

ON TEST SONY RX1R III • LEICA Q3 MONOCHROM • NIKKOR Z 24-105MM
PLUS! 4 IMAGE EDITING VIDEOS & 26 SOFTWARE EXTRAS



Digital Camera World

*The world's favorite
photography magazine*

Issue 306 Spring 2026

22 WAYS TO SHOOT SPRING

From flowers and landscapes to
close-ups of nature... and more!

Interview

Jon McCormack on
the patterns of nature



132
PAGES OF
TOP PHOTO
ADVICE!

FREE! WITH THIS ISSUE



26 Actions,
presets and more



9 all-new photo
tips cards



5 image
editing tutorials



2 photography
e-books

PLUS!
PHOTO
SKILLS
HOTSHOTS
CAMERA
CLINIC



**Trade the camera you
don't use for one you will.
Or take the cash.**

Time to change gear.



Welcome

As we usher in a new season, it's time to spring clean your kit and exercise those creative muscles. This month's cover feature (p62) is a pick'n'mix of 22 projects spanning a variety of photographic genres from flowers and forests to wildlife and weather. More inspiration awaits in Photo Skills (p39), while Camera Clinic (p82) is a masterclass in getting colours right. Digital Camera Apprentice (p8) visits a bird reserve in the company of top wildlife pro Andy Rouse, and we get set for Earth Day on 22 April in this month's interview (p118). Camera and lens reviews (p105) include new compacts from Sony and Leica plus optics by Nikon and Sigma. Enjoy the issue.

Niall

Niall Hampton, editor
niall.hampton@futurenet.com



**SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
GET 6 ISSUES FOR AS LITTLE AS £9.99***

Turn to page 36



This issue's bonus gifts **Find out more on pages 6 and 104**



Nine all-new photo tips cards

Our latest selection of tips cards gives wallet-sized advice on how to take better photos on location



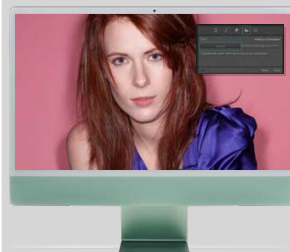
26 Actions, presets, brushes and macros

As seen in this month's tutorials, give your photos a new look in just a few clicks with these bonus software extras



Buyer's Guide and photo annual e-books

250-plus pages of camera and lens best-buys, plus a book of photo know-how – see your download's Gifts folder



26 minutes of video tutorials

Our experts highlight the latest features of Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom and Affinity Photo 2

Follow us or get in touch...



www.facebook.com/Digitalcameraworld
Keep up to date on social media



Instagram:
[@digitalcameramag](https://www.instagram.com/digitalcameramag)
Another way to follow us



Email: digitalcamera@futurenet.com
You can now have your say on our letters pages



Scan this to get our daily newsletter!

Contents

ISSUE 306
SPRING 2026



62

22 SPRING PHOTO PROJECTS



© Ross Gudgeon / CUPOTY

74

Hotshots Our showcase of the category winners from Close-up Photographer of the Year 2025



93

Digital Darkroom Learn essential skills for editing in Photoshop, Lightroom and Affinity Photo

Photo skills

- 8 The Apprentice**
Shoot with a pro – we're winging it at WWT Slimbridge with award-winning wildlife photographer Andy Rouse
- 24 Ask Matthew**
Our agony uncle answers your photo queries on a variety of topics
- 39 Photo Skills**
NEW! Fresh inspiration on every page – choose from nine all-new projects and enter our latest photo challenge
- 62 Shoot the Spring**
Get your photography of the new season off to the best possible start with 22 fun and creative projects
- 82 Camera Clinic**
Are you making the most of colour in your photographs? Will Cheung is on hand with his expert hints and tips
- 93 Digital Darkroom**
Five new image editing tutorials, plus our latest batch of software extras

Regulars

- 20 In Focus**
The latest camera kit and accessories from across the photographic industry
- 26 Readers' letters**
Our pick of the month's correspondence from readers
- 28 Scanning ahead**
Will smartphone tech kill mirrorless cameras, wonders our columnist
- 30 Reader gallery**
Presenting the month's best images across a wide range of genres
- 74 Hotshots**
Category winners from Close-up Photographer of the Year 2025
- 92 Shot of the Month**
One of the photos from Laetitia Vançon's series *The Other Battlefields*
- 118 Interview**
Photographer and conservationist Jon McCormack discusses his new book



Gear & tests

- 106 Sony RX1 R III**
An impossibly small full-frame compact that packs a heavyweight punch
- 110 Leica Q3 Monochrom**
An absolute dream camera for street photography in classic black and white
- 114 Nikkor Z 24-105mm f/4-7.1**
A lightweight and affordable standard zoom for Nikon Z mirrorless cameras
- 116 Sigma 15mm F1.4 DC Contemporary**
A downsized delight for a variety of APS-C sensor mirrorless bodies, including Canon



Page 36 – never miss an issue!
**Subscribe today for
 as little as £21.49**



**SUBSCRIBE
 AND START
 YOUR NEW
 PHOTO
 YEAR!**

*New UK subscribers only

This month's contributors

Andy Rouse Wildlife photographer

High-flying birds, high-flying photographer – the multi-award-winning wildlife pro joins us at WWT Slimbridge to act as photo mentor to keen reader Connor Hill. **Page 8**

Jon McCormack Photographer & conservationist

Coinciding with Earth Day, *Patterns: Art of the Natural World* is a collection of images that reveal the hidden geometry of our planet. Its author tells us more, from **page 118**

Louise Collier Fine-art photographer

A fine-art photographer based in Gloucestershire, Louise loves experimenting with intentional camera movement (ICM). We think you'll love her work too. **Page 43**

Jon Devo Photographer and writer

Our resident tech columnist enjoys considering the latest developments in photography and digital imaging. Read his latest dispatch on **page 28**

Peter Travers Photographer and writer

The editor of our former sister title, *PhotoPlus: The Canon Magazine*, has curated a bumper package of spring photo projects. You can start to get inspired from **page 62**

Will Cheung Photographer and writer

A fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and the former editor of many photography titles, Will is the man behind Camera Clinic, which continues on **page 82**

82 **Camera Clinic** _ While the majority of photos are taken in colour, there's a real skill in using it to full effect. Learn how to maximise the impact of your images, at the point of capture or afterwards in editing, with expert guide Will Cheung

Digital Camera APPRENTICE



8 **The Apprentice** _ It's all about incoming birds this month as we decamp to the WWT Slimbridge nature reserve, accompanied by top wildlife photographer Andy Rouse, to capture the avians arriving for the daily winter feed

39 **Photo Skills** _ **NEW!** We've given our photo projects section a makeover for 2026. It now features step-by-step techniques and in-depth image analysis to help make you a better photographer. Turn to page 39 to get started



**NEW
 SECTION!**
 10 ways to
 improve your
 photo skills
 p39



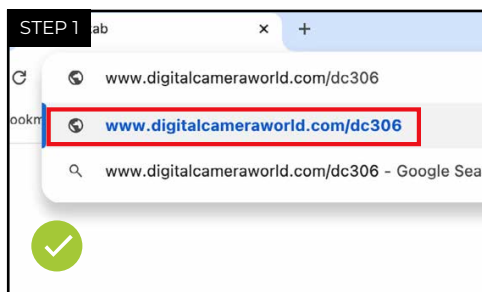
How to get your 32 digital gifts

**BONUS
SOFTWARE
EXTRAS!**
See page
104

ENTER THIS URL

www.digitalcameraworld.com/dc306

Enter the URL **www.digitalcameraworld.com/dc306** into the destination bar of your internet browser – we're using Google Chrome, but other browsers work in a similar way. **Please do not enter it in any search field or search bar.** This will take you to a page on our website.



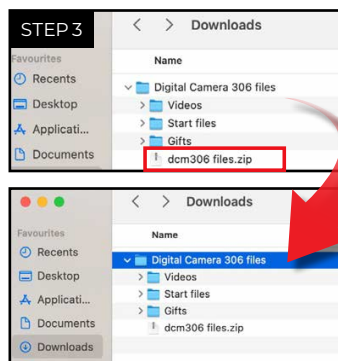
JUST CLICK THE HIGHLIGHTED LINK

Click on the link labelled 'Download the files for Digital Camera 306' and your download will start, delivered from our own server. **Please override any browser warnings about downloading from a non-secure source – our server is safe!**



ACCESS YOUR FILES Open the .zip

In your Downloads folder, or wherever you download your files, double-click the dcm306-files.zip file icon. When it expands, double-click on Digital Camera 306 files, and the download content will display like this (right), arranged in sub-folders. Keep Digital Camera 306 files and delete dcm306-files.zip. Enjoy your digital gifts!



Future Publishing Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA11UA
Editorial +44 (0)1225 442244 • www.digitalcameraworld.com
Subscriptions and customer services +44 (0)330 333 1113

Editorial

Editor **Niall Hampton** niall.hampton@futurenet.com
Technique editor **Wendy Evans** wendy.evans@futurenet.com
Art editor **Roddy Llewellyn** roddy.llewellyn@futurenet.com
Production editor **Jon Crampin** jon.crampin@futurenet.com
Reviews editor **Gareth Bevan** gareth.bevan@futurenet.com
Imaging labs manager **Ben Andrews** ben.andrews@futurenet.com

Contributors

James Abbott, James Artaius, Will Cheung, Jon Devo, Sean McCormack, Dan Mold, Matthew Richards, Peter Travers

Cover image Gareth McCormack / Alamy Stock Photo

Photography Bath Photo Studio

All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising

Group commercial director **Clare Dove** clare.dove@futurenet.com
Head of market, advertising **Matthew Johnston** matthew.johnston@futurenet.com
Account director **Matt Bailey** matt.bailey@futurenet.com
Sales executive **Ellie Joyce** ellie.joyce@futurenet.com
Media packs are available on request

Licensing & Syndication

Digital Camera is available for licensing and syndication. To find out more, contact us at licensing@futurenet.com or view our available content at www.futurecontenthub.com
Head of print licensing **Rachel Shaw** rachel.shaw@futurenet.com

Subscriptions

New orders and customer service queries: help@mymagazine.co.uk
Magazines marketing director **Sharon Todd**

Circulation

Head of newstrade **Ben Oakden**

Production

Head of production US & UK **Mark Constance**
Senior production manager **Matt Eglington**
Senior advertising production manager **Jo Crosby**
Digital editions controller **Jason Hudson**
Production manager **Vivienne Calvert**

Management

Managing director **Stuart Williams**
Content director **Chris George** chris.george@futurenet.com
Group art director **Brad Merrett**

Printed by

William Gibbons on behalf of Future

Distributed by

Marketforce UK Ltd, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR
www.marketforce.co.uk Email: mfcommunications@futurenet.com

How to order and access past issues: If you are an active subscriber, you have instant access to past issues through your iOS or Android device/s. You will only be able to access the digital past issues as long as you are an active subscriber. To purchase single past issues (print format only) visit: magazinesdirect.com (click on 'Single issues' tab) or email: help@magazinesdirect.com. Manage your subscription online with MyMagazine. Visit www.mymagazine.co.uk or help@magazinesdirect.com. www.mymagazine.co.uk is owned and operated by Future Publishing Limited. BAR rate subscription prices: UK £77.87, Europe €161, USA \$182, Rest of the World £140.



Digital Camera (ISSN 1477-1721, USPS 25900) is published monthly with an extra copy in January by Future plc, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA11UA. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc., c/o BBT 150-15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Future plc, c/o World Container Inc., c/o BBT 150-15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.

GPSR EU RP (for authorities only), eucomply OÜ Pärnu mnt 139b-14 11317, Tallinn, Estonia. helo@eucompliancepartner.com, +375690241

General Product Safety 2023/988: The use of our product under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, including the actual duration of use, does not present any risk or only the minimum risks compatible with the product's use, which are considered acceptable and consistent with a high level of protection of the health and safety of consumers.

Subscription records are maintained at Future Publishing, c/o Air Business Subscriptions, Rockwood House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH, UK.

All contents © 2026 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

Editorial complaints Digital Camera is a member of the IPSO (Independent Press Standards Organisation) which regulates the UK print and digital news industry. We abide by the Editors' Code of Practice and are committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism. If you think that we have not met those standards and want to make a complaint, please contact legal@futurenet.com. If we are unable to resolve your complaint, or if you would like more information about IPSO or the Editors' Code, contact IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or visit: www.ipso.co.uk



We are committed to only using magazine paper derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards.



Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com
Chief Executive Officer: **Kevin Li Ying**
Non-Executive Chairman: **Mark Brooker**
Chief Financial Officer: **Sharjeel Suleman**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244



WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT DISPLAY THE TIPA
LOGO IS YOUR ASSURANCE OF THEIR OUTSTANDING
QUALITY, DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE

Every year since 1991, TIPA awards have been given to the best photo, video and imaging products and accessories, including smartphones and equipment for printmaking, image editing and display. The TIPA logo is awarded by a large group of respected editors of technical magazines and websites from around the world, including the Camera Journal Press Club of Japan.



Visit our website to learn more about our
organization and TIPA World Awards
www.tipa.com



Fowl play on the water

One reader, one pro... we visit the Slimbridge Wetland Centre with top wildlife photographer **Andy Rouse**

W

elcome to *Digital Camera Apprentice*, where we pair a reader with a professional photographer for a day of shooting together. The concept is simple: the pro acts as a photographic mentor, sharing their expert insights to help the reader improve their favoured genre of photography – it's like having a one-to-one workshop, but a wider audience gets to see what happens. This month, we're back outdoors to catch the afternoon feed at one of the UK's leading bird reserves. The Slimbridge Wetland Centre, near Stroud in Gloucestershire, is one of the best locations in Britain for wild birds and wildfowl, which is why it's a favourite haunt of top wildlife



The Pro

Name: Andy Rouse

Camera: Sony A1 II

Photographer, author, educator and workshop leader, Andy Rouse has been one of the UK's leading wildlife photographers for 25 years, having won 34 major international awards to date. He also travels the world with his photographic safari company, Wild Bunch Expeditions, sharing his love of wildlife and expert insights with fellow enthusiasts. www.andyrouse.co.uk

The Apprentice

Name: Connor Hill

Camera: Sony A7 IV

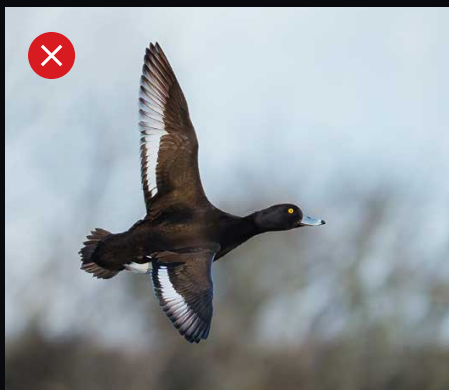
An ecologist who lives in Hampshire, UK, Connor is passionate about conservation and enjoys photographing birds and reptiles. Self-taught, he has invested plenty of time and money in his photography and jumped at the chance to be able to learn from a leading wildlife pro photographer and get instant feedback on his image-making. **Instagram:** @connor.wildlife

Expert insight Backgrounds

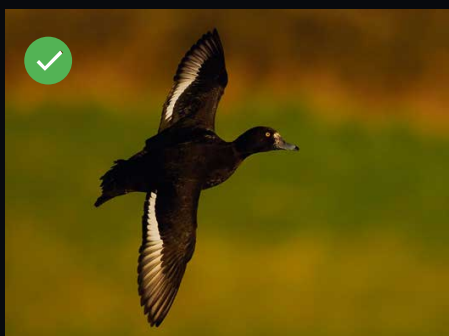
The sunny conditions during our visit may have been preferable to the endless rain in January and February, but they caused extremes of contrast, which had to be taken into account. The cloudless skies didn't make the most inspiring background for flying birds either.

While the vegetation on the opposite side of Rushy Lake provided a varied backdrop for lower-flying birds, and shooting at wide apertures defocused it, any higher-flying birds had to be captured against a featureless blue sky.

No matter where we were at Slimbridge, backgrounds were important and Connor had to find ways of working with them. This involved searching for shafts of sunlight on the water for ducks to move into, or being proactive and adjusting his position – standing or kneeling to best incorporate a decent background in his photos.



Connor Hill



Andy Rouse



RIGHT: 'MERGANSER'

THE APPRENTICE: "After a brief wait, the bird began preening, allowing me to capture its stunning tuft, eye and beak, and giving me a decent pose."

THE PRO: "Beautiful lighting, composition and exposure plus interesting behaviour from the bird. What's not to like? Nothing – great shot!"

photographer Andy Rouse, who has offered to mentor keen photographer Connor Hill for a day. An ecologist from Hampshire, Connor is looking forward to spending a day out photographing our feathered friends, with the bonus of being able to glean some expert insights from one of the top pros on the wildlife scene. Slimbridge's winter feeds take place daily at 4pm on Rushy Lake from November to February; before today's feed, Andy is going to show Connor the best places to photograph wintering birds at Slimbridge.

As *Digital Camera* arrives on the appointed day, Andy and Connor have already met each other in the car park, so we check in with the WWT and make our way to the Rushy Hide. Andy and Connor are both Sony shooters and have each brought the same lens – a Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS – so they will definitely be on the same wavelength today.

Banking on it

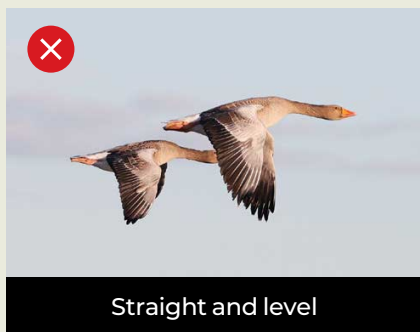
Having booked this shoot a couple of weeks beforehand, we were always going to be at the mercy of the weather. And while today's sun is a welcome respite from over 40 consecutive days of rain since the start of 2026, the wind is going to be a problem. It's coming from the wrong direction, so birds flying in now, and for the feed later on, will be landing into the wind.

This matters because Andy won't be able to show Connor one of his preferred ways of photographing flying birds – not while they're flying past at speed, but when they slow themselves down by banking before landing. It's the ideal way of capturing a top-of-the-wings photo (see panel on the left).

We find some space in the hide and Andy starts suggesting what Connor —————>

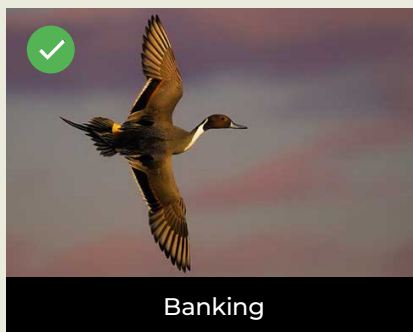
Camera skills Two options for birds in flight

Established pros like Andy know what makes a successful flying bird photo. "The tops of the wings are beautiful," he says, "and pictures of them always sell." A reliable way of capturing wing tops is to catch the birds while they're banking, as they slow down when doing so.



Future

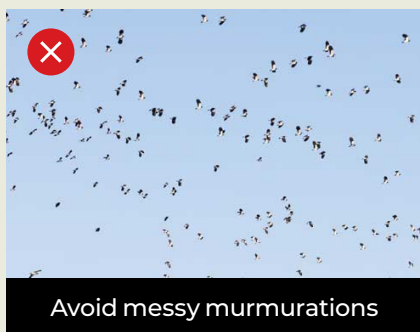
Straight and level



Andy Rouse

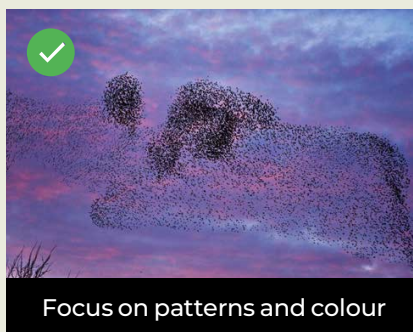
Banking

For a murmuration (below), zoom in and find a pattern – dramatic skies will work best here.



Future

Avoid messy murmurations



Andy Rouse

Focus on patterns and colour



SUPER
SHOT #1

Camera:	Sony A7 IV
Lens:	Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS
Exposure:	1/800 sec at f/7.1, ISO 640

Flying bird photos 101

Things to bear in mind when shooting in a wetland centre

Wildlife sightings

WATER BIRDS Golden Plover Lapwing Oystercatcher Ring-billed Gull Shelduck Wigeon	CLAYTON'S TOWNS Great Frigatebird Grey Puffin Herring Gull Kittiwake Ring-billed Gull Shelduck Wigeon	SLIMBRIDGE Great Frigatebird Grey Puffin Herring Gull Kittiwake Ring-billed Gull Shelduck Wigeon
--	--	---

1 Get genned up

A board behind the visitor centre displays the bird sightings in various locations across the Slimbridge site. And note the guidance boards in the hides – move quietly, keep voices low and don't lean out of the windows or any openings.



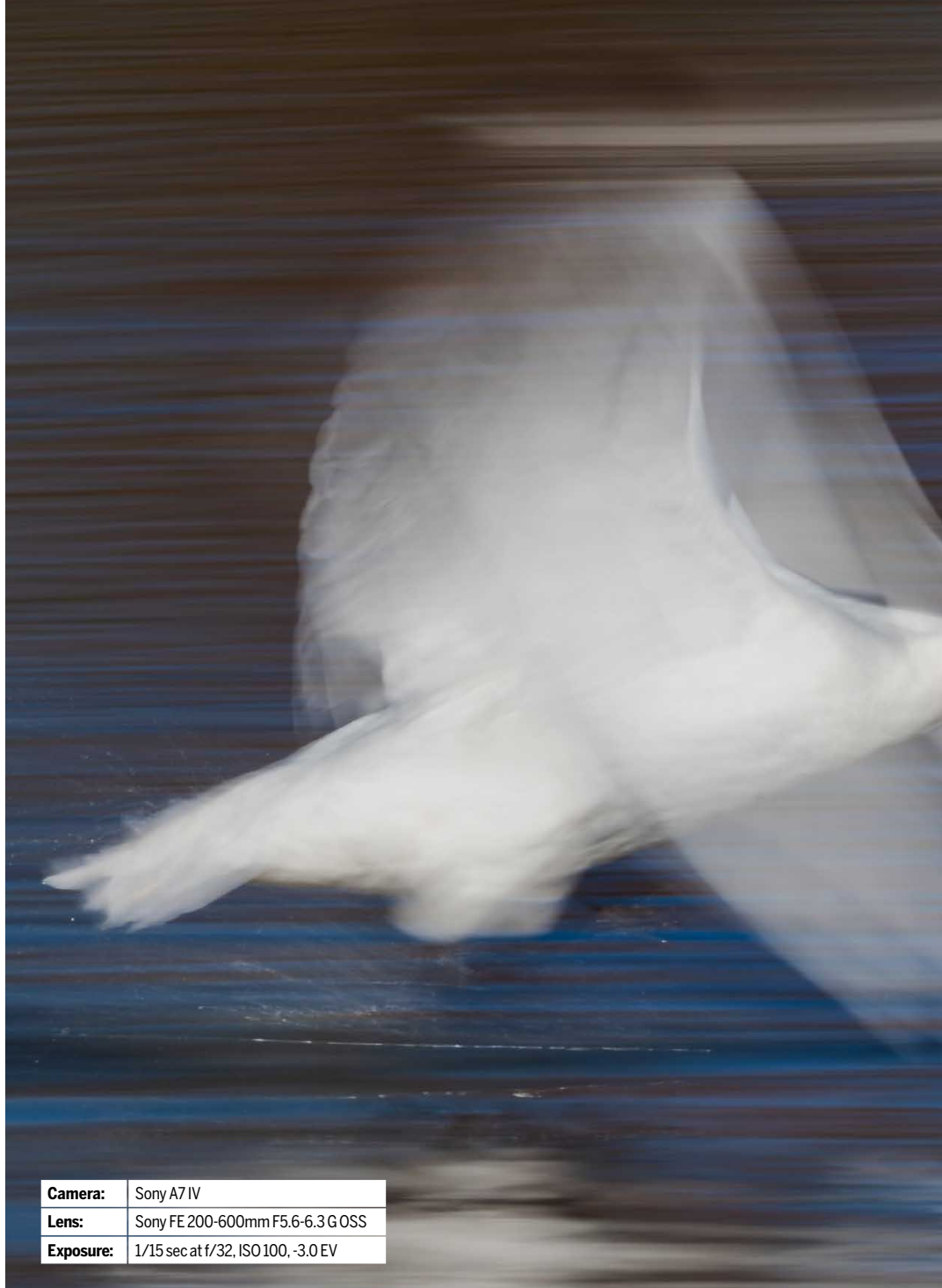
2 Blend in, keep warm

Wear darker clothes that don't advertise your presence and layer up to keep warm in winter. Andy swears by his camouflage-print lens cover, which he has stuck to his heat-dissipating white lens to dial down its visual impact.



3 Fast cards required

A day at Slimbridge could result in shooting up to 1,000 raw files. Make sure you have plenty of capacity, so you don't have to delete files on the fly. Opt for a couple of 128GB cards to eliminate any potential capture card catastrophes.



Camera:	Sony A7 IV
Lens:	Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS
Exposure:	1/15 sec at f/32, ISO 100, -3.0 EV

should be looking for in the sky in front of him. Groups of birds come into view from the left, flying across the front of the hide and landing in front of the adjacent Peng Observatory. Connor starts getting his eye in by tracking and firing short bursts, but the birds are fast and checking his rear screen after a while, he's not getting the photos he wants.

Andy is full of encouragement, though, picking out various birds as they fly past. "The picture is *there*," he gestures. "You see the colours? It's not *there*, because it's too light."

Andy recommends shooting in Manual mode with Auto ISO, and dialling in exposure

compensation if needed. "Auto ISO removes a decision you don't have to make, which is why I use it. I always have my shutter speed around 1/1,000 sec because the reason why most pictures are missed is due to the shutter speed not being fast enough. It's fine to be intentionally blurred, though."

And blur is something that Andy wants Connor to attempt. Birds are flying past, but not in the numbers we need. A lapwing murmuration, on the other hand, is a more straightforward proposition, especially when there's a creative technique for getting distinctive photos of them. Rather →

"I always shoot around 1/1,000 sec. Most pictures are missed due to the shutter speed not being fast enough"

SUPER SHOT #2



Our pro's kit **Sony A1 II**

Having used different brands over the years, Andy is currently shooting on Sony's flagship pro body. Optimised for speed and resolution, the A1 II is based around a 50.1MP full-frame sensor. Two of its killer features are Speed Boost (see below) and Pre-capture (p14). Andy pairs his A1 II with a Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS, mounted to a Coman M1 carbon fibre monopod via a Wimberley AP-620 lens foot.
www.sony.co.uk



LEFT: 'SWAN'

THE APPRENTICE: "I tried to add energy by blurring the fastest areas while tracking the head and eye to prevent the subject from becoming too abstract."

THE PRO: "Top marks to Connor for trying this shot and pushing himself – he did really well considering he literally had seconds to nail this."

Camera tech **Speed Boost**

Wildlife photographers who focus on a stationary bird or animal that flies off or runs away will love this feature – a one-touch way of going from a few frames per second to a faster burst rate, with a single button press. Set to the A1 II's C5 button by default, Andy has mapped Speed Boost to his AF-On button, as he doesn't use back-button focus. Now, a change in behaviour won't mean missing shots.



Speed Boost allows the photographer to jump to a variety of burst rates.

Camera tech **Pre-Capture**

One of the recent innovations in mirrorless cameras has “changed the game” for wildlife photography, says Andy. This feature is available on bodies including the Canon EOS R5 Mark II and R6 Mark III, plus Sony’s A1 II and A7 V, the Nikon Z 8 and the OM System OM-1. While tracking a subject with the autofocus activated and locked on, with a shutter button half-press or the AF-On button engaged, the photographer can capture a burst of frames without fully pressing the shutter button. The duration of the burst depends on the camera model, but can range from 0.3 secs to 1 second, and the images are recorded to the capture card when the shutter button is fully pressed. So missing potentially amazing photos because you didn’t manage to hit the shutter in time has become a thing of the past, although you will have to wade through a lot of files to get to the ‘keeper’ shots...



No Pre-Capture – reject



Pre-Capture on – keeper

than trying to capture an unruly mass of birds, Andy’s tip is to zoom in, look for patterns and colours and slow the shutter speed to 1/15 sec. He adds that, on days with rain clouds, he’ll dial in exposure compensation of minus two, deliberately underexposing to stop white clouds burning out, but also making any dark clouds behind the birds even moodier. With a blue sky backdrop, though, Connor isn’t able to realise the full potential of the scene.

“Don’t be afraid to slow it down,” says Andy. “You’ve got to be willing to fail to get it right, and this can take time to perfect.” We stay here for a while so Connor can practise, then it’s time to move on to a different location.

A quick visit to the Discovery Hide, which overlooks the South Lake, reveals that there isn’t a great deal going on, so we wander over to the Long Ground Pool. Here, groups of ducks float serenely on the water and enjoy the warmth of the sun. With reflections of trees shimmering in the rippling water, it’s an attractive scene, further brought to life by the contrast of the shadows and highlights.

“Too many people rush around these quiet places”, reflects Andy. “They think it’s easy: ‘It’s just a duck in the middle of some water.’

“I get that, but it’s not enough just to get a photograph of a duck on water. Take your time and try to come up with something special.”

Connor is certainly trying to do that, moving around, changing shooting position and exploring the possibilities.

“I love the way the light’s breaking through the trees”, he says. “You have to time your shots so the ducks get picked out by the light. Watching their movements and waiting patiently is rewarding, trying to predict which one will come into the light next, then trying to find the best composition.”

Andy agrees. “I could spend all afternoon doing this, because it’s so relaxing. You’ve got ducks asleep, some of them are twisting, so you’re seeing different pictures.” As enjoyable as it is here, though, there’s still more to see.

Avocets in the aviary

Andy is keen for Connor to stretch his wings creatively, so to speak. So we walk over to the Living Wetland Theatre. Behind this is the Waterscapes Aviary, an immersive attraction that shows visitors how birds rely on wetlands for their survival. Some avocets are enjoying the aviary and Andy issues a challenge for Connor – capture a photo that could fill a double-page spread in a magazine. →

RIGHT: ‘MUTE SWAN’

THE APPRENTICE: “Commonly photographed, so I aimed for a more unusual crop, but it’s a shame the head isn’t lower and tighter against the body.”

THE PRO: “I like the head position Connor has used here, as that little bit of blue helps to frame the head nicely. Again, great composition and exposure.”



Away from flying bird melees, pro Andy and Apprentice Connor enjoyed photographing ducks in one of the less-busy parts of WWT Slimbridge.

SUPER
SHOT #3

Camera:	Sony A7 IV
Lens:	Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS
Exposure:	1/1600 sec at f/6.3, ISO 100, -1.7 EV



ABOVE: 'TUFTED DUCK'

THE APPRENTICE: "Despite the challenging wind direction, a timely high shutter speed shot allowed me to photograph the duck with one wing extended."

THE PRO: "This is a great capture because tufted ducks fly like mini-rockets. Connor managing to get a sharp image like this was a good effort."

"Get a group of avocets together like that one, and blur them with a shutter speed of 1/15 sec or even less, and use the avocets to tell the story of the motion," Andy says.

Connor considers the brief and how he's going to respond to it. What will he try?

"As the water is quite still in here, as opposed to where we were earlier, I'm going to try a reflection shot," he replies. "Potentially having an avocet looking into the water and being reflected back, but I'll need to get lower."

Andy's mentoring is clearly having an impact on Connor; as a pro, your next shot is as important as your archive, so getting fresh takes on familiar scenes is vital. And Andy is a great believer in having a plan, rather than just turning up and seeing what happens on the day. You've got to work with the conditions available and narrow the options.

"In the afternoon, if it's windy, I'll sit in the flight hide and that's all I'm going to do," he

says. "I wouldn't be trying to shoot reflections. Or if it's cloudy, I can try slow shutter speeds. The temperamental weather means you have to take advantage of whatever presents itself, and as a pro, I've always been able to adapt. If it's not working because the animals have other ideas, you have to know when to scrap the plan."

Beautiful backlight

One of the great things about Slimbridge is that there are plan Bs and Cs in abundance. As we stroll back to the visitor centre, one of these options comes into view – a flamingo house. As it's winter, the birds are inside and

SUPER SHOT #4



Connor in the Rushy Hide, all set for the 4pm feed – and the ensuing fly-in – to start. The hide gets very busy, so grab a space before everyone else.



Andy reviews Connor's captures on the rear of his Sony A7 IV. Hints, tips and helpful advice were in abundance all day, and Connor really benefited.

Pro tip Histogram

To avoid blowing image highlights, which can't be recovered, you can enable the histogram in a mirrorless camera's viewfinder. When photographing white birds against a white sky, adjust the exposure settings to keep the histogram away from the right edge of the graph.



Camera:	Sony A7 IV
Lens:	Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS
Exposure:	1/2500 sec at f/6.3, ISO 1000, -0.7 EV

they're pleasingly backlit. Andy recommends that Connor finds a suitable candidate and zooms in for an intimate portrait. There are marks on the glass and a rubber lens hood would come in useful here, but what's right in front of the lens won't be in focus anyway.

"Get your lens right up against the glass, use your hand to keep it there and shoot

away," says Andy. "You'll be fine as long as there are no reflections on the photo."

Connor seems pleased with what he's getting. "I'm chuffed with this shot," he says. "If Andy hadn't pointed out that you can put your lens right up to the glass and still get some decent, sharp pictures, I would have walked straight past that window." →

"If things aren't working because the animals have other ideas, you have to know when to scrap the plan"

Technique assessment

You won't go wrong with these top tips for capturing birds



1 Manual exposure

Connor shoots in Manual mode, for full control of his settings, dialling in exposure compensation as and when the scene requires it. He used Auto White Balance at Slimbridge, although he could change it later as he was shooting raw, and often leaves WB around 5500K.



2 Auto ISO

Thanks to modern sensor performance, image noise at higher sensitivities isn't the problem it used to be. Andy recommended that Connor use Manual and Auto ISO, staying within a reasonable upper limit. On the day, Connor shot between 100 and 2500.



3 Autofocus

For tracking fast-moving feathered subjects, Connor set the AF to continuous (AF-C on Sony and Nikon; AI Servo on Canon) and his focus area to Zone, in conjunction with subject detection and Animal Eye AF. Andy's A1 II can auto-detect subject types – genius!

Pro portfolio

Andy Rouse



Andy Rouse

Black Panther sunset

"Shot as part of my recent low-angle project, this is proof you can teach an old dog new tricks and that as a photographer you need to evolve both creatively and technically. This was captured with a Sony A1 and Sony FE 24-70mm F2.8 GM II lens."



Andy Rouse

Bee-Eater Beauty

"Knowing your camera inside out is the key to great photography. I have Pre-Capture enabled and Speed Boost is mapped to my camera's AF-On button so I can react to situations like this and nail them. Sony A1 II and Sony FE 300mm F2.8 GM OSS lens."



Andy Rouse

Elephant herd

"I've always tried to take images that are punchy, eye-catching and just different, so I've added monochrome to my editing workflow. This is how a herd of elephants running towards you feels! Sony A1 II and 70-200mm F2.8 with 1.4x teleconverter."



One of the flamingo houses was a happy hunting ground for Connor. Inside for the winter, the birds were beautifully backlit by the low sun.

This shot is ticked off, but we're not finished with these pretty pink birds yet. Walking on, we make a quick stop in another flamingo house. It's home to a variety of species, and Connor looks for some intimate portraits.



Apprentice verdict

"Today has been absolutely amazing. Slimbridge is a new place for me and it has been great to spend it with Andy. The experience has definitely given me some extra avenues to try in the future."

Feeding time

After reviewing the day so far at the excellent Kingfisher Kitchen Restaurant, we return to where the day started, squeezing into a space at the end of Rushy Hide. Eventually, a WWT warden walks onto the bank of Rushy Lake with a barrow of feed and pandemonium ensues. As the wind hasn't changed, the in-flying birds aren't banking before landing, so Connor isn't able to get the top-of-the-wing shots he's hoping for. But where there's food, there's fighting, and Connor does his best to bag some bad behaviour in the melee.

As light levels start falling, there are plenty of birds in the sky – lapwings, ducks, geese and swans – not all of them adhering to the flight paths that would produce the best photography. And as there are plenty of high-flyers, the only background is a fading blue sky. It's not often you wish for bad weather, but some moody clouds would have given Connor's photos a different aesthetic. But there's no need to get in a flap about it, because we've all had a great day out at one of the UK's best bird-watching sites. ● Special thanks to the WWT for hosting us today. You can find out more about the Slimbridge Wetland Centre at: www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/slimbridge



Pro verdict

"Connor has done really well. He's listened to my advice and has taken some new ideas on board. His photography is good – he just lacks a bit of confidence, and I hope I've given him some of that today."

RIGHT: 'BACKLIT FLAMINGO'

THE APPRENTICE: "The dark background and directional light offered me a chance to get creative, resulting in this low-key style photo."

THE PRO: "I noticed Connor picking this shot out. He knew what he wanted and nailed a great image that many photographers would just walk past."

BE OUR NEXT APPRENTICE!

Are you looking to take your photography to the next level, whatever genre you shoot? *Digital Camera* can help. Let us know what you'd like some help with, and we could pair you up with a top pro for the day! Email us with 'The Apprentice' in the subject line, let us know which camera you use and share some examples of your photos. Apprentice shoots take at least half a day, and you'll need to be able to travel to them independently.

Email us at:
digitalcamera@futurenet.com





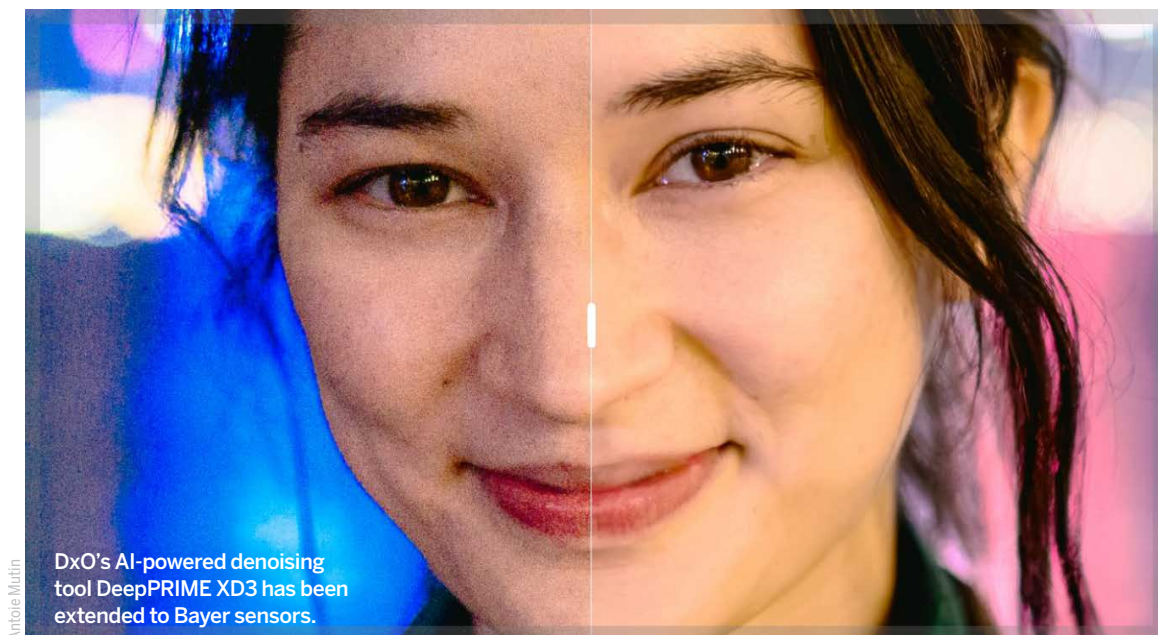
SHOT
OF THE
DAY!

Camera:	Sony A7 IV
Lens:	Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS
Exposure:	1/1000 sec at f/5.6, ISO 800, -1.7 EV

InFocus

Photography news from around the globe

01	Photography news	Page 20
02	Ask Matthew	Page 24
03	Letters	Page 26
04	Scanning ahead	Page 28



1 DEEPPRIME XD3 FOR BAYER SENSORS

Owners of Bayer-sensor cameras now get the 'eXtra Detail' of DeepPRIME XD3.

2 'UNMATCHED' DUST REMOVAL

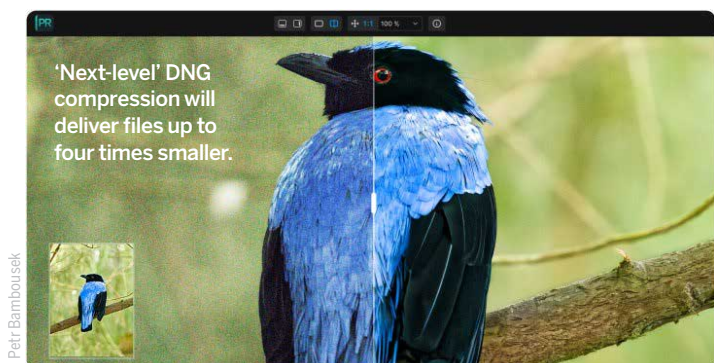
Powered by AI, DxO says dust spots can be found and zapped quickly and efficiently.

3 BUY OUTRIGHT OR SPREAD THE COST

PureRAW 6 is available as a one-off purchase, or you can opt to pay in instalments via PayPal.

DxO's AI-powered denoising tool DeepPRIME XD3 has been extended to Bayer sensors.

Antoine Mutin



Petr Bambousek



DxO PureRAW 6

Latest version of raw file batch processing software brings enhanced noise-reduction for Bayer sensors, 'breakthrough' high-fidelity DNG file compression, 'unmatched' AI dust removal and faster performance

PureRAW 6 is on sale now, boasting a range of new features including DeepPRIME XD3 for Bayer sensors, 'next-level' DNG compression, AI-sensor dust removal and faster batch processing. For anyone unfamiliar with the DxO ecosystem, PureRAW is designed to be the first port of call to maximise the quality of raw files by producing sharper, cleaner and more detail-rich imagery. The AI-powered denoising tool DeepPRIME XD3 was launched in PureRAW 5 exclusively for Fujifilm X-Trans sensors, but PureRAW 6 extends its compatibility to the more commonly used Bayer sensors. The technology uses a complex neural network to perform its tasks, turning out results that DxO claims are "perfect for the most demanding raw files".

Other improvements featured in PureRAW 6 include 'next-level' DNG compression, with the ability to deliver DNG files that are up to four times smaller with no loss in image quality, and 'unmatched' AI-sensor dust removal, which according to DxO, finds and removes dust spots with "unmatched precision".

The latest version of PureRAW also benefits from performance improvements: a 'batch parallelisation' function is claimed to speed up performance by simultaneously preparing the next image. PureRAW 6 is available now, as a lifetime licence or by spreading the cost and paying in four instalments via PayPal.

Find out more at: www.dxo.com; £120/\$140 (lifetime licence). £75/\$90 (upgrade from PureRAW 4 and 5).



SIGMA

ART
50mm F1.2
DG DN

Available in L-Mount and Sony E-mount.

Visit sigmauk.com



Follow us on Facebook

Keep abreast of all the latest photography news and reviews, *Digital Camera* subscription offers and community updates – including shoutouts for participants in our Apprentice reader challenge.

Facebook page: [Digitalcameraworld](https://www.facebook.com/Digitalcameraworld)



Follow us on Instagram

It's all about the image – see what other Instagram followers, plus some of the biggest names in photography, have been posting and share your photos with the growing *Digital Camera* magazine community!

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

Focal point

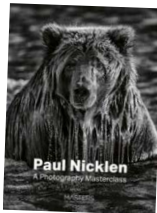
Rounding up what's new and exciting this month



Quarto / Paul Nicklen

Take Paul Nicklen's masterclass

Based on his Masters of Photography course, the top wildlife photographer offers a masterclass in his craft. Over 20 lessons, readers can learn how to spark creativity and develop their own style, go behind the scenes of some of Paul's top pictures and grow as a photographer. www.quarto.com; £18.99/\$25



SJCAM C400 action camera

This modular 4K action cam seeks to bridge the gap between conventional action cams and handheld creator devices. Its detachable 3-in-1 design supports handheld shooting, mounted POV capture and remote operation via a wireless Bluetooth controller. www.sjcam.com; £210/\$236



Leitzphone goes global

Hitherto exclusive to the Japanese market, the Leitzphone will now be sold globally. A partnership with Xiaomi, the latest Leitzphone features a 200MP zoom, a one-inch sensor and a rotatable camera control ring for adjusting zoom, ISO and more, and for choosing Leica Looks. www.leica-camera.com; £1,700/\$N/A



Sigma 35mm F1.4 DG II Art

Updated prime for L-Mount and Sony E-mount focuses on bringing enhanced resolution across the entire frame for today's higher-resolution mirrorless bodies

While this optic carries a 'II' in its name, Sigma says that the lens has been 'completely redesigned', a change that makes it about 20 per cent lighter and around 14 per cent shorter than the previous iteration. The Sigma 35mm F1.4 DG II Art uses a 15-element design in 12 groups (the preceding version used the same number of elements but in 12 groups).

Sigma says that this updated prime corrects for chromatic aberration. The surface accuracy of its aspherical elements has also been improved, which works along with the 11 rounded aperture blades of the lens to create smoother bokeh. The L-Mount variant of the new optic weighs 530g, down from the 645g of the original.

Find out more at: www.sigmauk.com; £849/\$1,059

The lens is dust and splash-resistant, while coatings to repel water and fingerprints will help protect the front element.



Du Li/Chao

Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S II

The original was crowned the 'world's best' 70-200mm trinity zoom, but the latest version is better, lighter, faster... and more expensive

Redesigned from the ground up with Nikon's best autofocus system to date, re-engineered S-Line optics, stronger image stabilisation, improved ergonomics and a lighter build, the new lens is 362g lighter and 12mm shorter than its predecessor – and a significant upgrade in terms of balance, agility and stability. Up to six stops of in-lens Vibration Reduction are

available and autofocus speed is claimed to be up to 3.5x faster – and 50 per cent quieter – than the first generation. The new optical construction uses fewer elements to greater effect, there's pro-grade weather sealing and the removable tripod collar now has an Arca-Swiss-compatible tripod foot.

For more info, visit: www.nikon.co.uk; £2,999/\$3,197



Nikon



Autofocus is 3.5x faster and 50 per cent quieter than the first-generation lens.





SNAP YOUR BEST FRIENDS YOUR MEMORIES. INSURED.

Insurance for your camera equipment, pets, horse and more with our wide range of policies.

25%*
INTRODUCTORY
DISCOUNT

ON CAMERA INSURANCE



theinsuranceemporium.co.uk/DC99



03300 244 062



*The Introductory Discount is available from the start of the policy until its first review/renewal date.

AskMatthew

All your questions answered. Send your questions to digitalcamera@futurenet.com



Matthew Richards

Matthew Richards is a photographer and journalist who has spent many years using all manner of photo gear.



This shot was taken on a Nikon Z 8, but you can expect the same kind of pictorial quality and colour treatment from the Z 6III.

© Adam Waring / Future

Decision time: Nikon Z 8 or Z 6III?

Q I have a Nikon D810 and am trying to decide whether to upgrade to a Z 6III and Z 24-120mm lens, or a Z 8 body on its own. Do you have any suggestions?

Frankie Holmes

A That's a tough choice. The Z 8 is relatively chunky and features Nikon's more 'pro-style' layout of controls, which will feel a more seamless progression from your D810. Its high-res

46MP stacked image sensor plays a starring role, which pays dividends if you want to create super-sized photo prints while retaining the utmost in fine detail and texture. It also allows really aggressive levels of creative cropping.

The flipside is that the Z 6III is more compact and lightweight. Although it has a more modest 24MP 'partially stacked' image sensor, it's still speedy, has an incredibly realistic viewfinder, more effective image stabilisation and less image noise at high ISO settings.

I've found that Z-system lenses are generally in a different league to their F-mount counterparts, the larger mounting flange and closer proximity to the image sensor enabling superior image quality, so I'd keep something in the kitty for upgrading your lenses.



One of the main handling differences between the two cameras is that the Z 8 has Nikon's typical pro-style layout, especially for the control buttons on the left of the top panel.



These toy soldiers were shot under LED room lighting. By switching the camera's flicker reduction mode on, we have eliminated any banding and ensured consistency in successive exposures.

Flicker-free indoor shooting

Q I took some indoor shots of toys using LED room lighting, but I've noticed banding in some shots and the exposure levels are inconsistent. Why is this, and how can I fix it?

Andy Wallcroft

A Mains-powered LED lightbulbs are quite flickery, so while the light looks 'constant' to the naked eye, there's a lot of fluctuation in brightness from one split-second to the next. That's not an issue at slow shutter speeds, but speeds of around 1/100 sec or more can be problematic. The solution is to use your camera's 'flicker reduction' shooting mode. Its exposure metering system automatically triggers the shutter release at the right moment. This reduces the appearance of banding, so you don't get a difference in brightness towards the top or bottom of the frame.

Build yourself an extension

Q I'm hoping to get into macro photography, but my budget won't stretch to a proper macro lens. Is there any mileage in using extension tubes with my standard prime lens?

Joni Jennings

A The short answer is yes! I recently tested some extension tubes for our website www.digitalcameraworld.com and was especially taken with the Meike MK Extension Tube Set. Consisting of two tubes of different lengths, used individually or together for different magnifications, they are available in Canon RF, Nikon Z, Sony E and L-Mount versions, with full electronic pass-through between camera and lens, at around £40 (\$40) per set. The Viltrox DG AF Macro Extension Tube Set is also good for Nikon Z and L-Mount, at £50 (\$55).

This extreme close-up of a nutcracker doll was taken with a Nikon Z 40mm lens and Viltrox 24mm extension tube, delivering serious macro magnification.



Second-hand superstar

Almost the last in an illustrious line, this APS-C format DSLR has a lot to offer

Q I'd like a 'proper' DSLR camera, ideally Canon, that delivers good all-round performance and image quality at a keen price. Which second-hand model would you recommend?

Harry Taylor

A **Matthew recommends...**
Canon EOS 80D
It's the second-to-last in Canon's run of double-digit DSLRs; the final EOS 90D is still available to buy new.



Despite the design now being over 10 years old, the 80D still features all mod-cons, including a fully articulated rear screen and Dual Pixel sensor-based autofocus, in addition to the viewfinder AF module and a secondary top-panel info screen.

Released (year): 2016
Price new: £999/\$1,199
'Excellent' £375/\$435
'Good' £285/\$375

Wonderfully versatile, the 80D is properly good at just about everything. The controls, ergonomics and overall handling are befitting of an enthusiast-level camera. For Free Mags Check Sanet.st With comfortable grip areas and a smart layout of direct-access controls for creative shooting settings.

Well-suited to action shots, it has a fast maximum shutter speed of 1/8000 sec, with a respectable 7fps continuous drive rate. The top panel LCD is easy on the eye, and the viewfinder is an up-market pentaprism with full 100 per cent frame coverage. Killer features include Canon's Dual Pixel AF for fast and accurate autofocus in Live View and movie shooting, a vari-angle touchscreen and built-in Wi-Fi.

1 Sensor and processor
The 80D has a 24.2MP Dual Pixel CMOS image sensor and a late-generation DIGIC 6 processor to deliver great performance.

2 Autofocus module
As a DSLR, the 80D has a standalone autofocus sensor, complete with no less than 45 AF points, all of them cross-type.

3 Rear screen
As well as an optical viewfinder, the 80D has a 3-inch rear screen with 1040k-dot resolution and full articulation.

Sensor, proc: 24.2MP CMOS, DIGIC 6
AF points: 45-point (all cross-type)
Shutter speeds: 1/8000 to 30s, Bulb
ISO range: ISO 100-16,000 (50-25,600 extended)
Viewfinder: Pentaprism, 0.95x, 100%
Rear screen: 3-inch, 1040k dots, touch, pivot
Memory: 1x SD/HC/XC
Size, weight: 139 x 105 x 79mm, 730g
Battery, life: LP-E6N, 960 shots

Readers' Letters

Have a burning question about the future of photography? Want to discuss a feature or a tutorial in the magazine? Send us your letters...

★ Star letter prize ★

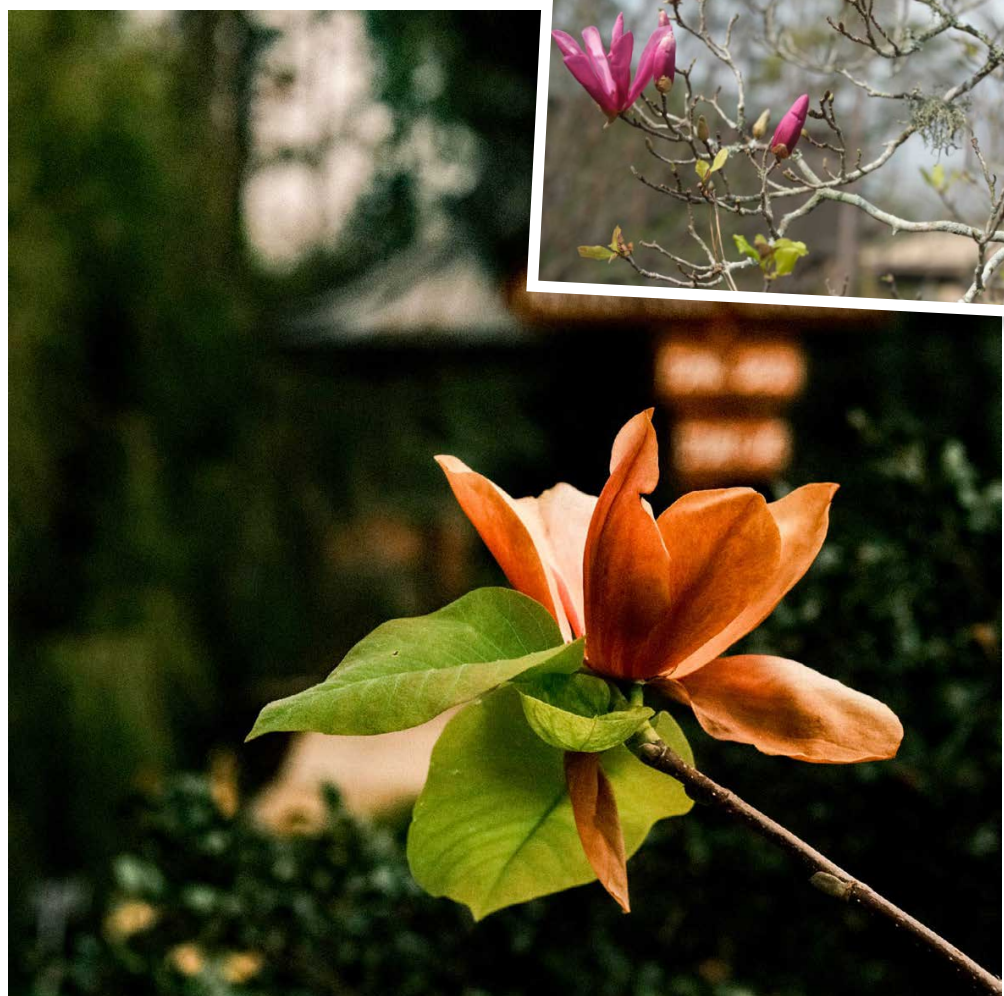
cewe
we love photos

Love capturing life's moments?

With CEWE, you can turn your favourite memories into something truly special. From an award-winning CEWE PHOTOBOOK to beautiful, high-quality wall art, CEWE will help you bring your story to life.

The Star Letter each month will win a voucher for £50 to be used to create a CEWE PHOTOBOOK.

Scan this code to find out more



Larry Plasek

Star letter: Down in the woods

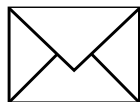
After reading the 'A walk in the woods' project in issue 300 (November 2025), I embarked on a mission with a new 56mm f/1.2 portrait lens. The challenge was to find out whether a portrait lens could be effective for landscape and nature photography. With a restricted minimum focusing distance, would the image be sharp for subjects such as blossoms and plants? How about the bokeh? Is extra post-processing necessary and is metering a problem? All relevant questions, but the overriding answer seems to be, 'Sure'!

These images (above) indicate that a 56mm lens can consistently answer many of these questions and produce a desirable image. The conclusion of this

mission seems to be that a more skilled photographer than I can take these factors into consideration and use virtually any prime or zoom lens to capture the image in their mind's eye! I have much to learn.

Larry Plasek, by email

Digital Camera says: Of course, your portrait lens could do a job here, as we can see from these two great images. They aren't that limited on close-ups either, as a 56mm lens will typically allow focusing at around 50cm for newer lenses, or a bit further for older lenses. With a wide aperture, you will be able to get some great bokeh, but the challenge then becomes one of assessing how much depth of field you need for each shot.



Send us your letters and photos!

Have your say in the magazine.

Tell us what you think of our articles or photography.

Email us, with **'Reader letters'** in the subject line, at: digitalcamera@futurenet.com



Join us on Facebook

Keep abreast of all the latest news and reviews, *Digital Camera* subscription offers and community updates – including shoutouts for our Apprentice reader challenge.

Facebook page: [Digitalcameraworld](https://www.facebook.com/Digitalcameraworld)



Ando Fuchs

@andofuchs

Amazing black and white photographer from Austria with a strong use of light, shadow and composition

Jayne Bond

@jaynebond_studiomlino

A stunning array of wildlife captures from around the natural world

Angi Wallace

@angiwallacephotography

Creative photographer specialising in macro and experimental floral work, submerging flowers in water and ink

Anthony Murray

@alternative.exposure

Glasgow-based photographer whose experimental visual photography work uses motion and light in urban scenes

Tim Allen

@timallenphotogram

Environmental portraits from around Hastings, as well as photographs of local craftspeople and their work



Tim Allen

NEXT ISSUE:

Tim Allen takes us through his new zine, 'Strangers When We Meet'



Join the community on Instagram

Our growing community is where you can see our readers' amazing work, plus get regular updates for challenges, Rate My Photo and subscription offers. We also showcase the highlights of our latest issue.

Instagram: @digitalcameramag

Cover note

The 'clean' cover design of issue 304 (March) looks neat – just the main image, masthead and barcode. Having been transferred to *Digital Camera* from *PhotoPlus*, I'm happy – you have some great articles and I like the fact that like the 'hands-on' content is aimed at different levels, from newbies to intermediates and even more advanced photographers. Keep up the excellent work – and the clean cover designs! *Stephen Keene-Elliott, by email*

Digital Camera says: Thanks for your kind words, Stephen. We're glad you're enjoying the content in the magazine and the 'clean' cover designs. These are produced for the 'premium' issues we run during the year – special promotions for newstrade retailers including TG Jones, WH Smith Travel and other outlets. For an increased cover price, buyers receive a photography bookazine or a photo calendar and as the magazine is sold in an environmentally friendly paperwrap, we're able to run the front cover without 'coverlines', so the main photo can be appreciated as its photographer intended.



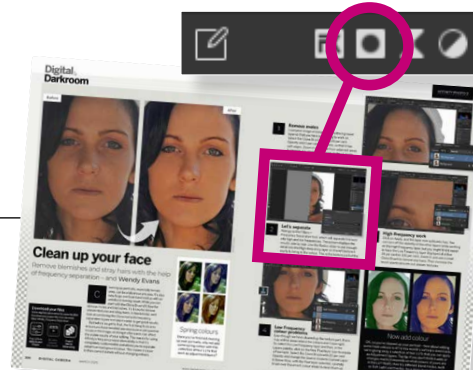
Easier to use

I like the new layout of the magazine, but I have a suggestion as to how the Digital Darkroom section could be more user-friendly. When there has been a major update to software, your authors shouldn't assume readers know where to find things.

Specifically, Wendy Evans's article on cleaning up portraits with the Frequency Separation tool, in the March issue (304). In Step 2 of that tutorial, she suggests going to the Frequency Separation Tool. In Affinity Photo 2, it's easy to find from the top menu bar by going to Filters > Frequency Separation, but that dropdown option isn't visible in the top menu of Affinity Studio 3. It took me ages to find it, as Filters is now just an icon on the right-hand toolbar (second from right). Frequency Separation isn't one of the available options and there was no supporting video to help. I eventually found

it in the Pixel top menu, but it took me a while. It would be helpful if your writers remember that most of us are nowhere near as familiar with the software as they are. *David Lane, by email*

Digital Camera says: We are using the most popular version of the software packages and, unfortunately, we don't have the space to include instructions for different versions. However, we are aiming to include a video with each of the tutorials, where possible, to make it easier to follow.





Jon Devo

"A new type of camera is emerging, led by mobile brands like Tecno and Vivo."



Jon Devo
[instagram.com/gadgetsjon](https://www.instagram.com/gadgetsjon)

Jon is a professional photographer, videographer and technology journalist.

At Mobile World Congress (MWC 2026), held in Barcelona in early March, the most significant devices weren't just the ones with the fastest processors or thinnest bezels. They were the ones that had stopped pretending that smartphones and cameras are different things. Brands like Tecno, Xiaomi in partnership with Leica, and Vivo demonstrated attractive and capable modular solutions that give smartphones proper grips, dedicated shutter buttons, and serious optical zoom. Vivo's X300 Ultra was on display, fully rigged and Zeiss-engineered, with results that were hard to argue with.

However, the show's most arresting concept was from Tecno: a 4.9mm-thin prototype accepting magnetic hardware upgrades, including a 20x optical zoom lens with manual focusing ring, an action camera mod and more. Where Motorola's 2016-era Moto Mods once felt like an engineering curiosity, this felt like a category arriving. Honor's Robot Phone, built with Arri, with a DJI Pocket-style gimbal in its chassis, underlined the point. What MWC 2026 confirmed is that the problems that killed the Galaxy Camera, including poor battery life, sluggish performance and bulk, have been solved by 14 years of progress. Samsung's imagination from back in 2012 has finally met hardware that can keep up with it.

Which brings us to the question that the camera industry should be losing sleep over. Mirrorless didn't just replace the DSLR. It made the DSLR feel obsolete by being meaningfully smaller and technically superior, winning on two fronts simultaneously. The modular smartphone makes the same argument: increasingly capable image quality, a device you already carry everywhere, and the physical controls and optical reach that were the last remaining objections. If mirrorless is to avoid the DSLR's fate, the industry needs to answer not just with better sensors, but with a clearer reason to exist as a separate object. History suggests that will be harder than it sounds. ●

Scanning ahead...

Jon Devo says advances in smartphone tech could signal the end of the mirrorless camera

The year is 2012, the London Olympics have finished, and the Paralympics are just beginning. Instagram is entering its golden

age after being purchased by Facebook, signalling a shift that the traditional camera industry was just beginning to understand: that camera tech would move from professional hardware to social-first software powered by AI.

Out in space, NASA's Suomi-NPP satellite provided its first images of the globe. Its revolutionary Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite featured a Day-Night Band lowlight sensor that changed how we see from space. It could capture the brightest sunlight during the day and the glow of a single ship at sea at night, automatically switching gain stages and subtracting sensor noise from the image.

It was the ultimate proof of a new photography dogma: when you reach the physical limits of glass and silicon, software takes over. The way Suomi-NPP solved extreme dynamic range using computational stacking is a direct ancestor to Night Mode in smartphones and dynamic range boost in mirrorless cameras today. While NASA was deploying this tech to photograph our own planet in unprecedented detail, Samsung was back on Earth at IFA 2012, betting that connected intelligence would eventually swallow the camera industry whole.

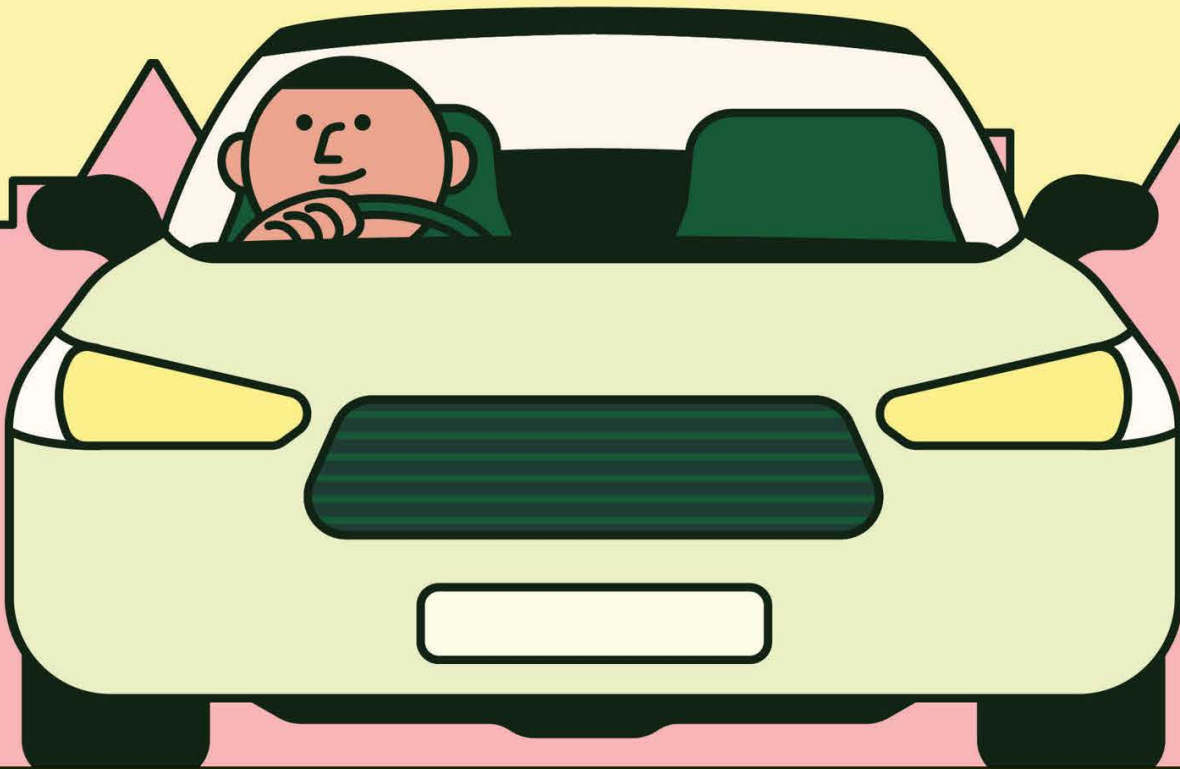
Few realised it then, but Samsung showcased two ideas that would define the next generation of devices. The Galaxy Note II and the Galaxy Camera were Samsung's hedged bet that the future of mobile and cameras would be inextricably linked. The Galaxy Camera was the world's first truly connected camera: a non-removable 21x optical zoom lens, a 4.8-inch screen and Google's Android operating system. The Note II proved that people had an appetite for a large creative canvas to make and enjoy content on. That direction of travel is now unmistakable.

"Samsung's imagination from 2012 has finally met hardware that keeps up"

Advertisement

GO.
COMPARE

STEERING YOU TOWARDS SAVVY SAVINGS



From first cars to long drives,
scan here for car cover that fits you.





Reader gallery

Digital Camera readers show how they've been getting creative, submitting images across a range of genres



1

'Nanshan District' by Geoff Taylor

Cityscape photography presents an excellent opportunity to capture the stark, raw architecture of the modern urban environment. In the evening, the Nanshan district of Shenzhen looks striking, providing a wonderful light show. Until the early 1980s, Shenzhen was a small fishing village in southern China. Now a major technology city, it continues to expand rapidly."

Instagram: @geofft1000

Digital Camera says:

Great shot! You've managed to capture some pleasing colour in the evening sky, which contrasts with the lights of the city. The composition works well, with the shoreline leading the eye towards the cluster of buildings.

Reader gallery

2

'Strelitzia Reginae' by Pauline Graham

"I recently began experimenting with intentional camera movement (ICM) to introduce some motion into my images. This shot of a bird of paradise flower (strelitzia reginae) was taken in my studio using natural light from the window on a dull day in January. At f/8 and ISO 50, I had a shutter speed of 2.5 seconds, during which I moved the camera slightly to create the effect in this image."

Settings: 2.5 secs at f/8, ISO 50.

Instagram: @paulinegrahamimages

Digital Camera says:

Bird of paradise flowers are known for their bright coloured petals, and by shooting them against a black background, you have shown them and the movement off perfectly.



3 'Dong Lady' by Xiaoyan Ren

"The picture was taken in Liping County, Guizhou province, a remote part of south-western China. While I was walking in the paddy fields, I noticed two young women of the Dong ethnic minority. I took the photo of this lady while she was chatting to her friend." **Instagram:** @xiaoyan_renphotos02202026

Digital Camera says:

This is a great portrait study. The black and white conversion really makes the woman stand out.



4 'Beresford Building' by Stuart Neville

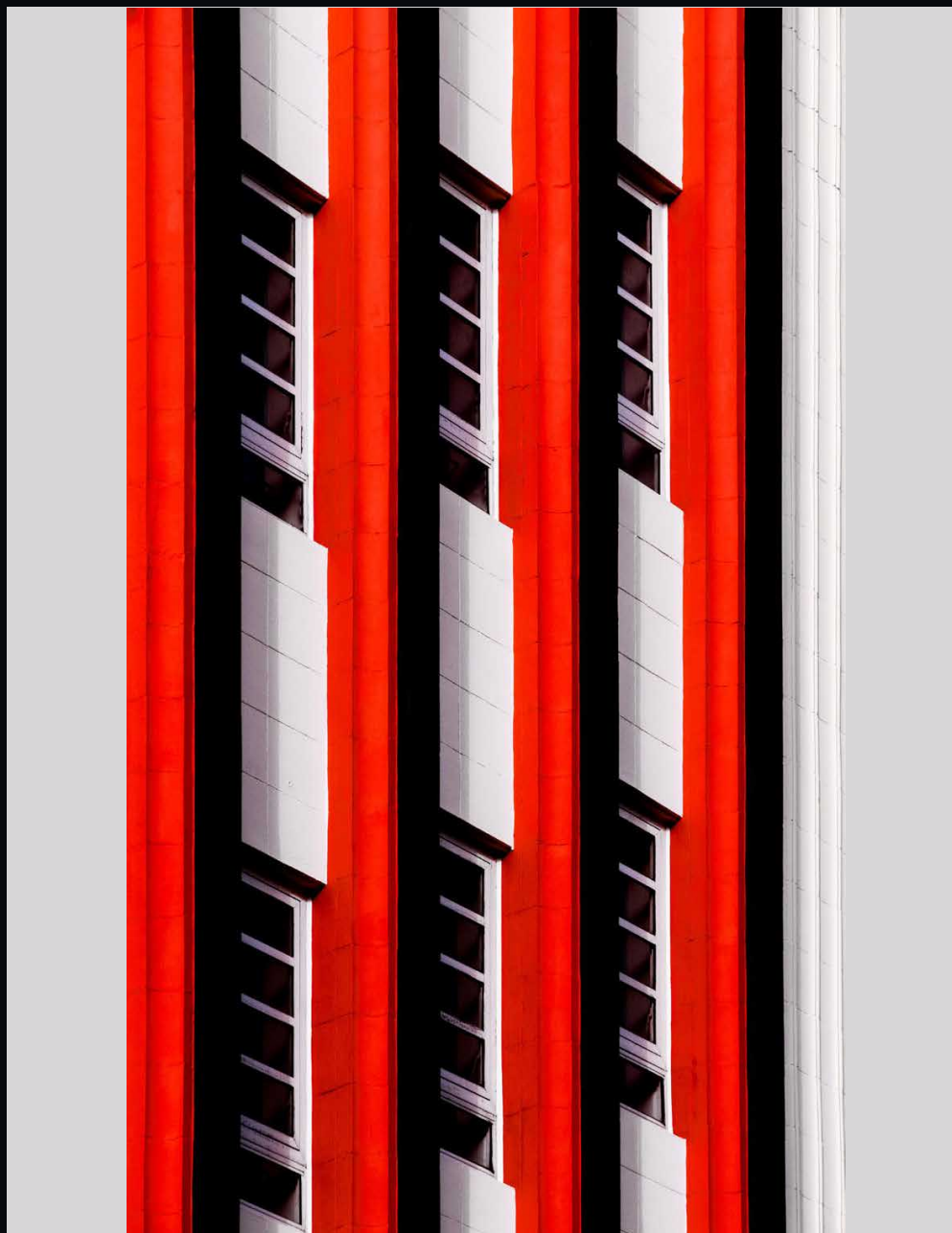
"A detail shot of the elegant art deco Beresford building in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, designed by William Beresford Inglis and built in 1938. I've taken many pictures of this lovely building over the years, which looks good from every angle and in all lighting conditions."

Camera: Fujifilm X-T1. **Settings:** 18-135mm lens at f/9, ISO 800.

Instagram: @glasgowpixman

Digital Camera says:

The striking colours and fantastic geometric patterns of this building make this shot work both as an abstract and an architectural image.





5 'St Andrew's Church' by Billy Callum

"This drone shot was taken in Alfriston, a small village near Eastbourne in East Sussex. I love the way the sun was bouncing off the church, while there was a lovely morning mist flowing across the horizon."

Camera: DJI Mini 4 Pro. Settings: 1/20 sec at f/1.7, 24mm focal length. Instagram: @bh_media_17

Digital Camera says: This is a great early morning shot, with the sun highlighting the church and graveyard.



6 'Walking the Line' by Liz Hadfield

"I took this shot while people-watching in Cardiff Bay. I'd gone to do some ICM photos of the sea, but as I stood on a footbridge, in bright sunlight above a walkway, I noticed that the man's shadow perfectly balanced the image."

Camera: Nikon D7500 and Nikon 18-140mm zoom lens.

Instagram: @lighttrapart

Digital Camera says:

The shadow helps fill out the left vertical, where the man and his shadow are walking along the line. The faint circles to the right add extra detail and texture to the image.



7 'Dalmatian Pelican in Flight' by Mark Vella

"I was fortunate to be part of a group photo tour to Lake Kerkini in northern Greece, where we photographed these amazing Dalmatian curly-haired pelicans. My aim was to capture one of these birds in flight, gliding close to the water and skimming the surface with its wingtips. This shot was taken as the sun rose over the mountains, the bird catching the warm light on its outstretched wings."

Instagram: @markvellaphotography

Digital Camera says: The light is fantastic, and the dipping wing and spray add depth to the shot. The bird is perfectly in focus, too. Well done!

SEND US YOUR IMAGES!

Want to feature in our gallery or on our Instagram feed?

Please email a high-res image (at least 10MB) marked 'Reader Images' and including a title and brief description, plus your social media handle, to:

digitalcamera@futurenet.com

or share it on Instagram with the tag:

#digitalcameramag

UK subscription offer

GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE...

- **NEW!** Digital access to 200+ issues when you subscribe to print!***
- **SAVE** 28% when you subscribe†
- **NEVER MISS AN ISSUE**
Get *Digital Camera* delivered direct to your door or device every month
- **NEW TIPS & INSPIRATION**
A *Digital Camera* subscription will inspire you to take truly phenomenal photos every month and help you get the best results from your kit



**SUBSCRIBE
AND START
YOUR NEW
PHOTO
YEAR!**



Get a *Digital Camera* magazine subscription today

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION OPTIONS

PRINT

£27.99 every 6 months

- 6 issues of *Digital Camera* delivered to your door
- Digital access to 140+ issues

DIGITAL ONLY

£21.49 every 6 months

- 6 issues of *Digital Camera* digital edition for your tablet or device
- Take your *Digital Camera* issues wherever you go

SUBSCRIBE NOW



ONLINE magazinesdirect.com/DCM/DN22P



PHONE 0330 333 1113 and quote code 'DN22P'



SCAN QR CODE TO SUBSCRIBE



*Offer expires 31 October 2026. Offer open to new UK subscribers only. † Savings based on cover price. Your gift will be delivered separately via email after your first payment has cleared. **Gifts not available with a digital subscription. ***Access to the digital library will end with your subscription. Please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery. Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries and overseas rates please call: +44 (0) 330 333 1113. Lines are open Monday-Friday 8:30am-7pm, Saturday 10am-3pm UK Time (excluding Bank Holidays) or email: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

for as little as **£21.49** and
never miss an issue



"Subscribe to *Digital Camera* and get the world's favourite photo magazine delivered to your door or device each month"

Niall

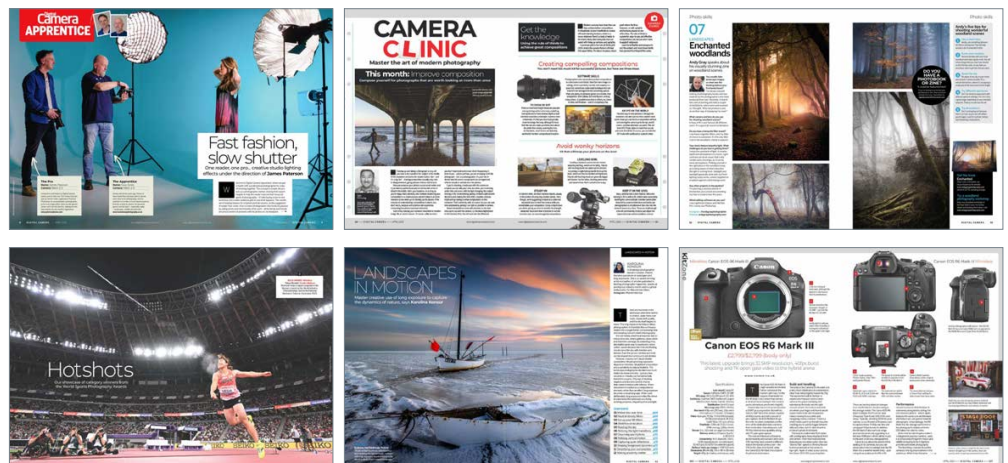
Niall Hampton
Editor, *Digital Camera*

**6 ISSUES
FROM ONLY
£21.49!**

WHAT'S INSIDE EVERY ISSUE OF DIGITAL CAMERA

Techniques, tips and
tutorials for taking
your best-ever photos!

- Apprentice reader challenge
- How to photograph a wide range of genres
- Inspirational photos
- 5 image editing tutorials
- Camera and lens tests
- Interviews with top pros



132 PAGES OF EXPERT PHOTO ADVICE, TIPS & TECHNIQUES EVERY MONTH!

HOPE AND HOMES FOR CHILDREN



URGENT APPEAL



Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine is not just a humanitarian crisis for the Ukrainian people; it's a child protection emergency.

Up to 100,000 children warehoused in Ukraine's vast orphanage system – a network of over 700 buildings – risk being forgotten. Left to face the dangers of war alone as staff flee. As families are torn apart or forced from their homes, many more children are at risk of being separated from the love and protection they desperately need. Worse still, they are at risk of trafficking, or being placed in overcrowded, understaffed and poorly resourced orphanages in border countries.

We must act now.

Born out of the Balkans conflict 30 years ago, we've championed the vital importance of family and community-based care of children and our teams are on the ground in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania to ensure this war does not rob children of the love and protection they need now more than ever. Across all three countries, we're directly supporting displaced families and unaccompanied children with material and emotional

support. We're working closely with authorities to keep families together when they are at their most vulnerable and to fight for the safe tracking, monitoring and care for children without parental care. And we won't stop when the fighting stops.

Will you help us by donating?

With your help, we can avert a child protection crisis of epic proportions and ensure children are protected and kept in families. Never orphanages.

To help protect vulnerable children, donate online at:

www.hopeandhomes.org/donate. Or call **01722 790 111**

Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm.

Please quote **FP22 - P&D** when making your donation.

In the event that funds raised exceed what is needed to deliver Hope and Homes for Children immediate and longer-term response to this crisis, we will use donations where the need is greatest.

**HOPE AND HOMES
FOR CHILDREN** 



I would like to make a donation to Hope and Homes for Children:

Name	Address
Tel	Email

I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to Hope and Homes for Children or please debit £

from my credit/debit card (details below)

I would like to donate by debit/credit card

☐ Visa	☐ Mastercard	☐ Maestro	☐ CAF card	Maestro only
Card no.	-	-	-	-
Start date	Expiry date	Issue no.	Security no.	on signature strip
Signature		Date		

giftaid it

Make your gift grow by 25% at no extra cost to you

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Hope and Homes for Children. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Gift Aid will be used to fund Hope and Homes for Children's general work.

Name of taxpayer	Today's date
------------------	--------------

Please let us know if you would like to hear from us:

☐ by phone ☐ by email

☐ please tick here if you would NOT like to hear from us by post.

Please make cheques payable to 'Hope and Homes for Children' and send to Hope and Homes for Children, FREEPOST RTKX-TYLS-JHHB, East Clyffe Farm Barn, Salisbury Road, Steeple Langford, Salisbury SP3 4BF.

You can view our privacy policy here www.hopeandhomes.org/privacy.

Registered charity (No. 1089490) FP22 - P&D



PHOTO SKILLS

Tips, tricks and techniques
to improve your
photography

IN THIS ISSUE

10 skills for you to learn this month

01 Long exposures under a pier	page 40	06 Wild swimming with Marc Le Cornu	page 50
02 Abstracts at the seaside with Louise Collier	page 43	07 Discover Hollin Jones's street life	page 52
03 Portraits, but with a twist	page 44	08 Rate my photo: Christopher Scragg	page 54
04 Create an Easter- or spring-themed still-life	page 46	09 Why this shot works: Cam Parfitt	page 56
05 Greg Patton captures Dalmatian pelicans	page 49	10 Photo Challenge: Architecture	page 58



Tag us with your photography

Whether out and about taking photos, or if you're inspired by any projects in this issue, tag your work to: [@digitalcameramag](https://www.instagram.com/digitalcameramag)



Follow us on Facebook or email us

And if you would like to get your work published in our reader gallery, send your images to: digitalcamera@futurenet.com

**SEND
US YOUR
PHOTOS!**

Email us your hi-res shots
digitalcamera@futurenet.com

01

LANDSCAPES

Under the boardwalk

Come and shoot some long exposures under the pier in broad daylight, with **Wendy Evans**

Long exposures, during the day, when the sun is shining? What madness is this, I hear you cry. Well, calm yourselves, I haven't taken leave of my senses. For this project, I thought it would be interesting to capture the swirl of the incoming tide, set against a blue sky (remember those?) and the architecture of the underside of a pier, with its wooden planks and rusty metal. The first thing you'll need is a tripod, because we're going for a long exposure. Exactly how long it is will be dependent on a number of factors that we're going to consider here.

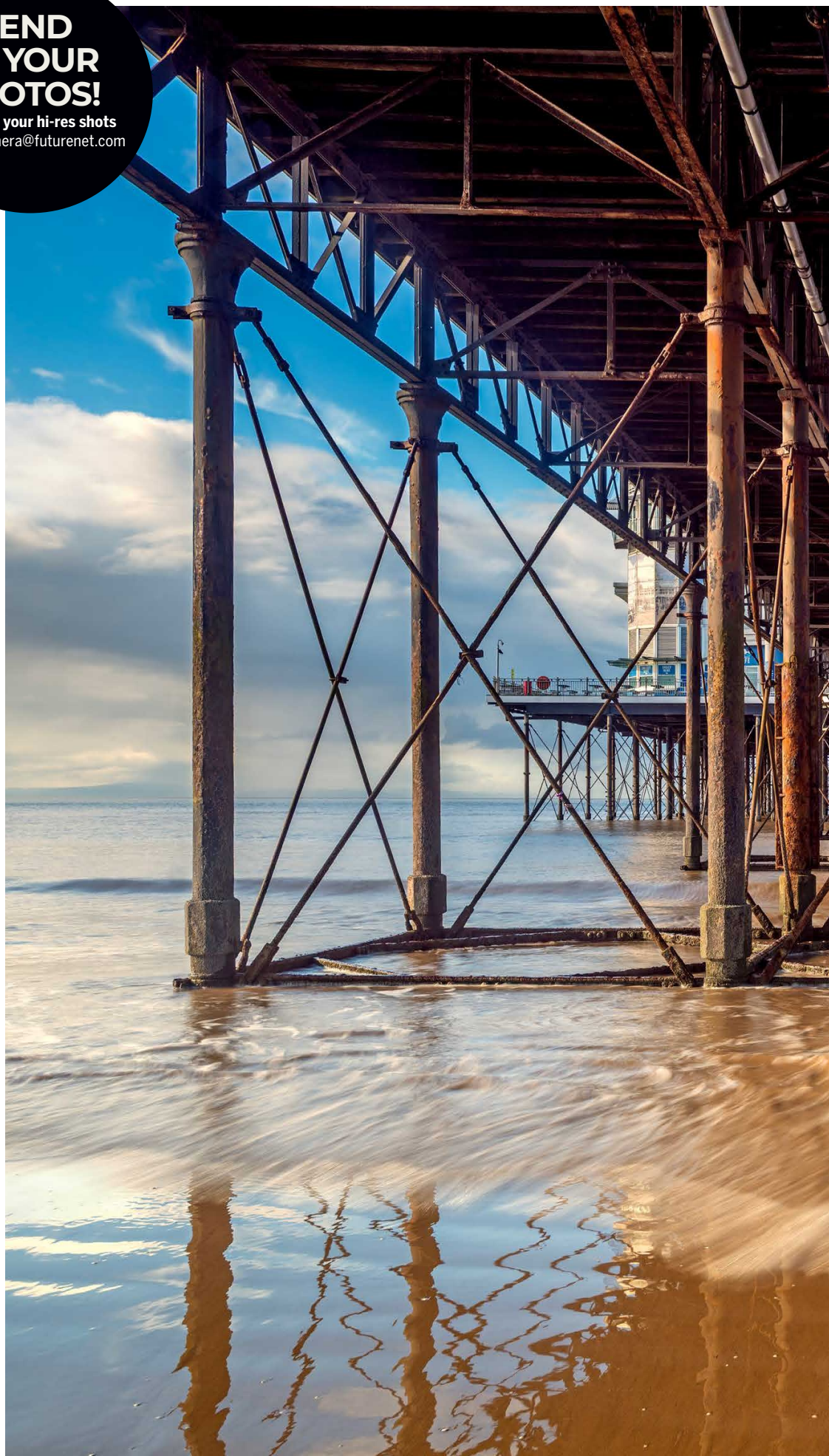
Now, before you pack your tripod and head to the seaside for your nearest pier, it's worth checking the tides. When will you be arriving? Where will the tide be? Does it come all the way in? Do you need to be there at low tide, high tide or somewhere in the middle? For your research, try www.tidetimes.org.uk or the Met Office website.

Having checked all of that and arrived at the pier, head underneath while everyone above plays on the arcade machines and buys candyfloss for excitable children. It's best to go for a central composition, so that there's symmetry, with the underside of the pier providing leading lines into the background. Don't have any stanchions too near the camera as the wide-angle lens will distort them, as well as produce converging verticals.

Camera: Nikon Z 8 and Nikkor 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5 G lens at 24mm

Filters: Circular polariser, Cokin ND grad, Cokin 2-stop ND4 filter

Settings: 1/2 sec at f/8, ISO 64





Step by step The key is to reduce the light How to shoot an under-the-pier shot with a long exposure



ND filters

The point of using a neutral density filter is to reduce the amount of light coming into the camera, so you can use slower shutter speeds on bright days. They are usually rated ND2 (1 stop), ND4 (2 stops) and ND8 (4 stops).

01 Load up your filters

Because it's sunny, you'd normally get a fast exposure, but that's not what we want. So get out your filters, starting with an ND (neutral density) filter that can reduce the light coming into the camera. This one here is for two stops of light (an ND4 filter), but as the sky was also fairly bright at the sides of the pier, I used a graduated ND filter to cover those areas as well.



02 Set the ISO

The other way of reducing the light for a longer exposure is to reduce the ISO. Hold the button down and reduce it as low as it will go. On some cameras, it might be ISO 100 or even ISO 64. Others may have a special low-rated mode that's the equivalent of ISO 32, in terms of the effect on speed rather than the image quality being any cleaner.



ND grads

The idea of a graduated neutral density filter is to balance the light from the sky with that of the ground, particularly in cases where there is too much contrast between the two.



03 Aperture and shutter speed

Set the camera in Aperture Priority mode and dial in f/22 to start with. What shutter speed does this give you? You might get around four to six seconds, and if that's the effect on the water you want, shoot away. However, f/22 won't give you a sharp image, especially in the pier details. Here, I went for f/8, which is sharper, with a shutter speed of 0.5 sec, which showed movement and blur in the water.



04 Focus and depth of field

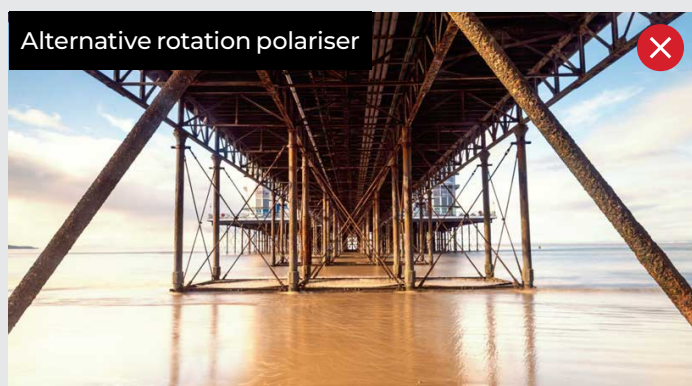
If you go with f/22 at 24mm, you will get plenty of depth of field because the hyperfocal point is under a metre away and the first 40cm or so that is not sharp won't be in the shot at all. At the f/8 aperture used here, the hyperfocal point was 2.42m, and although I focused on the pier structure about 3m away, again, most of the first 1.34m that was not quite as sharp was either out of view or was on the sand.

In depth Effects of the polariser Rotate for the desired results



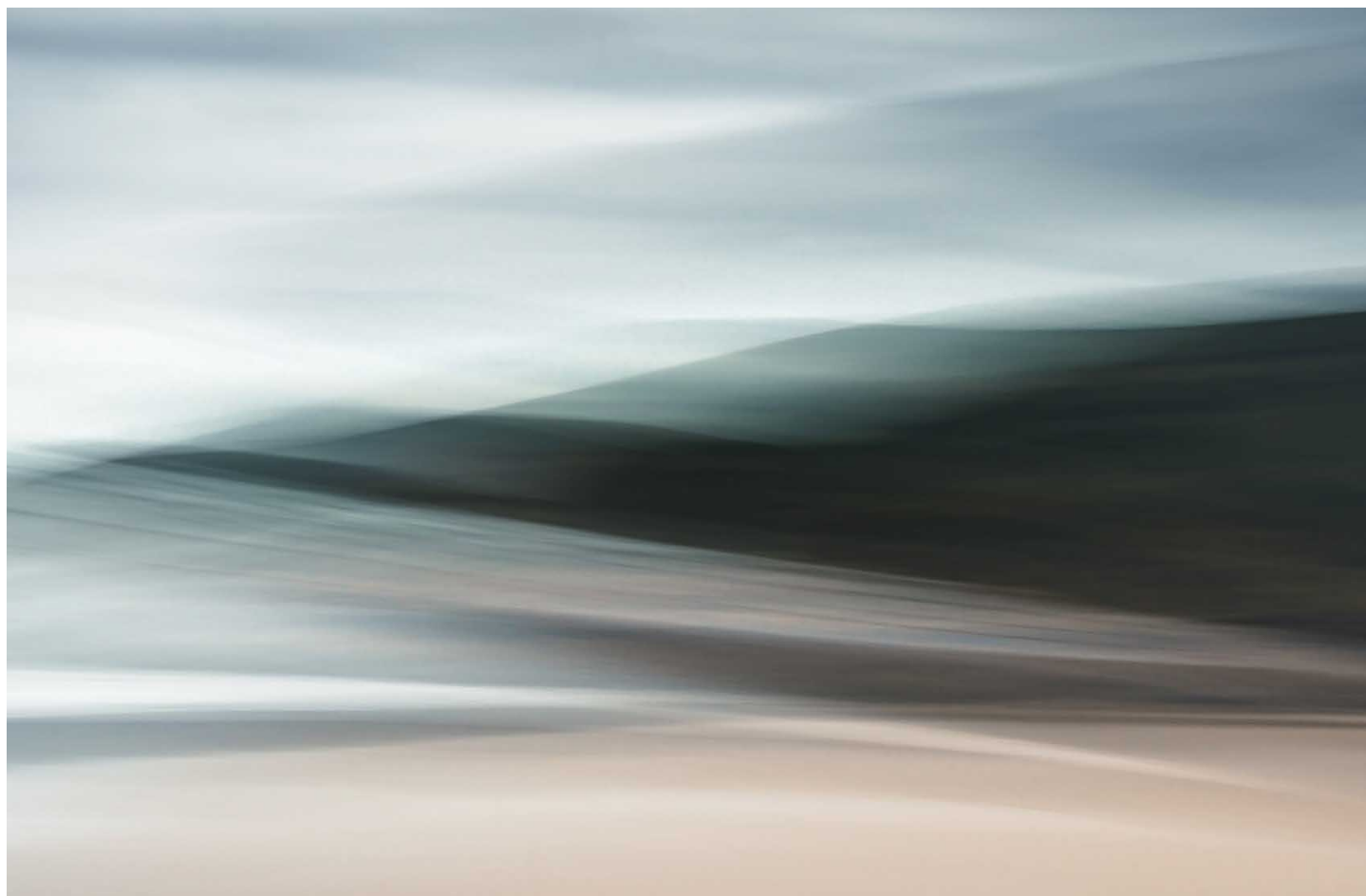
Fitting and using it

With a circular polariser, you can slot it into a Cokin EVO filter holder system (unless it's magnetic) and rotate it around until it cancels out the light waves you want to exclude from the image. It also has the bonus effect of reducing light by one to two stops, which is what we want in this project as well. One of the effects is to enhance the definition of clouds, the other is to remove reflections on water.



Practical effects

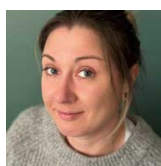
For the main image, the polariser was rotated so that you could see the sky, clouds and structure of the pier in the reflection. To show the difference, the image here had the polariser rotated the other way to minimise the reflections from the pier or the sky. They are still there, just less defined. It also makes the scene browner because you are getting more colour from the sand and less of the blue sky.



Louise Collier

02 LANDSCAPES

Louise Collier explains how to capture fantastic ICM shots, such as this one from Saunton Sands



Louise is a fine-art photographer, based in Gloucestershire, UK, who specialises in abstracts and nature. "I enjoy experimenting with ICM, multiple exposure

and macro photography, using shapes, lines and textures to express my creative vision," says Louise. "I'm also fascinated by more intimate scenes within the larger landscape, allowing me to focus on intricate details and patterns which are often overlooked.

"I've been doing photography since 2003 and graduated with a BA Hons in Photographic Art in 2008. Only recently,

in the past couple of years, have I started sharing my work on social media and via my website. In this time, I've been awarded in the Fine Art Photography Awards, International Garden Photographer of the Year and the Minimalist Photography Awards.

"My camera gear includes a Sony A7R II, a Nikon Z 7 and a Ricoh GR III. The lenses I use are a Sony 24-105mm f/4 G, Tamron 50-400mm f/4.5-6.3 and the Laowa 100mm 2x Macro. I also regularly use K&F magnetic ND filters and a polariser, which I recommend for ICM and long exposure photography."

Instagram: @lcollier_fineart

Website: louisecollierfineart.com

Louise's essential kit

K&F magnetic ND filters

Kentfaith, also known as K&F, offers lots of different types of filters, including ND grads and polarisers, in its systems. There are some great two-in-one Variable ND Filter and CPL Circular Polarising Filters (right) that don't need a filter holder. For more information on K&F's product range, visit www.kentfaith.co.uk



Louise's top five tips for ICM images

✓ Decide on a composition

Just like a traditional photograph, you still need to find an interesting composition. Look for distinct shapes, lines and colours within the scene.

✓ Choose your settings

Shoot in Shutter Priority or Manual mode with the lowest ISO. Experiment with shutter speeds between 1/15 sec and 2 secs to see what effect this has.

✓ Camera movement

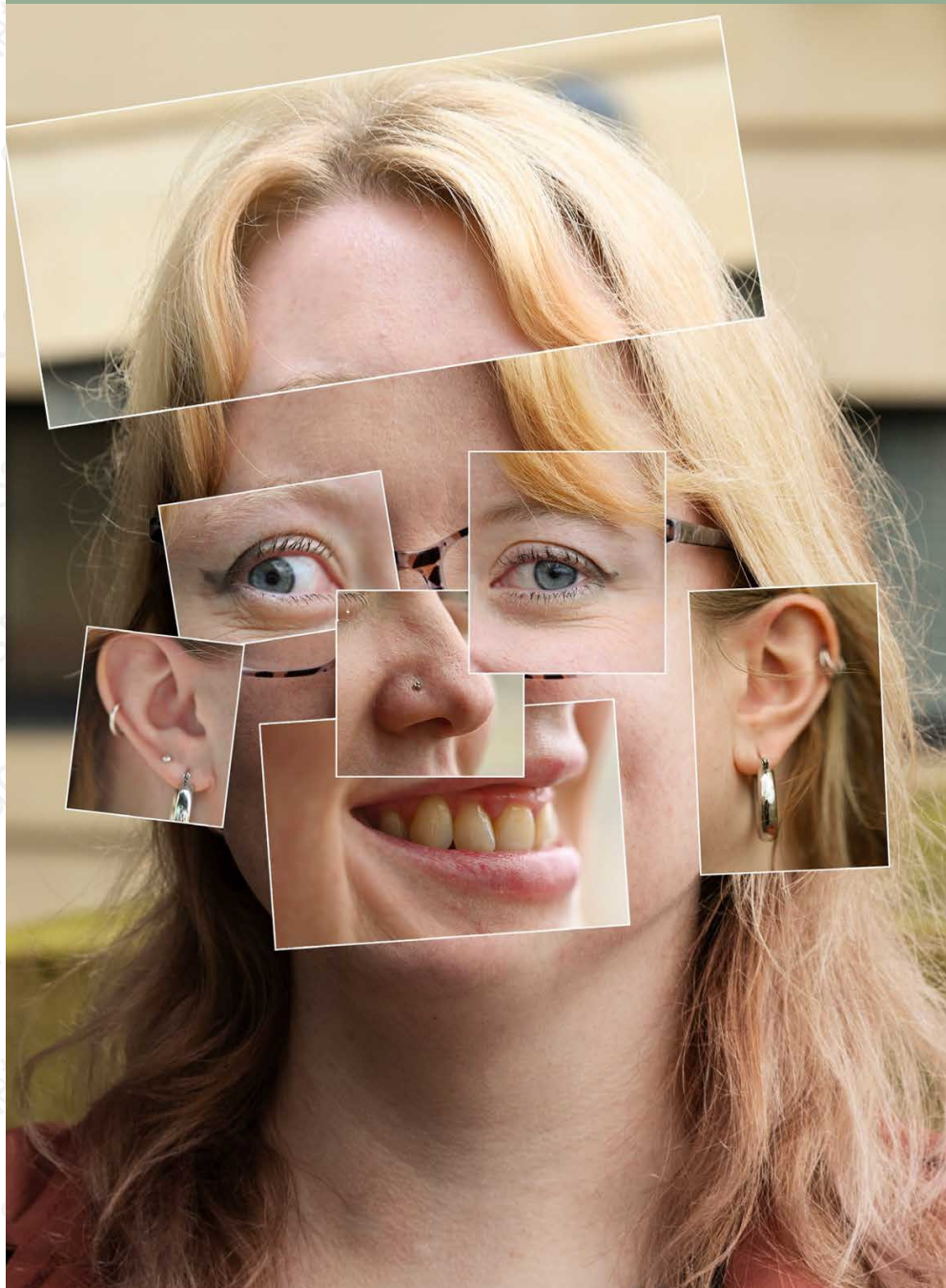
Turn on Image Stabilisation. Then start your movement before pressing the shutter to emphasise the shapes and lines of the scene.

✓ Shutter speed control

Use a polariser, or preferably an ND filter, to enable slower shutter speeds, even in bright conditions, allowing for longer and gentler movements.

✓ Have fun!

It's trial and error, so experiment by taking plenty of shots until you get the desired result. And most of all, have fun!



Step by step Image assembly for freakish portraits

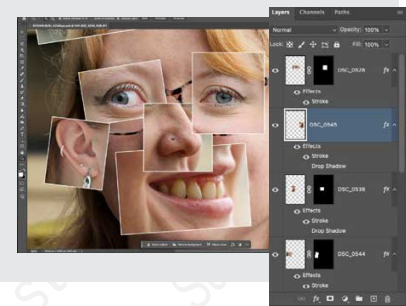
01 Shoot the background The background image is the one onto which everything else will be added. Use a portrait lens to capture a head and shoulders shot. Either go wide with f/1.8 or more depth with f/8.



02 Time for a close-up Switch to the macro lens for close-up shots of the individual features. Use a wide aperture to avoid having to increase the ISO in low light. Get the subject to exaggerate their expression.



03 Start compositing Load your base portrait into an image editor, then drop in the individual photos. Resize to fit, rotate some for effect and use masks to remove unwanted parts. Also, add a white border.



03 CREATIVE Create a collage

Wendy Evans channels her inner Dr Frankenstein by assembling a portrait made from body parts

Unlike the aforementioned Doctor Frankenstein, this particular portrait project doesn't require you to scour mortuaries or dig up body parts from the local cemetery. All the facial elements are coming from the same person, but once assembled, they will produce something as weird as wonderful (but mainly weird) as you like.

There are different ways of capturing each feature, but the basic plan is to take a head and shoulders shot with a portrait lens or a 50-100mm focal length lens. You can go with a wide aperture and completely throw the background out of focus, but also soften features in front of or further back from the

focal point. Or you can use an f/8 aperture and try to get the base image all in focus. You then need to switch to a macro lens and shoot close-up images of each facial element – eyes, nose, mouth and ears as the basics, but it's also worth including other parts, such as the forehead or parts of the neck.

Don't be afraid to get close to fill the frame, because, otherwise, you'll need to select and mask off parts of these close-up images. You can go for detail, with a narrow aperture, or throw it wide open and add the shallow depth of field to the sense of unreality. The trick is to shoot the close-ups from different angles or with a different expression from the main image. Now it's time to create your monster...

Introducing the STACKPRO 1



For absolute control and maximum sharpness from 1:1 to infinity, choose STACKPRO 1—the ultimate stacking solution for demanding studio and object photography. Visit novoflex.co.uk for more.



Recycle your magazine and seven days later it could come back as your newspaper.



The possibilities are endless.

www.recyclenow.com





**SEND
US YOUR
PHOTOS!**

Email us your hi-res shots
digitalcamera@futurenet.com

04

CREATIVE

Compose a spring- themed tableau

Assemble the props for your take on Easter or spring, and shoot a still life with **Wendy Evans**

Y

ou can approach this month's still life project either as an Easter-related exercise with bunnies,

Easter eggs or religious items, or pivot towards spring with daffodils and other elements of the new season. I decided to do both, combining eggs with daffodils, but also deploying some coloured lighting for a specific finish.

The immediate problem of using something quite tall, like a tub of daffodils, alongside something quite short, like the bowl of eggs, is the height disparity that means we have to fill the scene without leaving an empty space. The solution was to shoot it from above, putting the focus on the daffodils and leaving the eggs and other elements to go slightly out of focus thanks to the f/4.5 aperture.

Camera: Nikon Z 8 and Nikkor AF-S 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G lens.

Settings: 1/160 sec at f/4.5, ISO 100

How to set up your spring-themed still life

Camera position

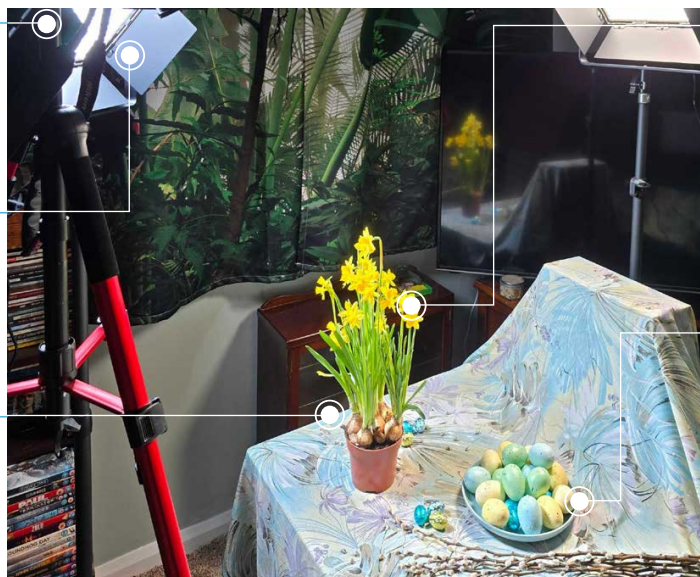
The camera was on a tripod, above the project looking down, with the LCD touchscreen making focusing possible. I used a 24-85mm lens and went right to the end of the telephoto range.

Lights please

There are two lights; one behind the items set to a colour temperature of 5600K, the other to the front left at 10,000K to give a bluish hue. Camera white balance was set to 5600K, so it didn't cancel the blue effect.

Background and base

The theme is blue and yellow with some green, so source a light blue cloth or one with predominantly blue-cyan tones. For a lower-down shot, you'll need to extend the cloth to create a seamless background.



Composition

The daffodils essentially fill the left side of the frame, up to the left side third vertical, while the bowl of eggs sits squarely on the right vertical where it intersects with the top, horizontal line. The loose eggs are grouped in an arrangement of three.

Props to use

Here, I used a plant pot with lots of daffodils, a blue bowl with large eggs and smaller chocolate eggs for a reflective element. Extra chocolate eggs filled the space, with some willow branches doing the same.

Step by step Still-life

With this being a three-dimensional shot, selecting the point of focus was a key consideration



01 Arrange the items

The image is arranged so that the view runs from left to right, front to back and to the right. Placing key items on the verticals balances the composition with the secondary elements, adding further detail without distracting from the main subjects, which are the daffodils and the eggs.



03 Camera settings

Set to Aperture Priority mode, the wide aperture was dialled in. Using f/4.5 at the end of the 85mm telephoto gave plenty of detail in the flowers, but made the eggs go out of focus. At ISO 100, a shutter speed of 1/160 sec reduced the possibility of camera shake.



02 Set the lights

This is the control panel for the light at the front left. Note that it is set to 100 per cent power, so that the rear light was set to 60 per cent. Various coloured gel options could have been used, but these give a strong effect, whereas increasing the colour temperature has a more subtle result.



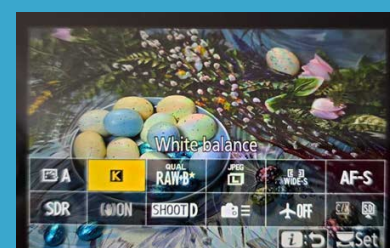
04 Where to focus

A single focus point was used, with the LCD touchscreen used to focus by tapping on the point where it was required. Otherwise, a step ladder would have been needed as the camera was above head height. Here, the focus point was on the flowers to the left.

White balance

Set up your camera to avoid colour conflicts

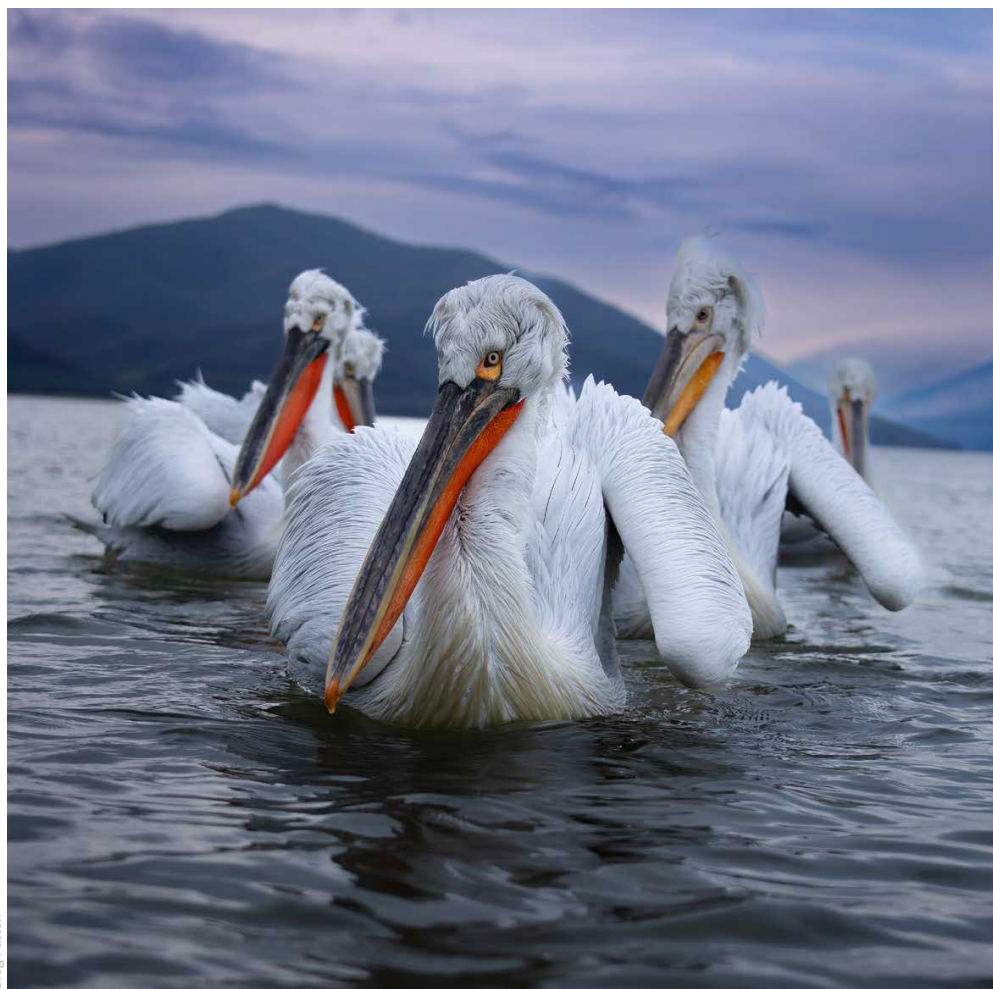
The problem with leaving the camera on AWB when you are using coloured lighting is that it will see it as a colour cast and attempt to convert the colour back into white light. With two different lighting sources, it will attempt to balance the colour between both. It's not significant here, as one light is 5600K and the other is 10,000K, but to ensure the blue cast from the front light was retained, the camera white balance was manually set to 5600K.



White balance setting



Manually set to 5600K



Greg Patton

05 WILDLIFE

Greg Patton shot these amazing Dalmatian pelicans from a traditional fishing boat



This photograph was taken on a freezing cold day as the sun set behind the mountains of northern Greece on the stunning Lake Kerkini. The temperature and light were

dropping fast when a sudden burst of light lit up the mountains in the background. I knew I needed to get as low to the water as possible to ensure I could get the mountains in the background. Risking getting my camera wet, I positioned it a few inches from the lake, then waited for the pelicans to swim towards the boat. As the sun dropped lower, a small group began moving in formation towards the boat.

It was one of those moments where everything aligns for a few seconds – the light, subject and background. Shooting low to the water allowed me to place the viewer at eye level, emphasising their size and prehistoric presence. I barely breathed while shooting, letting them pass naturally rather than forcing the moment. As quickly as it happened, the light slipped away and it was over. The colours cooled and the pelicans sailed away.

The Dalmatian pelicans are amongst Europe's most charismatic birds; their enormous bodies

glide across the water. Photographing them at sunset is about patience and observation.

If you are interested in joining a pelican shoot tour group in Greece, contact Greg via his Instagram account (details below).

Camera: Sony A7R IV and 24-105 F4 at 43mm

Settings: 1/1,000 sec at f/4, ISO 320

Instagram: @naturewithgreg

Greg's six tips for bagging big birds from a boat

✓ **Shoot low angles**
Get as low to the water as possible. Low angles create dramatic water-level perspectives, enhance reflections, and make these Dalmatian pelicans appear even larger and more powerful.

✓ **Use fast shutter speeds**
Their wings beat quickly during takeoffs. A shutter speed of at least 1/1000 sec is needed to freeze the motion, especially when they sweep close to the boat in golden morning light.

✓ **Anticipate behaviour patterns**
Pelicans often follow predictable loops around boats. Observe their behaviour before getting started so that you are ready to capture the best moments rather than reacting too late.

✓ **Stabilise your stance**
Brace yourself against the boat's side. The boat is always moving, even when the water is calm, so a stable body posture matters more than sturdy gear.

✓ **Try to control your background**
Busy backgrounds can ruin great shots. Move slightly so your subjects are framed against clean water or distant mountains, giving images simplicity and a stronger visual impact.

✓ **Shoot in bursts**
Pelicans change expression and position instantly. Use continuous shoot mode to capture small moments – head movements, stretches, wings flapping and splashes. Don't rely on a single frame.

Greg's essential kit Sony FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS

This Sony 200-600mm zoom offers great versatility for shooting birds and wildlife. It allows me to frame distant subjects, adapt to movement quickly, isolate the subject when needed and capture detail from afar without disturbing the subject.





06 ACTION

Marc Le Cornu recounts the stories behind these amazing captures of Ocean Seven swimmers from around the world



Oliver Doran

Marc Le Cornu is an award-winning freelance photographer based in Jersey in the Channel Islands. "I specialise in aerial photography, but I undertake all aspects of photography, including sports, events, commercial imagery, brand shoots, real estate and construction," says Marc. "I set up my own business, Bam Perspectives, in 2017, but before that, I had previously been a firefighter for 27 years," he adds.

Underwater camera housing

Sea Frogs Aluminum Alloy Underwater Camera Housing For Sony A7R V

If you want to capture the underwater action, like Marc, the Chinese company Sea Frogs makes lightweight and sturdy underwater housing for all camera brands, plus action cameras. The camera housing for the Sony A7R V can be used for up to a depth of 100m (328ft).

Price: £2,400/\$3,244 (approx)

Find out more at www.seafrogs.com



"These images are from different locations; the black and white one (opposite page) was taken in Hawaii and features Herman van der Westhuizen. There's also Nathalie Pohl (above, left) swimming in Mallorca, and the other shot is of Adam Walker in Menorca (above, right). These three swimmers have all completed the 'Oceans Seven', an extreme open water swimming challenge that only 42 swimmers in total have completed.

"The Oceans Seven sees these incredible super-humans swim seven of the toughest channel swims around the world: the Catalina in California, USA; the North Channel between Northern Ireland and Scotland; the English Channel; the Strait of Gibraltar; the Cook Strait in New Zealand, the Moloka'i Channel in Hawaii and the Tsugaru Strait in Japan. These images were all from training swims, but I have photographed Nathalie Pohl and Bengisu Avci completing three of the full channel swims, which was incredible to capture. I mainly use Sony Alpha cameras, such as the Sony A7R V for my above-water imagery and the A7R III in a Sea Frogs housing for my underwater work.

"The black and white image is one of my favourite underwater captures. I love the way the bubbles portray the power that Herman is using in his stroke. I also love how the image shows the depth of the ocean he's swimming in. With my photos, I wanted to tell the story of the epic swims these people complete, and capture timeless imagery for the swimmers to remember what they have achieved.

"Shooting swimmers from a moving boat, whilst battling the swell and the ever-changing elements and sea conditions, is always a challenge, but the rewards are worth it. Ensuring that the water housing is sealed correctly is always a concern for the first few underwater shots I take. For this reason, I use my older A7R III camera – just in case!"

Marc's five tips for open sea swimming

- ✓ **Be prepared**
Prepare all gear in advance of the shoot, so it's at hand and ready to grab at a moment's notice.
- ✓ **Know the plan!**
Understanding what's happening is key to being in the right place at the right time, so ask the swimmers what they intend to do.
- ✓ **Have backup gear**
Have a fallback for each element (both above and underwater). If your gear fails while you are stuck at sea, but you still need to capture the shots, you will have spare equipment to hand.
- ✓ **Practise, practise, practise**
Shooting from moving boats, between waves and getting the right point of the swimmer's stroke takes practice.
- ✓ **Any special requirements?**
Check what the swimmer wants before the shoot. There may be a specific element they would like captured, and you have one opportunity to get it.

Camera: Sony A7R V and Sony A7R III

Instagram: @bam_perspectives

Website: www.bamperspectives.smugmug.com

smugmug.com

To find out more about open water swimming worldwide, visit:

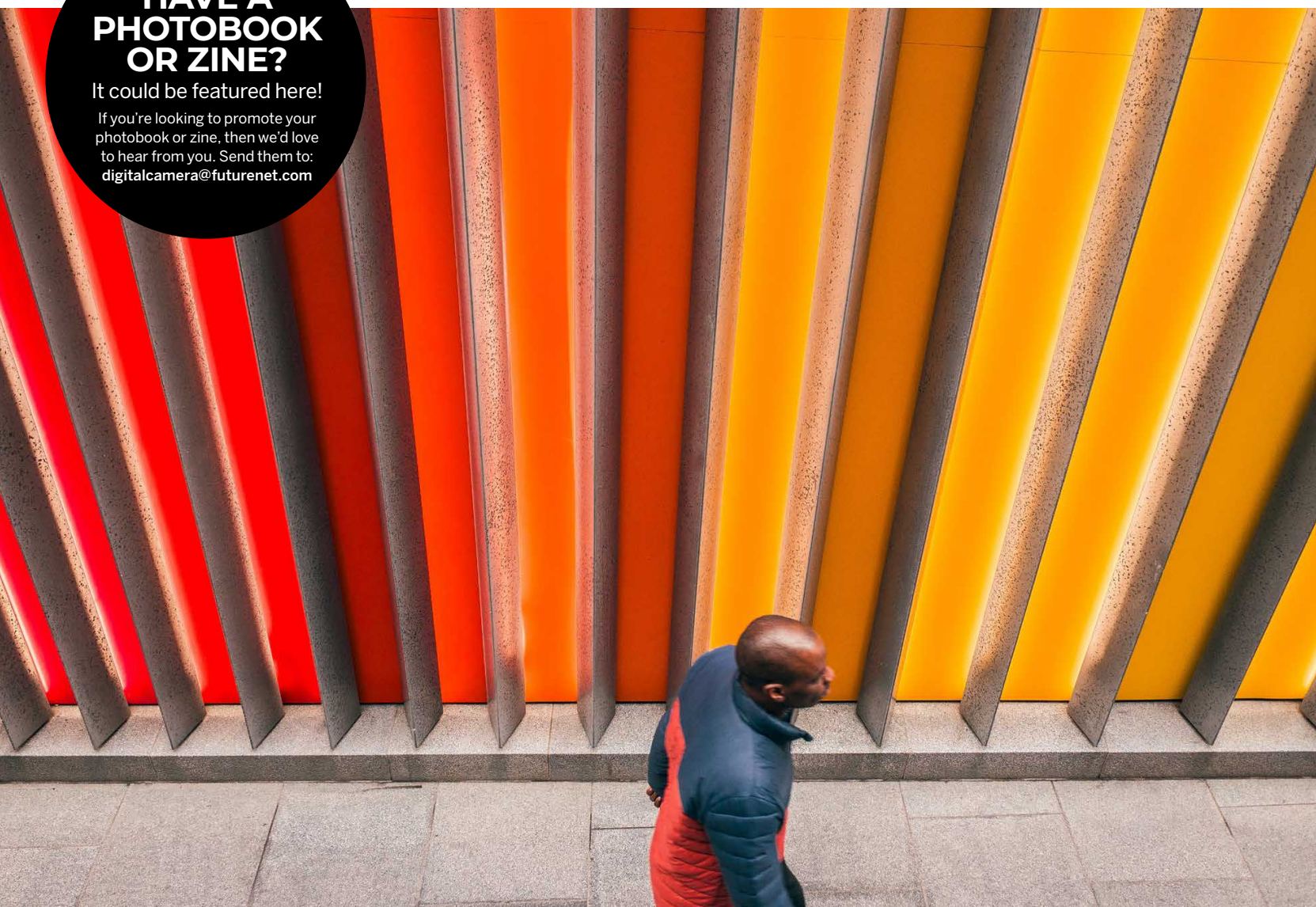
www.openwaterswimming.com



DO YOU HAVE A PHOTOBOOK OR ZINE?

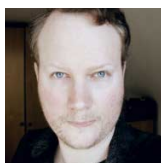
It could be featured here!

If you're looking to promote your photobook or zine, then we'd love to hear from you. Send them to: digitalcamera@futurenet.com



07 URBAN London – Light & Lines

Hollin Jones explains how he captures the patterns and colours of the capital's streets and architecture



An early career in music production shaped Hollin's introduction to photography, shooting live events and touring with bands. Moving to London and going full-time, he became fascinated with street photography, creating several series themed around various aspects of the city. At the heart of every shot, he strives to find a human connection.

Capital cities offer an incredible variety of sights and scenes, and this series follows 'Working Late', which was published in *The Guardian* in 2024. Where that series focused on the short winter days, 'Light & Lines' takes a more abstract approach. The idea was to capture the geometry, patterns and colours that exist all around us, even if most people

rarely notice them. At the same time, it was important to ground the shots in reality, using a relatively wide field of view and sometimes including people for scale.

"Using a Ricoh GR meant that carrying a camera everywhere was no trouble," says Hollin. "It's unobtrusive and allows you to shoot almost unnoticed, which is key to getting candid shots. Since it is relatively low resolution compared to newer models, I would always frame physically, rather than relying on cropping later. Post-production was relatively minimal; I just compensated a little for the fast way in which many of the shots were taken. Really, though, the city should look like the city."

Camera: Ricoh GR

Instagram: @hollinjonesphoto

Website: www.hollinjones.com

Images (clockwise, from above):

Liverpool Street

Light panels add life to an otherwise sterile development near Liverpool Street station.

Barbican

Behind the Barbican, the colourful cladding contrasts with the muted stonework as a passer-by goes about his day.

Camden

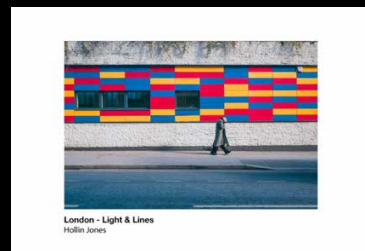
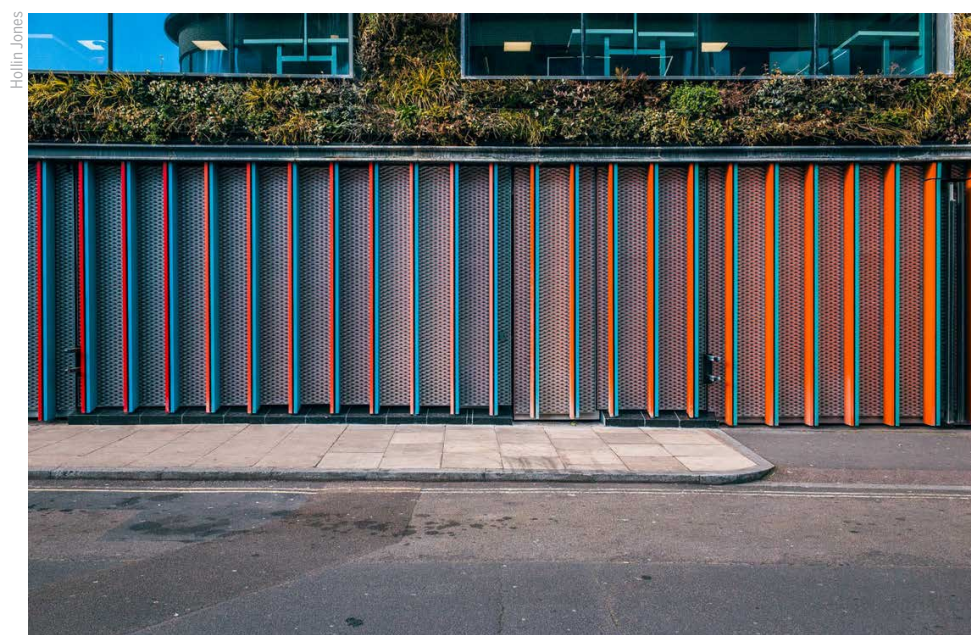
Someone took the time to graduate the colours and add contrasting greenery to this office building near Camden Lock.

East India

East of Canary Wharf, a bypass rises above the street below, creating a multi-layered scene.

Hollin's five tips for framing street photos

- 1 Be invisible**
 A compact, unobtrusive camera that still has the controls and resolution to shoot creatively makes you more likely to get the kinds of shots you want. As soon as people spot a big camera, they behave differently.
- 2 Pick the right mode**
 Full Manual mode can be too slow when you only have a couple of seconds to get the shot. Set an ISO for the general level of light, then ride shutter and aperture controls to quickly freeze the action.
- 3 Shoot raw and process**
 Shooting in raw format gives you much more latitude to retouch in editing. Street shooting means accepting some imperfections with overexposed skies and dark shadows. It's important to lock the focus and use a fast shutter. Those things are much harder to fix if they are wrong.
- 4 Always carry a camera**
 Sometimes you might take your camera and not even get it out, but other times, you will see something that makes a great shot, and when that happens, you will be glad you had a better camera with you than just your smartphone.
- 5 Be consistent in framing**
 It's an aesthetic choice, but having a consistency to the kind of angles and viewpoints you use really makes a series hang together rather than just feeling like a bunch of separate shots.



Get Hollin's book London – Light & Lines

For more info, or to order the 26-page hardcover book of the series for £36, including P&P, visit www.hollinjones.com



Christopher Scragg

08 STILL-LIFE Rate my photo

Christopher Scragg's coffee-themed still-life is examined

I wanted to create the feeling of enjoying a cup of Grind coffee with some custard cream biscuits, capturing that comforting moment before facing the Monday blues. The aroma of the coffee and the vapour underneath your nose help you escape reality for a while, reminding us how important mental health is. Sometimes, a simple coffee and biscuit break is all we need to recharge and find calm in a busy world.

Camera: Sony A7 IV and Sony FE 28-70mm F3.5-5.6 OSS at 67mm

Settings: 1/200 sec at f/18, ISO 160

Instagram: @christopherscraggphotography

✓ Steam trails

The key element here is the steam, which requires a dark background so that it can be seen. The key light manages to light it up well, but it needs a fast enough shutter speed so that it doesn't blur. As Christopher used a narrow aperture, he needed to set ISO 160 to get a shutter speed of 1/200 sec.

✓ Complementary components

There's nothing superfluous in this still life – the beans, the coffee made from them and the biscuits all tell a consistent story, as described by Christopher himself. One of the main components is the biscuits, and having three of them works better than if there were an even number of two or four.

✓ Focus and depth

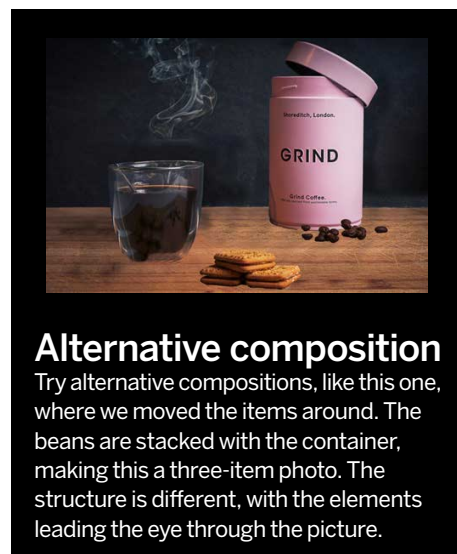
The plane of focus is along the coffee jar and the cup of coffee. These were the important items that needed to be in focus – and they are. The aperture of f/18 gives more depth of field, but at 67mm, that isn't a lot, especially in front of the focus point. Consequently, the biscuits are slightly out of focus. The 67mm focal length narrows the field of view, but another option might have been to choose a shorter focal length and move the camera closer. At 50mm, at this distance and aperture, there would be nearly double the depth of field.

✗ Stilted composition

Using four main items, even though the biscuits are broken up into a group of three and there is a handful of coffee beans, makes it harder for the eye to move through the image. The composition isn't symmetrical either, with the objects all having different sizes and shapes, and the coffee tin being closer to the edge than the mug of coffee. The addition of the spoon is a plus, though.

✗ Beware the background

Sometimes with still-life images, you are constrained by the space available, but that isn't the case here. Because the depth of field extends more backwards than forwards, it means the background is too prominent, and there could be a little more separation. Also, the black coffee doesn't really stand out against the black background, so



Alternative composition

Try alternative compositions, like this one, where we moved the items around. The beans are stacked with the container, making this a three-item photo. The structure is different, with the elements leading the eye through the picture.

maybe adding some milk, even if he doesn't take his coffee that way, would have made a better shot.

✗ Random reflections

One of the other issues with having black coffee is that it makes the reflections on the glass more visible. There is a distracting white reflection on the glass of the mug – it might have been worth trying to use a circular polariser to see if that could have reduced the reflections. There is also a stray reflection from the coffee cup on the edge of the pink GRIND jar. A little more separation between the two items, or moving the mug a little further forward, would have eliminated this.

Send us your shots!

Want us to rate your photo? Then send your image to: digitalcamera@futurenet.com with 'Rate my photo' in the subject line.



EVERY 46 MINUTES

SOMEONE IS DIAGNOSED WITH A

BRAIN TUMOUR.

Work with us to accelerate a cure

Brain tumours affect more than 11,000 people every year and survival rates are among the lowest of all cancers. We need your support to help us get closer to defeating brain tumours.

Text DEFEAT5 to 70507 to donate £5, please help us to find a cure.

thebraintumourcharity.org

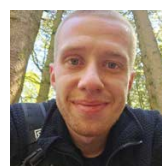


09

WILDLIFE

Feeding a chick

Cam Parfitt won last month's 'Birds' challenge with this cracking capture



I took this shot of an adult hoopoe feeding its chick on a trip to the Tiszaalpár region of Hungary last year. The guy who runs the workshop I was on is also the head warden of the nature reserve.

He finds where the nesting sites are, then puts in temporary, low-profile hides so people can observe the different species without disturbing them.

I recently changed over to Sony, with an A1 II camera, and I couldn't be any happier with the kit. It's truly phenomenal. The pre-capture feature was really helpful when capturing this photo, as it meant that I could pre-focus with the pre-capture running and wait for the bird to fly into the frame.

Camera: Sony A1 II and Sony FE 600mm F4 lens

Settings: 1/6,000 sec at f/6.3, ISO 5000

Instagram: @cam.parfitt

IMAGE ANALYSIS

1 COMPOSITION

The tree fills the left third of the image while the action is perfectly frozen as the bird feeds its chick.

2 SHARPNESS

The detail and sharpness of the bird coming in with the grub is perfect, with so much detail.

3 BACKGROUND

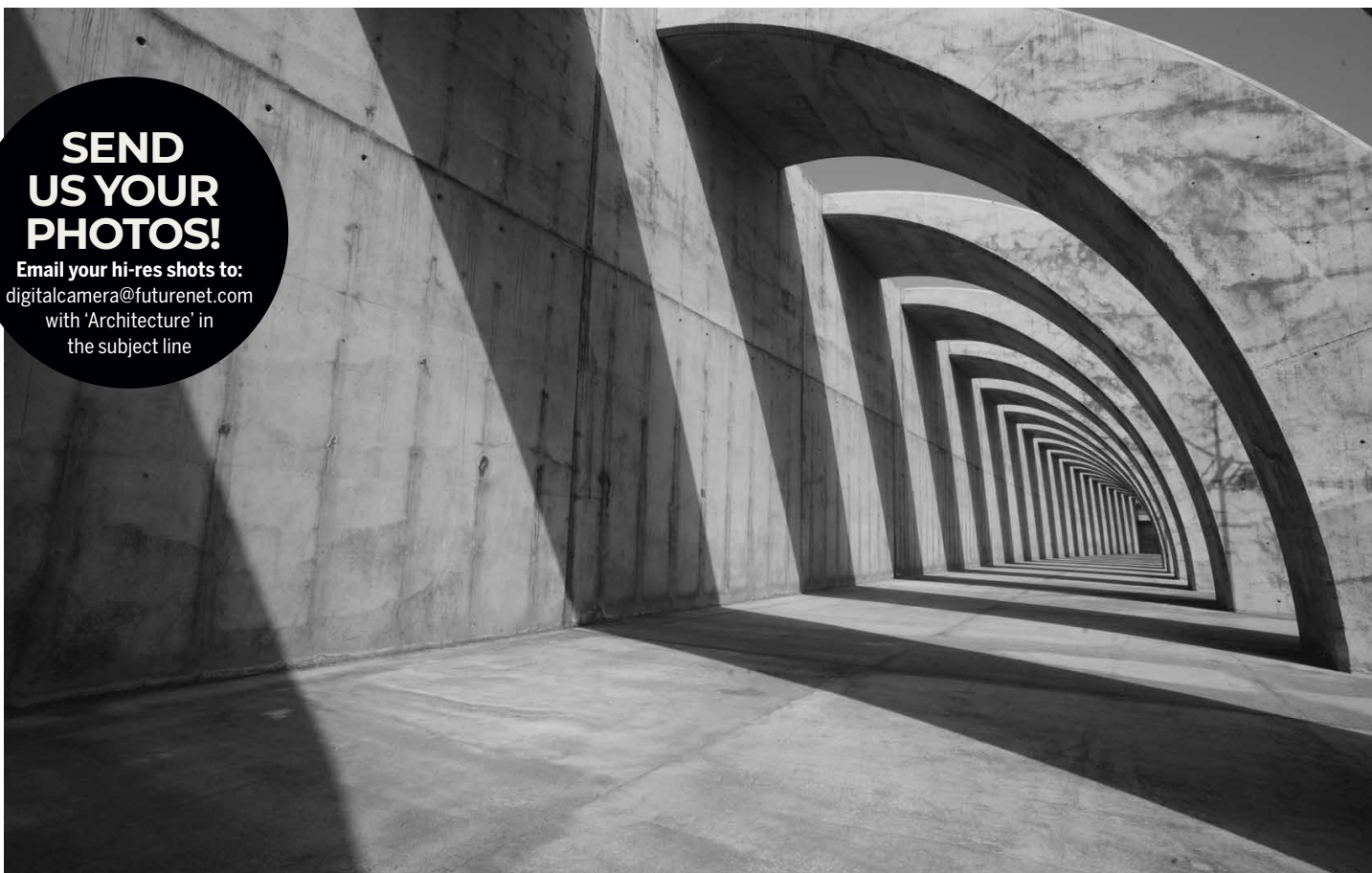
The background is out of focus, yet it offers some lovely colouring that contrasts with the birds.



Cam Parfitt

**SEND
US YOUR
PHOTOS!**

Email your hi-res shots to:
digitalcamera@futurenet.com
with 'Architecture' in
the subject line



© Getty

10 PHOTO CHALLENGE

Architecture challenge

We're looking for buildings, monuments or stonework – modern or old

Welcome to our monthly reader photo challenge, where the winning image will feature in the magazine and you can revel in the glory of seeing your image in print. For spring, the theme is 'Architecture'. What we are looking for are photos of the built environment, whether that's an ultra-modern, glass-fronted office block, a mock-Tudor semi-detached or a very

big house in the country. You can go back in time to include monuments, castles and follies, or be more abstract and send in stonework, woodwork or patterns. It simply has to be something constructed by people.

Enter via email

Email digitalcamera@futurenet.com with 'Architecture' as the subject. Please attach your entry (sending a hi-res, uncompressed

jpeg version, rather than links or raw files) and include a brief description of the image, along with your Instagram or social media site that will be listed if you win. Enter the challenge by 16 April 2026. Remember, only one image per reader, please.

The winner will be announced in issue 308 (June 2026) of *Digital Camera*, which goes on sale on Friday 22 May.

Email your entry to: digitalcamera@futurenet.com
or enter at: www.facebook.com/digitalcameraworld

NEW EDITION FOR 2026

ALL OF THE BEST CAMERA, LENS AND ACCESSORY REVIEWS THAT YOU'LL NEED TO MAKE THE MOST INFORMED PURCHASES.

60 EXPERT REVIEWS!

Digital Camera SPECIAL

CAMERA SHOPPER

132 PAGES

TESTS YOU CAN TRUST!
Buy with total confidence!
Tougher, scientific reviews

27 CAMERAS TESTED

EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS

SONY A9 III

The camera technology revolution powered by the biggest brands

33 LENSES TESTED

- ✓ Telephoto ✓ Macro
- ✓ Wide-angle ✓ Prime
- ✓ Zoom ✓ Lab tested

THE BEST BEGINNERS

THE BEST KIT RIGHT NOW

- ✓ Lenses
- ✓ Roller bags
- ✓ Lighting & More

NIKON | **OLYMPUS** | **PANASONIC** | **FUJIFILM** | **SONY**

SCAN ME



ON SALE NOW

www.magazinesdirect.com/camerasshopper



When was the last time you spring cleaned your camera shelf?

Do you REALLY love your old gear, or just haven't got round to sorting it yet? Turn your unused kit into cash with [mpb.com](https://www.mpb.com)

We're all guilty of having shelves full of camera gear – unused bodies, unloved lenses, probably a few filters and some long-outgrown camera bags – and we convince ourselves that we're proud of our 'collection'. We probably even arrange it into a neat little display from time to time. But do we actually take pictures with it?

'Spring cleaning' is a practice I usually avoid. I used to bemoan my wife's desire to "have a good blitz and get rid of the stuff we don't use any more," safe in the knowledge

that my camera collection needed no such thing. But then the strangest thing happened: my camera cupboard got too full. The problem was that the space had masked just how much kit had been accumulated over time. And when I stopped to consider the last time I had used most of it, I realised that it really did need a blitz.

Spring clean your kit

Overall, I sold almost £3,000 of unused (or, at least, underused) camera equipment with MPB. Of course, I genuinely was proud

of some of the kit I'd accumulated – the first mirrorless camera I bought, the lens I took such-and-such a picture with, the multi-piece modular handgrip that I never actually used, but absolutely loved because it made my camera look like a James Bond gadget. But it was just sitting there gathering dust.

It would have been one thing if I used it all regularly, but some of it hadn't been touched in years. I almost felt that I owed it to my kit to give it a new lease of life, to let somebody else take memorable pictures with it that will make them proud too.



Sell your unused gear for extra cash, or trade it in and treat yourself to the latest camera tech with MPB.

“I boxed everything up and MPB.com booked a courier to collect it, completely free. A few days later, I received an email to say that all the kit had been inspected by its trained evaluation experts”

So I made a note of everything I thought I could potentially sell, then tapped it into MPB.com, along with an estimate of its condition, and received an instant quote.

When you stop looking at your camera shelf as an abstract collection of technology and think about the fact that there's potentially three grand of cash sitting on it, suddenly a spring clean doesn't seem like such a terrible idea. I wanted to turn two grand into cash to put towards a myriad of other life expenses. I turned the remaining grand into a couple of camera bits I'd long had my eye on, but never had the funds for.

Packed up, picked up, paid in

I boxed everything up and MPB.com booked a courier to collect it all, completely free. A few days later, I received an email to say that all the kit had been inspected by its trained evaluation experts. My condition grading was mostly spot on, but if anything, I'd been conservative with some of it – MPB offered me more for a few items, as the experts said the condition was better than I'd listed.

This is one of the reasons I love selling and shopping with this retailer. I've bought enough stuff on eBay to know that 'mint condition' means vastly different things to different people – and that Facebook sellers tend to hope you won't notice things that don't work, rather than being upfront about it. But the experts at MPB.com test everything thoroughly, so you know exactly what condition it's in when you receive it. For additional peace of mind, there's a warranty if you do happen to have any issues.

I confirmed that I was happy with my quote and the cash appeared in my bank account instantly, with the camera gear I'd traded it for arriving just a couple of days later – exactly as pictured, couriered to me in eco-friendly packaging, rather than festooned in tape and bubble wrap. My bank account was happy, my old gear would soon be making new owners happy, and the planet was happy that I was reusing old, unused kit and reducing electronic waste.

Time for your own 'blitz'?

You may have your own reasons for needing to do a spring clean. Upgrading is an obvious one; buying the latest camera is an expensive business, but you've got plenty of equity in the kit sitting on your shelf if you want to sell some of it – or even trade it in.

MPB.com has a huge range of equipment from all the big photography brands, so whether you want to turn your old DSLR into a mirrorless camera, move on those macro lenses you never use and get your hands on the wildlife glass you always wanted, or finally pick up those lights you've been meaning to take on a portrait shoot, you can do it all in the same easy transaction. Maybe you have your own life expenses on the way and just want to free up some pennies without wading through the minefield of online marketplaces.

Whatever your reason, do yourself a favour: go and take a look at the stuff on your camera shelf with an honest eye. Work out the last time you used it, then pop it into MPB.com's quote generator to see what it's worth. You might be amazed at just how much cash or potential trade-in value has been sitting there all this time!

Find out how much you could earn from selling your old photography gear.



Buy, sell or trade. Used camera kit ready for the next shot at: www.mpb.com



22

SPRING PHOTO PROJECTS

Learn how to capture your best-ever spring shots, from flowers, forests and colourful landscapes to close-ups of butterflies, wildlife and birds... with **Peter Travers**

S

pring has finally sprung – gardens are blooming, flowers are flourishing and birds are singing. But capturing all the beauty

this bustling and vibrant season has to offer can prove challenging if you don't know where to start, or haven't photographed spring much before.

The inspirational projects in this spring photography masterclass will help you improve all aspects of capturing the new season. I'll show you how to take better exposures of bright flowers and how to use the correct aperture and focal length for controlling your depth of field; master your macro lens for close-ups of spring insects and wildlife, or use a long

telephoto zoom for far-away birds; find out how to take better compositions of blooming landscapes in spring, and the best ways to photograph blankets of bluebells in your local forest. Plus, you'll learn how to photograph spring sunrise and sunset scenes, including those atmospheric misty morning shots. So let's turn the page to get started...

**PETER TRAVERS**

Peter is a Canon professional photographer and content creator with over 18 years of editorial and photographic experience. The former editor of our sister title, *PhotoPlus: The Canon Magazine*, he now runs Peter Travers Photography from his home studio between Bath and Bristol, and in Boscastle, north Cornwall, where he provides coastal photography workshops. His favoured photographic genres include everything from landscapes, seascapes and wildlife to portraits, property and products.

www.petertravers.co.uk

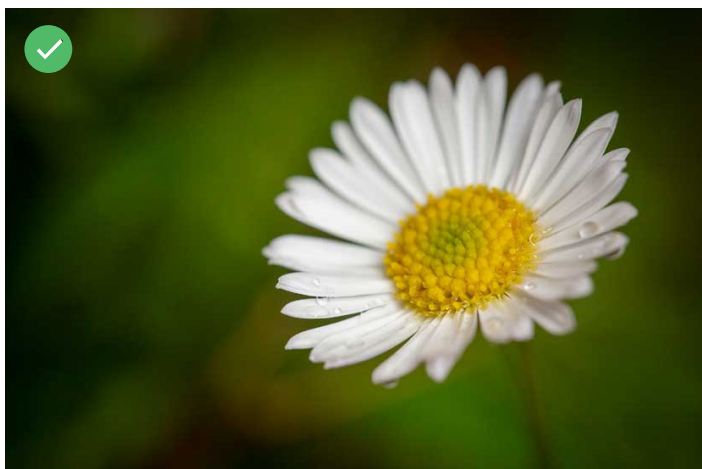
Instagram @peter_travers

CONTENTS

01 Better backgrounds	p64
02 Backlit flowers	p64
03 Get creative with blur	p65
04 Use shallow depth of field	p65
05 Focus, focal length, aperture	p66
06 Different focal lengths	p66
07 Polariser for perfect colours	p67
08 The low-key look	p68
09 Small mammals in studios	p68
10 Fast bursts for birds	p69
11 Coastal birds	p69
12 AF modes for wildlife	p69
13 Really wild life	p70
14 Focusing techniques	p70
15 Dedicated macro lenses	p70
16 Right aperture for macro	p71
17 Insects on lightboxes	p71
18 Misty mornings in spring	p72
19 Bluebells in the woods	p72
20 Seascapes at sunrise	p73
21 Sunbursts at sunrise	p73
22 Piers at sunset	p73

FOUR TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR FLOWER PHOTOS

Find out the best ways to take close-up photos of spring flora



Peter Travers



Peter Travers

BETTER BACKGROUNDS

01 A background can make or break your images. Move around with your camera to compose so that your chosen flower has a colourful backdrop that flatters. Shooting at an angle with your flower facing 'into' the frame is also more interesting than one placed centrally.

BACKLIT FLOWERS

02 Shooting towards the sunlight may feel counter-intuitive; however, using the sun to backlight your flowers will give them a bright rim to stand out. Compose so that the backdrop is colourful, and don't point directly at the sun. Boost the shadows of your raw image when editing.

TOP KIT TELEPHOTO ZOOMS FOR FRAMING FLOWERS

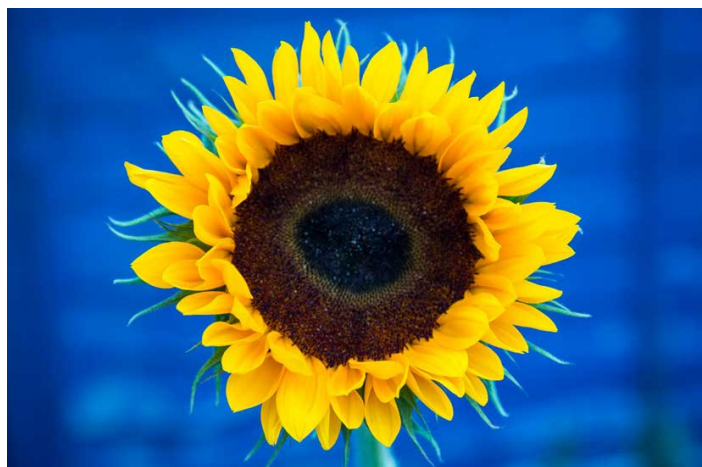
No flowers say 'spring' more than golden yellow daffodils, and photographing them can be easy with a few key tips. For a start, you don't need a macro lens to capture daffodils. I've used a Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM between 250-400mm. Shoot in Aperture Priority (Av/A) mode at f/5.6 to provide a shallow depth of field, but maintain sharp flower heads. Shoot at an angle so the sun lights the flower heads from the side to create more depth with shadows. Take care to position yourself so you can compose with a clean background.





TOP KIT USE A TRIPOD FOR SHARPER CLOSE-UPS

Use a tripod to ensure sharp close-up shots, as any camera movement is magnified, plus you can focus more accurately when using a macro lens. I use the Manfrotto 190 Go! carbon-fibre tripod, which has a 90° column mechanism and versatile legs that can be angled so I can shoot lower to the ground.



Peter Travers

GET CREATIVE WITH BLUR

03 The late Martin Parr used this technique to great effect by blurring people's faces in the foreground, so why not try it with a sunflower? Use a focal length of around 100mm at f/5.6, stand close to the sunflower, then focus on the backdrop in the distance so the flower head is blurred.



TRY USING A SHALLOW DEPTH OF FIELD

04 When I'm photographing close-ups of smaller flowers, I use a proper macro lens that will let me focus close enough for frame-filling photos. For this image, I used the old, but brilliant, Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM, which has a closest focusing distance of just 30cm. But any macro lens will work for this project. These capture a true macro magnification ratio of 1:1, so the flower in real life is the same size as on your camera sensor.

The telephoto length and close focusing mean you can frame in tight, even for flowers such as these tiny blue grape hyacinths. Combined with the wide f/4.5 aperture I've used, it creates a super-shallow depth of field to really blur the background, as well as lower flower heads, so my main focal point stands out better.

FIELDS OF DREAMS

Spring is the time to shoot fields filled with flowers

FOCUS, FOCAL LENGTH & APERTURE

05 For sharp scenic shots, you need to learn to control the depth of field, which can either stretch from your feet to the horizon, or be as little as a few millimetres with macro. Master depth of field with the three essentials: focusing distance, focal length and aperture.

Focusing distance The closer you are to a subject, the less depth of field you capture. This is why depth of field is so limited when you're using a macro lens for close-ups, even at narrow apertures. It's the distance at which you focus the lens that's crucial, so it's critical to choose where the lens is targeted.

Focal length The wider your lens, the more depth of field you have to work with. Wide-angle lenses produce images with more depth of field, even at fairly wide apertures, while long lenses produce images with shallow depth of field, even at quite narrow apertures.

Aperture The narrower the aperture, the greater the depth of field. A wide (large) aperture, such as $f/4$, means that less of the scene will be in focus than if you use a narrow (small) aperture of around $f/16$ to capture the whole scene in focus.



TRY DIFFERENT FOCAL LENGTHS FOR FLOWERY FIELDS

06 What's the best focal length lens for landscape photos, such as lavender fields? It's up to you! Use a wide-angle lens at 18mm on crop-sensor cameras, or 24mm on full-frame cameras, to capture plenty of lavender in the bottom third of the frame and fill the two-thirds with blue sky. Alternatively, you could try a 35mm focal length on your 18-55mm standard zoom lens on a crop-sensor camera, or 50mm on a 24-105mm with full-frame, and fill the bottom

two-thirds of the frame with lavender and the top third with sky this time.

Alternatively, use a 200mm telephoto zoom lens. These aren't just for portraits; a 70-200mm $f/2.8$ lens is also great for isolating elements within your scenes for a more minimalist approach to composition. Notice how the lavender appears a little patchy in the 24mm shot, a bit denser in the 50mm shot and more dense again, as the rows have been compressed at 200mm.

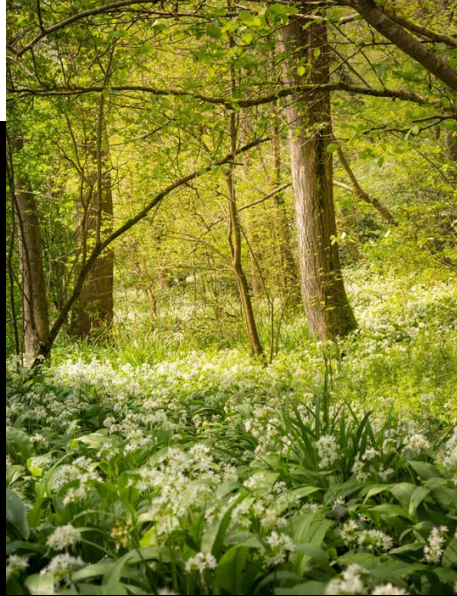


GO WIDE FOR BIG SKIES

1 Here, I used a Canon EF 24-105mm $f/4L$ IS USM at a focal length of 24mm to include a large expanse of beautiful blue sky and clouds in the top two-thirds of the frame. Exposure: 1/160 sec at $f/9$, ISO 125.

TOP TIP CORRECT EXPOSURES

Large expanses of white flowers or close-ups of flowers such as snowdrops can confuse camera metering systems. The camera tries to achieve an average mid-tone, resulting in whites looking grey. To prevent this, shoot in Aperture Priority (Av/A) mode, take a meter reading from a patch of flowers, then dial in around +1 stop to +2 stops exposure compensation to ensure the flowers are white and not grey.



TOP TIP BRACKETING FOR BETTER TONAL RANGE

For landscape shots, use a tripod to avoid camera shake at slower shutter speeds and set lower ISOs for better image quality. You can also bracket exposures for a better range of tones. Using Auto Exposure Bracketing (or Auto Bracketing), you can set your camera to take three images, one at -2 stops darker, one standard and one at +2 stops brighter. You can then bracket a set of three, five or seven images for darker to brighter exposures.

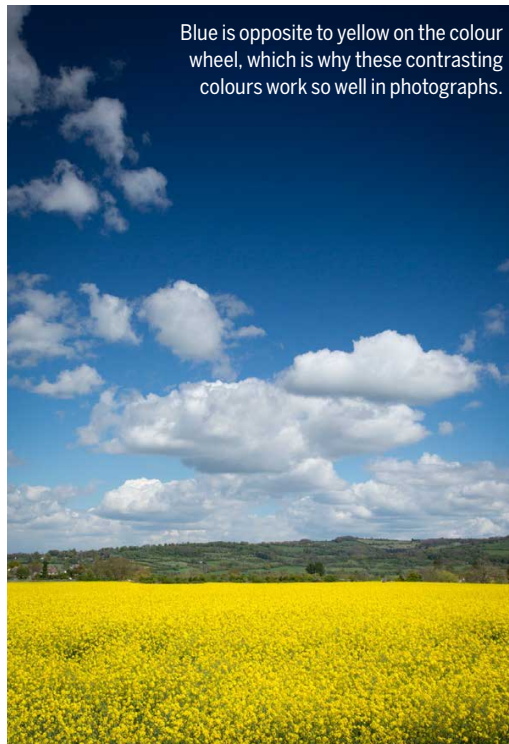
Merge these bracketed images for a detailed HDR image that reveals a range of shadows, midtones and highlights. Adobe Lightroom makes it easier than ever to create HDR images from your bracketed raw files.



POLARISER FOR PERFECT COLOURS

07 If you only own one filter, make sure it's a circular polariser. These help eliminate glare from reflective surfaces and when shooting white clouds against a blue sky, they deepen the blues and make the clouds look crisp. The effect is at its most dramatic when shooting at right angles to the sun. A polariser is ideal for rapeseed fields as they reduce the brightness of the yellow flowers, while boosting blue skies. Try a creative composition including the minimal amount of field and maximum sky.

Blue is opposite to yellow on the colour wheel, which is why these contrasting colours work so well in photographs.



Peter Travers



ZOOM IN WITH LEADING LINES

2 Zooming to a focal length of 50mm with my 24-105mm, this time I switched the composition. Now, two-thirds of the frame is filled with rows of lavender, leading the eye towards the trees. Exposure: 1/125 sec at f/16, ISO 200.



Peter Travers

THE POWER OF TELEPHOTO

3 For this shot, I changed to my EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM telephoto zoom to shoot at 200mm, splitting the frame so it was half lavender and half sky with a lone tree on the horizon. Exposure: 1/160 sec at f/16, ISO 200.

LOCAL BIRDS & WILDLIFE

Nature awakes in spring to provide more opportunities

THE LOW-KEY LOOK

08 You could be forgiven for thinking that I photographed this flamingo in a studio with lights and a black background. However, this shot was taken in late afternoon sunshine at a nature reserve, using the classic 'low-key' technique. The birds need to be a light colour and brightly lit. Position yourself with a long focal length around 400mm to isolate a dark background in shadow behind the subjects. With the bird correctly exposed, the darker background will appear black.

I used a Canon RF 100-500mm F4.5-7.1L IS USM super-telephoto zoom (below) in Manual mode, with -1 stop of negative exposure compensation. My settings were 1/4,000 sec at f/7.1, ISO 2000.

Investing in a good zoom lens allows you to get closer to your subject, especially at bird reserves.



Peter Travers



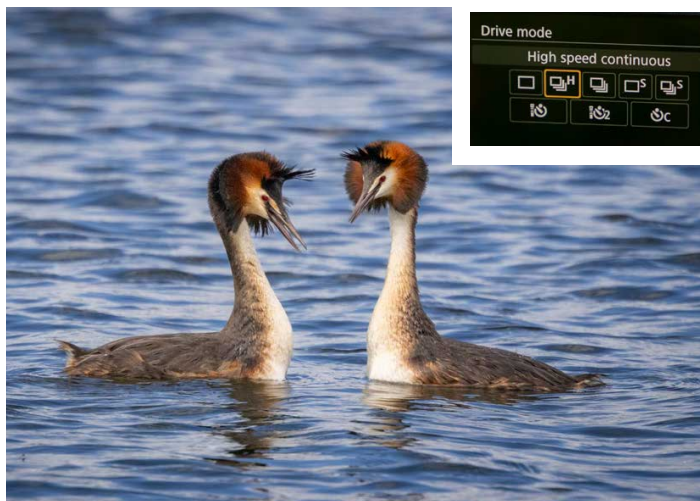
Peter Travers

SMALL MAMMALS IN STUDIOS FOR BRIGHTER RESULTS

09 Locating interesting wildlife and getting close enough to take a good photo can be hard work and often requires a lot of patience. An easier option is to visit your local wildlife centre, especially if it also offers indoor photo sessions. Often, the centre will have a studio with lights and professional handlers. If it doesn't, then a simple two-light setup with softboxes should be all you need.

Simply ensure that the lights are angled correctly so that you can illuminate your small subjects with side lighting.

This tiny harvest mouse resting inside the tulip was shot with a 100mm macro lens at f/22 to ensure that the flower head and mouse were totally sharp. I also used a shutter speed of 1/160 sec to sync with the lights, and ISO 200.



Peter Travers

FAST BURSTS FOR BIRDS

10 Great crested grebes can be fantastically photogenic as they carry out their synchronised courtship displays in early spring. I sat quietly for a few hours in this secluded hide by a quiet side of a lake in Somerset, watching the grebes dart about in the distance. They would dive in one spot, only to surface again 50 metres away. Then a pair

reappeared at the same time and began their elegant courtship while I focused and fired off a burst of frames.

Here, I used a 1.6x APS-C crop-sensor Canon EOS R7 with an RF 100-500mm F4.5-7.1L IS USM at 500mm, giving me an 800mm effective focal length, which meant that I could still focus and fill the frame with the distant grebes on the water.

COASTAL BIRDS

11 Spring is an active time for coastal birds, such as puffins and gannets. You can find puffins from April in Ireland, Skomer Island in west Wales, and Bempton Cliffs on the Yorkshire coastline.

Puffins are surprisingly small birds, only about 20cm tall when standing on land, so you'll need a long focal length of around 500mm to fill your frame. Get down low to the ground, and use a wide aperture around f/5 so the whole puffin is sharp, with the foreground flowers and background elements blurred. Try to position yourself so the distant sea is behind the bird to capture bokeh in the sunny

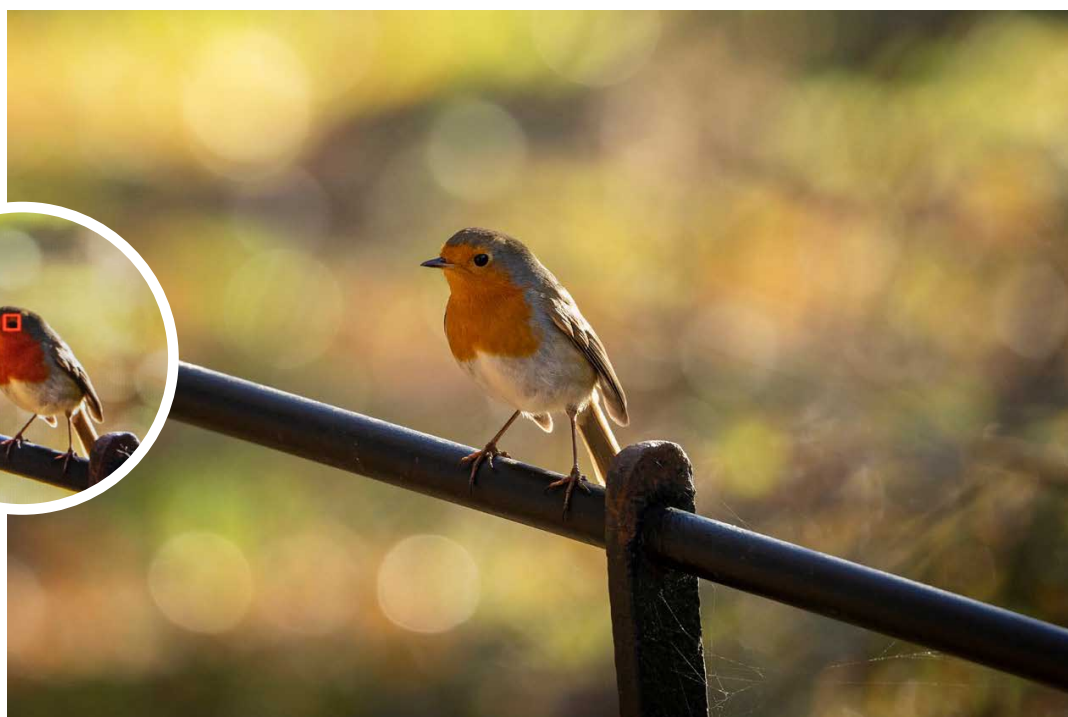
highlights on the water. Be careful not to over-expose their white plumage in the sunshine by dialling in negative exposure compensation if needed.



Gareth McCormack / Alamy Stock Photo



Setting up your focus for wildlife photography. Many cameras have intelligent autofocus modes that lock focus points on moving subjects, such as fast, twitchy birds in the wild.



Peter Travers

AUTOFOCUS MODES FOR WILDLIFE

12 Most modern mirrorless cameras have intelligent autofocus modes to enable you to lock your focus points on moving subjects. These clever AF settings are invaluable when photographing fast,

twitchy birds in the wild. Set continuous AF mode, AF to face tracking, and choose the Animals or similar subject to detect.

More advanced cameras also allow you to choose Eye detection AF for animals,

which is what I used for this image of a robin on a fence (above). In this mode, the AF point was set to highlight the bird's eye, and I then confirmed the focus with the back button for a sharp shot.

ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

Set your sights on capturing larger animals

Shooting from low down at 500mm and f/7.1 meant both foreground and background areas were blurred.



REALLY WILD LIFE

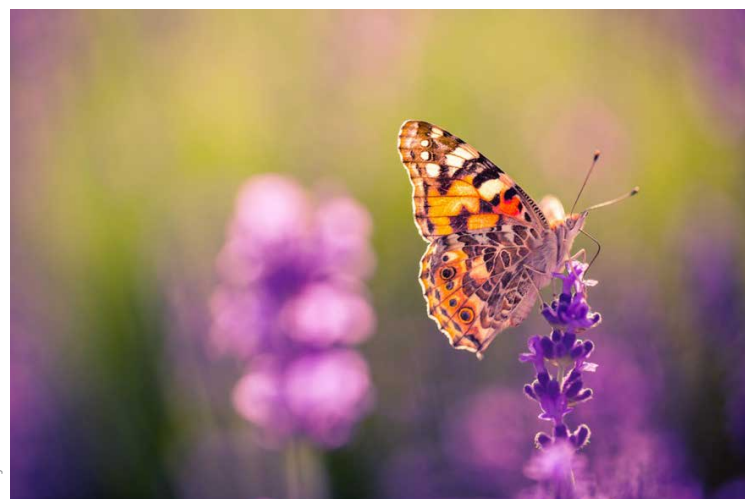
13 I took this shot of a young deer while I was trekking to a remote bird hide in Somerset, the same one as the grebe image on page 69. I spotted the deer's ears above the long grass, and as always, I had my camera over my shoulder so I was ready to get a shot. I crept as quietly as possible to get in position, and keeping hidden in the hedges, I was able to get a couple of shots from distance before the deer saw me and ran for cover. Shooting from low down at a 500mm focal length and at f/7.1 meant that both the foreground grass and wild flowers and the background areas were blurred, while setting ISO 3200 gave me a fast shutter speed of 1/2,000 sec for a shake-free shot.

Peter Travers

DEDICATED MACRO LENSES

15 For Canon EOS mirrorless cameras, such as the EOS R5 or R5 Mark II, I use an RF 100mm F2.8L Macro IS USM lens. It offers exceptional sharpness – even handheld – thanks to up to eight stops of stabilisation, and has a 1:1.4 reproduction ratio so even tiny subjects can be captured at 1.4x life size to reveal amazing detail. It also has spherical aberration control, image stabilisation and a focus limiter.

Used on a 1.6x crop-sensor Canon, such as the EOS R7 or R50, this lens gives you more reach with an effective focal length of 160mm. Sony shooters should also check out the Sony FE 100mm F2.8 Macro GM OSS, while Nikon users should consider the Nikkor Z MC 105mm f/2.8 VR S, and Fujifilm users, the Fujinon XF80mm F2.8 LM OIS WR Macro.



Getty

FOCUSING TECHNIQUES

14 The closer you get to your subject, the shallower the depth of field at any given aperture. When you're really close, the zone of sharpness may be just a few millimetres, even at narrow apertures, so your focusing needs to be spot on – the slightest inaccuracy will

result in blurred shots. Use the zoom focus feature in Live View or on the LCD screen to focus in close on subjects, then manually tweak the focus with your lens ring, until the element that you want to be in focus is pin-sharp. If your camera has an option for focus peaking, then use this too.

An L-bracket allows you to quickly switch between landscape and portrait shots.

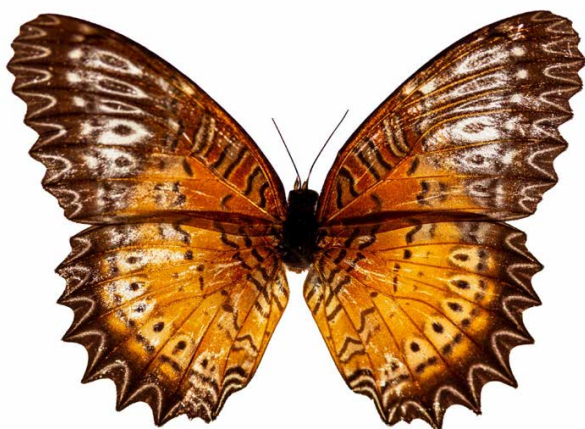
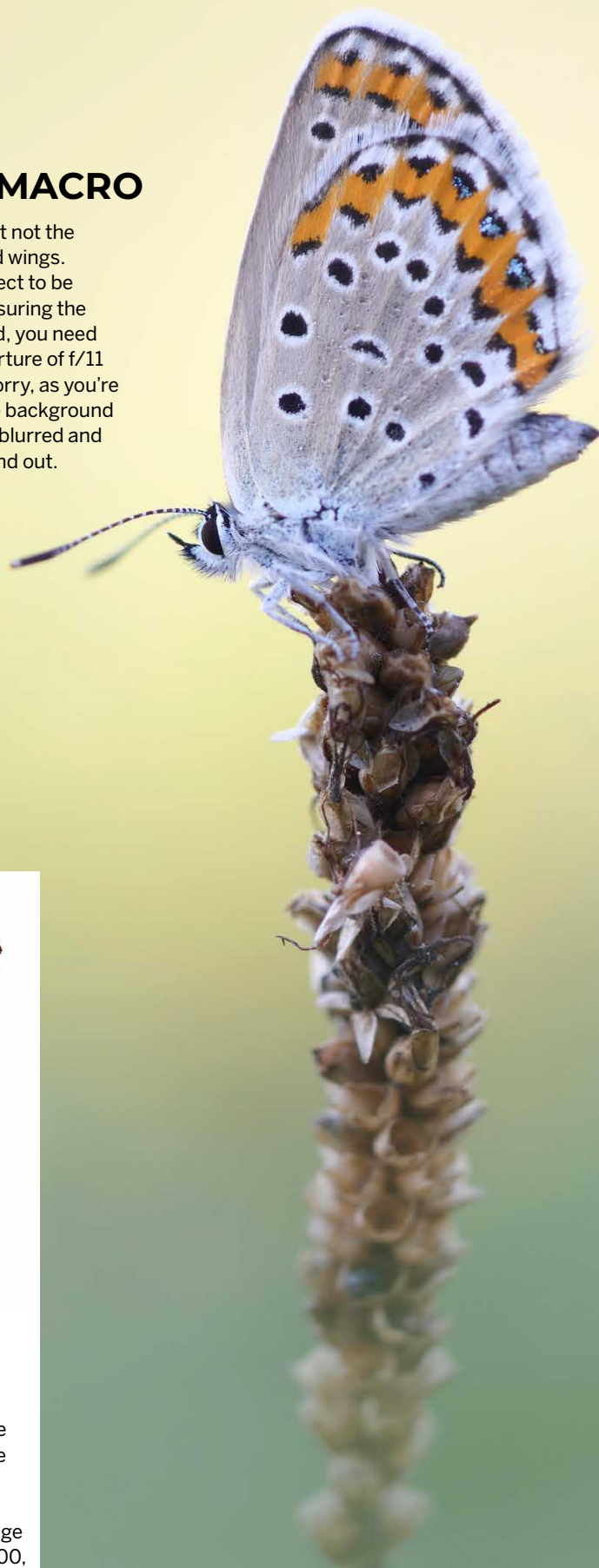


THE RIGHT APERTURE FOR MACRO

16 It's tempting to use your macro lens's widest aperture and shoot at f/2.8 for super-soft blur in backgrounds behind butterflies, but this isn't always the best option, especially at 100mm. Setting an aperture of f/2.8 at close range means that only a shallow band of the subject is sharp – for example,

the head or eyes – but not the antennae or body and wings.

For more of the insect to be in focus, while still ensuring the background is blurred, you need to set a narrower aperture of f/11 or even f/16. Don't worry, as you're focusing so close, the background will still be pleasingly blurred and your subjects will stand out.



INSECTS ON LIGHTBOXES

17 This is a great way to photograph insects close-up and in controlled conditions in your home. Of course, we don't condone catching wild insects, killing butterflies or buying endangered species online. However, you can source dried specimens from ethical butterfly farms.

Set up your insect on a lightbox, or make one from a cardboard box, tracing

paper and desk lamps. Shoot from directly above with a tripod, making sure your lens plane is parallel to the insect laid flat. Use a macro lens at a mid-range aperture of f/8 and ISO 100, then set a shutter speed according to your light power. A good starting point is 1/50 sec.

Get entomological natural history specimens from www.wobam.co.uk

Capture sharp shots of butterflies and insects early in the morning before they warm up and start moving.

AND FINALLY... SPRING SUNRISES AND SUNSETS

Varied weather conditions make spring the season to work on your landscape skills



Peter Travers

MISTY MORNINGS IN SPRING

18 For years, I've wanted to get a shot of Kelston Roundhill, near Bath in Somerset, sitting above the clouds. I'd visualised the photo but never had the right conditions, luck or timing... until earlier this spring, when the conditions were perfect

for a low-lying mist first thing in the morning: a cool, clear night followed by a morning frost, then warm sunshine.

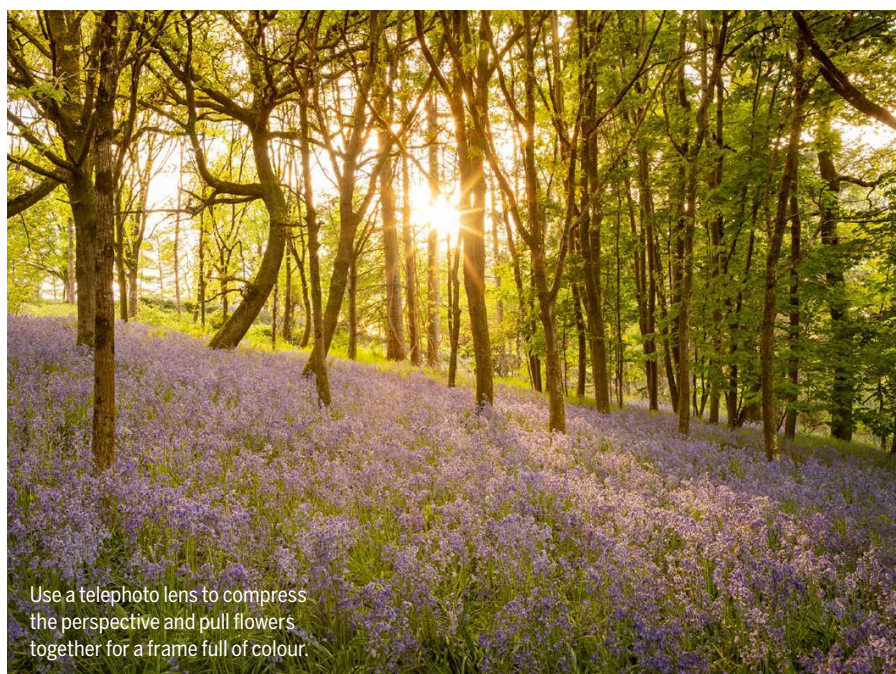
Just after sunrise, I raced to get into my pre-planned position across the valley in my local village, then had to patiently stand with

my camera kit on the tripod, and wait for the thick blanket of mist to clear. After an hour or so, I was rewarded with enough of the roundhill appearing through the mist to be highlighted by the sun. I love the soft side-light from the early morning sunshine.

BLUEBELLS IN THE WOODS

19 A sea of bluebells in a forest in spring is a favourite springtime photograph. A few years ago, I found this fantastic location on top of a hill, with big blankets of bluebells filling large areas of the forest floor. I went back before sunset to capture these shots of the soft sunlight beyond.

Put your wide-angle lens away, and choose a 24-105mm or 70-200mm lens instead, as the key is to shoot at focal lengths above 50mm to compress the perspective and pull the flowers together for a frame full of colour. Get your camera on a tripod and use f/16 for sharpness and to create a sunburst effect. With the low evening light, I used a shutter speed of 1/8 sec at ISO 100.



Use a telephoto lens to compress the perspective and pull flowers together for a frame full of colour.

Peter Travers



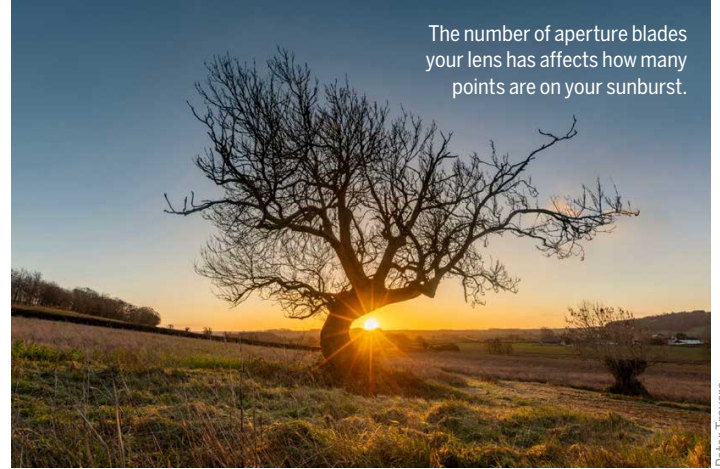
6-stop ND filter

Peter Travers

SEASCAPES AT SUNRISE

20 Early morning and late evening are the best times for capturing beautiful landscapes with warm, golden lighting and colourful skies before sunrise and after sunset. This shot of the Mumbles lighthouse in south Wales is a great example of why you need to be in position well before sunrise. I arrived 40 minutes ahead of time to be greeted by vibrant colours showing in the sky.

I set up my camera and 24-105mm lens on my tripod as it was getting brighter by the minute. I zoomed in at 90mm for a neat composition and used a six-stop ND filter for a longer exposure of five seconds to subtly blur the water. Editing the raw file, I used a warmer white balance setting to bring out the reds and yellows in the sky and reflection in the sea.



The number of aperture blades your lens has affects how many points are on your sunburst.

Peter Travers

SUNBURSTS AT SUNRISE

21 The 'sunburst' is a brilliant technique to master to transform your sunrise shots in spring. But there's more to it than simply using a narrow aperture to create the sunburst effect. It also takes prep and practice. I did a recce at this location the morning before, when it was cloudy, using my PhotoPills app to determine the position of the rising sun in relation to the tree on the hillside. I then worked out the best spot to shoot from, at a low angle and with a wide 16mm focal length for the best composition.

The next day, the forecast was for cloudless skies, so I returned before sunrise and got in position with my Canon EOS R5 Mark II and adapter with an EF 16-35mm f/2.8L II USM on my tripod, low to the ground. As the sun poked above the horizon, I moved so that I could place the sun in the bend of the tree trunk.

The key is to shoot at sunrise, so the light is diffused, or partially place the sun behind an object such as a tree or church spire. I shot at an aperture of f/16 and bracketed exposures to merge into an HDR image that held the highlights and boosted shadows.

PIERS AT SUNSET

22 Here, patience really paid off to get this cracking sunset photo of Clevedon Pier in North Somerset, despite the changeable and unreliable weather forecasts. That morning, the Met Office weather app showed sun and clear skies all day, right through to the evening. But the afternoon remained thick with cloud cover,

and by early evening, the Met Office app changed to display only one solitary hour of sunshine, due just before sunset.

However, experience has taught me that it's always worth taking a chance on the weather to get the shot. Out of nowhere, blue skies appeared inland, shifting the clouds over the pier and out to sea. The

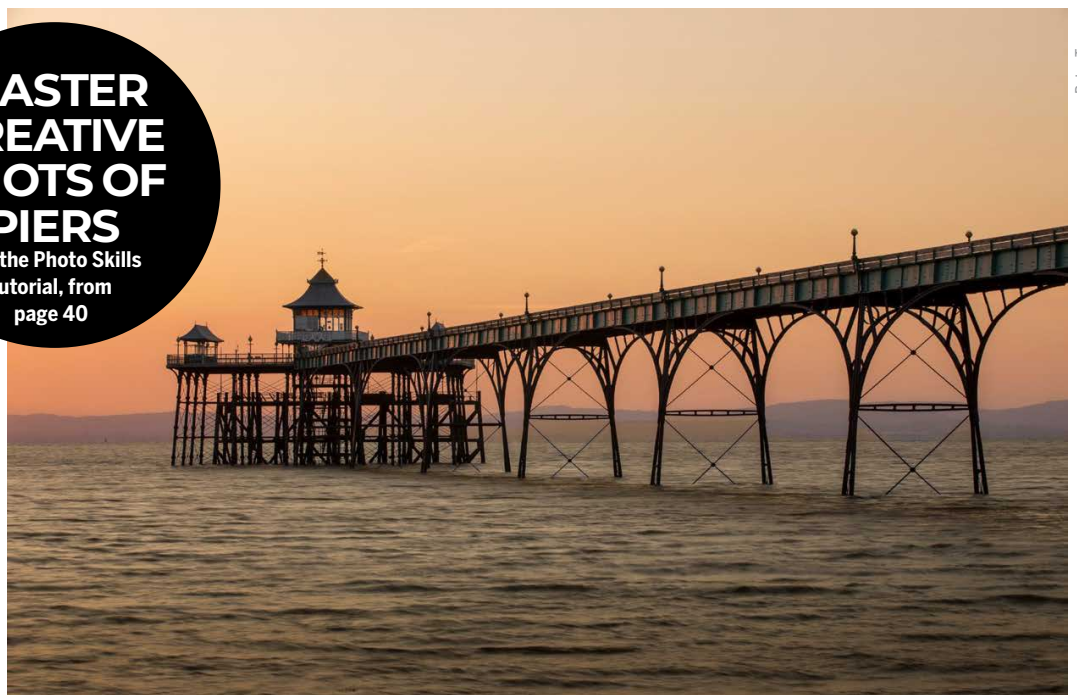
skies cleared and the sun emerged.

Just before the sun disappeared below the horizon, the skies surrounding the silhouetted pier had transformed to reveal beautiful pinks, oranges and yellows. Using a 70-200mm lens at 100mm allowed me to zoom in on the pier and include the most colourful parts of the sky at sunset.

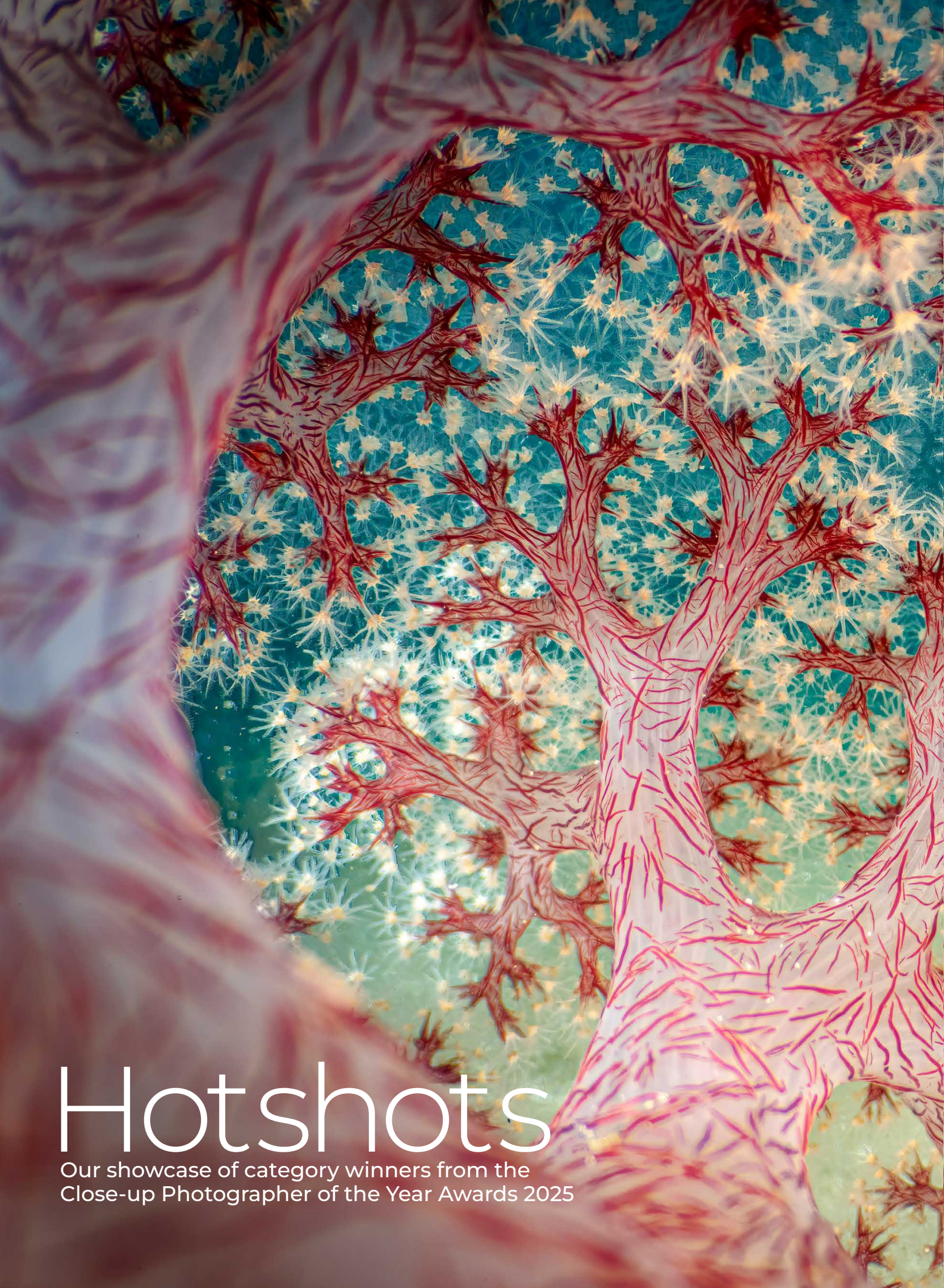


MASTER CREATIVE SHOTS OF PIERS

See the Photo Skills tutorial, from page 40



Peter Travers



Hotshots

Our showcase of category winners from the
Close-up Photographer of the Year Awards 2025

**OVERALL WINNER
AND WINNER: Underwater
'Fractal Forest' Ross Gudgeon**

The inside of a cauliflower soft coral in the Lembeh Strait, Indonesia. "Named for its cauliflower-like appearance, this coral has numerous small, round polyps that give it a puffy texture. This unique perspective was made possible by the Nauticam EMWL (Extended Macro Wide Lens), an underwater version of the probe or insect eye lens. Due to its length, small diameter, close focus and wide field of view, it allows perspectives that are impossible with conventional lenses. I decided to experiment with the EMWL on the soft coral to capture a different view of a common life form. I carefully threaded the end through the branches of the soft coral so as not to damage them, creating an image looking from the inside out."

Instagram: @ross_gudgeon



© Sho Hoshino / CUPOTY

i

WINNER: Intimate Landscape 'Dreamy State' Sho Hoshino

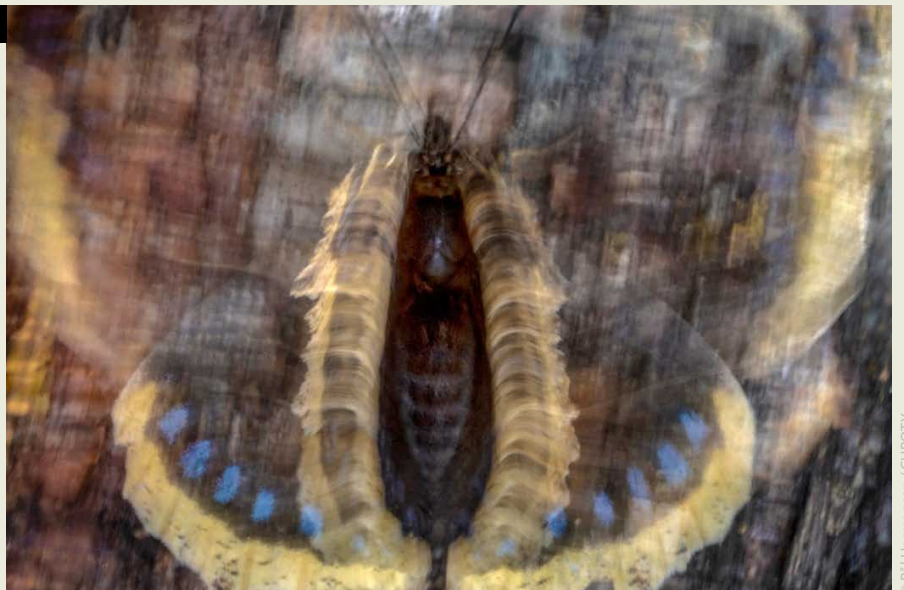
A tree covered with rime ice in Nagano Prefecture, Japan. "I took this photograph when frost-covered trees stood before a mist that turned pink in the morning sunlight. The composition relies on soft, pale tones, anchored by the dark, intricate shape of the tree trunk and its distorted form. I excluded the base of the tree to highlight the complexity of its trunk. I wanted to emphasise the special conditions of frost and mist, so I waited for the moment when the background turned pink. Although the scene depicts the freezing cold of winter, the warm colour tones give it a gentle sense of warmth rather than loneliness." **Website:** www.shohoshinophotography.com **Instagram:** @shocha_photography

i

**WINNER: Butterflies & Dragonflies
'Butterfly Flash'
Pål Hermansen**

A Camberwell beauty (*Nymphalis antiopa*) flashes its wings to defend its feeding spot on a tree trunk in Follo, Norway. "This butterfly was sitting on a birch tree, drawn by the leaking sap caused by an attack of goat moth (*Cossus cossus*) larvae. Some red admiral butterflies and wasps were also attracted to the sweet sap. When the wasps approached, the Camberwell beauty didn't fly away, but instead defended the spot by suddenly flashing its wings several times. The other insects kept their distance, allowing it to spend sufficient time feeding undisturbed."

Website: www.palhermansen.com
Instagram: @hermansenpal



© Pål Hermansen / CUPOTY

i

WINNER: Animals-Amphibian
'Amphibian Galaxy'
Filippo Carugati

A Malagasy frog (*Guibemantis* sp.) egg clutch in the Maromizaha rainforest, Madagascar. "Cyclone season gave me the opportunity to witness the spectacle of the mass reproduction of Malagasy frogs. Their reproduction peaks correspond with winter months, a period characterised by intense rainfall. I was impressed by the variety in shape, colour and size of the egg clutches. Here, I documented a large egg clutch hanging on a small trunk. Inside, several tadpoles were swimming in the gelatinous substance. Using an external remote-controlled flash, I lit the subject from behind, enhancing the shapes of the converging tadpoles and the colourful mixture within the gelatine, which suggested a cosmic appearance."

Website: www.filippo-carugati-photographer.com
Instagram: @wildlais

© Filippo Carugati / CUPOTY

i

WINNER: Invertebrate Portrait
'Good Boy' Laurent Hesemans

A moth (*Bombycidae* sp.) in Tinamaste, Costa Rica. "A favourite quarry of many macro photographers, it is always lovely to get the opportunity to spend time with members of the Bombycid family. Incredibly photogenic, the large eyes and antenna positions of these moths, especially the males, always lend their portraits a somewhat melancholy feeling. They are a lesson in beautiful subtlety and a reminder to give even the simplest arthropods and small creatures a second, closer look." **Website:** www.laurent-hesemans.com **Instagram:** @laurent_nam

© Laurent Hesemans / CUPOTY



WINNER: Insects 'Blue Army' Imre Potyó

A swarm of Danube mayflies (*Ephoron virgo*) in Szentendre, Hungary. "After a few decades, the endangered Danube mayfly has returned to the River Danube after disappearing from the rivers of Middle Europe due to water pollution. In this image, taken in summer 2024, a swarm containing millions of mayflies approaches the city of Szentendre, lured out by the city lights due to their positive phototaxis. During the late August festival, dense clouds of mayflies engulfed restaurants, wine bars and open-air concerts, becoming an unmissable spectacle.

The mayflies circled the lights, but unable to break free, they perished on the asphalt. Each evening resulted in huge ecological damage, with millions of mayflies perishing, along with the egg clusters containing their offspring." **Instagram:** @imrepotyó

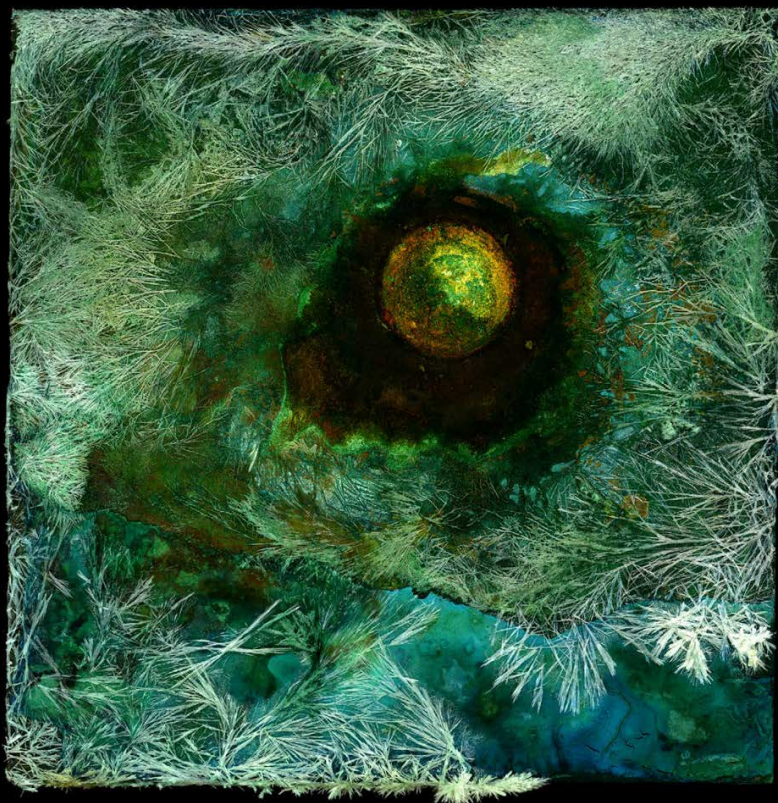
WINNER: Fungi & Slime Moulds**'Mushroom in the Nude Style'****Valeria Zvereva**

A fragment of the lower part of the cap of a lamellar mushroom near Moscow, Russia.

"This image shows the lower part of the cap of a lamellar mushroom. After all, there is something of the 'nude' style in this."

Instagram: @zebrav1

i



© Paul Kenny / CUPOTY

WINNER: Studio Art 'Copper Works No.25' Paul Kenny

A copper plate distressed and oxidised by everyday household materials.

"Three years ago, at the age of 71 and after 35 years living in rural and coastal tranquillity, my wife and I moved back into the centre of a big city. For 50 years, my work had been concentrated on creating visionary landscapes, constructed from insignificant scraps from the shoreline.

However, my new environment conjured up memories of my upbringing in the post-industrial revolution Lowry-esque landscape of inner-city Salford. Over the past three years, a new body of work has emerged. The fragments of flotsam and jetsam that formed the source of my medium have been replaced with the chemical fragments of common household materials – bleach, cleaners, gardening products and bathroom products. This image was made on a glass plate and captured with a scanner."

Website: www.paul-kenny.co.uk
Instagram: @jmarmaduke

i



© Artur Tomaszek / CUPOTY

WINER: Arachnids 'Dinner'**Artur Tomaszek**

A lynx spider (*Oxyopes* sp.) feeds on termites in Hong Kong. "Lynx spiders are ambush predators that hunt prey by sight. Despite producing silk, they don't build webs. It had been a hot, dry spring, but on this evening, it started raining, prompting the termites to begin their mating dance – an opportunity for the lynx spider to make its catch. The main difficulty was the termites flying in my face, attracted by the camera's flash. In the end, the spider caught two or three of them, creating this striking scene."

Website: arturtomaszek.com
Insta: @artur.tomaszek.photo



Close-up
Photographer
of the Year

About the competition

The Close-up Photographer of the Year (CUPOTY) competition is the largest contest in the world dedicated to close-up, macro and micro photography. Founded in 2018 by Tracy and Dan Calder, the seventh edition of the competition attracted over 12,000 entries from 63 countries. A jury of 22 expert photographers, naturalists and editors spent over 20 hours selecting the winners and Top 100 images across the 11 different categories. These winners were selected from the shortlisted images in early February 2026.
www.cupoty.com

CAMERA CLINIC

Master the art of modern photography

This month: Using colour for impact
Master hue, saturation and luminance and your photographs will improve



Whether you prefer a bold, saturated style or a subtle one, make colour work for you.



Will Cheung

An imaging journalist and freelance photographer based in London, Cheung has a wealth of experience over several decades.
www.williamcheung.co.uk

Virtually every photograph taken today is in colour, and for most people, capturing lifelike pictures of their loved ones and life's adventures is all they want. If you're reading this, though, your ambitions probably lie beyond record shots and your expectations may be higher.

Exploring colour is a challenge because we take the medium for granted, but the good news is that you don't need fancy camera kit, just a different mindset and a little effort. Getting creative with colour can be as simple as tweaking exposure, shooting at different times of the day and composing with more care, but you can delve deeper into the techniques with picture profiles, playing with white balance and using filters. Then there's the file format you shoot and how far you want to go with editing. While there's a great deal you can achieve in-camera, factor in editing and the opportunities increase exponentially.

The thing with colour is that, in a photographic sense, we perceive colours differently, and tastes vary from person to person. Some photographers like the bold, saturated approach and want pictures with visual impact, while others prefer a subtle and harmonious feel. There's no right or wrong, and it's what suits your style best and where you are right now on your photography journey.

If you're an experienced enthusiast, you'll already know what you like (and don't like) and have already developed a personal style. However, if you sit at the other end of the spectrum, you're probably wondering which techniques are going to work for you, and that's where this Camera Clinic will help. As with many aspects of photography, the best way to learn is to get out there and do it. Try the different ideas mentioned here and see what fits your vision, and that will help you find your own way.

Get the knowledge

Is there such a thing as the 'right' colour?

There are times when your image should accurately match the subject, for example, a pro photographer shooting a wedding should get the colour of the bride's dress spot on. As enthusiasts, though, we have creative licence and can use colour to evoke a mood, enhance the subject or create a result that matches your creative vision.

How you go about using colour is up to you. Getting it close to your desired look

in-camera can be done with exposure, filters, white balance and picture modes. Doing most of the work at the taking stage is crucial if you're only shooting in jpeg format because there is limited room for editing on the computer. This is why raw is the format to shoot in, providing you have the software and the time to process your shots afterwards.

Factor in filters

Lens accessories to enhance your colour



GRADUATED FILTERS

These are available in a wide range of colours, including blue and orange, which have potential for scenics. However, the most popular grad filter is grey, which reduces the amount of light reaching the sensor without affecting its colour, so it's perfect for controlling intense skies and bright foregrounds. Graduated filter strengths from two to four stops and transition styles – soft, medium and hard – are available. Kick off your filter outfit with a three-stop soft ND grad.



POLAR POWER

The polariser is the most versatile filter you can buy, with the ability to produce effects that can't truly be emulated in software. It can bring out blue skies, cut down reflections off water and glass and deal with glare for richer colours. A polarising filter has a variable filter factor of around one to two stops, depending on the filter design, but it's worth noting that its impact varies and depends on the lighting and the subject.



VARIABLE ND & POLARISER

A versatile filter that can be employed as a polariser, a variable ND or a combination of the two. Ideal for scenics, it can be used to enhance skies or reduce glare and enable longer shutter speeds at the same time. Different ND strengths are available from 5 stops up to 10 stops, which can also double up as a video fader. Getting the most from a variable ND/polariser takes practice, but it's worth considering adding to your kit bag.

True colours

Devices for expert colour management without the pain



WHITER THAN WHITE

Your camera's Auto White Balance usually does a great job, but it can trip up in some instances, and a custom WB reading can give more accurate results. Custom WB readings can be done with a sheet of white paper or grey card, but a gadget such as the Expodisc v3 placed in front of the lens will give consistent, pro-quality results, regardless of the situation and lighting type.



PERFECT COLOURS

Ensure colours are correct every time with a portable camera calibration device, such as the Datacolor Spyder Checkr Photo (£100/\$100) or Calibrite ColorChecker Passport Photo 2 (£129/\$119). Take a raw shot of the test chart in the same light as that on the subject. Using the supplied software, a custom profile is generated to apply to your shots in your usual image editor.



CALIBRATE YOUR MONITOR

If your photographs look different on other monitors or prints look wrong, an uncalibrated monitor could be the cause, and a screen calibration device would be a worthwhile investment. Profile devices are also available for scanners, projectors and printers. Colour management is a dark art, but the software is straightforward to use and a reminder can usually be set to warn you when the next calibration is due.

Perfect examples of creative colour

Spice up your pictures by exploiting the full colour spectrum



THE COLOURS OF RAIN

I enjoy the challenge of photographing brollies in the rain. My camera, complete with rain cover, was already out and a high ISO set. It was a busy scene with a messy background, but I saw a bus about to pass and hide what was behind the pedestrians. The low light meant that, even at ISO 6400, I could only muster 1/15 sec with the lens at its widest setting, but that was slow enough to blur the bus, which suited my idea. If anything, I'd have liked a little more blur; however, the bus was stuck in slow-moving traffic, so I didn't want to risk setting a slower shutter speed and increasing the chance of camera shake.

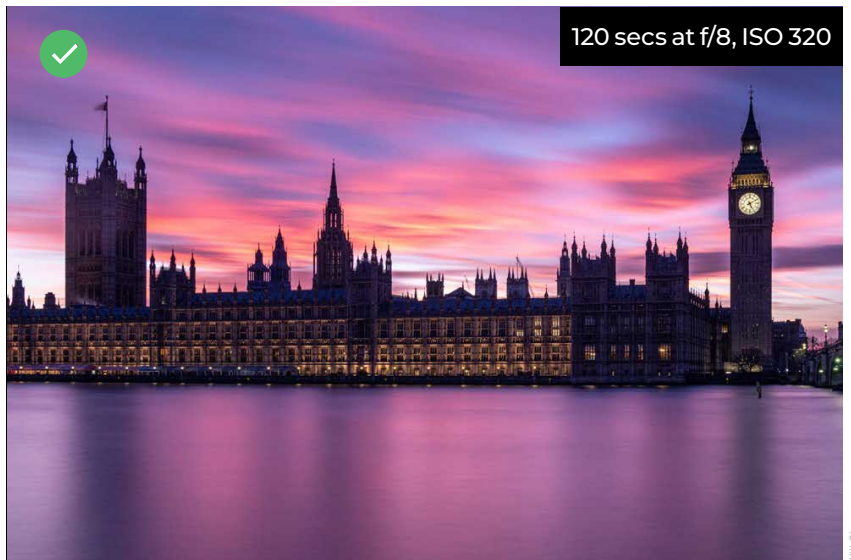


Will Cheung



TWILIGHT ON THE THAMES

Nature occasionally puts on a fantastic show and you don't have to do much except be there with the camera. Great conditions aren't always predictable, and during the day the weather was nothing special, but around sunset the sky got better and better. The twilight was epic, with the stunning colours peaking for a few minutes. It doesn't last long and if you've been out photographing the sunset, it's worth hanging on for blue hour, too – you might be lucky enough to get some fabulous colours. An ND filter was used to cut down the low light levels to enable a 120-sec exposure to blur the sky and water, which were both slow-moving.



Will Cheung



GO BOLD FOR IMPACT

Bright sun adds punch to bold colours, but can make life challenging for people photography. I saw that the yellow shop front, the broolly and the bold colour palette had potential, but the scene needed colour contrast, which was provided by a lady walking past. Exposure is important here, and it's best to avoid overexposure, which would weaken saturation as well as burn out highlights. A standard zoom suits this type of work when there's lots of light, but a wide-angle prime, a 28mm or 35mm on full-frame, is a viable option. Of course, it has the advantage of a faster maximum aperture when the light levels drop.



Will Cheung



Making the most of colour

Hints and tips to get creative with your colour photos

It's easy to take colour for granted and not work it hard enough, so while images may be 'colour', they often lack mood, soul and impact. The good news is that the situation is easily remedied by thinking about your camera and editing techniques. When shooting, exposure, filters, white balance and careful framing can all make

the difference to your photos. Your colour approach defines your style; for example, you may either prefer shooting bold scenes with impact or opt for subtlety.

The good news is that many of the techniques we cover in this Camera Clinic are free and easy to incorporate into your photography.

Nine winning ways to help you exploit the glory of colour



ACCENT COLOUR

This technique predominantly uses one colour, with the minimal use of a contrasting or complementary colour. This splash of colour pulls the viewer's eye, so it's a potent compositional technique. However, it can be challenging to spot scenes that work well.



A QUESTION OF BALANCE

Have fun with the camera's white balance by dialling in a manual K (Kelvin). Using 8000-10,000K makes an image warmer – here, it was 8300K – while 3200K or lower makes everything cool and blue. Try it with portraits, urban scenes and landscapes.



BLUR IT

Intentional camera movement can produce great abstracts. Here, the camera was set to 4 secs and slowly panned during the exposure. For smooth transitions, start panning then press the shutter release. On brighter days, you will need an ND filter.



COLOUR CONTRAST

Using complementary colours opposite each other on the colour wheel (eg blue-orange) gives pictures with impact, depth and energy. Use strong colours with underexposure to saturate them and consider fitting a polarising filter to intensify the colours.



COLOUR POPPING

Usually done in editing, this leaves one vibrant colour intact and desaturates the rest of the image to black and white. It's a striking technique, but one that's best used sparingly. That said, with the right subject, it works really well and gives an unusual look.



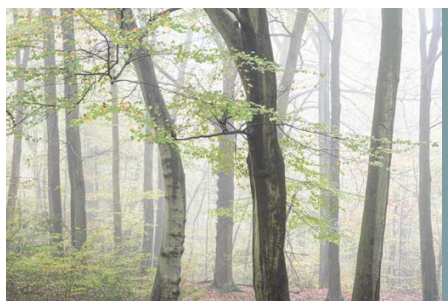
FEEL THE BLUES

An hour or so before sunrise and after sunset is a great time to be out with the camera. How long the blue hour lasts depends on the atmospheric conditions, so shoot quickly when the going's good. Light levels will be low, so a tripod is essential.



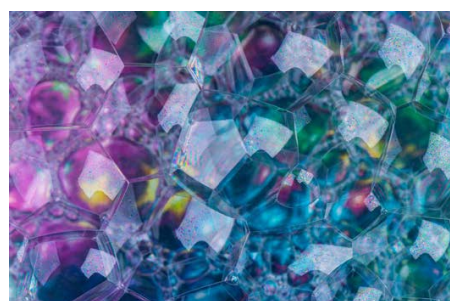
MONOCHROMATIC COLOUR

Images dominated by shades of one colour can often be impactful. This may occur naturally due to the lighting or time of day, but it can be produced by focusing on a small area. Here, tight framing has excluded other colours from the composition.



THE POWER OF EXPOSURE

Your camera will aim to get the exposure right. But deliberately over- or underexposing can impact the result; this scene was overexposed by 1.5 stops for a pastel look. Don't overdo it – check the histogram to ensure you aren't burning out highlights.



COLOUR HARMONY

Combining harmonious colours gives images that are easy on the eye. The approach uses analogous colours, adjacent on the colour wheel (eg yellow and red). This approach gives a pleasing, cohesive and calm look, different from using colour contrast.

Pros and cons

The miracle of colour

Getting creative in colour may sound simple, but it isn't as easy you think

We are fortunate to see the world in glorious colour, and our digital cameras can capture scenes with great realism. But it's easy to take it for granted and miss out on creative possibilities. That's solved, though, with a little more thought about what's in front of you.

✓ Mood matters

Use colour balance for emotion. Warm scenes are appealing and welcoming, while cool ones are the opposite. Adjust the manual white balance to reflect the mood you want to portray.

✓ Using picture modes

Picture profiles such as Fujifilm's Film Simulation modes are applied to in-camera jpegs. For a similar look with raw files, add them in editing.

✓ Be prepared

The camera's Auto White Balance setting copes with most variations of daylight, but doesn't deal so effectively with interior lighting or artificial lights, such as streetlamps. Use presets, a manual Kelvin setting or take a custom white balance.

✓ Check your flash

If you're using flash, the natural assumption is to use the Flash white balance setting, depicted

as a lightning icon, but don't assume accurate results, even if you're using an own-brand flashgun. Check previews and use a custom white balance or take a few test shots at different Kelvin settings and apply the most neutral. This is especially important if you're working in a brightly coloured room.

✗ Watch your speed

For the best colour performance, avoid high ISOs. Colour accuracy and saturation suffer as speed increases and blacks lose density. The speed at which colour performance tails off depends on the camera – recent models are more tolerant.

✗ Don't leave it on

The polariser has many benefits, but it absorbs light and doesn't work for every situation. Use it when the conditions have potential – which is usually when the sun's shining – although the filter can still reduce glare off foliage, paintwork and rocks on dull days. Remember to rotate the polariser in its mount to determine the best effect.

✗ Cast away

Using colour to imply a cool or warm mood is one thing, but beware of subtle colour casts that can ruin a photo. Green and magenta casts are the most common, so always check neutral areas, such as whites and greys, for a distracting cast.

Colour is everywhere
Concentrate on colour with tight framing.

PRIVATE

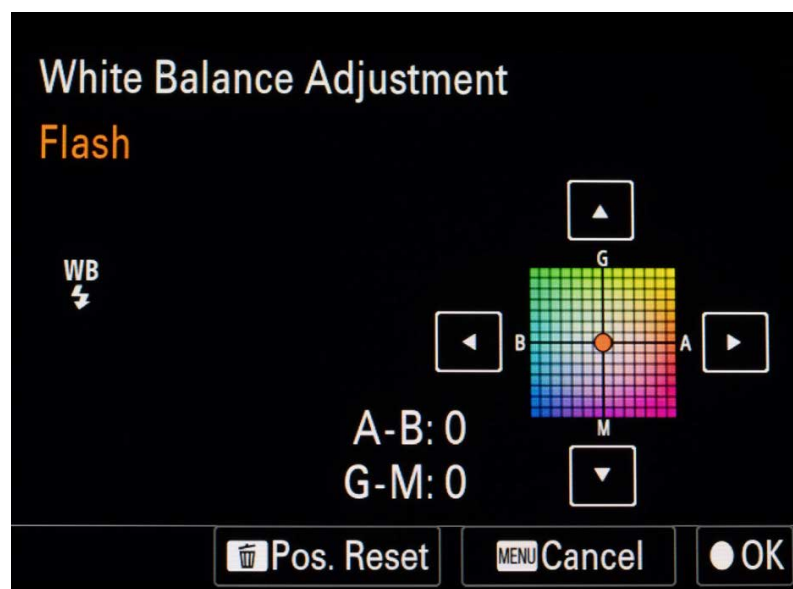
Camera know-how

More about white balance

Change the WB settings for interesting results

The role of the camera's white balance feature is to make colours look lifelike in different lighting. There's usually a selection of presets, such as Cloudy, Flash, Shade and Tungsten, as well as Auto White Balance (AWB), where the camera does the work.

AWB in daylight usually gives fine results and if you're shooting in raw format, there's the safety net of editing. If you're shooting jpegs only, or prefer to get it right in-camera, use the appropriate preset, custom white balance or manually set the colour temperature. As a rough guide, noon daylight is 5500K, tungsten lighting 3200K and shade 7000K. However, deliberately setting the incorrect white balance can give interesting results.



Expose for richness

Minor underexposure
saturates the colours.



PRIVATE

Don't overdo it

Keep it simple for success.

Will Cheung

Camera tech

Using picture profiles

Tailor the camera's colour controls
to meet your desired artistic vision

Shoot jpegs and the picture profile used will be applied to the final result. With raw format files, you can still enjoy the camera's profiles at the time of shooting and add or change the effect in editing.

Every digital camera has a default picture profile that gives 'standard' results, which often means nicely saturated, crisp and natural-looking photos. However, extra settings are available to give the look you want. Fujifilm has taken this further with its Film Simulation modes. Non-Fujifilm shooters will have to improvise and create their own formulas using available parameters, such as saturation, clarity, contrast and sharpness. Do a web search for the settings to use on your camera.



Shoot photos like a pro

Look after your colours and they will create an eye-catching shot

Making the most of colour isn't difficult, but it can be challenging to start with, although this depends on the individual. Some people 'see' or visualise colour in a photographic sense more readily than others; it's the same with black-and-white photography.

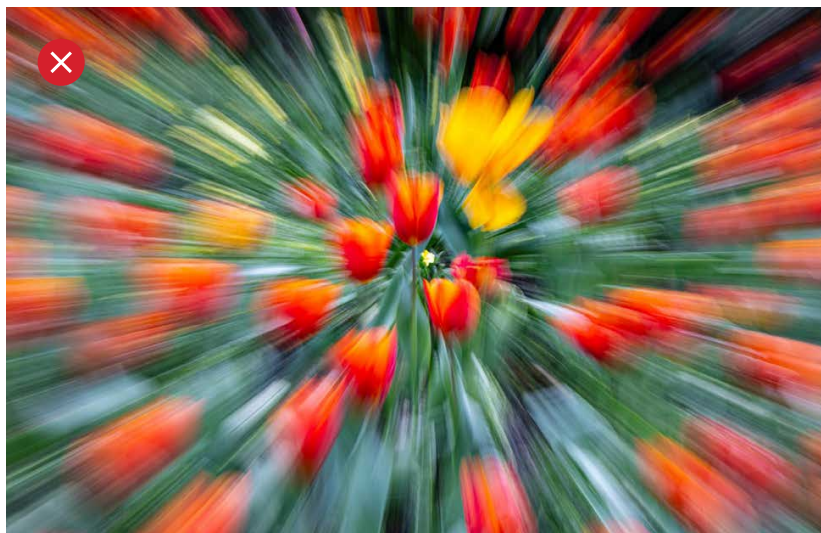
If seeing colour creatively doesn't come naturally to you, the best way forward is to practise shooting pictures with a colour

approach that works for you. This could mean concentrating on punchy, saturated colours, or if you have a preference for more delicate pastel hues, seek out images that suit those colours.

Naturally, the approach is also guided to a large extent by the subject. For example, gritty street pictures often benefit from a bold colour palette, while beauty portraits require a gentler touch.

Blooming zoombursts

Inject life into your colour shots with a zoomburst, where you zoom the lens during a longer exposure. For a variety of looks, try zooming in as well as zooming out, setting different exposure times or zooming at different points during the exposure. In terms of composition, placing the focal point at the centre of the frame often works best with all the blurred lines of colour taking you into the scene.



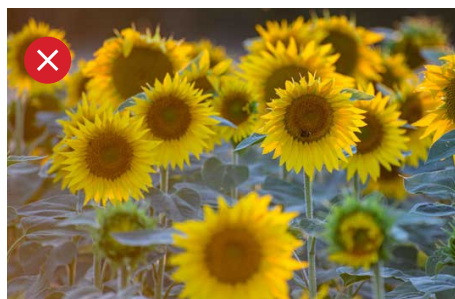
1/4 sec at f/20, ISO 50



0.4 sec at f/20, ISO 50

Trick of the light

Two different areas of the same sunflower field show the influence of lighting. In the shade, the sunflowers still picked up some brightness, but the shadows were cool and looked uninviting. Focusing on a patch of flowers that was fully backlit gave a much warmer and more pleasant result. Shooting towards a low sun can cause flare, so use a lens hood and remove any protection filter. Also, make sure the lens is spotless.

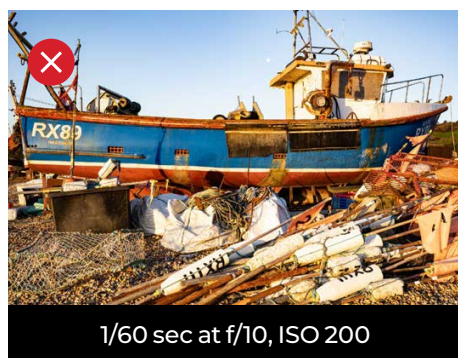
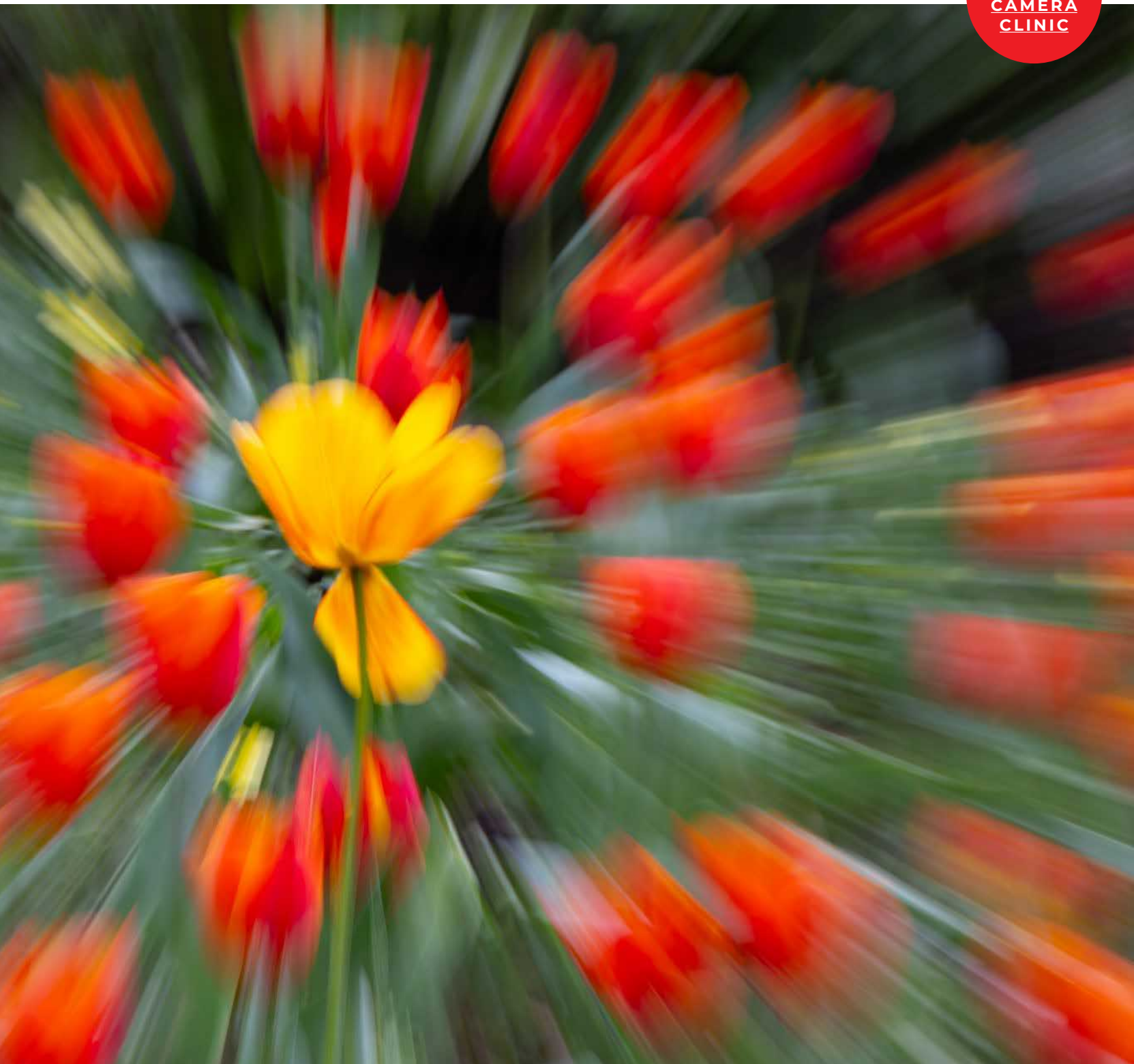


1/90 sec at f/5.6, ISO 200



1/125 sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

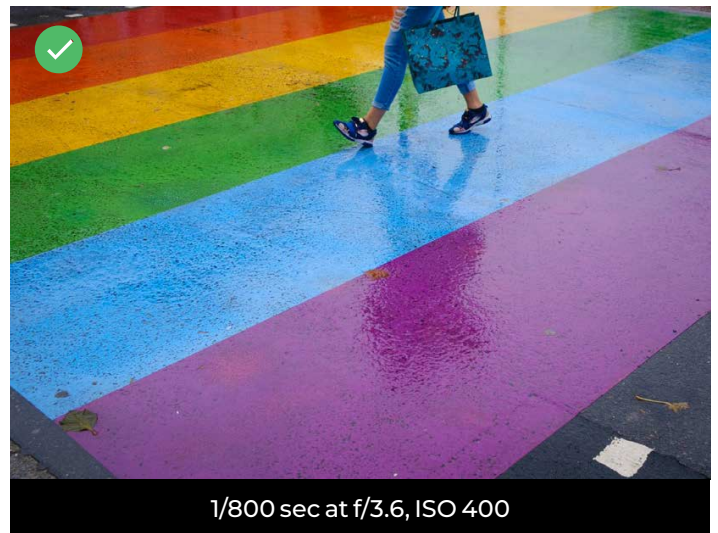
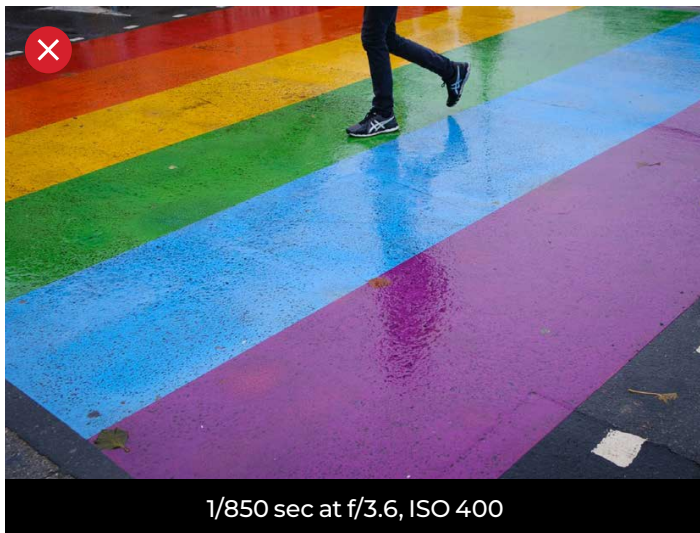
Will Cheung



Will Cheung

Bracket for success

Use the camera's autoexposure bracketing feature to ensure a perfect result. Lit by early morning sun, I bracketed this scene by taking three shots at +/- 1 stop, not only to make sure I had a perfect shot, but also to record detail in the waning moon. The frame underexposed by one stop was perfect, giving a richly saturated scene with the moon standing out boldly with plenty of detail in its face.



The right stuff

This rainbow crossing on a rainy day had lots of potential. The low contrast meant the colours came out nicely saturated and the dampness from the rain offered the potential for some good reflections. All I needed was a focal point and someone using the crossing seemed perfect, so I waited for a suitable subject. When a woman wearing blue jeans with a blue bag came along, I knew I had the shot I wanted.



The importance of depth

Which aperture to use is dependent on various factors, not least how much background sharpness you want in the shot. A small f/stop, such as f/11 used here, gives a deeper zone of acceptable sharpness and that can mean the main subject merging in too much with the background. In this case, a wider f/stop of f/4 made the two alliums stand out more effectively from the background, resulting in a stronger composition.

Camera tech Custom white balance

How an A4 sheet of white paper means perfect colours

If you're unhappy with how the camera's white balance is coping with a particular scenario, take a custom white balance reading. If you own a gadget such as the Expodisc, use it, but if not, an A4 sheet of white paper will do.

There are two custom WB methods, depending on the camera. Both require you to fill the viewfinder with the paper sheet. It doesn't have to be sharp, so set

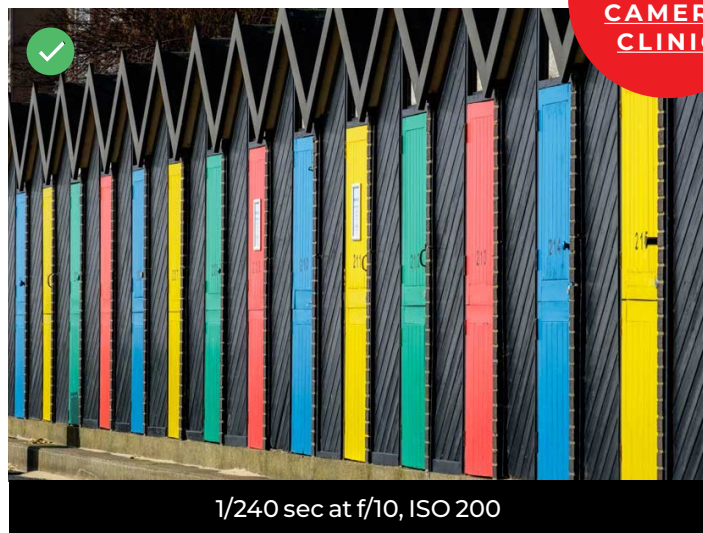
manual focus, but it must be in the same light as that hitting the subject. The first one is pressing the shutter release, but no image is recorded and a custom WB reading is taken. The second is taking a shot of the paper and selecting that when custom WB is engaged.

Remember to return the camera's white balance setting to normal when you have finished in that situation.



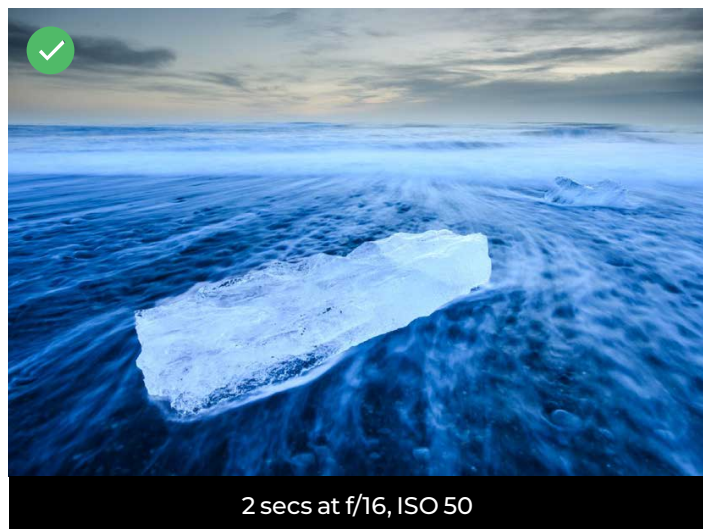
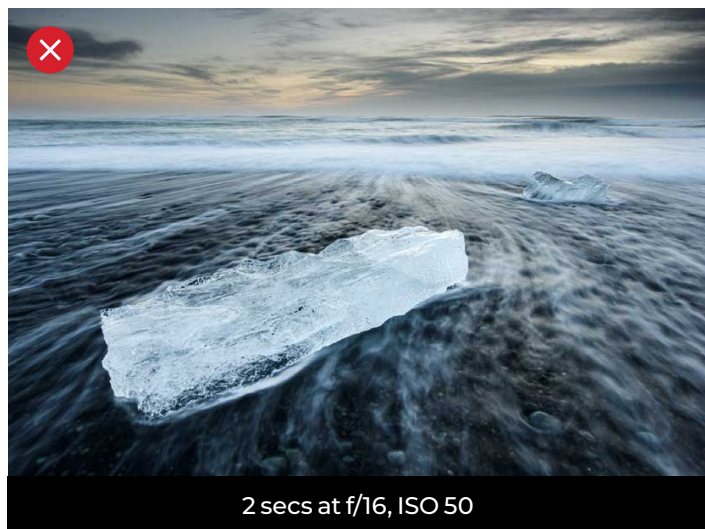


CAMERA
CLINIC



Vary the viewpoint

Even a slight shift of position or camera height can make all the difference. Here, the aim was to take a picture of the colourful doors, so with a telephoto zoom, I tried two compositions from different viewpoints. The one on the left made more of the colours and was more identifiable as beach huts, but my preferred photo (right) showed more obvious perspective compression and the doors created a stronger, abstract pattern.



Balancing act

The original shot was taken using Auto White Balance. The camera did a fine job and the resulting raw file was accurate. However, I thought the shot lacked mood. In Adobe Lightroom, I moved the white balance slider to a lower Kelvin value, and that made the whole scene blue for a colder feel. However, that made the sky too cool, so using a linear gradient, I adjusted the white balance for a more natural colour.

Pro tip Caring for your colours

Colour management, workflow and profiles

Experienced photographers work hard at ensuring a smooth, efficient and managed workflow so their shots come out in print and on-screen exactly as visualised. How deep you want to go with this is your call, but a good place to start is to calibrate the monitor. The kit isn't too expensive and the latest calibrators are easy to use.

However, it gets trickier if you want to print your images regularly. Use a printing lab, and there's usually colour advice and downloadable profiles to use, with the degree of difficulty ramping up if you decide to make prints at home. However, there is something highly satisfying about making prints at home, so it's thoroughly recommended.





"So many things have changed, and will never return the way they were", says Emilia Devoe. From the series *The Other Battlefields*.

Laetitia Vançon

Shot of the month

A girl on the Kyiv metro helps **Laetitia Vançon** to a Female in Focus 2025 photo project win

Laetitia Vançon
Photographer

Title: 'Emilia Devoe'

Location: Kyiv, Ukraine

Date: April 2023

Camera: Nikon D750 and 24-70mm f/2.8 lens

Exposure: 1/125 sec at f/4, ISO 1600

Instagram: @laetitiavancon

The winners of Female in Focus 2025 were announced in February. Celebrating outstanding work by women and non-binary photographers around the world, the award was established to discover, promote and reward remarkable photographic talent, and reflects the commitment of Nikon and the British Journal of Photography to amplify these important voices in photography.

Responding to this year's theme, 'On the Cusp', the two winning projects and 21 single images explore moments of transition – personal, cultural, environmental and technological – capturing the lives and landscapes on the edge of change.

The two winning projects were *New Scramble* by Giya Makondo-Wills and *The Other Battlefields* by Laetitia Vançon. The former highlights the rapid expansion of data centres across South Africa, and how patterns of extraction historically tied to land and minerals may now be replicated through data infrastructure.

The Other Battlefields is a portrait of Ukrainian youth living through war, and was described as "poignant and quietly profound". Her project began six months after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, but instead of focusing on the frontline, Laetitia turned her lens towards the daily persistence of Ukraine's youth, "standing between two worlds – the life they imagined and the life the war has imposed on them".

We see images including maritime students continuing their studies, graduates in Odesa dancing among sandbags erected to protect against drones and missiles and volunteers crafting bulletproof vests. Pictured above is Emilia, a student travelling on the Kyiv metro to meet her boyfriend at a concert. There are no 'tells' that Kyiv is a city at war; the passengers are behaving in the same way that subway travellers across the world do – focusing on their phone screens, minding their own business. Emilia, her face beautifully lit and looking away in hope and not in fear, is holding on physically – a visual metaphor for her fellow travellers. ●

You can view the winning entries at www.1854.photography/awards/female-in-focus/2025-winners

Digital Darkroom

Transform your photos with our easy, effective guides



PAGE 94
Photoshop
Use the Brush tool to add clouds for an artistic, painterly effect

PAGE 96
Lightroom
Reduce the dreaded red-eye effect with this simple Lightroom hack

PAGE 98
Photoshop
Try Blending modes and adjustment layers for a range of effects

PAGE 100
Affinity Photo 2
Macros offer quick and easy edits – learn how to create your own

PAGE 102
ON1 Photo RAW MAX
We look at the various tools you can use to edit portrait photos

MEET YOUR TRAINERS Edit like a pro with their expert insights



Dan Mold
As the deputy editor of our former sister title Photo Plus, Dan Mold has over a decade of experience in writing Photoshop tutorials and guides.



James Abbott
Specialising in landscapes and portraits, James Abbott is an advanced Photoshop user and has created hundreds of tutorials.



Sean McCormack
A photographer and writer based in Galway, Ireland, Sean McCormack is the author of books including *The Indispensable Guide to Lightroom CC*.



Wendy Evans LRPS
The author of over a dozen books on the subjects of photography, CGI and Photoshop, Wendy Evans has used Photoshop since version 3.0.



Before



After

Brush strokes

Dan Mold gives his images a painterly twist in Photoshop, and explains how you can recreate the effect with your free brush pack

The Brush Tool is one of the most popular tools within Photoshop CC, enabling you to do everything from painting directly onto your photo or blending different images together by painting on Layer Masks to managing how your layers are combined.

While you'll no doubt have used the standard circular Brush Tool with a hard or soft edge, there are plenty more options when it comes to brush tips that will provide an entirely different look. Photoshop comes loaded with extra brushes, and you'll find them in the Tool Options in the Brush Preset Picker. These include the dry and wet media brushes that can help you craft more painterly brush strokes. Inside the Brush Preset Picker, you can click the settings (cog) icon and choose Get More Brushes to download from Adobe.

However, we've carefully curated 20 cloud brushes for you to download in this month's software extras. In this tutorial, we'll explain how to install and start using them.

Make your own brushes

Open up an image you would like to use and hit Ctrl/Cmd+U to desaturate it. You want your object to be dark, so hit Ctrl/Cmd+I if your subject is light with a dark background. Hit Ctrl/Cmd+L to open up levels and bring the Highlight point in until the background is pure white. Now grab the Lasso tool and draw a selection around your subject, then head to Edit > Define Brush Preset. In the box that appears, give it a name and hit OK. You can now start painting with the brush you've just created.

Download your files

www.digitalcameraworld.com/dc306
Download your files and video tutorial from the folder titled 'Photoshop_Brush Tool'.



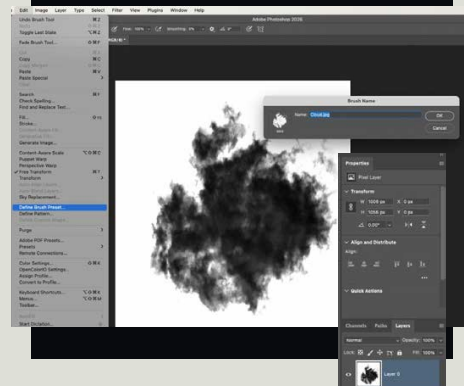
20 brushes
for Photoshop
Brush Tool

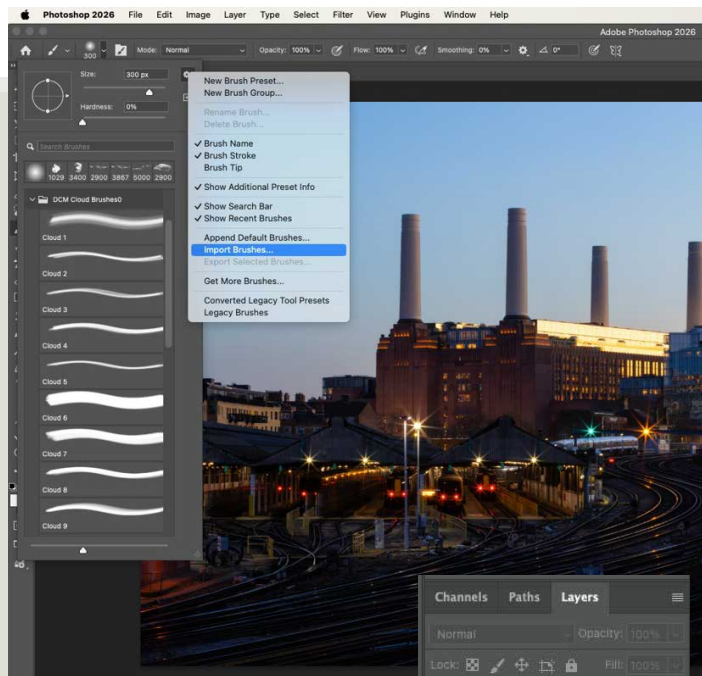


10-minute
video
tutorial



Project
files and
instructions

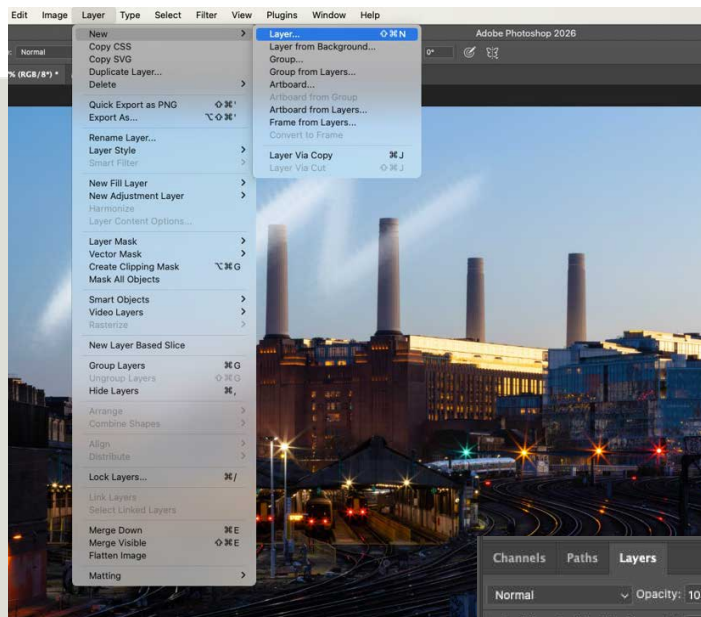




1

Load the brushes

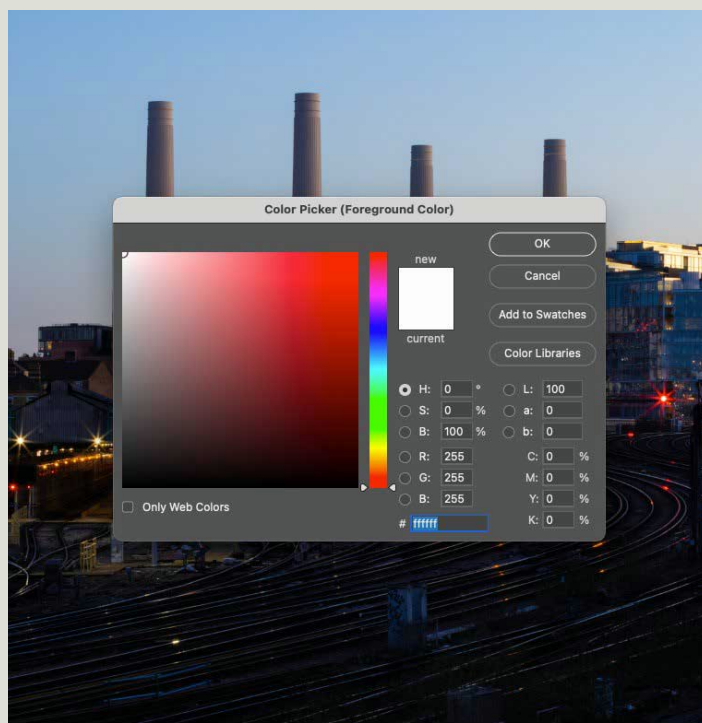
Open Photoshop and click on the Brush Tool or hit the keyboard shortcut B to make it active. Now, head up to the Options bar and click on the Brush Preset Picker. In the menu that appears, click on the Settings (cog) icon and choose Import Brushes, then navigate your way to the Cloud Brushes.abr file contained within the free software extras to load them in. Now you can browse through the 20 brushes and pick one that you like the look of.



2

Set the Size, Hardness, Opacity and Flow

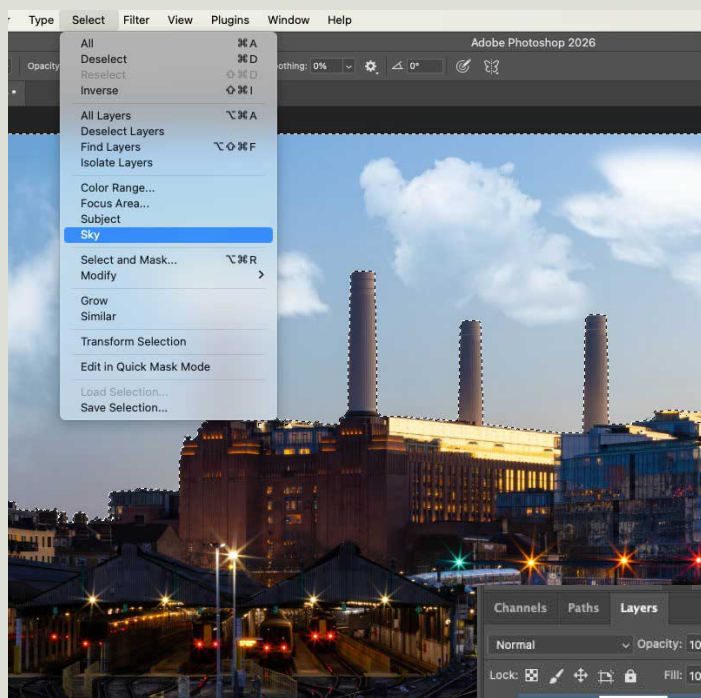
Go to the Brush Preset Picker again, and now you can adjust the Brush Size (you can also use the [and] keys), as well as the Hardness slider, which will make the edges of your brush more or less defined. In the Tool Options, you can also change the Opacity and Flow to control how strong the brush is when painted over an area. Finally, make sure you paint your clouds on a separate layer to keep your original image protected, so head up to Layer > New > Layer.



3

Change the colour

To change the colour, head down to the bottom of the Toolbox and click on the foreground colour swatch. Now use the Color Picker to set the colour you want to use, or use the Eyedropper to sample a colour within your picture. Note that when you are working on layer masks, you will only be able to set it to black and white, although you can hit X on the keyboard to quickly switch between a black or white foreground colour.



4

Mask off the sky

If your clouds are appearing in front of the buildings, you'll want to restrict the clouds to just the sky. The easiest way to do this is to click the Background layer in the Layers Panel to make it active, then go to Select > Sky. You can refine the selection further by clicking Select and Mask in the Options bar; a slight feather of 0.5px can work well. Now click on the cloud layer, then click the Add Layer Mask icon to mask the clouds off to only the areas with sky.



Before



After

How to reduce red eye

Sean McCormack uses Lightroom to repel this alien invasion

You know how it goes. You own a camera so you get roped into photographing events for friends and family. Your invite is usually wrapped up with taking the 'professional' photos instead of the usual phone shots. You can only use what you have, and that may be the built-in flash on the camera or a basic external flash. Off you go, getting the whole event in a dark room where the flash is a must, even with great ISO noise control on the camera.

On-camera flash, or even off-camera flash, takes time to master. If it's your first time doing shoots like this, you could well encounter that ugliest of phenomena, red eye! What causes this alien invasion? It's quite simple. The retina is nature's light-gathering tool, but it's also a great reflector, meaning you can see it clearly in some situations.

If you did basic physics in school, you may remember hearing the phrase 'the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflectance'. Light bounces back at the same angle. So on-camera flash is almost level with the lens on a camera, so the light goes into the eye and lights it up for the lens to capture. Fortunately, there is an easy fix in Lightroom Classic...



Bounce flash

The real trick is not having to deal with this scenario at all. Get your flash higher, or aim up to the ceiling to bounce for better light – even try pointing to the ceiling behind you. We're likely to see a lot more red eye in images again, as compact cameras have taken off with Gen Z. Thankfully, this tool is an easy fix.

Download your files

www.digitalcameraworld.com/dc306
Download your files and video tutorial from the folder titled 'Lightroom_Red Eye Reduction'.



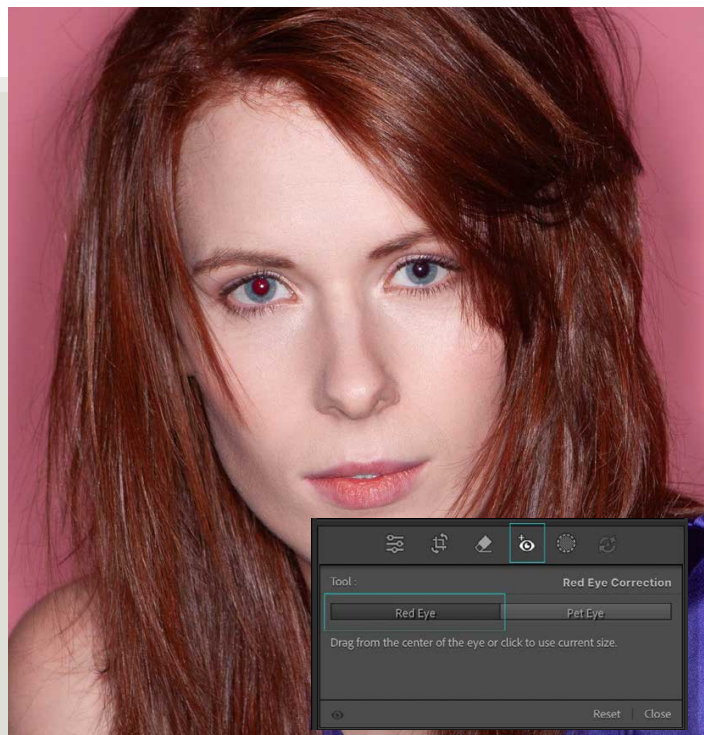
Four
Lightroom
Presets



9-minute
video
tutorial



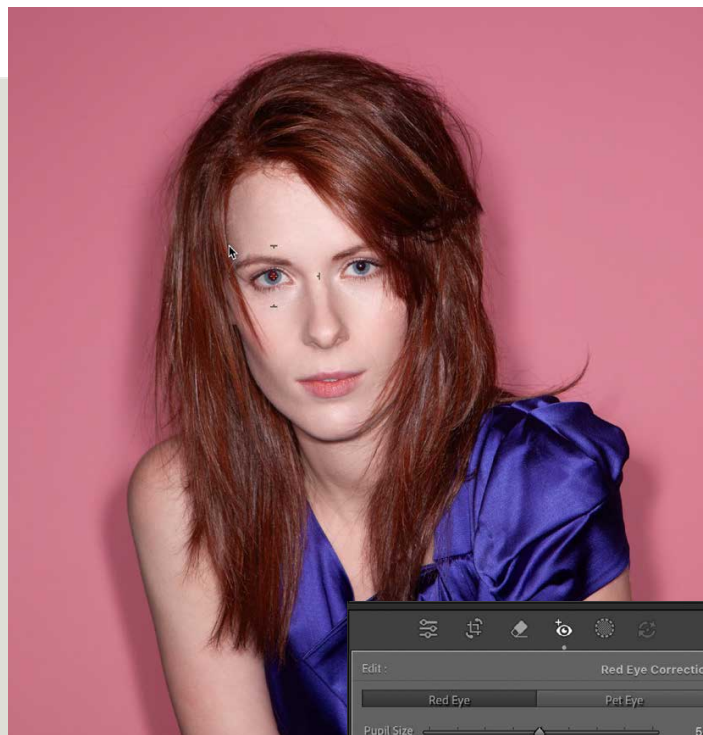
Project
files and
instructions



1

Finding the right tool

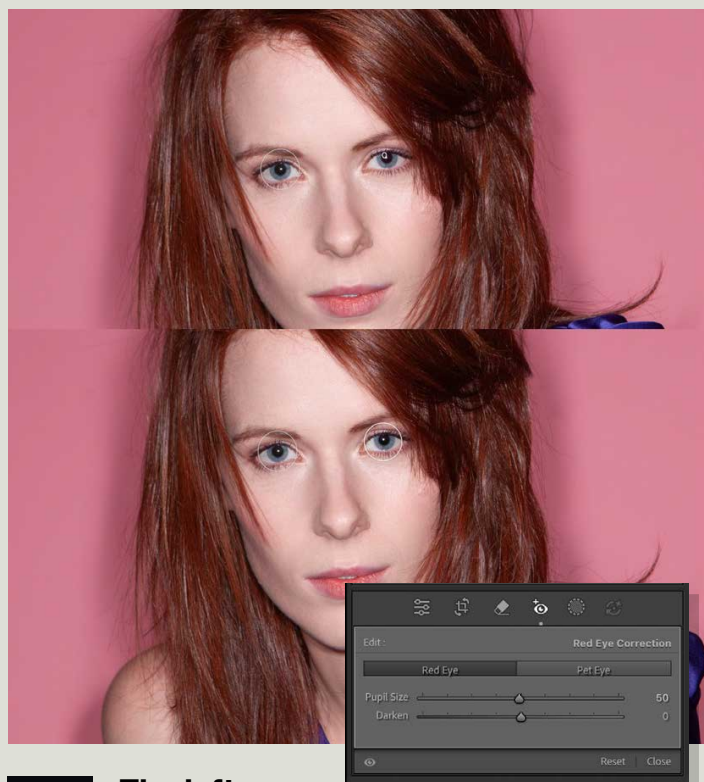
Unlike most tools, there isn't a dedicated header in Lightroom. The Red Eye tool is found in the Toolstrip, under the Histogram. Click on the eye with a small plus icon to open the tool. Here, you will notice that you have two main options: Red Eye and Pet Eye. Pet Eye deals with the green version of the issue that you get with animals over humans. But here, we're going to use Red Eye.



2

Aye Eye

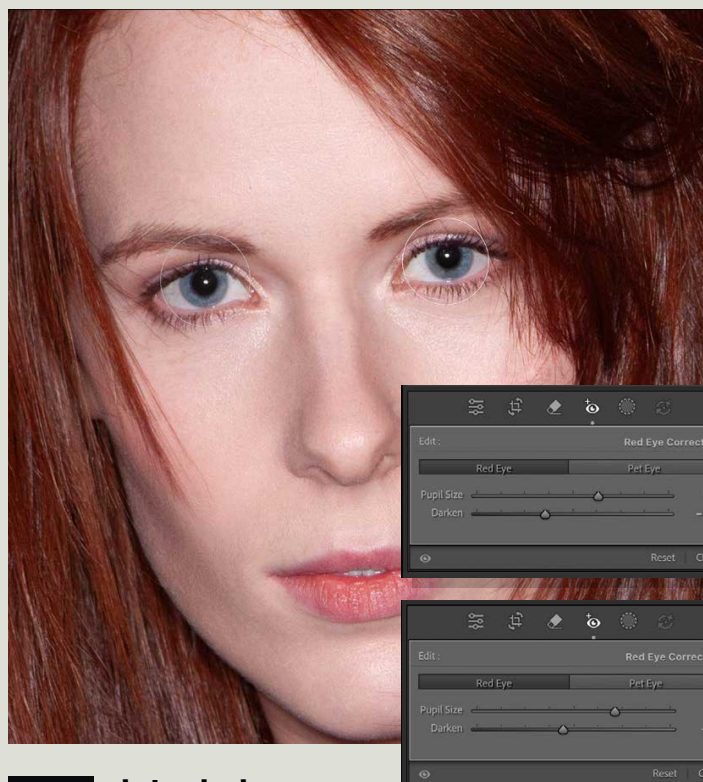
As the text in the panel says, click and drag around the eye. The subject's right eye (on the left in the image) is worse, so we'll start there. Drag to cover the whole of the visible eye. Too much and you will darken parts of the iris as well. Too little and only the centre of the pupil will be selected, or it won't be detected at all.



3

The left eye

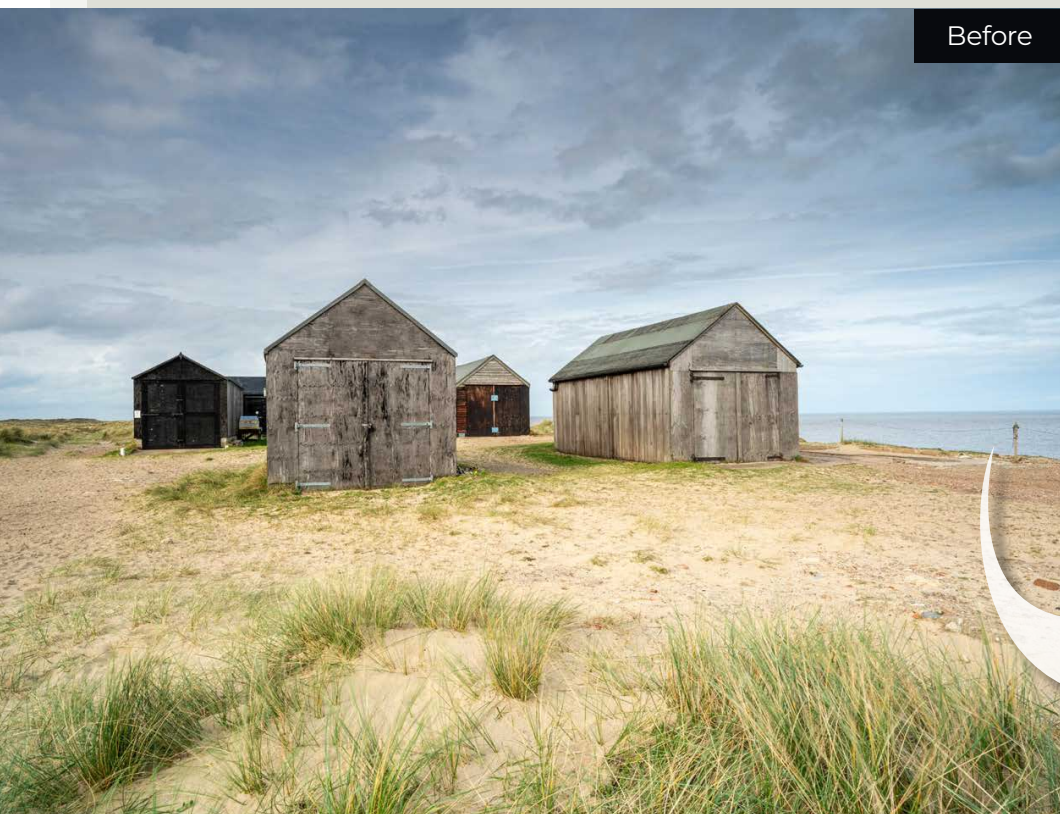
Now drag the tool over the other eye in a similar way to the first one. However, because there's less red here, the detection hasn't gone as well. There are two options. First, you can change the size of the circle by dragging over an eye and repositioning it by clicking and dragging it where you want. You could also click and hit delete on the circle and try a larger area, then move if required.



4

Into darkness

You aren't limited to the default look. Use the Darken slider to increase the depth of black or to reduce it. The overall tone of the photo will dictate the right look, and you may opt to go darker to improve contrast and bring attention to the eye. Darken the first eye to -29 and the other to -11. The Pupil Size expands the area selected, and fades into the iris. Set to 64 and 72, respectively.



Before



It's an ideal blend

James Abbott explores the creative possibilities of using Photoshop's Blending modes and Adjustment Layers in tandem

There are many ways we can make creative adjustments to our shots in Photoshop, and despite the complex appearance of Blending modes, they're an excellent way to make Adjustment Layers work even harder. Blending modes change the way that Layers interact with one another, delivering a wide range of effects and creative possibilities. But when combined with Layer Opacity, even further control is available.

Blending modes control how the affected Layer's pixels interact with the Layers beneath, adjusting aspects such as colour, contrast and brightness. So, for example, Multiply darkens, Screen lightens, while Overlay adds contrast. There are many other Blending modes, and you can experiment to see how they affect your Layers. If you're not happy with an effect, try another mode or switch back to Normal.

Download your files

www.digitalcameraworld.com/dc306
Download your files and video tutorial from the folder titled 'Photoshop_Blending modes'.



Four
Actions for
Photoshop



5-minute
video
tutorial

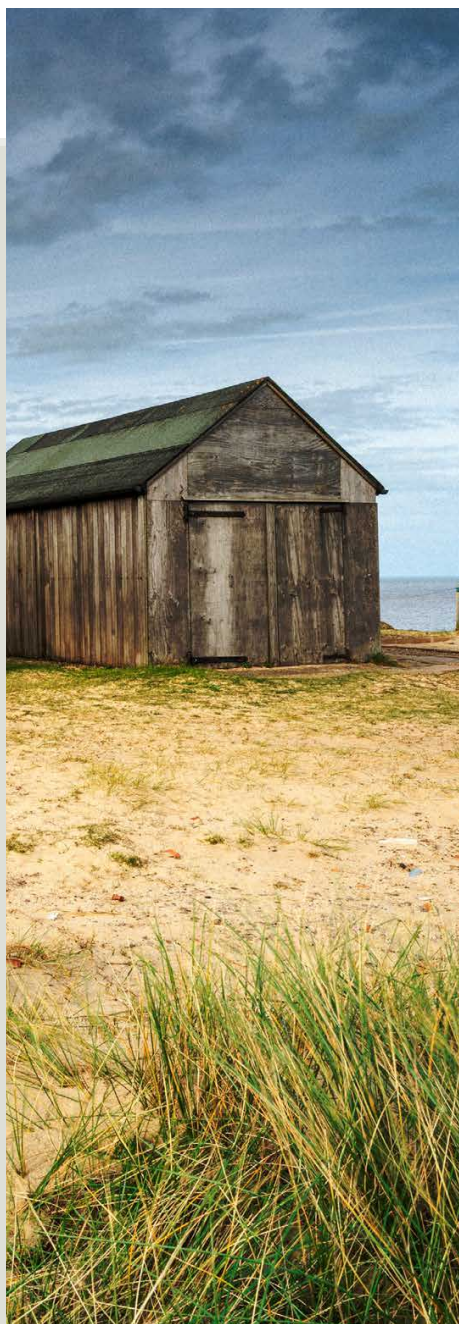


Project
files and
instructions

1

Inject high-contrast desaturation

To get started, let's create a quick and easy yet highly effective adjustment. Click on the Create new fill or adjustment layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and select Black & White. Immediately close the dialog and change the Blending mode from Normal to Overlay to create a high-contrast desaturated effect. If the effect is too strong, try the Soft Light Blending mode instead and use Opacity to reduce the effect further if required.



2

Apply rich warmth

Click on the Create new fill or adjustment layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and select Photo Filter. When the dialog opens, click on the Filter dropdown menu that's set to Warming Filter (85) by default and choose Sepia. Next, set the Density to 40 per cent and close the dialog. Now change the Blending mode of the Layer from Normal to Multiply, which is a darkening Blending mode. If it's too strong and makes the image too dark, use Opacity to reduce the effect.

3

Add saturated grain

Click on the Create new fill or adjustment layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and select Grain. Set Amount to +60, Size to +50 and Roughness to +50 before closing the dialog. Now change the Blending mode from Normal to Linear Burn and set the Opacity to around 50 per cent to create a saturated, grainy effect with a painterly quality. Linear Burn is a darkening Blending mode like Multiply, but its effect produces stronger high-contrast darkening than Multiply.

4

Increase contrast and keep natural colour

In this simple technique, Blending modes are used to maintain natural colour saturation during strong increases in contrast. Click on the Create new fill or adjustment layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and select Curves. Place a point three-quarters of the way up the curve, then drag up and to the left. Place a point a quarter of the way up, then drag down and to the right to boost contrast. Set Blending mode to Luminosity.

Before



Wendy Evans



After

Auto tweaks for landscapes

Save time when editing landscape shots in Affinity Photo 2 by creating an all-in-one macro, with **Wendy Evans**

Download your files

www.digitalcameraworld.com/dc306
Download your project files and video tutorial from the folder titled 'Affinity_Create Macros'.



One macro to apply to your images



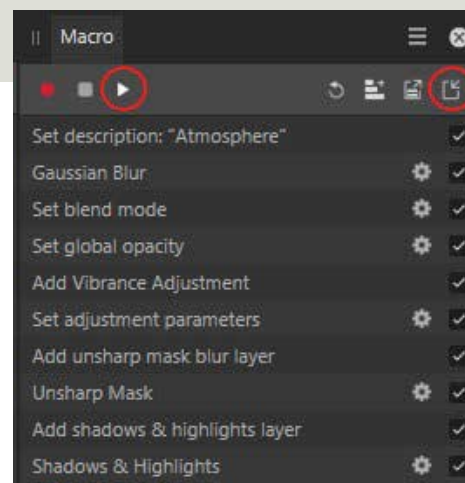
3-minute video tutorial



Project files to follow along

A

lot of effort goes into editing landscape photos, and that's even before you start cloning out rogue rubbish bins, pesky pedestrians and annoying aerials. But what if you had a macro function that could do all the heavy lifting, get you started on the essentials and could be modified and tweaked without automatically and permanently adjusting the image? That's what we're doing this month: creating an all-you-can-eat landscape macro with effect layers that you can edit.



Using macros in Affinity

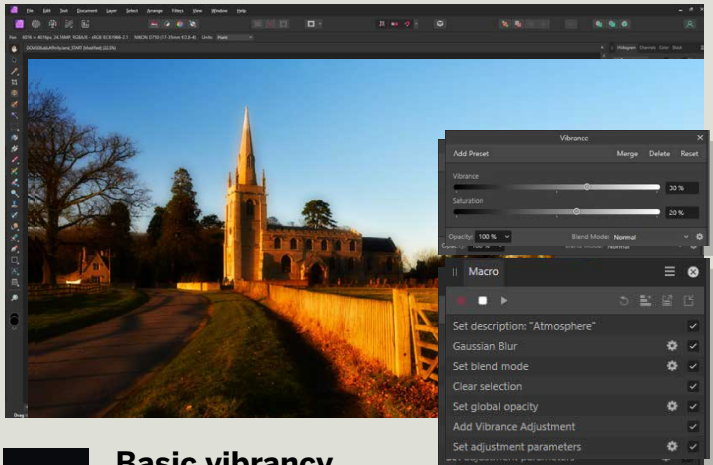
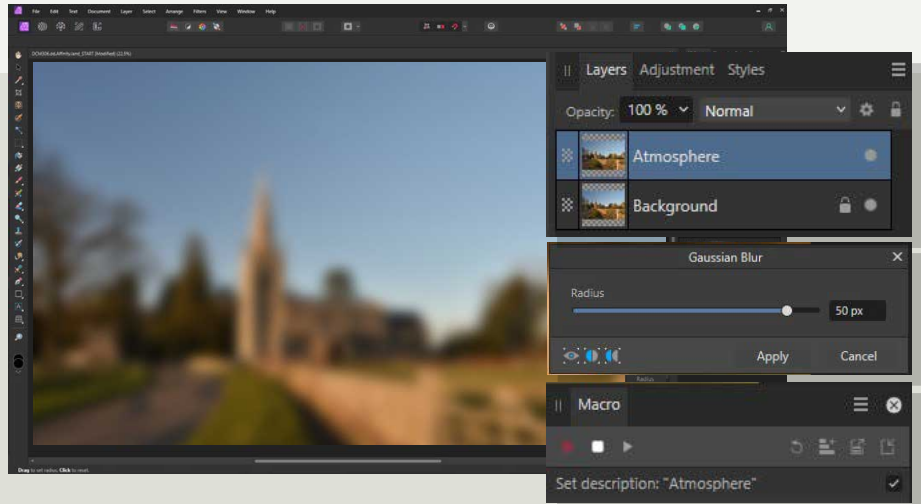
Macros are essentially the same as Photoshop's Actions. This process creates one macro, but if you want to see how it works without going through all the steps, we've provided one to download in this month's software giveaways.

To use it, open the Macro window and click on the Import Macro icon. Navigate to the folder on your computer, select and hit Open. Once loaded into the Macro window, click on the Play icon.

1

Add some atmosphere

Duplicate the Background layer and select the newly duplicated layer. Then open the Macro recording window (Window > Macro) and click on the Red button to start recording. This first effect is entirely optional. Now rename the duplicate layer as 'Atmosphere'. Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and enter a value of 50px. Then set the blend mode for the layer to Overlay and reduce the opacity to 70 per cent.



2

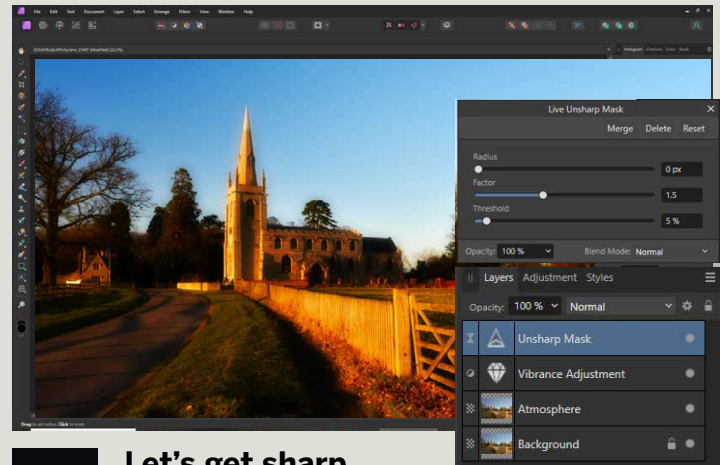
Basic vibrancy

Click on the Adjustments icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and select Vibrancy. Enter values of +30 Vibrancy and +20 for Saturation. Increase the Saturation by more than that, and it will often create artifacts. However, it can work at higher levels, especially if the image is dull and flat. Remember, if the effect is too strong in conjunction with the Atmosphere layer, reduce one of them.

3

Let's get sharp

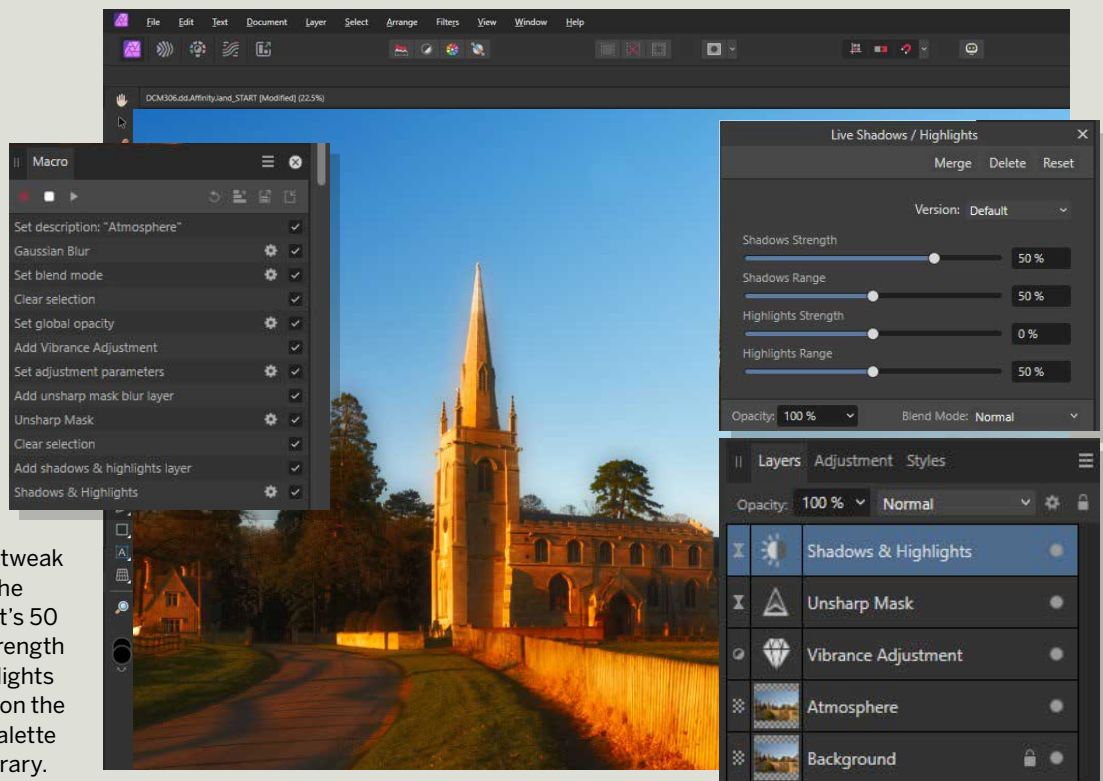
Now click on and add a Live filter for Unsharp Mask. Set the Radius to 6.5px, the Factor to 1.5 and the Threshold to 5 per cent. It's important to realise that you may need to alter these on an image-by-image basis. The good news is that, unlike applying sharpening, you can customise this alongside the other effects.



4

Shadows and highlights

Add another Live filter, this time for Shadows/Highlights. If you aren't using the Atmosphere effect layer, these should start at 30 per cent Shadows Strength and 5 per cent Highlights Strength, but tweak them to suit. Used with the Atmosphere layer here, it's 50 per cent for Shadows Strength and nothing for the Highlights Strength. To finish, click on the Stop icon in the Macro palette and then click Add to Library.





Before



Use masking to apply multiple adjustments to specific areas, all at once.

**EXCLUSIVE
READER OFFER!**

Get a 40% discount off
ON1 Photo RAW MAX
2026, until 30 April

Go to this link:
on1.sjv.io/dc26
and use the code:
DIGITALCAMERA40

After



Wendy Evans

Perk up your portraits

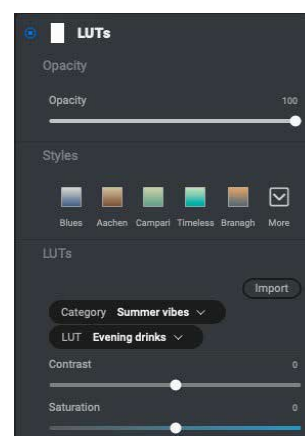
Concluding our mini-series introducing ON1 Photo RAW MAX 2026, with **Wendy Evans**

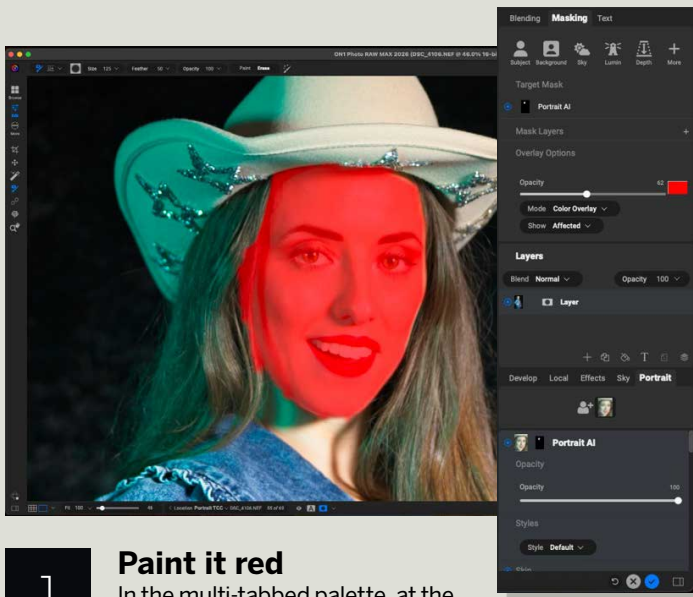
PART 4 OF 4
Missed parts 1-3?
Subscribers get 200+
digital back issues.
See page 36

There's a little of something for everyone in ON1 Photo RAW Max, and this month, it's the turn of portraits. There are some different ways of approaching editing people, from using the basic tools on the left with the Healing brush to the automated, mask-based functions on the right. It's best to do all the tweaks to the complexion first before you attempt the overall effects, such as applying LUTs. To get started, use the Browse section to find the image you want, then click on Edit. Use the Crop tool on the left to ensure the photo composition is correct.

Effects to add

After applying the adjustments, you are returned to the Browse screen, but if you want to jump back in and add some effects, then click on More on the left and select Effects. Click on Add Filter and select LUTs. You can either use the Category list or click on More at the end of Styles to see them all. You can also import third-party LUTs, such as the ones we're giving away, by clicking on Import and adding a custom category.

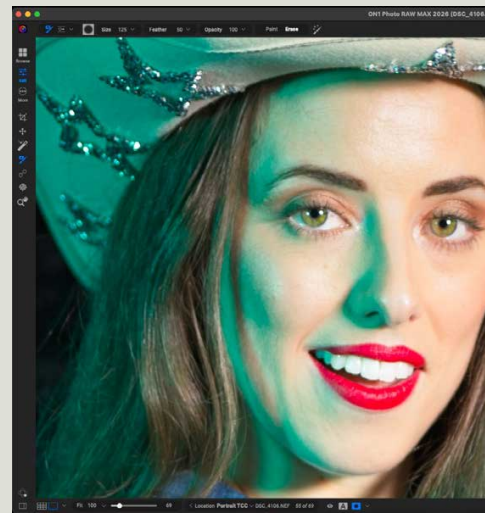




1

Paint it red

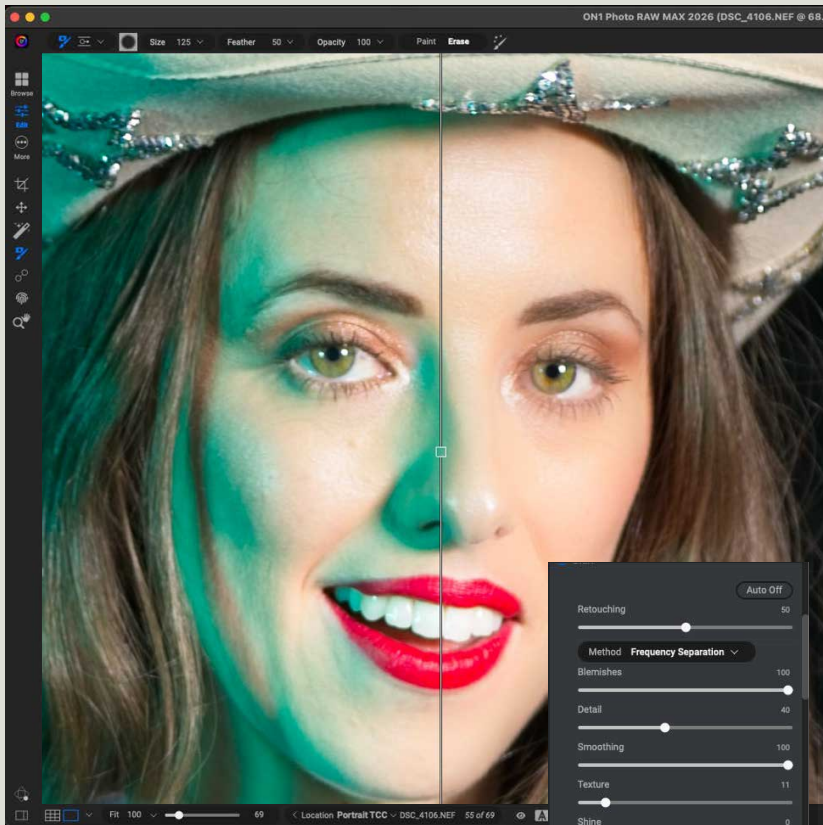
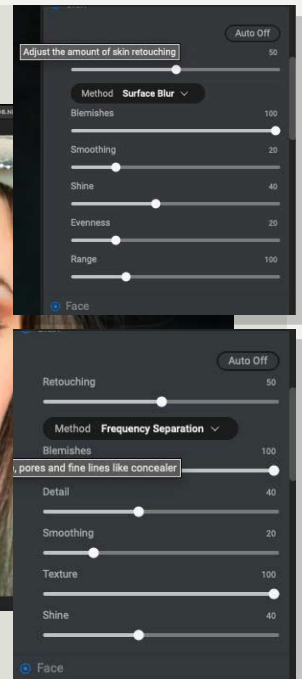
In the multi-tabbed palette, at the bottom right, click on the Portrait tab. This uses AI to create a mask that leaves the face editable, but blocks out everything else in the photo. Select Color Overlay, under the Masking tab, to see what is editable. Use the Masking brush from the left to remove wrongly selected areas or add parts that have been missed.



2

Retouching modes

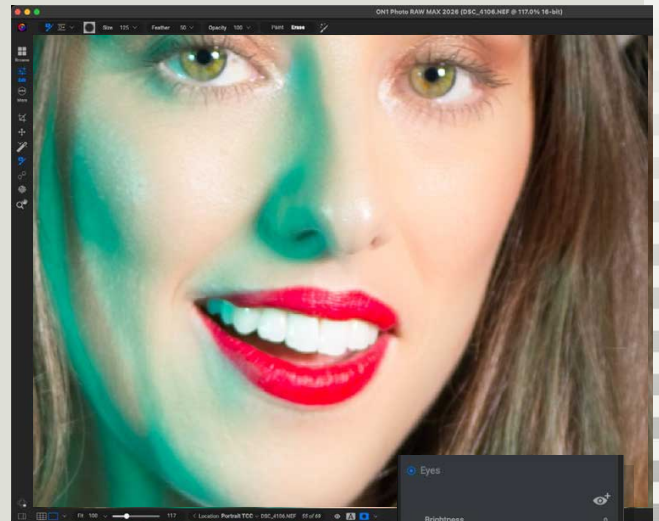
In the Portrait tab, you can find various sliders to tweak different features. There are two methods of getting this to work: frequency separation (select this if the subject has large blemishes or wrinkles) and surface blur, which is more aimed at smoothing the surface out. Each one has presets for the sliders below.



3

Start improving things

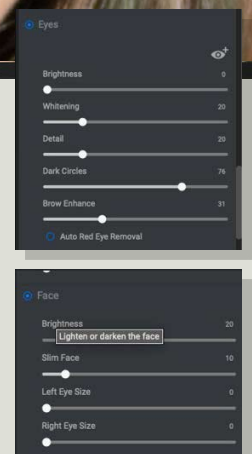
Let's max out the Blemishes removal with the slider on 100. Increase the Smoothing to 100 and reduce the Texture to 10. There's a Shine slider to remove shiny highlights, but this can sometimes darken the areas around the shine, making it look more apparent, not less. So reduce this to 0. At the bottom of the screen, there are some preview options.



4

Final facial corrections

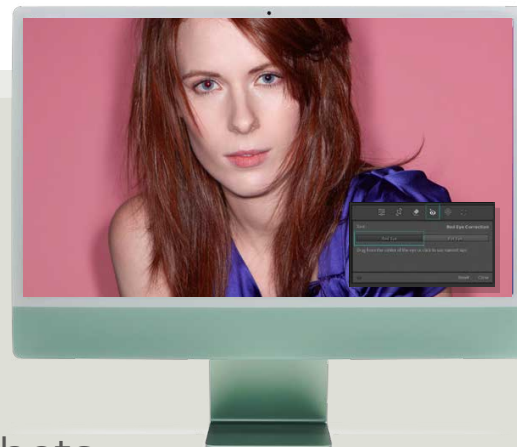
Further down this palette are options for the Face. If the face has become darker, increase the Brightness by 20. You can slim the face, if required, and adjust the eyes. The eyes have a number of options, including removing Dark Circles and enhancing brows. The final section is Mouth, where you can whiten the teeth (not really needed here) and tweak the lips. Click the tick to apply these effects.



THIS MONTH'S SOFTWARE EXTRAS

26 Brushes, Actions, presets and a macro

As seen in this month's tutorials, give your shots a new look with our collection of software extras



This month, we are giving away 26 software extras with our Digital Darkroom tutorials. Once installed in Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, Camera Raw or Affinity Photo, these Actions, macros, presets and brushes will transform your images. Rather than manually adjusting your shots, they will

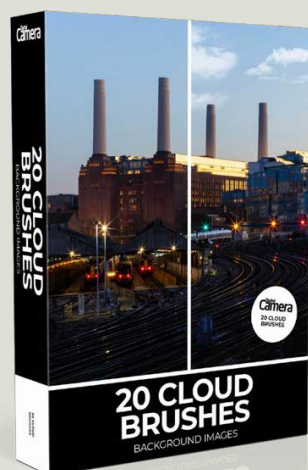
get you there in just a few clicks. This month's giveaways include 20 cloud brushes to give your skies a more painterly look and a 1970s Summer preset for Lightroom. There is also a pack of four Blending Mode Actions to go with the tutorial, and an all-in-one macro for Affinity Photo, which will make simple edits to your landscape shots.

How to use your software extras

Once you have downloaded the 'dcm306-files.zip' file to your computer, extract it and put the folders where you can easily access them. These folders contain the software, project files and a PDF with installation instructions.



**DOWNLOAD
FILES & VIDEO AT**
www.digitalcameraworld.com/dc306



20 CLOUD BRUSHES

Software: Photoshop
(Version 25.5 or higher)

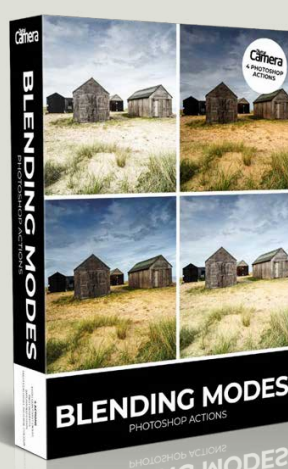
The Brush Tool is one of Photoshop's most popular editing tools, enabling you to paint onto your photo or blend images together. This month, we're giving away 20 carefully curated cloud brushes that will give your images an artistic, painterly look.



70s SUMMER PRESET

Software: Lightroom

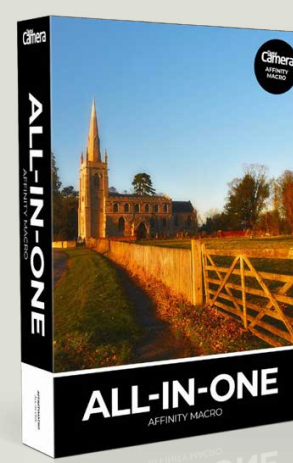
Spring is in the air and we'll soon be enjoying outdoor events with friends and family – and taking more photos. This month's tutorial deals with reducing red-eye in portraits, but once that's done, give them a 70s summertime makeover with this Lightroom preset.



4 BLENDING MODE ACTIONS

Software: Photoshop
(Version 25.5 or higher)

To complement this month's tutorial on blending modes and adjustment layers, these four Actions will transform your shots in just a few clicks. The four effects include: High-Contrast Desat; Rich Warmth; Saturated Grain; and High-Contrast Natural Colour.



ALL-IN-ONE MACRO

**Software: Photoshop/
Affinity Photo 2**

Of course, you put lots of effort into editing your landscape photos, so what if you had a macro function that could get you started on the essentials? That's what we're giving away this month, with an all-in-one landscape macro with effect layers that you can edit.

Download all four packs from: www.digitalcameraworld.com/dc306

KitZone

New gear, buying tips and the world's toughest tests



106 **Sony RX1R III** _ This small full-frame compact packs a heavyweight punch



110 **Leica Q3 Monochrom** _ The dream camera for B&W street shooters?



114 **Nikkor Z 24-105mm f/4-7.1** _ Standard zoom lens with extended focal range



116 **Sigma 15mm F1.4 DC Contemporary** _ Wide-angle for APS-C mirrorless bodies



Compact cameras are on the march in this month's Kit Zone, and while the two models we're reviewing share similar dimensions, that's about it. First up is the Sony RX1R III, which accommodates a 61MP full-frame sensor in a body that you can really wrap your hands around. A 35mm fixed Zeiss f/2 lens takes care of optical duties, supported by an AI processing unit to deliver the latest AF smarts, and the matte black body finish will keep things subtle on the street. Which is another USP of the Leica Q3 Monochrom,

the storied brand's latest foray into black-and-white-only photography. Leica has even omitted the iconic red dot to keep things faithful to the needs of street shooters.

These two compacts are spoken for lens-wise, but we have two tests of interest to interchangeable-lens camera users. The Nikkor Z 24-105mm f/4-7.1 is an affordable and lightweight wide-angle to telephoto zoom for everyday photography. And the Sigma 15mm F1.4 DC Contemporary could tempt owners of Canon, Fujifilm and Sony crop-sensor mirrorless bodies looking for a fast wide-angle prime. **Niall Hampton**



250-page gear Buyer's Guide
Find out more on page 6

The awards bestowed by the Digital Camera lab...



Given to the top product in a group test



For products that receive five stars overall



Given to products that offer superb value for money

Ratings explained

★★★★★ Best in class
★★★★☆ Excellent
★★★☆☆ Good
★★★☆☆ So-so
★★☆☆☆ Poor

All products reviewed in KitZone are tested independently by photographers with years of experience, using lab and real-world testing

Compact Sony RX1R III



1
The smallest possible camera setup doesn't get much smaller than the Sony RX1R III.

2
A 35mm f/2 fixed lens is an ideal focal length for street and documentary photography.

3
Build quality, in a word, is 'premium'. It's metal and tactile, with enough heft to feel substantial.

Sony RX1R III

£4,200/\$5,098

The impossibly small Sony RX1R III packs a heavyweight punch in a cruiserweight frame

www.sony.co.uk

Specifications

Lens: Zeiss T* Sonnar 35mm F2 T* (49mm filter)

Sensor: Full-frame CMOS, 61MP

ISO range: 100-32,000 (exp to 50-102,400)

Autofocus: 693-point hybrid phase detect

Stabilisation: Electronic

Max image size: 9504 x 6336px

Max burst: 5fps (120 jpeg Extra fine / 52 RAW / 14 RAW & JPEG)

Video: (50.8MP) 4K 30p 4:2:2 10-bit, FullHD 120p

Viewfinder: OLED 2.36 million dots, 100% coverage, 0.7x magnification

Screen: Fixed 3-inch TFT LCD touchscreen, 2.36 million dots

Memory cards: 1x SD UHS-II

Connectivity: USB-C, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, micro HDMI, microphone jack, Multi Interface Shoe

Battery/ shots per charge: NP-FW50 • 270 shots EVF / 300 shots LCD monitor • 80 mins continuous recording

Dimensions (W x H x D): 113.3 x 87.5 x 67.9mm

Weight: 454g (498g incl battery & card)

The Sony RX1R III has been almost a decade in the making, so perhaps it's understandable that it received a bit of a

Marmite-like reception online. Because while there's been almost a decade of speculation and expectation, it's fair to say that the Sony RX1R III doesn't represent almost a decade of innovation.

But I don't think it needs to. There are things that I wish had been included – an articulating screen for one, in-body image stabilisation another – but what is here is more than enough for what the Sony RX1R III sets out to do.

A 61MP sensor, enabling the 35mm f/2 Zeiss to shoot at multiple digital focal lengths, with phenomenal autofocus, in a body that's smaller than almost every other camera on the market, which is arguably the single most important factor for this product.

The price is what it is, and means that the Sony RX1R III is in the same category

as the luxury Leica Q3 rather than the affordable Fujifilm X100VI (though it's worth noting that the RX1R III is even smaller than the X100VI, despite having a bigger sensor and higher resolution).

The price tag might be much more befitting for a handmade German camera. However, I would personally choose the Sony RX1R III over the Leica Q3; it's simply an awesome mobile imaging machine.

This camera is really small. To see just how small the Sony RX1R III is compared with a host of interchangeable lens cameras with different sensor sizes and equivalent focal lengths, check out this article on our website via this link: www.bit.ly/dcm306_rx1riii.

The takeaway is that the Sony RX1R III is smaller than any body and lens combo aside from the smallest Micro Four Thirds camera on the market. That includes the Sigma BF with 35mm f/2 lens, which is the smallest full-frame mirrorless body you can get.



Sony RX1R III Compact



Minimum interaction with the buttons and dials is required – select the aperture on the lens, adjust the shutter speed dial and that's all there is to it.



The unique selling point of this camera is compactness: as seen from the side, it is barely any taller than the diameter of its built-in lens.

4

The electronic viewfinder is sharp, with 100 per cent coverage, 0.7x magnification.

6

The location of functions around the rear wheel will be familiar to Sony Alpha users.

8

...but are knurled for easy use by the thumb. Exposure compensation is on the right.

5

Sadly, the rear touchscreen is fixed – there's no tilting or other articulation.

7

Both top plate dials are recessed into the body to keep the design sleek...

9

Physical connections include USB-C and micro HDMI ports, and a microphone jack.

If you want the smallest possible camera setup, it doesn't get much smaller than this – and the few cameras that are smaller also have a smaller sensor and lower resolution. It's a tiny camera, then. But what about the build quality? 'Premium' is the word I would use. It's metal and tactile, with enough heft to feel satisfyingly substantial while remaining super lightweight and nimble to wield. Sadly, though, there is no official weather sealing.

Of course, being so small means that the Sony RX1R III might not suit bigger hands. Nothing is exactly fiddly, and the buttons aren't hard to stab at even with

chunky fingers, but being a physically small body means that it can get lost in large hands, especially with the lack of any real grip. That suits me fine – after all, the whole point of this camera is its compactness. The aperture is controlled by a ring on the lens, so you need minimal interaction with the buttons and dials, even in manual mode. All you need to do is change the shutter speed via the rear thumbwheel.

Sony's refined menu system puts all the key settings just a tap away on the rear touchscreen – everything from changing the autofocus subject detection to switching between

James Artaius



The image quality of the RX1R III is stunning, as you'd expect from Sony's 61MP full-frame sensor and the old but gold Zeiss lens.

Compact Sony RX1R III

James Artaius



The lack of an articulating screen means that waist-level street shooting is out, but given its compact nature, the Sony RX1R III won't attract much attention.

the digital focal lengths. That said, the rear screen is fixed – there's no tilting or other articulation. This is the RX1R III's most limiting factor. For a 35mm camera that lends itself perfectly to street photography, documentary, reportage and travel, there were plenty of times where I really missed being able to shoot at waist level, either for a better perspective or because I physically couldn't get in the right position to use the viewfinder.

That said, given that having an articulating screen would make this camera bigger, would I actually want it? When I think of it in those terms, given that size is such a crucial part of the Sony RX1R III's identity, I can totally see why the sacrifice was made.

It's also worth noting that, while I had no problems at all with the 2.36 million-dot electronic viewfinder and rear screen, a camera that costs around \$5,000 should probably have Sony's higher-resolution

displays. Which is fair, even if it really didn't affect my shooting experience or enjoyment.

Performance

My biggest concern with the Sony RX1R III was that it has no in-body image stabilisation (IBIS). That's mainly because, having used cameras with IBIS since 2014, I know my camera discipline isn't what it used to be and camera shake is probably going to be a thing – especially with a 61MP sensor that will betray every microscopic wobble.

I was pleased to find that not a single photograph I took had any sign of shake. That's not to say that my camera craft is back where it was in the pre-stabilised film and DSLR days; rather, this camera is so small that you don't really need IBIS, unless you're shooting off the rear screen.

Given that all but the smallest hands will wrap around this camera like a baseball glove, you can grip it like a vice and keep it absolutely rock solid. Shoot using the EVF, with the camera braced against your face as well, and it becomes even more stable. I'm such a fan of IBIS that, since selling my original Canon EOS R, I promised never to buy another camera without it. But the lack of stabilisation on the Sony RX1R III appears to be a virtual non-issue – particularly when the sensor is so good that you can crank up the ISO without too much worry.

Rival cameras



Fujifilm GFX100 RF
£4,699/\$4,899
 Packs a 102MP medium-format sensor into the small body. Superb image quality, but modest f/4 aperture and no IBIS.
 Reviewed: issue 298
 ★★★★★



Fujifilm X100VI
£1,599/\$1,599
 Compact with a new sensor and faster AF and better video than before. Expensive for a fixed-lens compact, though.
 Reviewed: issue 280
 ★★★★★



Leica Q3
£5,300/\$5,995
 Earns its place as one of the best walking-around photography cameras available today. But that red dot isn't cheap.
bit.ly/dcm306_leicaq3
 ★★★★★



While testing the RX1R III, our reviewer averaged 1,000 shots a day – far more than he imagined. The battery is rated for 270 shots on a single charge.

As you'd expect from Sony's trusty 61MP sensor and the old but gold Zeiss lens, the image quality is stunning. Sony's colour science has its quirks, as most people know, but you're getting beautiful files packed with detail and huge amounts of latitude in the raw files for post-production.

Of course, while the Sony RX1R III has a fixed lens, its focal length isn't fixed; thanks to that 61MP sensor, this camera offers digital zooms (ie crops) that enable you to shoot with other 'virtual lenses'. Obviously, at the native 35mm length, you're getting the full 61MP resolution, but a tap of the rear screen switches over to a 50mm zoom with 29.4MP images or a 70mm zoom for 15MP files. At the long end, that's sacrificing a lot of pixels, but it's still more than enough for social media and even decent-sized prints.

I fell in love with the 70mm zoom, thanks to photographing the unlikely subject of bees. The Sony RX1R III has great autofocus and some brilliant subject detection modes, including insect AF. During testing, I spent far too long shooting at 70mm, with bumblebee tracking, firing frames at 5fps while chasing these fluffy-bottomed cuties around a community garden. It was genuinely one of the most fun experiences I've had with a camera in ages.

“My concern with the Sony RX1R III was the lack of IBIS. However, not a single photograph I took had any sign of shake”



35mm



50mm



70mm

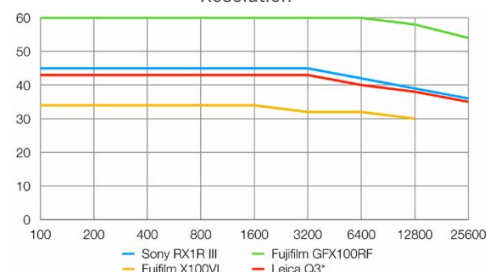
Captured at the standard focal length, and using the digital zoom – accessed via a quick tap on the rear screen. Exposure: 1/1000 sec at f/2, ISO 100.

Shooting small subjects such as insects means that you need to switch the lens into its de facto macro mode; as standard, you'll be using the 3m-infinity range, but for close-up work, simply turn the dial to 0.2-3.5m. This was a little fiddly and occasionally irritating, especially when I forgot to turn back the dial, then tried to shoot something at standard range, only to be met with a wall of blur. However, it is far more convenient than having to change lenses on a regular camera body or attach an optical adapter to a fixed-lens camera.

While this is a photography-focused camera, the Sony RX1R III's video features are great. The 4K 30p video is excellent, and while I'm grateful that it has a microphone jack and has 4:2:2 10-bit options, with a fixed screen and no IBIS, the video options are pretty limited. **James Artaius**

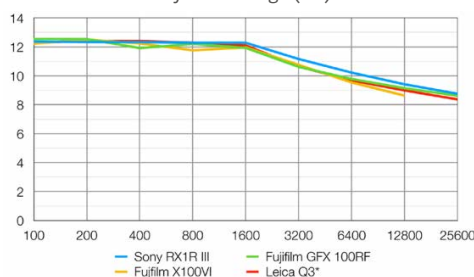
Sony RX1R III Compact

Resolution



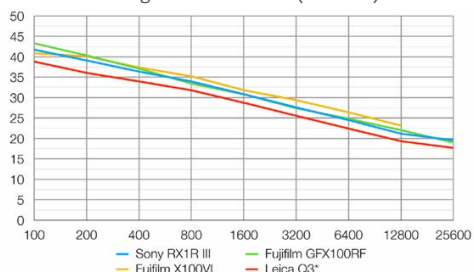
Unsurprisingly, the 61MP Sony resolves an almost identical level of detail to the 61MP Leica Q3. The medium-format advantage of the 102MP GFX100 RF is staggering, though.

Dynamic range (EV)



All four cameras are well matched when it comes to capturing dynamic range, though the RX1R III manages to record marginally more highlight and shadow detail at higher ISOs than the competition.

Signal to noise ratio (decibels)



The RX1R III produces cleaner images than the Q3 throughout the tested sensitivity range. It equals the medium-format GFX100 RF for clarity, though the X100VI is the camera of choice for low-light work.

Digital Camera verdict

4.5 ★★★★★ Outstanding



The Sony RX1R III is compact, powerful and pocketable, making a case for being the ultimate everyday camera. With quick responsiveness and phenomenal autofocus, this is a camera for street, travel, documentary and everyday photography, though the lack of IBIS may be an issue for those who struggle with camera shake. The biggest asterisk here, though, is the price tag: £4,200/\$5,000 buys you a lot more camera elsewhere, but maybe not one this small that does what it does. Want the smallest and most powerful camera you can buy? This is it.

Compact Leica Q3 Monochrom



1 With a flat body, there's no natural grip, so this is a camera you need to touch and try first.

2 The 60.3MP mono sensor produces less noisy images than its colour counterpart.

3 The fixed 28mm f/1.7 lens offers 'digital' focal lengths of 35mm, 50mm and 75mm.

Leica Q3 Monochrom

£5,800/\$7,790

An absolute dream camera for street shooting

www.leica-camera.com

Specifications

Lens: Leica Summilux 28mm f/1.7 ASPH

Sensor: Full-frame BSI CMOS monochrome (no low-pass filter), 60.3MP

Image processor: Maestro IV

ISO range: 100-200,000; Dual base (100, 640)

Autofocus: 315 AF points, contrast detect. Subject detection: Human eye/face/body, animal (beta)

Stabilisation: Optical

Max image size: 9528 x 6328px

Max burst: Elec: 15fps (12-bit), 7fps (14-bit)

• Mech: 5fps (12-bit), 4fps (14-bit)

Video: 8K 30p, 4K 60p, FullHD 120p

Viewfinder: 5.76 million dots, 120fps

LCD: 3-inch tilting touchscreen, 1,843,200 dots

Memory card: 1x SD UHS-II

Connectivity: USB-C, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, micro HDMI, wireless charging

Battery/ shots per charge: BP-SCL6/ 302

Dimensions (W x H x D): 130 x 80.3 x 92.6mm

Weight: 662g (746g incl battery)

I wasn't sure what to expect of the Leica Q3 Monochrom. While I admire the base Leica Q3, I'm not a fan of the 28mm

focal length as it's a little limiting. So it's curious that what might be perceived as an even bigger limitation – the total absence of colour – is what made this camera truly click for me.

I love street and reportage, typically at 35mm or 50mm, and shoot almost exclusively in black and white. It's here, in this specific Leica context, that my brain understands what this camera is and does. The Leica Q3 Monochrom might be the best camera for street photography I've used. Despite being an advanced digital camera, it's also the closest you can get to the photographic experience of the old masters – the Cartier-Bressons and Capas of the world – without actually shooting on film.

On paper, the Leica Q3 Monochrom is a cutting-edge 60.3MP/8K powerhouse. But in the hand, it's the closest a modern camera has come to the purity of

shooting on a black and white film camera. The specs are secondary, existing only to service that experience.

Pick up this camera, and you'll never want to settle for the clumsy process of converting colour images ever again.

Build and handling

The Monochrom is almost identical in appearance and handling to the base Q3. The big difference is that this camera eschews the Leica red dot logo on the front of the camera, with the Leica branding on the top plate being completely black (check out our Leica Q3 review, here: www.bit.ly/dcm306_leicaq3 for a full rundown of the build and handling). In short, though, this is a wonderful camera to hold and use.

However, the Leica Q3 Monochrom does differ from the Q2 Monochrom, and all these changes are for the better, if you're thinking of upgrading from the previous model. For starters, the rear LCD screen now tilts – enabling you to shoot waist level or from low angles, which is welcome for a compact like this.

Leica Q3 Monochrom Compact



4

The EVF and rear LCD screen have better resolution than those of the Q2 Monochrom.

5

A second function button has been added, sitting just under the shutter speed dial.

6

Button placement on the rear panel has changed – moved to the right of the screen.

7

The 28mm lens has a precise focus distance scale with depth of field markers.

8

Staying abreast of tech, the Q3 Monochrom features USB-C and mini HDMI ports.

9

In keeping with the front of the camera, the top plate also has an understated design.

Leica has repositioned the buttons, removing them from the left lapel of the screen where they lived on the Q2. Here, the Play and Menu buttons now reside above and below the circular D-pad, while the second function button now sits alongside its sibling, just below the shutter speed dial below the top panel.

In addition, the LCD screen and EVF boast improved resolution, while the camera now has USB-C and mini HDMI ports, the latter for video capabilities. While there is no mic jack, the USB-C can be used for microphones, including several Røde wireless models.

Performance

There are a couple of key differences when shooting with this (or, indeed, any) monochrome sensor, compared with a standard colour sensor. Crucially, the mono sensor lacks a Bayer filter, which produces colour information via a demosaicing and interpolation process, at the expense of clarity and resolution. This has a few consequences.

First, images on the Leica Q3 Monochrom are noticeably clearer and crisper than on the standard colour Q3. Noise is drastically reduced too, so you get cleaner results out of this —>

James Artaius



The contrast-based autofocus is excellent, but focusing manually and using focus peaking will be a more immersive – and rewarding – experience.

James Artaius



The latest Q-series Monochrom iteration benefits from having a tilting rear screen, so shooting from ground level is another creative tool in the box.

Compact Leica Q3 Monochrom

James Artaius



As there's less exposure latitude than you might be used to on a colour sensor, exposing for the highlights – to the right – is advised with the Leica Q3 Monochrom.

camera when shooting at high ISOs. However, there are two compromises to be aware of. The first is autofocus; the lack of a Bayer filter means that phase detect AF points would produce visible artifacts on a mono sensor, which means that the Q3 Monochrom is limited to contrast-detect AF. The second is that mono sensors are less forgiving when it comes to clipping highlights. The lack of colour channels means that luminance data is all you have available to recover your blown highlights,

so this is something to be mindful of when shooting. What does this mean in practice? Let's start with noise. For an image shot at the maximum sensitivity of ISO 200,000, such as the kitchen shot (above right), even at the most extreme sensitivity, details are distinguishable and the text is legible. While you shouldn't intentionally shoot everything at ISO 200,000, pushing the ISO on this camera isn't something to be afraid of.

As for the highlight clipping, this cuts both ways. Certainly, exposing for the highlights

(also known as exposing to the right) is best practice with the Leica Q3 Monochrom; there is less latitude than you might be used to on a colour sensor. However, if you shoot an intentionally high-contrast style when working in black and white, as I do, the highlights aren't any more blown out than when using a conventional sensor. So your mileage may vary, depending on how experienced you are with shooting in mono.

As far as the autofocus is concerned, I had no trouble with this camera. Yes, it's a contrast-based system, but shooting in black and white is inherently more 'contrasty'; throw in impressive algorithms for face and even animal detection, and in practical terms, the AF is perfectly fast and accurate. Of course, many people investing in this camera will use its sublime manual focus ring anyway. Paired with focus peaking, this is arguably the most satisfying way to shoot with the Leica Q3 Monochrom. Again, it can be an art, nailing focus at f/1.7 if you're not used to focusing manually or using peaking, but it's what this camera was meant for.

The image quality is fantastic; the tonality and gradation produced by this sensor are simply gorgeous. You might be able to get similar results with a standard sensor and a bit of processing – but I don't think that's the point of this camera. The raw material that the Monochrom gives you – the quality of

Rival cameras



Fujifilm GFX100 RF
£4,699/\$4,899

Packs a 102MP medium-format sensor into the small body. Superb image quality, but modest f/4 aperture and no IBIS. Reviewed: issue 298



Leica M11 Monochrom
£8,300/\$9,195

Has a black and white sensor, manual focus, no video and a big price tag, but it's one of the best experiences you can have. Reviewed: issue 269



Sony RX1R III
£4,200/\$5,098

Compact and powerful, it could be the ultimate everyday camera. Has a 61MP sensor, but no IBIS and a fixed rear screen. Reviewed: issue 306



Leica Q3 Monochrom Compact

James Artaius



ISO 200,000



Captured at the maximum ISO value offered by the Leica Q3 Monochrom – even at the most extreme sensitivity, details in the frame enlargement on the right are distinguishable and the signage text is legible.

James Artaius



Compact and lacking the signature Leica red dot, the Q3 Monochrom prioritises subtlety – it's the closest you can get to the photographic experience of the street photography greats without shooting on film.

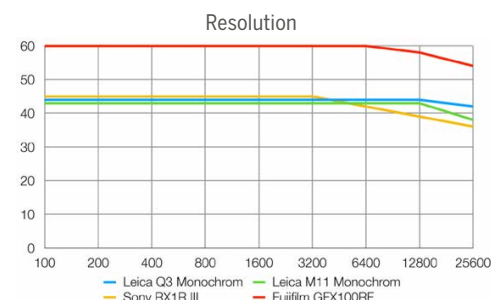
the pixels and the rendering of the tones – is clearer, richer and more detailed. When converting a colour image into mono, you're starting with inferior ingredients, and you have to wrangle them to look as good as the files that this camera produces. If you really want to crush the blacks and push the whites and create a more agonised look, you have so much more latitude and exactly the image data you need to achieve the results you want in even better quality.

The camera features a handful of Leica Looks (Natural, Sepia, Selenium and Blue) and the Q3 even enables you to upload custom LUTs in addition to the Natural and Classic profiles on offer. Which brings us to this camera's video features. The Monochrom shoots 8K 30p because it

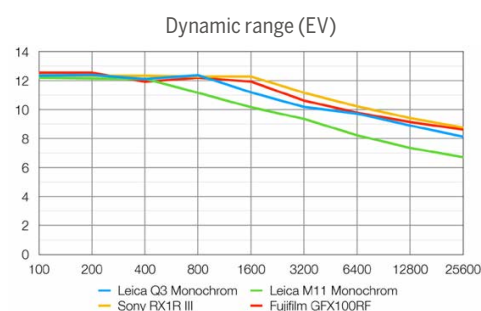
can – not because it should. There may be a stylistic purpose for shooting video in black and white raw format, but I don't think this would be the camera with which you'd choose to do it. Support is there for USB microphones, but there's no headphone jack, and you're stuck with the native 28mm focal length – or digital crops.

Like the standard Q3, the Monochrom can achieve different angles of view by cropping into the sensor, enabling you to shoot at an effective 28mm (60MP), 50mm (36MP) or 75mm (18MP). Bear in mind, though, as with any crop sensor, that your depth of field will never be equivalent to a 50mm or 75mm lens at f/1.7; you will always have the depth of field of a 28mm f/1.7 lens, just with a tighter crop. **James Artaius**

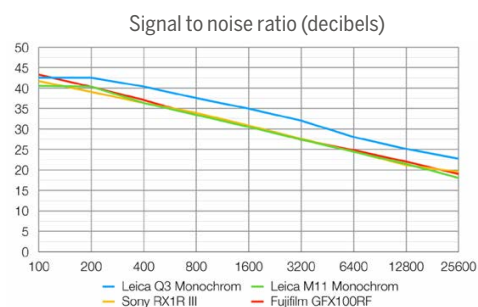
“The image quality on the Q3 Monochrom is fantastic; the tonality and gradation produced by this sensor are gorgeous”



With 60MP sensors, the Sony and the Leicas are closely matched. The Q3 Monochrom excels at higher sensitivities, capturing more fine detail than the RX1R III, while the 102MP GFX is in a class of its own.



Losing colour hasn't helped the Q3 Monochrom capture increased dynamic range, compared with the Sony and Fujifilm cameras. It captures more than the M11 Monochrom, helped by its Maestro IV processor.



The mono-only sacrifice has a benefit in reduced noise levels. From ISO 200, the Q3 Monochrom produces cleaner images than other cameras – and the difference is noticeable through to ISO 25,600.

Digital Camera verdict

5.0

★★★★★
A best-in-class product



The Leica Q3 Monochrom is a contemplative camera for someone who wants to carefully craft and compose images, who values texture and tone, who enjoys photography as an expressive art form or as a pure documentary tool. To this point, it's the first Q camera to support Content Credentials. As someone who shoots in black and white, I would buy this camera. The shooting experience is joyous, the image quality is outstanding and the editing latitude is wonderful. And if Cartier-Bresson and Capa were alive today, this is the camera they would shoot with.

Zoom lens Nikkor Z 24-105mm f/4-7.1



Nikkor Z 24-105mm f/4-7.1

£529/\$550

A compact and lightweight standard lens that goes large on zoom range

www.nikon.co.uk

The Nikkor Z 24-105mm f/4-7.1 has a string of tough acts to follow, the most recent of which is the Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S II, arguably the best standard zoom on the planet, but also the budget-friendly 'trinity' Nikkor Z 28-75mm f/2.8, the Nikkor Z 24-50mm f/4-6.3, and my all-time favourite 'kit zoom' lens, the Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/4 S. So is there a gap in the line-up for this new lens?

The Nikkor Z 24-120mm f/4 S has been Japan's best-selling lens for two years running, and while the 24-105mm doesn't quite match its telephoto reach, it's about half the price and a little over half the weight. All in all, the Z 24-105mm aims to be one of the best Nikon standard zooms, as well as one of the best lenses for Nikon Z cameras. With its telephoto extension and 0.5x macro, it reminds me of the Canon RF 24-105mm f/4-7.1 IS STM, launched six years ago, the Canon having the same aperture rating and 'centre macro' ability.

Build and handling

This is the second-slowest Z-mount lens that Nikon has made, but is that a bad thing? Bokeh may be the biggest buzzword right now, with faster lenses that can deliver a tight depth of field gaining popularity, but it's not the whole story. For walkabout and travel photography, a compact, lightweight and affordable lens is preferable. That's one of the biggest attractions of the Z 24-105mm.

That 24-105mm zoom range is a big tick for versatility, giving you seriously wide-angle potential and substantially more telephoto reach than a 24-70mm lens. The large zoom range is packed into a portable package, measuring just 107 x 74mm and weighing 350g. The lens is

1

There are 12 elements arranged in 10 groups, with one ED and two aspherical elements.

2

The impressive zoom range fits into a compact package, weighing just 350g.

3

The lens features multiple weather-seals, boosting its travel-friendly credentials.



The lens is compact, lightweight and affordable, ideal for walkabout and travel photography.



It gets quite blurry towards the edges of the frame in macro shooting, as demonstrated in this shot.

compact and lightweight, but extends considerably through the zoom range from 24mm to 105mm. The overall length goes from 107mm to 163mm, about 50 per cent.

The optical design is based on a modest count of 12 elements arranged in 10 groups, and includes one ED (Extra-low Dispersion) element and two aspherical elements. It isn't retractable, so there are no 'folding optics', making the build even more impressive. Autofocus (and manual focusing) is taken care of by a linear stepping motor that is quick and virtually silent in operation.

While the STM autofocus system is par for the course, the actual focusing range is more distinctive. The lens goes down to just 0.2m at the short end of the zoom range and 0.28m at the long end. This results in a 0.5x macro magnification ratio at the minimum focus distance, throughout the 70-105mm range. That puts extreme close-ups on the agenda, boosting the lens's versatility. In macro photography, narrow apertures are generally preferred, so the lack of a bright aperture is less of an issue. Even so, macro shooting isn't all you might imagine.

As expected with a budget-friendly Nikon Z-mount lens, there are two control rings rather than three. Nominally for zoom and manual focus, the latter can be customised via in-camera menus, enabling you to use it for aperture adjustment, ISO and exposure compensation while in autofocus mode.

Switching between autofocus and manual focus modes is one of the less appealing facets of the design and handling. There's no physical switch, forcing you into the relatively long-winded method of using the in-camera menus. With no optical VR (Vibration Reduction), there's no VR on/off switch



When shooting cityscapes, you will need a large depth of field, which is within the remit of this lens.



24mm



105mm

These shots, taken on an overcast and drizzly day at Bristol Floating Harbour, show the extremities of the generous zoom range, from the 24mm wide-angle shot (left) to the 105mm telephoto shot (right).

either. That's a non-issue if you're shooting with an FX (full-frame) Z-system camera that features IBIS (in-body image stabilisation). But for cameras like the Nikon Z50 II or Z fc, it could be, as no Nikon DX bodies have IBIS.

Adding to the lens's travel-friendly credentials, it features multiple weather-seals, though many will see the inclusion of a plastic rather than a metal mounting plate as a downside. The benefit is that it helps keep the build as lightweight as possible, and should prove durable. Like some of Nikon's other budget lenses, it doesn't come with a carrying pouch or lens hood. The 'optional' petal-shaped, bayonet-fit, reversible HB-93B hood costs an additional £35 (\$37).

Performance

The Z 24-105mm has smooth handling characteristics, with a tactile, high-precision feel to its control rings. That said, they're the only handling attributes of the lens, as it lacks any switches or a tertiary control ring.

If you're shooting landscapes, cityscapes or architecture on your walkabout and travel photography pursuits, you will need a large depth of field, which is within the remit of this lens. The flipside is that you'll struggle to get a tight depth of field for isolating the main subject within a busy scene by blurring the background. That's especially true towards

the long end of the zoom range, where the widest available aperture shrinks to f/7.1.

The shots taken at Bristol Harbour (above) show the extremities of the generous zoom range. The lens is capable of a tight depth for close-ups throughout its entire zoom range. You can certainly get in close, with up to 0.5x macro magnification. However, unlike 'proper' macro lenses, the 24-105mm doesn't retain sharpness in close-ups towards the edges and corners of the image frame. It gets quite blurry towards the edges of the frame in macro shooting, and not because the lens isn't a 'flat field' lens like most genuine macro optics. Edges are plain blurred, as seen in the coloured pencils shot.

Apart from extreme close-ups, I'm yet to test a Nikon Z-mount lens that's anything other than impressively sharp. Paired with a 45.7MP Nikon Z 8, the Z 24-105mm delivers excellent centre-sharpness throughout the zoom range, dropping off a little at the long end. Edge/corner-sharpness is decent, but dips a little in the 50-70mm range.

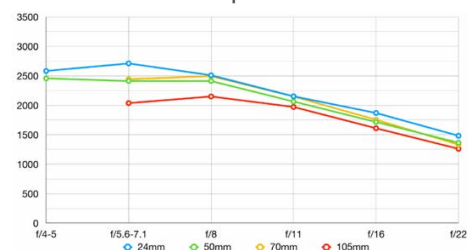
Distortions are minimal, but that's due to automatic in-camera corrections (which can't be disabled in the menu system) rather than the optical prowess of the lens. Colour fringing is generally a non-issue, but benefits from in-camera correction at the short end of the zoom range. **Matthew Richards**

Zoom lens

Specifications

Mount options: Nikon Z
Full-frame: Yes
Autofocus: Yes
Image stabilisation: No
Lens construction: 12 elements in 10 groups
Angle of view: 84-23.2°
Diaphragm blades: 7
Max aperture: f/4
Min aperture: f/22-40
Min focus distance: 0.2m (W) 0.28m (T)
Max magnification ratio: 0.5x
Filter size: 67mm
Dimensions (L x D): 107 x 74mm
Weight: 350g

Sharpness



Sharpness

Centre-sharpness is excellent in the 24-70mm range, and very good at the longest zoom setting of 105mm. Edge/corner-sharpness is good, but dips noticeably at some aperture settings in the 50-70mm zoom sector.

Fringing Short 0.56 Long 0.42

There's barely any colour fringing in the 50-70mm section, and it only rises slightly at the 105mm mark. There's a bit more fringing at the shortest end, but it's within the remit of automatic in-camera correction.

Distortion Short -1.06 Long -0.31

The lens delivers slight barrel distortion at all zoom settings. As with many recent lenses, compactness comes at the expense of a reliance on in-camera corrections, which can't be switched off in the menu.

Digital Camera verdict

4.0 ★★★★★ Excellent



On paper, I didn't take to the Nikkor Z 24-105mm f/4-7.1. That 7.1 number put me off, as I didn't feel the need for such a 'slow' lens. However, it won me over with its compact, lightweight build, making it a travel-friendly lens with an expansive and versatile zoom range. Tight depth of field and soft bokeh aren't among its strong points, but as a general-purpose lens for everyday photography, it performs well and delivers pleasing image quality, with good sharpness, clarity and bite. The 0.5x macro facility is a bonus, although only the centre of the frame is sharp, with the edges pretty blurry. The lens is keenly priced for an own-brand Nikon zoom, and overall, it's an attractive proposition.

Prime lens Sigma 15mm F1.4 DC Contemporary



Sigma 15mm F1.4 DC Contemporary

£449/\$578

A downsized delight for APS-C Fujifilm, Sony and Canon mirrorless cameras

www.sigmauk.com

Rewind to October 2019, and I'm reviewing the Sigma 16mm F1.4 DC DN | C with a Canon EOS M50 camera. A range of APS-C format versions of this lens were available at the time, as well as a Micro Four Thirds option. Later on, the supporting cast grew to include a grand range of L-Mount, Sony E, Canon EF-M and RF-S, Fujifilm X, Nikon Z DX and Micro Four Thirds mount options covering most mirrorless crop-sensor bases. I was so impressed with the Sigma 16mm that I gave it a five-star rating and a coveted gold award. Even so, it wasn't perfect, as it lacked weather-seals and wasn't particularly compact or lightweight, which was only to be expected from a fast f/1.4 prime at the time. Enter the new replacement.

The Sigma 15mm shaves a millimetre off the focal length to give a slightly wider perspective, while shedding half of the weight and 30 per cent of the physical length, compared with the previous lens. It also features a more weather-resistant construction. In short, it's wider, smaller, more manageable and tougher. What's not to love? The mount options are comparatively restricted, at least at launch, but it aims to be one of the best wide-angle lenses for Canon RF-S, Fujifilm X and Sony E mount mirrorless cameras.

Build and handling

The last Sigma 15mm f/1.4 lens I tested was the Sigma 15mm F1.4 DG DN Diagonal Fisheye Art, which was comparatively huge and expensive, and catered to full-frame cameras. This 15mm 'Contemporary' lens matches its bigger sibling for aperture rating, but is a rectilinear wide-angle lens, rather than a curvilinear fisheye.



Matthew Richards

The hood offers physical protection to the front element and reduces the risk of ghosting and flare.

The lens is more compact and lightweight than Sigma's previous 16mm f/1.4 APS-C format prime, more befitting slimline mirrorless cameras. It reminds me of Viltrox Air lenses, including the Viltrox AF 15mm F1.7 Air APS-C format lens, which has the same focal length but a slower aperture and more basic handling characteristics, with no aperture control ring. Even so, Sigma appears to be fighting back against budget Chinese lenses, while still basing its design and manufacture in Japan. There are few 'Japanese' companies that can say that these days, including Nikon, whose Z 180-600mm lens was made in China.

In keeping with the downsized design, the lens has a modest 58mm filter thread at the front, which is small for a wide-angle lens with a fast f/1.4 aperture rating. Further inside the lens, three double-sided aspherical elements help keep the size and weight to a minimum, while also boosting image quality. They're supplemented by three SLD (Special Low Dispersion) elements to enhance clarity while minimising colour fringing, along with one top-grade FLD (Fluorite Low Dispersion) element.

Along with optical quality, consistent sharpness in practical terms depends on the accuracy of the autofocus system. The Sigma features a linear stepping motor to drive autofocus, which is both agile for stills and smooth and near-silent for videography. The lens is designed with more than a passing nod to videography, featuring fast and effective autofocus tracking, as well as minimal focus breathing, so the angle of view is constant during changes in focus distance.

Further good news for shooting video as well as stills is that the lens features a dedicated aperture control ring. This has an Auto position at the narrow end, while the full range between f/1.4 and f/16 is catered to in one-third f/stop click steps. The compact nature of the lens means limited space, so there's no locking switch to avoid unwanted nudging when in the Auto position, and there's no de-click option for silent aperture adjustment when shooting video.

The lens is designed with input from Sigma's 'advanced simulation technology' to optimise clarity and contrast and reduce ghosting and flare when shooting against the light. This is enhanced by an effective

1

The lens has a modest 58mm filter thread, which is small for a wide-angle lens.

2

There is a dedicated aperture control ring, which is good news for both video and stills.

3

Typical of Sigma lenses, it has a metal mounting plate and rubber weather-seals.



The Sigma delivers impressive clarity and sharpness, even wide-open at f/1.4, across most of the frame.



There's minimal lateral chromatic aberration even at the edges and corners of the image frame, while the widest aperture of f/1.4 enables a tight depth of field for close-ups, along with pleasantly smooth bokeh.

petal-shaped hood supplied with the lens. The bayonet-fit design can be reversed to save space when stowing the lens. With the hood in forward-facing mode, you can easily fit and remove the lens cap, thanks to its spring-loaded pinch-style mechanism.

Many lightweight lenses from Canon, Nikon and others have plastic rather than metal mounting plates. They should be sufficiently sturdy and robust, but don't exactly inspire confidence. Typical of Sigma lenses, this has a 'proper' metal mounting plate and features a rubber weather-seal running around its circumference. Sigma doesn't claim the lens is comprehensively weather-sealed, but says it has a 'dust- and splash-resistant structure'. You should be safe to shoot in drizzle, but large amounts of water splashing on the lens may cause a major malfunction and render the lens unreparable, warns Sigma.

Performance

There's little point in buying a fast lens if its performance is lacklustre at its widest aperture setting, but in this instance, the Sigma delivers impressive clarity and good sharpness even wide-open at f/1.4, at least across most of the image frame. As expected, you need to stop down a little to enhance sharpness towards the edges

and corners of the frame, ideally between f/4 and f/11. At f/16, there's a drop-off in sharpness due to the usual phenomenon of diffraction at narrow apertures.

An upside of an f/1.4 lens is that it enables a tight depth of field for isolating subjects within a scene by blurring the background. Despite the wide-angle nature of this beast, the Sigma does enable a tight depth of field for close-ups, and the quality of bokeh is pleasantly smooth. The need for consistently accurate autofocus also comes to the fore when shooting close-ups at wide apertures, and the Sigma does well in this respect, too. Naturally, another bonus of the fast aperture is that you can maintain quick shutter speeds for freezing motion under dim lighting conditions without needing to bump up your camera's ISO too much.

Both axial and lateral chromatic aberrations are kept on a tight leash, and there is negligible colour fringing even with automatic in-camera correction disabled. As usual for modern wide-angle lenses for mirrorless cameras, barrel distortion relies heavily on in-camera correction. I found that I could get away without using automatic correction for distortion with the older Sigma 16mm F1.4 DC DN Contemporary lens, but correction is essential with this 15mm lens.

Matthew Richards

Prime lens

Specifications

Mount options: Canon RF-S, Fujifilm X, Sony E

Full-frame: No

Autofocus: Yes

Image stabilisation: No

Lens construction: 13 elements in 11 groups

Angle of view: 86.9° (83.6° Canon)

Diaphragm blades: 9

Max aperture: f/1.4

Minimum aperture: f/16

Min focus distance: 0.18m

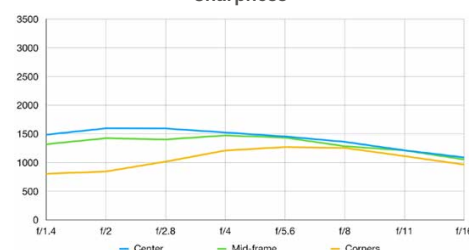
Max magnification ratio: 0.13x

Filter size: 58mm

Dimensions (L x D): 65 x 64mm

Weight: 220g

Sharpness



Sharpness

Levels of sharpness across most of the frame are good at f/1.4. It pays to narrow the aperture by at least a couple of f/stops to f/2.8 for edge/corner-sharpness to come on song. It's better still between f/4 and f/11.

Fringing

0.40

Both lateral and axial chromatic aberrations are negligible. Referred to as 'bokeh fringing', as it's a problem with fast lenses at their widest apertures, but the Sigma keeps chromatic aberrations to a minimum.

Distortion

-6.18

There's heavy barrel distortion, although that's the norm nowadays, with compact wide-angle lenses designed for mirrorless cameras. Either way, it's taken care of with automatic in-camera correction.

Digital Camera verdict

4.5 ★★★★★ Outstanding



The Sigma 15mm F1.4 DC Contemporary gives me two reasons to splash out on a prime lens for my APS-C format mirrorless cameras, rather than using the kit zoom lenses that came with them. First, it gives a much more noticeable wide-angle perspective than a typical kit zoom that only shrinks to a minimum 18mm focal length. It also has a much faster aperture rating, ideal for gaining a tight depth of field for close-ups and maintaining quick shutter speeds under dim lighting. The Sigma is compact, lightweight and has a fast f/1.4 aperture. Handling is excellent, although the aperture control ring doesn't have a de-click option, and image quality and all-round performance are highly impressive.

Right: California, 2020.
 "In the blue hush of twilight, the beach rocks of northern California begin to resemble China's Karst mountains. Here, light, scale and erosion briefly align."

Jon McCormack

With his book due out for Earth Day, the conservationist speaks to **Niall Hampton** about photographing patterns in nature

Jon McCormack



Jon McCormack
 Photographer and conservationist

The arid, wide-open spaces of the Australian Outback engendered a love of the natural world in the young Jon McCormack, who turned to photography to document it.

Studying engineering and then computer science led Jon to a career in the tech industry, and he currently works for Apple, developing the lens and camera software for the iPhone.

Jon is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, serves on the board of the Rainforest Alliance and is a founding board member of the oceans conservation organisation SeaLegacy.

He co-founded The Kilgoris Project, which partners with the local community to support the education of children in a Maasai village in south-west Kenya. Jon lives in California, USA.

jonmccormack.com

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

Earth Day takes place on 22 April this year, and is a show of support for environmental conservation and protection – a reminder of the responsibility that humankind has to safeguard the planet for future generations. (For more information about the day, and how to get involved, visit www.earthday.org).

Published to coincide with Earth Day, a new book by photographer and conservationist Jon McCormack is titled *Patterns: Art of the Natural World*. A collection of photography that explores the hidden geometry and unseen patterns of the planet, it is the author's first monograph, with most of the images having been captured since 2020.

Described by the publisher as a "meditation on the geometric patterns that define our planet's most breathtaking landscapes and ecosystems", *Patterns* documents how the earth reveals itself as "both architect and storyteller". Over 168 pages, the reader will savour images that range from microscopic mineral blooms to vast aerial geometries, gathered from across the world.

Keen to find out more about the book, we spoke to Jon McCormack on a video call from his home in California, USA.

You grew up in the Australian Outback. For any readers who aren't familiar with it, can you describe what this vast territory is actually like?

The overwhelming thing to say about Western Queensland is that it's flat – we don't have rolling hills. I grew up on a farm that had

sheep, cattle and wheat. It was semi-arid, with only about 16 inches of rain a year, and life there was pretty harsh. The closest town was about 15 miles away. The mailbox, on the main road, was a mile from the house, and it was 15 miles to school every day on the school bus.

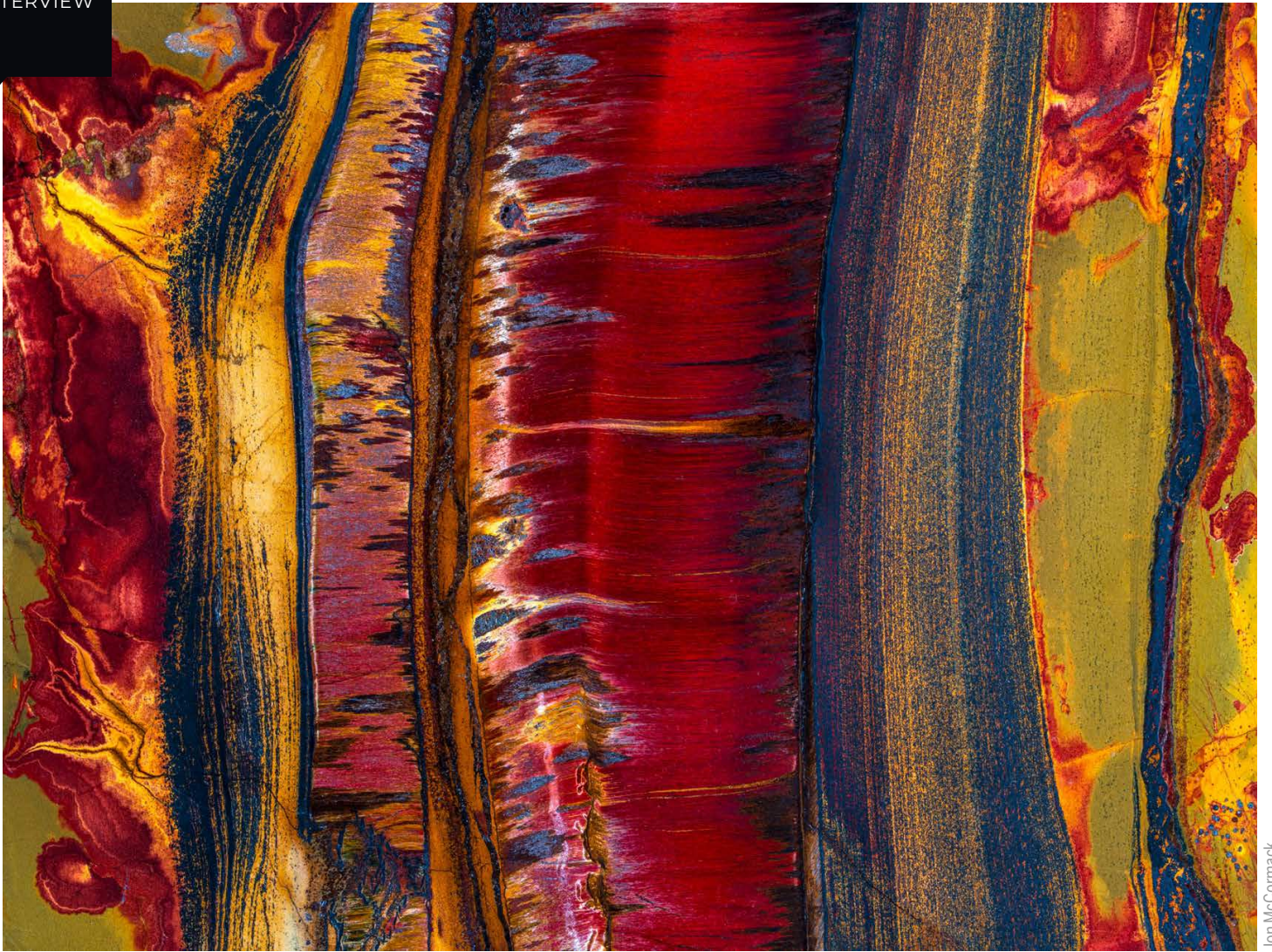
And did living in the Outback develop your love of the natural world and eventually photography?

Yes, it did. Our farm had been in the family for 125 years, and we were the fifth generation of farmers there. My father embraced regenerative agriculture long before it was an interesting thing. The farming world in Australia had largely gone chemical, but Dad was resistant to that. His view was that we'd been farming the land for over 100 years and it had been fine, so there was no real reason to change. He also said that we didn't know what this was going to do to the earth.

The other thing about growing up in that part of the world is that there's a lot of space and natural beauty. We didn't have electricity until after I went to boarding school. We had a 32V generator that Dad would turn on at night so we could watch a little black-and-white TV, but we spent a lot of time outside because that was really all there was.

This informed my view of how I think about the environment and how the environment shows up in my life. Western Queensland is a very textured environment. It goes from semi-arid to arid, with the occasional small waterhole that would be surrounded by trees, lush grass, animals and birds. →





Jon McCormack

Above: Australia, 2025. "Tigerite is a stone shaped as much by time as by chemistry. Its extraordinary range of colour comes from that slow, layered history."

At some point, my dad gave me a camera that had belonged to my grandfather. It was made in the late 1940s and was an Olympus 35 Mark IV, I think. Nothing about it was automatic – there was an external light meter, for example. The other kicker was that the closest place to get film developed was a two-hour drive away, so I'd only get film back every couple of months. This made me a student of photography in terms of taking photographs and making sure I was taking good notes as well. And I needed to do that; I'd get my photos back and I'd be like, 'What did I do there?' That was quite annoying at the time, but also deeply instructive.

"The closest place to get film developed was two hours away. That made me a student of photography, in terms of taking good notes"

So how did you progress further from your initial steps in photography?

I made a choice early on to have a day job in addition to photography, because growing up in Australia, it didn't even occur to me that being a full-time photographer was something you could do. So I did an engineering degree, then studied computer science and eventually went on to get a job in tech.

Working in tech meant a lot of travelling. At that time, in the early 1990s, the tech industry was outsourcing a lot to India, so I spent a lot of time there. I did what everybody else was doing and bought two camera bodies. I also took an 85mm f/1.4 and a 16-35mm lens with me and went to every temple and garden I could find.

It was a lot of fun, but at some point, I really started to struggle with the idea of 'people

photography', because I wasn't telling anyone's story. I think this is what marked my growth from simply taking photographs to actually becoming what I would think of as a photographer and communicator.

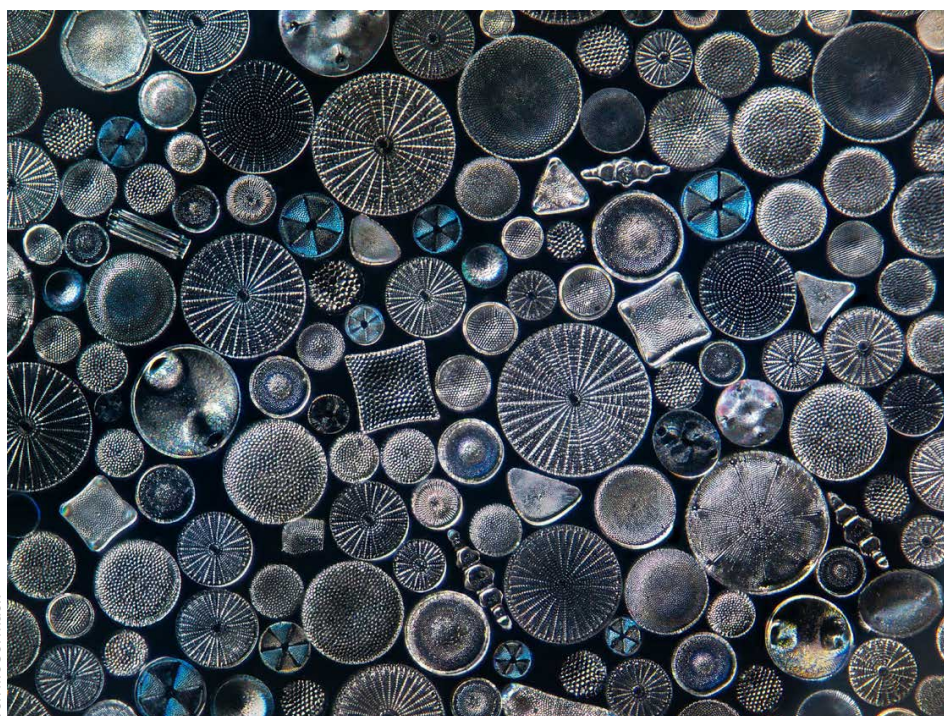
At some point when I was in California, I looked back over four or five years of work and realised that I didn't know the name of a single person in any of my photographs. I didn't know who they were, and I didn't know their stories. It struck me that I wanted to do something deeper. The Yosemite National Park is right at my back door, relatively speaking. It's around four hours drive away, so I ended up making a switch to landscape photography. And that's where I really started to learn about image-making and understand the value of a photograph, especially its value as a communication tool – and particularly one around something that I really cared about, which was the environment.

I started off taking 'pretty' pictures, then moved to photographing wildlife. Since then, I've travelled all over, doing lots of wildlife and landscape work in conjunction with NGOs [non-governmental organisations], including



Left: Iceland, 2023. "As glaciers melt in southern Iceland, ice caves are born, forming temporary wonderlands of architecture and colour."

Below left: Diatoms, 2024. "Under a microscope, diatoms reveal a hidden world of astonishing beauty. Each one is no larger than the width of a human hair."



language for a lot of people; for me, though, it's patterns. I only began to understand this during Covid, when the world slowed down for a while and photography stopped for me. When we were all stuck inside, I was lucky because there's a little beach not far from where I live. When it became clear that we couldn't catch Covid just from going outside, I would wander on the beach every afternoon just to get out of the house. Of course, I took my camera with me and started making photographs. But after a while, how many sunsets can you take and still be interested?

So I started to look for these intriguing little details, interesting patterns that could only happen one time because they were a result of a combination of the tide, the light, wind, seagrasses and so on. Then, I ended up making a decision that I would stick to for the remainder of lockdown; I went to the beach every day and took one photograph with a single lens. Because of the compositional discipline of only having one telephoto lens, I started looking for the deeper details. Searching for these patterns became fascinating to me, so I ended up spending four or five months seeking out the patterns formed by light, wind and water.

Looking back at my earlier work, a lot of it was about patterns. When I think about my photographs from India, my strongest ones tend to be those where I'm much more focused on a pattern than whatever the charismatic subject is. By the time Covid finally ended, my photography had moved onto this idea of looking for patterns. I see wonder in patterns and find that from a neuroscience perspective, patterns – especially ones occurring in nature – have a profound effect on the brain, because they engage you without taxing you.

Patterns in nature are relatively regular, but never repeat exactly. Here's an interesting fact... if you look at Jackson Pollock's drip paintings, they are true fractals [repetitive geometric patterns forming a larger pattern], and that's why these messy, squiggly things are so relaxing. It turns out you have a choice; you can go and spend a few million dollars on a Jackson Pollock or you can go and walk outside – I'll take the walking option. So, photographically, I really resonated with these patterns. Part of it – a lot of it, in fact – was just because of the personal effect that had on me. For me, my photography is now hunt and peck, looking for interesting patterns. And even the journey on its own is fun. ➔

Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy and SeaLegacy. I have this rather deep idea that I can use my photography as a way of talking about things and places that I think are important; places that other people should know about, even if they are inaccessible to most.

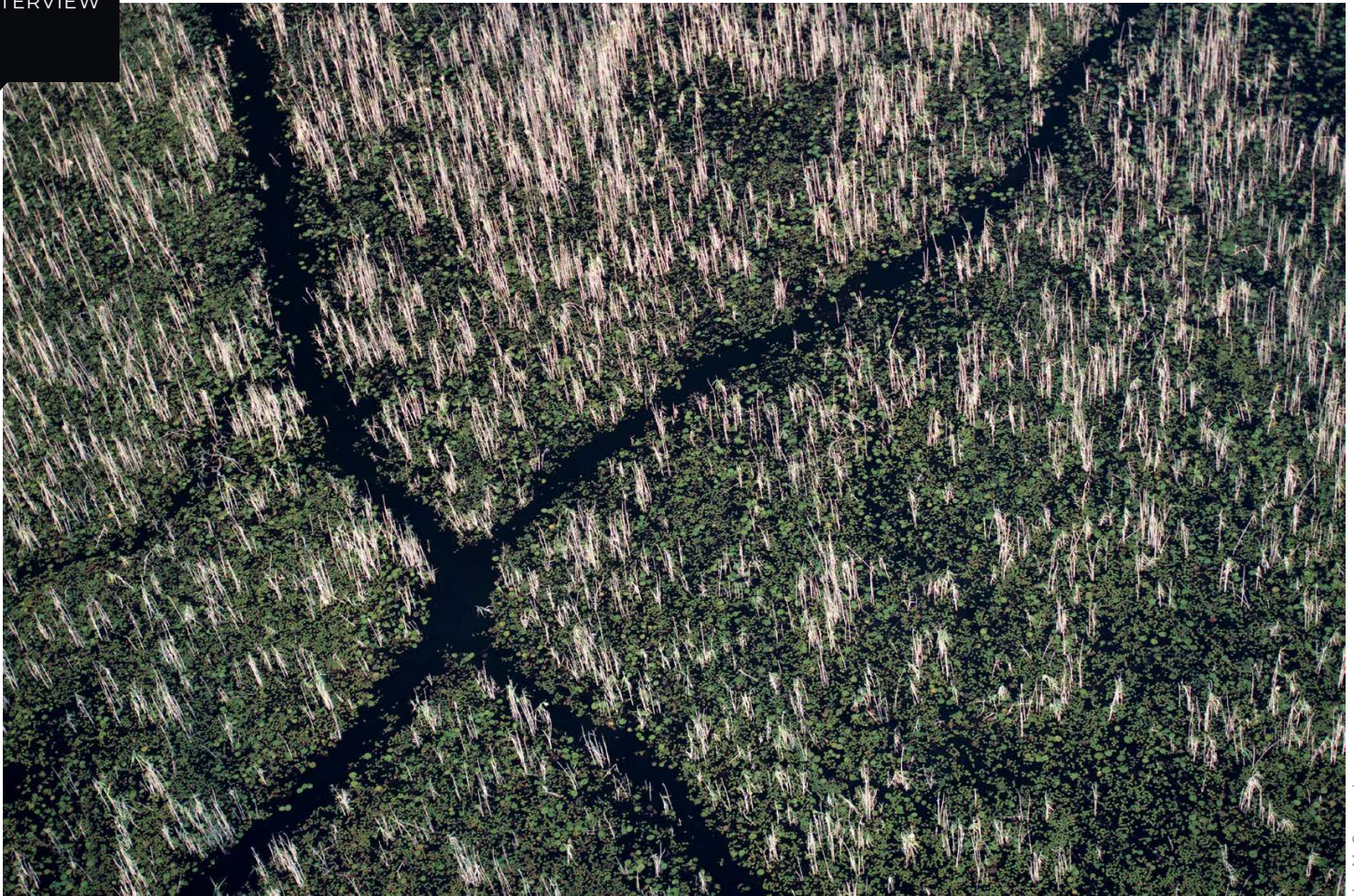
Take somewhere like the Great Bear Rainforest. Depending on who you talk to, it's home to somewhere between 150 and 200 spirit bears. They're about 10 times rarer than a panda bear, but for a while, there was talk about putting a Keystone oil pipeline right through the rainforest. Those bears survive

almost exclusively on salmon streams, so one oil spill would take out that entire population.

Being able to spend time in places like that, taking charismatic photographs that allow organisations with a bigger voice, such as The Nature Conservancy, to talk about the real value of saving this land and the real value of the biodiversity that's there, this became something really important to me.

How long did it take you to form your visual style that we know today?

It turns out that it was always there, because I'm colourblind. Colour is the primary visual



Jon McCormack

Above: Botswana, 2014. "Hippos move through the Okavango Delta, guided by smell. With poor eyesight, they rely on scent to orient themselves in the dark."

The other thing that I learned during the pandemic was that it was OK if there was no photograph to be had. I wasn't going to force it. I wasn't looking for winners. I wasn't looking for great shots. Instead, I would be thinking, 'Just let the photograph happen'. If it did, that was fantastic; if it didn't, I would still have a good time sitting on the beach. I became a far more relaxed photographer because of it.

When was this body of work featured in *Patterns* gathered, and from how many different places?

The book covers all seven continents. The earliest photograph is a film photograph from 1999, but I would say at least two-thirds of the photographs in the book were made from Covid onwards, so between 2020 and now.

Was it in your mind that a book of the series of photographs would result?

No, it started off as something I liked doing. I regularly had my images published in the American magazine *Outdoor Photographer*, but when that ceased publication [in 2023], the primary vehicle for giving voice to my work just went away.

So I thought, 'Maybe I could do a book about patterns in nature', but then I learned how difficult it is to create a book. It was a remarkable process, starting with the idea to make a book of patterns from Monterey. I love prints, so I printed all of the pictures out, arranged them in colour order, and looked through them. However, my first thought was, 'This is the most boring thing I've ever seen, because it's just the same photograph, over and over again'. But it did confirm that there was potential for a book. Then, the idea of scale came in, finding patterns that replicate across different scales and different forms. That got me travelling again.

Are you pleased with how *Patterns* has turned out in the end?

Yes, I am. It really is everything that I hoped it was going to be, particularly in terms of representing my view on how I look at the natural world as this wondrous place. Of course, the great irony in the book is that I travelled all around the world to take the photographs, but the key thing that it taught me is that wonder is everywhere. If you take a blade of grass and put it under the microscope, it becomes this fantastical thing. Ironically, I travelled the world, only to find that there's wonder in my back garden.

What did you use to make these images?

I think there are eight different cameras involved, even an iPhone got a showing. Smartphones these days have excellent image quality, and they're easy to take on a hike. Sometimes, I used a phone; other times, it was a conventional DSLR in an underwater housing, 120 feet down, staring at an octopus. In a helicopter, I tend to fly at about 500 feet, so a 100-400mm is my go-to lens for that. The microscopic pictures were probably the biggest adventure, figuring out how to do microscopic photography, using a Zeiss microscope with a mirrorless body attached.

Actually, here's an interesting story... that slide that looks like a whole load of buttons [p121], they're all diatoms [single-celled algae] and every one is smaller than the width of a human hair. I actually bought that slide at an auction. It was made by a company called Fenton & Son in Edinburgh in the late 1800s. Remember, this was back in the days of Victorian Britain, where you would have people hand-arranging diatoms on slides. Then, in drawing rooms, people would get out their microscopes so they could observe natural history. It's just one of those wonderful things that you sort of discover along the way. This idea of looking closely at nature is not actually a new thing at all.



How did you discover the best places to visit when visiting all these continents?

I still have a day job, so I have to be surgical about the planning, because I have to fit everything in on vacations, holidays and weekends. I'm a big planner, and the internet, including Google Earth, helps a lot with that, as does talking to other photographers.

What I'm most interested in is finding out about an interesting subject, but maximising the opportunity of getting there at the right time, just as something good was about to happen. And that involves spending lots of time on Google Earth, sending emails and researching on the web, plus a reasonable amount of good luck. Throw in some bad luck, and that will result in no photograph at all.

There's a description in the book that resonates: you say your photographs are 'living reminders of the fragile magnificence that surrounds us every day.'

It really is. Again, I go back to that irony of travelling the world to find interesting things in my garden. One of my goals for this book, certainly one of the things I hope it says to people, is that, as a member of the environmental movement, we've been telling people what not to do for years and years, 'Don't throw this away, don't use that'.

Instead, [we should be] looking for something a little gentler, by saying, 'Look at this wonderful world we live in. And this wonderful world is really close'. To me, that's a big idea.

The publication of *Patterns* is timed to coincide with Earth Day 2026.

What does Earth Day mean to you?

Like most marked [red letter] days, it really is a day to reflect, notice and pause. What it means to me is that it's a day of thinking about what an extraordinary planet we live on. We're the only planet we have found that's like this in the universe – that's not to say that there aren't others out there, but Earth is an extraordinary place. And Earth Day was set aside for people to notice that once a year.

Who will buy the book – people who love photography or conservation, or both?

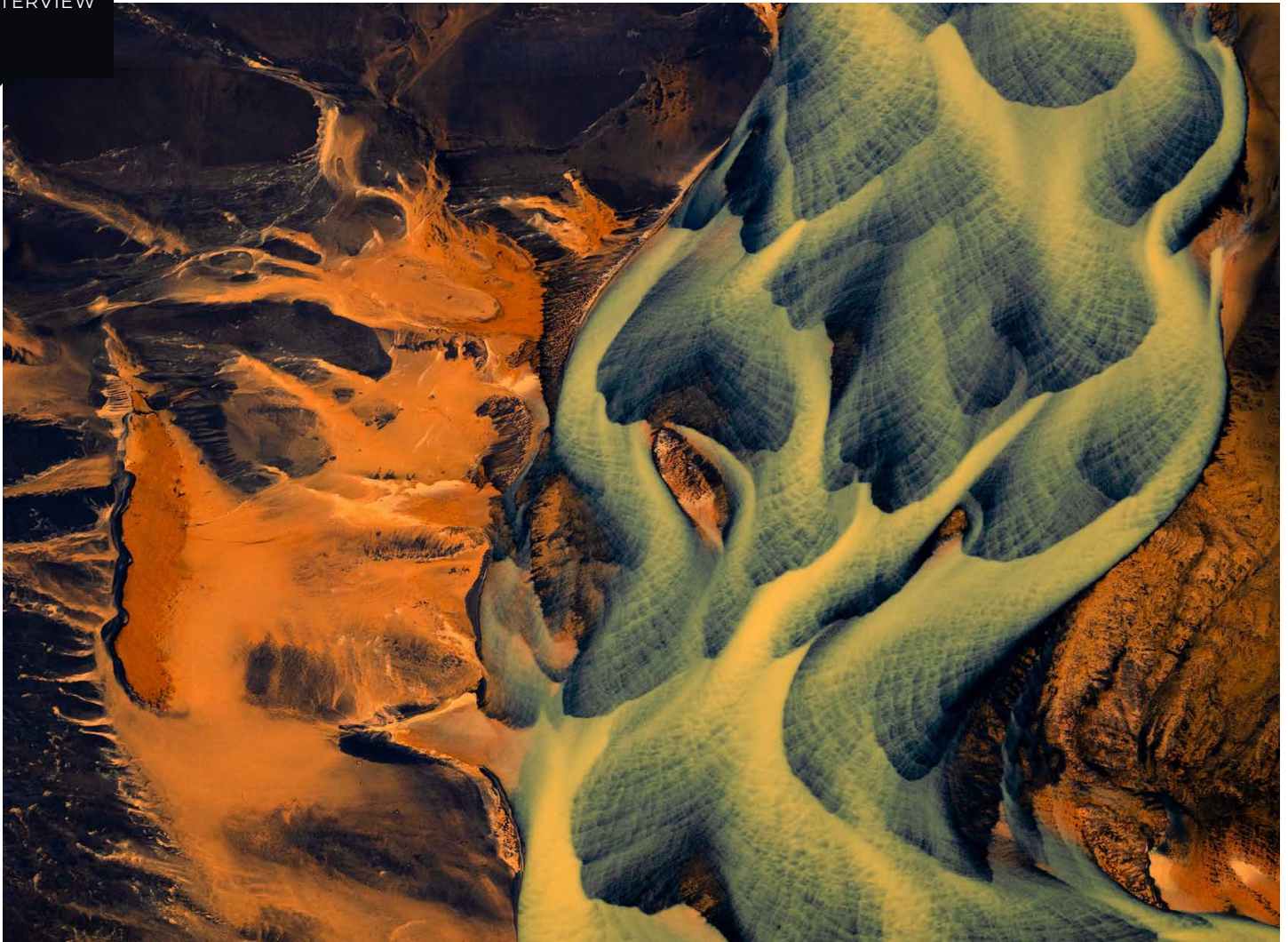
I really hope that the book is accessible and that people will buy it just because they

Above: Kenya, 2024. "On Lake Magadi, as flamingos gather to feed on algae, their movements stir the mineral-laden water, choreographing living patterns."

think it's interesting and that the images are beautiful. With the exception of the final image in the book, I've taken away all scale references. That was intentional because I want people to look at a photograph and say, "What on earth is that?" Then just by asking that question and engaging in the caption, they might think, 'Oh, wow, that's cobalt blue ancient ice in Antarctica, the old forest of the ice. What a fantastic thing'. So I do hope that *Patterns* is a crossover book.

Of course, it would be great if anyone buys my book, but I'm less worried about people who are already sold on the environment buying the book because they're already more likely to agree with the things that I've got to say. What I'm much more —→

"The great irony in the book is that I travelled all around the world taking photographs, only to find wonder in my back garden"



Above: Iceland, 2025. "Rivers spread across broad outwash plains, dividing and rejoining in endlessly shifting patterns shaped by meltwater from glaciers."

interested in is people who pick up the book and just have an opportunity to go, 'Wow! This is really fun, this is really interesting'.

Do you think that, ecologically speaking, the planet is in grave danger?

I would say that we humans are in grave danger, but ultimately, I think nature will survive. Nature has a remarkable way of self-healing. For example, I was in the Namiri Plains in the Serengeti National Park in December 2024. This whole area had been shut down for 25 years, and nature had come roaring back to the point that, in one morning, I saw more cheetahs than the entire cheetah population of the Maasai Mara in Kenya. Basically, if we leave nature alone, it will do what it needs to do to self-heal.

However, as a civilisation, we humans may not make it through. Ultimately, we're doing profound damage to this planet, and for it to be habitable to us in future, we will have to make lots of changes. And if we choose not

to make those changes, the Earth will win eventually. That is a sobering thought.

Are you continuing to capture this kind of photography? Are you planning on publishing a follow-up book?

I don't know if there will be a follow-up book, but I certainly hope so. As for the next place, there's obviously going to be a lot more of the same photography for me, but I've made this commitment to myself to start to figure out how to embrace deep space photography, looking out at nebulae and things like that. Again, it's this idea of things that you can't necessarily see with the human eye, but nonetheless, they are magnificent and spectacular. I've got a lot of that in my future.

But the thing that creating the body of work for the book taught me was who I was as a photographer. And there's no version of me that has said, 'OK, this chapter of my life has closed, now I'm going to do something else'. It's more like, 'Let's keep going, let's keep finding more that's out there'. This could involve going to even more extreme places, which I'm always up for, or it could involve more time in my back garden. ●



Patterns: Art of the Natural World by Jon McCormack, with essays by Ami Vitale, Daniel Katz, David George Haskell, Sylvia Earle and Wade Davis, is published by Damiani Books (ISBN: 978-88-6208-857-2) and is priced £45/\$55. www.damianibooks.com

Next month

CAPTURE THE COAST

12 pages of pro techniques and insights!

✓ Camera settings ✓ Tripod setup ✓ Editing

ON TEST

Hasselblad
X2D II 100C

Meike 35mm F1.8 Pro AF

Samsung Galaxy
S26 Ultra

REGULARS

The Apprentice
Photo Skills

Camera Clinic

Expert photo
editing tutorials



SUBSCRIBE
6 ISSUES FOR
AS LITTLE AS
£9.99*

Turn to page 36

*New UK subscribers only

ON SALE Friday 24 April

Contents subject to change



Conscious choices. Quality goods.

Choose used, go greener



Stock updated every
Wednesday[§]



All stock is quality
checked and graded
accordingly



30-day returns
policy[†]



All used items
come with a 12-month
warranty^{*}

T&Cs: E. & O. E. §Online only. †Faulty items are 30-day policy. Proof of purchase must be supplied. *Exception is 'for spares only' items. Further T&Cs apply, visit wex.co.uk/terms for more details. Wex Photo Video is a trading name of Warehouse Express Limited (Company Reg. No: 03366976). Registered in England & Wales. Registered Office: 13 Frensham Road, NR3 2BT. VAT Number: 108237432. ©Warehouse Express Limited 2026.

View the full range at wex.co.uk/used
or call us on **01603 486413** 7 days a week

Mifsuds Photographic Ltd

Family Run Pro Dealership With Friendly, Knowledgeable Staff. Established 1954.

27-29, Bolton Street, Brixham. Devon. TQ5 9BZ.

www.mifsuds.com **01803 852400** info@mifsuds.com

Latest offers, stock and opening times - Visit - www.mifsuds.com.

VISIT A REAL CAMERA SHOP!
Amazon, Ebay, Google and Trustpilot Reviewed

Billingham

QUALITY CAMERA BAGS

HANDMADE IN THE U.K.



Canon



MIRRORLESS CAMERAS

LENSES
ACCESSORIES

HOYA



QUALITY FILTERS

VAST RANGE
IN STOCK
37mm ~ 82mm

TIFFEN

FILTERS & FILTER KITS

B+W & ND FILTER KITS
BLACK PRO-MIST
GLIMMER GLASS
BLACK SATIN
46mm ~ 82mm



Panasonic

TRAVEL ZOOM AND BRIDGE CAMERAS



VANGUARD



BAGS, TRIPODS, SCOPES & ACCESSORIES

opticon

BINOCULARS & SCOPES

ADVENTURER



AURORA BGA



DBA VHD+



EXPLORER



IMAGIC IS



NATURA



SAVANNA R



TRAVELLER BGA



ASPHERIC 3



BGA OASIS



DISCOVERY



IMAGIC HD



MARINE 2 + 3



OREGON OBSERVATION



SCOPES



VERANO BGA



ALWAYS WANTED

Quality Used Equipment -
Part Exchange Welcome

CALL MATT 0736 828 8126

8am till 8pm daily. RING NOW!

Or email equipment details to info@mifsuds.com

**BEST
PRICES
PAID**

Sensor cleaning carried out on the premises and Pro equipment hire available - please ask for details

Family Run Pro Dealership Trusted Since 1954. **FREE P&P.** CORRECT 27/02/2026. E&OE.

QUALITY USED EQUIPMENT - CHECKED, CLEANED AND WARRANTIED.

Used Canon



R5 MKII Body	£2699
R6 MKIII body	£2399
RF 100-500mm F4.5/7.1 IS USM	£1999

CANON R MIRRORLESS USED

R5 MKII body	£2699
R6 MKII body	£2399
R6 MKII body box	£1499
R7 MKII body	£1799
RF 14-35 F4 IS STM box	£1099
RF 15-30 F4.5/6.3 IS STM box	£1299
RF 15-35 F2.8 IS USM box	£1299
RF 24-105 F4 IS	£899
RF 24-105 F4 IS	£899
RF 35 F1.8 IS macro box	£369
RF 50 F1.2 L USM box	£1299
RF 70-200 F2.8 L IS USM box	£1799
RF 70-200 F4 L IS USM	£1299
RF 85 F1.2 L USM DS box	£2299
RF 100 F2.8 L IS USM macro	£1699
RF 100-500 F4.5/7.1 IS USM	£1999
RF 600 F11	£549
RF 800 F11	£549

CANON DSLR USED

1DX MKII body box	£1499
7D MKII body	£1499
7D body + BG-E7	£1999
6D MKII body	£1499
6D body box	£1099
5Ds body	£699
5D MKIV body	£1199
5D MKIII body box	£399
80D body box	£499
13000D + 18-55 box	£199
BG-E21/20/16/14/13/11/9/8/7 ea	£WEB

CANON M MIRRORLESS USED

M50 MKII + 15-45 box	£449
EF-M 11-22 F4.5/6.3 IS STM	£199
EF-M 18-55 F3.5/5.6 IS STM	£199
EF-M 18-150 F3.5/6.3 IS STM	£299
EF-M 55-200 F4.5/6.3 IS STM	£199
EF-M adapter	£49

Used Canon



100-400mm F4.5/5.6 LII	£999
200mm F2 IS USM L	£2499
300mm F2.8 IS USM LII	£3499
400mm F4 DO IS USMIII	£3699

FLASH/ACCESSORIES USED

ST-E3 box	£149
ST-E2 box	£69
MRI4-EXII ringflash box	£399
MRI-14 ringflash	£169
270EX	£79
320EX	£79
430EX III	£199
430EX II	£99
430EX	£69
550EX	£49
580EX	£149
580EX II	£179
600EX RT	£199
600EX RTII box	£299
RS-600N remote	£20
RS-80N3 remote	£30
TC80N3 remote	£79
Angle finder C	£79

CANON AF LENSES USED

8-15 F4 USM	£149
10-18 F4.5/5.6 IS STM EFS	£699
14 F2.8 USM LII	£599
15 F2.8 fisheye EFS	£249
15-85 F3.5/5.6 EFS	£199
16-35 F4 USM IS L box	£399
17 F4.5 USM L box	£999
17-40 F4 L USM box	£299
18-55 F3.5/5.6 IS STM	£99
18-135 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS nano	£199
18-200 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS	£199
24 F1.4 USM MKII box	£599
24 F2.8 STM EFS	£169
24 F3.5 USM LII TSE box	£999
24-70 F2.8 L USM L box	£699
24-70 F4 IS USM L	£599
24-105 F4.5/6.3 IS STM	£199
24-105 F4 IS USM L	£299

Used Canon



5D MKIV body	£1199
5Ds body	£699
7D MKII body	£499

SIGMA CAF USED

4.5 F2.8 DC fisheye box	£299
10-20 F3.5 EX DC HSM	£169
12-24 F4.5/5.6 II DG	£349
18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS box	£299
35 F1.4 Art	£499
50 F1.4 Art	£499
105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS	£299
150-600 F5.6/6.3 DG OS sport	£999
150-600 F5.6/6.3 DG OS contemp	£749
TC1401 1.4x extender	£149
TC2001 2x extender	£299

TAMRON CAF USED

10-24 F3.5/4.5 DiII	£179
16-300 F3.5/6.3 II VC	£349
18-400 F3.5/6.3 DiII VC	£499
70-300 F4/5.6 VC USD	£249
90 F2.8 Di	£199
180 F3.5 SP Di	£299

Used Nikon



Z8 body	£2299
Z7 MKII body	£1299
70-200mm F2.8 S VR	£1499

NIKON Z MIRRORLESS USED

Z9 body box	£2999
Z8 body box	£2299
Z7 MKII body	£1299
Z6 MKII body	£1499
14-24 F2.8 S box	£1399
24 F1.8 S box	£749
24-70 F2.8 S box	£1099
24-70 F4 S	£399
24-120 F4 S	£749
24-200 F4/6.3 VR	£599
35 F1.8 S box	£599
50 F1.8 S	£399
70-200 F2.8 VR S box	£1499
85 F1.8 S	£599
100-400 F4.5/5.6 VR S	£1699
180-600 F5.6/6.3 VR box	£1499
800 F6.3 VR S box	£4199
TC 2x tele converter	£479
FTZ adapter II box	£149
FTZ adapter	£99
MB-N11 grip	£199
MB-N10 grip	£99

NIKON DSLR USED

D5 body box	£1699
D850 body box	£999/1499
D800 body box	£999
D780 body box	£999
D750 body box	£599
D500 body box	£599/999
D7200 body box	£399
D7100 body box	£299
D5300 body box	£299
D5100 body box	£169
MBD-18 (D850) box	£249
MBD-17 (D500)	£199
MBD-16 (D750)	£99
MBD-15 (D7100/7200)	£99
MBD-12 (D800/810)	£99

FLASH / ACCESSORIES USED

SB-400	£99
SB-700 box	£149
SB-900 box	£149
SB-910	£99
SU-800 commander	£199
DR-6 or DR-5 angle finder each	£99
MC-36A rem	£149
MC-30A rem	£79

Used Nikon



200-500mm F5.6 E ED AFS VR	£749
500mm F5.6 E PF VR AFS	£1799
500mm F4 E FL ED VR	£2999

NIKON AF LENSES USED

10-20 F4.5/5.6 AF-P DX VR	£199
10-24 F3.5/4.5 AFS DX box	£199
12-24 F4 AFS DX	£199
14-24 F2.8 AFS box	£699
16-35 F4 AFS VR	£399
16-80 F2.8/4 VR DX	£499
18-35 F3.5/4.5 AFS	£299
18-55 F3.5/5.6 DX VR	£99
18-105 F3.5/5.6 VR DX AFS	£199
18-140 F3.5/5.6 AFS DX VR	£199
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX MKII	£299
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX	£149
18-300 F3.5/5.6 VR DX box	£449
20 F1.8 AFS box	£499
24 F2.8 AFD box	£249
24-70 F2.8 AFS VR box	£1199
24-70 F2.8 AFS box	£1199
24-120 F4 AFS VR	£499
28-300 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR box	£499
35 F1.8 AFS DX	£149
35 F2.8 AFD	£269

NIKON AF LENSES USED

40 F2.8 AFS DX Micro	£199
50 F1.4 AFS G box	£249
50 F1.8 AFS box	£99
50 F1.8 AFS box	£99
55-200 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR DX box	£299
55-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS DX VR	£299
70-200 F2.8 E FL AFS VR box	£1099
70-300 F4.5/5.6 E AF P VR	£499
70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR	£299
85 F1.8 AFS box	£299
105 F2.8	£499
105 F2.8 AFS VR macro	£399
180 F2.8 AF	£199
200-500 F5.6 E ED AFS VR box	£749
300 F4 E PF VR box	£899
500 F4.5 E FL VR	£2999
500 F5.6 E PF VR AFS	£1799
TC14-EIII	£199
TC17-EIII box	£99
TC20-EIII box	£199
TC20-EIII	£99

Used Nikon



D850 body	£999
D500 body	£599
D5 body	£1699

SIGMA NAF USED

8 F3.5 DC	£299
10-20 F3.5 DC	£169
12-24 F4.5/5.6 II HSM	£349
18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS	£299
20 F1.4 DG HSM Art	£499
24-105 F4 DG OS	£499
35 F1.4 Art	£499
50 F1.4 Art	£499
70-200 F2.8 Sport box	£799
100-400 F5.6/6.3 DG OS	£599
105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS	£299
150-600 F5.6/6.3 DG OS sport	£999
150-600 F5.6/6.3 DG OS contemp	£749
180 F2.8 OS macro	£499
TC-1401 1.4x extender	£149
TC-2001 2x extender	£299

TAMRON NAF USED

16-300 F3.5/6.3 DiII VC	£349
70-300 F4/5.6 VC USD	£229
90 F2.8 Di VC	£299
90 F2.8 Di	£199

NIKON 35MM BODIES/LENSES USED

F5 body box	£699
F801/F601 body each	£999
F801 body	£499
F2 + DP-1 black	£599
F + plain prism	£499
FM2N body	£399/599
FE2 body	£499
28-85 F3.5/4.5 AIS	£199
35 F2 AIS	£349
35-105 F3.5/4.5 AIS	£149
50 F1.2 AIS micro box	£449
50 F1.4 AIS	£299
85 F2 AIS box	£349
100-300 F5.6 AIS	£199
105 F1.8 AIS	£499
105 F2.8 micro box	£299
135 F2 AIS	£399
180 F2.8 AIS	£399
200 F4 AIS macro	£299
PB-6 bellows	£199
PB-4 bellows	£199

Fujifilm Used



XT-4 body black	£799
X Pro 1 body	£399
16 F1.4 WR	£349
16-55 F2.8 XF	£499
16-80 F4 WR	£499
18 F2 XF	£299
18-55 F2.8/4 XF	£299
23 F1.4 XF WR	£349
27 F2.8 XF	£349
55-200 F3.5/4.8 R box	£349
56 F1.2 R	£399
60 F2.4 box	£299
90 F2.4 WR	£399
X500 flash box	£199
EF-42 flash	£99
XT-2/XT-3/XT-4 grip each	£69

FUJIFILM DIGITAL USED

OM-1 body box	£799
E-M10 MKII body	£379
7-14 F2.8 Pro	£599
9-18 F4.5/6	£299
12-40 F2.8 Pro	£399
12-200 F3.5/6.3	£599
14-150 F4/5.6 ED MKII	£349
25 F1.8	£249
30 F3.5 mac box	£199
40-150 F2.8 Pro	£899
40-150 F4 Pro box	£649
45 F1.2 Pro ED	£599
60 F2.8 macro	£349
75-300 F4.8/6.7 MSCII	£249
HLD-10 grip	£299
HLD-9 grip	£99

Olympus Used



OM-1 Body	£799
40-150mm F2.8 Pro	£899

OLYMPUS MICRO 4/3 USED

OM-1 body box	£799
E-M10 MKII body	£379
7-14 F2.8 Pro	£599
9-18 F4.5/6	£299
12-40 F2.8 Pro	£399
12-200 F3.5/6.3	£599
14-150 F4/5.6 ED MKII	£349
25 F1.8	£249
30 F3.5 mac box	£199
40-150 F2.8 Pro	£899
40-150 F4 Pro box	£649
45 F1.2 Pro ED	£599
60 F2.8 macro	£349
75-300 F4.8/6.7 MSCII	£249
HLD-10 grip	£299
HLD-9 grip	£99

Panasonic Used



G9 Body	£499
8-18mm F2.8/4	£599

PANASONIC MICRO 4/3 USED

GHS body	£599
G9 body box	£499
7-14 F4	£399
8-18 F2.8/4 box	£599
9 F1.7 DG	£439
12-35 F2.8 II	£449
12-60 F3.5/5.6	£199
14 F2.5	£149
14-42 F3.5/5.6	£99
14-140 F3.5/5.6	£299
24 F1.4 Summilux DG	£599
25 F1.4 box	£399
45-175 F4.5/5.6	£249
45-200 F4.5/5.6	£149
100-300 F4/5.6 MKII box	£429
Samyang 12 F2 man foci	£179

Sony Used



A7R MKV Body	£2499
100-400mm F4.5/5.6	£1799

SONY FE MOUNT DIGITAL USED

A7R MKV body box	£2499
A7C 11 body silver box	£1499
16-35 F2.8 GM	£1069
16-35 F4 PX box	£849
20 F1.8 G box	£649
24-105 F4 G OSS	£599
24-240 F3.5/6.3 OSS box	£499
50 F1.2 GM	£1199
50 F1.4 ZA	£699
70-200 F2.8 GM OSS MKII box	£1899
85 F1.4 GM box	£799
100-400 F4.5/5.6 GM OSS box	£1799
200-600 F5.6/6.3 box	£1099
Sigma 35 F1.2 Art	£249
Tamron 150-500 F5.6/7.3 VC	£699
Voigtlander 50 F2 APO MF	£499

Bronica Used



ETRSi + 75 + WLF + 120 back	£699
-----------------------------	------

BRONICA ETR 645 USED

ETRSi + 75 + WLF + 120 back	£699
ETRSi body	£199
50 F2.8 E MC	£299
100 F4 E macro	£299
100 F4 E macro	£199
135 F4 PE	£349
150 F3.5 PE	£299
150 F3.5 E	£179
250 F5.6 E	£199
120 back RWC late	£99
135N 35mm back	£249
Speed grip E	£99
WLF	£149
Sports finder	£299
AEII prism	£299
AEII prism	£199
Rotary or plain prism E	£149
Macro bellows E	£149
Accessories	£149

Bronica Used





What the f-stop?

How much do you really know about photography? Test yourself to the max every issue with our tricky trivia quiz!



Owen Franken - Corbis / Getty



Chris George

1 Introduced in 1981, the Sony Mavica (above) was an early non-film stills camera. What did it record onto?

- ☐ A DAT
- ☐ B VHS-C
- ☐ C Floppy disc
- ☐ D Compact Disc

2 What is blix?

- ☐ A Old type of flashgun using magnesium
- ☐ B A 1940s British camera maker
- ☐ C A chemical used in colour film processing
- ☐ D Lookup table used in video editing

3 Samyang has recently started working in partnership with which German lens company?

- ☐ A Rodenstock
- ☐ B Meyer-Optik-Görlitz
- ☐ C Voigtlander
- ☐ D Schneider Kreuznach

4 Which company has just launched a £100 compact camera amusingly called 'The Tank'?

- ☐ A Yashica
- ☐ B Minolta
- ☐ C Kodak
- ☐ D Agfa

5 What is the name of the fortnightly podcast produced by the *Digital Camera World* website?

- ☐ A Bokeh Face
- ☐ B Shake it like a Polaroid
- ☐ C Don't take my Kodachrome away
- ☐ D f/8 and I'll be there

6 Which of these companies doesn't make a range of photo papers for inkjet printing?

- ☐ A Hahnemühle
- ☐ B Canon
- ☐ C Canson
- ☐ D Basildon Bond



7 What is the name for this at-a-slant compositional trick, much loved by motorsport photographers?

- ☐ A Angolan angle
- ☐ B Dutch tilt
- ☐ C French curve
- ☐ D Finnish flat

8 What was the best-selling model in Olympus's range of 35mm SLRs?

- ☐ A OM-1
- ☐ B OM-4
- ☐ C OM-10
- ☐ D OM-40

9 What is the name for the wheels used on a video tripod to enable camera movements?

- ☐ A Dolly
- ☐ B Molly
- ☐ C Lolly
- ☐ D Tolly

10 Brandon Stanton famously set out to take 10,000 portraits on the streets of which US city?

- ☐ A Los Angeles
- ☐ B New York
- ☐ C San Francisco
- ☐ D Miami

How did you do?

10 points You're a photo mastermind!
8-9 points Fantastic, you're a brainiac
6-7 points Really good score
4-5 points Respectable, but no cigar
2-3 points We'll keep your score secret
0-1 points Epic fail

ANSWERS 1C,2C,3D,4A,5A,6D,7B,8C,9A,10B

The latest NEW products & special offers available from Park Cameras!

Canon EOS R5 Mark II

Master the Moment

45
MEGA
PIXELS

3.1"

30 fps

8K



INSTANT
SAVING
£270



Sony a7 V

Beyond Standards

33.0
MEGA
PIXELS

3.1"

30 fps

4K



NEW
& in stock!



R5 II Body
£3,729*
normally £4,399

+ RF 24-105mm
£5,129*
normally £5,399

Spread the cost with
our finance options.
See website.

*Offer available 18.03.26 - 28.04.26. See website for full details.

a7 V Body
£2,799

+ 24-70mm GM II
£3,999

+ 24-105mm f/4 OSS
£3,199

2 Year Warranty Available. See website for full details.

Canon EOS R6 II

Body Only



SAVE
£270

Our Price
£1,929

Offer ends 28 April 2026.
See website for details

SAVE UP TO
£500
ON SELECTED
CANON RF LENSES



Visit us in store or see
the range online.

*Offer available
18.03.26 - 28.04.26

Canon EOS R6 III

Body Only



Our Price
£2,799

Save £200 on selected
lenses with the EOS R6 III

Sony a7 IV

Body Only



SAVE
£100

Our Price
£1,999

Save £100 on selected
lenses with the a7 IV

Sony a7R V

Body Only



Our Price
£2,999

Spread the cost with our
finance options. See web.

Sony FE 70-200mm f/4 G OSS



SAVE
£400

Our Price
£799

Looking for a bargain? See
our used range from £599

ZEISS Otus ML 35mm f/1.4



NEW!

Our Price
£2,050

EXPECTED APRIL '26!
Various mounts available

Sigma 15mm f/1.4 | Contemporary



NEW!

Our Price
£449

EXPECTED SPRING '26!
Various mounts available

Sigma 35mm f/1.4 DG II | Art



NEW!

Our Price
£849

EXPECTED APRIL '26!
E-Mount / L Mount

Tamron 35-100mm f/2.8 Di III VXD



NEW!

Our Price
£799

EXPECTED APRIL '26!
E-Mount / Nikon Z Mount

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



NEW!

Our Price
£2,999

EXPECTED SPRING '26!
See website for details

Atomos Ninja RAW Monitor-Recorder



NEW!

Our Price
£718

EXPECTED SPRING '26!
See website for details

PGYTECH OnePro Ultralight 20L Backpack



NEW!

Our Price
£180

EXPECTED SPRING '26!
See website for details

Billingham Hadley One Navy / Chocolate



NEW!

Our Price
£353

EXPECTED SPRING '26!
See website for details

Manfrotto ONE Photo Aluminium Tripod



NEW!

Available from
£269

EXPECTED SPRING '26!
See website for details

UPGRADE or SELL your camera gear

It's quick, easy & secure to sell or
part-exchange your photo / video
gear to Park Cameras

Get your instant quote at
parkcameras.com/trade-in



photoGuard

Get
a quote
online

Insurance designed to help you focus

Over 20 years of
experience protecting
the UK's photographers

✓ Interest-free payments

✓ Friendly UK based claims & customer support

✓ Trusted by over 750,000 photographers*

✓ Specialist photography insurance

✓ Choose the cover that works for you

*Total of all policyholders for Guardcover since 2005

Specialist camera insurance that you can trust

One of the great things about photography is capturing the unexpected, but no photographer wants to be on the end of a nasty surprise. With our specialist photography insurance, it doesn't matter if you're a professional photographer or someone who takes pictures in their spare time, we can help you focus on capturing the moment. Get in touch for a quote today.



www.photoguard.co.uk/digital-photographer



0333 004 6555

photoGuard is a trading style of Thistle Insurance Services Limited. Thistle Insurance Services Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.FRN 310419. Registered in England under No. 00338645. Registered office: Rossington's Business Park, West Carr Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire, DN22 7SW. Thistle Insurance Limited is part of the PIB Group.

PGD250201

