

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

P.12 **LIGHT CURTAINS**
Drone Art on the Water

P.46 **READY STEADY**
AeroTrac Workstation

P.60 **FOR THE DOGS**
Pet Portraits That Matter



Heads Up

JANUARY 2026

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PPA STATEMENT OF INCLUSION: PPA believes that the photography community prospers when we work together. We support all photographers and reject discrimination based on age, race, disability, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation and gender expression. We recognize and embrace our similarities and differences, encourage opportunities to learn from our members, and cultivate inclusive communication and multicultural skills for the betterment of the photography community.

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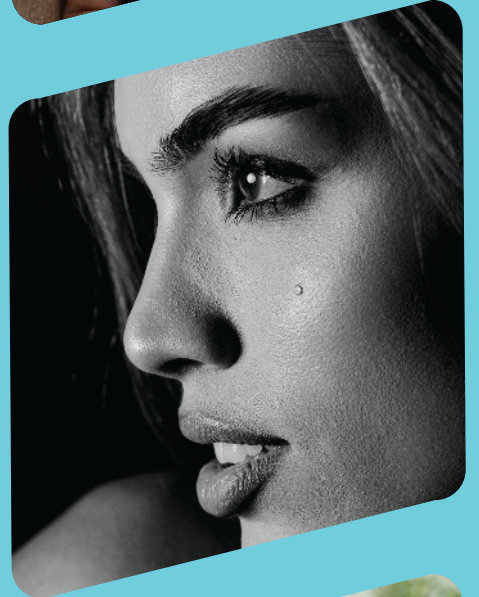
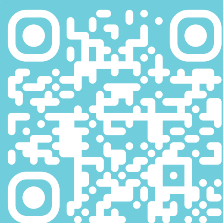
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You Are Not Alone

PPA OFFERS BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

This month in Nashville, Tennessee, I am excited to experience my second Imaging USA. It's a great place to ask these and other questions: What new techniques and processes do I want to learn? What hot new gear and technology will vendors be demonstrating and selling that can help me grow my business and/or expand my creativity? Can I add a new genre of photography to my business? How can I stay afloat in this volatile economic climate?

PPA surveys our members frequently, and we have heard from a lot of you related to that last question; 2025 was rough! Prices on equipment and supplies have skyrocketed, clients are pulling back due to loss of their own disposable incomes, and there is a lot of uncertainty. Members are more anxious about financial stability, and "photographers increasingly feel under-resourced, not in control of sales, and lacking a business plan," according to recent PPA research findings.

We at PPA have been listening, and we have solutions. One is our new content platform, PhotoVision on ppa.com, an immersive online destination that provides professional photographers with the tools, inspiration, education, and entertainment needed to grow successful businesses. Your PPA member login unlocks all of the content. Another solution is what you're holding in your hands: our award-winning magazine, *Professional Photographer*. Each month, we address some of these pressing business issues in the Success department. This month, you will learn from one of our "Professional Photographer" podcast episodes (another powerful resource!) how to break into YouTube (page 38) and how to develop mental toughness (page 41).

Another way PPA can help you succeed is its premier annual event, the largest and longest-running photography conference in the world: Imaging USA. It might sound counterintuitive to spend money on a conference (travel, accommodation, food, etc.) when you're worried about your finances. But if you are struggling, that is actually a prime reason to attend. Why? Imaging USA offers classes, constant networking opportunities, and real tips and advice. When you gather at Imaging USA, you can commiserate, learn from each other, and ultimately celebrate this robust industry. Maybe you are reading this magazine at the Nashville conference, and if not, perhaps you will consider joining us in 2027 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Whether you're exploring PhotoVision on ppa.com, reading this magazine, listening to our podcast, or visiting us in Nashville this month at Imaging USA—or doing all four!—remember that you, as a professional photographer, are part of a legacy that's more than 150 years old. You are not alone. In this new year, stay solution-oriented with PPA, and let's celebrate those creative and small business triumphs together. •

Melanie Lasoff Levs

Melanie Lasoff Levs
Director of Publications



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FOREGROUND

By Amanda Arnold

Flow State

CURTAINS OF LIGHT

IMAGES ©REUBEN WU / reubenwu.com, instagram.com/reuben



"The concept began as sketches in 2021," says Reuben Wu of his "Siren" series. He'd created his "Aeroglyphs" series by using drones equipped with lasers to create geometric light patterns in his images. But he wanted to create something more fluid. "The breakthrough came during a family trip to Lake Michigan in August 2024," he says. He was testing a new laser technique during the Perseid meteor shower when the aurora borealis made a surprise appearance, "extremely rare at this latitude in the summer," he says. He found that when he moved the drones toward the shore, the movement of the waves as they hit the beach modulated the laser light, which resulted in the curtainlike look when captured during a



long exposure. Meanwhile the sky is filled with stars, shooting meteors, and gorgeous green light.

Process: To create the photos, he mounted lasers to drones, which he flew over the water in the darkness. Exposures were around 15 seconds. “The challenge was to find the sweet spot where I could capture aurora glow and the laser-created forms without overexposing any element,” he explains. He typically shot at ISO 800-1600 with apertures around f/4 to get enough light and still maintain sharpness.

Equipment: For the light patterns, he used a custom-mounted laser fiber optic on a DJI drone. For the captures, he used a Fujifilm GFX100 II or a Fujifilm GFX100RF mounted on a sturdy tripod for long exposures.

The challenges: It was difficult to balance the three main elements: the moving aurora, the occasional meteor streaks, and the lasers. “I was adjusting exposure times on the fly to time the duration of the laser forms,” he says. “In situations like this, you rely heavily on intuition and enter a flow state.” •



Good Vibrations

GETTING CREATIVE WITH BUNGEE CORD

David Zentz's portrait series "Reverb" was inspired by a memory. A student he knew back in film school had devised a rig that suspended the camera to free float between tension wires, allowing the student to create a vibrating effect for a scene in which the character was launched into space, Zentz explains. "I never saw the rig, but the effect worked pretty well," he says, so he was inspired to try something similar for a portrait series. Zentz describes the setup:

"I mounted the camera to a rig I built out of two-by-fours and bungee cords, which sat on a tripod about 6 to 10 feet from the subject. The camera was mounted on a small square rig that was suspended inside a larger square rig by bungee cords at each corner. This allowed me to move the camera along the X and Y axis, sometimes slightly tilting it to throw focus or distort the edges of the silhouette and then return to center for the final frames without having to refocus.



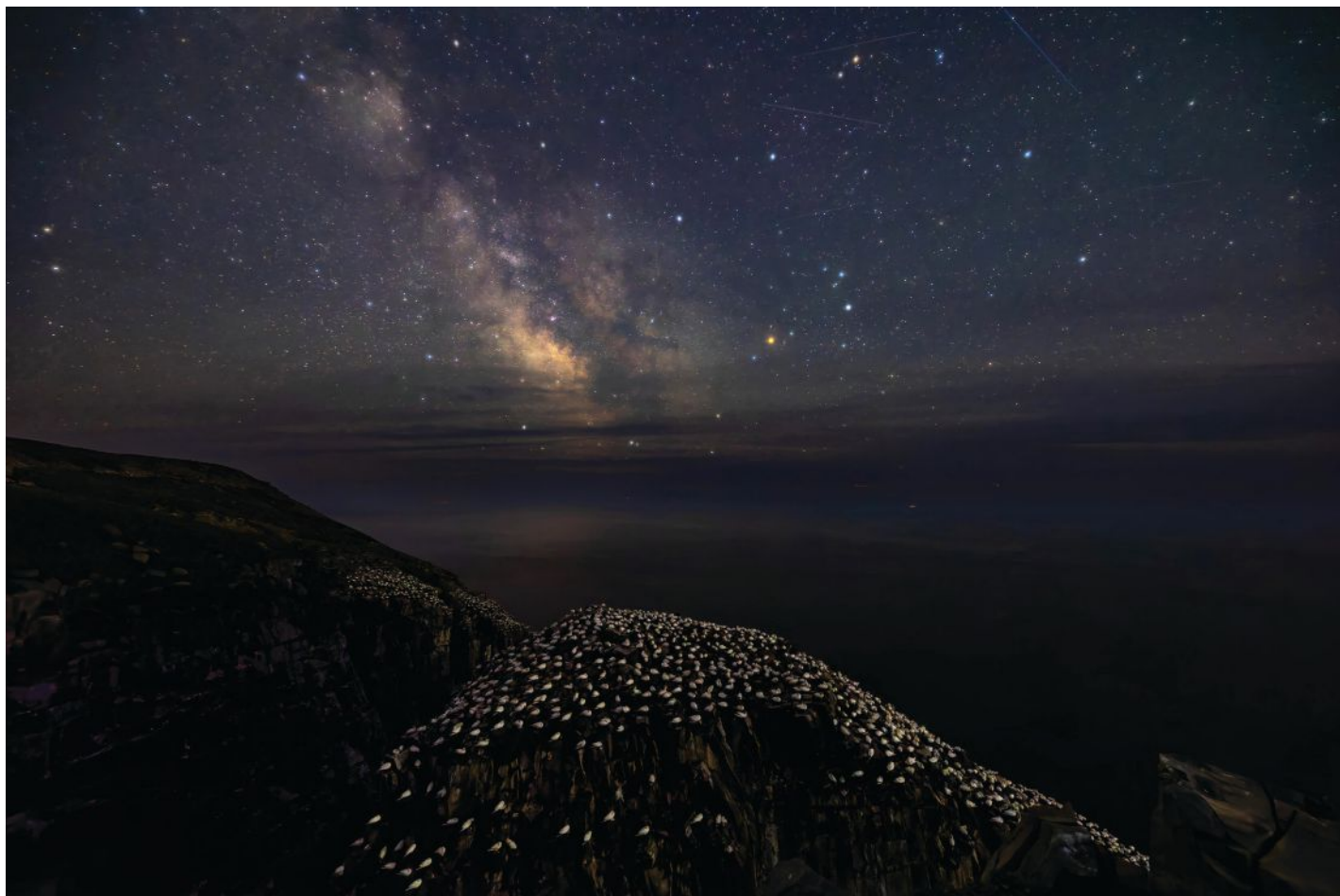
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“First, I would ask the subject to hold a pose and not move. Then I would prefocus on their eyes using a modeling light. Watching the screen on the back of the camera, I would take exposures of about six silhouettes, moving the camera slightly each time. In multiple exposure mode on a Nikon Z 7, you can see the images stacked on top of one another on the back screen, even though it is saving each exposure as an individual raw file. This allowed me to review the images on the back of the camera as I went and know how many silhouettes are lining up to one another. Once I shot the silhouettes, I returned to the center, flipped on a key light, and made a final exposure or two of the subject’s lit face.

“In post, I chose to shift the silhouettes to blue and then stacked and blended them as a smart object. Finally, I color corrected and retouched the lit exposure of the subject, stacked it on top of the smart object layer, masked it, and painted it back in to expose the subject only where needed.” •





Like Stars in the Sky

THE BEAUTY OF A BIRD COLONY

The journey took two flights, a two-and-a-half-hour drive, and a one-mile hike, and it was all worth it for the image Joe Subolefsky captured of the Milky Way and the Northern Gannett bird colony at Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve near Branch, Newfoundland. The image was a winner in the Birds in Landscapes category of the 2025 Audubon Photography Awards for U.S. and Canada.

Equipment: He used a Canon EOS R5 with a Canon RF 15-35mm F2.8L IS USM lens. "The wide aperture was essential for low-light conditions," he explains, "and the 15mm focal length allowed me to capture the full

scene." He used a Gitzo tripod and cable release to ensure the camera's stability and prevent camera shake during the long exposure, which was 20 seconds at f/2.8, ISO 6400.

Planning: Subolefsky studied star positions, moon phases, and Milky Way visibility to time his three-day trip to Branch. He decided on the moon's dark phase for optimal visibility of the Milky Way. The area is a certified dark sky location, and Subolefsky chose not to use additive light. Instead, he relied on a lighthouse three-fourths of a mile from the site to illuminate the bird colony he was photographing. "I timed the

exposure to coincide with the lighthouse beam lighting the birds," he says. "I manually set the lens to the hyperfocal distance—calculated using the PhotoPills apps—to ensure sharp focus throughout," he adds, which allowed him to capture both the birds and the Milky Way beautifully.

The challenges: Timing the lighthouse's rotating beam with the camera shutter wasn't easy. And the weather played a critical role. "Out of a three-day window, I had only a 40-minute break when the rain stopped and the clouds cleared enough to capture the shot." But, as Subolefsky notes, "I enjoy a challenge." •



OUTSOURCE SMART

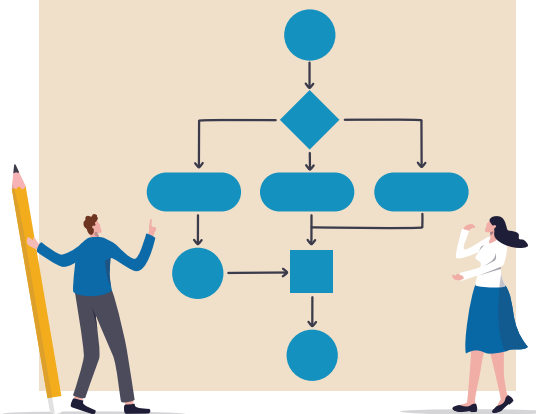
PILOT PROJECTS FIRST

If you're overwhelmed by work, it may be time to delegate some of your tasks to an outside contractor. The risk is that a third party may not provide the quality you and your clients expect, which could harm your brand. So, when it comes to outsourcing, start with minor tasks that aren't as critical to your business, advises the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. And before you sign a contract with a particular vendor, ask if they'd be willing to do a pilot project to determine if they are the right fit for your business. When the pilot project is complete, you can decide whether you want to work with them again.

CHART IT OUT

CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN

Do your customers often ask the same difficult questions over and over? Are you consistent in the way you answer those questions? Streamline your customer service by creating a customer service delivery flow chart outlining what to do when certain questions are asked or problems arise. Even if you can't predict what might go wrong, it's nice to have a step-by-step guide for what to do next so that all problems are addressed in a timely and consistent manner.



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Meet the Board

AMANDA RAE MENTORS BUSINESS OWNERS

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AMANDA RAE

Every month, I'm using this page to introduce PPA members to one of our stellar board members. This month, I'm proud to introduce you to Amanda Rae, CEO of 17hats, a small business software company based in San Marino, California. Rae, who was a photographer, now serves as the business advisory representative on PPA's board.

—MARK CAMPBELL,
M.PHOTOGRAPHY.HONORARY.M.PHOTOGRAPHY.COUNCIL, CPP
PPA BOARD PRESIDENT

How did you begin your photography career and how did you transition into the business side of the industry?

If it wasn't for one photograph of my grandfather standing by a gas station, I would never have heard the story of his youth. That one conversation with him brought out a deep love for photographs, which grew into my love of photography. From lessons in the local 4-H to high school journalism, my teacher, Mrs. S, instilled in me a love of photography and design. I photographed my first wedding in college and leveled up with the birth of my nephews. I then took a PPA business course, and that gave me the confidence and mindset change needed to propel my business forward.

What was your favorite part of being a photographer?

My favorite part was when high school seniors I photographed would see themselves as beautiful as they truly are, inside and out. To see their confidence grow through the client experience was the reason I loved doing what I did.

How did you get involved with PPA?

I was introduced to PPA through family members who were also photographers. Imaging USA was being held in San Antonio, Texas, in 2017, so I joined PPA and attended the conference.

What's the most important lesson you learned while running a photography business?

I went to the camera store to buy the most expensive lights at the time, and an older gentleman asked me what I was photographing. I told him I was starting a business. He said, "Let me tell you the secret to business: If they like you, they will book you." That advice changed my life, and I have found it 100% true in every business I have created or mentored.

What advice do you give to entrepreneurs to help them grow their businesses?

Learning photography makes for a great photographer, but not necessarily a great business owner. So, if you want to be great at business, learn business. Read books, talk to successful business owners outside of photography, and create a client experience worth referring.

Why did you want to serve on the PPA board?

Even though I am no longer a working photographer, the photography community continues to hold a large space in my heart. PPA helped jumpstart my entrepreneurial career, and because of that, I am happy to serve the community that made a huge impact on me. 17hats has been a part of the tradeshow floor at Imaging USA for many years, and my role on the board is to be a voice for the vendors within the PPA network.

Where would you travel to if you had unlimited funds and time?

As an artist in my past life, I would love to go to Italy for a year and immerse myself in the culture, learn the language, and pick up painting again.

How would you describe yourself in one sentence?

I am a dreamer and a doer who loves to make an impact and add value to the world.

What is your favorite book and why?

Investing in business books is what I believe to be one of the best educations you can give yourself as a business owner. A few of my favorites include: "The Pumpkin Plan: A Simple Strategy to Grow a Remarkable Business in Any Field" by Mike Michalowicz, "Selling the Invisible: A Field Guide to Modern Marketing" by Harry Beckwith, "Obviously Awesome: How to Nail Product Positioning So Customers Get It, Buy It, Love It" by April Dunford, "Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business" by Gino Wickman, "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team" by Patrick Lencioni, and "Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead" by Sheryl Sandberg. It isn't about just one book, but how a variety of books molds the perspective and creates a mental shift for business growth. •

A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a light-colored Nike sweatshirt, is giving a thumbs up with his right hand. He is holding a Canon EOS R5 camera with a large lens in his left hand. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and a large black umbrella.

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DENNIS ROJAS

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“This was my first Imaging USA and I loved the quality and quantity of high-quality classes offered. I definitely will be returning next year!”

Robby Owenby
Imaging USA '25 attendee



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"I learned so much and was introduced to new vendors that will help enhance my client experience!"

Dominique Thorpe
Imaging USA '25 attendee

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Opening Keynote, Matthew Emerzian 10–11:15am

PhotoVision Theater 11am–5:30pm

Imaging USA Expo 11:30am–5pm

United Behind the Lens 4–5pm

Networking Avenue 6:30–8pm

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MONDAY

PhotoVision Theater 11am–5:30pm

Imaging USA Expo 11:30am–5pm

The Listening Room on the Road 5–6:15pm

International Photographic
Competition Finale 6:30–8pm



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TUESDAY

PhotoVision Theater 11am–4pm

Imaging USA Expo 11:30am–3:30pm

Inspired by Vision:
Lessons from PhotoVision's
Leading Educators 3:15–4:30pm

PPA Award
& Degree Ceremony 5–6:30pm

See You in Nashville!

“What I loved most?

LEARNING FROM LEGENDS.

Photographers who have shaped the industry were there sharing their knowledge, struggles, and breakthroughs. Hearing their journeys and realizing that even the greats never stop learning was priceless.”

Kia Boone
Imaging USA '25 attendee

“This photography community is the most supportive group of people inspired by empowering one another. I met so many photographers who share openly in the spirit of growth for everyone.

I'M SO PUMPED FOR NASHVILLE!”

Jennifer Mallowney
Imaging USA '25 attendee

“I live for moments of inspiration, education, and creative connection and Imaging USA is the ultimate place to **FUEL THAT FIRE!”**

Tracy Hyder
Imaging USA '25 attendee

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Whiskers

Katie Brockman

Katie Brockman Photography
St. Louis, Missouri

CAMERA & LENS: Sony Alpha 7 III, Sigma 10-20mm F3.5 EX DC HSM lens

EXPOSURE: 1/160 second at f/10, ISO 200

LIGHTING: Katie Brockman used three Godox AD200 strobes. She modified the key light with a Godox 27.5-inch parabolic soft box, and she used Godox 12x47-inch strip boxes with grids on the rim lights.

POST-CAPTURE: In Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop, she lifted the shadows, dodged and burned the image, added a slight vignette, color balanced for a warmer tone, and sharpened around the whiskers.



©KATIE BROCKMAN / katiebrockmanphotography.com

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: The kitten was a foster she was photographing for adoption promotions. "This particular shot was an accident," she explains. "I was waving a feather toy around to get her attention, and she just happened to look up at the exact moment that I took the shot. At first, I was a little disappointed since it wasn't the looking-straight-at-the-camera shot I was aiming for, but after a second look at it, I really like the unique angle and how it showed off her impressive whiskers."

OUR COVERS: *Professional Photographer* staff chooses each month's cover image from the top 32 images across each category in the International Photographic Competition.

Unfinished

Emmalee Rathsam, CPP

Emmalee Rathsam Photography
Kansas City, Missouri

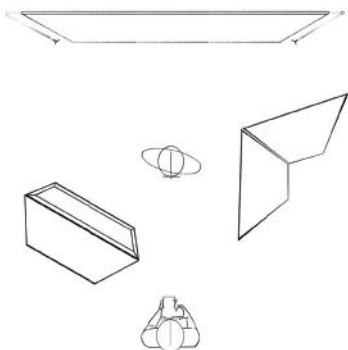
PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "This image was inspired by the unfinished paintings and sketches by Picasso, Jacques-Louis David, and Leonardo da Vinci," explains Rathsam, "all of which I saw at the Louvre and the Picasso Museum during my trip to Paris."

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon EF 35mm f/1.4L II USM lens

EXPOSURE: 1/160 second at f/14, ISO 100

LIGHTING: Emmalee Rathsam used a Godox strobe, a Larson 4x6-foot soft box, a Phottix Ares II Flash Trigger Receiver, and a white v-flat for the portrait.

POST-CAPTURE: She used Adobe Lightroom for minor adjustments and Photoshop for the artwork. She used a Wacom tablet to "paint in" the image using a layer mask and wet media brushes, giving it a watercolor effect. She then sketched over the image with a fine black pencil brush to give it pen lines and added ink marks with splatter brushes. To add texture, Rathsam photographed watercolor paper and overlaid that onto the image.



©EMMALEE RATHSAM / emmaleerathsam.com

ABOUT THE IMAGING EXCELLENCE COLLECTION: The Imaging Excellence Collection comprises photographs chosen by trained jurors as being the best of the best in PPA's Merit Image Review. The Imaging Excellence distinction is awarded to compositions that successfully address the 12 elements of a merit image. **NOTE:** Lighting diagrams shown here are not to scale. ppa.com/mir

Autumn Breeze

Julie Mullock

Julie Mullock Photography

Sydney, Australia



©JULIE MULLOCK PHOTOGRAPHY / juliemullock.com

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS 5D, Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM lens

EXPOSURE: 1/8 second at f/11, ISO 200

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: Adobe Photoshop was used to crop the image and adjust the highlights, shadows, contrast, and white balance. Minor distractions were removed using the healing brush tool.



©PATTY BLOME / pattyblomephotography.com

Whispers of the Dunes

Patty Blome, CPP

Patty Blome Photography

Murphy, Texas

LOCATION: Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Colorado

CAMERA & LENS: Lumix G9, Lumix G Series Leica 100-400mm F4.0-6.3 lens

EXPOSURE: 1/1,000 second at f/22, ISO 400

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: Cropping, and basic color and brightness adjustments were made in Adobe Photoshop.

Who You Callin' Itsy Bitsy

Ashley Metler, M.Photog.Cr.

Ashley Metler Photography

Belle Plaine, Kansas



©ASHLEY METLER PHOTOGRAPHY / ashleymetlerphotography.wordpress.com

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS R5, Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro IS USM lens

EXPOSURE: 1/250 second at f/16, ISO 4000

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: In Adobe Photoshop, Ashley Metler painted a new background and added small details and fine hairs to the spider.

Trails of Glory

Kari Nay

Kari J. Nay Photography
Spanish Fork, Utah

CAMERA & LENS: Sony Alpha 1, Sony FE 70-200mm F2.8 GM OSS II lens

EXPOSURE: 1/2,000 second at f/8, ISO 160

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: Kari Nay used Adobe Lightroom to decrease noise, raise the exposure and shadows, bring down the highlights, and for cropping.



©KARI J. NAY / karijnayphotography.com

Echoes of M.C. Escher

Rebecca Blacker

Studio Twenty2

Poolville, Texas



©REBECCA BLACKER, STUDIO TWENTY2 / studio-twenty2.com

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS R5, Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8 II USM lens and Canon EF EOS adapter

EXPOSURE: Five bracket exposures, of which three were used, at 1/100, 1/50, and 1/25 second at f/8, ISO 200

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: Rebecca Blacker used Adobe Camera Raw for minor adjustments in exposure and to straighten the vertical and horizontal lines. She then blended three exposures in Photoshop using luminosity masks to balance highlights and shadows, revealing the building's intricate tonal textures. She used the pen tool to cut out each window and replace them with images of the building itself, "an intentional nod to M.C. Escher's mirrored world." She blended the windows using Gaussian blur and lowered the opacity to make them seem both real and surreal, then removed cars and signage at the street level, cloned the uneven sidewalk, restored portions of the columns, and converted the image to black and white. She extracted the building, blurred its edges slightly, and placed it against a dark gray background. Final touches included tonal contrast and sharpening in Topaz Studio, "which brought out the structure's graphic strength while preserving its quiet, historic beauty, giving homage to M.C. Escher's style," she explains.



©COREY MCDONALD / coreymcdonaldphotography.com

Until I See You Again

Corey McDonald, M.Photog.M.Artist.Cr., CPP

Corey McDonald Portrait Artist

Monroeville, Alabama

CAMERA & LENS: Nikon Z 8, Sigma 105mm Art lens

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: Corey McDonald created this photo after the death of his beloved dog Starbuck. "I photographed her running last fall for our yearly Christmas card and combined clouds from my cell phone (taken from a plane) and skies I've photographed for my composites over the years," he explains. "I turned the camera around on myself grieving, holding her collar. The idea was for us to not be looking at each other because we can't anymore."

POST-CAPTURE: He used Adobe Photoshop for digital painting and compositing.

Years ago when *Professional Photographer* was undergoing a redesign, the editors had to decide what to call this section of the magazine, which aims to help PPA members not just in business, but in other aspects of life. Success fit the bill, because success means different things to different people, and different things depending on the stages of life and career.

What does success at this moment mean to you?

8 Action Items to Mark Personal Success



Content Creation

HOW TO SUCCEED ON YOUTUBE

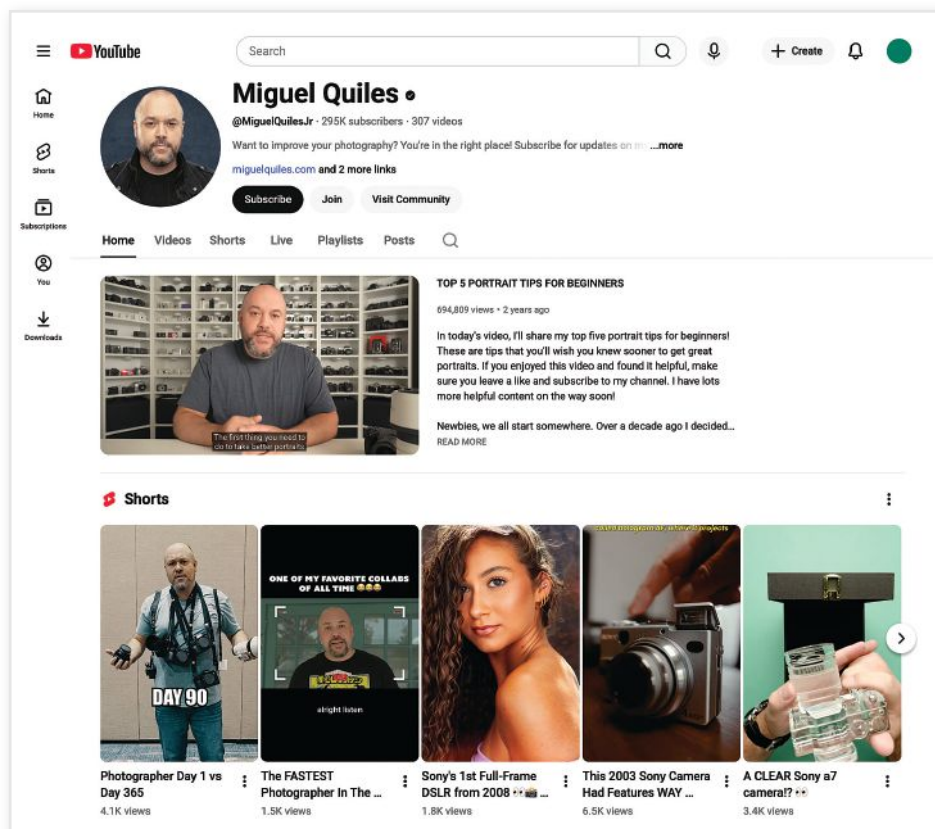
By Melanie Lasoff Levs

Miguel Quiles uses different parts of his brain depending on how he is using his photography skills: capturing images, creating YouTube content, or teaching, he tells “Professional Photographer” podcast host Pat Miller. The two sat down during Imaging USA 2025 in Dallas, Texas, last February to record the episode, “Stop Hiding Behind the Gear: Photography YouTube Secrets with Miguel Quiles.”

“For me, I find photography to be very easy. You get in, you have your concept, you take your shots, call it a day, everything’s nice and smooth,” says Quiles, a beauty and portrait photographer based in Orlando. On the other side, he explains, “Content creation takes a lot.”

Producing a YouTube video involves researching, planning a topic, and packaging it in a unique way, Quiles says, so it’s not, for example, just one of “a million videos on YouTube of how to take a portrait.” The content and presentation should be approachable and useful, and “that takes a lot of different parts of the brain [to] activate and fire.”

For the last few years, Quiles has been creating content not only for his personal YouTube channel but also for Sony’s channel, Alpha Universe. He talks about new products and gear, and techniques such as ways to set up your camera. Whatever his subject, Quiles says, he keeps in mind his standard viewer: someone seeking skills and knowledge about photography packaged accessibly. “Essentially, at the end of the day, I make content that I would have liked to have seen when I first started,” he says. “So, I put myself



in the shoes of, like, the Miguel of 2008, who didn’t know anything about photography and who was trying to figure things out and who would hit YouTube. How would he find this content? And then, what would he need to hear from this content to gain value? That’s what drives every decision, every action, every bit of research. It’s all through that lens.”

Quiles cites several SEO, optimization, and YouTube growth tools that help him save time, including TubeBuddy, Answer the Public, VidIQ, and Keywords Everywhere. But ultimately, when creating content, he says he trusts his gut and his core viewers. And it’s paid off, he tells Miller, sharing one example of a video that, when he researched its interest lev-

el, “it literally was like a zero out of 100,” he says. But he still created and packaged the content and the video ended up with some 350,000 views in about three weeks. “I knew in my heart, this has to be something that’s approachable for people. This is going to do well,” he says during the podcast. Patience and trust are key. “The cool thing about YouTube is that [a video] may not do well today, but that doesn’t mean that I can’t repackage it and revisit it half a year from now, a year, two years,” he adds. “I’ve done stuff, repackaged it from five years ago, and it just hits differently. It hits at the right time.”

Though he is confident, Quiles says imposter syndrome is real, especially when you know there are bigger and more well-



Get more insights from the
“Professional Photographer”
podcast at:
ppa.com/podcast



MIGUEL QUILES

known YouTubers and streamers online. “And so you think about that, and then it’s very easy to just be like, ‘Yeah, I’m just not going to put this video out today,’ or just leave it. And then it never gets put out,” he says. “But you *have* to put it out. You have to do it.” And you never know what might hit, Quiles chuckles, sharing the story of a video from 2019 that he posted uneventfully before running errands, coming home and finding it had 30,000 views and a bunch of comments. Many of the comments joked an iteration of, “My left ear loved this video.” It turned out the audio

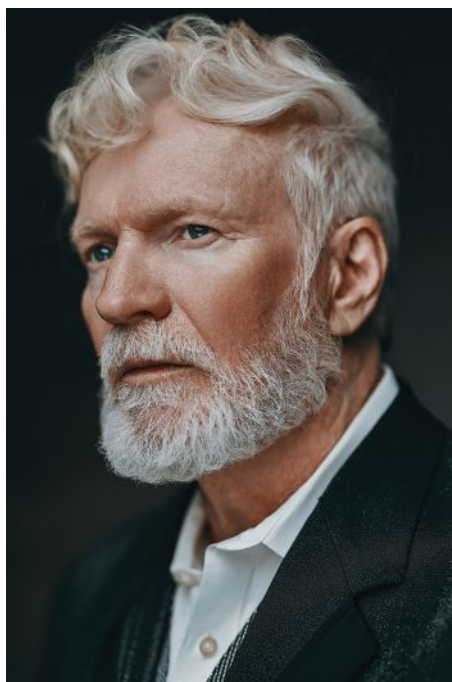
“I PERSONALLY
WOULD LOVE TO SEE
MORE PHOTOGRAPHY
CONTENT CREATORS
THAT ACTUALLY TALK
MORE ABOUT THE
NITTY GRITTY.”

was damaged. He could have re-uploaded it but instead, he left it as-is, to capitalize on its upward trajectory. That instinct, too, was spot-on. “Today it’s at like, I don’t know, a million and a half views,” Quiles says. “And so all of that is to say, your audience just wants you to show up. I didn’t show up perfectly for them at that point. But the content was good. The information was helpful, and it did great. It’s been my best-performing piece of content.”

Much of his most viewed content is in the nuts-and-bolts-of-photography space, an area that overall is lacking, he says. “I personally would love to see more photography content creators that



actually talk more about the nitty gritty,” he explains, discussing what lens they used in an image and how they chose their settings and lighting, for example. “They don’t put themselves in the shoes of somebody who’s new, who wants to walk in their footsteps. So, I’m more of that, ‘Hey, let me take your hand and show you exactly how I did it.’ And I



would love to see more of that because then, even for me, I feel like I’m a student of the game even though I’ve been doing this for a very long time. I hope that 20 years from now, I’m still a student of the game, and I try to just learn as much as I can. And I hope that people who are into that will also want to do the same.”

Quiles treats his personal YouTube more like a digital diary, but agrees that approach isn’t for all creators, nor should it be. He recommends finding a formula, making it scalable, and posting frequently. Also, ignore your inner critic, he

advises. “You don’t go to the gym and all of a sudden you work out once and you’re buff or you’re fit. It’s a consistency that you have to apply,” he says. “If you can, just be OK with the fact that you’re going to be on camera, you’re going to sound funny to yourself, but to other people, they don’t see that. And if they do, then OK, over time the awkwardness goes away. But if you’re not creating consistently, you’re going to take yourself out of the game before you even ever get a chance to get into it.”

Succeeding on YouTube means knowing your viewer, relating to them, and trying to take the personal out of the project, Quiles says. “I think that the hardest thing for people when they’re getting started is that they’re too worried about their self-image. They’re in their own heads,” he adds. “They’re like, ‘Oh, well, there’s already somebody else who’s talked about this, and they’re way better, way more famous, way, whatever.’ They give themselves a lot of excuses to not get started.” What does he tell those people? “You need to create a lot of content before you could find yourself, find your voice, find your approach. Your first, I don’t know, 30, 40, 50 videos, they are probably not going to be great. And if they are, wonderful. But realistically, I can only think of a handful of creators that I’ve ever seen that come right out of the gates on YouTube that just kill it.”

Quiles’ intention, patience, and consistency working YouTube has changed his life, he says: introduced him to countless people, given him another career, and provided a living for his family. He encourages others to take the chance. “I would tell people that whatever it is that’s holding you back from doing it, understand that on the other side of that awkwardness and that challenge,” he says, “could be a whole different life.” •

When the Tough Get Going

PERFORM LIKE AN ELITE ATHLETE TO ELEVATE YOUR BUSINESS

By Jeff Kent



What separates the elite practitioners in your field? What distinguishes photographers who are booked solid and charge enviable rates from those struggling to define themselves and languishing in a crowded middle ground? There are many factors, of course, but one of the most important is a mindset that helps successful pros be more resilient and perform at a higher level when it matters most.

Most of us already have the tools to push ourselves in the right direction. That process can begin with mental toughness, an approach often used by elite athletes to overcome adversity and ensure they're at their best during critical moments.

Brad Cooper, Ph.D., a behavior change specialist and CEO of Catalyst Coaching 360 in Ft. Collins, Colorado, spent years studying the science of this mindset. He created a framework called Functional Mental Toughness (fMT). Cooper, also

host of "The Coaching Lab" podcast, is the author of a forthcoming book on mental toughness. The concepts work well for athletes, but apply to anyone looking to raise their performance levels, including entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Professional Photographer magazine talked with Cooper about how photographers can apply the tenets of fMT to their lives and businesses. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Jeff Kent: *What is functional mental toughness?*

Brad Cooper: I wanted to figure out how we can give people real tools, instead of just saying, "Grit your teeth, suck it up, and just get it done." So we created this model. The idea is to fill up your fMT "bank" so you can access it when you need it. Your bank is what provides the



BRAD COOPER

©VANESSA HOUK



THE THREE COMPONENTS OF THE FUNCTIONAL MENTAL TOUGHNESS (fMT) MODEL

THRIVE: Focuses on the lifestyle elements of move, fuel, rest, and connect. This is about establishing foundational habits that support overall wellbeing. It involves an active lifestyle (move), nutrition (fuel), sleep (rest), and meaningful relationships (connect).

PREPARE: Involves identifying critical moments in advance, such as an all-day headshot photo session at a conference or a long vertical hike to catch a sunset photo, and practicing techniques to help you perform at a high level. These techniques include visualization and positive self-talk.

ACTIVATE: The phase when you're in the critical moment and applying the tools and strategies you've developed in the other two phases. Here, you're activating your toolbox of techniques for success.

At the center is the "fMT bank." This is your reservoir of mental resources. The components work together, with improvements in one area feeding into and supporting the others.

Brad Cooper online
catalystcoaching360.com/one

resources to drive positive outcomes. There are three main ways that one can fill the bank: thrive, prepare, and activate. Those three elements build on each other (see sidebar).

Thrive is about your lifestyle, establishing good habits that support the outcomes you want.

Prepare is the work you do in advance to set yourself up for success.

Activate is when you apply the tools and strategies you've developed to achieve your desired outcomes.

You don't have to implement these stages all at once. But if you improve even one element, that will feed your fMT bank. The idea is to use these concepts to address the gap between desired outcomes and actual outcomes, the desired life and real life. How do we bring those closer together? There are no guarantees in life. You have to do the work to set yourself up for success. Bake the cake and fMT will put the icing on it.

JK: *How can professional photographers begin to bridge that gap between their desired outcomes and actual outcomes?*

BC: One example is a wedding photographer who wants to bring more energy to the job, improve their interactions with guests, or manage their schedule better. We all know that weddings can be very stressful, and wedding photographers have to be "on" the entire day. One of the key components of the fMT model is identifying your critical moments so you can spend from your bank at those times. Working a wedding involves several critical moments where you'll want to draw on your fMT bank. Identify and focus on those versus wasting your fMT on silly things like where to park or what time to leave. Sure, those should be part of your advance planning, but not where you should be spending your primary

energy. Your fMT should be devoted to critical moments when you have to be at your best. The first part is identifying those critical moments. Next, think about the outcome that you want to achieve at those times. Then, what are you going to do to get the result you want?

JK: *Can you expand on the idea of the fMT bank and how entrepreneurs like professional photographers can get the most out of it?*

BC: There are three ideas with the bank:

1. We want to fill it up.
2. We want to limit the leakage so we aren't wasting resources on things that don't need fMT.
3. We need to be able to use it when we need it.

It's just like money in a real bank. You want to fill up your savings account. You don't want to drain it for little things like banking fees or subscriptions you don't use. You need to be able to access fMT when it's important. So, ask yourself, are you continually filling up your fMT bank with the three elements, so it's full when you need it? Or are you letting your bank drain out for inconsequential things? For example, take the "thrive" concept. If you're sleeping well, you're more likely to be focused enough to prepare for an upcoming photo session. When you have prepared—researched the client, scouted a location or cleaned your studio, set up your lighting—you're going to be more effective when you reach the "activate" stage. The different stages work together.

JK: *How do people start developing their functional mental toughness?*

BC: Tuning into these concepts is a great start. On your own, start thinking about Thrive, Prepare, and Activate. You can begin with Thrive and the four funda-

mental elements within that area: move, fuel, rest, and connect. Start taking small steps to improve those elements in your life and then build from there. Behavior change is hard, so you could consider working with a health and wellness coach. They're trained in things like intrinsic motivation and motivational interviewing. A good coach comes alongside you, tunes into what makes you unique, and then helps you create a plan to move forward.

JK: *How does one track ROI from all these efforts?*

BC: This goes back to closing the gap between your desired outcomes and actual outcomes. In our wedding photography example, let's say you want to improve your performance at your wedding jobs. This could include figuring out how to create a better experience for the couple, capturing more images during key moments, trying more artistic approaches, or boosting your stamina and energy throughout the day. In your clients' mind, this could translate to a higher review on social media or a testimonial on your website. What is that worth to you? If every five-star review earned you an additional three referrals, what would that be worth to your business? And if you keep performing at that higher-quality level, there's a compounding effect, with every event multiplying your referrals, bookings, and revenue. There's also the differentiation of being known as an exceptional wedding photographer. That is your competitive edge. Most wedding photographers have access to the same equipment and the same software, but you've got access to that higher level of performance that makes you the in-demand photographer in your field, and that absolutely comes with real, quantifiable benefits. •

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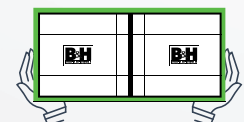


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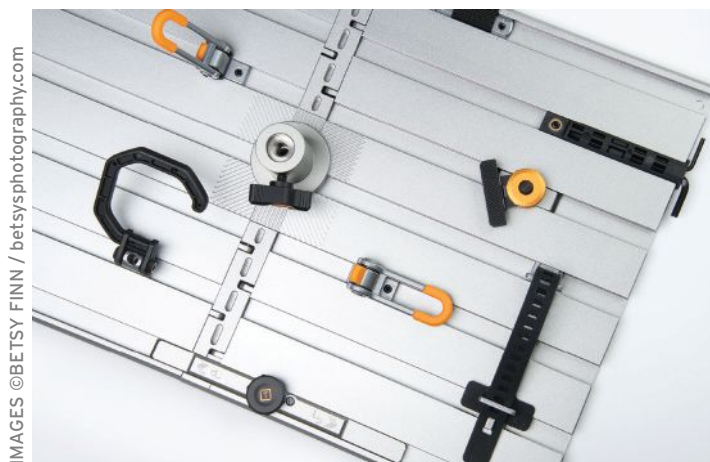
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TETHER TOOLS AEROTRAC WORKSTATION SYSTEM

By Betsy Finn, M.Photog.Cr.

COURTESY TETHER TOOLS / tethertools.com



The AeroTrac and legs fold into a slim profile, and the versatile design allows you to fix the attachments almost anywhere on the plate.

We take special care to protect our camera and lens on the job, but if you're also working closely with a laptop during a photo session, it takes an extra degree of effort—especially if you're working tethered. Tether Tools has a great reputation for offering top-notch safe cable solutions and other gear to keep your workspace functioning smoothly, and now they have released the AeroTrac Workstation System. I've used several portable workstations over the years, and the AeroTrac is Tether Tools' best iteration yet.

The AeroTrac Workstation is self-explanatory right out of the box. I was able to figure out what each part was and how to install it (for the most part) before looking at the setup instructions. The AeroTrac has a versatile design, and most of the pieces can be installed wherever works best for your needs. I even had fun creating a "flat lay" setup with the parts installed every which way, just to illustrate this flexibility. The only parts that have specific places are the ballhead adapter, the handle, and the feet. Other than those minor restrictions, you can customize it practically any way you like.

In the box, you'll get the AeroTrac Workstation Plate, two tech clamps (for securing your laptop), a removable handle, a configuration tool that holds two Allen wrenches, two 1/4"-20 accessory threads, and two action tabs (magnetic closure). These are all important, but the optional accessories are what really makes the AeroTrac shine. Accessories that are sold separately or included in kits include workstation legs, a tripod roller, tech straps, a baby ballhead adapter, an accessory holder, hooks, 3/8"-16 and 1/4"-20 accessory threads, VersaMounts (for securing items such as the sunshade), a carrying case, and more.

Out of the box, the AeroTrac comes folded. This is the perfect time to install



The foldable legs are tall enough to hold the AeroTrac flat with the baby ballhead adapter still attached.

the handle. But if you're like me, you might opt to unfold the workstation and deploy the sliding lock first. Then you'll discover that the handle can't be installed unless the AeroTrac is folded. This is a design/safety feature; it's impossible for the handle to slide off while you're carrying expensive gear around.

After exploring all of the accessories we were loaned, I set the AeroTrac up as I would use it in the field. I secured my laptop to the top side of the workstation using the tech clamps. The clamps secure the keyboard/base of a laptop to the AeroTrac, and the screen can safely open and close. Tether Tools has always been dedicated to keeping your gear secure, and these clamps reinforced my confidence in that. Even though two clamps may not seem like enough, the laptop is well-secured. The tech clamps can only fit laptop bases (or other items) between 3.6mm and 16mm thick.

I customized the bottom of the workstation by installing the configuration

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Optional accessories include a baby ballhead adapter (above), hooks for managing cables (center), and an accessory holder (top right).



tool, the workstation legs, tech straps (for an external hard drive), the accessory holder, a hook, and the ballhead adapter. The ballhead adapter attaches to your tripod or a lightstand to bring your device to a comfortable working height.

Now for the brilliant design detail: Tether Tools designed the AeroTrac so that you can fold the workstation in half with the ballhead adapter still attached. But wait, there's more. If you want to leave that adapter in place and carry your workstation to a table or flat surface, the workstation feet are perfectly tall enough to make this possible. Even if you don't plan to set the workspace anywhere but mounted, the legs are nice to keep your laptop and workstation secure while setting up your tripod. I appreciated this thoughtful design feature by Tether Tools.

The accessory holder is one of the few add-ons that doesn't tighten down with an Allen wrench. It's meant to be able to slide underneath when not in use, and there's a clever magnetic tab to keep it collapsed and out of the way. I tested

it out with a water bottle, and it holds weight just fine. It would be a good spot to hold your phone, a mini gray card, or a light meter.

If you're photographing tethered, you'll want a hook to manage extra cord length, and it's likely you'll also want to back things up to an external hard drive, which you can attach to the underside of the plate with tech straps.

I appreciated having the option to use magnetic tabs to keep my workstation from "flopping open" when folded, and the AeroTrac storage case is wonderful. Too often, something like this ends up getting shoved into a bag or bin as an afterthought, without padding or protection. It's nice to have something the right size to keep the AeroTrac and all its accessories together.

For those who have 3D printing capability, Tether Tools offers STL files for download and a maker kit—perfect for designing your own unique accessory mount components. With this option and the impressive lineup of compatible ac-

cessories, you can configure the AeroTrac to your needs.

Overall, the AeroTrac workstation is heavy-duty and sturdy, especially compared to older Tether Tools workstation tables. It weighs 3.3 pounds, is made of anodized aluminum, and can hold up to 30 pounds (14 kilograms). When used on a flat surface with accessory legs, AeroTrac provides a great workspace on the go and keeps your computer off the ground. If you have a chunky workhorse of a laptop, check its measurements carefully to make sure the tech clamps will work before purchasing.

Is the AeroTrac Workstation for you? It depends on your workflow. If you're working in the field while tethered, you'll benefit from this thoughtful and flexible workspace that keeps your important gear safe. The AeroTrac Workstation retails for \$299.99, and accessories range from \$9 to \$99. •

Betsy Finn is a portrait artist in Dexter, Michigan.

Big League Ambitions

NIKON Z5II TEST DRIVE

By *Mark Edward Harris*

Nikon recently released the new Z5II with a 24.5-megapixel full-frame BSI-CMOS sensor that is 50% larger than most APS-C models but still demure in size. That means there's no crop factor with Nikon's Nikkor Z lenses. I took it for a spin to test its capabilities and get a feel for it.

Since I teach many photo workshops around the globe, I'm frequently asked, "What kind of camera should I get?" Too often, this question is based on the student thinking they need a camera

upgrade to get the world-class photos they envision. The reality is that often, the camera and lenses they currently have are capable of producing those images if they put more artistic thought and technical prowess into their creation. But, in the ever-evolving world of photographic equipment, there are times to consider an upgrade.

Moving from DSLRs to mirrorless is one of those inflection points. The advantages include more compact cameras

because of the removal of the mirror and prism, and the "what you see is what you get" factor in terms of depth of field.

To narrow down my answer to which model to get, I always ask, "What is the usage in terms of subject matter, as well as the end usage?" If the plan is to print the images large, cameras like the Nikon Z5II are a good starting point. If the images will stay on a computer screen or the web, then the more compact APS systems might be the way to go. The Z5II dimen-



COURTESY NIKON



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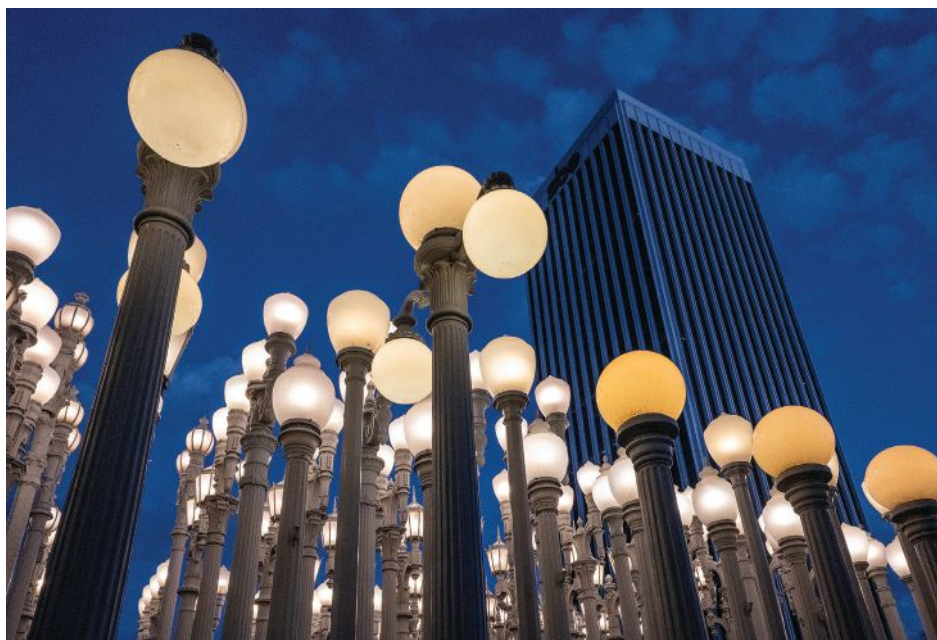
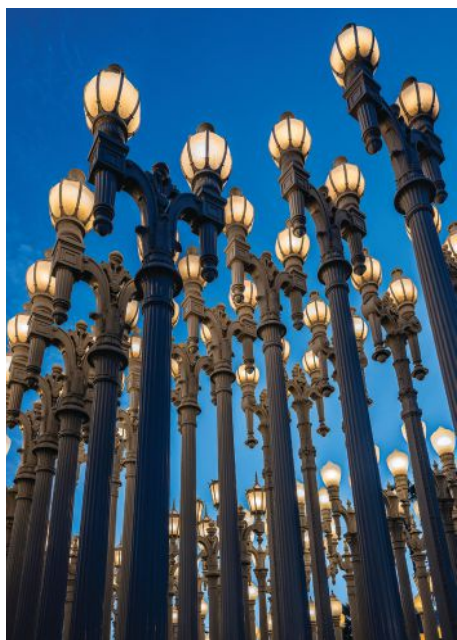
sions are 5.3x4x2.9 inches and it weighs 24.7 ounces.

The Z5II also has 3D-tracking autofocus and nine subject-detection subjects: people (eye, face, head, upper body), birds, dogs, cats, cars, bicycles, motorcycles, trains, and airplanes. These features are two huge technical steps forward from DSLRs.

At fellow photographer Joyce Charat's Tulum-inspired pool house in Southern California, I photographed model Danielle Okia (left) using Nikon's new Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S II lens on the Z5II body in the Auto ISO mode with manual shutter speed and aperture settings and exposure compensation. It was not until I entered the mirrorless world that I felt confident trusting Auto ISO. The camera's exposure compensation ranges from -5 to +5 EV in 1/3 and 1/2 increments. I keep my aperture set to 1/3 stop increments, though it's not a bad idea for photography students to set their cameras to 1/2 stop increments so they will both memorize their f/stops and see the subtle differences in every aperture adjustment.

I tested the Z5II's low light capabilities with a Nikkor Z 24-50mm f/4-6.3 lens attached at the Los Angeles County Museum of Arts Urban Light artwork by Chris Burden (right). The vertical here is at ISO 2200 with the horizontal being exposed at ISO 11,400. Even at the latter's high ISO there was relatively low digital noise.

For those shooting in JPEG, a top deck Picture Control button (to the right of the exposure mode



dial) sets built-in signature looks. Included settings are Auto, Standard, Neutral, Vivid, Monochrome, Flat Monochrome, Deep Tone Monochrome, Portrait, Rich Tone Portrait, Landscape, and Flat. Creative picture controls are combinations of hue, tone, saturation, and other settings to create styled looks and have 20 options to choose from, including Dream, Morning, Pop, Sunday, Somber, and Dramatic. Selected picture controls can also be modified and stored as custom picture controls and shared with others, and you can download customized Picture Controls from Nikon Imaging Cloud.

For sports, the Z5II's Expeed 7 processing engine enables high-speed shooting up to 30fps. Sports photographers can also take advantage of the 1/8,000 second mechanical shutter. Flashes can keep up with that shutter speed in the FP High Speed Sync mode for applications off the field of play.

Astronomical and landscape photographers can slow things down and set

shutter speeds as slow as 900 seconds—in other words, 15-minute exposures—before having to work in the Bulb setting.

Photographers working on film sets and in performance halls with mirrorless cameras can take advantage of the silent shooting mode and avoid the cumbersome foam-lined boxes, known as “blimps,” that act as giant silencers.

The Z5II has an impressive array of AF-Area Modes, which determine how the camera selects the focus point for autofocus: Pinpoint, Single-point, Dynamic-area (S, M, L; photo mode only, AF-A or AF-C), Wide-area (S, L, C1, C2), Auto-area, 3D-tracking (photo mode only, AF-A or AF-C), and Subject-tracking (video mode only). The user manual includes examples of when to use which type of autofocus based on subject and types of movement anticipated.

The Z5II also has TTL metering and autofocus in the video mode and 4K Ultra High Definition (UHD) recording. Video file types N-RAW 12-bit (NEV), H.265 10-

bit (MOV), H.265 8-bit (MOV), and H.264 8-bit (MP4) are available for capture.

Audio recording can be done through a built-in stereo microphone (with sensitivity adjustment, attenuator, frequency response, and wind noise reduction functions) or external microphones. Continuous recording is possible for as long as two hours and five minutes.

With the SnapBridge app you can pair or connect to the camera via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi to transfer stills and video off the camera and into the world.

The Z5II is available as body only with an MSRP of \$1,849.95 or as kits with the economical Nikkor Z 24-50mm f/4-6.3 lens (\$2,149.95) or the Nikkor Z 24-200mm f/4-6.3 VR (\$2,649.95). The Z5II seems to be well placed for photographers on a tighter budget who are interested in moving up into the big leagues of photography. •

Mark Edward Harris is an award-winning photographer and writer based in Los Angeles.



Stories That Need Telling

BY AMANDA
ARNOLD



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©SEBASTIAN KENNERKNECHT

Conservation and humanitarian photographers use their cameras to lend help

“The forest is tough in Malaysia,” says wildlife and conservation photographer Sebastian Kennerknecht, which seems increasingly like an understatement as he describes sleeping in a jungle hammock for a month to capture photographs of elusive wild cats. “It’s 90 degrees with 100% humidity outside of the hammock,” he explains. “Inside the hammock, you can add another five degrees.” There were bugs everywhere, he says, recounting his wounds: two wasp stings, 20 honeybee stings, over 100 leech bites. He carried 20, 30, sometimes 60 pounds of camera trapping equipment up the mountain (“Cats are always up the mountain for some reason,” he chuckles) and lost 20-30 pounds of his own body weight in the process.

But this isn’t a job you do for luxury, money, or even notoriety. “You are suffering some; you’re scratching every mosquito bite you have,” says the Seattle-based Kennerknecht, who with his wife also owns and runs a photo safari business specializing in wild cats and whales. “But you do it because you love doing it. It’s a passion.

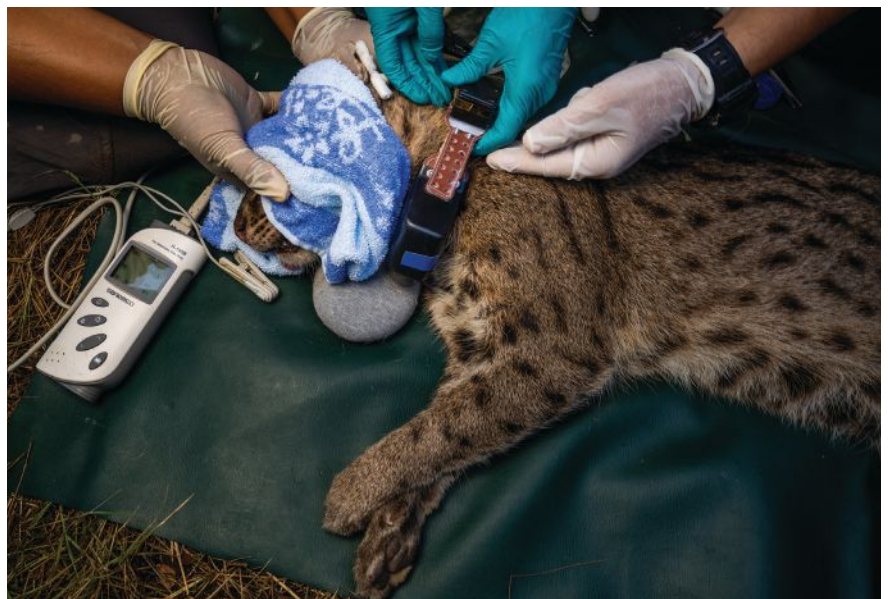


GO-TO EQUIPMENT

TALOR STONE uses a Canon EOS R5 with a 100-500mm telephoto lens. "I love the intimate feel that type of lens can give you," she says. For her underwater shark photography, she uses the R5 with a 10-20mm lens and a Nauticam housing.

MARSHALL FOSTER uses a Nikon Z 8 with a 14-24mm lens and a Nikon Z 9 with a 24mm lens. "I usually carry two cameras on my holster ... because everything changes so fast."

SEBASTIAN KENNERKNECHT uses a Sony Alpha 1 with a 600mm lens for photographing wild cats and a 100-400mm lens for environmental photographs. His camera trap equipment involves a wide angle 10-22mm lens with Nikon flashes. He also uses a Really Right Stuff tripod.



I always feel like this is what I've been meant to do in this world—to help save cats—and photography is the tool that allows me to do it in the best way possible.”

That feeling of being called to make a difference links humanitarian and conservation photographers like Kennerknecht around the world. Humanitarian and fine art photographer Marshall Foster felt pulled to leave his career as a tour manager in the music industry to photograph in Africa with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Talor Stone, a Las Vegas-based photographer, booked a backpacking trip to Greenland one night when she couldn't sleep and is now researching her Ph.D., which includes making photographs of an indigenous hunting community in Northern Greenland, while also pursuing other conservation photography projects. These types of photographers specialize in raising awareness of and funds for issues such as climate change and animal conservation, and humanitarian causes such as natural disasters, hunger relief, and worldwide poverty. Each of these globe-trotting professionals takes not only their image making seriously but the causes they represent, and stops at virtually nothing to document their best work.

Conservation photography “wasn't my original plan,” says Stone. “I just loved photography and I loved travel, and I really wanted to just pursue photography for the sake of visual art.” But about five years ago, that pursuit began to feel hollow. “I wasn't particularly motivated by chasing sunsets and I wanted to find something with a little bit more meaning,” she says. “Conservation photography felt like a natural fit” that also dovetailed



Sebastian Kennerknecht

SNOW LEOPARD SUCCESS

EQUIPMENT: Camera trap

This image was captured in 2016 in Kyrgyzstan, in Central Asia, where Sebastian Kennerknecht lived in a zero-degree sleeping bag for six weeks in minus-10-degree temperatures at 10,000 feet elevation. “I think I had six camera traps up, and every day I hiked 8 to 12 miles to go and check different ones over really steep terrain,” he recalls.

A local biologist suggested Kennerknecht check an area that looked to be a marking site for snow leopards. “You could see there were spray marks and you could smell [the cat urine],” he says, “and if you looked really carefully, you could actually see snow leopard fur. So, I put the camera trap there. Three weeks into the assignment, a cat came through and triggered that camera. It had crossed the freezing icy river—it was so cold there were ice chunks floating down this river—and then went on this trail and triggered my camera trap. And despite cutting off the front paw in that shot, I love it, as it shows the mountains and there's a beautiful glow.

“I'm also proud of the photo because it reached a lot of people when we published it on social media and [resulted] in a lot of donations [to conservation efforts]. And that's really why we do it, right?”



nicely into her Ph.D. research. “What better way to communicate a story than through visual storytelling?”

DON'T WAIT TO BE TAPPED

Launching and sustaining this type of photography business requires endless hustle. When Foster first started his career 12 years ago, he spent six months in Uganda and Kenya with 10 or 11 different NGOs. To pay his bills and fund his humanitarian photography trips, he initially worked in wedding and event photography, and even as a chauffeur. At first, he recalls, he averaged about 10% humanitarian photography work and 90% other work. Over time, the humanitarian photography work increased to 40% and eventually to full-time. Today, he spends about half the year

on the road pursuing humanitarian photography projects. He plans for his future assignments when he is home in Austin, Texas.

Foster recommends maintaining multiple websites dedicated to each niche of photography you offer, including humanitarian. “Clients want specialists,” he notes, so having separate websites communicates that you’re a specialist. He also recommends going to the specific location you’re interested in photographing, whether that’s a disaster area after a hurricane or wildfire, or a region with multiple NGOs. Most organizations don’t have the money to pay for photographers’ travel, he explains. “If there’s a story you want to tell, save up enough money and go do that,” Foster advises.



NAVIGATE THE COSTS

Funding conservation and humanitarian photography projects can be difficult, but there are ways to navigate it. Stone funds her projects by leading travel photography trips with Muench Workshops. She usually leads 10 guided trips a year and uses some of her earnings to fund personal projects related to conservation.

For example, recently, she was in Florida to photograph bull sharks, who are attracted to the electronics inside a camera. “If they can get your camera in their mouth, they are going to do that,” she says, adding that she captured some “pretty crazy” photos of the animals a mere 6 inches from her. “I mean you have to, like, push them off of you sometimes with your hands.” Because she was so close to the sharks, she could see that almost all of them had fishing hooks attached to them and other damage to their bodies from catch-and-release sport fishing. “They’re pretty badly injured,” she says. “I think most people who are sport fishing, they don’t understand the impact of that activity.” She is now documenting those wounds through images, to draw attention to the issue.

When Kennerknecht works with conservation and research organizations for wild cats, he says they set the financial pace by saying, “Here’s the amount of money we’ll give you; however much you spend, you spend, and however much you don’t spend, you keep as your salary,” he explains. His goal is to put 80% of that money toward his work—for things like accommodations, transportation, food—and 20% toward his salary. He’s also supplemented that funding through donors and sponsorships by reaching out to marketing, communications, or outreach departments of companies that align with his work.



Marshall Foster THINKING FAST

EQUIPMENT: Nikon Z 9, Nikkor Z 24-120mm lens

Everything is fluid when it comes to decision making in photography, particularly as a humanitarian photographer, says Marshall Foster. An example of this outside-the-box thinking is an image he took of King Charles visiting an elementary school in Barbuda that had been destroyed by Hurricane Irma in 2017.

“We had a large press pool, and getting any kind of clean photo was nearly impossible,” Foster recalls. “When he entered the schoolroom, there was no way to fight through the crowd of photographers. So, I stopped and asked myself, *How else can I get this shot?* I decided to leave the press pool and walk around the building, and there was King Charles, standing alone among the ruins. That image ended up being stronger than what I’d been trying to capture in the first place. Sometimes when we let go of our expectations, we open ourselves up to something better.”



PUT ON YOUR PLANNING CAP

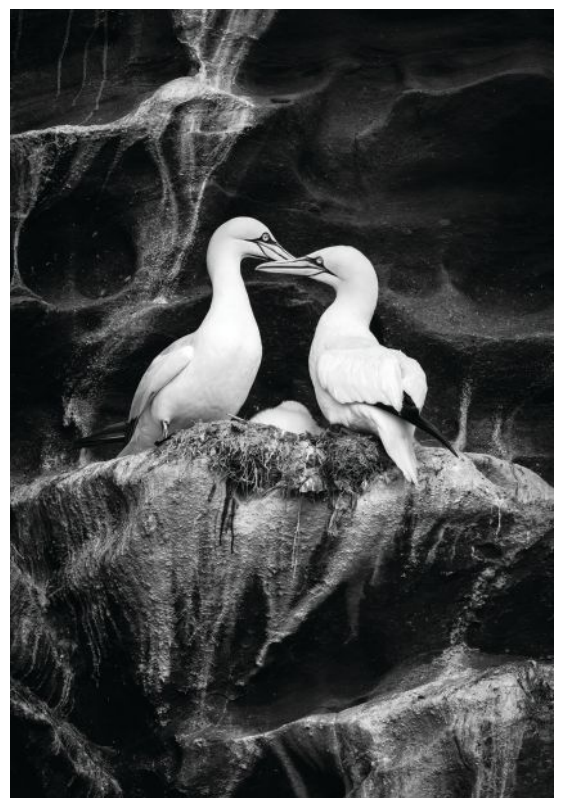
Orchestrating trips requires extensive long-term planning. “I plan a year or two in advance for different shoots, figuring out what timelines work best for the field work,” says Kennerknecht, who teams up with scientists, conservationists, and anti-poaching organizations with a focus on wild cat populations. When lining up projects, he first considers which environmental issues he believes need highlighting. “Let’s say that’s tiger poaching in Thailand, for example,” he says. He would then contact leaders in organizations addressing that issue to see when they’ll be in the field and whether he can tag along. Once they allow him to join the team, he determines logistics: Is he bringing his own food? What is the water situation? How does he charge his batteries? What’s electricity like, etc. “All that stuff,”

Kennerknecht says, “we talk about for months at a time.”

His specialty is using high-resolution SLR camera trapping equipment to capture images of elusive wild cat species, some of which have never been photographed before. So, in addition to photographing researchers and conservationists at work, he spends weeks setting up, adjusting, and checking camera traps to capture sometimes just one image of the wild cat the team is trying to protect. Because the cats are so hard to capture on camera, “Generally, my assignment length at a minimum is a month long,” he says. “But I’ve gone anywhere from four weeks to three months. Three and a half months has been my longest assignment.”

TELL THE STORY WELL

One of the biggest challenges in conservation photography, says



Stone, is “figuring out how to get someone to care about something that you care about.” It’s easy to elicit sympathy for a cuddly polar bear but harder to “get someone to make a nuanced connection between inanimate objects—for example, the relationship between fog and icebergs, or a relationship between a particular river and a valley,” she says. “It can feel at times like you are screaming into a void.” That’s why she is thoughtful about creating more with her projects than a simple gallery of images, “merging still photography with text and with audio and video so that someone can transition from just looking at something to also experiencing it in an immersive way,” she says. “I find that really important for education.”

For Foster’s humanitarian photography with NGOs that depicts disaster relief, livelihood programs, and medical procedures, it’s all about the human connection. “Oftentimes, I don’t even bring my camera when I’m first meeting somebody, because I just want to get to know them,” he says, adding that he introduces himself to the potential subjects and builds relationships. Once he’s established a rapport, he’ll ask permission to tell their story through his lens.

He compares his work to photographing a flower 30 feet away. “Sure, you could take a zoom lens and zoom in on that flower and take a photo of it. Or you could walk up to that flower and see the details. You can smell the fragrance, and you can really take it in,” he says. “I think people are the same way. You have to get close because that’s where the trust comes from. That’s where the story is going to come down. And that story is the most important thing.” •



Talor Stone ON THE OCEAN ICE

EQUIPMENT: Canon EOS R5 with an RF15-35mm F2.8 L IS USM lens

Last January, while making photos during her Ph.D. research in Greenland, Talor Stone befriended Dan, the only school principal in the region, who also spoke English.

“We spent a lot of time talking, and he really showed me a lot about the culture,” she recalls. “He introduced me to the sled dogs and how you care for them and how to feed them, and he always would invite me to go out whenever he was doing a hunt.”

On this day, Stone accompanied Dan to train the sled dogs for an upcoming race. However, the dogs had other ideas. “They were just not listening to him,” Stone says. “He got so frustrated that he just stopped and got off the sled. He didn’t hit the dogs with the whip. The whip hits the ice, which I think is important to say, but he was scolding the dogs. I immediately knew this was going to be a great opportunity to get a photo, so I jumped off the sled and ran around. The timing was just perfect the way the whip arched through the air and framed the sled. I also love the iceberg in the back, which tells you that we’re out on the ocean and this iceberg is frozen into the sea ice.”

pets and the City

JEN HILLENGA CAPTURES
DOG PERSONALITIES

BY SUZANNE WRIGHT

after spending more than 18 years as a portrait photographer in the Midwest and creating an internet business selling products to professional photographers, Jen Hillenga was at a crossroads. The churn of a portrait business in an ever-changing industry had lost its appeal, and the overhead and stress of having a large studio, two businesses, and employees had taken its toll. She decided to change course and focus on photographing beloved pets in New York, where she had moved in 2014 from Minnesota.



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JEN HILLENGA WITH HER DOGS ROCCO AND NALA





JEN HILLENGA'S EQUIPMENT

CAMERAS AND LENSES

I use a Sony a7R 5 and primarily shoot with three lenses: Sony FE 70-200mm F2.8 GM, Sony FE 24-70mm F2.8, Sony FE 85mm F1.8.

LIGHTING

On location, I don't use lights or reflectors. I need to be mobile and use only one camera body and two lenses with a wider angle thrown in. I don't want anyone to see a single woman carrying thousands of dollars of camera equipment around the city. In my studio, I mainly use one large Godox light with a 70-inch umbrella and scrim and v-flats for reflectors. Occasionally for colorful, punchy action shots, I will add in two strip lights for separation. If a dog gets nervous about flashing lights, I also have a full wall of windows and can switch to photographing in natural window light.

PROPS

Maybe I'll use a chair in the studio. I generally think of myself as a fine art photographer with my own aesthetic. But if someone wants to dress up their dog in a sweater and bow, that's OK. The exception to the "no props" rule is for limited-edition holiday sets that are themed.





"The older I get, the more I like dogs and the less I like most people," she says with a laugh. "Pets show up authentically as they are, all the time. It's what I want to photograph, and I have reached a point in my life and career that I am only going to do what I love doing."

Hillenga started photographing "pandemic puppies" in 2020, as shelters emptied out with New Yorkers adopting as they quarantined. The sheer number of potential clients meant business started out steady. "This is the third business I've built and it's been the easiest one," she says. "You're only looking for a wedding photographer when you are engaged

and a baby photographer when you are pregnant, but everyone wants to look at dogs!"

Since formally launching her pet photography business, The Ways of the Dog, in February 2021, Hillenga says she has taken more than 600 pet portraits. She's booked several weeks in advance, with spring and autumn her busiest seasons. Her clients are mostly women or couples between ages 30 and 45 with disposable income, as Hillenga's sessions can run into the thousands.

"Their dog is their child," she explains of her clients, "and a vital part of their family." Some of her clients have even flown her for

sessions with their dogs on the beach in Carmel, California, and in tulip fields in Amsterdam.

For that 10% of her pet portrait sessions in studio, Hillenga shares a space with a few other photographers in different genres. "The studio is great for dogs that can't easily handle the city's noises or distractions, older dogs, or clients who want a more traditional look to their portraits," she says, or in the event of bad weather.

CLASSIC CAPTURES

Ninety percent of Hillenga's shoots are outdoors. "New York City is the best canvas," she says. "Everywhere you go is iconic. Every alleyway



offers something cool. The whole city is like walking through a movie scene.”

Some of her favorite places for pet portrait sessions feature recognizable landmarks like the New York Public Library at Bryant Park, the Bethesda Fountain and Terrace in Central Park, and the cobblestone streets of SoHo. Those famous vignettes—a love letter to New York—are client requests, but a wall of graffiti can also be a vibrant backdrop for a dog and their person. “My goal is to celebrate my client’s unique relationship with their pet and how they live that life in this city,” Hillenga says.

When photographing dogs, Hillenga only needs “about three feet of ‘pretty,’” not big, sweeping scenes. “I’m focusing on the dog’s expression and their connection to their person.”

MODEL BEHAVIOR

New York City and its rats, pigeons, squirrels, and other dogs can be distracting for many dogs. So how does Hillenga coach winning expressions from her four-legged clients? “When we meet, I like to start by giving treats so they know I’m a source of good things,” she explains, adding that she doesn’t want to make them sick or too



TRICKS OF THE TRADE

HOW DO YOU FIRST CONNECT WITH A CLIENT?

An exploratory 15-minute phone call is a requirement to get on my calendar. I use the time to run through any potential behavioral issues, discuss preferred shooting locations, and understand how the client plans to use the photography—as wall or desk décor, a coffee table album, digital images, or an image box.

HOW DO YOU PRESENT YOUR IMAGES TO CLIENTS?

Five to 10 days after the shoot, I schedule a Zoom call to go over 40-60 images from their session.

HOW MUCH EDITING DO YOU DO?

Because dog owners have so many images of their dogs, my images have to convey something above and beyond what they can get on their iPhones. I cull and do the bulk of editing in Lightroom to crop, adjust color, shadows, and highlights, and enhance clarity. I pick five to 10 of my favorites from the session that I really want the client to fall in love with and I do a full edit in Photoshop.

I do all this pre-editing before the client ever sees an image. Then after the final selection, I go in and make final edits and remove small issues like trash on the ground, stray hairs, etc.

ARE ANY OF YOUR PHOTOS COMPOSITES?

Maybe 1 in 100, if I need to switch heads because the human is looking away or if there are multiple dogs in the shot. I need the best look from each of them, and I can capture that in multiple frames and blend together.

WHAT’S YOUR AVERAGE SALE?

I sell a ton of albums because New Yorkers don’t have a lot of wall space. And anything the client prints they also get the digital image. I tell my clients that printed artwork is the goal, because I want them to have a beautiful image of their dog for years to come. We don’t get our pets for long enough, so I want this to be a piece you have forever.





ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

CAMERA AND LENS: Sony a7R V camera with the Sony 24-70mm F2.8 lens

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "I choose to find the light where it lives rather than create it artificially. In this image, I did just that. I am always seeking to find the light's direction, and on this day I noticed the sun was reflecting off the building in the background skyline, creating a flare, and bouncing off another building behind me, which cast a perfect little spotlight onto the grass. I placed my subject just next to the light with her little dog right in that tiny little spotlight. My pet photography is always about highlighting the personality of pets and my client's relationship to them. This client wanted to be in the images, but didn't want the images to be about her, so this was the perfect way to show this client and her pup in a way that paid homage to their relationship, the dog's personality, and celebrated their life in the city. The Sony system's animal eye detection focus technology allows me to never miss focus on my clients' pets."

expectant. "So I only give a few treats before I switch tactics. I carry squeaky balls and a lanyard of wildlife noises—birds, squirrels, ducks, peacocks—to gain their interest and attention and get those great head tilts and perky ears."

Timing and logistics are also critical, according to Hillenga. Her photo sessions are typically scheduled for 10 a.m. and last about an hour. "It's not the best time for light, but it's the sweet spot for me," she says. "Everyone walks their dog before 9 a.m. and again at noon. The tall buildings provide open shade so I can find pockets of light in nooks and crannies. Anything after noon in the city is crowded and too chaotic for dogs to focus."

Hillenga has enjoyed countless cuddles and kisses from her furry subjects, who represent all dog breeds and training levels. "Dangerous or big dogs don't scare me at all," she says. "Even if I can't pet them or get within five feet, I can get a great photograph. Every dog and every client deserves to have a beautiful image that celebrates their bond, even if the dog is a bit more difficult."

GIVING BACK

Hillenga credits her rescue pitbull mixes Rocco and Nala with making her a better person, and says photographing their unique personalities sparked her pet portrait business. She gives back to the rescue community by offering free "Foster Dog Fridays" portrait sessions in Central Park and hosting fundraising photo booths throughout the year. This pro bono work has paid off, she says, in that at least 40% of her business is from clients who have adopted their pups from the rescue organizations she works with. "If all things are equal," she says, "people want to do business with someone who shares their values and is part of their community."

She also gains business through social media, particularly dog influencers who collaborate with her or tag her account. "Some of those dogs have up to a half million followers! One client posted her





dog's photo session with me, and I gained over 2,000 followers overnight," Hillenga recalls. "Most anyone who's an avid New York City dog person is following my feed, whether or not they currently own a dog. Even though my numbers aren't huge, followers are pre-qualified and very engaged. Every time I post, I get several inquiries."

And yes, Hillenga has photographed the occasional feline. "But no matter how chill and friendly your cat is, the minute I show up with camera, your cat takes one look at the camera and thinks it is dangerous," she says with a laugh. "It takes twice as long to get half the results. There are brilliant cat photographers out there, but I'm just not one of them."



That confidence in her specific genre is one reason Hillenga's third business is the charm. "I now live with a mindset of abundance, not scarcity. Being content in my business is No. 1; money is secondary," she explains. "I stopped thinking I need my business to be bigger to be successful. Now I concentrate on doing what I love and being grateful for what each client chooses to order, because I have recalibrated my metrics for success." •

Suzanne Wright is a freelance writer based in a small arts village in the borderlands an hour south of Tucson.

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NEW YORK CITY IS THE BEST CANVAS.
EVERYWHERE YOU GO IS ICONIC.
EVERY ALLEYWAY OFFERS SOMETHING COOL.
THE WHOLE CITY IS LIKE WALKING THROUGH
A MOVIE SCENE.

”





***On location with landscape photographer
Caleb Kenna*** *By Robert Kiener*

ABOVE IT ALL



IMAGES ©CALEB KENNA / calebkenna.com



It's early October, and I'm in Brandon, a picture-perfect town in central Vermont. The area's celebrated fall foliage is at peak, and the town is packed with camera-toting leaf peepers. It's 5 p.m., the beginning of the golden hour; the sky is cloudless, and everything is cast in a soft, warm light. To make things even more ideal, I'm with much-praised, Vermont-based photographer Caleb Kenna, high atop a hill overlooking Brandon (his hometown) as he's about to launch his DJI Mavic 3 drone and fill me in on how he captures his award-winning, fine art aerial images.

Kenna holds the DJI Mavic remote controller in both hands, taps the screen, and the three-lensed drone, which is sitting on the grass lawn about 50 feet in front of us, responds with a gentle whir as its four propellers lift it straight up into the air. As it soars above the nearby treetops, Kenna tells me, "Remember I told you that when I first began using drones, some eight years ago, I used to fly my drone about as high as it could go, about 400 feet in the sky, then I'd make landscape images, complete with a horizon line?"

As the drone soars overhead and Kenna expertly uses the joysticks to move the drone's



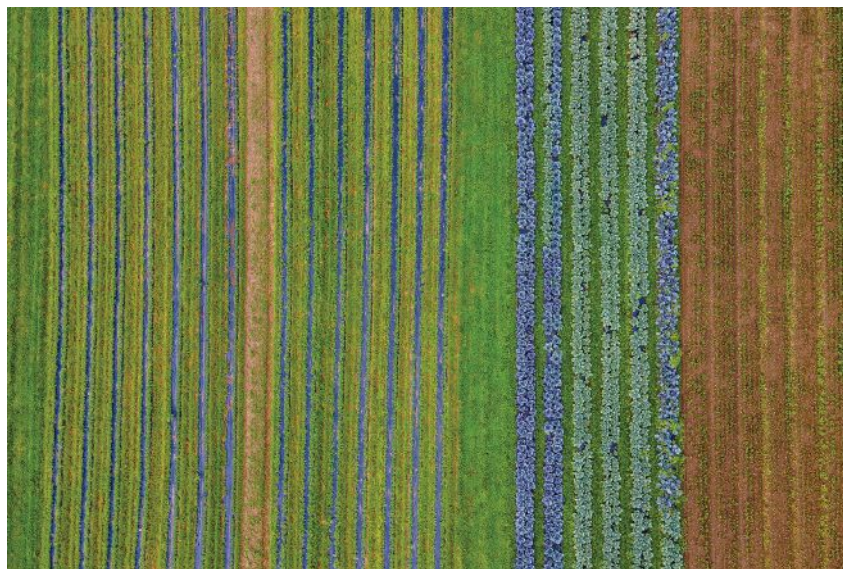
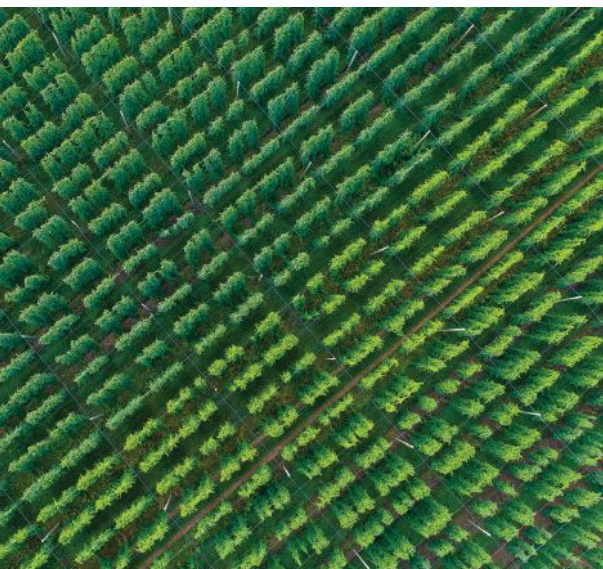


“I had no idea that I’d capture these images after I launched my drone, but that’s part of the magic of this process. You never know what you’ll discover.”

gimbal, or motorized stabilizer, to adjust the lenses, he continues. “I realized that, while my long-range landscape-type pictures were good, I was too high. I was missing so much. So, I started lowering the drone to 200 feet, then 100, then even lower and shot straight down. I was thrilled with what I was discovering. I started capturing details, many of which I hadn’t expected or seen before that blew me away. Without framing the shot by including the horizon, hovering lower and shooting straight down, landscapes became more about patterns, abstractions, and visual mystery.”

He invites me to look over his shoulder as he lowers the drone to some 100 feet over a nearby cornfield. Suddenly, the digital screen on the remote control is filled with an artistic, geometric, almost abstract image of the lush, thick cornfield and its neat rows. “See, with this bird’s eye view you really start to see patterns of the land. There’s beauty everywhere.”

He makes a few adjustments with the joystick to frame the composition and then clicks the shutter release. “Got it,” he tells me. “That’ll be a keeper.”





AERIAL DISCOVERY

Kenna, 55, graduated from San Francisco State University in 1993 and worked as a newspaper photographer in his home state of Vermont as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands and New Mexico before turning to freelance photography some two decades ago.

While he created a wide variety of work (“Whatever helped pay the bills,” he notes), he always had a special interest in landscape photography. “I’d long been interested in aerial photography and I would hire a plane a couple of times a year to shoot in Vermont,” he explains.

“But I wasn’t too happy with the results.” Hiring a plane was expensive, he notes, and there were no guarantees that the weather and light would cooperate. “It was always a risky proposition. You were always pretty high above the ground so there was often a sameness—a distance—to the images.”

Experimenting with his first drone camera in 2017 was liberating. Released from the restrictions of standard cameras, he felt “free as a bird,” he says. “Suddenly I was soaring above the landscape and making new discoveries in places I’d covered many times on the ground.”

He remembers driving near the tiny town of Rupert in southern Vermont and spotting the roof of an old barn rising in a cornfield. “It wasn’t until I flew my drone over the barn that I saw—and photographed—the wonderful patterns of the barn’s slate roof and the swirling rows of corn nearby. It was a moment of aerial discovery. Without the drone, I would have missed the picture.” He was hooked.

While Kenna kept freelancing for clients including occasional assignments for *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Wall Street Journal*, commercial and nonprofit organizations, and others, he

continued to work with drones. He laughs when he remembers how long it took him to feel comfortable operating a joystick and keeping track of his new airborne gear. “I was never a big gamer, so operating a joystick was a challenge. I admit I lost a couple of drones. One got away from me and smashed into a stand of trees; another crash-landed into a creek.”

He kept practicing and improving, and in 2018 qualified as a FAA-certified drone pilot. What he calls his “big break” came in 2020 when *The New York Times* published a 17-image photo essay of his Vermont aerial work in its series called, “The World Through a Lens.” “That really gave me national exposure and brought me both work and recognition,” he explains. Indeed, after seeing his photo essay in *The New York Times*, Schiffer Publishing reached out to him and published a 144-page, hardback collection of 130 of his aerial images, “Art From Above: Vermont,” in 2022.

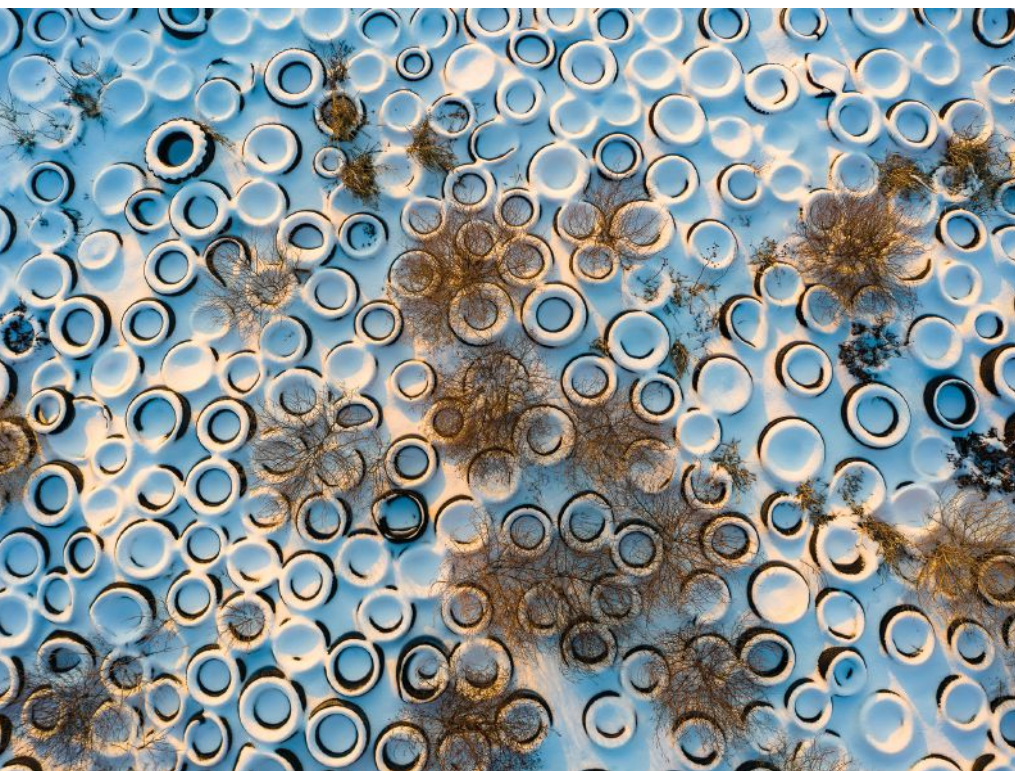
While discussing *The New York Times* photo essay, he admits that he is, like so many other accomplished photographers, always “hustling.” “For example, *The New York Times* didn’t call me and ask to run my images. I put a package together myself and pitched them. I’ve learned that if assignments don’t come to you, you need to make your own assignments. Being a freelancer is exciting, but it’s also challenging.”

Although Kenna has earned national praise as an aerial photographer, he is quick to explain that he prefers the simple label of photographer. “I still love shooting people, places, and things with my Nikon, and I don’t want to be pigeon-holed as only a drone photographer.”

CATCHING THE UNEXPECTED

After Kenna retrieves his DJI Mavic 3 from the grass atop the hill overlooking Brandon, we flip through the various images he’s made over the last 20





minutes. As he looks through photos of farmland; colorful, tight shots of lush foliage; and a few faraway landscapes that feature the Green Mountains and the Taconic Range, he reminds me that much of the drone's appeal is its ability to catch the unexpected.

He flies his drone almost every day, often near his home in Middlebury, Vermont—a region known as “the land of milk and honey” for its abundance of beekeepers and dairy farms. “I’ve often said that these aerial chance discoveries, when you’re putting up your drone to shoot one thing and you see something else, are the most fun,” he explains.

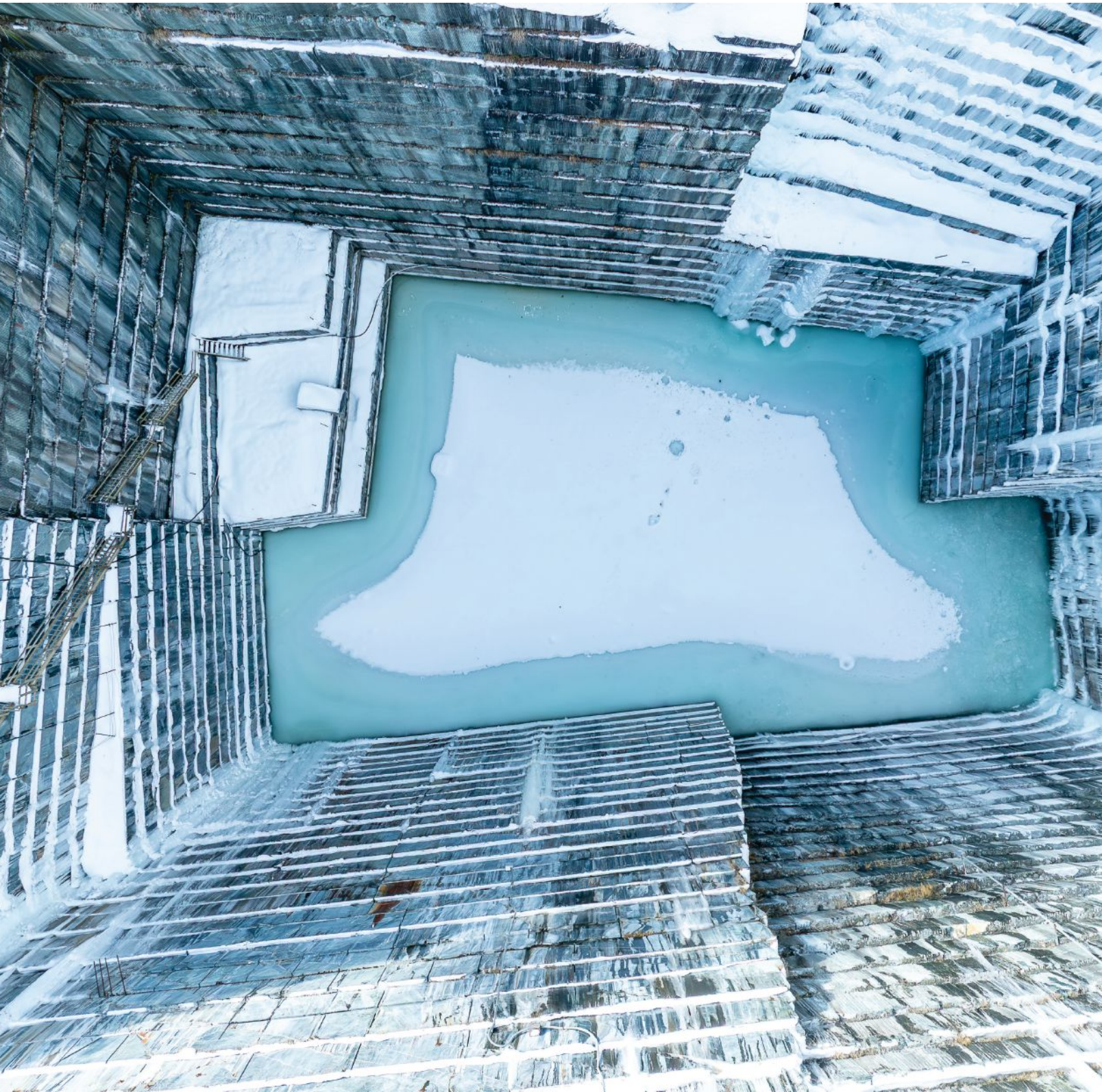
In his nearby studio, Kenna shows me a few aerial images that prove his point. One is a compelling, almost abstract composition, featuring the unlikelyst of subjects: a farm’s massive silage pile, or bunk, that is covered with plastic sheeting held in place by scores of snow-covered used tires. Another is an image of a smattering of hay bales in a colorful, just-plowed farmer’s field. And a photo of solar panels next to a meandering, half-harvested field is an artful study in abstract expressionism. Another eye-catching composition is an overhead view of a scrap metal lot.

“I had no idea that I’d capture these images after I launched my drone,” he says. “But that’s part of the magic of this process. You never know what you’ll discover. Some of my subjects may be trees, hay bales, and even discarded tires, but I hope they become something more—a metaphor of sorts.”

Clearly, Kenna has an eye for that, as *The New York Times* has noted that he can “isolate and elevate mundane objects and present them as if on display.” Kenna has a simpler, perhaps humbler, explanation: “I am so lucky because I live and work in a location where there is beauty everywhere. You just need to go looking for it.” •

Robert Kiener is a writer in Vermont.







EMILY SHACKLETON

Experience the Sounds of Nashville

THE LISTENING ROOM ON THE ROAD



ADAM HAMBRICK

Soak in the talent of Nashville's greatest songwriters at Imaging USA's "The Listening Room on the Road: Writers Room," a special session hosted by Chris Blair, founder of Nashville's The Listening Room Café and host of the "Stories Behind the Songs" podcast.

The session is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 12, at 5 p.m. and will feature live performances from three of the masterminds behind country music's biggest hits: Adam Hambrick (songwriter for Dan + Shay, Justin Moore, Maddie & Tae); Emily Shackleton (songwriter for Carly Pearce's "Every Little Thing," Sara Evans, and Runaway June); and Emmet Stevens Jr. (an emerging artist who has toured with Locash, Josh Turner, and Tyler Farr).

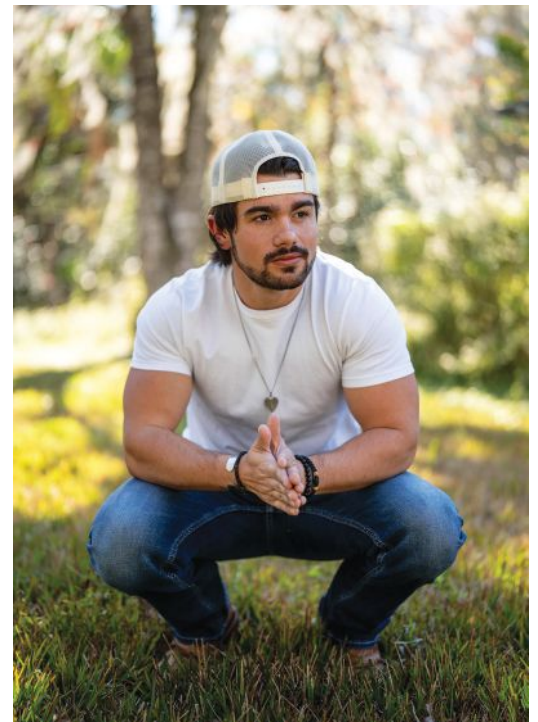
The evening will begin with brief interviews where songwriters share the personal stories behind their songs, and will be followed by live performances. •

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CHRIS BLAIR



EMMET STEVENS JR

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Strange Magic

EXPLORING THE CENOTES OF MAYAKOBA



IMAGES ©SJ ALICE BENNETT / sjalicebennett.com

SJ Alice Bennett's photography takes her beneath the surface of the earth, exploring the primordial twists and turns of underwater cave systems few people see with their own eyes.

Bennett took her first cave diving training in 2012 while living in Thailand. She embraced the rigorous program and set her sights on Mexico, a utopia for cave divers because of clear visibility and picturesque underwater landscapes. In Mexico, Bennett connected with Matt Scantland, a diver and the owner of multiple villas in the Mayakoba Resort of the Yucatán Peninsula, who had taken a

"I WANT TO SHOW
THE BEAUTY OF OUR
NATURAL PLANET."

year off to document the submerged cave systems beneath the resort. With the support of the nearby Rosewood Hotel, he began his project, called "The Cenotes of Mayakoba," in 2020, with the goal of creating a coffee table book and a documentary mapping the cave system. The word "cenote" comes from the Mayan word *ts'ono'ot*, which means "a cavern

filled with water." Cenotes are made visible when the ceiling of a cave collapses, exposing the groundwater below. Over time, acidic rainwater dissolves the limestone rock, creating a vast underground network of cave systems that connect to the ocean. Across the Yucatán Peninsula, cenotes appear as open-air pools, deep lakes, and caves. Read about another cave-diving photographer of this region, Martin Broen, in "Submerged Magic," page 62 in the October 2024 issue.

Scantland hired Bennett to teach a four-day workshop for his team. Shortly after, he asked her to *join* the team, which



included a producer, a director, and three divers, two of whom were underwater camera operators.

When Bennett plunges into the water, she's carrying about 130 pounds of equipment. She also must focus on many crucial, life-saving factors such as oxygen conservation and her body's direction in the water, as well as her connection with her dive partners, she explains. Despite all these considerations, Bennett says the underwater stillness is like meditation. One of her favorite aspects of the project was witnessing the beautiful optical illusions caused by the halocline—the zone where freshwater meets saltwater. As sea levels fluctuate, the halocline moves, dissolving the surrounding rock at different depths and forming new levels of horizontal caves within the larger system.

By the light of her strobe, Bennett saw green, orange, and purple reflected on the surfaces of the rock formations. Together, the team navigated through underwater cathedrals of stalactites and stalagmites. Bennett says she aims for a documentary photography style, not overly staged, but captured as if the caves were naturally lit.

Each guest room at The Rosewood Hotel now features a copy of the 200-page book “The Cenotes of Mayakoba,” and the film also plays on its TVs. The documentary earned a Merit Award



SJ ALICE BENNETT

from the National Speleological Society (NSS), and Bennett also earned multiple Merit Awards and honorable mentions from NSS for her cave photography work.

Today, Bennett is a graphic designer by day and pursues cave photography in her free time. She says she dreams of photographing caves full-time, a goal she moves closer to with each new expedition. In late 2025, she joined a group of divers to document a 170-meter-deep cave in the Texas desert. “I want to show the beauty of our natural planet,” she says. •



★ BINGO ★

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Sing Along to Your Favorite Song at the Closing Party	Vote On Your Favorite Image at the IPC Finale	Attend a Class Outside Your Specialty	Watch a Film at the PhotoVision Theater
Fist Bump a PPA Staff Member	Do Some Hotel Room Yoga After a Long Day	Attend a Bridging the Gap Class	Enter the "Tell Us What You Love" Giveaway

IMAGING USA 2026 BINGO

If you're attending Imaging USA this month at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee, keep this bingo card with you for some extra fun as you navigate the conference.



Michael Allen is a Memphis, Tennessee-based portrait, commercial, and wedding photographer who also works in film and video production, and teaches several types of photography classes throughout the Southeast. These images are from a professional photography workshop he led in New Orleans last year.

"I wanted to get a unique multiple exposure that was trendsetting. This was on a typical street in New Orleans, using a simple background. I wanted movement, energy, and fun. It was created in camera with five shots in multiple exposure mode, with some post-processing in Lightroom and Photoshop.

"For the behind-the-scenes shot, I actually shot the photography group, then turned the camera back to my subjects. If you look closely, you can see all the photographers in the shadows of the image." •



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