

PHOTOGRAPHY

MASTERCLASS

BUYERS GUIDE

**SIGMA 200MM
F/2 LENS**

EXPERT GUIDE

**TIPS FOR TAKING
SHARPER PHOTOS
IN LOW LIGHT**

featured
**GIOVANNI MORAN
INTERVIEW**

**FINE ARTS, FASH-
ION, PORTRAITURE,
LIFESTYLE, AND
CONCEPTUAL SELF-
PORTRAITURE**

MASTERCLASS

MASTER THE ART OF

HORSE PHOTOGRAPHY

LIGHTROOM

**LIGHTROOM
DENOISE
SECRETS: MAKE
ISO 12,800 LOOK
LIKE ISO 400!**

INSPIRATION

**THE POCKET
DARKROOM &
THE CULTURE OF
SMARTPHONE
PHOTO EDITING**





PHOTOGRAPHY

MASTERCLASS

MAGAZINE



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16

INSPIRATION

The Pocket Darkroom and the Culture of Smartphone Photo Editing



25

EXPERT GUIDE

Tips For Taking Sharper Photos In Low Light



36

MASTERCLASS

Master The Art of Horse Photography



66

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

We interview Los Angeles-based photographer, Giovanni Moran, who is known for his striking fine art, fashion, portraiture, and conceptual self-portraits that turn the everyday into the extraordinary.



05

EDITORS CHOICE

A Hand-Picked Selection Of Our Favorite Photos

31

EDITING

Lightroom Denoise Secrets: Make ISO 12,800 Look Like ISO 400!

85

TIMELAPSE

Easy Estonia Little Big World Tilt-Shift, Time-Lapse and Drone

88

READERS GALLERY

Your Best Shots Showcased

97

BUYERS GUIDE

The Lowdown on the Sigma 200mm f/2 Lens

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to this edition
of Photography
Masterclass Magazine

Unlock the secrets of stunning horse photography in the latest issue of Photography Masterclass Magazine! We share expert tips for capturing the beauty and spirit of horses, with insights from renowned equine photographer Jane Lazenby. We'll teach you how to master the art of horse photography and inspire you to take great photos of our equine friends.

Also in this issue, we interview Los Angeles-based self-taught photographer and creative director Giovanni Moran, who is known for his striking fine art, fashion, portraiture, and conceptual

self-portraits that turn the everyday into the extraordinary. With a practice fueled by curiosity, resourcefulness, and bold storytelling, Giovanni's imaginative imagery (recently featured on television and in solo exhibitions) challenges convention while celebrating authenticity. Today, we dive into Giovanni's unique creative world to uncover how he crafts images that are as raw and honest as they are visually compelling.

We hope you enjoy this issue. If you try out any of the techniques mentioned, we'd love you to see your results, so please do share them with us in our [readers' Facebook Group](#), or on Instagram using hashtag #PhotographyMasterclassMagazine

Happy Shooting!



Gill



MESSAGE FROM GILL ROBERTS
THE EDITOR

EDITOR'S CHOICE



A Hand-Picked Selection of
our Favorite Photos



By: Ahmed Photography
Shot Details: Sony a7 IV, at 40mm,
f/2.8, 1/400 sec, ISO 250
[Instagram](#)



By: Joshua Kettle
Shot Details: Fujifilm GFX100S, at 183mm,
f/7.1, 1/34 sec, ISO 250
[Portfolio](#)



EDITORS CHOICE



By: Allec Gomes

Shot Details: Nikon Z7 II, at 77mm,
f/5.6, 1/250 sec, ISO 200

[Instagram](#)

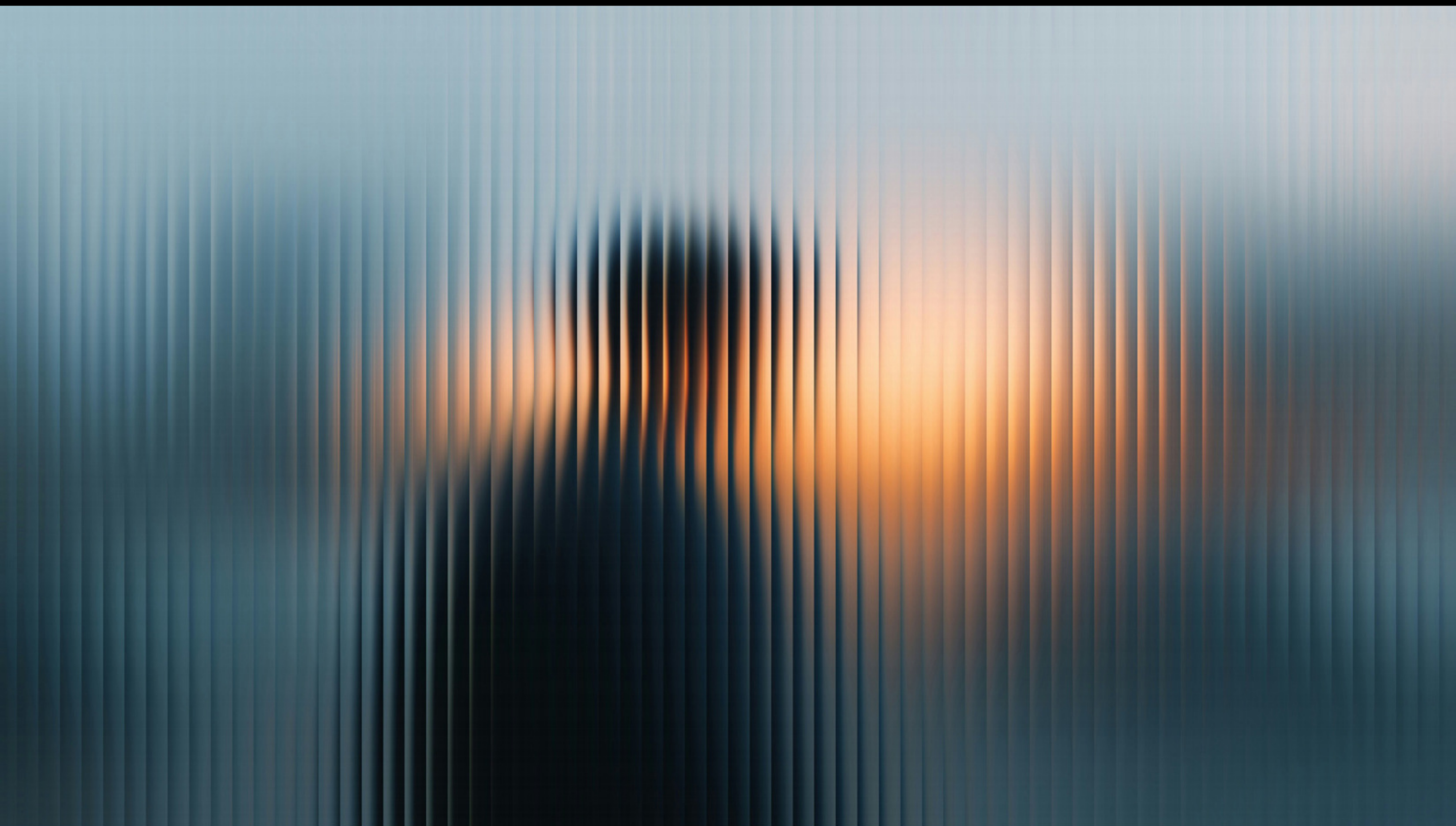








By: A. C. Photography
Shot Details: Sony a7 IV, at 24mm,
f/2.8, 1/800 sec, ISO 64
[Website](#)





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THE POCKET DARKROOM AND THE CULTURE OF SMARTPHONE PHOTO EDITING



Photo by: [Lee Loo The First](#)

REDEFINING ARTISTIC VISION AND AUTHENTICITY IN THE AGE OF INSTANT PHOTO EDITING

By Gill Roberts

Photography has always been as much about what happens after the shutter clicks as the moment itself.

In the days of film, the darkroom was a sacred space, where negatives were coaxed into prints, and where a photographer's vision was truly realized.

Dodging, burning, and chemical experimentation were the tools of the trade, and mastery took years to develop. Today, the darkroom has been replaced not just by a computer but by the smartphone, and the process of editing is now as accessible as a swipe or a tap.

With the rise of mobile editing apps, anyone can transform an ordinary snapshot into a work of art in seconds. This democratization of the darkroom has revolutionized not only how we edit photos, but also who gets to participate in the creative process.

As we examine the culture of mobile editing, we find ourselves at a crossroads: empowered by new tools, yet challenged by new questions about authenticity, originality, and the very nature of photography itself.

THE RISE OF MOBILE EDITING APPS

The past decade has witnessed an explosion in the availability and sophistication of mobile photo editing

apps. What began as simple filter overlays in early Instagram has evolved into a robust ecosystem of tools that rival, and sometimes surpass, desktop software in both power and accessibility.

Apps like VSCO, Snapseed, and Adobe Lightroom Mobile have become household names, offering everything from basic exposure adjustments to advanced color grading, selective edits, and even AI-powered enhancements.

This shift has fundamentally changed who edits photos and how. No longer is photo editing the exclusive domain of professionals with access to expensive software and hardware. Today, anyone with a smartphone can experiment with tone curves, split toning, and retouching.





The learning curve has flattened, thanks to intuitive interfaces and a wealth of online tutorials. Editing on the go has become second nature, whether it's perfecting a sunset before posting to social media or crafting a cohesive visual story for a personal blog.

The accessibility of these tools has also fostered a new sense of community. Editing "recipes" and preset packs are shared and sold across platforms, allowing users to emulate the styles of their favorite creators or develop their own signature looks.

The result is a vibrant, ever-evolving culture where creativity is no longer limited by technical barriers but instead is propelled by the collective energy of millions of mobile photographers around the world.

PRESETS, FILTERS, AND THE NEW VISUAL LANGUAGE

With the rise of mobile editing apps came the era of presets and filters. These one-tap solutions could instantly transform the mood and tone of any image. What began as a handful of quirky Instagram filters has blossomed into a global marketplace of downloadable looks, each promising to give your photos a unique edge. From the moody desaturation of "VSCO A6" to the sun-drenched warmth of "Tezza," these presets have become the building blocks of a new visual language.

This language is not just about aesthetics; it's about identity and belonging. Entire communities have formed around specific editing styles, with hashtags and challenges encouraging users to adopt certain looks.



A lot of us probably remember the "Instagram look", popular in the early to mid-2010s, which was characterized by soft pastels, high contrast, and a touch of grain. It became so recognizable that it was almost a genre unto itself. Influencers and brands carefully curated their feeds to maintain a consistent visual identity, often relying on the same set of filters to achieve a cohesive appearance.

However, as more people adopt the same editing styles, the uniqueness of individual images can be lost in a sea of similarity. The ease of applying a filter can sometimes discourage deeper

experimentation or personal expression. Yet, for many, these tools are a gateway to creativity and a starting point for further exploration, rather than a final destination. In this new era, the act of editing is as much about participating in a shared culture as it is about personal expression.

The challenge for today's mobile photographers is to use these tools not just to fit in, but to stand out and to find ways to infuse their images with a sense of self, even as they speak the common language of filters and presets.

EDITING AS ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

In the early days of digital photography, editing was often seen as a corrective process. A way to fix exposure mistakes, adjust white balance, or crop out distractions. Today, mobile editing has evolved far beyond correction. It has become a powerful tool for creative expression, allowing photographers to shape not just what their images show, but how they feel.

Modern editing apps empower users to manipulate color, light, and texture in ways that were once the domain of seasoned professionals. With a few taps, a dull sky can be transformed into a dramatic sunset, or a cluttered background can be softened into a dreamy blur.

Selective adjustments let photographers highlight a subject or mute distractions, while advanced tools like curves and

HSL sliders offer fine-grained control over every aspect of an image.

This creative freedom has given rise to a new generation of visual storytellers. For many, editing is where the real magic happens as it's a chance to infuse a photo with mood, emotion, or narrative.

Some artists use editing to create surreal, painterly effects, blending multiple exposures or layering textures for a unique look. Others embrace minimalism, using subtle tweaks to evoke a sense of calm or nostalgia.

The line between photography and digital art has never been blurrier. While purists may debate where one ends and the other begins, most mobile photographers see editing as an essential part of their creative toolkit. It's not just about making a photo look "better", it's about making it say something, about turning a fleeting moment into a lasting impression.



IS IT A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD?

The democratization of editing tools has opened the doors to creativity for millions, but it has also introduced a paradox. As more people gain access to the same presets, filters, and editing techniques, the visual landscape can start to feel repetitive.

This homogenization is not unique to mobile photography; every artistic movement has its dominant styles. However, the speed and scale at which trends spread today are unprecedented. A single influencer's editing style can ripple across the globe in days, inspiring thousands to adopt similar looks. For brands and aspiring creators, there's a strong incentive to follow the crowd because consistency and familiarity often

translate to more likes, followers, and engagement.

Yet, within this sea of similarity, there are countless photographers striving to carve out their own visual identities. Some deliberately buck the trends, experimenting with bold colors, unconventional crops, or analog-inspired imperfections. Others blend popular styles with personal touches, using editing as a means of self-expression rather than imitation.

The challenge for today's mobile photographers is to balance inspiration with originality. Presets and filters can be valuable starting points, but true individuality comes from pushing beyond the default settings—tweaking, combining, and inventing new approaches. In a world where anyone can edit, it's the personal vision behind the edits that truly stands out.



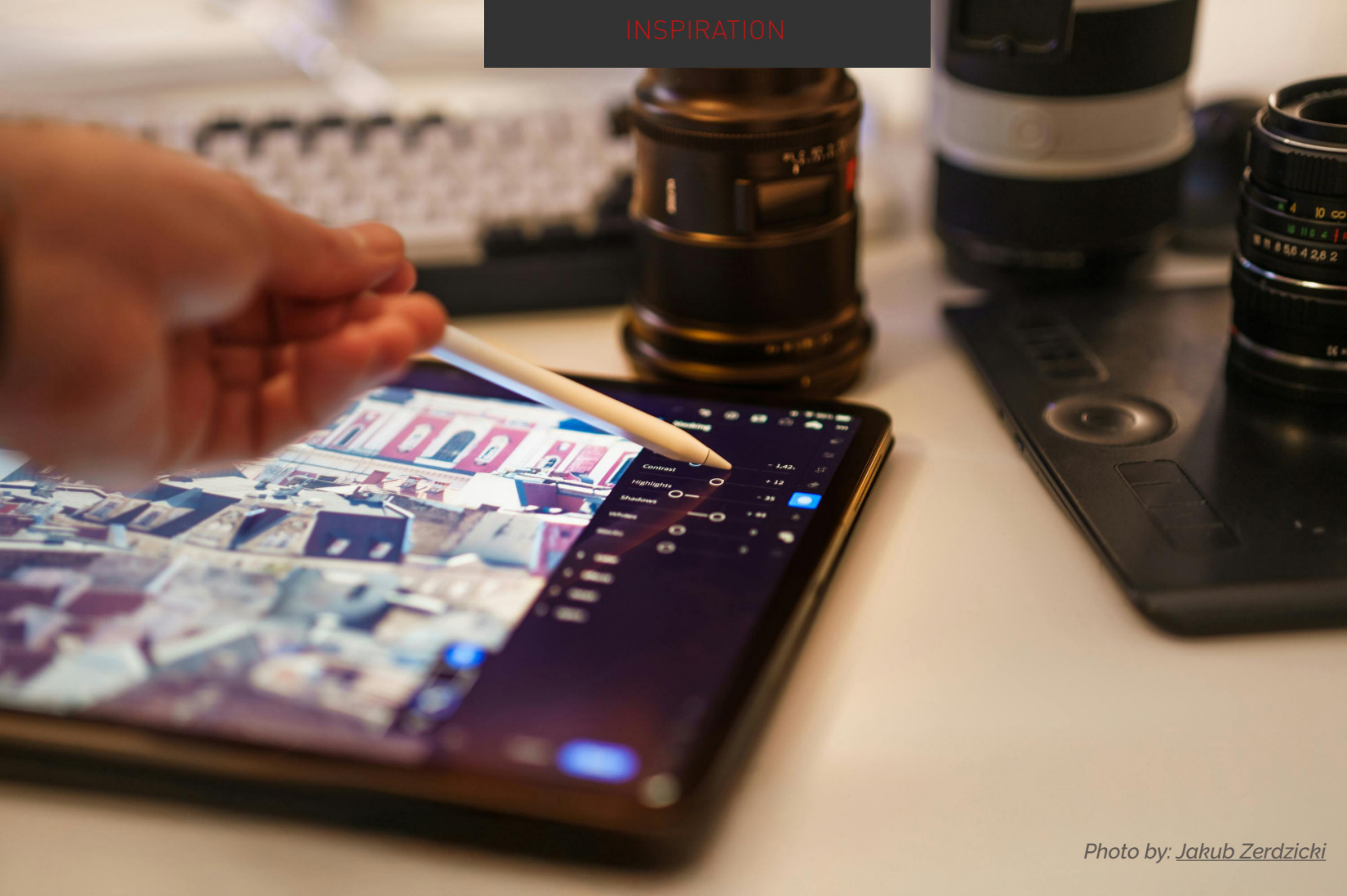


Photo by: [Jakub Zerdzicki](#)

AUTHENTICITY IN THE AGE OF EASY EDITING

As editing tools become more powerful and accessible, questions about ethics and authenticity in photography have come to the forefront. In the analog era, manipulation was labor-intensive and often left traces.

Today, a few taps can remove blemishes, swap skies, or even add elements that were never present. This ease of alteration has sparked debates about what constitutes a "real" photograph and where the line should be drawn between enhancement and deception.

For many viewers, the expectation is that a photograph represents reality, or at least a version of it. When edits are subtle,

such as adjusting exposure, correcting color, or cropping for composition, they are generally accepted as part of the photographer's craft.

But as edits become more extreme, questions arise. Is it ethical to remove people from a street scene? To smooth skin until it's flawless? To use AI tools to generate backgrounds or objects that never existed?

Social media has amplified these concerns. Heavily edited images can set unrealistic standards for beauty, travel, or lifestyle, contributing to issues of self-esteem and authenticity. Some platforms and influencers have responded by disclosing when images are retouched or by sharing "before and after" comparisons to promote transparency.

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the photographer. Being honest about the extent of edits, especially in contexts like photojournalism or documentary work, is crucial for maintaining trust.

In artistic or commercial photography, the boundaries are more flexible, but clarity about intent and process helps foster an environment of respect and understanding.

As mobile editing continues to evolve, so too will the conversations about truth, manipulation, and the role of the photographer as both documentarian and artist.

IN CONCLUSION

The democratization of the darkroom has forever changed the landscape of photography. What was once the preserve of professionals and enthusiasts with access to specialized equipment is now open to anyone with a smartphone and a creative spark. Mobile editing apps have empowered millions to experiment, express, and share their visions with the world, blurring the boundaries between photographer, editor, and artist.

As we look to the future, the culture of mobile editing will continue to evolve. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are making editing even more intuitive and powerful.

At the same time, the conversations around authenticity, ethics, and originality will only grow more important. In a world where images can be endlessly manipulated, the value of honesty and personal vision will stand out more than ever.

Ultimately, the tools are just that—tools. It's the intent, imagination, and integrity of the photographer that give an image its meaning. Whether you're using a classic preset, crafting your own look, or pushing the boundaries of what's possible, the most important thing is to create work that resonates with you and your audience.

The darkroom may have gone digital, but the heart of photography remains unchanged. It's about seeing, feeling, and sharing the world in your own way. As mobile editing culture continues to democratize creativity, the next great photographic voice could be anyone's, including yours.



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TIPS FOR TAKING SHARPER PHOTOS IN LOW LIGHT

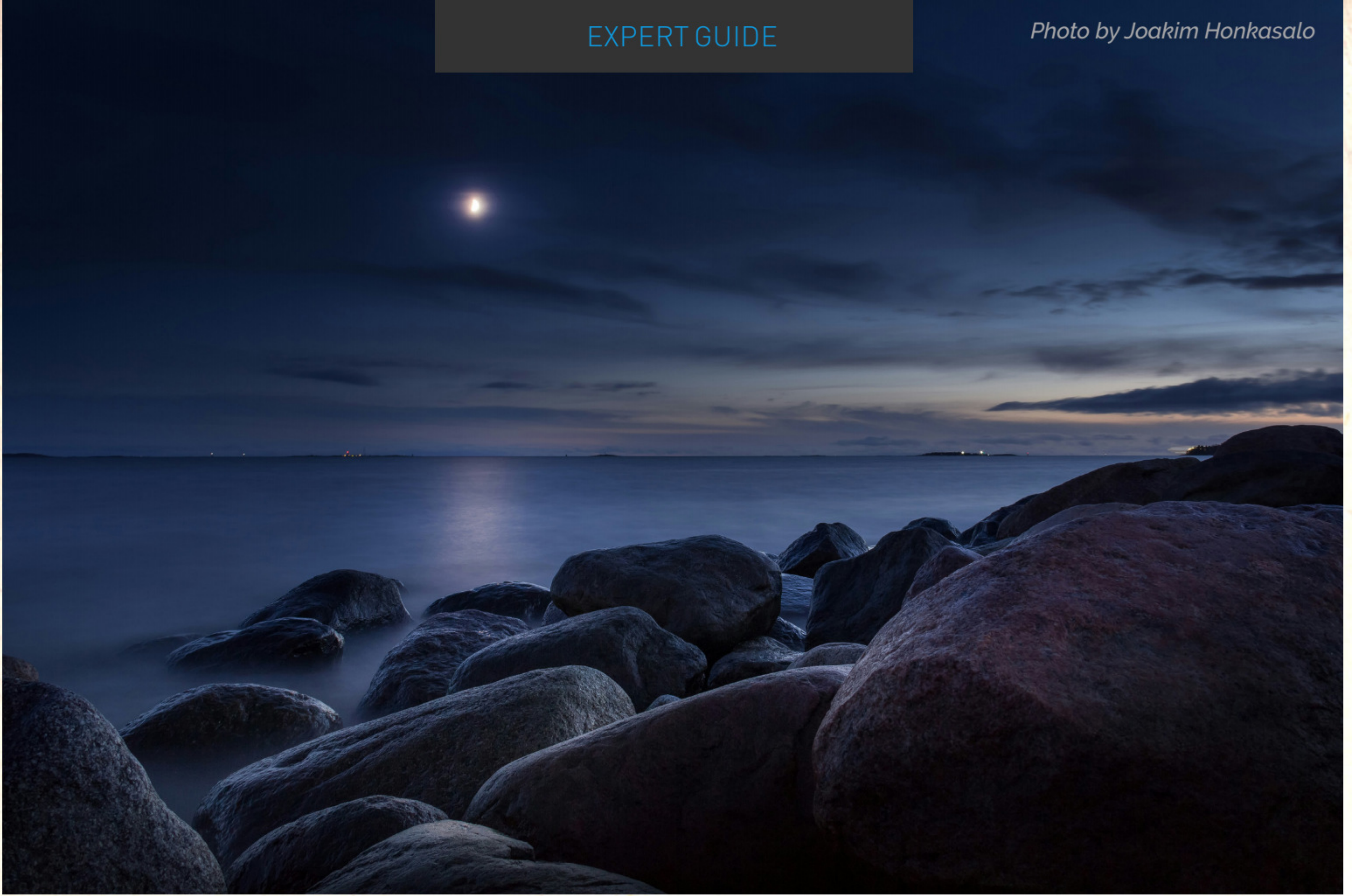


Photo by Photo Author

by Gill Roberts

There's a unique magic to the world when the sun dips low. Think of the warm glow of a city street at dusk, a candlelit portrait, or the beauty of a landscape in moonlight. These are moments brimming with mood and emotion, yet for many photographers,

they are also a source of immense frustration. You see the perfect shot, you raise your camera, but the image that appears on your screen is a blurry, noisy disappointment, a pale imitation of the scene you witnessed. The struggle is real. Low light forces



a camera to its limits, turning a simple snapshot into a technical puzzle. The lack of available light means the camera's sensor has to work harder, which often leads to two main culprits of unsharp photos: motion blur from slow shutter speeds and digital noise from high ISO settings. It can feel like an impossible trade-off, forcing you to choose between a sharp but dark image and a bright but blurry one.

But low light is not a barrier - it's opportunity to take deliberate control of your camera and create images with a depth and atmosphere that bright daylight can rarely match.

In this article, we will dismantle the challenges of low-light photography, piece by piece. We'll move beyond the frustration and unlock the potential that lies in the shadows, equipping you with the techniques to create images

that are not only bright enough but also beautifully and intentionally sharp.

THE KEY IS THE EXPOSURE TRIANGLE

At the heart of conquering low light lies the "exposure triangle" - the fundamental relationship between aperture, shutter speed, and ISO. In well-lit situations, you have plenty of flexibility, but in the dark, every decision is a critical trade-off.

Mastering this balancing act is the single most important technical skill for achieving sharp low-light images.

Think of it as a three-way negotiation for light, where every choice has a direct impact on the sharpness of your final image.

APERTURE (THE OPENING)

Your aperture is the adjustable opening in your lens that controls how much light reaches the camera's sensor. Think of it as the pupil of your camera's eye. A wider aperture (represented by a smaller f-number, like $f/1.8$ or $f/2.8$) lets in significantly more light than a narrow one (like $f/8$ or $f/11$).

In low light, a wide aperture is your best friend. It allows you to use a faster shutter speed to freeze motion and a lower ISO to minimize noise. Lenses capable of these wide apertures are often called "fast" lenses, and they are the go-to choice for low-light specialists.

The trade-off? A wide aperture creates a shallow depth of field, meaning only

a thin slice of your image will be in sharp focus. This can be a beautiful creative tool for isolating your subject, but it demands precise focusing.

SHUTTER SPEED (THE DURATION)

This setting determines how long the camera's sensor is exposed to light. To capture enough light in a dark environment, you'll naturally need to leave the shutter open for longer. This is where the primary enemy of sharpness - motion blur - enters the picture.

Any movement, whether it's your subject moving or the slight shake of your own hands, will be recorded as a streak or blur across the frame during a slow exposure.

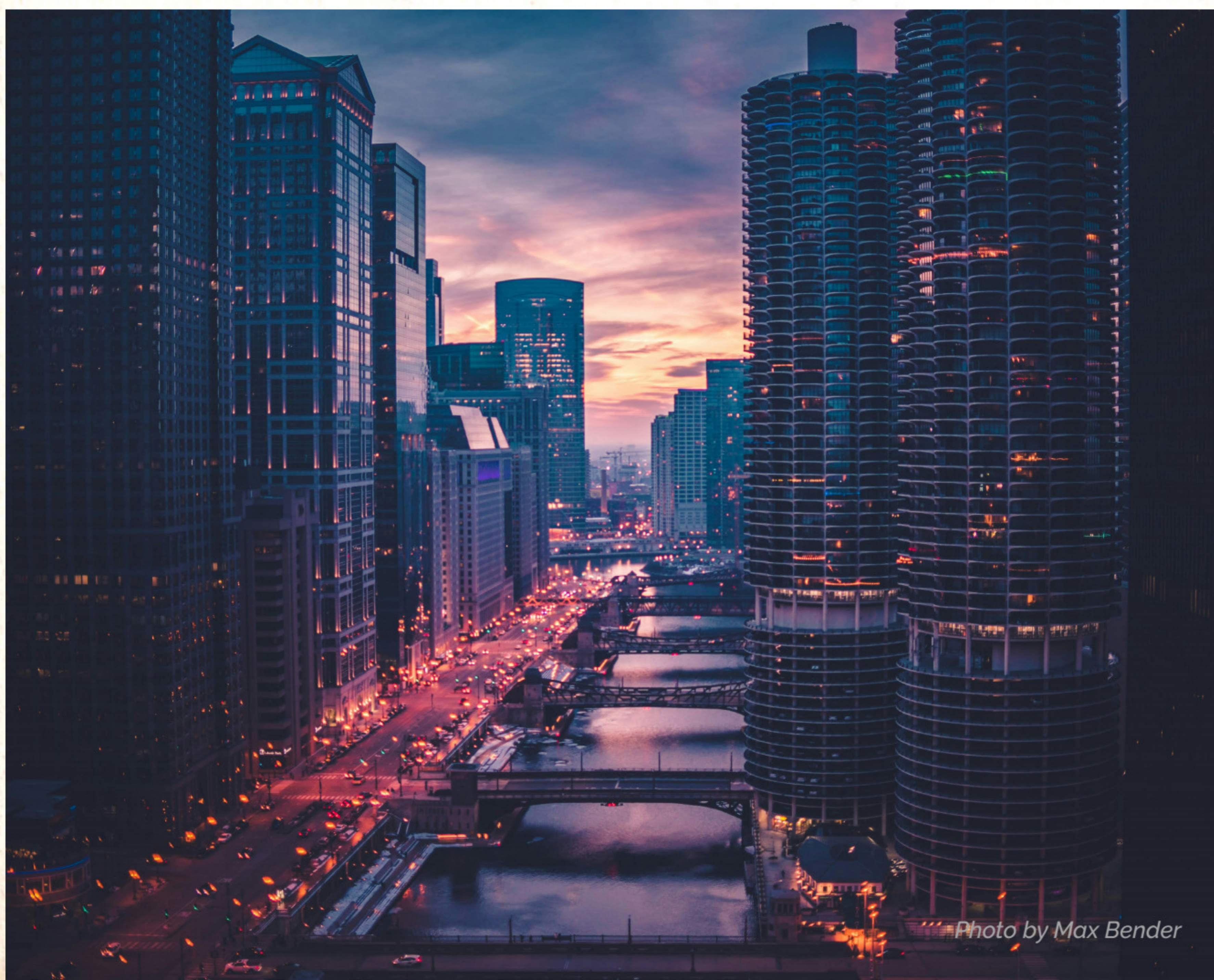


Photo by Max Bender

A woman with blonde hair is looking down in a dimly lit room. To her right, a brass candle holder with three lit candles provides the primary light source, casting a warm glow. The background is dark with some out-of-focus lights.

The general rule for hand-holding a camera is to use a shutter speed at least as fast as the reciprocal of your lens's focal length (e.g., 1/50th of a second for a 50mm lens). In low light, achieving this often isn't possible without compromising your other settings, making stability very important.

ISO (THE SENSITIVITY)

ISO measures the sensitivity of your camera's sensor to light. A low ISO (like 100 or 200) is less sensitive, requires more light, and produces clean, high-quality images.

A high ISO (like 3200, 6400, or higher) makes the sensor much more sensitive, allowing you to shoot in darker conditions with faster shutter speeds.

The price you pay for this sensitivity is digital "noise," a grainy or speckled pattern that degrades image detail and sharpness. Modern cameras are remarkably good at handling high ISOs, but the principle remains that you should always use the lowest ISO you can get away with for the shutter speed and aperture you need.

CONQUERING MOTION BLUR

Since slow shutter speeds are often unavoidable in low light, eliminating camera shake is your most important battle. No amount of post-processing can truly fix a blurry image caused by movement during the exposure.

*Photo by Andre Benz*

Your number one ally in this fight is a sturdy tripod. It is the single most effective piece of gear for guaranteeing sharpness in static scenes like landscapes or architecture.

A tripod removes your body from the equation, allowing you to use incredibly long shutter speeds (seconds, or even minutes) to soak up ambient light while keeping your ISO low for maximum image quality.

When using a tripod, use a remote shutter release or your camera's 2-second timer. This prevents the subtle shake caused by the physical act of pressing the shutter button.

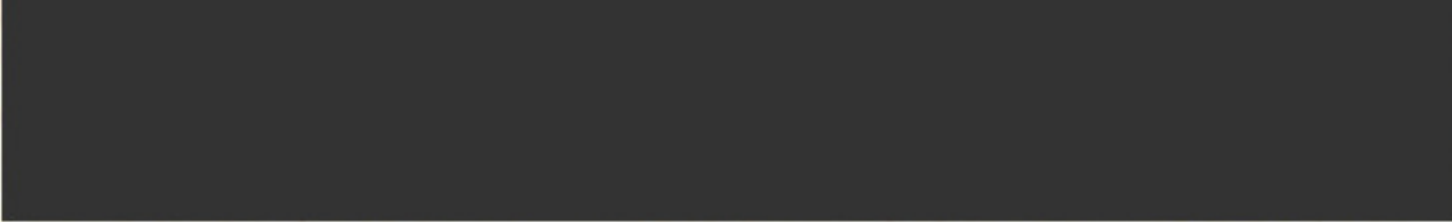
If you must shoot handheld, transform your body into a human tripod. Stand with your feet shoulder-width

apart, tuck your elbows into your sides, and brace yourself against a wall, a tree, or a doorway. Control your breathing, gently pressing the shutter button at the end of an exhale.

If your camera or lens has built-in image stabilization (often labeled IS, VR, or OSS), make sure it's turned on. It's designed to counteract the small tremors of your hands and can allow you to shoot at shutter speeds a few "stops" slower than you otherwise could.

FOCUSING IN THE DARK

What good is a steady camera if your subject is out of focus? In low light, autofocus (AF) systems, which rely on detecting contrast, often struggle and "hunt" back and forth without locking on.



To give your AF system a fighting chance, switch to a single focus point, which is usually the center one, as it's the most sensitive, and aim it at the most contrast-rich part of your subject you can find. This could be an edge where light meets shadow, a piece of reflective jewelry, or the catchlight in a person's eye.

When autofocus fails, it's time to switch to manual focus (MF). This is where modern mirrorless cameras excel. Activate your camera's live view on the rear screen and use the magnification function to zoom in on your subject. This allows you to precisely adjust the focus ring until your subject is perfectly sharp. If your camera has a feature called "focus peaking," turn it on. It will display a colored overlay on the sharpest, in-focus areas of your image, making manual focusing incredibly intuitive.

SHOOTING AND POST-PROCESSING FOR SUCCESS

Your technique shouldn't end when you press the shutter. How you capture and process the file is just as critical in low-light situations.

First and foremost, always shoot in RAW format. A JPEG is a compressed, "finished" file with limited information. A RAW file, by contrast, is the digital equivalent of a film negative. It

contains all the unprocessed data from the camera's sensor. This gives you enormous latitude in post-processing software like Adobe Lightroom to lift shadows, correct white balance, and, most importantly, apply noise reduction without destroying the image's detail.

When it comes to processing your RAW file, a light touch is best. Modern noise reduction tools are powerful, but overdoing it can make your image look waxy and artificial.

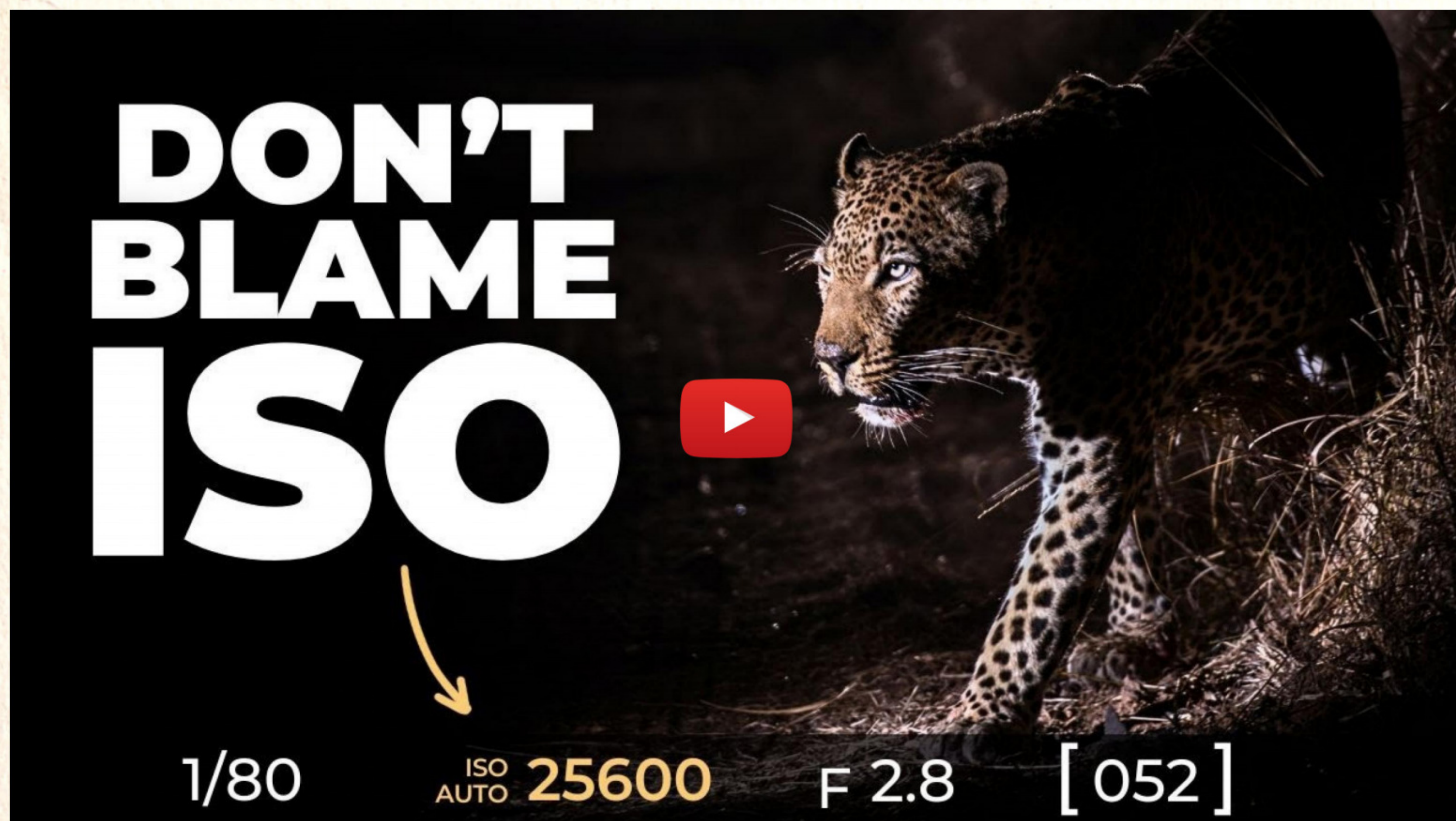
Apply noise reduction with care, balancing the removal of grain with the preservation of fine detail. Apply sharpening last, and consider using a masking tool so that it only affects the edges and details in your image, not the smooth, out-of-focus areas where it would only accentuate noise.

IN CONCLUSION

Low-light photography may seem daunting, but it is one of the most rewarding genres to master. It forces you to be a more deliberate and thoughtful photographer. By understanding the trade-offs of the exposure triangle, prioritizing stability above all else, focusing with intent, and leveraging the power of RAW files, you can transform frustration into creation. Stop seeing the dark as a limitation. See it as a canvas, full of mood, mystery, and atmosphere, waiting for you to capture it in all its sharp, dramatic glory.

VIDEO TUTORIAL: **HOW TO TAKE SHARPER** PHOTOS IN LOW LIGHT

by MARK DUMBLETON



Do you find it difficult to capture sharp wildlife photos in low light? After doing this for 18 years, I can tell you this is where most images fall apart. I've missed my fair share of shots in low light.

But the truth is low light photography is much easier once you understand what's actually happening. In this video, I'll show you the techniques I used to capture three clean wildlife images when the light was low.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mark Dumbleton is an award-winning and internationally published landscape & wildlife photographer from Johannesburg in South Africa. You can view more of his work on his [website](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)

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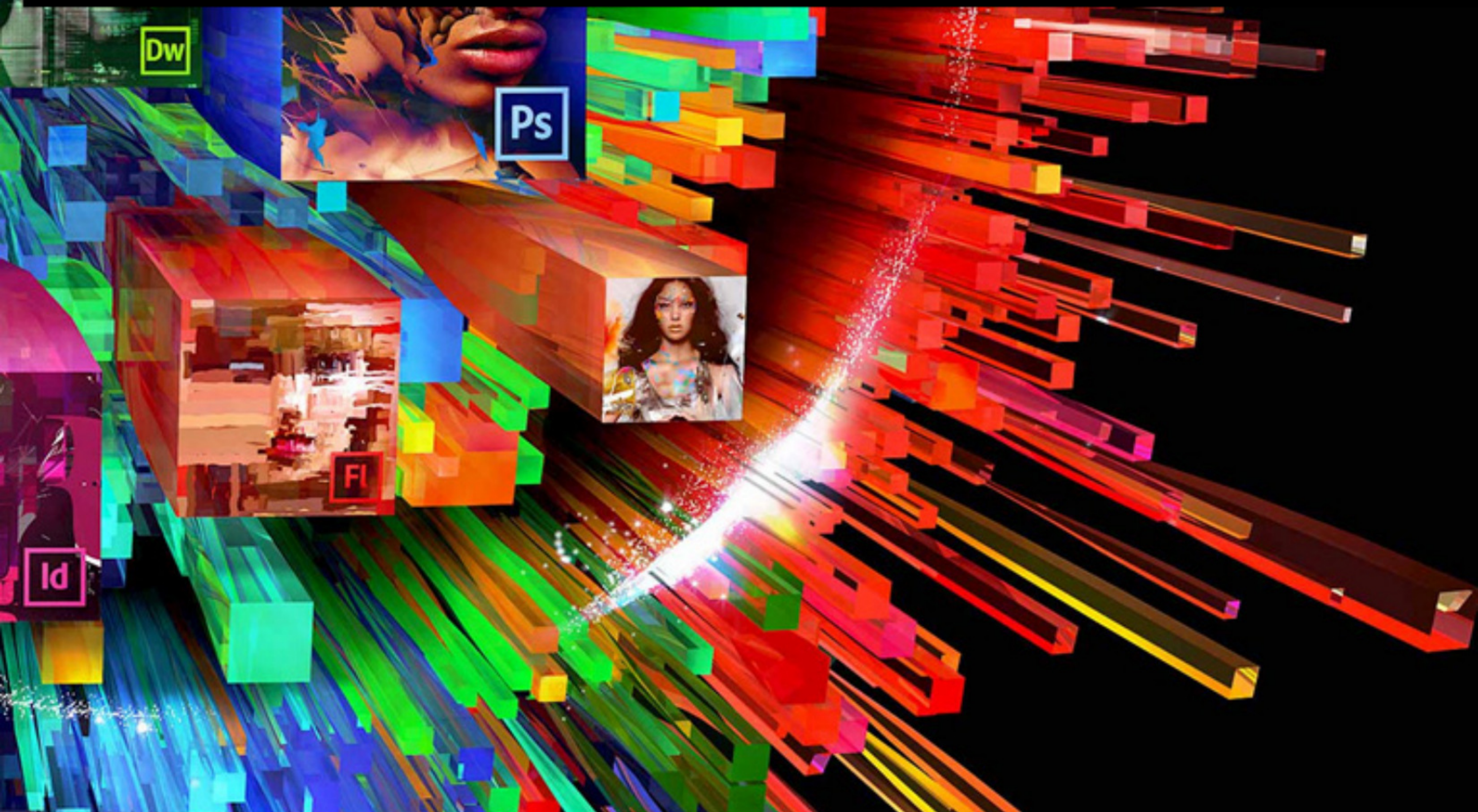
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PHOTO EDITING:

Lightroom Denoise Secrets:
Make ISO 12,800 Look Like ISO 400!



VIDEO TUTORIAL: **LIGHTROOM DENOISE SECRETS:** MAKE ISO 12,800 LOOK LIKE ISO 400!

by STEVE PERRY

Lightroom Denoise Secrets!



Make ISO 12,800

Look Like ISO 400!

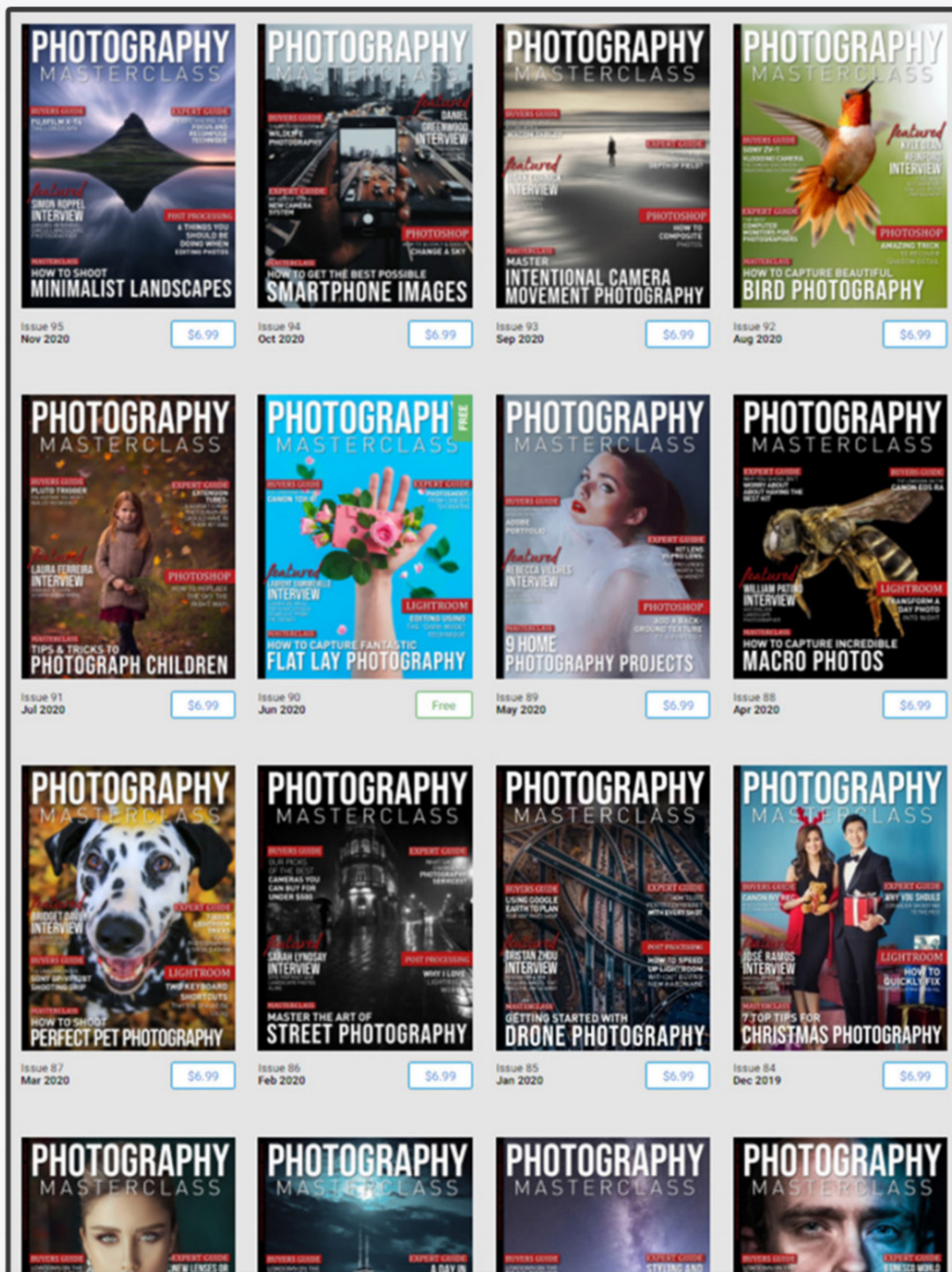
This video is a master class on Lightroom Denoise! If you want to see my techniques for making ISO 12,800 look like ISO 400, you're gonna love this! It's the BEST way to fix a noisy photo!

Please note after recording this video, Lightroom now does noise reduction with the RAW file and doesn't create a new DNG.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Steve Perry is a professional wildlife photographer, author, and educator focused on turning technical knowledge into compelling wildlife photographs. Follow more of his work at his [website](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) channel.

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MASTERCLASS MASTER THE ART OF HORSE PHOTOGRAPHY



By: Jane Lazenby

Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4 at 83mm,
f/5.0, 1/2000 sec, ISO 250

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



By: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Canon EOS 5D Mark III at 1000mm,
f/4.0, 1/4000 sec, ISO 200
[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



By: Jane Lazenby

Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4 at 94mm,
f/5,0, 1/1000 sec, ISO 640

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



By: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4 at 146mm,
f/4,5, 1/640 sec, ISO 200
[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)





By: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4 at 200mm,
f/4,0, 1/400 sec, ISO 800
[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



By: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4 at 182mm,
f/3,5, 1/5000 sec, ISO 800
[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



By: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4 at 143mm,
f/4.5, 1/1250 sec, ISO 800
[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



By: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4 at 94mm,
f/4,0, 1/500 sec, ISO 250
[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)



MASTER THE ART OF HORSE PHOTOGRAPHY

by Jo Plumridge



*Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 115mm, f/4.0, 1/2000 sec, ISO 100*

I started riding when I was six years old and spent many happy years surrounded by horses, dragging my long-suffering parents round the countryside

to show jumping events. So, for me, horses are wonderful gentle animals, and I've always thoroughly enjoyed photographing them.



Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 200mm, f/2.8, 1/8000 sec, ISO 400

But, for the uninitiated, photographing horses could seem daunting due to the sheer size and lack of predictability with an animal. These beautiful creatures can be sizable so, of course, you need to know how to work with them. And a horse often isn't particularly interested in posing for photos, meaning they can be challenging subjects. But, with the

right knowledge and skills, you too can take great photos of our equine friends. In this masterclass, I'll teach you how.

I've also spoken with the incredible [Jane Lazenby](#) (read more about her at the end of this article), who is an amazing equine photographer, alongside many other photographic skills.



Photo by: [Jane Lazenby](#)
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 152mm, f/4.0, 1/1000 sec, ISO 100



*Photo by: [Jane Lazenby](#)
Shot Details: Canon EOS 5D Mark III,
at 70mm, f/3.5, 1/500 sec, ISO 2000*



*Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Canon EOS Mark III,
at 90mm, f/3.2, 1/1250 sec, ISO 320*

SAFETY FIRST

If you're not familiar with horses at all, I'd strongly recommend either taking a lesson with an experienced trainer or visiting a riding school and asking if you can observe the horses and get some tips from a safe distance. Never, ever approach a strange horse and especially not from behind – there's a good chance you could end up being kicked if you startle them.

Big as many horses are, they can also be goofballs who will spook at daft things, such as a plastic bag or even a stick that's in a different place to where it was yesterday (I speak from experience here!). And, when they spook, they will just jump out of the way, barging anyone there to the ground if necessary.

Gentle and loving as horses are, it's every equine for themselves when

it comes to getting away from the dreaded plastic bag! While I'm talking about this, make sure to always wear sturdy boots around horses as you really don't want your bare toes to be trodden on.

Fortunately, horses are pretty good at giving visual clues in their body language when they're not happy with something. Flared nostrils, wide eyes and snorting mean they're spooked. Pinned back ears are another signal that a horse is stressed, angry and unhappy, while flickering ears can signify boredom.

Look out for constant shuffling and movement as well and remember that when a horse has had enough, they've had enough. Don't try and force them to pose for longer than they're happy with. Of course, this is just a basic summation, but these are important points to start with.



*Photo by: [Jane Lazenby](#)
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 194mm, f/4.0, 1/2500 sec, ISO 400*

CAMERA SETTINGS AND EQUIPMENT

How you set your camera up is particularly important in horse photography, particularly if you'll be photographing a moving horse. Equipment-wise, I'd say the two most important factors are a camera with fast tracking and autofocus and a telephoto lens. You don't want to use a wide-angle lens or even a standard lens on a horse or you run the risk of ending up with a huge face and spindly legs! And, if you're shooting action shots, you'll need a telephoto lens so you can capture the action from a safe distance.

Firstly, always make sure to shoot in RAW. You'll want the extra information for editing and RAW just gives you the most scope. Like all photography, your settings will change depending on what you're shooting, but it's always

important to focus on your aperture first. Whether you're shooting action shots or stationary poses, the horse and / or rider should always be the focus of your shot, so you'll generally want to use a wider aperture to reduce the depth of field.

Jane Lazenby points out that she'll tweak her aperture depending on who is the focus of a shot, "Shooting the human and the horse can bring new challenges; where do I focus? I always make that decision based on who is the client / main subject?"

If a rider is asking for images of them with their horse, I focus on their eye and not the horse. I need to ensure my depth of field is wide enough to have the rider sharp and also the majority of the horse in focus too, so F5-7.1. If I'm mainly creating a rider portrait with horse as a 'prop' I'd shoot f2.8 rider only. If both need to be of equal importance, let's go to f8-10."



*Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 100mm, f/5.6, 1/1600 sec, ISO 800*



*Photo by: [Jane Lazenby](#)
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 98mm, f/4.0, 1/1250 sec, ISO 250*



*Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Canon EOS Mark III,
at 120mm, f/2.8, 1/320 sec, ISO 200*

Speaking of focusing, it's obviously vitally important that you're controlling where your camera is focusing, so you need to be in charge of picking the correct AF point or group of points to ensure sharp images.

Jane has these tips for shooting action shots, "If action images are more what you want to shoot, AL-servo continuous shooting setting and focus tracking are necessary to capture sharp strides, and a 70-200mm lens will allow you to get close into the action without the worry of being too near a fast-moving horse."

If you are photographing action, you're also going to need a faster shutter speed to freeze motion. Having said

this, remember that disciplines such as dressage and show jumping will be slower moving than something like polo.

For freezing motion entirely, look to use a shutter speed of around 1/800th but, if you want some motion blur to convey the feeling movement, a shutter speed of around 1/320th may be more appropriate.

As with everything photography, trying different things out here is the key so you can get the look you're going for. ISO should be the last thing you adjust as well, as you may need to raise it to get enough light into the camera, particularly for action shots.



EJ Lazenby
PHOTOGRAPHY

Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 140mm, f/4.5, 1/400 sec, ISO 640

LIGHTING AND BACKGROUND

As we all know, lighting is what makes or breaks a photograph. If possible, avoid shooting in the middle of the day and stick to early morning, late afternoon or even early evening and the magical golden hour. You're looking for soft, fine light that won't create harsh shadows on your horse and rider. Direct sunlight actually isn't a horse photographer's best friend, and a cloudy day can work far better, as it diffuses the light, almost like a giant softbox. Try and also position

your horse so the sun is behind you or to your side in the direction the horse is travelling.

Just to make things a little more challenging, you also need to think about your background when photographing horses. You don't want anything behind the horse that will be distracting to your shot, so look for clean and uncluttered backgrounds that won't distract from your subject. This is obviously easier for stationary shots but if you're photographing action, just try and avoid backgrounds that are filled with too much 'stuff'.



Photo by: Jane Lazenby



Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 99mm, f/5.0, 1/500 sec, ISO 640

*Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 154mm, f/4.0, 1/4000 sec, ISO 320*



ENGAGING AND POSING THE HORSE

The last thing you want in horse photography is a shot with wonky ears and feet! But how best to engage a horse and get it animated for a shoot? I asked Jane for her tips.

"Horses can be quirky creatures to work with, each has an individual character and temperament, as you know, so your approach as a photographer needs to be really flexible. Firstly assess the horse at rest, is it alert, apprehensive, docile and sleepy? Ask the owner how the horse reacts in new situations. You need to gather as much information as to the possible reactions of the horse when photographing. I often make friends, spend a few moments scratching the shoulder and talking softly, also clicking the camera a few frames so again I can gauge the horse's reactions and put my shutter onto silent if need be.

I'm a great believer in starting a photoshoot in a familiar place within the horse's home yard or fields, rather than boxing to a new place where a more nervous horse would be on edge. Once the horse has confidence, I often ask them to walk to scenic areas or to investigate different fields and paths for more backdrop variety.

If the horse lacks interest, I use the 'All Ears Selfie' app on my smart phone to play different neighs, this will create that flicker of interest and pricking of ears so you can capture a more alert expression. Do be aware of using this around stallions as they can become stressed quickly with strange challenging neighs from invisible horses!"

I also asked Jane for her tips and tricks to pose a horse and keep them in position during a shoot.



Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 90mm, f/4.0, 1/800 sec, ISO 500

"With the pushy and impatient horse, don't ask them to stand too long. I like to ask a handler to walk in circles with a brief 20 second stop in front of the camera, in this way each stop gives a different body pose and neck angle, keeping the horses interest. The worst thing we could do is to constantly fuss about leg position and be asking to step back / forward every few seconds, something that will make that impatient horse really start to agitate.

I focus on the horse's eye using the tracking system (animal or human with my Sony a7R IV) and this is really helpful as the horse moves. I also often shoot a

little wider than needed so I can crop in later for that perfect composition.

Before your shoot, create a series of idea images for poses, Pinterest is a great space to do this. Think of the poses you want to get, and hope that the horse will pause long enough, bend happily or stare in the desired direction!

Often, the pose ideas can disappear from your mind, so a phone album or similar is great for keeping you on track. If you show the horse handler the images, they will be more able to halt or back up the horse for that desired pose."



Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 165mm, f/3.2, 1/4000 sec, ISO 400



*Photo by: [Jane Lazenby](#)
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4,
at 101mm, f/6.3, 1/1600 sec, ISO 250*



*Photo by: Jane Lazenby
Shot Details: Sony ILCE-7RM4
at 132mm, f/4.0, 1/2500 sec, ISO 800*

TIMING

If you're photographing a moving horse, the key to great photos is timing. I would actually avoid photographing a horse just walking, as I think there isn't enough of a dynamic motion to capture the horse's musculature and elegance.

Trotting can produce elegant images, particularly in an extended trot where the foreleg nearest to the camera is fully extended. This will give the horse's legs an 'M' shape that's particularly pleasing in a photograph. At faster speeds, such as a canter or gallop, you want to be

on the same side of the horse as the leading foreleg and wait for this leg to be extended before you snap the shot. Alternatively, you could try to capture the moment of suspension where all four legs are off the ground.

To a certain extent, jumping is a matter of preference although I prefer to try and capture the moment just after a horse has taken off over a jump. The horse's front legs will be nicely tucked up, which gives the back of the horse a nice arc. Try and make sure that the back feet have also left the ground to convey the feeling of motion.

TIPS FOR SHOOTING HORSES AS A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

If this is the market you want to get into as a professional photographer, how do you go about it? Here are Jane's tips on getting started.

"Practice, practice, practice! It's a very saturated market with lots of photographers working for free trying to make their name. It can also be quite ruthless, many coping each other unmercifully, snatching shows and clients from each other and throwing dirt on social media. Learn your favoured poses, create a solid portfolio of images and start to build a solid social media presence.

If you can, shadow a professional, it's like having an apprenticeship, you will be running around with a reflector and a bucket of carrots, but it's an excellent way of learning the ropes. Lastly, stay humble. We learn all the time. Once you feel you've got your image formula perfect, it's time to reinvent it and push yourself to evolve!"

IN CONCLUSION

Horses are beautiful, stunning creatures that can look gorgeous in photos. But getting those photos does require skill, practice and experience. So, the best thing you can do is get out there and start taking those photos. The more you photograph horses, the more you'll learn what makes them tick and how best to work with them.

Jane Lazenby has been horse mad from an early age, obsessively drawing and painting every shape and size of equine. After a fine art degree in 1992 she started a portrait painting business creating oil, acrylic and watercolor originals. She qualified to teach in further education in 2000, sharing her skills at the easel, and later her photography skills both in camera and post processing techniques.

She now runs a successful education site, lectures for camera clubs, runs styled equine workshops for photographers and freelances as a portrait and event photographer. She says that she's always happy to support other photographers and sprinkle some of that magic creative dust wherever she goes!

Follow Jane at her [website](#) and [Instagram](#) or take a look at her [education site](#) if you'd like to book a course or session with her.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jo Plumridge is a UK based photographer, writer and lecturer. She specializes in portrait, corporate and travel photography, and writes photography, travel and comedy pieces for magazines, websites and books. You can see some of her work at her [website](#) or follow her on [Twitter](#).

VIDEO TUTORIAL: CAMERA SETTINGS FOR EQUESTRIAN PORTRAITS

by Shelley Paulson



One of the questions I am most frequently asked is, what camera settings do you use to photograph horses? So in this video, I share with you the settings I use and why.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Shelley Paulson is based in Minnesota but travels far and wide taking photos of horses and creating videos to help you grow as an equestrian photographer. Follow more of her work on her [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER: GIOVANNI MORAN



Los Angeles-based self-taught photographer and creative director Giovanni Moran is known for his striking fine art, fashion, portraiture, and conceptual self-portraits that turn the everyday into the extraordinary. With a practice fueled by curiosity, resourcefulness, and bold storytelling, Giovanni's imaginative imagery (recently featured on television and in solo exhibitions) challenges convention while celebrating authenticity. Today, we dive into Giovanni's unique creative world to uncover how he crafts images that are as raw and honest as they are visually compelling.





Photographic Speciality/Style:

Fine Arts, Fashion, Portraiture, Lifestyle, and Conceptual Self-Portraiture

Short Bio:

My name is Giovanni Moran, and I am a self-taught photographer and creative director based in Los Angeles, California.

How did your love of Photography start?

My journey began in my bedroom with a simple point-and-shoot camera, creating experimental self-portraits. What started as playful, conceptual imagery soon evolved into more polished and refined storytelling.

At 18, I stumbled upon the work of Guy Bourdin, and it completely transformed my understanding of photography. I realized a single image could hold imagination, narrative, and magic all at once. That discovery planted a seed in me that has since grown into a lifelong pursuit of creating images, whether or not anyone else ever saw them.

Since I never received formal training, every shoot became an opportunity to outdo my last. I studied the work of pioneers before me, experimented constantly, and built a practice that's rooted in curiosity, resourcefulness, and a hunger to grow.

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Where does your photographic inspiration come from?

Inspiration often comes from the overlooked. I started by using what I had at home, my mother's spiral vase with its kaleidoscope reflections, or my father's worn blankets as backdrops. What others might dismiss as ordinary, I saw as tools to create something extraordinary. Lighting, in particular, became an obsession. Even when I didn't fully understand it, the trial and error of learning was part of the magic.

Can you describe your typical creative process from idea to finished image?

My process is both structured and intuitive. It often looks like this:

Get Inspired → Network → Build the Team → Choose a Shoot Day → Scout Location/Studio → Email Coordination → Create Mood Board + Call Sheet → Cast the Muse → Pre-Production Prep → Budget + Errands → Shoot Day → Post-Processing → Editing → Submissions → Finished Work → Repeat.





What would consider to be your greatest achievement (or achievements) in your photography to date?

One of my proudest moments was my first solo exhibition in 2013. It was stressful, demanding, and full of pressure, but also deeply rewarding. More recently, my work

was featured on the 2024 television series OMG Fashun (Season 1), in collaboration with designer Jessica Rowell.

Today, I feel accomplished in returning to my roots, creating self-portraits with simplicity while traveling and exploring new creative environments.







What's your favorite photo that you've ever taken & why?

One that stands out is a portrait of my friend and collaborator James Gregory, who lives with albinism. It's a minimal yet powerful series "Solipism" with very little production—just honesty,

atmosphere, and intention. One of the images, a man floating in the air surrounded by a mist of fog (which you can see on this page), appears on the homepage of my website. To me, it represents how simplicity can carry incredible strength. My favorite photo ever.



What's your long-term photographic ambition?

I want to see more of the world and let travel shape my perspective. New places, people, and clients bring new opportunities to grow. A dream of mine is to be published in Vogue, and I've also been exploring videography as a way of expanding my visual language. Ultimately, my ambition is to remain a well-rounded creative while staying curious and open.

Who are your biggest influences inside and outside photography?

Within photography, Tim Walker has been a huge influence, his whimsical

storytelling and unique vision constantly inspire me. Outside of the industry, my family has always been my anchor. They remind me of my purpose when I lose motivation, and they've been my strongest support system throughout this journey.

What's inside your kit bag, and what's the one piece of kit you couldn't do without?

I shoot with Canon, and my must-have is a softbox flash. Lighting can make or break an image, and that tool is non-negotiable for me. And of course—memory cards, too many to count!







What words of advice would you give to beginners?

I love this question.

Believe in yourself! no one else will do it for you. Step outside your comfort zone. If you can't photograph yourself, how can you expect to photograph somebody else? Ask for help and build your network: your family, your friends, your neighbors - every person around you is part of it. Just because you photograph a beautiful model doesn't mean you've created an impactful image. Showcase your humanity. People need to trust you before they collaborate with you.

Use mood boards. Collect images that define the feel and execution of

your project. Build storyboards when working on a series. And stop worrying about other people, no one truly cares! Strangers watching you shoot in public will forget by the time they walk away. No one owes you anything, but you owe it to yourself to keep pushing. Be resourceful. Learn how to manage your money, because producing images isn't cheap.

In a world where everyone with a cell phone is a photographer, ask yourself: what makes me stand out? What makes me different from any other person taking a picture of a pretty face or a flower? Find that, and guard it. Get over yourself! Be humble. Remember that health is wealth. Live in the present moment, because the things you do NOW will blossom into your future.

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER





Protect your work: make clients sign contracts before committing to a gig. Their words aren't enough. Always ask for a deposit. Trust your gut feeling, it's your third eye, protecting you when something feels off. You will make thousands of mistakes, that's a promise. You'll pitch to 100 magazines: 90 will ignore you, 9 will reject you, and 1 will say yes. Learn to move on quickly from rejection. And never confuse likes with self-worth, algorithms don't measure the quality of your vision.

Don't let "photographer" become your entire identity, it's only part of who you

are. Who are you beyond that? Don't be a jerk! Protect your reputation at all costs, or karma will come back to you. Throw paint on your subject's face, shoot upside down, play with smoke and mirrors, reverse your images in post-production for an opposite perspective, use flowers as backdrops, push yourself creatively. Stay weird. Your photographs are only a small part of your legacy on this earth.

So imagine all the possibilities and create like your story depends on it!



FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER



Follow more of Giovanni Moran's work on his [website](#) and Instagram

TIMELAPSE

EASY ESTONIA LITTLE BIG WORLD

TILT-SHIFT, TIME-LAPSE AND DRONE

by LITTLE BIG WORLD



Experience Estonia like never before in this breathtaking four-minute timelapse, tilt-shift, and drone video journey - where vibrant cities, stunning landscapes, and unique celebrations come alive through the lens.

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JOERG DAIBER'S
“EASY ESTONIA | TILT-SHIFT,
TIME-LAPSE AND DRONE”



Estonia is a country in the Baltic region of Europe. It offers an amazing variety of beautiful locations. But don't take my word for it. See for yourself and travel from the beautiful island of Saaremaa to the midsummer celebration in Haapsalu.

Check out amazing beaches, castles and National Parks. Stroll through

cities like Tartu and of course the picturesque capital Tallin. All of this in only 4 breathtaking minutes.

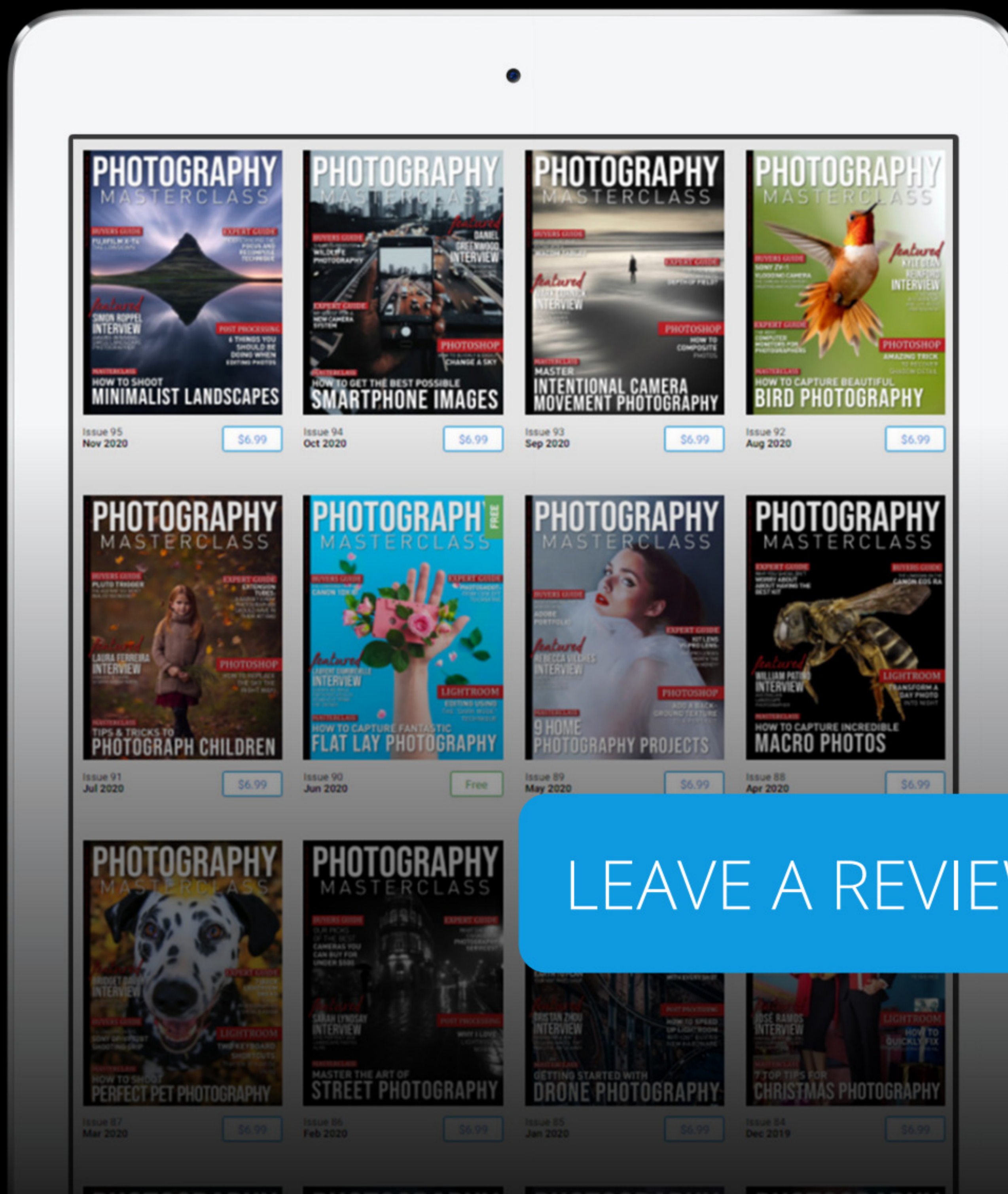
A time-lapse & tilt-shift & aerial video by Joerg Daiber

Shot with Lumix GH5 camera, 14-140mm and 7-14mm Lumix Lenses and DJI Mini 4 Pro. Postproduction with DaVinci Resolve Studio.

Follow more from Joerge Daiber on his [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#)

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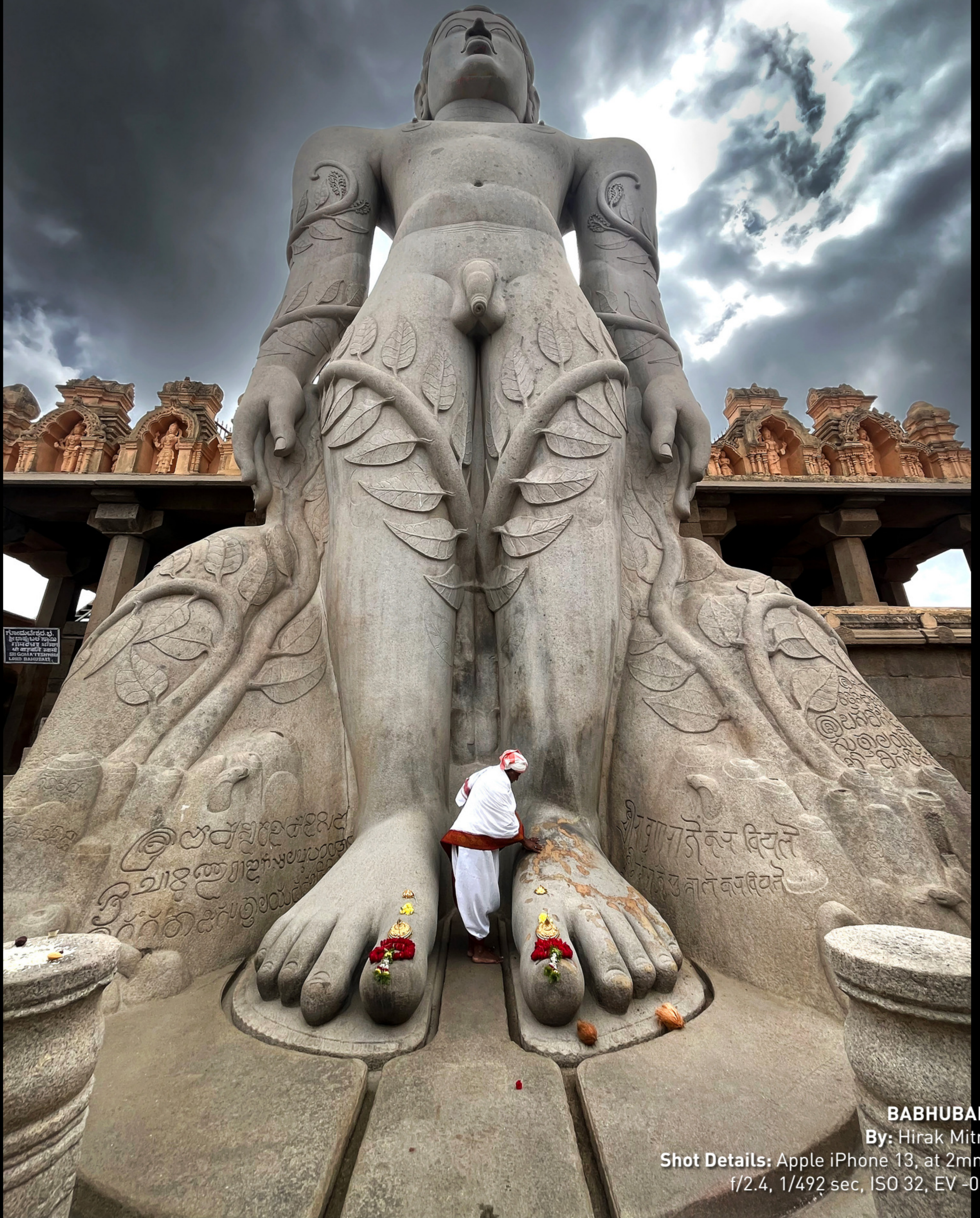


GROVE SNAIL

By: Alan Mason

Shot Details: Nikon D5600, at 40mm,
f/6.3, 1/13 sec, ISO 100, EV -2.3

[Facebook](#)



BABHUBALI

By: Hirak Mitra

Shot Details: Apple iPhone 13, at 2mm,
f/2.4, 1/492 sec, ISO 32, EV -0.3



JAISALMER DESERT

By: Hirak Mitra

Shot Details: GoPro Hero 11, at 3mm,
f/2.5, 1/1069 sec, ISO 100, EV -2



WAVES OF ROSE PETALS

By: Darryl Lansey

Shot Details: Nikon Z7II, with Nikon Nikkor 105 mm macro, f/16, 1/125 sec. All edits were done in LR Classic and Topaz AI (Noise reduction and sharpening)



BLEEDING HEARTS

By: Darryl Lansey

Shot Details: Nikon Z7II, with Nikon Nikkor 105mm macro lens, f/8, 1/125 sec. Initial edits were done in LR Classic and Topaz AI (Noise reduction and sharpening) and completed in Smart Photo Editor Studio.



ABOUT TO FLY

By: Hirak Mitra

Shot Details: Sony a6700, at 404mm,
f/6.3, 1/1600 sec, ISO 640



FLAMINGO GANG

By: Hirak Mitra

Shot Details: Sony a6700, at 500mm,
f/6.7, 1/1250 sec, ISO 640



ZONSONDERGANG

By: Jason Slagh

Shot Details: Canon R7, at 35mm,
f/29, 1/2 sec, ISO 100

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THE LOWDOWN ON THE SIGMA 200MM F/2 LENS

By Ryan Sitzman



The world's first 200mm F2 telephoto prime lens designed for full-frame mirrorless cameras.

Listen up, sports and wildlife photographers: There's a new Sigma lens on the market that could be a powerful addition to your gear bag. Today we'll take a closer look at the Sigma 200mm f/2 lens for L-mount and Sony E-mount cameras, while discussing whether it might be a good fit for you and your photography.



Before we get too deep into things, I'll add the first of the two standard disclaimers that I seem to feel compelled to note every time I write about lenses: Keep in mind that although this lens is cool, it's still "just" a lens. Now, I don't want to downplay the amazing technology that's packed into modern lenses, because they're truly remarkable. But when I say it's "just" a lens, I mean that there's only so much that a manufacturer can do to make its lenses stand out from the competition, and as a result, it's also hard to write about lenses because they're generally all built on the same principles. Unless manufacturers start offering lenses with built-in umbrellas and percussion massagers, we'll just have to be content with lenses that offer technology to help us take good pictures.

Additionally, to employ a cliché, a picture is worth a thousand words, and the best way to decide if a lens will work for you is to simply try it out. There's nothing like actually holding a piece of camera equipment in your hands and seeing exactly what it feels and

looks like in real life. That's still the best way to determine if it fits in with the way that you engage in your photographic pursuits.

With all of that out of the way, let's look into this Sigma 200mm lens. Sigma is currently developing three lines of lenses, namely the Contemporary series, the Art series, and the Sports series. As this is a fast, wide-aperture prime lens, it's part of the Sports lenses, but it could also easily be used in other kinds of photography, such as wildlife and portraiture.

The first thing that immediately makes this lens stand out is its lovely cream-colored body with black accents. I believe that lens manufacturers claim that the lighter color helps with heat dissipation, but I can't recall hearing of any cases when the color of a lens made a difference in performance on a hot day. But still, it looks cool, so in my book, that's a good enough reason to use the white color.

After noticing the Sigma's color, you'll also likely notice that it's a pretty big boy. It weighs in at 4 pounds and measures just under 8 inches without the hood. It's not as massive as something like a 1200mm lens, of course, but it's still pretty large. It's something to keep in mind if you'll be carrying it around and shooting handheld for a long period of time.



Also, a big part of that perceived size is due to the large lens hood. Fortunately, it is attached with finger-friendly screws, and it can be easily removed. However, if you are shooting sports photos, then it's probably a good idea to keep the hood on, to add a layer of protection to the glass elements of the lens.

As is to be expected from a lens of this caliber, there are also several switches, buttons, and other doo-dads on this Sigma lens. There's the standard switch to toggle between manual and automatic focus, as well as a switch for a focus range limiter.

There's also an on/off switch so you can decide if you want the focus ring to move smoothly or with a clicking effect. You can lock the aperture ring, and you can also set the amount of image stabilization.

Finally, there are a couple of programmable buttons. The whole thing is complemented with pro-grade weather sealing, which should help it withstand some light moisture and dust. All in all, it should have more than enough features for most photographers.

With its maximum f/2 aperture, this Sigma lens also performs very well in a variety of situations. When shot wide open, the background bokeh becomes an artistically pleasing blur, which allows the subject to really pop. Sigma has also done a great job refining the autofocus speed, and it locks onto moving subjects with ease. The lens even boasts up to 6.5 stops of image stabilization, so it can perform well in situations with movement or lower light.



Although we've mainly looked at this lens in the context of sports photography, it could also be a great lens for portrait photography, at least in some situations. Remember that the 200mm focal length imposes some physical restrictions on users, and the minimum subject focus distance is 1.7 meters.

In practical terms, if you want to shoot a portrait in a studio, you'd have to stand quite far away from the subject to get more than just their face in the frame. That might not be a problem if you're shooting outside, but it's something to keep in mind when evaluating if the lens works with how you shoot. If you do think the distancing thing might pose a problem, then you might be better off getting a zoom lens, so that you're not forced to "zoom with your feet." But if that's not a concern, then this could be a really cool portrait lens that helps your images stand out from the crowd.

The Sigma 200mm f/2 sells for around \$3,300 in the U.S. While that's not especially cheap, it is surprisingly reasonable when compared to earlier generations of similar lenses that were made by Sigma and other manufacturers. Yes, you can get a good

zoom lens for a similar price—or even less—but for a fast, 200mm prime lens, \$3,300 is actually a decent price.

Finally, I want to mention the second disclaimer that I generally say when writing about lenses: This is a great lens, but if it's not compatible with your camera, it's quite unlikely that you'll switch brands if you've already invested in another camera brand. This lens is made for two different lens mounts, so if you shoot with an L-mount camera (i.e., a Panasonic, a Lumix, or a Sigma) or an E-mount camera (Sony), then you'll be able to use this lens with your camera body. But if you have a Canon or Nikon body, then you're out of luck, at least with this particular lens, because it's not compatible with your camera body. However, Sigma makes plenty of other lenses that work with Canon and Nikon, and obviously, Canon and Nikon also both make lenses under their own brands, so you'll still have plenty of options.

If you do decide to use this Sigma lens, there's a good chance that you'll be happy with its performance. It's not the lightest or cheapest lens on the market, but for what it is—a 200mm lens with a wide aperture—it's a fantastic option.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ryan Sitzman splits his time between the coffee fields of Costa Rica and the mountains of Colorado. You can find him on one of his [several websites](#).

VIDEO THE ULTIMATE PORTRAIT LENS! SIGMA 200MM F/2

by TONY & CHELSEA NORTHRUP



Sigma's new 200mm f/2 lens is built for bokeh and capturing gorgeous portraits. Is this \$3,300 niche lens the right portrait lens for you? Chelsea goes over the pros and cons of this lens and who it's for.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Chelsea and Tony Northrup are photographers based in Connecticut. They are the creators of the top-rated photography book, "[Tony Northrup's DSLR Book: How to Create Stunning Digital Photography](#)" which features over nine hours of video training and free lifetime updates. To see more of their tutorials and photos you can follow them on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

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