for photographers and creatives at every level.

Ultimately, this isn't simply a question of whether photographers should embrace AI. It's about whether they should have a meaningful say in how their work is used. To me, that seems a reasonable place to start. ✪



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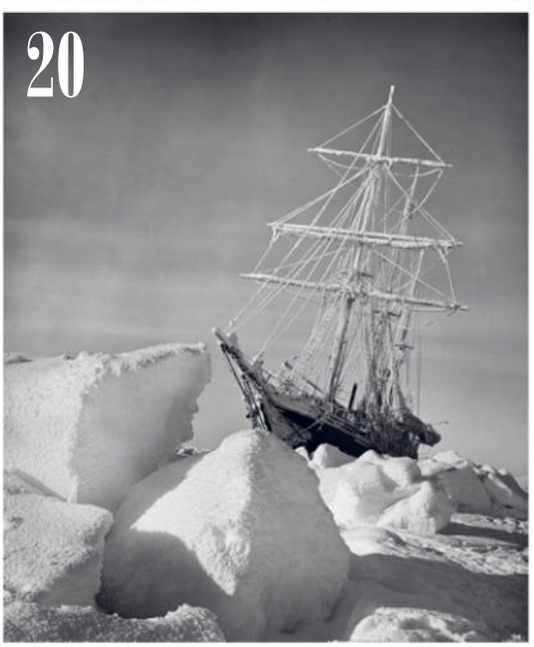
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DECEMBER - JANUARY 2027

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THIS ISSUES' COVER
Freediving and exploring one of the many stunning sea caves along the ancient coastline of Jervis Bay, on the NSW South Coast. Captured by photographer Jordan Robins, he says that over his 10-year photographic journey, he has only been lucky enough to photograph this particular sea cave on a handful of occasions. "Even the slightest swell or wind can make the water too turbulent to capture a clear over-under shot," he says. On this day in October, conditions were perfect, with calm seas, clear skies and crystal-clear water. The diver is Robins' partner Ruby, who he recently taught to freedive. "This was her first time diving in this cave and the shot would not have been possible without her help," he says.







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IN THIS MOMENT

PHOTOGRAPHER: DYLAN FOX

Some days are better than others. And some take it a step further. They are as close to perfect as it gets. This was one of those days.

I'm no stranger to New Zealand. I visit at least once a year to explore, and in some ways, I probably know parts of it better than where I live.

I've been fortunate enough to experience some incredible photographic opportunities here. Hanging out of a helicopter as the first light of day hits snow-covered mountain peaks comes to mind. But many of my favourite moments are the simple ones. I like to think of it as just 'going for a walk', with my camera in hand, of course.

In a way, it takes the pressure off having to come away with something special. Instead, I can simply explore and see what I find. Even if I don't come home with a portfolio-worthy shot, I'm happier for having taken that walk.

On this particular day, I was hiking through Fiordland, spending hours alone without seeing another person. Light rain had brought the rivers and small streams to life, and following their course is addictive. There's always the question of what might be around the next corner, often with something stunning waiting to be discovered.

The combination of light rain and beautiful light created surreal conditions. Water cascaded through the forest as warm sunlight glowed through the falling rain. Each element played its part, and without any one of them, the photographs wouldn't have been quite so special.

I followed the water until I found a viewpoint where the scene opened up. The sun was perfectly positioned low in the sky, creating beautiful shafts of light through the rain.

Forests can be notoriously difficult to photograph because of their inherent chaos. I find that good light helps tame that chaos, giving a composition a sense of direction. It makes finding a composition easier, bringing a sense of order to an otherwise busy scene.

SONY A7R V, 12-24MM F/28 LENS @ 12MM. 1/10S @ F9, ISO 400.



YOUR BEST SHOT

LIGHT/SHADOW

Light and shadow are among photography's most powerful tools. For our latest Your Best Shot challenge, we received more than 250 entries exploring the theme, from subtle shifts in natural light to bold contrasts and dramatic shadows. These were our picks from a selection of stunning images.

THIS MONTH'S WINNER



KENTO KOMATSU

Grandpa's chair

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Kento Komatsu tells us this photograph was taken at his grandparents' house and features his grandfather's favourite chair. "Even after he's gone, when the light shines on the chair, it feels like he's still with us," he says.

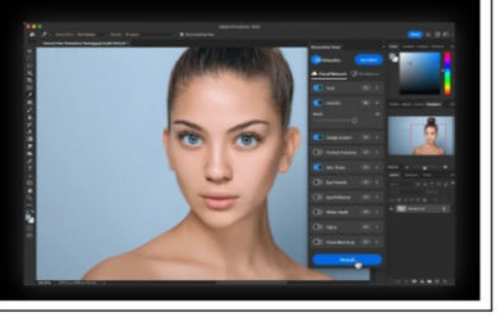
It's a beautiful, timeless image that captures the theme perfectly. The subtle use of colour and the simple arrangement of elements in the frame give the photograph a natural, unforced quality, while the light adds a quiet sense of presence and memory. A lovely, understated image.

TECHNICAL INFO

Sony A6700, Sigma 18-50mm lens @ 24mm. 1/125s @ ISO 250.

As our winner, Kento Komatsu takes home access to three Retouch4me photo retouching apps valued at $360. Retouch4me retouching apps are available as Photoshop plugins and standalone apps. Options include Heal, Dodge & Burn, Eyes Bundle, Fabric, Skin Mask, Portrait Volumes, Clean Backdrop, Skin Tone, White Teeth, Mattifier, Color Match and Dust.
YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE AT RETOUCH4.ME.

Retouch4me





HIGHLY COMMENDED

SHARON SPEARS

The quiet passage

EDITOR'S COMMENT
Sharon Spears says this image, captured inside the historic Stick Shed at Murtoa, captures the "dramatic interplay of light and shadow."

The monochrome treatment emphasises the contrast between the illuminated timber and the darker recesses, drawing the eye along the corridor of pillars. But what we also liked was the sense of space created here. There's a lovely emptiness that begs the viewer to explore.

TECHNICAL INFO
OM System OM-D E-M1 Mark II, OM 7-14mm lens @ 7mm. 1/5s @ f8, ISO 400.



TONY HARDING

Shadowy opposites

HOW I DID IT
On top of the iconic Oslo Opera House building there were people walking along past the different architectural structures. Their shadows were clearly discernible against the background and the brighter, higher parts of the building and this appealed to me artistically.

TECHNICAL INFO
OM System E-M1 Mark II, OM 12-100mm lens @ 31 mm. 1/4000s @ f11, ISO 200.

SHAYLE SCHIRMER

The Smoker

HOW I DID IT
I took this photo for a weekly challenge theme of High ISO. I had my husband stand under a street light and light a cigarette. He wasn't a fan of the challenge since he's not a smoker, but I quite liked the result!

TECHNICAL INFO
Canon R7, Tamron 18-400mm lens @ 50mm. 1/20s @ f5.6, ISO 25600. Tripod.



BRAD DUNSTAN

Stillness

HOW I DID IT
Amid a sea of light and intricate detail, a small group sits in quiet contemplation beneath the mosque's soaring interior.

TECHNICAL INFO
None provided





BILL ROBERTS

The red pot

HOW I DID IT
Here, several hue and saturation levels were used to emphasise the heat of a day in Dubai.

TECHNICAL INFO
Canon EOS 5D, EF 16–35mm f2.8 L USM lens. 1/60s @ f11, ISO 400.

HOW TO ENTER

YOUR BEST SHOT IS OPEN TO ANYONE IN AUSTRALIA. TO ENTER AN IMAGE IN THE COMP, CHECK THE COMPETITION THEMES AND ENTER AT AUSTRALIANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM/YAFPHOTOCOMPETITION/YOUR-BEST-SHOT

UPCOMING COMPETITION THEMES



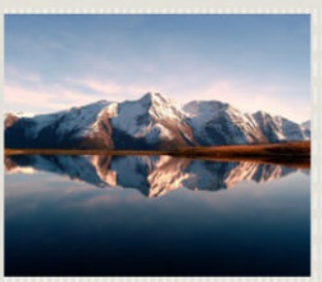
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YOUR ENTRY

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2. The image file must be the same as your name, for example Jane Smith.jpg. If you enter multiple images, each new image file name should be appended with a unique number, eg Jane Smith2.jpg
3. A maximum of three images can be entered per person.
4. Images must be in JPEG format.
5. Email file size must not exceed 7MB.
6. Please include the following information about your entry in the body of your email: Name, image title and up to 200 words explaining how you created your image. Please also include technical details including camera, lens, focal length, shutter speed, aperture, ISO, tripod (if used) and a brief summary of any software edits.

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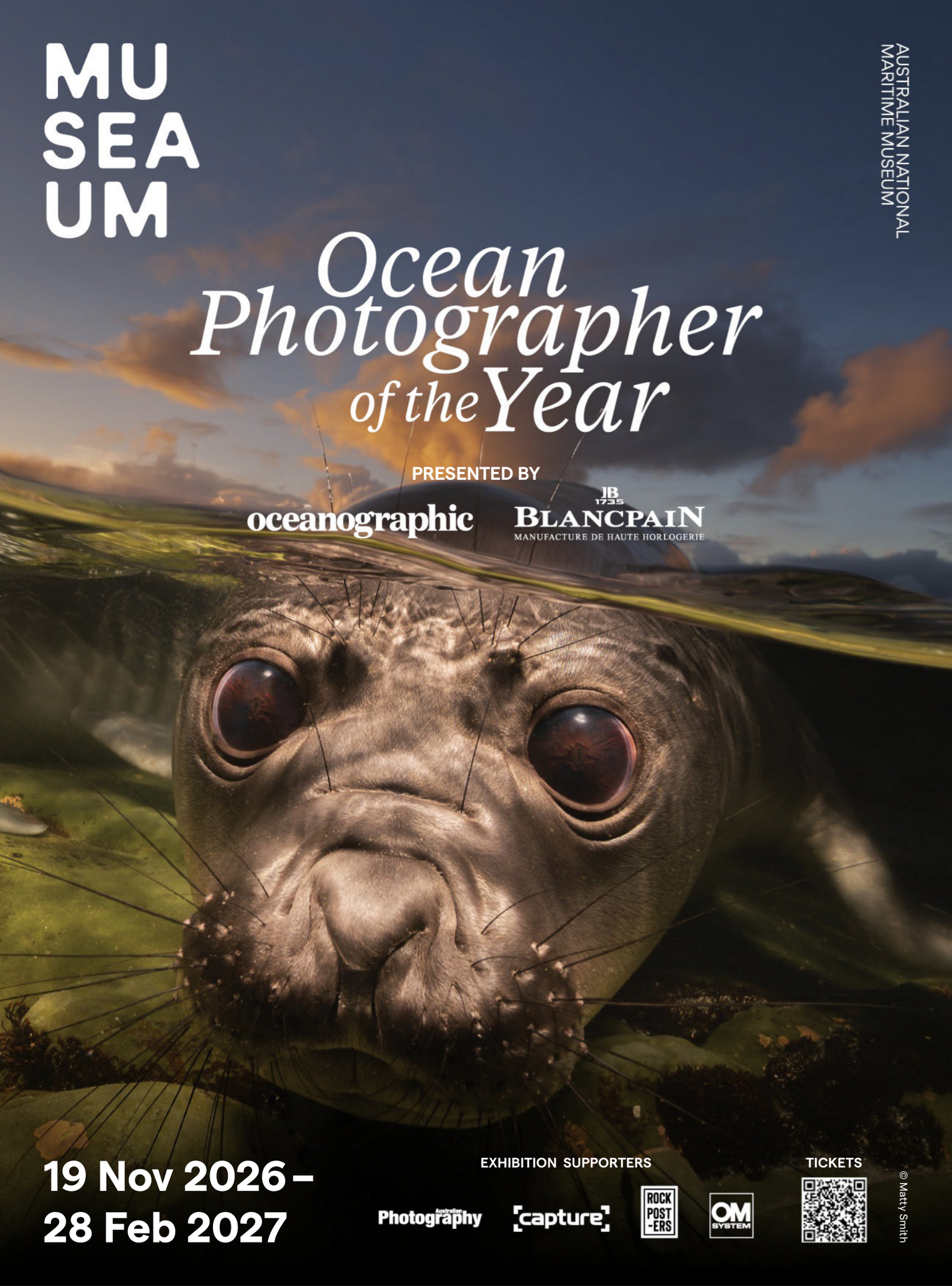
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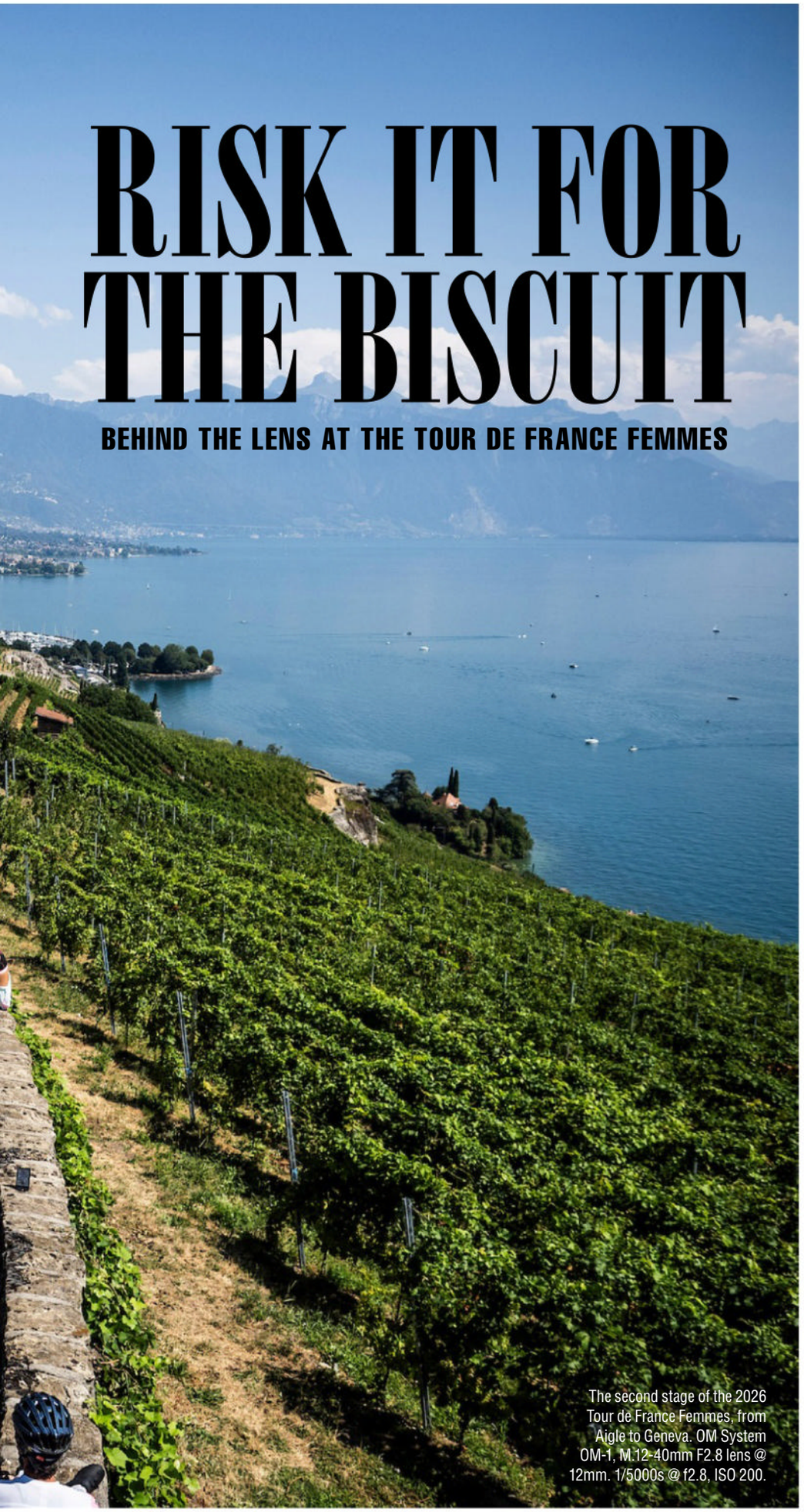
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RISK IT FOR THE BISCUIT

BEHIND THE LENS AT THE TOUR DE FRANCE FEMMES



The second stage of the 2026 Tour de France Femmes, from Aigle to Geneva. OM System OM-1, M.12-40mm F2.8 lens @ 12mm. 1/5000s @ f2.8, ISO 200.

BY MIKE O'CONNOR

What does it take to photograph the Tour de France Femmes as a professional cycling photographer? For Marcus Enno, better known as Beardy McBeard, it involves considerably more than pointing a camera at the peloton.

The Tasmanian photographer has close to 20 Grand Tours behind him, giving him plenty of experience in the unique combination of logistics, timing and visual anticipation required to photograph a stage race.

This year, being embedded with a pro team, via cycling brand Zwift, made things considerably easier. But independent coverage, something Enno has done extensively throughout his career, can involve weeks of planning, endless hotel searches and hours spent studying maps.

"And have you ever tried booking 21 hotels in a row?" he laughs.

For a freelance photographer, every euro spent is one less in the pocket, while getting between shooting locations presents another challenge.

"You can't drive backwards on a race course," Enno says.

That makes reconnaissance an important part of the job. Google Maps Street View becomes a virtual scouting tool as he works through thousands of kilometres of roads, looking for corners, climbs, descents, viewpoints, backgrounds and potential places to safely stop.

But while planning might determine where a photographer starts the day, it can't determine what will happen in front of the lens.

"There's definitely an element of planning, but you also have to be prepared to react," he says. "Once the race starts, things rarely go exactly to plan."

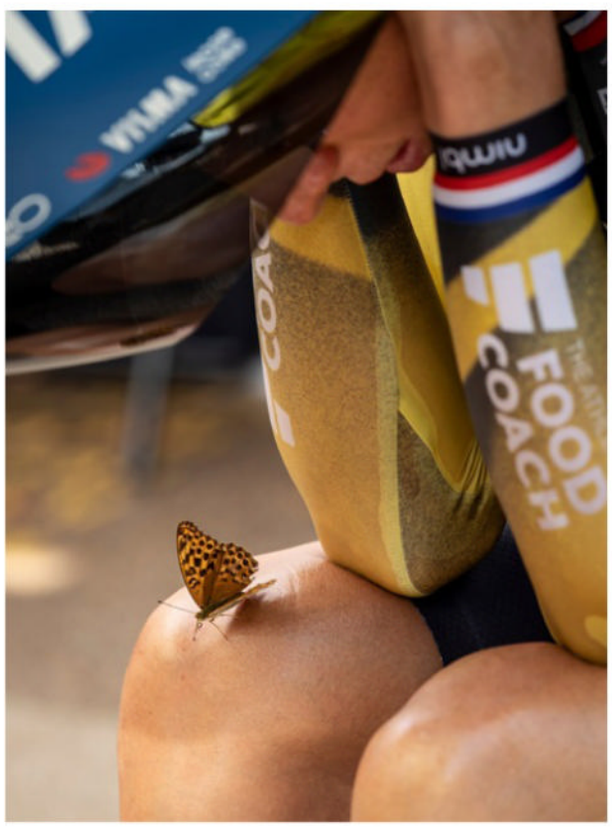
LOOKING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

At a major race, hundreds of photographers can be competing for the same pictures. Finding a way to make an image look different is therefore as important as getting to the right location.

"At some points you literally have another photographer leaning over your shoulder, shooting exactly the same thing."

Enno deliberately looks for ways to remove himself from the obvious vantage points, whether that means finding an unusual angle, climbing a tree or scrambling up a hillside.







LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Overall race winner Demi Vollering after winning the final stage. OM System OM-1, M.12-40mm F2.8 lens @ 31mm. 1/400s @ f2.8, ISO 200;
France's Pauline Ferrand-Prévot and a bright yellow butterfly. OM System OM-1 II, 50-200mm f/2.8 lens @ 79mm. 1/200s @ f2.8, ISO 80;
Canada's Alison Jackson with a burger. OM System OM-1, M.12-40mm F2.8 lens @ 12mm. 1/1000s @ f3.5, ISO 80.

OPPOSITE: Scenes from stage nine in Nice. OM System OM-1 II, 12-40mm f/2.8 lens @ 14mm. 1/2500s @ f5.6, ISO 400.



"Everyone knows where the best corner is, so if you stand there with everyone else, there's a pretty good chance you'll come home with the same photograph as everyone else."

It's a useful lesson that extends well beyond cycling photography. The best position isn't necessarily the one with the clearest view of the action. Background, light, perspective and timing can all change the way a familiar scene looks.

His philosophy is simple: "You've gotta risk it for the biscuit!"

Enno says he found the Tour de France Femmes particularly rewarding to photograph.

Part of that comes down to the unpredictability of the racing, but Enno says he is also interested in what happens around the key moments. Rather than concentrating solely on winners, attacks and sprint finishes, as many photographers already do, he looks for the personalities and quieter moments.

"I'm not just looking for who crossed the line first; I'm looking for the stories, the personalities and the moments in between," he says.

That means keeping the camera ready even when the obvious action has finished. Riders warming up, recovering, interacting with teammates or waiting for the start can provide just as much visual information about a race as the competition itself, and can tell a much more nuanced story too.

THREE FRAMES OF MAGIC

That approach produced Enno's favourite photograph from this year's Tour.

During the individual time trial, he was photographing riders warming up around the start. It was brutally hot and he estimates he had already walked around 14,000 steps.

At the start ramp, he noticed French rider Pauline Ferrand-Prévot sitting quietly among the photographers and television crews.

"She was completely zen, head down, almost as if she was meditating."

When the media crowd briefly cleared, Enno found himself with an unobstructed view. He looked through the viewfinder and noticed something unusual.

"There, sitting perfectly on Pauline's knee, was a bright yellow butterfly."

He fired three frames.

Then it was gone.

"I instantly knew I'd captured something pretty spe-



cial — one of those completely fleeting moments that you could never plan for."

The photograph works because of its simplicity. Ferrand-Prévot is surrounded by the noise and pressure of a Tour time trial, yet appears completely detached from it, with the tiny butterfly providing an unexpected point of focus.

It's also a good example of the difference between photographing an event and telling its story visually.

"Sometimes photography is about planning and positioning yourself in exactly the right place. And sometimes you just have to be there when a butterfly decides to land on someone's knee," he says.

THE BUSINESS OF CYCLING PHOTOGRAPHY

For photographers hoping to build a career in sport, Enno says the photographs themselves are only part of the equation.

With social media putting images in front of huge audiences, developing an individual visual style is increasingly important. So too is understanding the subject, knowing your equipment and continually working on your craft.

"Making your work individual and recognisable is definitely the goal, although that's much easier said than done. I've been a photographer most of my life and working professionally for more than 20 years, and I'm still learning."

"Practising your craft, continually honing your skills, understanding your subject and knowing your equipment inside out are all essential."

Experience also matters. Knowing where a race is likely to develop, anticipating a rider's movement or recognising when the light is about to change can make the difference between recording an event and producing a compelling photograph.

"There are a lot of people out there who want to do exactly the same job as you, so hard work is always going to be the cornerstone. You have to be prepared to put in the hours, take the opportunities when they come and keep improving."

But perhaps most importantly, it's about people.

"Photography is a people business," he says. "People want to work with photographers they trust, enjoy being around and know will deliver."

"The photographs get you through the door, but the relationships are what keep you there."

And sometimes, of course, you just need to be in the right place, with the camera ready, when a butterfly decides to land. ✪

You can see more of Beardy's work on his website, beardymcbeard.com and Instagram, @beardmcbeardy.



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SHACKLETON'S ENDURANCE

FRANK HURLEY'S ANTARCTIC PHOTOGRAPHS IN STUNNING NEW DETAIL

BY ROB DITESSA

More than a century after Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated Antarctic expedition, Frank Hurley's photographs are being given a new lease of life, thanks to the digitisation of the original glass-plate negatives.

In 1914, Australian photographer Frank Hurley joined Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, tasked with documenting an ambitious 3,000-kilometre journey across Antarctica from the Weddell Sea to the Ross Sea, via the South Pole.

By then, Hurley (1885–1962) was already gaining a reputation for his adventurous photography and ability to produce striking images that captured the public imagination, making him something of a celebrity.

The expedition took a dramatic turn when the expedition's ship The Endurance became trapped in pack ice and was eventually crushed. The crew abandoned ship and embarked on a perilous journey across the ice and sea before eventually reaching safety. Remarkably, all 28 members of the expedition survived.

Now, 50 of Hurley's photographs from the expedition feature in a new large-format book, *The Endurance Photographs: A Definitive Visual Record of Shackleton's Expedition*, published by Riverside Press in partnership with the Royal Geographical Society (RGS).

The book showcases newly digitised versions of Hurley's original glass-plate negatives, revealing a level of detail and clarity that was not possible from the period prints previously used to reproduce many of the images.

The RGS holds Hurley's original glass-plate negatives and their copyright. The book also includes photographs from the Endurance expedition held by the State Library of NSW, the National Library of Australia and the Scott Polar Research Institute at the University of Cambridge.

Australian Photography spoke with Jason Hook and Jamie Owen, members of the book project's curatorial team, about Hurley's photographs, the digitisation process and what contemporary photographers can learn from his work.

AP: HOW DID DIGITISATION OF THE ORIGINAL NEGATIVES ALLOW FOR BETTER REPRODUCTION THAN WE HAVE HAD UNTIL NOW?

Jamie Owen: Reproductions of Hurley's images were almost entirely made from period prints until we went back to the original negatives and scanned them. This allowed us to capture Hurley's masterful images in far greater detail and clarity.



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Return of the sun, Endurance frozen in the ice, 1915. The returning sun brought clear August days and glorious, pink-tinted sunrises, allowing Hurley to sledge away from the ship, capturing the clarity of light and the tones and textures of the ice.


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ABOVE: The Endurance in full sail, January 1915. A lead in the ice opened, and with full steam and sails raised, every effort was made to reach the lead and escape. Ultimately it proved futile.

AP: CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE USED TO MAKE THE NEW DIGITAL COPIES?

JO: State-of-the-art equipment was used to capture every detail of the negatives. We captured not only the image held on these priceless glass plates, but the negatives as objects as well. To achieve this, we used a combination of flatbed scanners and digital cameras.

AP: WERE ANY OF THE NEGATIVES RESTORED OR CLEANED UP?

JO: None of the digital images scanned and stored at the Society were cleaned up or restored in any way. The objective of the digital archive is to represent the true preserved state of the negatives. For publication, some light retouching was carried out.

AP: HOW LONG DID THE DIGITISATION PROCESS TAKE?

JO: The digitisation process took a week of intense work. The most time-consuming element was creating the different file types, along with storage and cataloguing, which continued for several months afterwards.

SAVING THE PHOTOGRAPHS

AP: HOW WAS HURLEY ABLE TO SAVE HIS PLATES AND NEGATIVES DURING THE PERILOUS TREK TO ELEPHANT ISLAND AND SOUTH GEORGIA?

Jason Hook: The dramatic moment when Hurley decided to shatter 400 heavy negatives on the ice to give himself and the rest of Shackleton's expedition the best chance of survival is described in one of the essays in the book, written by Jean de Pomereu.

The remaining 150 negatives, weighing more than 50 pounds, were sealed in tins along with an album of contact prints and reels of cine film. This precious cargo survived the journey to Elephant Island, where it was stored beneath an upturned lifeboat.

Hurley later wrote: "I had to preserve them almost with my life; for a time came when we had to choose

"HURLEY USED PIONEERING TECHNIQUES SUCH AS COMBINATION PRINTS TO PRODUCE THE 'PERFECT PICTURE...'"

between heaving them overboard or throwing away our surplus food – and the food went over!"

AP: CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE EQUIPMENT HURLEY USED AND THE CHALLENGES HE FACED IN THE ANTARCTIC?

JH: Hurley used a variety of large-format cameras, including a large bellows plate camera and Graflex cameras which he stored on the deck of the Endurance to prevent condensation building up inside them and affecting the results.

Once the Endurance succumbed to the polar ice, Hurley permanently switched to his Kodak Vest Pocket camera to document the onward journey, life on Elephant Island and the eventual rescue.

HURLEY'S PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES

AP: HURLEY TOLD STORIES THROUGH HIS PHOTOGRAPHY OF USING ALTERATIONS AND COMBINATIONS. ARE THERE EXAMPLES OF THIS IN THE BOOK?

JH: In their essays, Frans Lanting and Shane Murphy describe some of the ways Hurley used pioneering techniques such as combination prints to produce the 'perfect picture' and achieve the best visual storytelling.

These included adding dramatic skies and clouds, many decades before Photoshop, as well as the famous example of *All Saved, All Well*, which was created from a photograph of the James Caird departing from Elephant Island to seek help, rather than from the moment of its return and rescue.

Frans Lanting writes about an altered negative he examined in the RGS archives, describing Hurley's "surgical ability" to cut a tiny portion from the film and create a new version in a print as though nothing had been changed.


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LEFT TOP: The Endurance keeling over. By October, the Endurance had suffered a new wave of pressure, straining the timbers and buckling the iron floor plates. As the floes came together, the pressure forced the ship up out of the ice.

LEFT MIDDLE: The End – The Endurance is finally crushed in November 1915. Diving into the icy water, Hurley was able to rescue much of his photographic equipment.

LEFT BOTTOM: Launching the James Caird. Realising there was little chance of rescue from Elephant island, Shackleton and five men departed on the James Caird, aiming to sail 1,200km across the Southern Ocean to South Georgia.


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TOP: The nightwatchman's story. March, 1915. The digitisation of the negatives in 2015 unlocked remarkable details captured originally by Hurley, but invisible in previous reproductions. In this image, a sixth crew member was revealed hidden behind the smoke from the stove.

BELOW: Leonard Hussey lifting Samson.

AP: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE QUALITIES OF HURLEY'S ENDURANCE PHOTOGRAPHY?

JH: I think the oversized format of the book reveals the enduring beauty, drama and sense of place of these remarkable and unique images.

They achieve these qualities while also succeeding in their primary purpose: documenting one of the most heroic adventures in the history of exploration. It is also important to remember that Hurley made these photographs under the most extreme conditions, while fighting for his own survival.

AP: WHAT CAN MODERN PHOTOGRAPHERS LEARN FROM HURLEY'S WORK?

JH: There are many lessons for modern photographers in Hurley's work, from composition and visual storytelling to getting the most out of basic equipment and the power of black and white.

I rather like this quote from Hurley, included in Frans Lanting's essay: "The camera is just a piece of mechanical apparatus. You are its intellect."

AP: HOW DID THE BOOK COME ABOUT, AND WHO WAS INVOLVED IN PUTTING IT TOGETHER?

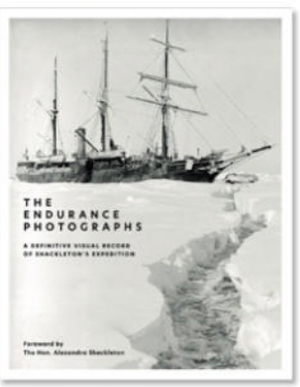
JH: The book was conceived and developed through a creative partnership between Jenny Manstead and me at independent publisher Riverside Press and Jamie Owen at the Royal Geographical Society, which sponsored the original Endurance expedition and holds Hurley's glass-plate negatives in its collection.

Jamie commissioned a team of authors including Alexandra Shackleton, Ernest Shackleton's granddaughter, Mensun Bound, who discovered the wreck of the Endurance in 2022, and nature photographer Frans Lanting.

The creative team also included Alex Coco, the Riverside art director, who designed the book around a great passion and respect for the photographs, and Julie Cole at the RGS, who curated the images.

AP: HOW WAS THE FINAL SELECTION MADE?

JH: We tried to present the entire collection of Hurley's original negatives in the book by including a thumbnail section that creates a catalogue raisonné. We aimed for a selection that had the greatest visual impact on the page, while also narrating the story of the expedition in the way Hurley intended. ✪

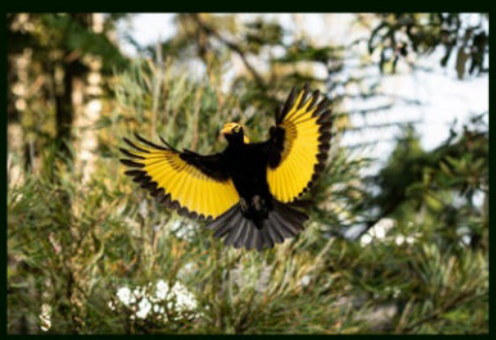


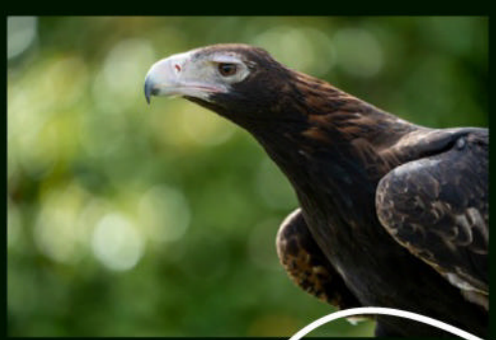
The Endurance Photographs: a definitive visual record of Shackleton's Expedition, is published by Riverside Press. You can find out more at unipressbooks.com/titles/the-endurance-photographs.

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IMAGES: MIKE O'CONNOR

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WORLD PHOTO ADVENTURES

Australian Photography



GO BEYOND THE POSTCARD

BY STEVE THOMAS

Travel photography is about more than collecting postcard shots. Here are some practical tips to help you make the most of your next trip, whether you're heading overseas or exploring closer to home.

From the remote tribes of the Amazon to the peaks of the Himalayas and Sydney Harbour, travel photography is a broad genre that demands versatility.

Travel photography is difficult to define because it encompasses almost every other discipline of photography. Street, landscape, portrait, macro, wildlife and action photography can all become part of a travel story.

The key is to move beyond simply collecting postcard images. If you are documenting a trip for family and friends, that approach can work, but a more specific subject or theme will usually produce a stronger body of work.

That focus could be anything from a trek or bike ride to the head-hunters of Borneo, the street food of Hoi An or the architecture of Fremantle. If the subject genuine-



Uchisar, Cappadocia, Türkiye. Shot in the soft light of a winter evening. I captured this on an iPhone 7 using a Ulanzi anamorphic lens and the Filmic Firstlight app to desqueeze the image. I've photographed this scene countless times, but wanted the XPan look. When I saw the soft light, I headed outside to catch the last rays of the day. The illuminated mosque made the image. Apple iPhone 7. 1/1400s @ f1.8, ISO 20.

ly interests you, that tends to show in the photographs.

Think in terms of a sequence rather than individual images. A good travel story might include details, food, landscapes, portraits, lifestyle and cultural images. I try to have at least five different styles of shot that work together without unnecessary repetition.

A simple checklist is useful when you arrive somewhere new. Try to get a wide establishing shot, a medium scene, a portrait or action shot, a detail and something that shows the character of the place. These five images give you the building blocks of a story rather than a collection of unrelated photographs.

You also don't need to travel to the Sahara or hike to Machu Picchu to make good travel photography. Much of the best travel imagery is produced by local photographers who know their subjects intimately and can return when the conditions are right.

When photographing locally, try to see familiar places through fresh eyes. Things you take for granted may be fascinating to someone seeing them for the first time.

KEEP THE GEAR SIMPLE

There is no denying that a medium-format camera can produce superb landscapes, or that a 600mm prime gives you a better chance of photographing a distant lion. Carrying that equipment is another matter.

Keep your travel system lean and simple. The less you are weighed down by equipment and choice, the more likely you are to actually take photographs. Whatever camera you use, learn its settings before you leave.





I currently use a Fujifilm X-T2 as my main camera, with an X-T1 as a backup. I also carry a full-spectrum converted X-E2 with a small 50mm prime and infrared filters.

My usual lens kit is a 10-24mm zoom, 18-55mm, 55-200mm and 18mm f/2 prime. I often travel with less, but having several focal lengths gives me more options. The old advice to simply "zoom with your feet" doesn't work in every situation.

Don't automatically reach for the widest lens for landscapes, either. A longer focal length can isolate a mountain, building or person from surrounding clutter, while a short telephoto can compress layers in a busy street scene.

When you find a promising subject, work the scene rather than taking one photograph and moving on. Change your position, alter the focal length, shoot vertically and horizontally, look for foreground elements and wait for people to enter the frame. Five minutes spent working one scene will often produce a stronger set of images than an hour spent wandering around taking single frames.

A backup camera is worth carrying if the photographs are important. Camera bodies can fail, and losing an entire trip because of a technical problem is a painful lesson.

DON'T FORGET THE ACCESSORIES

If you use a mirrorless camera, carry plenty of spare batteries and a second charger. Keep batteries charging whenever you're back at your accommodation, and carry a small power bank for charging on the move.

A lightweight full-length tripod is useful. Small flexible tripods such as a Gorillapod have their place, but the lack of height can be restrictive.

I've carried a small flash and off-camera cord for years, but can count on one hand the number of times I've actually used them. Large lighting kits don't fit my approach to travel photography.

A powerful LED torch is much more useful. It can also be bounced or diffused for fill light, as can the torch on a phone.

UV filters can protect lenses from dust and scratches, while a lens cloth and sensor swab are useful when travelling. Dust can become a serious problem, and I prefer a swab to a blower in less-than-clean environments.

I rarely use filters, but usually carry a three-stop ND filter for my mid-range zoom. Combined with a wide aperture, it allows longer exposures in dull conditions and can be useful for smoothing water.

A couple of zip-lock bags are also useful. They can protect batteries and memory cards from rain, or help







FAR LEFT: Ella, Sri Lanka. I was staying at a remote lodge built on stilts, with this tree directly in front of my window. I photographed it at various times of day, but was waiting for the evening sun to backlight it. Luckily, a curious monkey happened to climb the tree just as I was waiting. Fujifilm X-T1, 55-200mm lens @ 200mm. 1/160s @ ISO 200.

MIDDLE: Istanbul, Türkiye. There were plenty of pigeons outside this mosque, while two attendants sat in their shelters nearby. I had this shot in mind, but didn't dare scatter the birds into flight myself. Luckily, someone else walked past, prompting the pigeons to take off and create exactly the image I wanted. Fujifilm X-T1, XF10-24mmF4 R OIS lens @ 17mm. 1/800s @ f4.5, ISO 800.

RIGHT, TOP: Can Tho floating market, Vietnam. I was visiting the morning floating market in a small boat and wanted to capture the hectic energy of the place. I stopped as a noodle vendor pulled alongside a couple of local traders. Through the boats, I managed to isolate this older woman having breakfast. I converted the image to black and white to add drama to an already murky morning. Fujifilm X-T1, XF18-55mmF2.8-4 lens @ 55mm. 1/210s @ f7.1, ISO 800.

RIGHT, BOTTOM: Muktinath, Mustang, Nepal. I was working on a mountain biking story at high altitude when I spotted this man coming down a high mountain pass. I was fascinated by him, so I stopped and asked to take his photograph. His bike and slippers gave the image a modest, humbling quality that seemed to capture the extremes of riding in this environment. Fujifilm X-T1, XF18-55mmF2.8-4 lens @ 18mm. 1/300s @ f13, ISO 200.

"BACKING UP IMAGES WHILE TRAVELLING SAVES TIME AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, CAN SAVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS."

protect a camera from condensation when moving between very different temperatures.

BACK UP EVERYTHING

Backing up images while travelling saves time and, more importantly, can save your photographs.

I carry a wallet of memory cards, a small SanDisk SSD, a regular hard drive and a small laptop. A tablet can work as an alternative.

My X-T2 has two card slots, so I record RAW to one and JPEG to the other. This gives me two copies in case a card or reader fails.

Don't delete photographs from cards unless you are genuinely out of space. Once a card is full, put it somewhere safe and use another. Ideally, don't format the cards until the images have been edited and backed up in three separate locations.

It is also worth separating those copies. Don't keep the camera, memory cards and both backup drives in the same bag. If that bag disappears, you don't want your camera and every copy of your photographs disappearing with it.

I try to back everything up daily. That means transferring images to the drives, checking and labelling the files, editing a selection and, where possible, putting the best images into online storage such as Photoshelter or SmugMug.

It may seem excessive when you're halfway through a holiday, but losing an entire trip because of a failed card or drive is far more painful.







PACK FOR THE TRIP YOU'RE ACTUALLY TAKING

Photography bags have a habit of expanding to fill whatever space you give them. A bigger bag usually means more equipment, which means more weight.

For many trips I use an older Lowepro Photosport 200 combined with a small shoulder bag. The laptop fits into the hydration pouch, while the cameras, lenses, drives and basic carry-on items fit inside the main compartment.

When flying, keep your fragile camera equipment in your carry-on. Tripods and other non-essential items can go into checked luggage. I've been stopped several times for carrying a tripod.

A large, obvious camera bag can also attract unwanted attention. An inconspicuous setup is generally preferable.

Coiled cables and small spring-loaded tripods can also attract attention during airport security because of the way they appear on X-rays. Keep lithium-ion batteries in your carry-on luggage.



DO SOME RESEARCH, BUT DON'T OVER-PLAN

There is no shortage of information about photographic locations. Instagram, Flickr, 500px and Google Images can show you exactly where thousands of other photographers have stood.

That's useful, but it can also lead to a procession of familiar images.

I prefer to research the practical things first: seasonal weather, local events, restrictions and less obvious attractions. Wandering away from the popular locations often produces more interesting and authentic photographs.

There's nothing wrong with shooting the famous landmark, but don't let the trophy photograph dominate the trip.

FOLLOW THE LIGHT

The golden and blue hours around sunrise and sunset are obvious targets, but travel rarely gives you perfect conditions at exactly the right time.

Apps such as PhotoPills and SunSeeker can help predict the position of the sun, while weather apps provide useful information. Neither can control the weather.

For sunrise, always look outside before deciding to stay in bed. A wet, gloomy night can turn into five minutes of extraordinary morning light.

Sunset is easier to assess because you can watch the weather develop throughout the day. Remember that mountains, buildings and even city haze can significantly alter the predicted light. Arrive early and be prepared to move if the conditions aren't working.

Get something in the bag rather than spending your entire trip waiting for perfect conditions. If the light improves, go back.

During harsh midday light, look for narrow streets, arches and strong shadows. Try black and white, infrared or longer exposures.



FIVE USEFUL TRAVEL TIPS

1. Shoot handheld panoramas. Shoot a series of overlapping frames and stitch them together later. It isn't perfect, but it can produce a much wider, higher-resolution image than a single frame.
2. Use Wi-Fi. If your camera has Wi-Fi, use it to transfer images to your phone or tablet during the day. You can edit and share photographs without waiting until you return to your accommodation.
3. Carry a small umbrella. It can keep you and your camera dry while allowing you to continue shooting. It can also provide shade or act as a diffuser in bright conditions.
4. Wear a jacket with big pockets when flying. If your luggage is approaching the weight limit, moving a heavy lens or hard drive into your pockets can make the difference.
5. Mark your batteries and cards. A simple elastic band around charged batteries makes them easy to identify. Turning used memory cards face down in their case is an equally simple way to keep track of which cards are full.

The best travel photography ultimately comes down to observation rather than equipment. Travel light, research enough to understand where you're going, work the scenes you find interesting and make the most of the conditions you're given. The photograph you didn't plan for is often the one that ends up telling the story.

OPPOSITE, TOP: Cappadocia, Türkiye. I've walked the streets of this small town many times at night and am always fascinated by the reflections and windows. I quietly captured this image of a simple bakery, using those elements to reveal its complexity. Fujifilm X-T2, XF35mmF2 R WR lens. 1/170s @ f2, ISO 2500.

OPPOSITE: MIDDLE: Northern Laos. This tiny minority village was in a place that had seen few, if any, white foreign visitors. I stopped during a bikepacking trip and walked around, photographing the harsh, rarely seen realities of life for the people who live there. Every element of the image tells a story to me, yet the setting also leaves plenty of questions unanswered. I think that's a good thing. Fujifilm X-T2,1 8-55mm f/2.8-4 lens @ 55mm. 1/250s @ f4.5, ISO 400.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Mekong Delta, Vietnam. I was walking through a town at night when a bicycle-mounted military or police patrol passed by. I just managed to capture this image as they went past. The neon lights in the background created a striking contrast and offered a different view of the region. Fujifilm X-T1, XF18mmF2 R lens. 1/60s @ f2, ISO 4000.

LEFT: Southern Thailand. I visited a small, remote cave with illuminated stalactites and stalagmites at its centre. Using a small tripod and a long exposure, I wanted to capture the scale and drama of the place from a closer perspective. Fujifilm X-T2, XF10-24mmF4 R OIS lens @ 10mm. 30s @ f11, ISO 200.



Qinghai, China. Qinghai is a wonderful place. I was on the Tibetan Plateau photographing a bike race, and this scene unfolded in a small town before the start. Police were managing the crowd while local children looked on, seemingly in a daze. There's so much that can be communicated simply by looking at an image and thinking about what it might mean. That was the whole intention here. Canon 5D, 135mm. 1/200s @ f7.1, ISO 400.

Windows, doorways and reflections can also create useful layers. Shooting through a bus window, hotel window or café glass can add context to an image. Clean the glass where possible, put the lens close to it and avoid using the flash.

Midday is also a good time for details and food photography. Window light can be softened with a curtain or netting to create more controlled illumination.

When shooting in low light, don't automatically increase the ISO. Look for somewhere to brace the camera, such as a wall, railing or table. A sharp photograph at 1/15 sec can be more useful than a noisy one at 1/250 sec. If the subject is moving, however, shutter speed needs to take priority.

PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE

People can make compelling travel photographs, but they require sensitivity.

Cultural expectations and local laws vary, so research the rules before travelling. Be aware of where and when photography may be inappropriate, and don't push past someone's boundaries.

My preference is discreet street and reportage photography rather than elaborate mini-studio setups. Staged portraits can work, but they can also take time and lose some of the spontaneity that makes travel photography interesting.

When photographing people in the street, you can often get a sense of whether photography is acceptable. If it isn't, move on.

Asking permission can lead to a posed photograph, while shooting discreetly may produce something more natural. There isn't one correct approach; it depends on the situation.

I've had people agree to a photograph and then become angry afterwards. On some occasions I've even had fruit and cigarettes thrown at me. An apparent agreement doesn't necessarily mean everyone is comfortable with the situation.

In sensitive situations, step back and photograph the wider scene rather than the individual. And think carefully before paying people to pose. It can create an expectation of further payment and change the interaction.

Crowds don't always need to be avoided, either. Use them to show scale, or wait for gaps to isolate a subject. If the background is messy, change your angle rather than relying entirely on a wide aperture to blur it away.

EDIT FOR THE STORY

Don't try to make every photograph work. When editing a trip, look for repetition first. If you have five similar shots of the same temple, keep the one that adds the most to the story.

The strongest travel essays are usually as much about what you leave out as what you include. A good sequence should move between wide scenes, details, people and unexpected moments rather than showing the same view repeatedly. ✪



THE 2026/27 CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

BY THE AP TEAM

Looking for something special for the photographer in your life? From handy accessories and creative lighting to serious studio upgrades, our annual Christmas gift guide has something for every photographer and every budget. Whether you're shopping for a keen beginner, a film photography enthusiast or a seasoned pro, here are 10 gift ideas worth putting under the tree this festive season.



EIZO COLOREDGE CG3200X 4K HDR OLED MONITOR – $5335

Available from EIZO

If the photographer on your list has been exceptionally good this year, we have a suggestion. The EIZO ColorEdge CG3200X is a premium 4K HDR OLED monitor aimed at demanding imaging professionals who need a high-end display for detailed colour work. It's certainly not an impulse purchase, but for professionals working with high-resolution images and critical colour decisions, a quality monitor can be an invaluable investment.

More info: eizo.com

POLAROID HI-PRINT 2×3 POCKET PHOTO PRINTER – AROUND $148

Available from Polaroid

The Polaroid Hi-Print 2×3 Pocket Photo Printer is a fun way to bring digital photos into the real world. Compact enough to slip into a bag, it connects to a smartphone to print colourful, credit-card-sized photos on demand. It's a great gift for photographers who enjoy sharing their images in physical form, whether that's creating a mini album, decorating a wall or giving photos to friends and family.

More info: polaroid.com.au





NISI JETMAG PRO MONOCHROME FILTER KIT – $569

Available from NiSi Australia

For photographers who prefer to get creative in-camera, the NiSi JetMag Pro Monochrome Filter Kit offers a different way to approach black-and-white photography. Its magnetic filter system makes attaching and removing filters quick and convenient, while the monochrome focus encourages photographers to think about contrast, tone and light before pressing the shutter. A thoughtful gift for landscape and street photographers alike.

More info: nisifilters.com.au/product/nisi-jetmag-pro-monochrome-filter-kit-49mag-magnetic-filter-kit

LEOFOTO WS-02 QUICK DETACH CAMERA WRIST STRAP – $59

Available from Leofoto

Not every great photography gift needs to break the bank. The Leofoto WS-02 wrist strap is a practical accessory for photographers who prefer to keep their camera close at hand. Its quick-detach design makes it easy to attach or remove as needed, while the brown finish adds a classic touch. It's a simple, useful upgrade for everyday shooting.

More info: leofoto.com.au/product/leofoto-ws-02-quick-detach-camera-wrist-strap-brown



AMARAN ACE 25C CHARCOAL RGB LED LIGHT – $180

Available from Kayell

Small enough to slip into a camera bag, the amaran Ace 25c is a versatile RGB LED light for photographers and content creators who like to experiment with colour. It's a handy option for adding creative lighting to portraits, product photography or video without lugging around a full studio setup. A great gift for anyone who enjoys playing with light.

More info: kayellaustralia.com.au





EPSON SURECOLOR SC-P906 A2 DESKTOP PRINTER – $2059

Available from Kayell

There's something special about seeing a photograph come to life as a print, and the Epson SureColor SC-P906 gives photographers the tools to do just that at home or in the studio. Supporting prints up to A2 size, it's designed for photographers who want greater control over their finished work, from colour and tonal quality to the final presentation. For someone who takes printing seriously, this could be the ultimate Christmas surprise.

More info: kayellaustralia.com.au

LEOFOTO AZ-235C TRAVEL TRIPOD – $999

Available from Leofoto

A good travel tripod is one of those investments that can transform a photographer's kit. The Leofoto AZ-235C is designed for photographers who want a capable support system without carrying something bulky on every outing. It's worth considering for landscape photographers, travellers and anyone who enjoys working with longer exposures. At this price, it's certainly a gift for someone special.

More info: leofoto.com.au/product/leofoto-az-235c-travel-tripod





OM SYSTEM PEN – $1499

Available from OM SYSTEM

For the photographer looking to upgrade their everyday camera, the OM SYSTEM PEN offers a stylish alternative to a traditional DSLR-style body. Its compact, retro-inspired design makes it an appealing option for travel, street photography and everyday adventures. It's the sort of camera that encourages you to take it everywhere rather than leave it sitting at home.

More info: explore.omsystem.com/au/en

ARCHIVE 135 CANISTER 135 – US$98

Available from Archive 135

For the film photographer who appreciates the little things, the CANISTER 135 is a neat gift with a premium feel. Made from polished 304 stainless steel, this compact case holds a single standard 35mm film cartridge and comes presented in a black tube. It's a simple, tactile accessory that turns something as everyday as a roll of film into a rather special object. A thoughtful choice for the photographer who still loves shooting on film.

More info: archive135.com/products/canister-135



JOBY TELEPOD MINI SELFIE STICK LED LIGHT TRIPOD – $89

Available from JB Hifi

For the photographer who also creates videos, vlogs or social media content, the Joby TelePod Mini combines several useful accessories in one compact package. It can function as a selfie stick, a small tripod and a support for an LED light, making it a versatile companion for shooting on the move. It's an affordable stocking stuffer for content creators who like to travel light.

More info: jbhifi.com.au/products/joby-telepod-mini-selfie-stick-led-light-tripod





EIZO COLOREDGE CS3200X 31.5-INCH 4K COLOUR MONITOR – $2684

Available from EIZO

For photographers spending hours editing images, a good monitor is an essential part of the workflow. The EIZO ColorEdge CS3200X combines a generous 31.5-inch screen with 4K resolution, giving photographers plenty of room to inspect fine details and work comfortably across complex editing projects. It's a serious upgrade for anyone looking to build a more capable editing setup.

More info: eizo.com

Prices are listed as supplied and may vary between retailers. Check with individual suppliers for current availability and pricing.

SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE

BUILDING A PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION

BY DIANA KETCHION

A focused photography project can transform a familiar subject into a compelling collection. Here's a crash course in getting started.

This is a spotted gum. It was the contrasts in colour, texture and hue which caught my attention. The word that came to mind was 'striking' - and then I noticed this piece of bark, which resembled a lightning strike. Nikon Z9, 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 lens @ 370mm. 1/1000s @ f8, ISO 2000.

As a nature photographer, I'm fascinated by the patterns, textures and colours of the natural world. Around a year ago, a guest speaker at Queensland Camera Group inspired me to take a step back and reflect on my photographic journey.

Up to that point I had explored everything from wildlife and birds in flight to landscapes and macro photography. But I kept returning to the intricate details of nature. I also realised I had been capturing individual moments without building on my discoveries.

It got me thinking about how to explore a passion more deeply and turn individual photographs into a deliberate, considered collection.

Nature offers endless possibilities, and the challenge is deciding where to start. Reviewing your existing work can help reveal the subjects you keep returning to and the common threads that connect your images.

RIGHT, TOP: This snow gum in the Victorian Alps caught my eye because of the rich, saturated colours of the wet bark. I wanted to create an abstract image while giving no clue of what it actually was. Nikon Z9, 14-30mm f/4 lens @ 14mm. 1/60s @ f6.3, ISO 250.

BELOW: This image of a snow gum is taken near Dinner Plain in the Victorian Alps. Here I saw a pointed muzzle, a dark eye ringed in amber, a low body moving through the green half-light. Nikon Z9, 24-200mm f/4-6.3 lens @ 200mm. 1/400s @ f9, ISO 2000.

MIDDLE: In this patch of bark, I saw a sea: a deep indigo band like dusk water, branching rust marks like trees on a far ridge, and a pale form rising through it with a single amber eye. Nikon Z9, 24-200mm f/4-6.3 lens @ 102mm. 1/800s @ f10, ISO 4000.

OPPOSITE, TOP: Here, it was the unusual colouring of this bark that caught my attention. Nikon Z9, 24-200mm f/4-6.3 lens @ 54mm. 1/250s @ f14, ISO 2000.

OPPOSITE, BELOW: This is my favourite image in this series. A pale head lies in profile - long snout, quiet mouth - with a body of slate and russet scales uncoiling behind it, and set above the snout a single open eye: amber, ringed in darkness, watching. Nikon Z9, 24-200mm f/4-6.3 lens @ 160mm. 1/320s @ f11, ISO 500.







For me, the contenders included rocks, tree trunks, flowers and reflections. I had also recently returned from a camping trip to the Empty Quarter in Oman, where I was captivated by patterns in the sand dunes and tracks left by nocturnal wildlife.

But in the end, I settled on bark. The diversity of tree species offered seemingly endless opportunities to explore patterns, textures and colours, providing plenty of variety for a substantial collection.

The project was also driven by a desire to create something artistic rather than documentary. Instead of photographing forests or entire trees, I wanted to isolate small sections of bark and reveal a hidden world that exists in plain sight.

I find it interesting that most people walk past trees every day without a second glance, and photographers can overlook them too, often treating trees as little more than foreground interest or framing devices.

Look more closely, however, and a section of bark just 30 centimetres across might resemble an aerial photograph of an ancient river system. Another might evoke a mountain range at sunrise. Weathered timber can suggest a human face, while swirling colours might resemble waves crashing against a rocky coastline. Sometimes, the image is entirely abstract, built around the interplay of shapes, textures and colours.

Abstract photography of this kind is particularly rewarding because it invites viewers to bring their own interpretations to an image. Here's my advice if you want to take on a project like this of your own.

PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

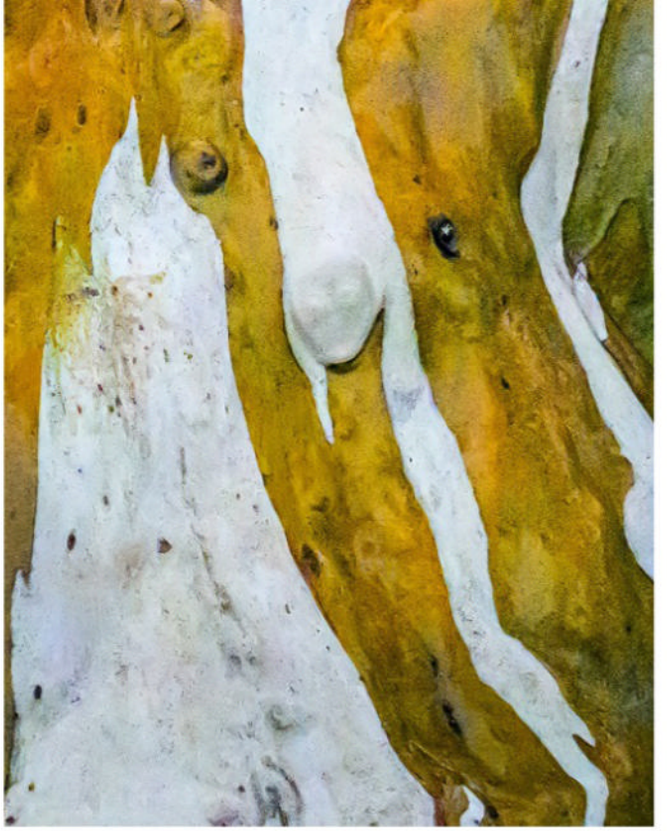
Before heading out with the camera, establish what you want your collection to achieve. An artistic statement can be a useful starting point, giving you something to refer back to as the project develops.

For my bark collection, that statement was:

"Each tree trunk bears a unique, irrepeatable artwork, shaped not by human hands but by the relentless forces of growth, weather, insects, and time. This collection explores that overlooked canvas: the boundless patterns, textures, and colours found in the bark of countless species, each one as distinct as a fingerprint."

You don't need to write anything elaborate. A few







sentences describing what interests you about the subject, what you want to explore and how you hope viewers will respond can help keep your project on track.

It's also worth considering how you'll present the finished work. An exhibition, book, boxed print portfolio or digital gallery each offers different possibilities.

Think about how people will experience the images. If you want viewers to slow down, examine details and form their own interpretations, a physical presentation might be ideal. A book, for example, gives you control over sequencing and image pairings while creating something people can revisit.

I decided to produce a hardcover book containing around 30 to 40 images. This gave me a clear target without restricting the project to a rigid formula.

PLANNING THE SHOOT

Research is a useful next step. Identify the different aspects of your subject that you want to explore, then make a list of the variations you need to capture.

For bark, this meant considering smooth-barked trees such as eucalypts and crepe myrtles, deeply fissured species such as ironbark, oak and cedar, and trees that shed their bark, including paperbarks. Other possibilities included burls, knots, scars, fungal growth, insect trails and fire damage.

You can apply the same approach to almost any subject. If you're photographing reflections, for example, consider water, glass, buildings, changing weather and different times of day.

Before planning new shoots, review your existing photographs. You may already have images that fit the collection, giving you a clearer idea of what's missing.

Consider the conditions that best suit each subject. Overcast weather generally provides even light and helps capture the true colours of bark. Photographing after rain can produce richer, more saturated tones, while early or late light emphasises the texture of heavily ridged bark. Backlighting can reveal the translucent edges of peeling bark.

Composition deserves similar consideration. If your aim is to explore abstract patterns, close-ups are an obvious starting point because they eliminate distractions and isolate colour, shape and texture. However, don't rule out wider views. The curve of a trunk or wrinkles

formed by extreme alpine weather can introduce variety and reveal patterns resembling aerial landscapes.

Location research can also make a difference. Living in Brisbane gave me access to a wide range of species in suburban areas, botanic gardens and nearby national parks. A trip to Western Australia offered the opportunity to photograph smooth-barked karri, fibrous-barked jarrah, and red and giant tingle trees, known for their massive, fire-hollowed bases.

Consider whether your project would benefit from different locations, seasons or environments. Snow gums, for example, look very different in autumn and winter. A single subject might even offer enough diversity to become a collection in its own right.



ABOVE: This was taken near Fryers Hut in Victoria's High Country. As I studied the bark of this stringbark, I saw an aerial view of a mountain range with the glint of snow on the crests. Nikon Z9, 180-600mm f/5.6-6.3 lens @ 180mm. 1/200s @ f8, ISO 3600.

CREATE YOUR OWN COLLECTION

Start with what you're most passionate about: the subjects that catch your eye and keep drawing you back. A collection can grow from something simple and familiar.

- Look through your images. You may already have the beginnings of a collection.
- Find a connecting thread. It could be a subject, texture, colour or even a mood.
- Be selective. The right image isn't always your favourite or best photograph. Choose images that contribute to the overall collection.
- Build on what you have. Research your subject, identify gaps and plan what to photograph next.
- Experiment with sequencing. Try different arrangements and notice how images interact with one another.
- Give it time. Step away periodically, then revisit the collection with fresh eyes. Trust both your judgement and your instincts.
- Most importantly, enjoy the process. Allow the collection to develop naturally and express your own way of seeing.

EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

You don't necessarily need specialised equipment to start a collection, but it helps to consider what will make your subject easier to photograph.

Shooting with a Nikon Z9, I found the following useful:

- **Macro lens and extension tube:** For extreme close-ups and fine detail.
- **Telephoto lens:** For tighter framing when getting physically closer isn't practical.
- **Tripod:** Helpful in low light, particularly in rainforest environments.
- **RAW format:** Provides greater flexibility when editing in Lightroom Classic.
- **Polarising filter:** Useful for reducing distracting reflections and sheen on wet bark.
- **Exposure bracketing:** Worth considering when strong light creates deep shadows and bright highlights that a single exposure can't capture effectively.

As you work, review your images against the purpose of the collection. Does each photograph contribute something? Are there enough variations in colour, texture, composition and mood? Are you repeating the same idea too often?

Be prepared to discard images you like if they don't strengthen the overall collection. Gaps in your selection can also guide your next shoot. Treat the process as an ongoing cycle of photographing, reviewing and refining rather than something that happens only at the end.

EDITING AND SEQUENCING

Once you've gathered enough material, start narrowing it down to the images that best express your original idea. My final selection contained 33 photographs, edited and sequenced to create a clear beginning, middle and end.

Sequencing is about more than choosing your favourite images and putting them in order. Consider how photographs interact with one another. Similar colours or compositions can create continuity, while contrasting images introduce surprise and keep viewers engaged.

Try different arrangements and see what happens when images sit alongside one another. If you're making a book, experiment with single pages, facing-page pairings and double-page spreads. An image that works well on its own might become even more effective beside a contrasting photograph.

It can also help to step away from the project before reviewing your selection. Fresh eyes often reveal repetitions, gaps or unexpected connections that weren't obvious before.

The aim isn't simply to assemble a group of good photographs, but to create something cohesive that gives viewers a reason to keep looking.

My bark collection has been a rewarding exercise in slowing down, looking more closely and finding new ways to interpret a familiar subject. It has also left me thinking about what to explore next.

You don't need to wait until you've accumulated hundreds of photographs or settled on a grand idea. Start with a subject that interests you, look for connections in your existing work and see where the process takes you.



HOLGA DC-01

Keychain cameras have taken off since Kodak released its Charmera, with everyone from established brands to anonymous electronics factories getting in on the action. Now, Holga has joined the trend with the DC-01, a tiny digital camera that embraces the imperfections of its film-based ancestors.



As a fan of Holga's cheap, plastic 120 film cameras, I was intrigued by this curvaceous little device, modelled on the 110 Micro thumb camera. Could it capture some of that old-school Holga magic?

Weighing just 24g and measuring 61 x 27 x 22mm, the DC-01 features a 35mm-equivalent f/2.4 lens, a tiny 0.96-inch rear screen and a built-in LED light. It captures JPEG stills and 720p or 1080p video, with eight filters available for both. A rechargeable battery, USB-C connection, microSD card slot and keychain attachment round out the package.

In use, I've found it a genuinely enjoyable little camera. Its toy-like appearance brings a smile to people's faces, and there's a pleasing simplicity to the experience. The tiny screen makes composition tricky, however, particularly when using the negative filters. Working out which filter is selected can also be frustrating.

The images are where things get interesting. Standard colour output is decidedly imperfect, with grain and blotchy patches, but the colours have a subtle, film-like quality. Highlights are also better controlled than I expected, while the black-and-white filter produces pleasing results.

The negative filters are gimmicky, certainly, but they can also deliver wonderfully unexpected images. You'll either love them or hate them, and I found myself firmly in the former camp.

Video is less successful. Without stabilisation, handheld footage is almost unwatchable, and even tripod-mounted clips look rough by modern standards. There's a certain retro charm, though, particularly when the filters produce their own happy accidents.

The fixed 16:9 aspect ratio is another disappointment, especially given the original 110 Micro's roughly 4:3 format. I'd also stick to the 16MB or 24MB still-image settings rather than the larger interpolated options.

So, is the DC-01 worth considering? If you're after clean, technically accomplished images, look elsewhere. But if you enjoy lo-fi photography, quirky filters and the occasional happy accident, there's plenty to like.

Like my old red Holga, this little camera has character. And that's precisely the point. ✪

BELOW: The results from the DC-01 are definitely what you'd call 'lo-fi', but there's still some charm in the results. And really, considering how small the camera is, those results are really not that bad at all!

RESULTS

FEATURES
★★★½

EXPERIENCE
★★★½

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★





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MATES

Some photographs are carefully planned, while others come together almost by accident. Mates was one of those moments when everything seemed to fall into place.



WITH ANDY RAE

Mates shows two country women, their horses and a relaxed dog, framed against the tussock-covered foothills of the Southern Alps.

I took the image while attending a Southern Regional Convention on the east coast of New Zealand's South Island. While the rest of the group were occupied with their own activities, I noticed the two women and saw the potential for a photograph. I asked if I could take some images, and they agreed to pose with their horses and dog. The resulting scene had exactly the combination of people, animals and landscape I was looking for.

The conditions were almost perfect, with sunshine, some cloud and very little wind. I used my Nikon 18-300mm at 80mm, which gave me enough compression to bring the mountains into the scene while keeping the four subjects prominent in the frame.

What I particularly like is the sense of connection throughout the image. The two



women, horses and dog all appear relaxed and comfortable together, while the Southern Alps and tussock landscape provide a strong sense of place. The title Mates came from that feeling of closeness between everything in the photograph.

I have always tried to look beyond the obvious when making photographs, searching for unusual angles, subjects or combinations of elements. I think that approach comes partly from my years deer stalking in the bush, where observation and being alert to what is happening around you are essential.

There was very little processing involved. I converted the image to black and white using Nik Silver Efex Pro 2, which I felt suited the strong shapes and relationships within the scene.

Mates remains one of my favourite photographs and has received a number of awards, including a Silver at the Maitland International 2022 Salon.

For me, photography is often about being in the right place, recognising when the elements come together, and being ready for the unexpected.

NIKON D7100, 18-300MM LENS @ 80MM. 1/30S @ F10, ISO 400.

THE AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

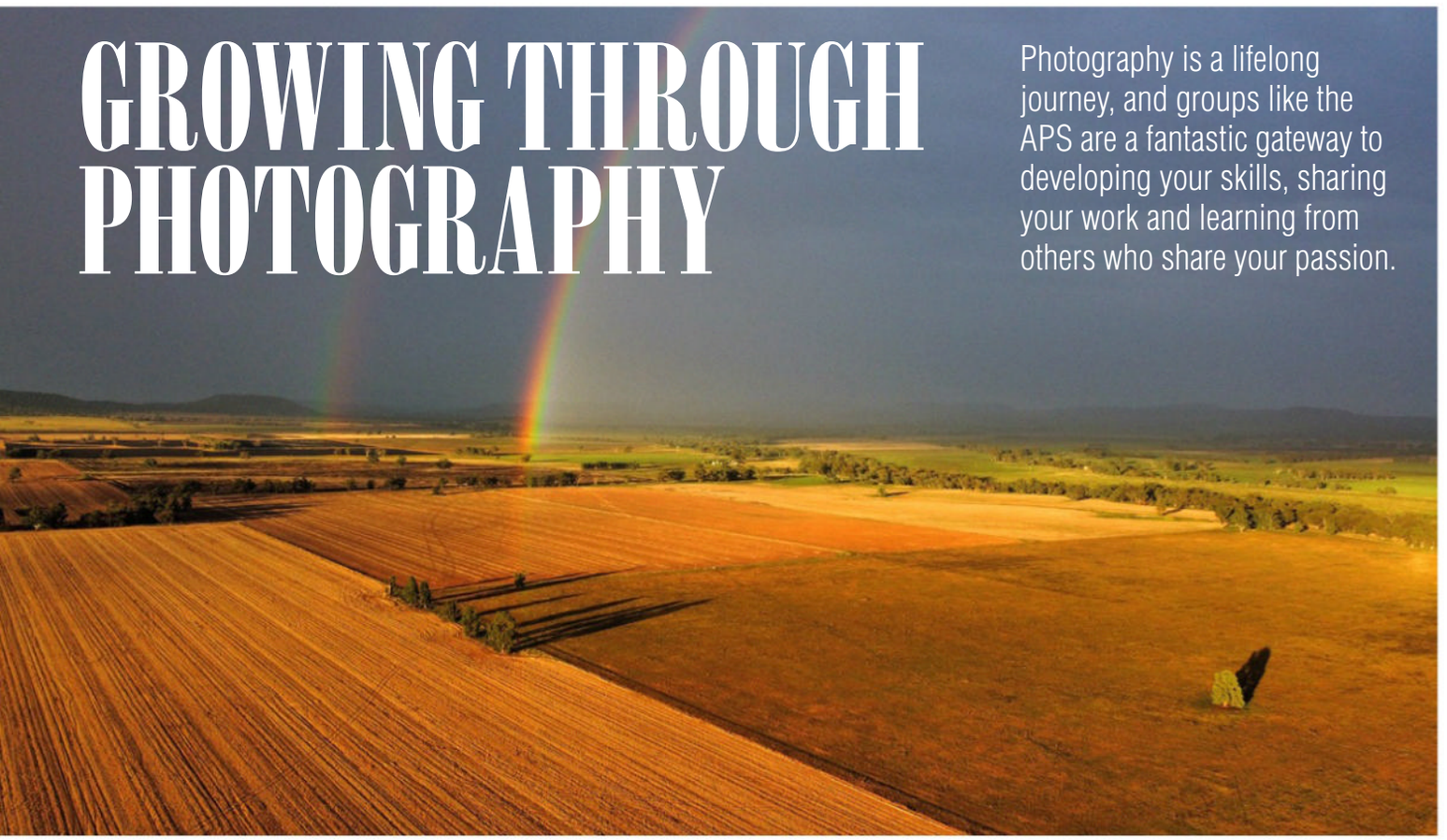
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Find out more at a-p-s.org.au

GROWING THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is a lifelong journey, and groups like the APS are a fantastic gateway to developing your skills, sharing your work and learning from others who share your passion.



WITH HELEN CARPENTER



My photographic journey has been about much more than taking photos. It has been about people, ideas, challenges and discovering new ways of seeing.

Photography may draw us in, but it is often the people we meet who keep us engaged. Through the APS, I have connected with photographers from diverse backgrounds and learned from their creativity, experiences and approaches to photography.

I have also had the opportunity to give back to an organisation that has given me so much. My involvement includes serving as Vice Chair of CAPA and as an APS Contemporary Group Councillor, administering the APS Street Photography and Contemporary Facebook groups, editing the monthly Contemporary Chronicles newsletter and contributing to the APS Focus writing group since 2019.

These roles have allowed me to support other photographers, share ideas and encourage discussion while continuing to learn myself. One of the greatest benefits of a photographic society is seeing how differently people interpret the same subject. Through light, colour, composition, perspective or timing, a familiar scene can become something entirely new.

My involvement with the Contemporary group has particularly reinforced this. Contemporary photography encourages us to look beyond simply recording what is in front of the camera and explore ideas, concepts and alternative interpretations.

Monthly challenges provide opportunities to experiment. A theme such as Reflection, Absence or Disruption can inspire vastly different responses. There is rarely one correct interpretation. The value lies in observing more carefully, thinking creatively and communicating an idea through an image.

Not every attempt will work, but that is part of the learning process. Trying something different can reveal new possibilities and lead us in unexpected creative directions.

Feedback is equally important. We often know what attracted us to a scene and what we intended to communicate, but others see our photographs without that background knowledge. Constructive feedback can reveal strengths, highlight weaknesses and help us understand why an image works or how it might be improved.

Competitions offer similar opportunities. Selecting our best work encourages us to assess our photographs critically, while viewing other entries exposes us to different techniques and creative approaches. Winning is rewarding, but there is also much to learn from photographs that don't receive recognition.

Ultimately, photographic societies are about more than what we gain as individuals. They thrive when members contribute their time, knowledge and enthusiasm. Through administration, writing, editing and supporting photographic groups, I have been fortunate to help create opportunities for others to share their work and ideas.

After many years with the APS, I still believe there is always something more to learn. Technology changes and styles evolve, but the fundamental skill remains the same: learning to see.

For me, photography is a lifelong journey of discovery. There is always another image to create, another idea to explore, another photographer to learn from and another way to see the world. ✪

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"Pallas Cat" by Pia Jessen EFIAP/p PFIAP APSEM HonFAPS
Taken on the Mongolia Steppe

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IMAGE DOCTOR

BY ANTHONY MCKEE

Images need a pick-me-up? The doctor will see you now.

HOLY COW, WHAT A SHOT!

"The Route 62 hiking trail from Schynige Platte to First is one of Switzerland's most popular alpine routes, with the Eiger's infamous north face an ever-present companion. Most of the walking is through undulating meadows sprinkled with summer wildflowers, and the only sounds you're likely to hear are the crunch of the trail underfoot and the ubiquitous clanging of cow bells. It was during a break that this curious cow wandered over for a closer inspection while I sat on the ground snacking on trail mix".

ANTHONY'S TIP: This is a great photo Mark, although I am always wary about getting low to the ground when cows are about; I'm not worried about being stepped on more so than stepping (or sitting) in something! Overall, there is not too much I would be worried about with this photo; it is one of those "moment situations" where, if you see the moment, you grab the moment. That said, if the cow was inquisitive enough to linger I probably would have repositioned the camera slightly. That cloud in the right of the frame is rather distracting, and if the camera was moved just a few centimetres to the right and then turned it left you probably would have had more blue sky and less cloud. Nowadays you could probably remove that cloud in Photoshop but if you are like me, you probably prefer to keep things real! Happy hiking!

TITLE: Swiss Cow
PHOTOGRAPHER: Mark Daffey
DETAILS: Canon 5D Mark II, EF20mm f/2.8 USM lens. 1/160s @ f11, ISO 100.

THIS MONTH'S WINNER





BEE-LINE FOR THE CURVES

"I took this photo in my garden with my very new Samsung Galaxy S25 Ultra phone.
I am happy with the photo as I have managed to blur the background to make the flower stand out nicely and feel I have captured the bee nicely.
I would appreciate some feedback as I normally take photos on my Panasonic camera".

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Sharyn, there's an adage in photography - the best camera is always the one in your hands!

The only adjustment I would make to this image is to lighten the bee. One option is to select the bee and then use the Curves control to brighten it, but I prefer a more nuanced approach.
Open the image in Photoshop and then go to the Layers panel. Duplicate the "Background" layer (by dragging it to the + icon at the bottom of the Layers panel) and then change the blending option at the top of this panel from Normal to Screen. This will brighten the entire image. Now use the Quick Select tool to select the bee and then click on the Mask tool on the Layers panel (the little box with a circle in it). Now the bee should bright while the flower and background look normal again. Use the Opacity adjustment to take the bee's brightness down to 50% and you voila. Finally, go to "Layer" in the main menu, select Flatten Image and you are ready to save and share.

TITLE: Bee on Salvia
PHOTOGRAPHER: Sharyn Rosenzweig
DETAILS: Samsung Galaxy S25. 1/180s @ f1.7, ISO 32.

BILL ME LATER

"I encountered this platypus while walking along a creek not too far from my home in Hobart. My partner, a friend and I were completely alone in the bush and it was such a special moment! I just sat and watched this fella for so long (and took lots of photos). In this photo, I liked how the dark water made a nice contrast to the platypus. I also like the green algae in the corner. The image turned out quite dark, so I did a fair bit of work in Lightroom to brighten it and increase the contrast. I also used the 'denoise' feature to remove noise.

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Tilde, I think this is a reasonable photograph given the platypus was hardly likely to get out of the water and dance for you. There are two things that you can do to improve though. As you look at this image you will notice that the highlights in the right of the frame are distracting. Rather than darken those highlights (which won't look natural) I would simply crop the image to square and loose that right hand side. This will still leave some highlights, but what I would do next is use the spot healing brush to remove any pinpoints of light. Do this and I think the image will look a lot happier!

TITLE: Tassie Platypus
PHOTOGRAPHER: Tilde Bergstrom
DETAILS: Canon 80D, Tamron SP 150-600mm f/5-6.3 lens @ 450mm. 1/2500s @ f6.3, ISO 1000.





F-STOP RIGHT THERE

"This image was captured at Werribee West. My original plan was to photograph the sunrise, but heavy cloud was blocking the light. I waited for over an hour and almost gave up when a brief moment of light broke through the clouds, softly illuminating the distant Melbourne skyline.I quickly reframed and captured the scene, drawn by the contrast between the vast, heavy sky and the fragile presence of the city below. For me, this moment felt unexpected, and slightly surreal."

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Dingyi, this is a great capture and proof again that good landscape photos work best with good light. My one critique with this image is your exposure management. You shot this image at f22 which is perfect if you want the most depth-of-field, but such small aperture settings also cause softness in the image caused by diffraction - the naturally occurring effect of light rays bending around solid edges like the aperture blades. At wide aperture settings like f2.8 and f4 there is so much direct light reaching the sensor that it is not noticeable, but at small aperture settings like f22 and f32 the effect is more noticeable.

Given there were no subjects in the foreground I would have been shooting at f8 and then using the extra three stops of light to bring down your ISO from 1600 to 200. Otherwise, good work!

TITLE: Veil Over Melbourne
PHOTOGRAPHER: Dingyi Han
DETAILS: Canon R5C, 200-800mm lens @ 320mm. 1/200s @ f22, ISO 1600.

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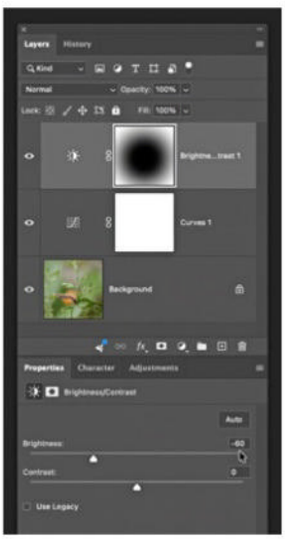
Image: Praedia of Julia Felix, II.4.2-3. Photographs by Luigi Spina by agreement with the Archaeological Park of Pompeii, Volume "Interno Pompeiano", published by 5 Continents Editions (Milan, Italy).

A CLOSER LOOK

"I was taking photos of my flowers early on morning and I saw this caterpillar. I loved how the flower blur in the background acts as a spotlight. This is the closest I could get without a true Macro lens, but I had the Canon RF85mm Macro lens which is the next best thing".

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Millie, I am not a Canon user, but my hunch is that 85mm f2 Macro lens is probably more useful to you than you realise. Besides, you can always crop an image.

Personally, I would be cropping this image to square, keeping the caterpillar in the lower third while losing that distracting flower at the bottom. Next, go to Adjustment Layers and add a Curves layer; use this to the quietly add some more contrast to the image. Finally, I would be adding a vignette to the image to darken periphery of the frame. To create this vignette, go to the Circular Marquee tool, set the Feather to 500 pixels, create a large circle and then invert this selection; now create an adjustment layer for Brightness and Contrast. About now you will see a new adjustment layer has been created with a mask that has a dark circle in the middle. Pull the Brightness control down to -60 and voila - suddenly this image should look amazing! Flatten the layers, do a Save As and you will be laughing!







TITLE: Dew Caterpillar
PHOTOGRAPHER: Millie Mae
DETAILS: Canon EOS R6 Mark II, Canon RF85mm f2 Macro lens. 1/250s @ f2.8, ISO 1600.

WIN!

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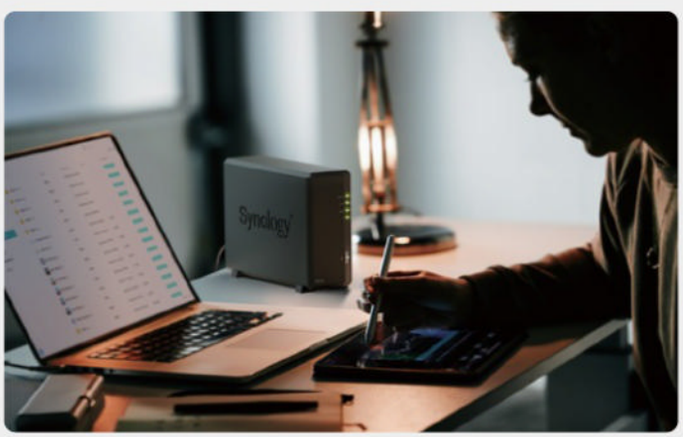
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