

CAMERACRAFT

KEVIN MILNER



VINCENT O'BYRNE



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Cameracraft has been published in print six times a year since May/June 2025 as a high resolution PDF edition for subscribers and magazine platforms, with a low resolution page-turn version available free. A small run of print copies is made, and subscribers are authorised to order digital printed copies. Through previous titles *Freelance Photographer*, *Photon* and *PHOTOpro* it is the latest in a line of photographic magazines published from Kelso by David Kilpatrick since 1989.

Errata: the last edition went to press with cover and p2 stating June/July instead of July/August. This has been corrected for subscriber re-downloads, Pocketmags and Mixam print on demand.

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BACK ISSUES: because Maxwell Place is up for sale, most back issues have now been disposed of as they occupied a room. In future, though it takes more time than can be found now, a downloadable archive will be put on the website and print-on-demand copies enabled. .

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Many readers will have seen the reproduction of an information poster for the centres used to house asylum seekers, where the Home Office misleadingly states: "In the UK, you should not take pictures or videos of someone without their permission.

"This includes taking pictures of videos in public spaces like streets or parks, or in private spaces like at home.

"Sharing sexual pictures or videos of someone without their permission is a serious crime.

"If you do these things, you could be arrested by the police. This could affect your asylum support and your asylum claim.

"If someone has taken or shared images of you without your permission, you can report this to the police. Reporting will not negatively affect your asylum claim".

No comments to the many pro photo group social media discussions about this denied that the third point, about sexual images, is valid but the first statement is entirely wrong unless you read "should" as advice and not a command of the law. Students of English *as she is spoke* will know that there are differences in meaning conveyed by *shall not*, *can not*, *should not*, *must not* and *may not* but it's hardly reasonable to expect an asylum seeker and non-native English speaker to know that there is a conditional aspect to "should".

Nor can the Home Office or police be expected to grasp that, and it's unlikely that the drafter of the poster/leaflet wording thought for even a second about the differences. The aspects of arrest and reporting to police which follow make it clear that "should not" is misused here to imply prohibition ("must not" is a better form of words if that is meant).

That is how any redneck getting hold of the text – not intended for general display and aimed only at asylum seekers – would read it. The wording implied this is a law in the UK. You can't photograph anyone in public, so in fact, anywhere at all without their permission.

Surveillance camera operators take note...

The fact that it is simply not true, and the reverse applies, won't deter the agitator who decides you need your camera forcibly removing. The notice may also reinforce attitudes of police and private security staff who don't understand such things as urban documentary or street photography, crowd scenes, news reporting or social comment. Martin Parr or Dougie Wallace would have been shut down without a second thought.

However, if reworded to make the intent clear the text would be fine.

It's entirely right to warn asylum seekers, or camera club outing members, that you should not photograph or film people without their consent, but it's not an offence. It's also fair to say the consent can be implied, as when people see the camera and know you're taking pictures and strike a pose on purpose, or it's a public event with many cameras around in addition to hundreds of smartphones.

We also need to remember that spaces we think to be public may not be. Large areas of London, especially in Mayfair, the City and Canary Wharf are private property including the roads you drive on and the pavement you walk on. Nearly all out-of-town shopping malls are the same, along with sports grounds, parks and plenty of woodlands.

Remember that the National Trust and the Crown Estate own much of Britain's coastline. National Parks and apparently 'wild' mountains are mostly private property. But where the public has access, they are public spaces. You can't be arrested for shooting wild campers lighting a fire in a forest...

– David Kilpatrick

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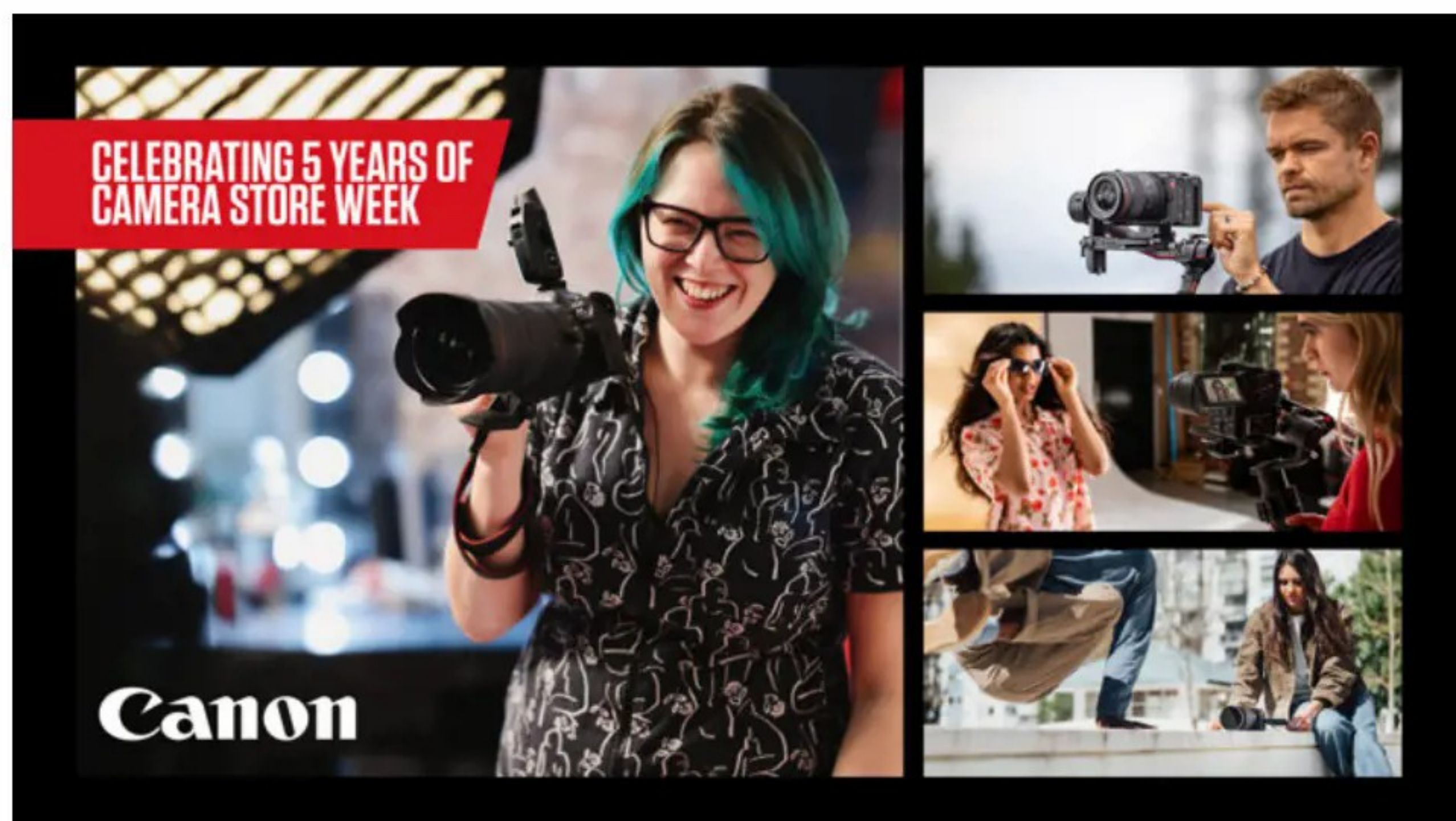
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Architecture and Photography: Canon celebrates real stores



FROM 14-27 September 2026 across the UK Canon experts and creators join leading photography brands for hands-on events, demos and photo walks at participating retailers. The fifth such event, which acknowledges the importance of specialists and bricks & mortar stores as part of a photographers' journey from the first hands-on captures to professional or recognised artist, there are opportunities for everyone and every discipline.

New for 2026, Canon and its retail store partners are hosting creator-led sessions and a social photography competition alongside the existing promotions, discounts, wider availability of demo kit and educational seminars.

Neale Conroy, Marketing Director, Canon UK & Ireland, said: "Specialist camera stores are an essential part of the photography community. They're places where people can receive trusted advice, try products first-hand and discover new ways to develop their creativity. Through Camera Store Week, we're proud to work with our retail and brand partners to create engaging experiences that support the high street and give customers more reasons to visit their local store."

For the full schedule of events, participating retailers and registration details, please visit:

www.canon.co.uk/camera-store-week

Inspiring Women: both sides of the lens



WOMEN now make up 40% of Parliament, progress in representation that's marked by The 40% Project's new photobook, *Inspiring Women*. Featuring the work of women photographers from across the UK, this documentary collection captures these women at work as they shape modern Britain and make history. Edited by Sue Wright, Chair of the Royal Photographic Society's Women in Photography Group, the Kickstarter also offers backers signed print rewards of individuals featured, depending on the tier selected.

Publication of the £40 hardback edition is assured as it is already funded.

Cameracraft readers may be able to claim a FREE signed 10 x 8" print (*Judith Cummins MP in the Speakers Chair above, by Sue Wright*) regardless of tier backed, using the code PASTBACKMP40 when you receive the Backers' survey from Kickstarter at the end of the campaign. You can find out more here:

www.kickstarter.com/projects/iar/the-40-project

Focus-coupled Petzval: 135mm completes the range



ANNOUNCED and previewed a year ago, the five-lens Petzval Focus Control series is now complete following the introduction of the 135mm f/2.5 – now in stock and available to order. It joins the initial trio launched in July 2025, comprising 35mm f/2, 55mm f/1.7 and 80.5mm f/1.7 mirrorless options.

While the latest Petzval series retains the use of Waterhouse-stop style aperture plates for special effects, aperture can be varied more conventionally than the first Lomography lens to bear the name. The three-ring control system of manual focus, seven-step 'Bokeh Control' and a stopless diaphragm across the range can be coupled, eliminating focus shift effects with changes to aperture or bokeh control.

The 135mm has a minimum aperture of f/22 and a minimum focus distance of 1.5m, the 27mm f/1.7 can focus down to 27cm, and features a controlled curvilinear design with a natural look without complicating the options for correcting distortion later. All lenses in the series feature controls compatible with MOD 0.8 follow focus gears and a drop-in special effects aperture system.

The Joseph Petzval Focus Control series is available for Nikon Z, Sony E and Canon RF mirrorless systems, and the lenses are an easy to remember £499 each – though the initial trio currently have a cash back offer and there may be bundle discounts and other promotions. A five-lens pack costs £1596 and represents excellent value if you do intend to get the full range.

<https://shop.lomography.com/lenses/petzval>

Tamron 12-20mm: remote-controlled wide-angle



OCCUPYING a very different space to the Petzval's controlled swirl, Tamron's ultrawide 12-20mm for Sony E and Nikon Z mirrorless systems promises optical precision in a 570g package. Even so, it shares some creative space – there's a drop-in creative filter provision in the rear mount, and the needs of videographers have come to the fore.

This means an aperture control ring on Sony or assignable control ring for Nikon, and Tamron's LINK wireless remote control app. This gives creative directors the ability to control lens features and settings from an app regardless of the camera's interface options. Being able to fine-tune the focus while monitoring on the big screen may prove useful when taking advantage of the minimum focus of 18cm at 12mm or 24cm at 20mm.

Tamron's generally comprehensive specifications include VXD linear focus for silent, fast tracking and acquisition, weather-sealed controls and a 12-blade circular diaphragm for pure, clean bokeh and precise sun stars. Recommended retail pricing is £1449 in Sony E mount and £1529 in Nikon Z, and the lens is available now.

www.tamron.co.uk

EXHIBITION

Iconic images in Judy Glickman Lauder USA exhibition tour 'Presence'

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS (AFA) announces the launch of *Presence: The Photography Collection of Judy Glickman Lauder*, the new traveling exhibition featuring more than 100 photographs by more than 50 artists, drawn entirely from the collection of Judy Glickman Lauder — photographer, collector, humanitarian, advocate, philanthropist, and community builder. After the world premiere at Massachusetts' Southampton Arts Center, *Presence* will continue traveling to museum audiences across the United States.

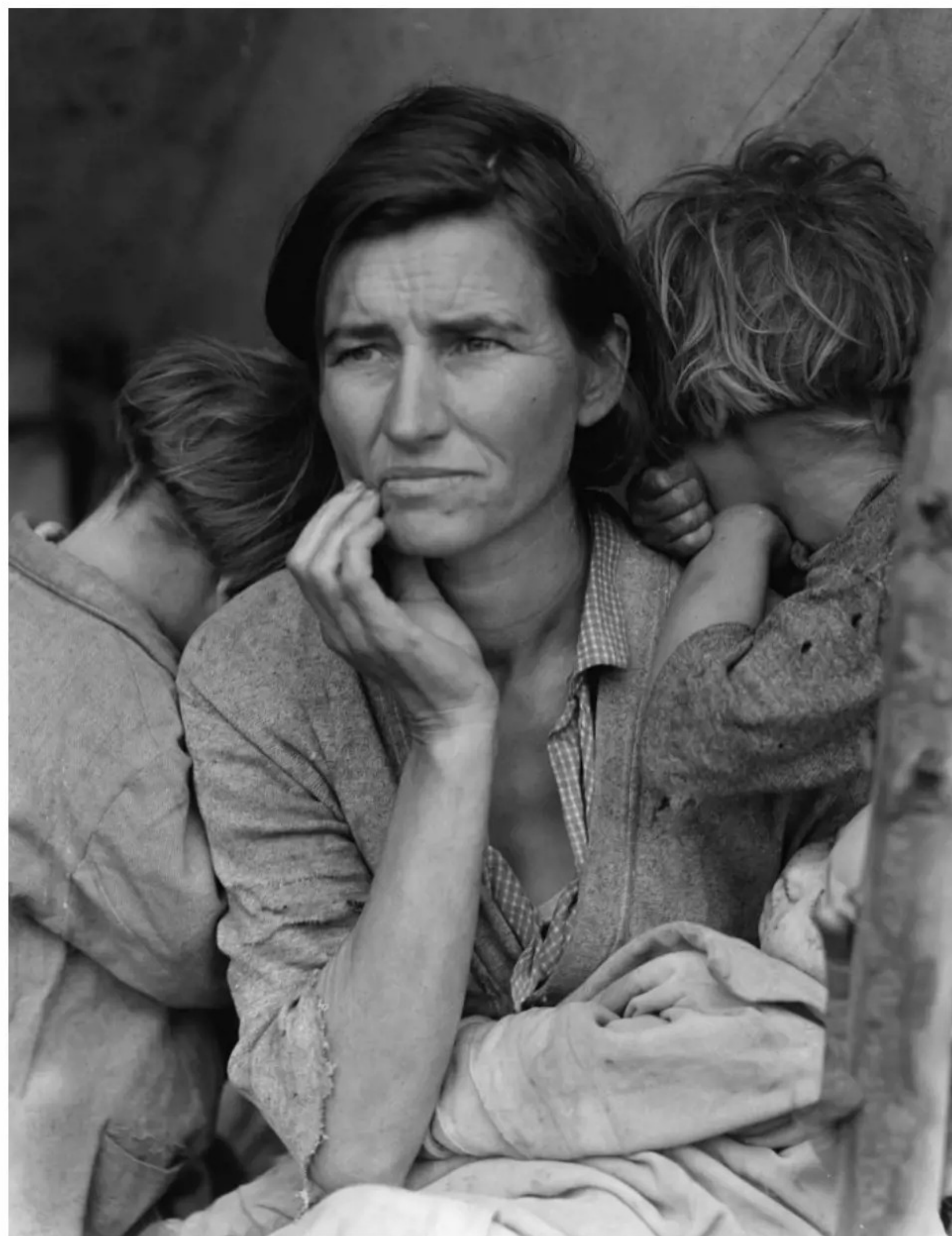
Look for these dates and venues:

Southampton Arts Center (until Sept. 27); Sarasota Art Museum (Oct. 18, 2026 – April 4, 2027); Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston (May 28 – Aug. 29, 2027); Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami (Sept. 30, 2027 – Feb. 26, 2028).

Spanning from Pictorialism and social documentary to Surrealism and street photography, this riveting exploration of photography's engagement with the human spirit features works by beloved and revered practitioners, including: Merry Alpern, Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon, Imogen Cunningham, Dorothea Lange, Danny Lyon, Susan Meiselas, Ruth Orkin, Gordon Parks, Edward Steichen, Joyce Tenneson, James Van Der Zee, and many others. The exhibition also includes photographs by critical contributors to the medium's history, such as Irving Bennett Ellis, Nan Goldin, Graciela Iturbide, Lotte Jacobi, Alma Lavenson, and Judy Glickman Lauder, the collector herself.

Presence is curated by Anjuli Lebowitz, PhD, the Judy Glickman Lauder Curator of Photography at the Portland Museum of Art, in Maine. From the anonymous to the celebrity, and from the everyday to era-defining events such as the Great Depression, the Holocaust, and the Civil Rights Movement, *Presence* captures the full spectrum of the human experience. All of the works in the exhibition are promised gifts to the Portland Museum of Art, Maine.

<https://bit.ly/Presencetour/>



Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965) *Migrant Mother* (Florence Owens Thompson), Nipomo, California, 1936. Gelatin silver print mounted on board, 13 1/4 x 10 1/8 in. Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Promised Gift from the Judy Glickman Lauder Collection, 7.1998.38



Norman Seeff (American, born South Africa, b. 1939) *Robert Mapplethorpe and Patti Smith*, New York, 1969. Archival pigment print, 15 x 22 in. Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Promised Gift from the Judy Glickman Lauder Collection, 1.2016.1 Courtesy the artist.



Nan Goldin (American, b. 1953). *Self-Portrait in Kimono with Brian*, New York, 1983. Cibachrome print, 24.5 x 32". Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Promised Gift from the Judy Glickman Lauder Collection, 9.2019.1 © Nan Goldin.



Irving Bennett Ellis (American, 1902–1977). *Louise Weinstein Ellis*, 1938. Gelatin silver print from a composite negative, 9 x 7 in. Portland Museum of Art. Promised Gift from the Judy Glickman Lauder Collection, 11.2006.7



that snicks into place once the lens-bayonet clunks home, was intermittently jamming. Consequently, twisting the focus ring on the lens merely removed it from the camera body once it reached the end of its travel. But our unsuspecting snapper didn't discover this until, several hundred feet in the air, there was an unexpected detachment of the lens, which was being held lightly by only two fingertips.

As our man was leaning over the side of the balloon's basket, one expensive Nikon lens tumbled several hundred feet to earth, never to be recovered. At least on that occasion, the snapper managed to grab a few pics before the incident, unlike my next epic fail.

Caledonian cock-up

On an almost equally expensive level, back in the early 1990s, I was guilty of not checking kit properly when I hired a Fuji G617 camera from KJP's pro camera store in Nottingham. I had planned to take panoramic landscapes (no Photoshop stitching then) on transparency film for a potential Royal Photographic Society licentiate application.

I'd decided on a couple of locations from memory, way up in the Scottish Highlands. I lived in Derby, England at the time, and the places I had in mind were some 425 miles north.

I checked the great beast of a camera over. All seemed fine, glass pristine, pressure plate behind the film gate unobstructed and clean. Mechanically perfect. I packed the car with the 617 in its case, my heavy duty Manfrotto tripod, 20 or so rolls of transparency film (representing only 80 exposures on that beast), and several days' worth of clothes, snacks, outdoor gear, walking boots etc. I'd booked a B&B near Achnasheen in the NW highlands.

On arrival in Scotland on the Friday night after something like a 10 hour journey, I was enjoying the correctly forecasted fine weather for the weekend. Mid-morning on the Saturday I drove a few miles to the beginning of a footpath where I schlepped the heavy tripod and camera case for what seemed like miles, to the viewpoint by a river I remembered from years ago.

I set up the tripod, took the pre-loaded camera out of its case and



Bristol balloon fest - by Tom Hill scanned from 6 x 4 colour print - c 1987



Without the special foot mount or 1/4" bush, the Fujifilm 617 could not be tripod mounted...

went to affix it to the Manfrotto head.

Unfortunately (understatement of the year!) the female tripod screw thread in the camera base was of the larger 3/8" of an inch size; my Manfrotto head only had a 1/4" male screw. In short, I simply could not attach the camera to the tripod. There was no way I could use the camera hand-held as

exposures of around half a second or longer were required using ND filters (the whole point was I wanted to get some sense of movement from the water in the river). I even tried some gaffer tape but the heavy Fuji still fell to one side and there was always a risk of the camera going tumbling down into the water. What a total disaster. By now it was mid-Saturday afternoon.

Al gets it markedly wrong when asked by Tom to invent his 6 x 17cm landscape. He should demand a rebate!



I returned to the B&B, got a copy of the Yellow Pages (no Google or smartphones back then) and phoned around camera shops within a hundred miles to find who might stock a 1/4" to 3/8" adaptor or conversely a correctly sized tripod head screw. I even phoned some wedding photographers to see if I could buy one off them at a ridiculously overpriced rate. No dice.

The nearest place I could buy an adaptor was Aberdeen. A three hour drive away. This meant that during the lovely weather all day Sunday I sat reading newspapers in my B&B. A wasted day. Then on the Monday morning early I drove and purchased an adaptor. Six hours there and back. I planned to extend my stay by two days and shoot on the Tuesday and Wednesday. But guess what? The weather turned Scottish, and nothing but overcast skies and rain were forecast.

I drove back to Derby on a soaking wet dull Tuesday morning, devastated at the waste of time and considerable expense of hundreds of pounds; not least the camera hire, mileage, accommodation costs, subsistence and the like. That's a mistake I won't make again...

Blowing hot and cold

My friend Mike Simmonds has been around a bit in terms of photographic assignments as a working press photographer. He was outlining the hazards of the early days of digital cameras and especially those not driven by clockwork mechanics, as extremes of temperature could really mess with one's equipment.

But even clockwork cameras go wrong in some situations. Mike's pal was once covering the Winter Olympics at Calgary in Canada back



Copyright Mike Simmonds, self portrait August 2026. No AI involved.

in 1988. The temperature was about minus 19° Celsius. His cameras came straight out of their bag from a nice warm hotel room, but within a few minutes, condensation formed everywhere and the internal mechanism of the camera simply became covered in ice. In effect, the camera seized up. The lesson is always to keep your camera, if possible, at the temperature it's going to be subjected to when using it. It's usually a matter of the differential temperature changes, than of the ambient storage temperature of the kit itself.

Then again, electronic cameras can suffer from an opposite problem. In the early days of NiCd (Nicaid) batteries, working in extreme cold would simply prevent them from outputting any power. Even nickel-metal hydride (NiMH) cells didn't fare much better. Mike was once photographing some people working in a cold store in a newly-built factory. He said the shoot lasted about two minutes; the rest of the pictures had to be taken at the normal ambient temperature after the camera simply stopped working in the extreme cold.

In the early days of digital cameras, when photographing winter Wednesday evening football matches at the side of the pitch, Mike mentioned that for each camera he carried no fewer than three spare battery packs, as the cold would render them inoperative quite quickly, so they had to be kept warm.

"I used to have one grasped under each armpit for keeping at body temperature. I won't tell you where I kept the third one..."

One doesn't get that same problem now so much with lithium-ion cells, but then there's the problem, regardless of battery design, of humidity misting-up lenses. Mike was telling me that he was once photographing an interesting internal plunge-pool area with some trainee deep sea divers. Anything glass or metallic almost instantly misted up. He moaned that more than half the time taken on the shoot was spent with the front element of his Nikon lens almost constantly under the blast of the hot-air hand dryer in the divers' changing rooms.

Be thankful for archives. A genuine, non-AI freezing winter scene by Tom Hill, the Pennine Way near Rochdale in the winter of 2008, before global warming.



Self portrait by imaginary octopus going pro in its new house. Pure AI.

Suffering cephalopods

Readers of a certain age might remember a TV series *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*. It ran originally from 1964 to 1968, but was repeated several times in the 1970s.

In the show, each week, the crew of the USS Seaview, a nuclear submarine, would encounter huge sea monsters, aliens, hostile Russian subs, tropical diseases, getting stuck on the seabed with little hope of rescue etc etc...

Admiral Nelson, played by rugged Richard Basehart, and captain Lee Crane, played by square-jawed David Hedison, would battle all these adversities, week in, week out. In one episode, their submarine encountered some giant octopus bigger than the sub itself. Inevitably, everyone is thrown around, emergency lighting comes on, pressure valves burst, whatever. But every week, the plucky crew always won in the end.

Unfortunately the same couldn't be said for Mike when he took his Go-Pro camera in its underwater housing on a beach holiday to Greece. Thinking he'd make some interesting time-lapse underwater movies on the Go Pro, he set the

device up, clipped it firmly into its waterproof housing, snorkelled around to find a suitable spot, then left the camera to do its thing.

Swimming around nearby, he noticed bubbles coming from the place where he'd left the housing on the seabed. On approaching the Go Pro, Mike was devastated to find that an octopus, about the same size as the camera itself, had taken an interest as to the contents of the housing. The curious creature had worked out how to unclip two toggles simultaneously, opened the housing, and was wrapping its tentacles all over the Go Pro. Needless to say, the device was ruined by seawater immersion. Suffering cephalopods!

So when you're all out there snapping away in summer heat-waves or winter wonderlands, make sure you don't get trapped by wildfires or have your camera grind to a halt with frozen condensation, failing batteries, octopus incidents or whatever.

Stay safe out there!

And if you're wondering what 'atmosphere from a networking event' might look like, here's a stock shot from Pixabay by Arc Fotos.



Vincent O'Byrne: the passing of a legend

We last published a profile of Vinnie O'Byrne with just a very few photographs in January 2018 – an interview based feature written by Stephen Power. He was then only 61 and despite financial and personal challenges at the summit of a remarkable career which took him from the discipline of architectural draughtsmanship to an equally precise and planned photographic and digital prowess.

Here we are presenting some of the images we didn't use when allowing just a couple of pages for that story, and a large reproduction of the most controversial portfolio.

We asked Vinnie's professional judging – and Kodak Gold Circle and Federation of European Photographers – colleague **Kevin Wilson** to write a few words about him:

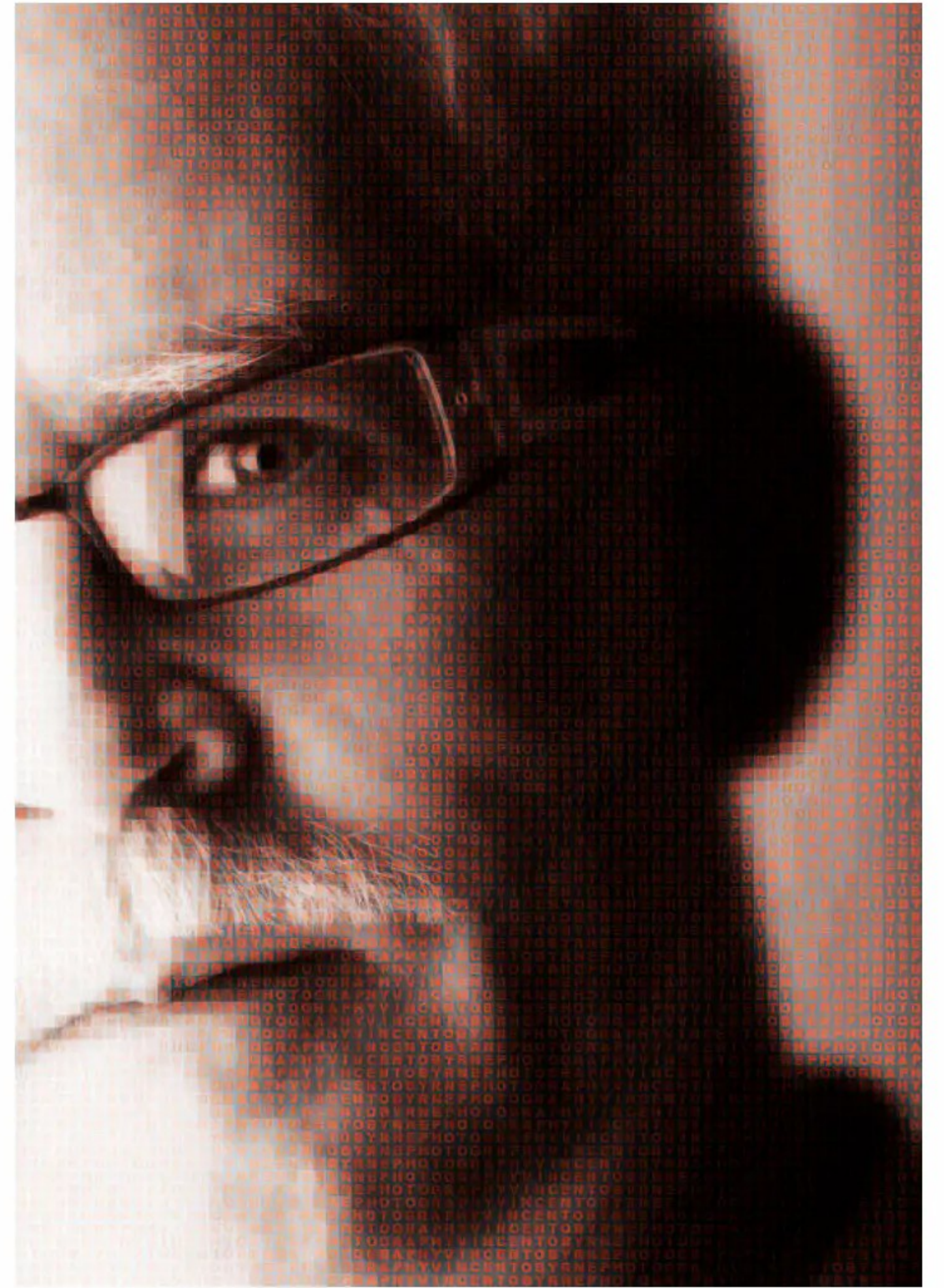
It was with great sadness I learned that Vinnie had passed away. To say it was a shock is an understatement. I am certain that many photographers will feel exactly the same as I do, especially in Ireland where he was born.

Vinnie was undoubtedly the finest photographer of his generation to come out of Ireland, in fact one of the best worldwide. I first became aware of Vinnie in 1997 – Martin Grahame Dunn who was chairman of qualifications for the Master Photographers Association made an unprecedented decision to allow Vinnie to submit a panel of large format architectural transparencies for his Fellowship, due to the fact that the work was of an outstanding quality (*the normal requirement was for prints*). This would be the beginning of a career that gave him such enormous success.

With Vinnie's passion for photography, he could apply his vision to any genre with equal measure.

He quickly established himself in the associations, leading the Irish Professional Photographers' Association as President. He became a

It's over 20 years since Vinnie O'Byrne left the Irish – and beyond – photographic community shaken as well as stirred by his 25-image series 'The Seven Deadly Sins'. Also known as his postage stamp collection, the irreverent photo-art compositions combined his skill in lighting and posing studio nudes with his knowledge of art history and new-found mastery of digital retouching. Many photographers took their inspiration from his work and he was generous in sharing his craft, training and mentoring while also pushing himself to gain the highest awards. Vinnie died on August 18th 2026 most unexpectedly to all those following his regular output on Instagram.



The self-portrait, which has been reproduced many times, is called 'Mug Grid'. Even it at this size and not the single-column kind of use it has had the image has been wasted – it is overlaid with his name like a string of code in red capitals which appear almost like pixels. Left, a classical nude he made in 2014, titled 'The Callipygian Ideal'.



judge and mentor, guiding photographers to a higher level in their own photography, a role he excelled in. Vinnie himself won Photographer of the Year titles on several occasions which reinforced his reputation as an image maker. His darkroom skills and BW creations were something one could only imagine possessing – coupled with his extraordinary brain they ensured his work was not just brilliant, it was highly original in its concept. He was someone that would never settle for second best.

Vinnie liked to make photographers resonate with his creations. One of the most outstanding of these was his panel of Irish postage stamps, 'The Seven Deadly Sins'. This proved to be a talking point right across Ireland, as something entirely original and clearly excellent as well as highly controversial.



Above: 'Tristar', 2014. Below, 'Past Presence Future Tense', 2017.

Vinnie has won too many awards for his work to mention them all. He won the Kodak Gold European awards, gaining him a gold Hasselblad, the first in Ireland I believe. He was also one of a few that received the coveted 10 pin award in the Kodak Gold Circle, to win one pin was hard – ten was rewarded with a commemorative pin.

Another first for him was when he received his MQEP, again the first photographer in Ireland to receive it from the Federation of European Photographers, a great honour.

After receiving his Fellowship with the MPA Vinnie became an assessor with the MPA, judging qualifications at all levels. His skills as a



sympathetic caring judge were evident. I recall many happy occasions judging with him for the MPA and of course the IPPA. In spite of all his success he remained humble and was never happier than when he was talking about the craft he loved. RIP Vinnie.

– Kevin Wilson



The famous and controversial Seven Deadly Sins Irish postage stamp series
from 20 years ago



All images are copyright of Vincent O'Byrne 2006





Left: 'Earth', 2011

Above: 'Poseidon', 2015

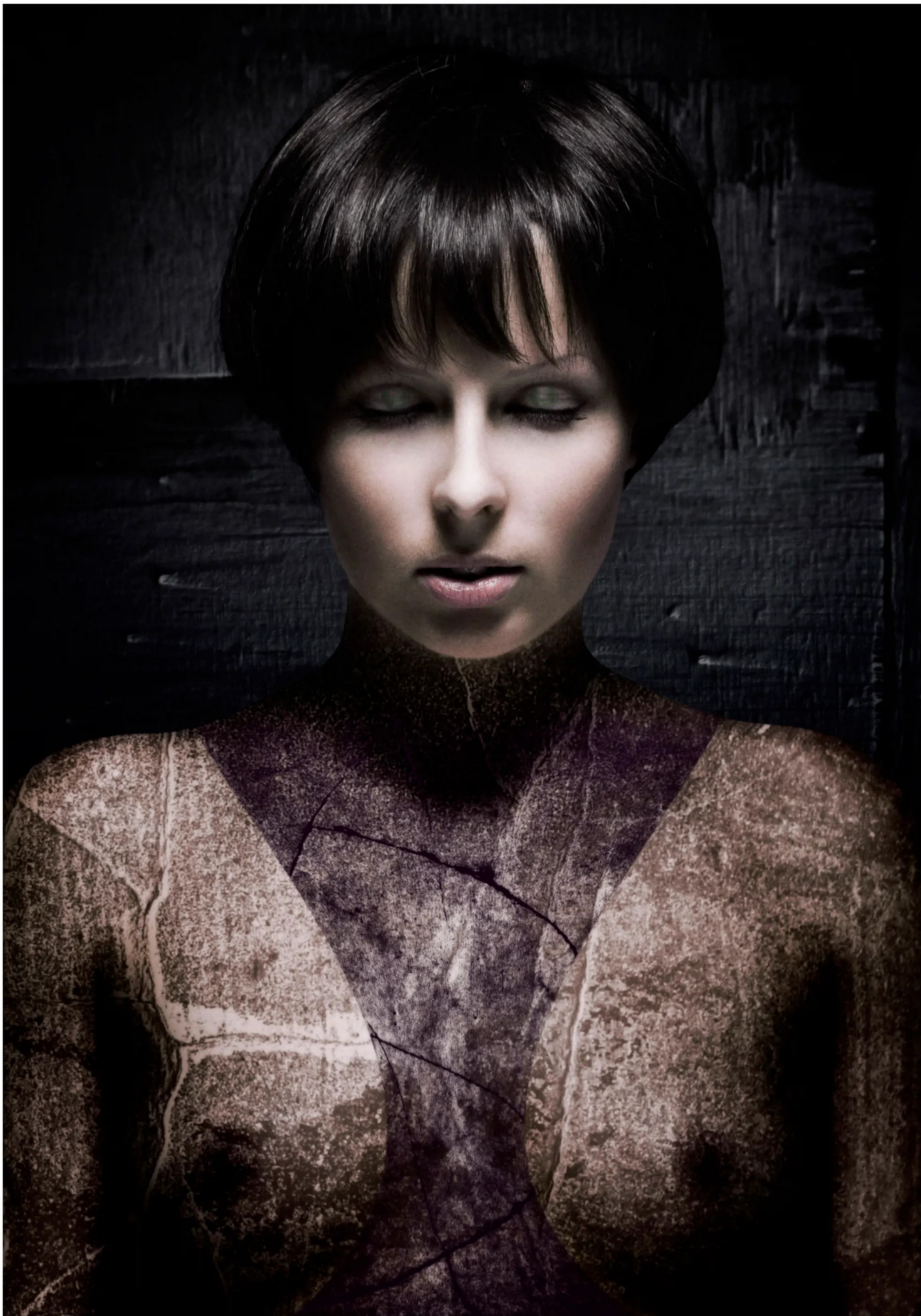
Below: 'Fallen Angel', 2014

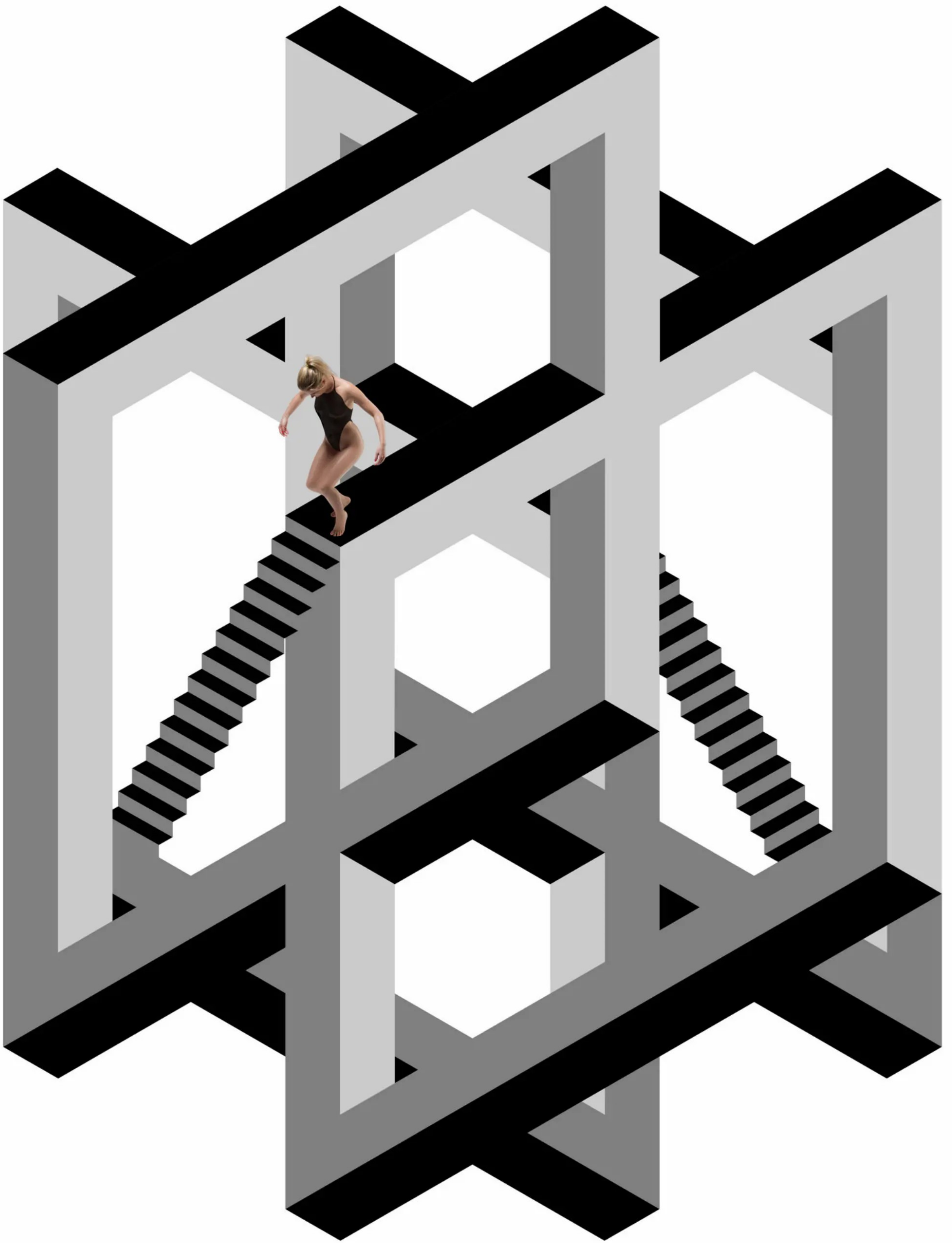




Above: 'VW Zero Emissions', 2015

Right: 'Reverie', 2012





Vincent O'Byrne originally trained and worked in architecture and his early commercial photography used the discipline of large format. In this combination of digital art and photography he combined draughtsmanship and camerawork.

"Chasing Penrose", 2016

How to order a printed copy of this magazine: Visit www.mixam.co.uk – from £10 plus postage

If you download your PDF file from a link provided to you by Icon Publications Ltd, the file will have sufficient resolution to print a top quality copy of *Cameracraft* should you want to have this.

It's very important to pick exactly the right specification.

For example, just changing the paper weight in the UK – whether to lighter or heavier paper – bumps the cost up well above a basic (which has increased to £10). However at one point 170gsm paper was costing exactly the same as 130gsm. Selecting the wrong size or binding, or number of pages, or requiring rapid delivery can increase the cost or introduce problems.

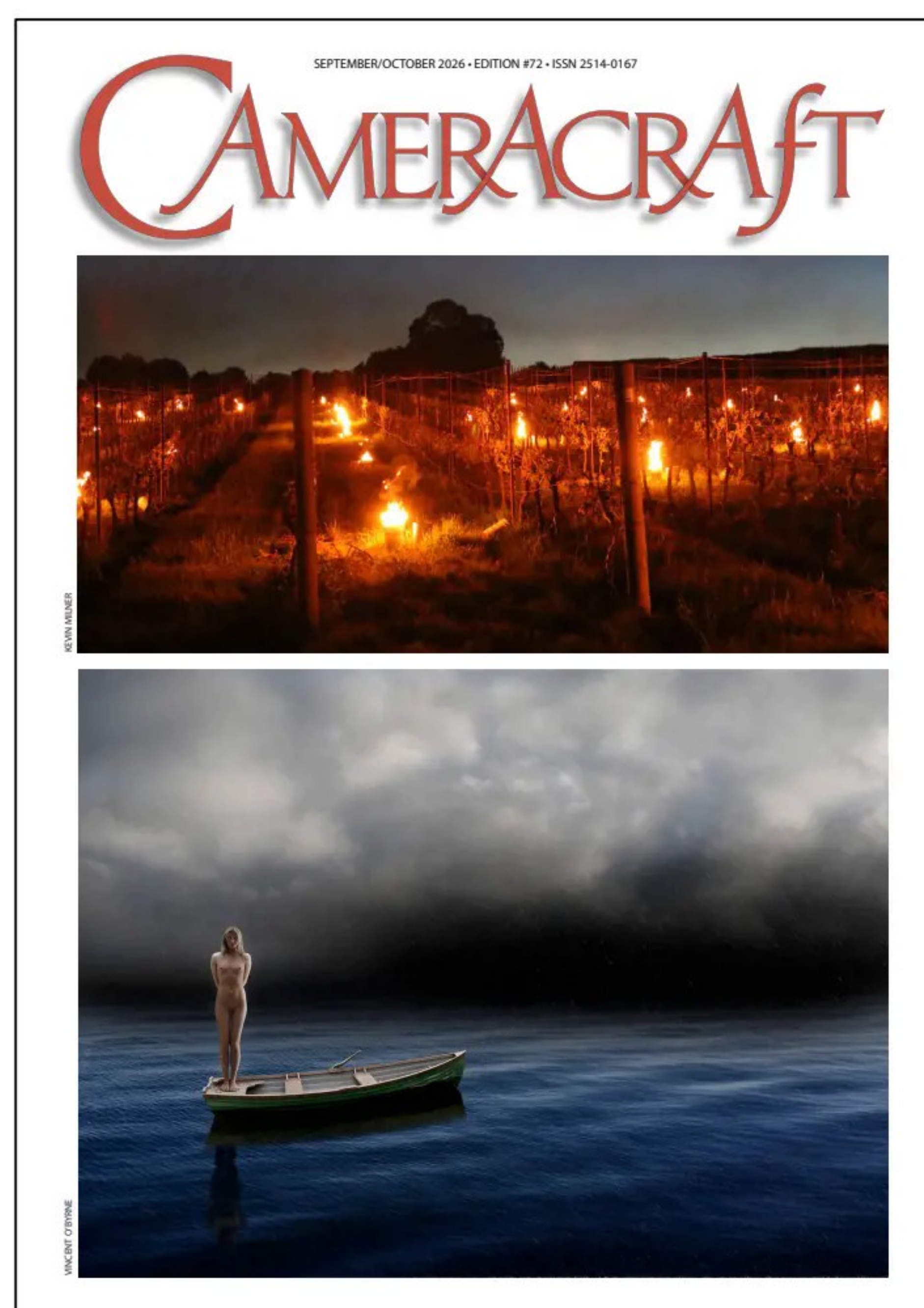
For *Cameracraft*, the correct choices are Magazine printing, Colour, Portrait orientation, A4 size, 130gsm Silk paper, stapled, 48 pages, no additional cover. The screen shot (right) shows this set up. It was made on April 29th last year and would, if a copy had been ordered then, have had a May 7th delivery date. The quality of print is identical to original printed editions.

Subscribers: simply go to the any Mixam website, upload your high res digital PDF download and get a printed copy at any time, in your local currency.

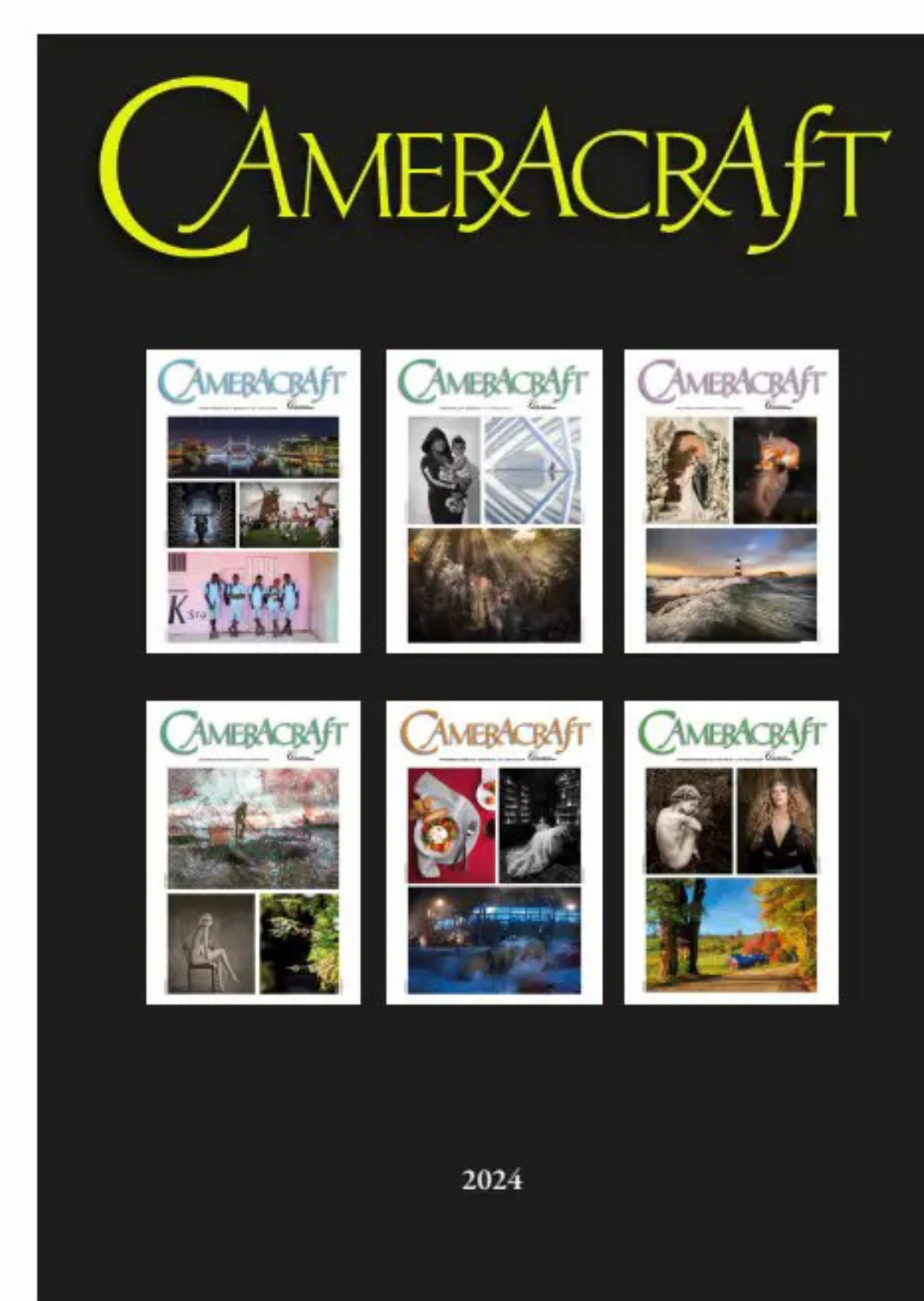
If you use the UK links on this page there's a small margin on the basic cost, which also applies to the annuals below, and helps fund *Cameracraft*.

Go buy the book!

By far the best way to have printed copies of *Cameracraft* is to take all six issues from a year and make them into a book. We've done this for **2025**, **2024** and **2023**. Each has 288 pages on the 130gsm paper used for single editions, a high gloss laminated heavier cover, and the title and year on the spine. You



To order a printed copy of this issue, <https://bit.ly/CCNo72>. For July/August 2026 – <https://bit.ly/CCNo71>
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This is a perfect-bound gloss laminated paperback (cover above). We first had one of these made – at much greater expense in the early days of digital print on demand – for the *Cameracraft* first series issues, 2012-2015. It takes up a fraction of the bookshelf space used for binders and for our archives all the past editions will be reprinted in this form.

Living off the Land

We put all the obvious questions to Kevin and a few more. The first questions was simply how he got started in farming photography – and the answer was unexpected. Most photographers start with the camera and find their subject. He did the reverse.

Farming has never just been a subject I photograph; it is part of who I am. My grandfather farmed in Yorkshire, my parents encouraged a love of farming and the countryside from an early age, and I was lucky enough to attend a school in Oxford that had farm nearby. My work experience was spent on farms, and from there I went on to study conservation, farming and ecosystems at Sparsholt College.

My early career took me through Hampshire Wildlife Trust and Hampshire County Council as a Volunteer Apprentice and then ten years as a Ranger and Forest Craftsman with the Forestry Commission. This combined experience gave me training so I had the breadth of skills to work safely and effectively in these environments, but it also taught me to notice the small details in a landscape and, more importantly, to appreciate the people

Kevin Milner has a photographic business and a 50,000-image stock library with a theme that looks to become ever more important as climate change and land uses impact Britain's countryside and our ability to feed the nation.

whose lives revolve around it.

Twenty years ago I decided to combine that knowledge with my passion for photography and videography. Looking back, I don't think I ever consciously chose agriculture, it chose me. Today I work with farms, estates, land agents, educational organisations and professional bodies across Britain, telling their stories through photography, film and drone imagery.

One of the best decisions I ever made was qualifying as a professional CAA drone pilot thirteen years ago. It allows me to reveal patterns, landscapes and stories that simply can't be appreciated from the ground.

The countryside has shaped my family life too. I met my wife through Young Farmers, and now our son George and daughter Daisy are members themselves. It is lovely seeing that connection with farming pass to another generation.

Have the many changes in farming affected your business?

They certainly have, but not always negatively. Changes in policy, legislation and commodity prices influence the budgets available for photography, while issues such as bird flu can suddenly restrict access to farms.

At the same time, those changes create powerful stories. I have watched British farmers embrace conservation, biodiversity, environmental stewardship and new technologies with remarkable resilience. Some of the most rewarding commissions I have undertaken have been documenting people quietly finding solutions rather than dwelling on problems. I think those are the stories the wider public deserves to see.

Drone landscapes give a new meaning to getting up early for the light, below. The intense colour of a lavender farm, right – just one of many alternatives to traditional arable crops.



Has the weather made your work harder to plan?

Without a doubt. Farming has always depended on the weather, but the seasons feel less predictable now than when I first started. Harvests move, crops mature earlier or later than expected and carefully planned diary dates can disappear overnight. People often imagine photographers simply wait for sunshine, but it is much more complicated than that. Heavy rain rarely produces inspiring images – prolonged drought leaves landscapes looking tired and washed out. Some of my favourite photographs have come from patiently waiting for that brief moment when the light breaks through. Photography teaches you patience; farming teaches you not to fight nature.







Did the vineyard frost candles work? (see facing page)

They did, and they produced one of the most magical scenes I have ever photographed. Standing in a vineyard before dawn surrounded by hundreds of flickering frost candles felt almost surreal. Knowing they were protecting the vines made the photographs even more meaningful.

Those images have since appeared in publications around the world. Moments like that remind me why I still love getting up before sunrise after all these years.

Have you been recording this summer's drought?

Yes, and it has been one of the most unusual summers I have experienced. The drought has revealed archaeological features that haven't been visible for years, including Roman remains hidden beneath fields in southern England. Being asked to record those discoveries has been a real privilege.

The weather also brought harvests forward, creating opportunities to photograph specialist crops such as Ahiflower, a specialist break crop that is a rich source of Omegas. It is a reminder that every season writes a different chapter. Personally, though, I will always prefer photographing a lush green landscape bursting with life to a brown one that is crying out for rain.



*Candles (like giant tea lights) used in a Hampshire vineyard to combat frost which would have ruined the grapes.
Facing page: a variety of subjects in farm photography – turkeys in the run up to the Christmas season, a river barrage to prevent flooding put in place by the farmer, and Highland cows in winter snow a long way from the Highlands.*



Why do estates commission drone surveys?

Every estate has different priorities, but they all value perspective. A drone reveals things that simply aren't visible from ground level.

One day I might be surveying crops or documenting woodland management. The next I could be recording archaeological features, conservation habitats or producing promotional films for an estate. Every flight reveals something new. Even after two decades, I still find myself looking at familiar landscapes and thinking, 'I've never seen it quite like that before.' That is a wonderful feeling.

Technology and changing land use?

Agriculture has always evolved and I think it always will. Renewable energy, data centres and changing land use will become part of our countryside, just as previous generations adapted to mechanisation and new farming methods.

As a photographer my role isn't to argue for or against change. It is to create an honest visual record of how farming, food production and the countryside continue to evolve while celebrating the people at the heart of those changes.

Tips for readers seeking colourful landscapes?

There are more opportunities than ever before. Farms have diversified brilliantly with sunflower fields, lavender farms, pumpkin patches, maize mazes, pick-your-own fruit and Open Farm Sunday events.

The biggest piece of advice I can give is simple: remember these are people's homes and workplaces. Respect the countryside, follow the Countryside Code, stay on public rights of way unless invited elsewhere and always leave somewhere exactly as you found it. Farmers are incredibly welcoming when visitors show that same respect in return.

Right: farms are not always huge expanses of field. Landscape photographers look for foreground and framing to give the picture three-dimensional depth and add interest.



A commercial drone licence is essential for land surveying over villages and housing.

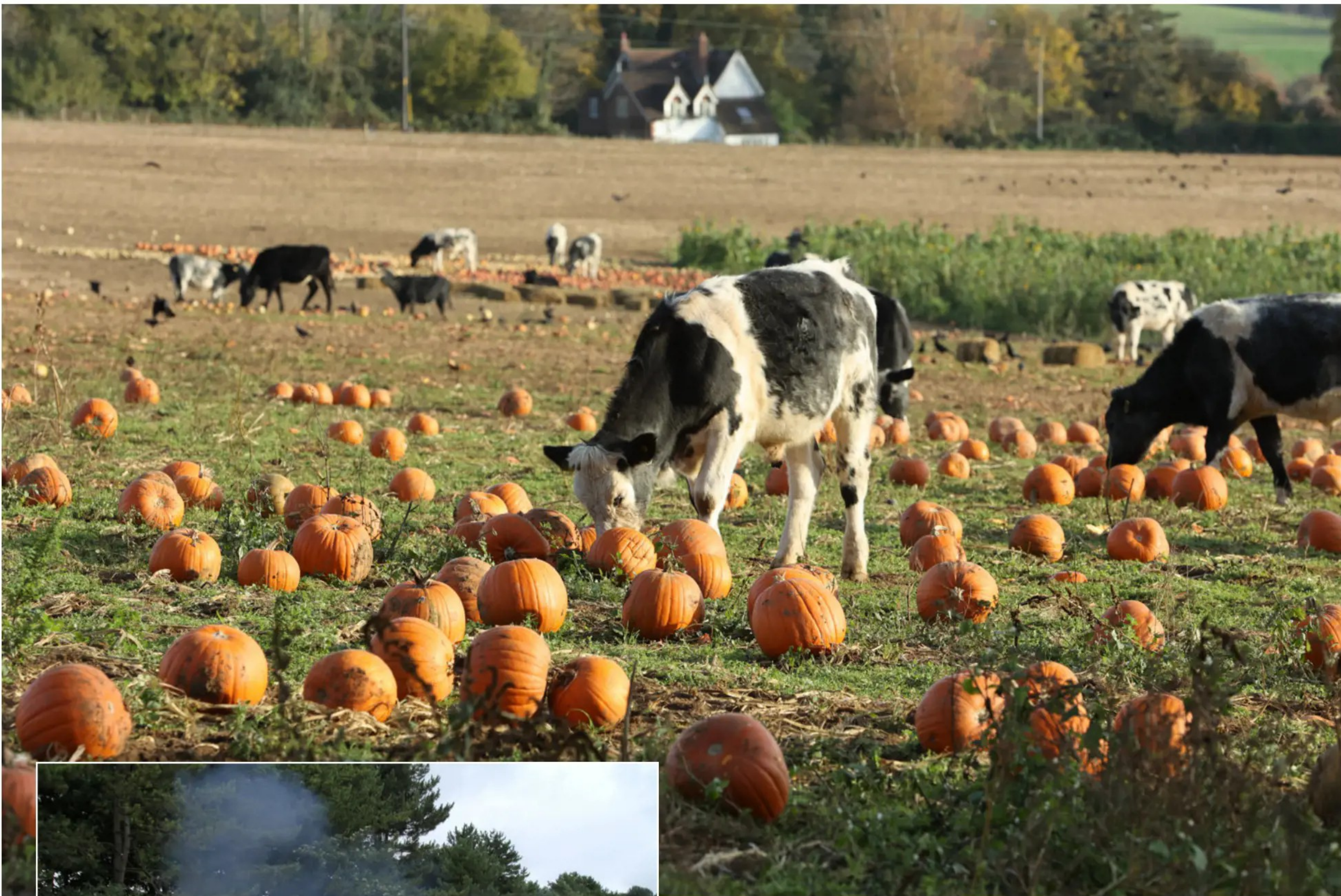
Below: solar farms are an important element on many farm estates.





*Drone photography can reveal problems with crops and weather conditions, above.
The aerial view is also good for showing agricultural machinery in use and the pattern of bringing the harvest in – which was very early this year.*





Diversification – pumpkin patches for the public become cattle feed when Halloween is over. Left, Juniper Leisure offer Hampshire tank driving experiences on farm land. Below, sunflower fields are always popular with farm visitors and make great subjects for the lens.



Pigs or people?

That is a wonderfully unfair question! I have a real soft spot for pigs because they are intelligent, inquisitive and full of personality. Watching pigs rooting through woodland is fascinating and they are incredibly valuable in conservation projects too.

But if I had to choose, it would be people. Every farm has a different story, every family has faced different challenges and every commission introduces me to someone new. After twenty years I still come home having learnt something. That is what keeps the job endlessly interesting.

How do you see your next twenty years developing?

The technology will continue to change, so I will continue changing with it. Drone technology, surveying

and monitoring are opening exciting opportunities, while AI is transforming the creative industries.

Ironically, I think that makes authenticity even more valuable. Anyone can generate a picture now, but you can't generate trust, experience or genuine access to British farming. Clients want someone who understands the countryside, knows how to work safely and captures real moments rather than manufactured ones. That is where I believe the future lies.

Favourite locations and animals?

I love mixed farms where crops, livestock and wildlife all exist together because they tell the complete story of sustainable farming.

As for animals, I would probably have to say pigs and cattle. My enthusiasm has definitely rubbed off on the family. George can identify every British pig breed, while Daisy's favourites are Friesians. Seeing their excitement reminds me why I started this journey in the first place. If my photographs encourage even a few more people to

appreciate the work farmers do every day, then I will feel I have done my job. complete story of sustainable farming.

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You can see more of Kevin's work at:
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A summer in Paris

Just a quick glance through Pako Dominguez's upcoming book is like going back in time. Not only literally – these images were taken in from 1995 to 1998 – but also for the classic B&W film work by someone who was trained to think in terms of light and shadow. You feel as though you were there with him. It's reminiscent of 1950s-60s photo books. Nobody shoots like this anymore – every scene was metered and composed carefully. It reflects a bygone era of B&W that you just can't get with modern equipment.

Pako's photography education was quite backwards compared to most people's journeys. While most people pick up a camera, take and process some images and fall in love, Pako started out working in a printing house and didn't end up picking up a camera for at least six months.

But we're getting ahead of the story.

Pako was born and raised in Lima, Peru until he was 16, when he followed his mother to Buenos Aires. In the fall of 1988 he got a job in a photo lab. "It was just a job at that point", he says. "I never thought photography was for me." He was tasked with trimming and sorting prints and negatives and packaging them. At that point he made an observation that would drive most of his decisions over the next 30 years:

"I realized that the guy developing the film made more money than me. So I learned his job. Then I realized that the person making more money than the printer or the developer was the color corrector. So I started learning color correction. This is all high-volume industrial equipment (no darkrooms).

"Then I realized that the person making more money than all the lab folks was the photographer." So he took his camera and found an apprenticeship position taking pictures in night clubs for a studio that focused on that market. Sometimes he'd be a 2nd shooter for a wedding and then went to the clubs to shoot until 3 AM. All while keeping his full-time job. Eventually he worked

Gary Friedman talked to Pako Dominguez about his book project



for a company that did school portraits, and he started the mini lab for them. Plus doing events in the evenings and weekends.

But he wanted to do something more meaningful than event photography. So he finally started taking formal classes to get rid of his "bad habits". First on technique, then on the creative process. He toyed with the idea of becoming a press photographer, and was told by an editor to pick one subject and cover it thoroughly. So he started covering political demonstrations. In Argentina there were huge demonstrations from retirees clamoring for more retirement benefits. He stopped that when he got caught up in the violence and they broke his finger.

The editor liked his work, but wasn't able to hire Pako: "There's a 45% unemployment rate among photographers right now", said the editor. "And if I could hire someone, I already know who that would be."

More incentive to improve came from some well-meaning but harsh feedback on his photo essay taken in the Peruvian Andes (*Cameracraft*, September/October 2023): "Your work is good but it's not perfect. It's not art photography. You need to go to the next level. And you can't use a zoom lens in art





photography – those people want to look in the corners (where zoom lenses tend to be rather soft).”

Time for a new challenge. He had already done photo essays in Peru and Argentina. At 24 years old, without knowing the language, he picked up and moved to Paris, without deadlines or other expectations than follow my career as photographer. “I’ve heard so many stories about Paris from friends, but I wanted to experience another culture for myself.”

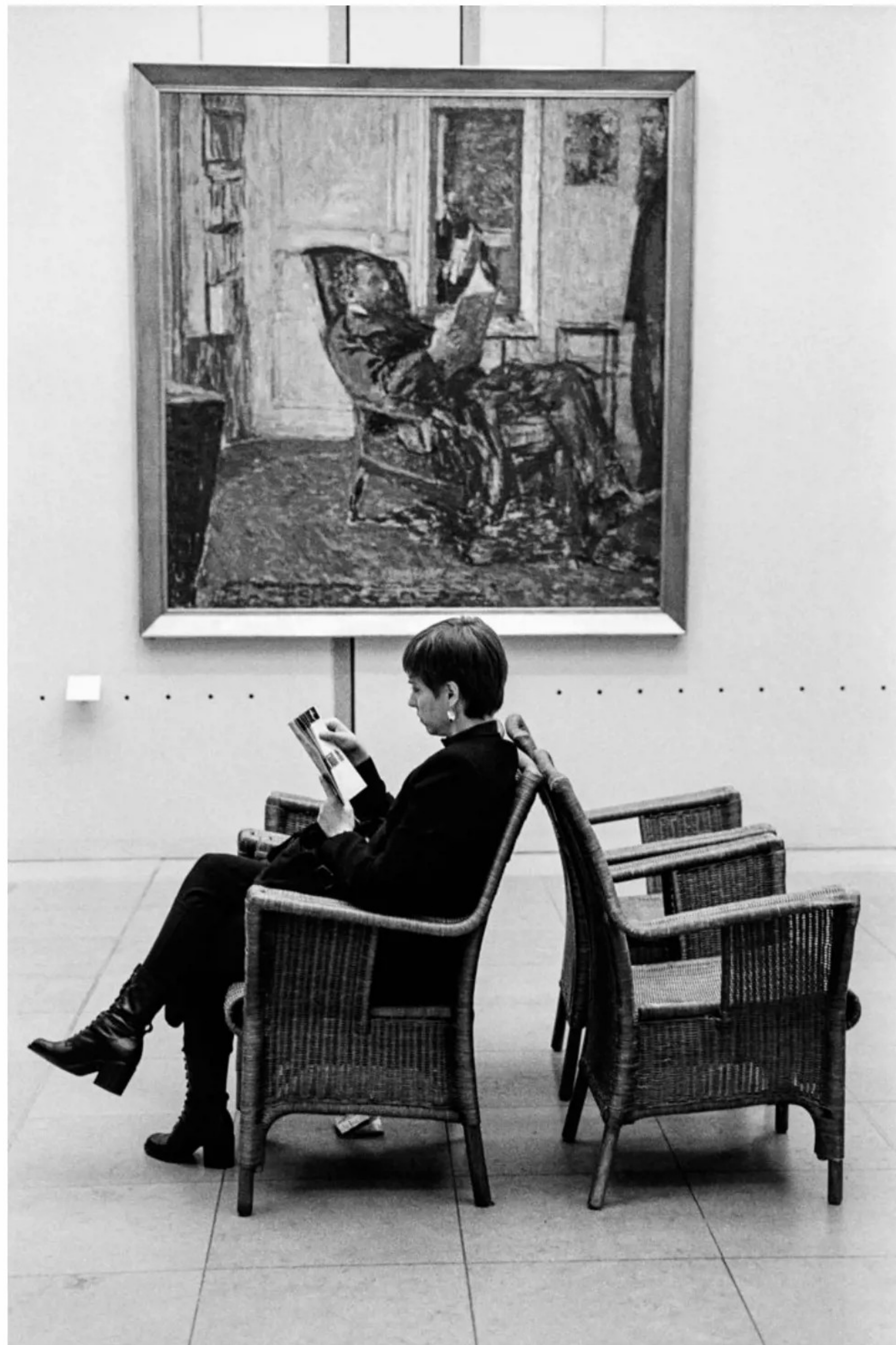
So, armed with a Nikon F and F801s a 55mm f3.5 Micro Nikkor, 135mm f2.8 and a Tokina 28-70mm f2.6 zoom, his days were split between photographing the city while he had “fresh eyes” before things were perceived as too ordinary for him to photograph. And showing his portfolio to any agency that would look at it. He received great compliments, but no job offers. When he ran out of money he got a job at a restaurant, but also found an industrial photography studio with a dark-room he could intern for in his off hours. So his days were quite full: French classes in the morning, studio during the day, restaurant at

night. “You have to be young”, he jokes. He would often photograph empty streets at 5am as he walked home after the night shift.

Much happened after that point. He upped his game in photography, but still couldn’t land any commercial photography work due to the dot-com crash. So he and his wife drove from Paris to Senegal and The Gambia, Africa. Then back to Paris to get papers so he could move to the U.S. where his brother (the real photographer of the family) lived. Finally, in 2003 he moved to New York City.

“I LOVE New York!” he exclaims. “No other city is like it. It’s massive! There’s a new skyscraper every week!” He got a full-time night shift job at the photo lab at Adorama (the famous camera store), then went back to old habits: he worked on the side taking photos in night clubs and being an assistant wedding photographer, teaching himself how to use digital and off-camera flash. None of those three jobs overlapped.

That was 23 years ago. Since then he had to stop the side work when his son was born (“Babysitters were making more money than me so I was losing money with side







A summer in Paris





photographs by Pako Dominguez





work”). Now 55 years old, he looks back on his time in France with fond memories. And he describes these pictures as a time capsule from a bygone era. “I just revisited Paris again last week, and it’s not the same. Nobody dresses like that anymore. There are fewer cars, and more bikes and buses. Yes, the buildings are still there and people still keep their cultural traditions, but it’s still not the same city. I think Paris is a great city to live in.”

In creating the book, he suffered from culling challenges that all photographers face: What to include, what to leave out. He was also careful to pair up pictures on spreads, though our choices here differ slightly. He includes some from another long-term project he’s working on, creative shots taken inside art galleries and museums.

How does he want viewers to react when seeing these images? He explains that that’s not how he approaches books like this. “When I was shooting events, once I delivered the pictures, they’re not mine anymore. They belong to the clients. They take on their own life. I want these pictures to fly and have their own life.”

He is already anticipating his



See more of Pako’s vintage images at <https://www.instagram.com/pakodominguez/> and www.pakodominguez.photo where the book will be available after publication

next photo essay project. “When I retire in 10 years, I want to go back to Peru and document how things have changed.” Many of his earlier images were exhibited at the Peruvian Consulate in New York shortly after Covid. “But I had a problem with those pictures – I felt like an aging rock star who keeps playing the same old song over and over. Those pics were from 92-94. The clothes today are more colorful, a result of the influence from Bolivia. I plan to walk those same towns to see how things have evolved.

“I don’t view photography as a hobby. When I have my camera with me (which is all the time) I’m working. People have asked ‘why don’t you have many pictures of your family?’ – it’s because with my family I’m not working. Now I have to force myself to do it.”

Today he still carries a camera everywhere. “A real camera, not a phone!”, he insists. “Even after all these years, taking pictures makes me very happy.”

If he had a chance to switch careers and become a photojournalist, would you take it? “It depends on the pay”, he says.

Things don’t change.



LENSES

Samyang 60-180mm *f*2.8 FE

If 70-180mm is not enough this is one is lighter as well as offering more range

Given the excellent build and performance of the previous LK Samyang Schneider-Kreuznach collaboration lenses covering 12-24mm and 24-60mm both at a constant *f*2.8 the 60-180mm *f*2.8 has something to live up to.

It also invites a comparison with the only almost similar specification, the 70-180mm *f*2.8 models from Tamron made under their own brand for Sony mount and as a Nikon lens in Z-mount. In original or Mk2 form, E or Z, this is definitely one of the best designs around and incorporates VC optical image stabilisation.

The Samyang-Schneider design without stabilisation saves 100g and relies on sensor-based IS, and is about the same physical length. Schneider put 17 elements into the 14-group configuration which uses a hybrid internal and front group zoom design giving minimal physical extension and allowing a remarkably short zoom throw, much less than a quarter turn (it looks to be around 60°). Although it's been equipped with a zoom lock which works at 60mm only, there's no creep at all and you can aim for the skies at 180mm with confidence if you shoot air shows. The zoom action is also remarkably light without any zones of higher resistance.

Against these clear benefits of very considered ergonomic and functional design we must set the trade-off – it's got a super-chunky barrel and takes 77mm filters, making the lens look much bigger than its rival with 67mm filters. Combined with a proportionately larger diameter lens hood, it needs a bit more bag real estate and is that little bit harder to wrangle during lens changes.

So, we have to ask why. Part of the answer is the 60mm bottom end, and part is due to reversing some recent ideas about compromises. This design does not lean heavily on built-in or raw processing lens profiling to counteract high levels of



*The first shot taken with the 60-180mm. At 90mm and *f*5.6, this revealed fine colour contrast and coverage with extreme resolution when focused on the door, very clearly reduced if focused on the stonework.*



The 60-180mm does not strike as small with its 77mm filters and chunky barrel, but it's the lightest in its class and well-balanced in the hand.

vignetting and distortion. It limits vignetting which needs very strong correction in my favourite lens, the Sigma 20-200mm *f*3.5-6.3. Use the fast Samyang at 180mm and *f*2.8 and it's better than the Sigma at *f*6.3 – set the Samyang to *f*6.3 and vignetting is effectively absent.

It's hard to tell whether the built-in lens profile is responsible but detailed examination of raw Sony A7RV files using different raw processors, the conclusion must be that the lens does the heavy lifting optically. Despite being absolutely a mirrorless generation digital system lens, it's built to the



correction standards Schneider-Kreuznach have always had for their lenses.

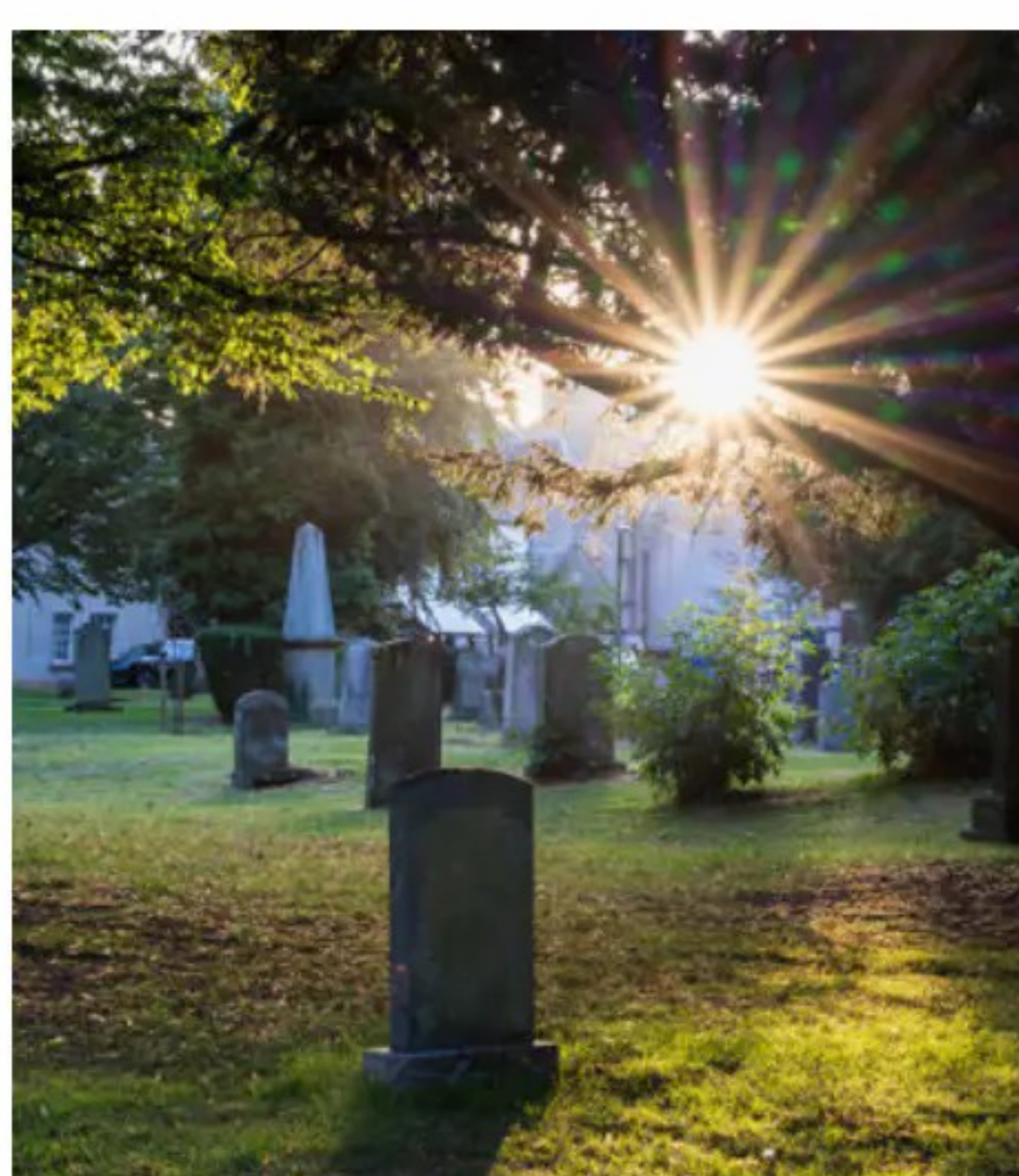
This quality extends to the bokeh, the quality of the defocused image. It's very different to those 70-180mm designs, with less of a visible 'pop' to the focus plane but super-smooth transitions aided by a unique iris design. It has only nine blades to form the aperture but the rounded design creates near-perfect circles all the way down. The blades are also coated to be dead matt, reflecting so little light than when examined it looks almost like a Waterhouse stop made of black velvet until you stop right down and blade overlap is visible.

As a result of this along with advanced multicoating make it hard to induce flare despite the near-77mm diameter of the front glass. We didn't have a chance to shoot a concert with spots to the back of the performers but it should be good at handling that.

When stopping right down and aiming at the partly-obscured direct sun to create a sunstar, a strange effect can be seen in my A7RV shots in the 60-80mm range at $f16$ where a 10 by 10 grid of green ghost images of the point source surrounds it. While I've not seen this from any previous similar shot, a quick test using an LED mini torch in the darkroom showed that it's not the lens itself. The effect is absent on the A7III with its 24MP sensor using a very different cover pack, and could be seen slightly from some other lenses on the A7RV. It's likely to be a result of the rear element location and curvature. I have to put this down as an artefact of the 61MP sensor.

Several times during the test the 60-180mm lost correct contact with the camera body. It was an inconsistent error hard to repeat exactly, corrected by a brief twist of the lens even if the bayonet had engaged firmly needing the lens release button and partial removal. Without also using the alternative body for several days it was not possible to be certain if the A7RV or the lens was responsible.

All the three Schneider-Kreuznach x Samyang zooms have non-standard E mounts. The Sony body has only 10 contacts, unlike Nikon and Canon which use 12.



At a county show, the 60mm end of the zoom is almost a 'standard lens' in classic 35mm, ideal for candid crowd shots (top) while at 180mm for the sheep judging all the handlers and sheep are acceptably sharp at $f8$ with the closest perfectly crisp. Left, a strange diffraction/reflection effect round an $f16$ sunstar at 60mm is not caused by the lens but interaction of the sensor and lens. It's an artefact of Sony's 61MP sensor which this particular lens design happens to make obvious.



Very effective multicoating!



Twelve contacts? Two are for a lens dock though the USB socket, below, now replaces the need for this.



Zoom lock at the front of the ring, AF/MF switch, and custom button.



These LK Samyang FE lenses have 12 contacts, but it's not because they are in some secret future upgrade to the E-mount. The extra two contacts are for the Samyang Station, though this lens has a USB-C connector which does away with the need for this accessory.

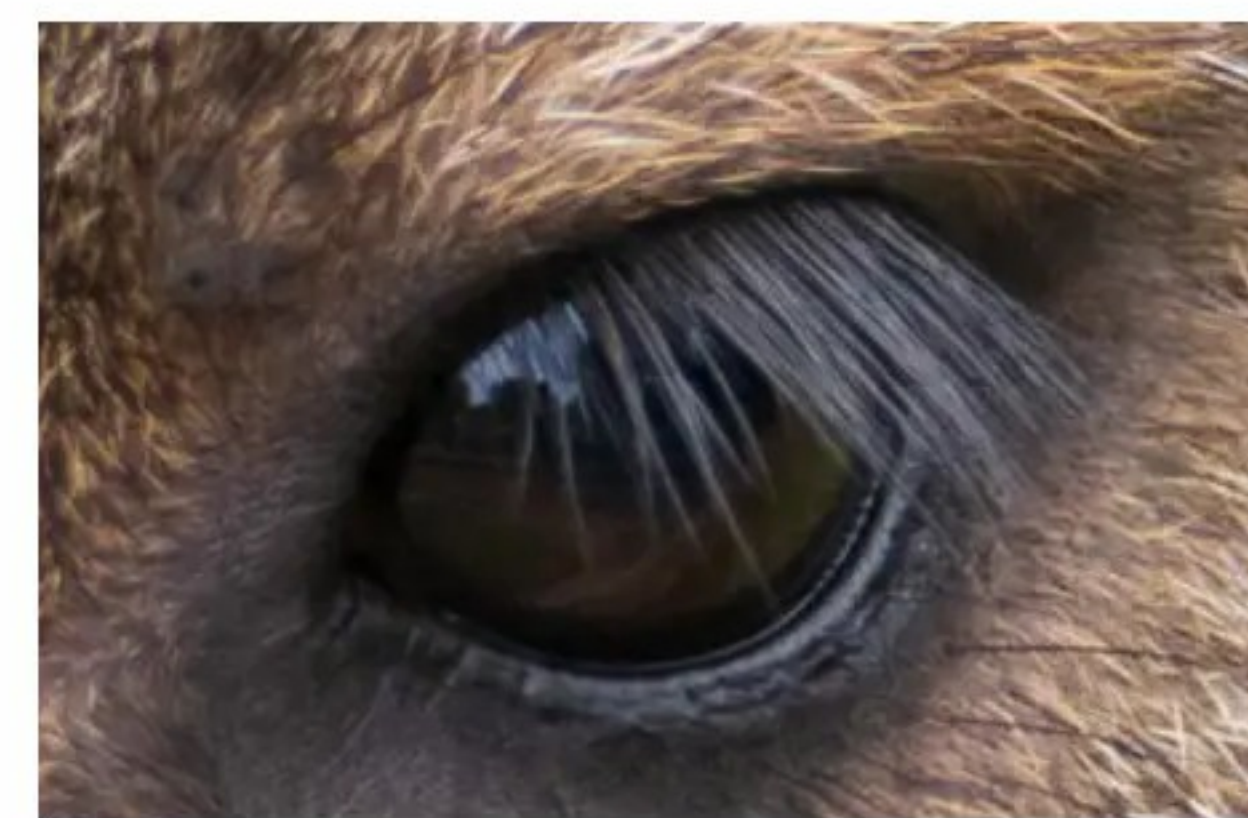
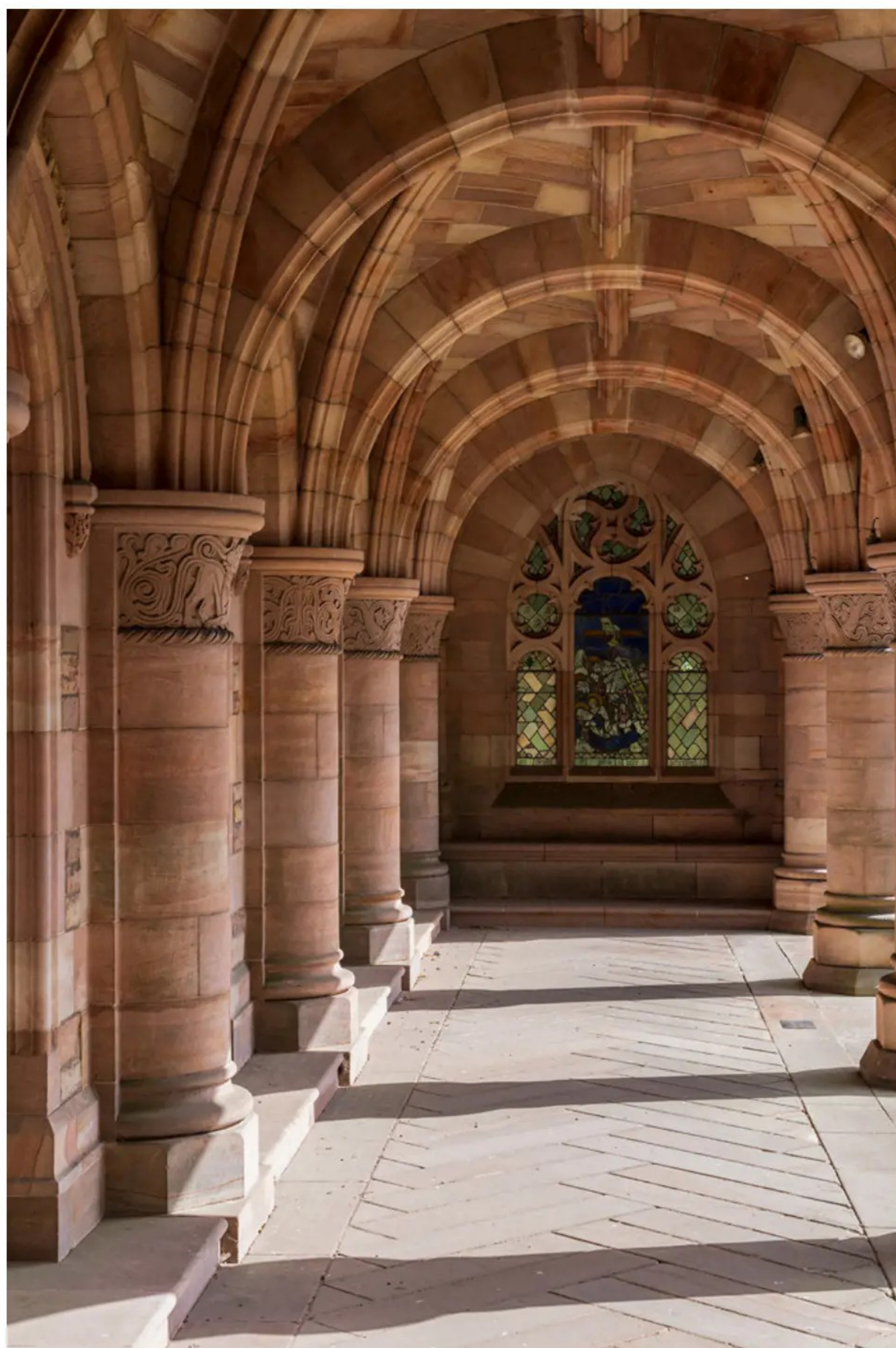
Samyang does not use exactly the same initialisation sequence as Sony. When switched off, or off-camera, the 60-180mm parks the aperture at $f4.5$. Switch on, and it first opens to $f2.8$, dwells for around $1/8s$, then closes to the working setting. At apertures wider than $f11$, the camera will autofocus at the working stop. At small apertures like $f22$ it will open to $f11$ for AF then stop back down for the shot. This applies to stills and normal single frame AF-S or AF-C.

As for focus, again it may be the interaction of a lens with such smooth bokeh – no wiry double images – which gave me some hunting at close range with small or intricate subjects like grasses, flowers and insects. Once fixed by finding a larger target at the same close distance the lens remained locked on and tracking. Eye-AF worked well and given the high resolution of the lens wide-open shots at $f2.8$ worked when only a bird's eye was within depth of field.

Grabbed shots of sudden action were sharp though as normal the first frame in a rapid shoot of AF-S might miss. Overall the speed of the linear stepper motor focus is all you will need. Manual setting down to 30cm (at 60mm) to 80cm (at 180mm) displays on the EVF scale along with auto invoked magnified focus. AF is to 35cm at 60mm and using manual can give a slightly better image scale than the AF 0.26X.

The big focusing ring with its light by-wire action needs fairly long throws as you adjust. The USB-C connected Samyang Lens Manager app lets you change the sensitivity of manual focus in three steps, update firmware, but not change the focus ring to control aperture despite this being stated in the brief User Manual.

There's only one Custom Button, on the left side of the barrel. It does the same as any one selected C button on Sony bodies, assignable with a simple function like focus



Wallaby full 61MP frame and 300dpi of eye, at 139mm and wide open at $f2.8$. The Roxburghe Cloister, below, shows excellent lack of distortion at 60mm with $f10$ providing just sufficient depth of field. This subject was re-opened last month at Kelso Abbey after five years of closure due to safety concerns.

hold or AE lock linked to still or video shooting. This is done on the camera and does not require the Manager. There are none of the clever video functions found on the Samyang 35-150mm $f2-2.8$ even though it's a lens with a good range for classic movie making.

As to whether the lens or the Manager software were in perfect order, I can't say but I managed to do something right at the end of the test period which prevented focus beyond around 8m.

Up to this point the lens behaved perfectly with the exception of the mount connection issue. It went back on time to the distributors with all tests completed but in need of checking in case I'd left a setting in place. My experience with other lens makes warns me off experiments with firmware and customisable functions.

The verdict is that with a saving in weight, size and cost over the closest competition the Schneider-Kreuznach optics add further to this lens's appeal. Teamed up with the other two LK Samyang collaborations this series has created another 'Holy Trinity' for Sony full frame users. Nikon Z owners can hope that a deal is reached soon to allow Samyang to offer these AF designs.

Leica L-mount owners came on line with their version of this lens just as we went to press. The £949 retail price compared with £899 for FE mount remains considerably better value than either Panasonic or Sigma's nearest rivals.

– DK



For further information visit:
FE Mount

<https://bit.ly/LKSamyang60-180FE>

L Mount:

<https://bit.ly/LKSamyang60180L>



It was not easy to persuade the A7RV to acquire focus on the small poppy in a roadside wildflower planting, working at 180mm and f2.8 to show the bokeh quality. It was possible to make the poppy fill about half the frame at closest focus but the A7RV's AF just couldn't nail it regardless of setting. This is despite the apparent very fast quiet focusing of the lens itself. Below, three shots from the historic Phantassie Doocot near Preston Mill in East Lothian. The furthest view is at 180mm and f10, with a carefully chosen camera position hiding modern details and a car but keeping the old estate cottage visible. The shot below with the wheat field which the doves in past years might have stripped bare is at 76mm and f14 to keep it all sharp. The dovecot with landing pigeon is wide open at 87mm for a high shutter speed. The 60-180mm range proved ideal for subjects like this.



LENSES

Mini 35mm $f1.6$ C-mount

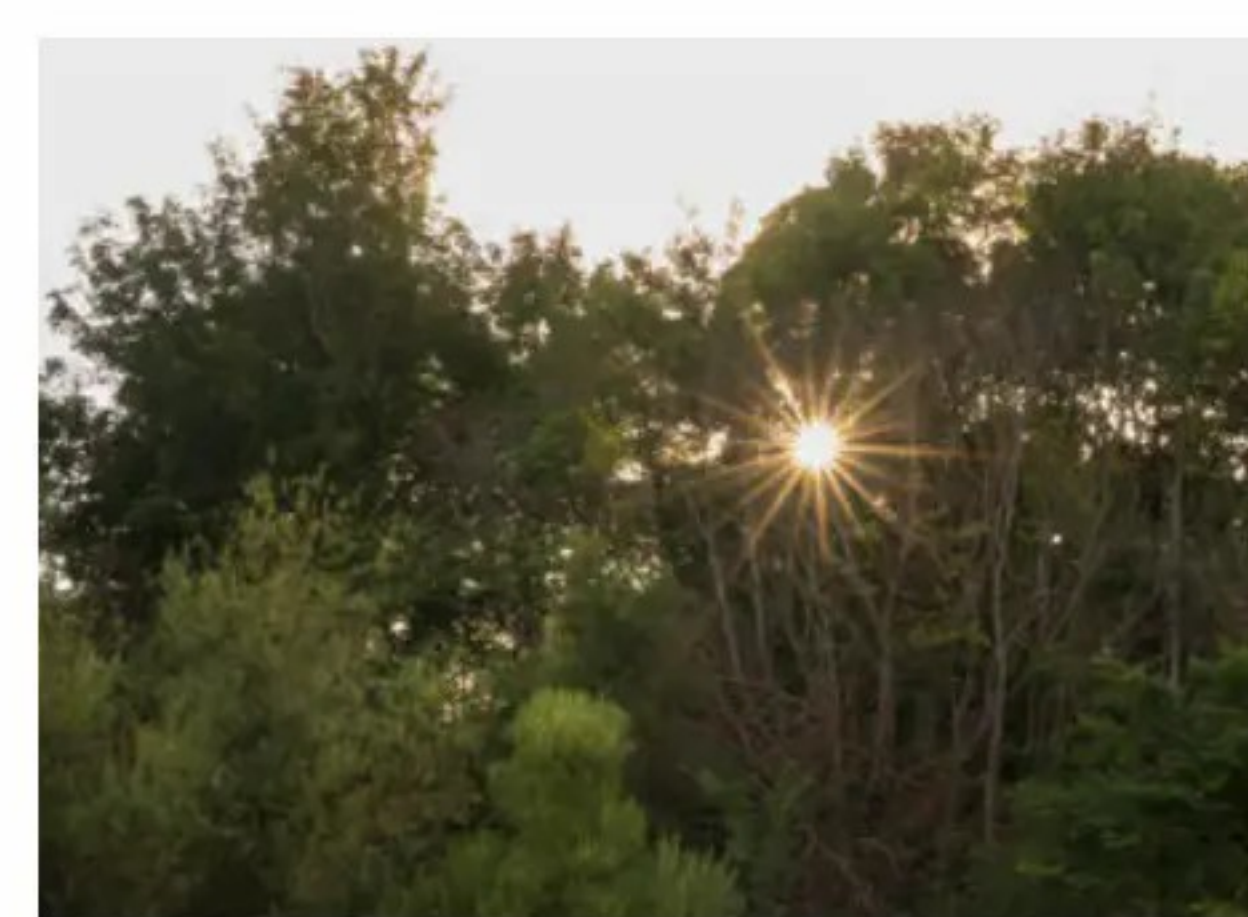
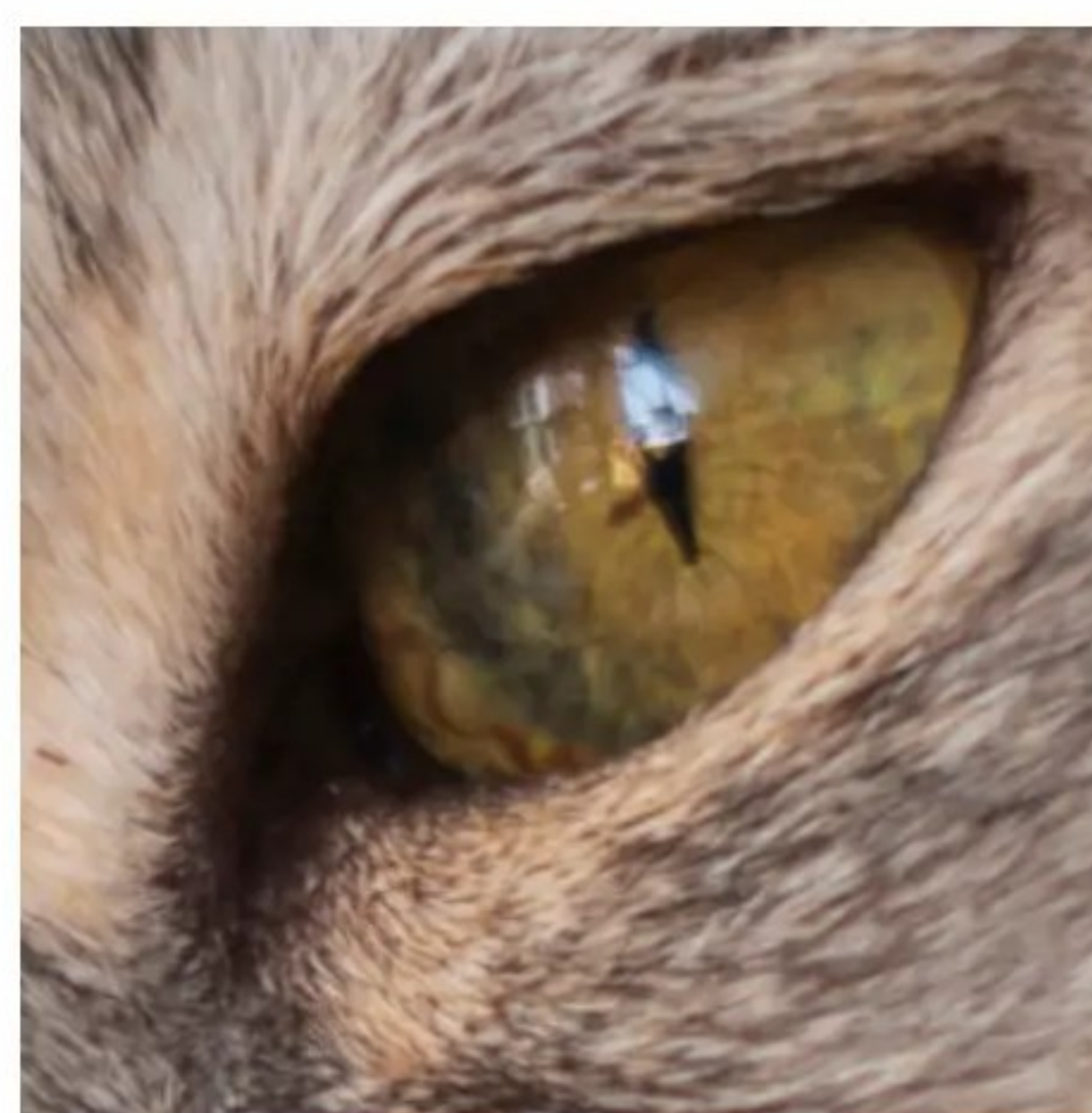
Sold with an MFT adaptor for £18, no brand or maker name, it has no right to be as good...

You'll see it being given away with the lowest priced used MicroFourThirds bodies on eBay, or popping up in Facebook ads from Temu or AliExpress.

At under £20 with shipping, and probably half that if bought in quantity, it's too good to be true even for a purely manual lens designed for CCTV in C-Mount. At $f8$ (below) it does a pretty good job on OM-1. It's very fast at $f1.6$ and the 35mm focal length is 'like 70mm' on the small sensor.

It's MUCH better than its price. It is metal mounted with super-smooth focus past infinity and a no-click aperture ring. Wide open, it's pin sharp centrally with smooth focus and outfield blur. As cat Willow shows at its minimum 45cm focus, a 24mm square crop on full frame at $f1.6$ has vignetting. On APS-C this would be minimal. Her eye is super-sharp with magnified view focus (by moving the camera not refocusing with the lens). The 300dpi clip is from a 21" square print equivalent.

– DK



A sunstar works well from the 8-blade near circular aperture at $f16$ ($f11$ is missing – log iris scale!). Top, a 24mm square crop from full frame at $f1.6$, 300dpi clip left. Far left, focused on the reed clump at $f8$ not at full aperture as there's some focus shift. Left and below, using an E-mount adaptor. It came with one for MicroFourThirds.



CAMERAS

Leica SL3 with 28-70mm f2.8

David Kilpatrick used the Leica Test Drive service to give the 60MP flagship a spin

Leica ownership is aspirational for more than just the red dot, or the 12mm circle with silver Leica name which discretely sits between the handgrip and the big white LEICA on the faux-prism fascia of the SL full frame mirrorless design. Inside the resolution flagship SL3 is a variation of the Sony 61 megapixel sensor mounted on a stabilising carriage which even enables hand-held multi-shot high resolution – this and other features set it apart from the A7RV which I used alongside it.

The most obvious difference lies in the body design. It's an austere design, almost puritanically plain, and larger than you would expect. Other mirrorless full framers, with the possible exception of L-mount cousins from Panasonic, make whatever internal components are needed fit into the space and shape dictated by an ergonomically designed body. I'm left with the impression that Leica do the reverse, building from the inside out, with the body as a protective operational shell sized to fit internal engineering.

You could compare it to an architect starting with the size and shape of all the rooms required in a building and laying them out before designing the walls and roof. That is very much how the first Leica started, with its film track and shutter assembly with controls and release positioned as they worked best then housed in a simple shell. The way that shell fitted the hands helped fix the design of hand-held eye-level viewfinder landscape format cameras for the next century.

The SL3 like almost all current digital cameras inherited elements of that design, and it's a template which through many modifications dominated photography right up to the arrival of competent smartphones. The original 1920s shape can still be seen in Leica's Q2/Q3 and Sony's A7C compact full frame range as well as many smaller sensor consumer models including Leica's own D-Lux series.



The Leica SL3 with 28-70mm test drive was delivered in a robust flight case, foam clearly cut (left) for different outfit testing. The £50 fee includes delivery and collection. Below, the SL3 with 28-70mm next to Sony A7RV with Sigma 20-200mm.

The SL series looks much bigger than the Sony A7R because of the L-mount's larger diameter. The A7RV main body height, baseplate



Note: this is a single photo not two – relative size is accurate

to top plate, is 75mm – the SL3's is 83mm. The false pentaprism adds 18mm on Sony, 22mm on Leica. The body length, held between your left and right hands, is 160mm for the SL3 and 130mm on the A7RV (this does give it a far more substantial feel). The thickness from body front to back is pretty much identical at 46mm, and the lens mount adds around 1mm less on the Leica than the Sony, with very different rear screen designs leaving the two equally matched.

Much the remaining impression of size is down to the SL3's impressively large EVF eyepiece and large plain rotary adjustment wheels mounted proud of both left and right ends, and the un-sculptured handgrip extending 30mm forward. Sony's only offers 25mm, shaped with a deep recess for the middle finger and slightly wider at the body with more taper. I can grip the SL3 with four fingers, the A7RV takes three leaving the index finger hovering over the shutter button or front control wheel, with a reach back a bit for the video button. The Leica shutter release is much further forward close to the leading edge, and serves a dual purpose for stills or video without needing specially assigning to do so.

The deeper handgrip of the SL makes up for its lack of ergonomic shaping – you can still hang the camera off a half-closed fist securely. With any camera and lens combo in this weight class (just under 1.5kg with a typical lens choice) hanging it on a neck strap is not good for you and having the camera 'in hand' much of the time helps, as does moving to a shoulder. Leica's fixed strap fitting, using no D or O rings, combines with a shaped wide strap using a neoprene pad to work well on neck or shoulder. Sony's cheap triangular D-rings are very poor, I've had to buy new identical £6 a paid Chinese ones from Amazon. But the gold standard remains the rapid clip-on rotating Hasselblad V (etc) fitting, which allows the entire

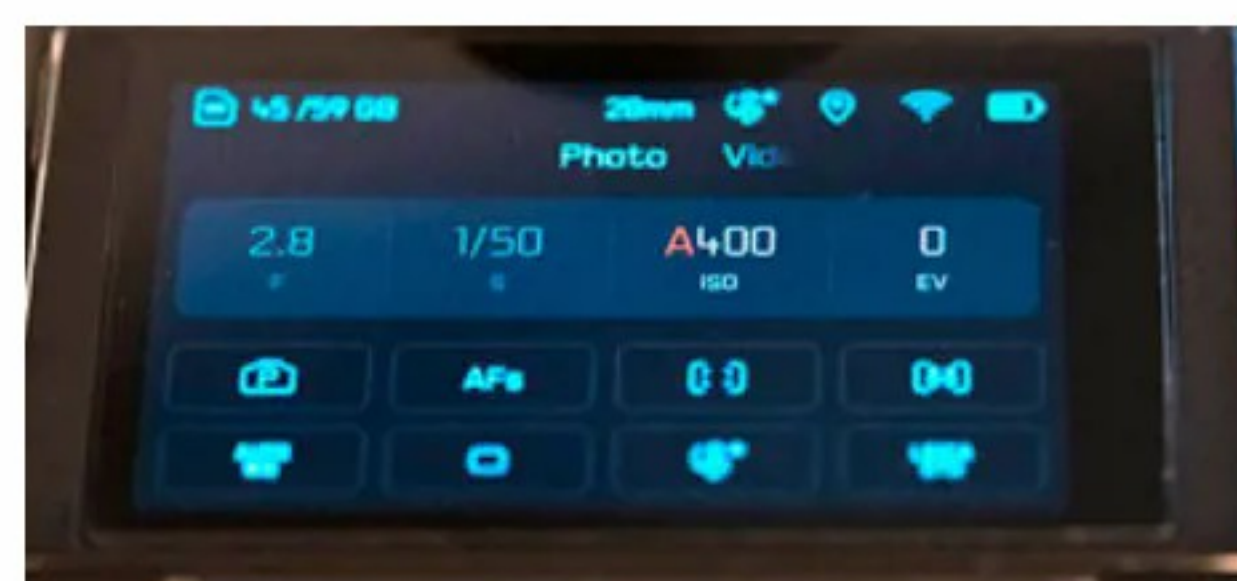
strap to be detached rapidly for tripod work.

This brings me to the Leica's large non-lockable rotary adjusters. The right hand one, assigned to plus-minus EV factorial exposure, ended up being nudged far too often by the strap or when picking up the camera. The left hand one (in the 'film rewind' location) defaults to quick ISO setting access, either Auto or Fix with the rear right-hand thumbwheel setting from 50 to 100,000. To get to Auto from any fixed setting you must scroll back past 50 then use the thumbwheel to return to Auto. This left-hand control does not seem prone to accidental change.

When not in sensitivity setting mode, the right hand top wheel which is easily reached by the shutter finger controls shutter speed in Manual while the thumb wheel sets Aperture. In A, S or P modes the top control is plus-minus EV as mentioned and the thumbwheel sets the A, S or program shift.

Behind the right hand top control are two very discreet buttons which despite being almost flush with the top proved possible to press by mistake when right-hand manhandling the camera. The left hand one switches between Photo and Video and several times I found I was in movie mode when not intended. The right hand one sets WB, with this camera preferring a distinctly neutral Auto WB. The range of WB presets is impressive with grey card spot and overall reading modes, and a special setting for HMI lighting – now rarely found in still studios, but with its extreme power surviving in professional movie studios. LED luminaires are now so universal you may never use HMI!

Both the EVF and rear screen display full information, grid line and spirit level by stepping through options using the Fn button. Settings when not under control of the wheels and buttons are access via Menu, which when shooting does not immediately show a conventional menu but touch screen (or wheel/nub joystick) accessed parameters. These occupy twelve sections on the three-inch screen, each a good size for finger touch without much risk of hitting the wrong one,



unlike typing on your iPhone.

Below Photo and Video on their own slim line (an alternative to button setting) we find aperture, shutter speed, ISO and EV factor. The middle row has mode (PASM), AF mode, AF target area or zone, subject and eye detection. The bottom row has WB, frame rate including bracketing and multi-shot modes, User Profile which enables you to save commonly used setups, and Leica Looks with a small set of profiles – no Portrait or Landscape, sadly.

At the top of the rear touch screen there's an info line which does not respond to touch, including battery status and wifi. There is no bluetooth symbol. To get into such settings, it's necessary to press the Menu button a second time and get the usual text based menu hierarchy. You can select functions like Touch AF versus Off or AF+Release, for example, or Touch AF in EVF Off on On. With this On my nose changed the focus point so often I used Off...

The Drive mode reveals much about Leica's concern for maximum file quality, already evident in their use of the .DNG raw format. You can select from 2 or 4fps 14-bit with AF, 5fps 12-bit with AF, 6fps 14bit, 7fps 12-bit, 9fps 12-bit or 15fps 12-bit. You can also program



The EVF has a generous and easily adjusted dioptre range, top left. The CFexpress Type B slot and SD XC II slot, top right. Screen articulation in horizontal axis only above, and the large touch screen navigation, left.

in interval shooting, and bracketing which can be pitched so only minus settings are used, for example, whether 3 or 5 brackets are chosen.

Other menu functions include Perspective Control, which uses the spirit level as effectively as OM-Systems' version and metadata-encodes the (undoable in processing) adjustment in the .DNG as well as applying it to the JPEG without file size loss. You should only turn this on when needed. With only a 28mm wide end to test I could not see how it might handle an ultra-wide view but tests proved its worth even on very marked convergence.

Perhaps the most impressive computational function is the hand-held multi-shot high resolution. OM-Systems offer something similar, their hand-held creates a 50MP image from a 20MP sensor and tripod mounted gives 80MP. With the SL3 the file size from hand or tripod is identical, and the 16-shot sequence takes a very short time. Foliage can move between captures but the camera's internal processing eliminates all but extreme camera instability and subject detail problems.

I compared the 16-shot on SL3 with 16-shot on A7RV, both tripod mounted as that's the only way the Sony can shoot hi-res. It was my

mistake to use the Sigma 20-200mm at 35mm and f8 to compare with the Vario-Elmarit at the same settings. The Sigma's a great everyday lens and delivers well on 60MP, but at 240MP CA and softness affected the outer field. In contrast the Leica shot was unbelievably detailed with high micro-contrast and absolutely no visible aberrations. The 28-70mm f2.8 may well be based on a Sigma design and made in Japan, but with its use of alloys instead of plastic for the body and mechanisms, its small modifications to internal mounting and coating and above all its level of QC it's got all the qualities expected from a Leica lens.

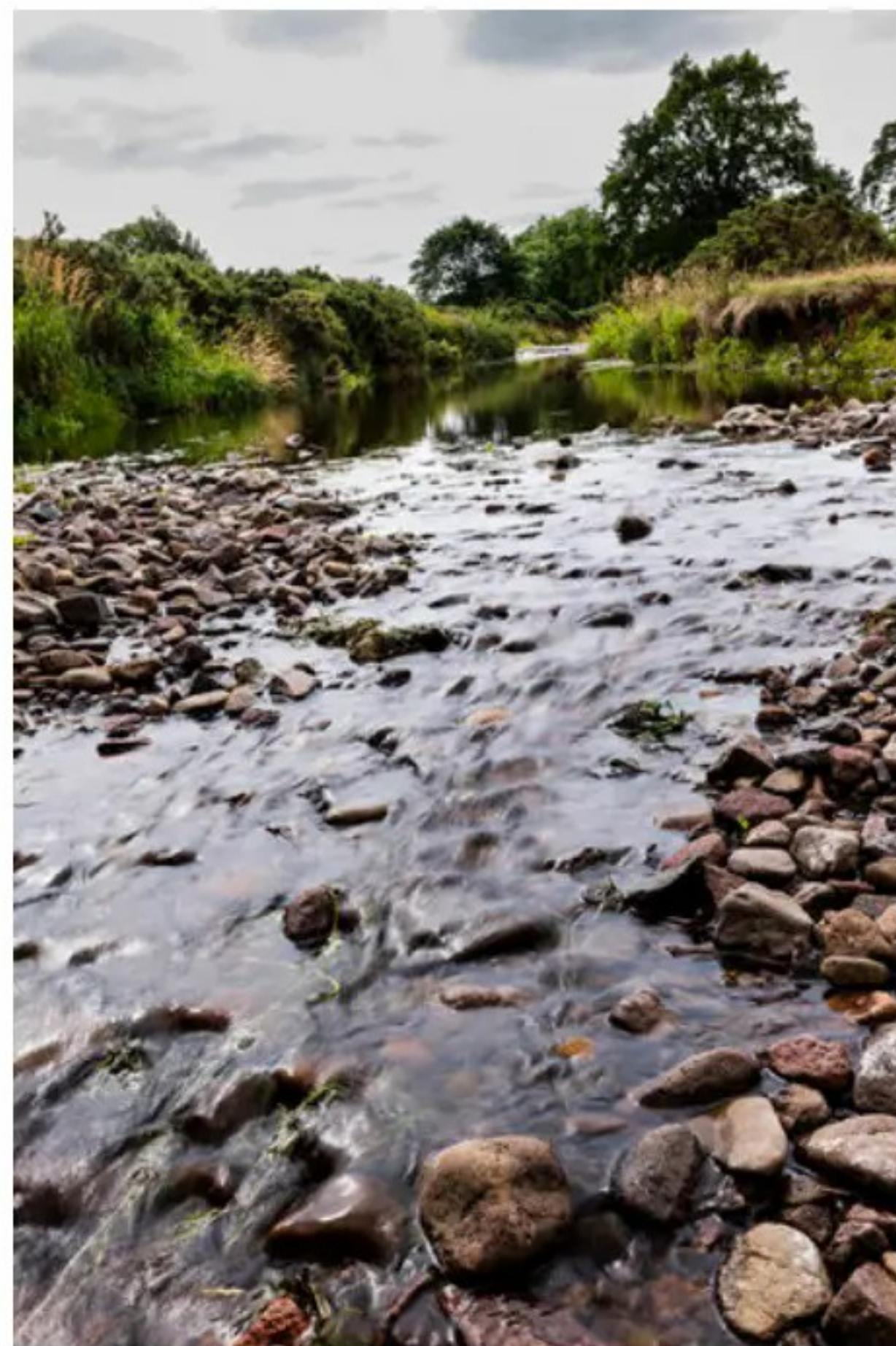
The different experience of Sony's 240MP desktop software process and Leica's effortless 240MP capture is a big thing. While the sensors may be nearly identical and Sony's in-body stabilisation proved if anything slightly more effective, the SL3 multi-shot capture creates a 240MP .DNG file saved on the card alongside one regular 60MP raw – Sony fills media up with 16 large .ARW files that you have to identify and group (not easy!) using Image Edge Viewer and process to create a new .ARQ raw.

I once earned a good part of my living from architectural and industrial work. If I was doing the same now, the Leica SL3 would be an important tool. It's not possible to combine Perspective Control with Multi-Shot high resolution, both obviously demand significant CPU power. Nor can you moderate Distortion Control, as a professional using movements would do, racking back just a fraction off fully corrected verticals to ensure the result looks natural.

As for one of my original intentions in comparing the SL3 and A7RV, the raw file quality and high ISO low light noise control, the outcome was a dead heat. The Leica 14-bit .DNG raws do not have any magical ability to rein in highlights, and as the Sony the best way to have full control over difficult contrast ranges is to work at ISO100 and expose three stops under. This is best done using bracketing so that the EVF and screen remain usefully set to normal exposure.



Above, despite the lack of vertical tilt for the rear screen it proved visible enough to keep this 28mm shot straight – with forearm in the ford. Left, f22 for cup and ring stone, vignetting correction turned off to 'hold in' the frame. Below, the downward tilt of the screen helped shoot over a hedge at dusk, with ISO 3200 and the lens at 70mm wide open delivered surprising quality with unique Leica colour but some vignetting even with the profile. Top right, Perspective Correction used – uncorrected version below. Right, a sloping horizon on a vertical shot as it was too hard to use the finder or the screen. The horizontal version presented no such problems.



While the EVF is definitely smaller than Sony's 9.44 million dot 0.90X view, offering 0.76X magnification and 5.67 million dots, the quality of the eyepiece and the control of brightness make it better in practice. Where the Sony can look dim the Leica may appear little different from using a good optical finder. It depends on the light level, with Sony's low light view winning but the SL3 much easier to use in sunshine. The button to the right of the eyepiece on the SL3 is great for switching instantly between EVF only, EVF Extended (intelligent power saving), Auto switching and rear screen only.

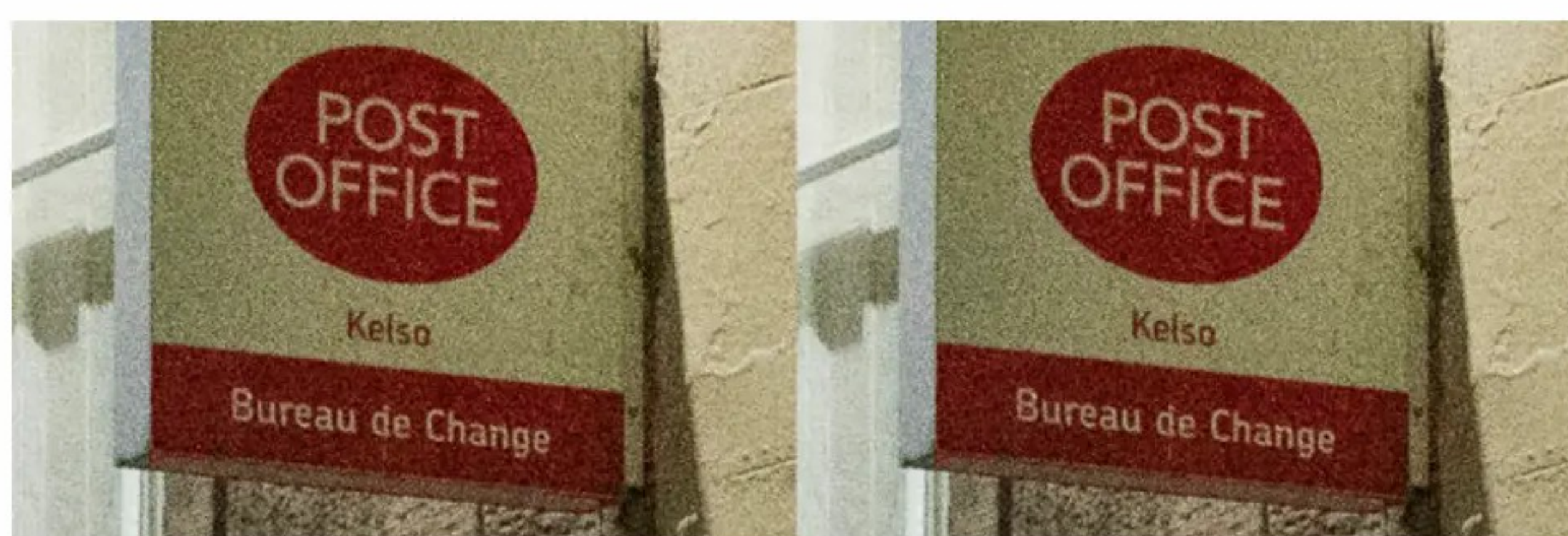
The rear screen is for me the biggest drawback of the SL3. It's an old style hinge and tilt type suitably mostly for landscape composition, and can not be tilted for vertical shots. It also has no front-facing option for video work, and no way to flip round. The lack of vertical articulation made several shots difficult to achieve or compose with a level horizon, such as where the camera needed to be held a few inches above flowing water. You can't lie down in a stream to look through the EVF or study the screen, and the same goes for shots from floor level.

When I wanted to show someone a shot just taken, the rear screen was too dim and reflected the sky in its high gloss toughened glass. You can generally show images on an iPhone in most daylight conditions, but not on this screen. I also found the symbols and text a touch over-finessed for anyone with close accommodation limitations – the EVF, with my eyesight, was better for using menus. Like the whole camera, it's a result of design decisions which you will either love or find restricting.

Fortunately the top plate LCD which displays main settings against a black background has big text for the primary adjustment – a good big f-number shown when in A mode for example. The remaining info of resulting shutter speed, ISO and EV correction is in a very fine small font. It's still better than not having any display of settings, as on the A7RV. It could have been designed to be friendlier to long sight, given the



This picture in a disused phone box was surprisingly difficult as it was at ground level and a vertically tilting rear screen would have been useful. The intense red and the black paint and white cobwebs show perfect white balance and colour management – the detail in those webs is frightening. 1/125s at f8, 70mm, ISO 640, -0.6EV. It's better on an RGB display!



At night, ISO 12,500 on the Leica (12,800 on Sony – they use slightly different scales) allowed 1/200s at f2.8. It may not be easy to see, but the Sony file (left repro at 330dpi) has a touch more noise and less 'bite' to the high contrast detail compared to the Leica on the right. Differences between the Sony 35mm f1.8 prime at f2.8 and Leica f2.8 zoom wide open are not discernible.

demographic of likely SL3 buyers.

However, it's not all about the Leica appeal to affluent older owners. The typical non-grey retail price is around £5,700 (some discounting exists and some stores may be more). The fairest comparison is not with Sony's A7RV because the SL3 has functions above and beyond – it's with the A7RVI at £4,400 with 66MP, or perhaps the Nikon Z9 (more like the SL3-P at 45MP) at £4,999. Or even the Canon R5 MkII at £4,399 with a similar image size.

There's no 60MP competition from Panasonic with the L-mount family but their S1R II at £2999 (reduced by £300 direct from Panasonic UK when we checked) has 44MP and many advanced functions including in-camera multi shot hand held high resolution of 177MP. It has a nearly identical EVF using the same OLED but different rendering and eyepiece.

None of these alternatives offer exactly the combination of a proven 60MP sensor with Leica build quality (IP54 rated for the rainy season) and colour science. If you want to spend more, Leica has a Reporter version of the SL3 in a military dark green finish at £500 extra. The way to find out whether the price is right for you is to book a Test Drive – in the UK, go to <https://leica-camera.com/en-GB/service/test-sl-cameras>. The cost is £50 (refundable against purchase) and if there's a Friday to Monday slot available you get a full weekend – I ended up with Thursday mid-day to Monday mid-day via DHL delivery and pickup. You must also have a credit card with a suitable authorisation limit and to Leica's credit the 'hold' is only 50% of the value.

To make it even better, you can book to receive a personal telephone call to go through any questions with a real Leica staff member prior to the hire – I spoke to Theo, a 40-minute call on time and more than helpful. Follow-up emails also answered questions after the test, and this was not because of *Cameracraft*. It's the standard of service given by Leica.

In the end that's what owners pay for and value.



See: www.leica-camera.com



Above – the full image is a hand-held 240MB multishot (34mm, ISO 100, 1/320s at f8) created as an in-camera .DNG by the SL3 in a matter of seconds. The 300dpi clip inset is from the roof where the red arrow indicates. Below – stabilisation hand-held at 70mm, 1 full second at f8 using ISO 50 which has retained highlight detail in the water. This is very much the same as the Sony A7RV stabilisation which needed 0.6s for similar tones, using -1EV correction.



Ilford Pan F Plus At £13.99 for a 135-36, revisiting Pan F in Perceptol – the finest grain combination possible 50 years ago – needed careful weighing up

Why try, in the digital era, a film which was not that practical even in its heyday?

In the decade up to 1978 I mostly shot black and white, and when nearly all the press photographers I knew used Kodak Tri-X, I chose Ilford FP4. I got on better with Tri-X than with Ilford HP4 as it seemed to have a more robust tonal quality. It was also the film which every newspaper picture desk preferred because the deep tank development in full strength Kodak D76 had to handle several films at once. There were times when one of the photographers would insist on pushed development for a single roll or batch, but mostly the dev was used warmer than 20°C to give one standard fast process time for everyone's films.

As a freelance, developing my own film and making my own prints, the unsuitability of the photo department 'soup' for my FP4 only became an issue if I was asked to hand over undeveloped film. I rated FP4 at double speed, 200 ASA and the difference of about 30% in dev time between Tri-X and FP4 might have ruined some films.

Because I shot carefully on a fine-grain medium speed film, little over a quarter of the sensitivity of Tri-X, some pictures editors liked my prints. Frank Herholdt of *The Guardian* wrote a note when returning prints from my first submission, saying he wished more photographers made prints like mine. They found space to use three of them. A while later I had a roll of FP4 developed by *The Guardian's* Manchester darkroom – they put it through Microdol-X with adjusted dev time for my rating. Most newspapers would never have done that.

Pan F was less than half the speed of FP4, as ISO 50 Pan F Plus is today. I only used rolls rarely, but when I did, I either used the Hyfin speed increasing acutance formula from Ilford based on metol-glycin, or the speed reducing ultra fine grain Perceptol. Hyfin had a dev time of 18 minutes and by the time that was finished with the right agitation the

solution had begun to oxidise. Glycin was hard enough to keep fresh in its dry state! Each sachet of dry chemicals made 600ml so two films saved up for development were a worthwhile economy.

In returning to using developers today I am amazed by what a long shelf and working life they have. I got a one-litre Perceptol powder mix and found that at stock strength it lasts ages. In a full bottle even part used stock solution can handle several films over a few days or weeks weeks.

This matches my experience with Adox Adotol Konstant print developer. It can be used week after week until exhausted which makes it very economical.

My mixed Perceptol was used at full strength for the last issue to process some former-ORWO NP21, to see whether this legendary fine-grain solvent developer could rescue a very grainy slightly outdated stock. It did much better than FX39 but its qualities were wasted on this film.

So I picked up a roll of **Pan F Plus** from Edinburgh retro camera store **Cameratiks**, despite the £13.99 price tag, to see how ISO 50 would fare. To achieve this speed, you can use Perceptol at 1+3, just 75ml of stock to process a roll in a typical Paterson type tank. Dev time is 18 minutes and there's a benefit in controlled highlight density and better sharpness at slight cost of the finest grain and midtone contrast. So that's how I processed it.

With only only one roll to run through it's still surprising how many shot situations can be covered. It's also surprising how many can be hit by a drying mark, scratch or dust. Pan F Plus is a thin emulsion film and despite the common view that a hardening fixer or final formalin bath is not needed, I wish I had done this as I did in the 1970s. Many frames were spotless but the best of five portrait shots had a large mark, and several frames had small ones to retouch digitally. The film base also showed a few fine scratches from wiping it dry after hanging the wet film up (drying the



A quick f8 studio flash of Barrie Spence FBIPP MQEP FSWPP ARPS – president of FEP and incoming president of BIPP. We'll have a full story on Barrie and Fiona's work in the next Cameracraft. Facing page, all on the same roll, all hand-held, several at 1/30s. The abbey used an R60 filter and the shopping mall, none (both 28mm). The road with low sun needed the scan processing with a gradient filter, contrast curve and shadow lift – I should have used Multigrade split with G2 and G5 ground. The birchwood on 50mm has great shadow detail and range.

base can help eliminate drying marks). I need some softer kitchen roll! Pan F Plus can kink in spiral reel loading due to its thin base. That was avoided by carefully shaping the cut-off leader (*photo above*).

The new emulsion does not seem to need the full exposure factor with orange or red filters. It's probably down to increased red sensitivity but strong sky tones were not forthcoming even with R60. Latitude and shadow detail seem more tolerant than original Pan F. I used a Minolta XG-M with 50mm f1.4 Rokkor PG and a Sigma 28mm



f2.8 Macro Wide. The prints are on G2 or G3 Ilfospeed, using an enlarger without filters.

By using Perceptol at 1+3 I've probably compressed tonal difference in the abbey masonry, and the horse tackle seems to have hit a muddy midtone – but this could be failing to see in black and white. Good BW is almost ONLY about light and shade, form and contrast. That shot had colour which probably caught my eye, forgetting such things simply don't work!

– DK





Cameracraft Crossword

by Phoebus

Use this link for crossword solutions – <https://bit.ly/3N0R0fw>



Across Clues:

- 9: Activity carried out by artists, photographers and corrupt police detectives! (7)
- 10: In your mind's eye, can you conceive a hit by John Lennon? (7)
- 11: Founder of al-Qaeda. (5)
- 12: Football official might be Celt, or a device for filling shadows in a portrait studio... (9)
- 13: Learning to make money, but losing 50? (7)
- 14: Confused at Cyril needing everything to be perfectly clear. (7)
- 15: Turner was 'simply the best' in 1989. (4)
- 17: First name of a famous British photographer of the Vietnam war, who turned over a new leaf... (3)
- 18: Essential computer component or accompaniment to deep-fried battered fish! (4)
- 23: Bernie & I got mixed up when we moved down to the Spanish peninsula. (7)
- 25: Get really up close and in focus with one of these! (5,4)
- 27: Leo dour when told he needed deodorant! (5)
- 28: Launched in 1979, this entry level Japanese 35mm SLR camera, model FX3, became very popular with amateur photographers. (7)
- 29: Badly adjusted headlight might illuminate the width of a ship... (3,4)
- foreign language... (8)
- 2: Did German portrait photographer August use one of these tools to prepare surfaces for painting? (6)
- 3: Periods of two years. (7)
- 4: The sum totals of various amounts of rocks, sand, and gravels... (10)
- 5: Minor argument about image file format. (4)
- 6: Collection of essential photographers' devices became rascal's obsession. (7)
- 7: German actress and singer upset about her dire itch! (8)
- 8: Not far away! (6)
- 14: A photographer or artist might receive one of these when engaged to produce a portrait, or an army officer would get one as a promotion. (10)
- 16: Four compass points above fly fisherman's activity makes for a daily programme about current events. (8)
- 19: Long running BBC TV investigative documentary series, or a wide format landscape photograph. (8)
- 20: AI notes unclear about northern European Baltic state. (7)
- 21: Put oneself into a pleasant, snug situation. (2,5)
- 22: Classic Japanese 120 format 6 x 7 roll film camera, initially Rather Brilliant! (6)
- 24: First name of female American photographer 1883-1976; known for her botanical photography, nudes, and industrial landscapes. (6)
- 26: You can buy camera equipment on the web, Ayrshire or anywhere, via this online marketplace. (4)

Down Clues:

- 1: If you were quite wealthy, you might have Auto-Focus on top of being completely eloquent in a

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'They Move in Darkness' – Cefn Coch (Druids' Circle)

by Glyn Davies

website link for print orders:
<https://glynsphotoart.com/products/they-move-in-darkness-cefn-coch-druids-circle-penmaenmawr>

If you would like to submit any of your work to *Cameracraft*, we can consider individual images sent to editor@iconpublications.com in JPEG form, quality level 10, Adobe RGB or sRGB with profile embedded, no watermark or frame/border. The ideal size is 2600 pixels wide. If you would like to have a body of work considered for a portfolio or profile, send a link to a gallery or Dropbox.



“High on the hill tops, nestled between low hummocks of old landscape, sits the Druids’ Circle. As you summit the hill, ancient figures suddenly become stones, instantly frozen but characters nevertheless. If you tune in carefully, you can hear them speaking to each other, whispering about the new person in their midst. I am very aware that my presence is recognised and when I walk away in the fog, I know I’m being watched. As I disappear from view, they move once again.”

Glyn Davies has been featured in *Cameracraft* for his landscapes, seascapes and out figure studies. His work can be seen at the successful Oriel Glyn Davies fine art print gallery in Caernarfon.

CAMERACRAFT REARVIEW



Keith Bannister of Burnley was invited by a photographer friend to a barn owl site he knew near his house. He has resisted any temptation to retouch the wire wrapped hosepipe mum or dad is perching on – genuinely as seen! He used his Nikon Z8 with Nikon Z180-600 mm lens at 530mm wide open at $f6.3$, exposing for 1/500s, with his framing aided by using a monopod. You can see more of Keith's wildlife photography on 500px (kban), on Flickr, and follow him on Facebook @keith.bannister2