

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

P.32 **ADD VIDEO**
Enhance Storytelling

P.41 **SUPERB OPTION**
Tamron 70-180mm F/2.8 Di III

P.46 **RISING STARS**
Meet the New Generation

30 UNDER 30

**Celebrating the Next Generation
of Professional Photography**

OCTOBER 2026

©NORF. AL. SYABI

Unrivaled Turnaround | Handcrafted Quality | Free Overnight Shipping



©Jenn Bartel

Made for What Matters

The moments that shape us deserve more than an online gallery.
From gallery-quality wall art to handcrafted albums, Miller's
transforms meaningful photographs into heirloom-quality pieces
your clients can pass down and around for generations to come.



MILLERSLAB.COM



What Changes When You Get Certified?

More Than Three Letters.

Earning your Certified Professional Photographer (CPP) designation helps you strengthen what you know, fill in what you don't, and build the confidence to stand behind your work—and your value.

STAND OUT

"Earning my CPP has allowed me to distinguish myself from local photographers and provides immediate credibility to clients."

— **Jill Blanchar**
M.Photog., CPP

KNOW YOUR CRAFT

"The CPP process helped me fill in gaps in my education and truly understand the principles behind lighting, posing, and problem-solving."

— **Adelle Lines**
M.Photog., CPP

OWN YOUR VALUE

"My CPP gave me assurance when discussing my pricing, increasing my sales."

— **Carly Sullens**
M.Photog.M.Artist., CPP



GET STARTED:
PPA.com/CPP



PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OF AMERICA

Director of Publications Melanie Lasoff Levs, mlevs@ppa.com

Senior Editor Joan Sherwood, jsherwood@ppa.com

Senior Editor Amanda Arnold, aarnold@ppa.com

Art Director/Production Manager Eryn March, emarch@ppa.com

Editor-at-Large Jeff Kent, jkent@ppa.com

Contributing Editor Ellis Vener

Director of Sales and Strategic Alliances Jasmine Butler, jbutler@ppa.com, (404) 522-8600 x215

Sales Executive Anthony Young, ayoun@ppa.com, (404) 522-8600 x241

Advertising Sales Specialist Melat Tezera, mtezera@ppa.com, (404) 522-8600 x223

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OF AMERICA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Makayla Harris, Cr.Photog.,CPP, mharris@ppa.com

Vice President Larry Lourcey, M.Photog.M.Artist.Cr.,CPP, llourcey@ppa.com

Treasurer Phaneendra Gudapati, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, pgudapati@ppa.com

Board Chair Mark Campbell, M.Photog.Hon.M.Photog.Cr., CPP, mcampbell@ppa.com

Shawon Davis, Cr.Photog., CPP, sdavis@ppa.com

Terri Baskin, tbaskin@ppa.com

Anjana Olson, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, aolson@ppa.com

Marcela Limon, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, mlimon@ppa.com

Shawn Lee, Cr.Photog., slee@ppa.com

Brandon Heiss, bheiss@ppa.com

Jenny Eggers, M.Photog., CPP, jeggers@ppa.com

John Gress, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, jgress@ppa.com

Jeff Galinovsky, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, jgalinovsky@ppa.com

Chief Executive Officer Angela Kurkian, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, akurkian@ppa.com

Chief Financial Officer Jennifer Wilson, CPA, jwilson@ppa.com

Director of Content Marnie Clagett, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, mclagett@ppa.com

Director of Credentialing Rich Newell, M.Photog.Cr., rnewell@ppa.com

Director of Events Melissa Thompson, CMP, mthompson@ppa.com

Director of Information Technology Bryan Dion, bdion@ppa.com

Director of Marketing & Media Strategy Kate Oliver, koliver@ppa.com

Director of Membership Value & Experience Gerard Wright-Bullard, gwright@ppa.com

Director of Publications Melanie Lasoff Levs, mlevs@ppa.com

Director of Sales and Strategic Alliances Jasmine Butler, jbutler@ppa.com

Executive Assistant Lisa Hill, lhill@ppa.com

PPA MEMBER SERVICES

Professional Photographers of America, csc@ppa.com, ppa.com, (800) 786-6277

EDITORIAL OFFICES

Professional Photographer, 229 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 2300, Atlanta, GA 30303-1608 U.S.A., (404) 522-8600

Professional Photographer, official journal of Professional Photographers of America Inc., is the oldest exclusively professional photographic publication in the Western Hemisphere (founded 1907 by Charles Abel, Hon.M.Photog.), incorporating *Abel's Photographic Weekly*, *St. Louis & Canadian Photographer*, *The Commercial Photographer*, *The National Photographer*, and *Professional Photographer Storytellers*.

Opinions expressed by *Professional Photographer* or any of its authors do not necessarily reflect positions of Professional Photographers of America Inc. Acceptance of advertising does not carry with it endorsement by the publisher.

Professional Photographer (ISSN 1528-5286) is published monthly by PPA Publications and Events Inc., 229 Peachtree Street, NE, Ste. 2300, Atlanta, GA 30303-1608. Periodicals postage paid at Atlanta, Ga., and additional mailing offices.

PPA CODE OF ETHICS: PPA members are expected to represent themselves in a professional manner by adhering to the highest levels of integrity in all relationships with colleagues, clients, and the public.

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.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Professional Photographer*, 229 Peachtree Street, NE., Suite 2300, Atlanta, GA 30303-1608.

Copyright 2026, PPA Publications & Events, Inc. Printed in U.S.A.



IMAGING USA

CHARLOTTE, NC
JAN 31–FEB 2

Your First Year Is **FREE!**

**New Full or Full Plus PPA members get a
FREE All-Access Pass to Imaging USA—a \$599 value!**

Don't wait, this offer is only valid for 2027. Learn from top educators, connect with passionate photographers, and test-drive the latest gear in three action-packed days. Whether you're here to learn, network, or get inspired, consider Imaging USA your new creative home.

New members are pre-registered this year,
so start planning your travel and show plan today!

ImagingUSA.com



Offer is valid for first year NEW, Full or Full Plus members based in the U.S. You must maintain a Full or Full Plus membership through January 2027 to qualify for the FREE Imaging USA 2027 All-Access Pass.

Contents

OCTOBER 2026



©MARIA RANDOLPH

68



38



©MOGHUL VEYRON

12



©KSAWERY WROBEL

Features

46 **30 Under 30**
Professional Photographers of America's inaugural recognition of notable and upcoming young photographers

68 **Dancing into Adulthood**
Maria Randolph's images mark an important milestone
By Suzanne Wright

In Every Issue

- 8** Editor's Note
- 16** President's Message
- 19** On the Cover
- 20** Merited
- 78** Perspective
- 80** Community Networks Directory
- 82** Background

Foreground

- 10** Cozying Up with Canines: Hollywood's dog lovers
- 12** Similar Notes: Photography by a musician
- 14** Light Show: Trailing the sun over seasons

Success

- 31** 3 Website Must-Haves: Gary Hughes' top tips to bring in new business
- 32** From Stills to Storytelling: Why it's time to add video to your photography business
By Jeff Kent

The Goods

- 38** Expanding Light Shaping Options: Profoto Hard Reflectors
By Mark Edward Harris
- 41** High Quality, Great Price: Tamron 70-180mm f/2.8 Di III VC VXD G2 Review
By Ellis Vener



Exclusive info and images you won't find in this issue
ppa.com/ppmag



Eyes on the Future

RISING STARS ELEVATE THE INDUSTRY

Last month, I shared how excited I was for our members to meet our first class of 30 Under 30 honorees this month. We are even featuring an image from one of them, Noof Al Siyabi from Oman, on our cover ("On the Cover, page 19). Typically, our covers are from the top 32 images in various categories from the International Photographic Competition. But what better way to illustrate how impactful the next generation of photographers is than to feature one of their cover-worthy images?

Right away, several of us noticed Al Siyabi's image is reminiscent of the photo on *National Geographic* magazine's June 1985 cover by Steve McCurry (featured in the May 2024 issue of this magazine). I almost teared up when I thought about how we are paying homage to that iconic image as we celebrate the gifted eyes creating new art, new memories, and the future of photography.

What strikes me about both these photographers' experiences is how quickly they determined the urgency of a moment and the need to grab their cameras. Al Siyabi says it was the window light reflected in the little girl's eyes that "immediately caught my attention," as well as how her green shawl complemented them. "The combination created a quiet sense of curiosity and mystery," she adds, which compelled her to document the experience. For McCurry, "I noticed this one little girl with these incredible eyes, and I instantly knew that this was really the only picture I wanted to take," he told National Public Radio during a July 2015 interview. When his editor saw "The Afghan Girl," McCurry recalls, he "really leapt to his feet and said, 'That's our next cover.' Occasionally in life and occasionally in my photography, the stars align and everything comes together in a miraculous way."

For PPA and for our 30 Under 30 honorees, the stars have aligned: We were moved by their work, and now we share their stories and images with you. Each member of this first class of 30 Under 30 is now also a PPA member. We are proud to bring these rising stars into the organization as they continue along their life and career journeys. Each of them confidently uses their skills and talents across photography, videography, digital media, and cinematography, telling stories in innovative ways. Honoree Patrick Rogers of Marietta, Georgia, explains how some young creators think when he says, "Because I love creating in so many different avenues, you won't see me only in one particular niche. I believe you can be a jack of all trades and a master of all too."

We have as much to learn from the next generation as they do from us, and I look forward to meeting many of our honorees in person at Imaging USA 2027 in Charlotte, North Carolina. For now, I will proudly display Al Siyabi's stunning cover image alongside the rest of this year's covers on my office wall and think about what the late first lady Eleanor Roosevelt once said: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." •

Melanie Lasoff Levs

Melanie Lasoff Levs
Director of Publications

©PPA

✉ editors@ppa.com

f @OurPPA

📷 @OurPPA

🖥 Exclusive info and images you won't find in this issue
ppa.com/ppmag



Hover your phone camera over the code for unique content that didn't make it into this issue.

ppa.com/ppmag

PPA's
MEMBER
REFERRAL
PROGRAM

TELL
YOUR
Friends
* THEY BELONG *
Here

\$25
FOR
YOU

\$35
OFF
FOR
THEM



PPA.com/Mem2Mem



FOREGROUND

By Amanda Arnold

Cozying Up with Canines

HOLLYWOOD'S DOG LOVERS

How do you capture a celebrity with their guard down? Photograph them with their beloved dog. Pet photographers Charlie Nunn and Raymond Janis, who run Charlie Nunn Photography in West Hollywood, California, created 200 portraits of celebrities with their canine best friends, which they collected into a book, "Hollywood Tails: Famous Faces and the Dogs They Love" (Weldon Owen, an imprint of Insight Editions).

"We didn't have to manufacture much," says Janis of making the portraits. "It's a person and their dog, usually the one being the other feels most at ease around. Our job was just to capture how that showed up naturally."

How they found subjects: The first participants were people in their existing client base.

"After that, it got harder," admits Janis. They used IMBD to track down celebrity publicists and managers, and if that wasn't fruitful, they contacted their potential subjects directly on social media.

"More than once we got a firm 'no' from a rep, then a fast 'yes' once we reached the person directly," Janis explains. When celebrities then shared their portraits on social media, that became "the best introduction [to others] we could ask for."

The importance of quick work:

The biggest hurdle to persuading a subject to sit for a portrait was the perception that it would take hours. "We had to prove we could work fast. Very fast," says Janis. And they did. For example, for actress Kristin Chenoweth, whose schedule was packed, they set up a backdrop at a hotel where she was already in hair and makeup for an event and spent just 10 minutes with her. •



Joel McHale



Simu Liu



Amanda Seyfried



Similar Notes

PHOTOGRAPHY BY A MUSICIAN



Street and portrait photographer Moghul Veyron is also a Hollywood film composer and jazz improv pianist. He discusses how his background in music influences his photography work.



"The key component of writing music for film is guiding the emotion—carefully watching the scene, understanding the intentions of the character, and knowing the unspoken tensions. All of this information is synthesized through the music. When photographing I watch an environment or subject with the same intent, using light as my instrument."



IMAGES © MOGHUL VEYRON / moghulveyron.com

“When writing music, if you’re adding too much, the core of the music is probably weak. Great music is felt through the fundamentals. When you hear a John Williams theme, a few notes can bring a surge of emotion. The few notes I always look for when creating a photograph is the marriage between light, contrast, and emotion. If these ingredients are faithfully there, I will always have a photograph that sparks my interest.” •

Light Show

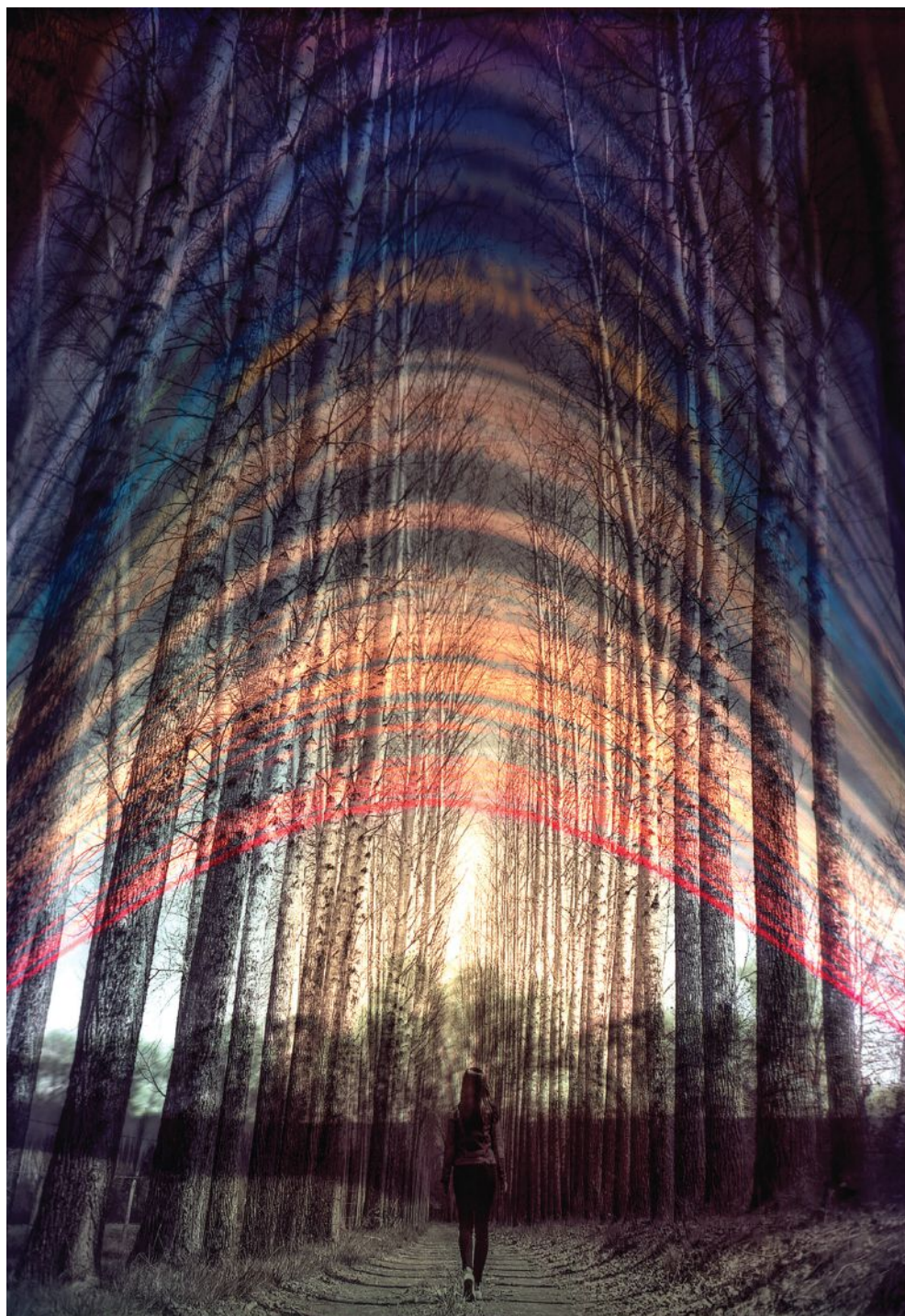
TRAILING THE SUN OVER SEASONS

Imagine a photograph that takes months to make. The solarigraphy photographic technique involves creating a pinhole camera out of a light-tight container, such as an aluminum can or plastic box, and capturing the sun's path across the sky over an extremely long exposure, from a few weeks to multiple months. "Instead of freezing a moment, it compresses the passage of time into a single image," says Chicago-based photographer Ksawery Wrobel of the technique, which he adds has become a "slight obsession" for him.

The camera: Using a fine needle or model-making drill bit, make a small hole in a light-tight container with a black, non-reflective interior. Then, in a sufficiently dark environment, place a sheet of black-and-white light-sensitive photographic paper inside of it, with the emulsion side facing the pinhole. Place the camera pointed toward the sky, making sure it's firmly in position, as any movement will interfere with the exposure. "In the Northern Hemisphere, it is often positioned south in order to capture the daily arcs traced by the sun," Wrobel explains.



Ksawery Wrobel's Eye of Sparrow pinhole camera



IMAGES ©KSAWERY WROBEL / theksawerywrobel.com

Post-production: After a very long exposure of weeks or months, open the camera indoors or under dim light to see the image, which is a negative. To convert the negative into a positive, scan the photographic paper at a high resolution and then use editing software to invert the negative and adjust the levels, contrast, and color balance to enhance the image.

Lessons learned: At first Wrobel used a soda can with light-sensitive paper mounted on the curved inner wall of the can. If a building was in the photo, the structural lines would be curved and the trails of the sun would be distorted, so he began mounting the paper flat inside the can instead. He also found that glossy photographic paper resulted in light reflections that created unwanted vertical streaks in the image, so he changed to matte paper. Eventually he moved on from less discreet soda cans to smaller plain black aluminum cans that wouldn't attract the attention of passersby, who sometimes damaged or removed the soda cans. Above all, he's learned to embrace uncertainty, as environmental conditions make each capture unpredictable.

"What fascinates me most is that such a simple camera can create such extraordinary photographs," says Wrobel. "It feels as if light is performing its own quiet magic inside a small sealed box." •



"WHAT FASCINATES ME MOST IS THAT SUCH A SIMPLE CAMERA CAN CREATE SUCH EXTRAORDINARY PHOTOGRAPHS. IT FEELS AS IF LIGHT IS PERFORMING ITS OWN QUIET MAGIC INSIDE A SMALL SEALED BOX."



Don't Miss Out

THE MOST EXPENSIVE EVENT IS THE ONE YOU SKIP

By Makayla Harris, Cr.Photog., CPP



©PHANEENDRA GUDAPATI

I almost talked myself out of going to my first Imaging USA.

Travel is expensive. Leaving work behind is inconvenient. Big events are exhausting. And if you are anything like me, “networking” ranks somewhere between a root canal and being trapped in an elevator with someone who wants to tell you about their cryptocurrency portfolio.

I was much more comfortable at home. But I went. It was 2017 in San Antonio, Texas, and Mel Robbins was the keynote speaker. I remember watching her walk onstage in a skirt and sneakers and thinking she somehow looked polished, cool, professional, and approachable at the same time. Then she started talking about the “5 Second Rule.” This was before it became the phenomenon it is today. Within the first 30 minutes, I remember thinking, *Is this what I've been missing?*

It wasn't just Mel's talk. It was the energy of the room, the conversations in hallways, the tiny ideas you overhear that suddenly solve a problem you have been thinking about for six months, the people you meet who make you look at your business differently, and apparently, the opportunities to embarrass yourself in front of industry legends.

One night during the conference at a late-night party, I was awkwardly standing around scanning the room pretending to be waiting for someone. I decided to step outside my comfort zone and introduce myself to a stranger. I wanted to practice this whole “networking” thing. I grabbed my drink and saw someone, also scanning the room, in a fancy velvet jacket. *Perfect*, I thought. *That's a conversation starter.*

“Cool jacket,” I told him. I introduced myself and asked what brought him to Imaging USA. “Miller's,” he answered.

There was a pause while my brain caught up. Older gentleman. Fancy velvet jacket. Miller's. Wait. Richard Miller, as in the owner of one of the biggest photo labs in our industry? Cool. Cool, cool, cool. I had just casually wandered up to

Richard Miller and asked him the networking equivalent of, “So, what do you do?” at the party he was hosting, while I sipped my free cocktail. Total face-palm moment.

Later that night, I shared my embarrassing story with the rest of the Miller's Professional Imaging team. Over the years, the Miller's team has become like family, an important company to our business and a tremendous supporter of all my crazy ideas. I could never have anticipated that moment. And that's the point.

When we calculate whether attending an out-of-town event is “worth it,” we usually calculate the obvious costs: the airfare, the hotel, the registration, the days away from work and family, the energy required to walk into a room where we may not know anyone. What we rarely calculate is the opportunity cost of staying home: the friend you never make, the mentor you never meet, the presentation that changes the direction of your business, the ridiculous conversation with the man in the velvet jacket who turns out to be someone you're glad you humiliated yourself in front of. There is comfort in staying where we already know everyone and everything. But comfort rarely introduces us to anything new.

The craziest part is, this wasn't a rare occurrence. Every life-changing milestone I've experienced has been a result of meeting someone I never planned to meet. Some of the most valuable things I have gained from this industry were never listed on an event agenda. They happened over coffee, at dinner, in hallways, at hotel bars, and during conversations I almost didn't have.

So go. Spend the money. Make the effort. Introduce yourself terribly if you have to. Because sometimes the most expensive event is the one you decided not to attend. •

Bonita Springs, Florida-based Makayla Harris is co-founder of The Harris Company, and founder/CEO of ASET: Album & Art Sales and the Printographers Society.



See more from Makayla Harris, Cr.Photog., CPP, on PhotoVision at ppa.com.

FROM PHOTOVISION

ANJ OLSON

NOW PLAYING

PPA.COM/ANJOLSON



MAKE PORTRAITS THAT FEEL TRUE

with Anj Olson



"You're growing as an artist every time you choose to enter into creative play."

Anjana "Anj" Olson is a portrait photographer whose work with children, families, branding, and self-portraiture centers on emotionally driven inspiration.

Her approach blends storytelling, curiosity, and most importantly: creative play and trust. This method helps her clients reveal something authentic to the camera.

5 WAYS TO CREATE HONEST CONNECTION

START WITH THE STORY.

Before thinking about the final product, ask what your client wants to remember and what makes them feel most like themselves.

1

MAKE ROOM FOR PLAY.

Give people something to do. Props, games, or music can create space for authentic expression.

2

KEEP PEOPLE MOVING.

Walking, turning, swaying, or looking away can help clients focus less on posing and settle into something more natural.

3

BE INTENTIONAL.

Choose light, color, and props with purpose. Each creative choice should deepen the story.

4

CHOOSE HONESTY OVER PERFECTION.

Technical skill matters, but still try to leave room for the small, unpolished moments that make portraits feel personal.

5

KNOW WHAT YOUR CLIENTS VALUE

PPA consumer research shows that style is the most important attribute family portrait clients consider when choosing a photographer. Relationship building is also high on the list. Having a client-centered approach to your work and a distinct style will help to attract clients who want to book their next session.

[PPA.com/Research](https://ppa.com/research)



Watch Anj's portrait lessons and capture clients' authentic selves.

[PPA.com/AnjOlsonTips](https://ppa.com/AnjOlsonTips)



Green Cover

Noof Al Siyabi

Noof Al Siyabi Photography
Al Amerat, Oman

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "I was originally photographing someone else, and this girl happened to be with them at the time," explains Noof Al Siyabi, one of PPA's 30 Under 30 honorees. "While I was taking the photograph, she was standing near a window, and the light reflecting in her eyes immediately caught my attention. I was also drawn to the way the green shawl complemented her eyes. The combination created a quiet sense of curiosity and mystery in her expression, so I asked her if I could take her portrait."

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS 5D Mark III, Canon EF 50mm f/1.8 STM lens

EXPOSURE: 1/125 second at f/2.8, ISO 500

LIGHTING: Natural window light from the subject's right side complemented by a studio flash positioned slightly forward and angled toward the subject from the same side, used as a subtle fill light.

POST-CAPTURE: Al Siyabi processed the image in Adobe Lightroom, adjusting for exposure, contrast, and colors to bring out details. "One of my approaches to editing is to emphasize fine details, especially the eyes," she explains, "so I enhanced the eyes and the catchlight within them." She also refined the skin tones and enhanced the green in the shawl while strengthening the color and contrast.



©NOOF AL SIYABI



OUR COVERS: *Professional Photographer* staff chooses each month's cover image from the top 32 images across each category in the International Photographic Competition. Learn more about the International Photographic Competition on **PhotoVision** at **ppa.com**.



©JEFF LEIMBACH / jphoto-graphic.com, jeffleimbachphotography.com

Toadstool Hoodoo

Jeff Leimbach

JLPhotoGraphic
Orlando, Florida

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS
R5 Mark II, Canon RF15-35mm
F2.8 L IS USM lens

EXPOSURE: 20 seconds at f/4,
ISO 3200

LIGHTING: A Luxli LED at 1% on
the subject at 45 degrees

POST-CAPTURE: Standard
edits were made in Adobe
Lightroom.



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
Watch "Inside the Image" Merit Image Reviews on **PhotoVision** at ppa.com.

Throw Your Hands Up!

Patrick Gibson

Patrick Gibson Photography
Danville, Virginia

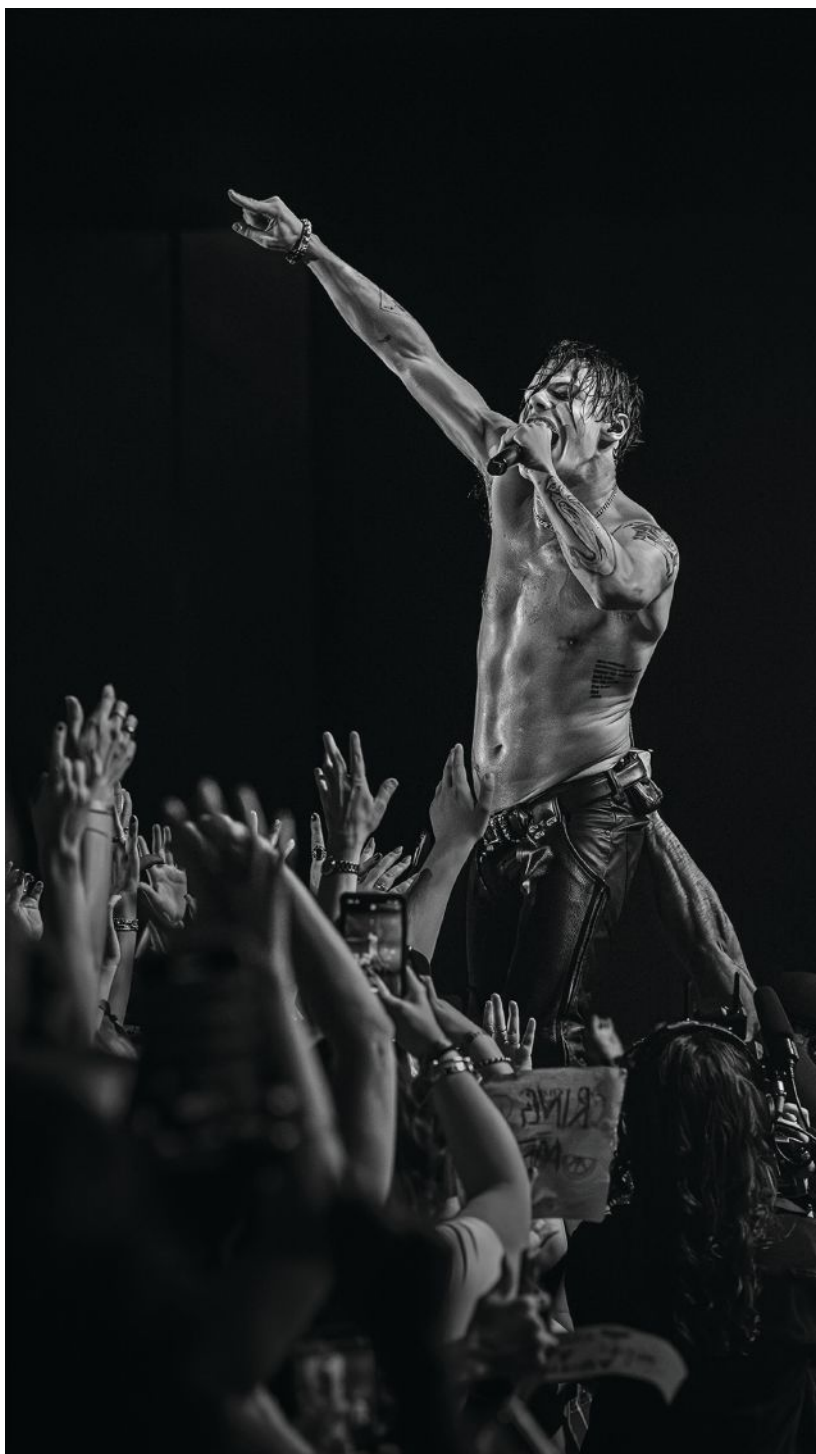
PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "We had already finished our approved shooting time for the concert, but about midway through the show, Yungblud moved out toward the crowd and the entire room shifted," says Patrick Gibson. "We were no longer actively photographing the concert, but I saw the moment unfolding from the side of the room and knew I had to react fast. I quickly lifted my camera, framed it from where I was standing, and captured the image as he reached out over the crowd with everyone's hands in the air."

CAMERA & LENS: Nikon Z 6II,
Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S lens

EXPOSURE: 1/250 second at f/3.2,
ISO 2500

LIGHTING: Available light

POST-CAPTURE: In Adobe Photoshop, Gibson processed the image in black and white with contrast and tonal adjustments to emphasize the stage lighting, the performer, and the crowd. He used selective dodging and burning to guide the viewer's eye, cleaned up minor distractions, and refined the overall contrast and sharpness while keeping the image true to the live concert atmosphere. Read more about Gibson on page 54.



©PATRICK GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY / iamgphography.com

Révérence

Mark Schermeister, M.Photog., CPP

Studio1761

Boulder Junction, Wisconsin



©MARK SCHERMEISTER / markschermeister.com

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "This was initially a series of images to capture the subject in arabesque; when she paused to adjust a ribbon on her pointe shoe, she looked up," explains Mark Schermeister. "We, the creative team, asked her to pose in *révérence*, a deep, slow curtsy that indicates respect and gratitude. Only one exposure was needed."

CAMERA & LENS: Sony Alpha 7R III, Sony FE 70-200mm F2.8 GM OSS lens

EXPOSURE: 1/200 second at f/16, ISO 100

LIGHTING: Two Paul C. Buff Einstein 640 strobes in 64-inch white umbrellas were placed as close to the subject as possible to create the largest possible relative light source. One additional Einstein 640 in a Paul C. Buff beauty dish was placed directly in front of the subject at the camera position, bounced off a low white ceiling over the subject and onto the seamless paper background. "This is an example of how a problem—a low ceiling—can be used to the photographer's advantage," Schermeister says.

POST-CAPTURE: Using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom, he did minor retouching to clean scuff marks, stray hairs, and minor variations in skin tone, and applied a background mask to even out the tonal values.

IMAGING USA

CHARLOTTE, NC
JAN 31-FEB 2

IMAGINGUSA.COM



ACCESS
GROWTH

ACCESS EXPERTS

We get very caught up in the day-to-day grind of running our businesses, but there's something to be said for stepping outside of your everyday life to recharge your energy and invest in your long-term success.

If you invest your time into attending Imaging USA, you're more apt to take what you've learned and put it into practice in a way that moves your business forward.

—JENNIFER HILLENGA
2027 IMAGING USA SPEAKER

JENNIFER HILLENGA M.PHOTOGRAPHER
Dogtography: Building a Pet Brand

Pre-Con



New Speaker

RUBY JEAN

Building a Photography Brand People Care
About: Lessons from The Goddess Project

SPONSORED BY: THE BOUDOIR ALBUM

Pre-Con



New Speaker

ABHI SARKAR

Luxury Without Borders: Photographing
Multicultural Weddings with Authority,
Respect & Representation



ALISON CARLINO CR.PHOTOGRAPHER, CPP
Combining Traditional to Trending:
Team Sports & Media Day

BIG IDEAS REAL-WORLD SKILLS FRESH WAYS TO GROW

Bold ideas. Practical takeaways. New possibilities. At Imaging USA, learn directly from industry experts who'll help you sharpen your skills, work smarter and build a stronger photography business.



New Speaker

GUSTAVO POMAR

Tu Mirada Creativa / "Your Creative Gaze"

Pre-Con

IMPARTIDO EN ESPAÑOL TAUGHT IN SPANISH



BILL MANNING

Film Photography in the Digital Age

Pre-Con



New Speaker

Pre-Con

JENNIFER STITT M.WED.PHOTOG.
Level Up Your AI Workflow: The Simple Social
Media Shortcut for Photographers

The speakers were phenomenal. It was a great networking event to meet amazing photographers in person and talk with people who actually understand what you're talking about."

— JENNIFER BRANDES
2026 IMAGING USA ATTENDEE



SEE THE FULL SPEAKER LINEUP
IMAGINGUSA.COM/SPEAKERS

ARRIVE EARLY LEARN MORE CONNECT WITH THE EXPERTS

Imaging USA's Pre-Convention Classes are your opportunity to immerse yourself in the topics most important to your photography and business. From courses on specific skills like lighting, posing, film and video to social media, marketing and any niche you can imagine—don't miss your chance to learn first-hand from the industry's top experts.



EXPLORE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

GROW YOUR PORTFOLIO

PRACTICE IN REAL-TIME

Take your learning to the next level with more hands-on opportunities than ever.

With 30 photo walks and 28 demo stage sessions, you'll witness experts put lighting, posing, gear, workflow and creative direction into action right in front of you.

Bring your camera and get in on the experience. Discover new techniques, experiment with new tools and create portfolio-worthy images on guided photo walks designed to inspire ideas you can take home.

Level up your experience with:

- 30 photo walks
- 28 demo stage sessions
- Immersive learning with industry leaders
- Styled models and real portfolio-building opportunities
- A chance to test gear, solidify new skills and create alongside your peers



I love connecting with other photographers and seeing us all build our skills together.

—DANA DAVIS
2026 IMAGING USA ATTENDEE

ACCESS SKILLS

ImagingUSA.com

TAKE TIME TO CELEBRATE!

Join us at the NASCAR Hall of Fame to end Imaging USA on a high note at the Closing Party!

Toast to all you learned and the connections you made with a night of music and dancing as we wrap up an unforgettable week.

**Tuesday, February 2
6:30pm**

NASCAR Hall of Fame



ACCESS
CONNECTION

BOOK EARLY TO STAY CLOSE TO THE ACTION

Make your travel plans early for the best selection of hotels. Imaging USA offers 14 official hotel options near the Charlotte Convention Center, with a variety of rates, amenities, and styles to fit your stay.

Book through ImagingUSA.com to access official hotel rates and avoid third-party booking scams. Rooms closest to the convention center and offered at the best rates fill quickly, so plan ahead—especially if you're traveling with friends, classmates or coworkers.

Join us in Charlotte—a vibrant destination filled with creative energy, walkable Uptown experiences, great dining, public art and plenty of photo-worthy backdrops.

When you're not taking classes, networking, exploring the Expo or hanging out at the Hub, make time to experience the city. From skyline views and colorful neighborhoods to murals, restaurants and local culture, Charlotte offers inspiration around every corner.

Courtesy of charlottesgotatlot.com

EXPLORE ALL CHARLOTTE HAS TO OFFER
IMAGINGUSA.COM/TRAVEL



\$100 EARLY-BIRD SAVINGS END SOON REGISTER BY OCTOBER 31

All-Access Passes For PPA Members Are Only \$299

PPA members who register by October 31 will save \$100—double last year's savings!

Bring Your Friends

PPA members can add up to two guests by October 31 for only \$199 each. Invite a coworker, friend, or fellow photographer to discover Imaging USA with you. With a full non-member All-Access Pass priced at \$599, the Buddy Pass makes it easier to share the learning, connections, and inspiration.

REGISTER TODAY

Brought to you by



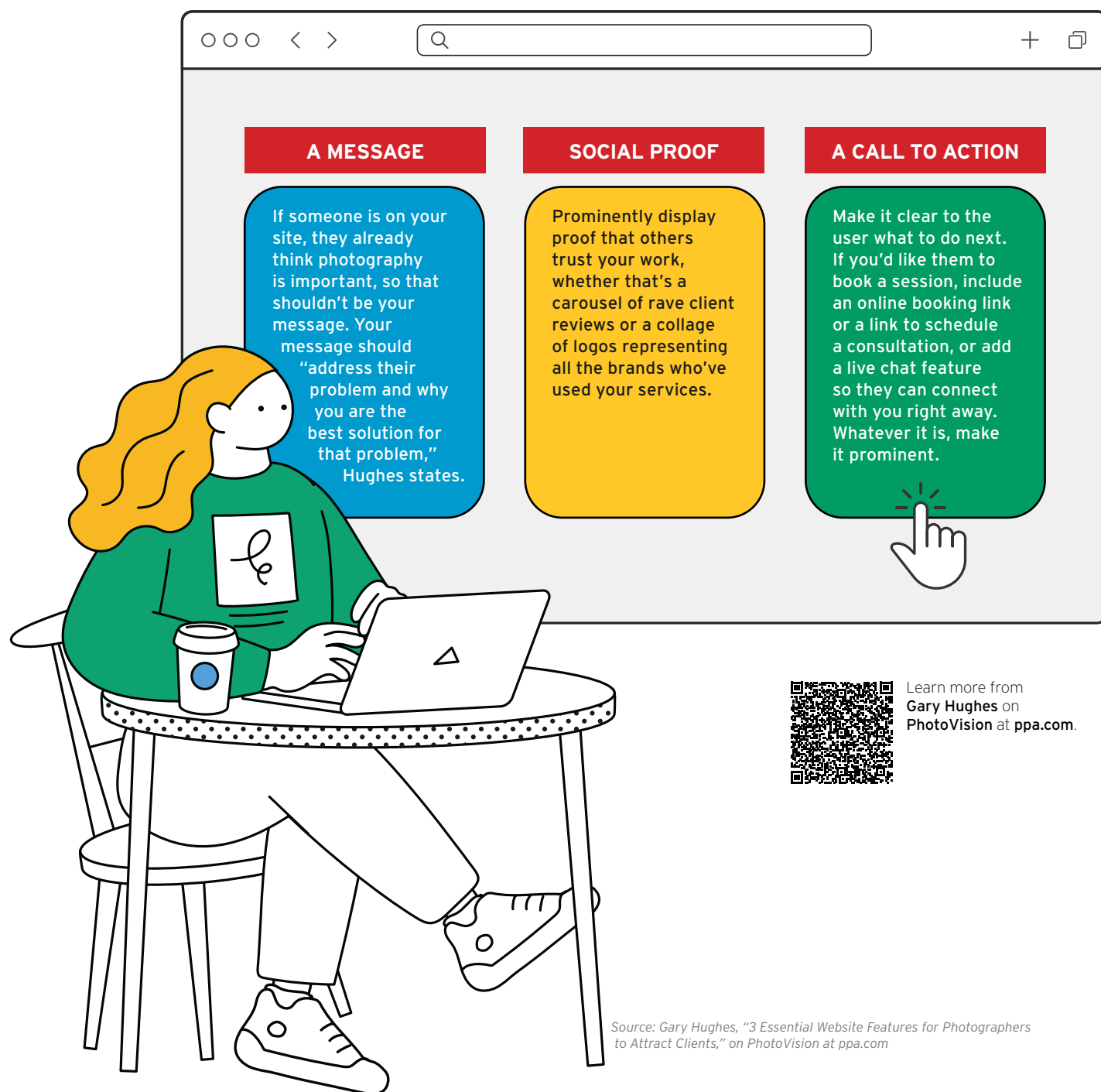
IMAGING USA

ImagingUSA.com/Register



3 Website Must-Haves

Want your website to bring you new business? Include these three things, according to photographer and PPA PhotoVision instructor Gary Hughes.



Learn more from
Gary Hughes on
PhotoVision at ppa.com.

Source: Gary Hughes, "3 Essential Website Features for Photographers to Attract Clients," on PhotoVision at ppa.com

From Stills to Storytelling

WHY IT'S TIME TO ADD VIDEO TO YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS

By Jeff Kent



IMAGES © JEFF CARPENTER / readylightmedia.com



JEFF CARPENTER

If you've been putting off adding video to your photography business, you're not alone. Plenty of photographers keep video at arm's length, treating it as a separate industry that requires a distinct skill set, an additional gear bag, and another professional identity.

Nashville, Tennessee-based commercial portrait and headshot photographer, videographer, and educator Jeff Carpenter, Cr.Photog., understands this reticence. That was him not long ago: unsure about jumping into a new discipline, and wary of the gear and technical considerations. But as clients

increasingly requested video along with his photography bookings, he realized he was leaving money on the table.

As he started adding video services, Carpenter learned that what often prevents photographers from diving into this unfamiliar medium is more a mental block than equipment or expertise. Once photographers get past the hurdle, a panorama of new opportunities awaits, he says. Today, videography makes up about 50% of Carpenter's business, a lucrative add-on that has helped him dramatically expand the level of service he provides. He will

be sharing his experiences and tips at Imaging USA 2027 (see sidebar, page 34). “It’s not as daunting of a task as most photographers think,” he says. “We’ve already got most, if not all, of the gear that you would need to at least get the ball rolling. And we understand light and composition and storytelling. You’re really just tiptoeing around an industry that your toes are already in.”

TELL A BETTER STORY

Video extends the narrative element that many commercial, wedding, and portrait photographers consider central to their work, Carpenter explains. Events like weddings are natural fits for video coverage, and commercial or product work translates easily into short-form video. Fitness and lifestyle clients benefit from movement-based content that shows a product in action. Portrait and headshot videos need a clear purpose, whether that’s a video resume accompanying a corporate headshot or behind-the-scenes footage that tells the story of a particular portrait session.

“I’ve got clients who ask me to tell the story about what their company does as another way to reach their potential clientele,” says Carpenter. “Obviously, you can do that with photos, but video provides another way to communicate that story in a way that can be easier for today’s audiences to digest.”

BUILD THE VIDEO GEAR BAG

One of the biggest myths about videography is that it requires an investment in gear. Carpenter suggests that photographers leverage what you already have, with a few strategic additions.

A camera you already own. Most professional DSLRs from the last decade



“RIGHT NOW, THERE IS A LOT OF NEED FOR VIDEO, AND YOUR CLIENTS ARE PROBABLY LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY WORK. WHY NOT YOU?”



Watch Jeff Carpenter's educational videos on PhotoVision on ppa.com



JEFF CARPENTER AT IMAGING USA

Jeff Carpenter plans to dig deeper into the art, the business, and the why of video at an Imaging USA 2027 pre-conference session, "Becoming a Hybrid Photographer: Adding Video Without Starting Over," Saturday, Jan. 30, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Attendees can expect hands-on video demonstrations alongside guidance on the business side of the transition. imagingusa.com

will shoot high-quality video that works well for social media and typical client uses.

A way to shape light. Natural light works great for simple video sessions, "and we all have a window," says Carpenter. The next step is an investment in a continuous light system to provide more consistency. But in a pinch, many strobes have an LED function that will get you through a video session. Carpenter sometimes uses the LED function that's built into his Profoto strobes for simple talking-head videos, rather than bringing a dedicated lighting rig.

A decent microphone. "Audio makes up 80%, if not more, of video," Carpenter says. "If the audio is bad, it's really easy for viewers to check out." The solution could be as simple as clip-on pocket mics that will sync to a smartphone or plug directly into a camera. DJI and SmallRig both offer affordable wireless models that work well for an entry-level videographer kit.

Affordable editing software. Carpenter recommends DaVinci Resolve, Blackmagic Design's editor, which he says does what most photographers-turned-videographers need. It has a free download version with no watermark and no meaningful export limits. The upgraded Studio versions bring extra features for a little under \$300.

More storage. Digital storage is an area many new videographers overlook. A multi-camera video interview can eat up a terabyte by itself, says Carpenter. His recommendation: Repurpose old hard drives into an external enclosure, invest in networked storage, and/or shoot in a standard (non-log) profile to save space when you don't need the extra flexibility in post.

A WORKFLOW THAT WON'T WEAR YOU OUT

Carpenter is the first to admit that organization isn't his natural strength, but adding video forced him to be more disciplined. That discipline has, in turn, improved his photography, he notes. Carpenter now runs detailed discovery and pre-production calls with clients so everyone knows what to expect. At the session, Carpenter keeps photography and video work separated into distinct blocks rather than switching back and forth between media. "If you're constantly going from photo to video to photo to video, it just gets confusing," he says. Splitting the session—photo first, then video, or vice versa—makes life easier and allows for a more concentrated creative approach. Carpenter also runs separate camera systems for each discipline (Panasonic for video, Canon for photo), though he's quick to note that's a personal preference, not a rule.

Everyone's workflow will be different, so the key is to borrow ideas from photographers who've made the transition rather than copy them, he says. "Adopt what works for you and customize it to your style and approach."

MARKET VIDEO

Carpenter suggests starting to use video with clients with whom you already have a strong relationship. Offer to tell their story or film an event for them. The built-in trust removes the friction of a first video project. By approaching video this way, your existing clientele serves as a springboard to launch your video services to a wider audience. Share the portfolio-worthy videos you create on social media and your website. Include them in email marketing and other materials. Show the kind of work you want



to do and let your audience know you're available for the expanded services.

When you do add video as a paid service, particularly as an add-on to a photo session, put a price on it and list it on the invoice. "That way your clients know they're not just getting it for free," says Carpenter. "It's important to set those expectations ahead of time."

FIND YOUR WHY

Not every photographer needs to become a full-fledged videographer. You may prefer to record the footage yourself and

outsource editing or you may hire a dedicated videographer to help cover events while you focus on the still images. What matters most is having a genuine reason for adding video: client demand, marketing potential for your studio, or the appeal of telling a more comprehensive story. Contemplate that *why* to determine if video is right for you. If it is, there's a marketplace waiting for you. "Right now, there is a lot of need for video, and your clients are probably looking for people who can provide high-quality work," says Carpenter. "Why not you?" •

IMAGINGUSA

Attend Jeff Carpenter's pre-con class and/or platform class about videography at Imaging USA 2027 in Charlotte, North Carolina. imagingusa.com

Your Community Has a Story to Tell

Every workshop, meetup, class, and conversation shows what makes PPA's Community Networks so powerful: photographers learning together, supporting one another, and building connections that last.

Now, we want to help share those moments.



Florida Community Network Book Club Meetup



WPPA Connection Annual Convention in Casper, Wyoming

Member Voices is a new way for Community Networks and Community Network Schools to submit photos and stories from their local events, workshops, and gatherings. Submissions may be featured across PPA channels to celebrate the people, places, and experiences that bring our community to life.

Show us the education.

Show us the collaboration.

Show us the connections happening in your network.

Because when you share your story, you help inspire the next member to show up, get involved, and feel like they belong.

Submit Your Community Network Photos and Stories
[PPA.com/Voices](https://ppa.com/Voices)



Expanding Light Shaping Options

PROFOTO HARD REFLECTORS

By Mark Edward Harris



Profoto's new hard reflectors—the PowerBeam, MaxiZoom, and MiniZoom—are designed to boost output and produce a crisp light with a distinct fall-off. All three were created for use on Profoto's flat-front flashes and point-source LEDs. In the studio, they can help shape contrast and mood, and at outdoor locations, give photographers the ability to light subjects and overpower the sun at greater distances. The reflectors can zoom out from a focused light with a well-defined fall-off to a wider light spread across the image area.

The PowerBeam Reflector in particular has been designed to maximize power output and long throw with Profoto's flatfront 100mm lights such as their B30 battery powered monolight, adding up to 3.5 stops of power. It concentrates the light into a tight, focused beam of 20 degrees with minimal spill and smooth edges. The PowerBeam is compatible with Profoto 337mm grids and barndoors for additional light shaping options and comes in a protective reflector case for secure transport and storage.

To test the reflectors, I turned my townhouse into a temporary studio using Foldable V-Flats on either side of my seamless. The flats are black on one side and white



on the other so converting the set from moody to high key can be done quickly and easily.

In one of my tests, I used the PowerBeam Reflector on a B30 head as a key light and a MaxiZoom Reflector on a second light on a small stand directly behind my subject to create a graduated background. In its spot position, the MaxiZoom produces a 25-degree beam and boosts light output by up to two f/stops. I went the opposite direction and slid the reflector back on the strobe head to produce a wider, softer beam of light onto the dark gray seamless. The focused key light worked well to create an impactful portrait of wealth advisor/photographer Andrew Jurun by bringing out his facial features while the backlight helped separate his dark hair and black turtleneck from the background. To slightly soften some of



IMAGES ©MARK EDWARD HARRIS / markedwardharris.com

I used the PowerBeam Reflector on a B30 head as a key light and a MaxiZoom Reflector on a second light on a small stand directly behind my subject to create a graduated background. I softened some of the distinct shadows on his face by using a Westcott Eyelighter on a low stand in front of him.



I used the same simple two-light setup to photograph a canine friend.

the distinct shadows on his face, I placed a Westcott Eyelighter on a low stand in front of him.

I used the same basic setup to do a portrait of a four-legged canine friend. The PowerBeam Reflector proved not only how well it could shape light but how powerful it was. For the portrait of

Andrew, I turned the B30's power to its lowest setting and still was able to get an ISO 100 setting with my Nikkor Z 85mm f/1.2 S lens set to f/4.5 while syncing at 1/200 second. This means I could have had an extremely fast recycling time if needed.

This simple two-light setup is

designed to create a bit of drama since personality and intensity can more often be found in the shadows. In situations where the goal is to have flawless skin, the Profoto White Softlight Beauty Dish Reflector can be swapped in as the key light.

The most demure of the three new hard reflectors in Profoto's arsenal is the ultra-compact and lightweight MiniZoom Reflector that, with its optimized reflective pattern, boosts light output by up to 1.2 f/stops. For solo travel and location photographers or those who need to hike into remote areas, this might be the reflector of choice since it's small enough to remain mounted on a Profoto light even when packed in a bag. With 48 states and more than a hundred countries visited so far during my four-decade career, I'm acutely aware of the balancing act photographers face when packing for travel. As with its larger brethren, the MiniZoom, because of Profoto's adjustable mount, offers effortless fine-tuning zoom control.

Whether you work in the studio or the great outdoors, light control is the name of the game, especially for those whose work ethic does not sync with a "We'll fix it in post" attitude. New tools for old school approaches to photography such as Profoto's hard reflectors are always appreciated. •

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

High Quality, Great Price

TAMRON 70-180MM F/2.8 DI III VC VXD G2 REVIEW

By *Ellis Vener*



IMAGES ©ELLIS VENER / ellisvener.com



COURTESY TAMRON

If you are a Nikon Z or Sony E-mount camera user in the market for a 70-200mm f/2.8 lens, you have a not-so-easy choice to make. The Tamron 70-180mm f/2.8 Di III VC VXD G2, optically and mechanically, delivers excellent performance while being substantially smaller and lighter than the Nikon and Sony 70-200mm f/2.8 lenses. That's great, but there are compromises. For photographers watching their bottom line, the extremely competitive price—\$1,099 and \$1,149, about one-third the MSRP of either the Sony or Nikkor Z competition—might make choosing a no-brainer. The pool is deep, so let's dive in.

You may not have thought about the letter designations in a lens model name, but they tell you more about the lens. Di III is Tamron's designation for lenses made exclusively for full-frame mirrorless cameras. VC is short for Vibration Canceling technology. It works well; I was able to reliably make acceptably sharp photos at 180mm when handholding down to shutter speeds as low as 1/15 second. Voice-Coil Extreme-Torque Drive, Tamron's name for a linear focus motor, has mercifully been abbreviated to VXD. Both auto and manual focus are as fast and precise as your camera allows, and with the Nikon Z6III, subjects snap into focus with near-instantaneous speed. Finally, the G2 tag indicates that this is not only a second-generation lens but also one of Tamron's "Daisangen" lenses. Daisangen translates as "Big Three Dragons," a reference to a highly valued hand in Japanese Riichi Mahjong. The other two dragons of the VXD G2 triad are a wide-angle zoom, the 16-30mm f/2.8 G2, and a mid-range zoom, a 28-75mm f/2.8.



With the Daisangen trinity, Tamron set out to make smaller, lighter, and less expensive alternatives to Nikon and Sony's trinity of f/2.8 full-frame zooms. By comparison, you can purchase all three lenses in Tamron's trinity for less than the price of either the current Sony or Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 lenses. The Tamron lenses do not have the physical bulk of the rival OEM versions, and all three G2 lenses take 67mm filters. As all lenses in this class are known for their superb image quality, you need to pair them with equally good filters, which are not cheap. Since the G2s use the relatively small 67mm filter size, going with the Tamrons can save you even more money.

You also must measure cost and weight savings against what you give up. With the Tamron 70-180mm f/2.8 G2, the three most obvious things you'll find missing compared to the Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S II are: the extra 20mm at the long end, a rotating tripod mount, and the lens not needing to physically extend to zoom. On a full-frame 45-megapixel Nikon or a 60- or 68-megapixel Sony camera, you have enough resolution to crop to make up for the less-than-10% focal length difference for all but the most demanding needs, and even fully extended, the Tamron is roughly an inch shorter than the Nikkor and a half-inch shorter than the current Sony FE 70-200mm f/2.8. There are also accessory solutions for supporting the barrel of the lens if that is critical for you.

The Tamron 70-180mm f/2.8 G2 is a pleasure to use. The length of the main barrel makes hand-held photography a breeze. With my left hand cradling the lens, my thumb and index finger control the wide zoom ring, allowing me to go from 70 to 180mm with a short (about 60 degrees) twist of the ring, and my ring and little finger fall on the narrower focus ring. For this class of lens, its low weight and small size make it easier to handhold and travel with than the

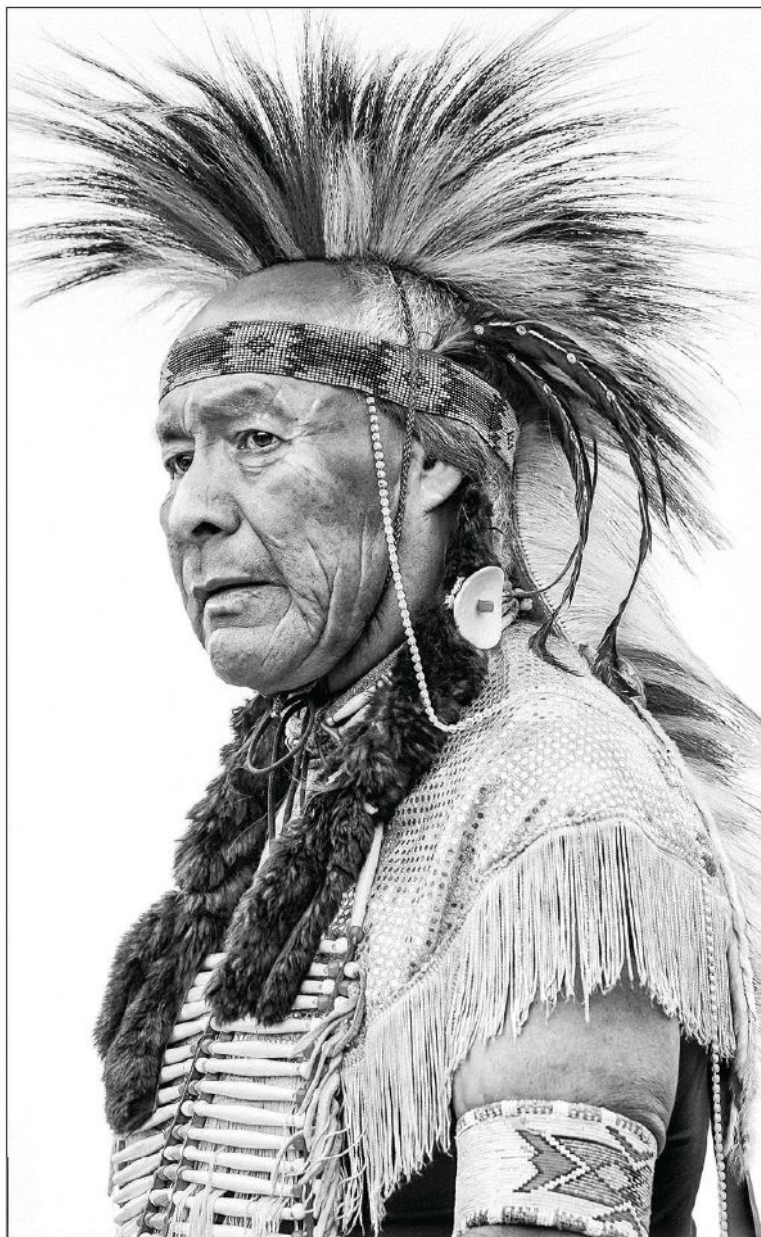


Nikon or Sony 70-200mm f/2.8. Because the lens extends as the focal length increases, using the optional lock switch at the 70mm position is a nice feature for keeping the lens compact when it is packed up or when you are walking with it. When manually focusing, rotating the focusing ring clockwise takes you toward infinity.

Image quality, even in difficult lighting, is superb. When stopped down, the curved edges of the aperture blades give out-of-focus areas, particularly highlights, a pleasingly soft-edged quality. Flare is not quite as well suppressed as it is with a Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S II, but unless there is a light source just outside the field of view, the difference between the two lenses is minimal. Overall sharpness and definition are best at f/5.6, but these qualities hold up surprisingly well across the entire f/2.8 to f/16 range. Center-to-corner brightness fall-off is close to nonexistent at all focal lengths and f/stops. Its optical and mechanical qualities make it excellent for portraits, and as a great general-purpose out-and-about lens.

Tamron has made a great lens at an extremely competitive price. •

Ellis Vener is a commercial and portrait photographer based in Atlanta.



© Rebecca Pickrel

Work toward your PPA degree, one image at a time.

Enter the November Merit Image Review by October 31.

PPA.com/MIR



 zno

30%
Off Sitewide



*One-time use only. Offer can not be combined with other discounts and does not apply to shipping or taxes. Excludes Little Series Products and Studio Samples. Expires **01/31/2027**. Visit zno.com/event/holiday for more.

 ZNO CLOUD

Zno Instant

Instant Gallery Delivery for
Event Photographers



- Share photos during live events
- Branding, Estore, Printing
- Free mobile tethering kit



[cloud.zno.com/
instant-photo-gallery](https://cloud.zno.com/instant-photo-gallery)

30 UNDER 30

Welcome to PPA's first class of 30 Under 30 honorees.

Earlier this year, PPA put out the call to feature the next generation of photographers and visual media creators. We received almost 100 submissions, which a small team of PPA staff (including professional photographers) judged on their stories and image quality. Those chosen represent rising stars under the age of 30 in photography, film, media, photography entrepreneurship, and photography-adjacent professions. They are an inspiring and diverse lot, tackling personal and professional challenges, running successful businesses, solving problems, doing good in their communities and in the world, and mentoring others, all while creating beautiful and inspiring work in the many niches of image making. *Professional Photographer* is proud to share these 30 Under 30 honorees' stories and photos.

©GABRIEL PEREZ SILVA





Gabriel Perez Silva

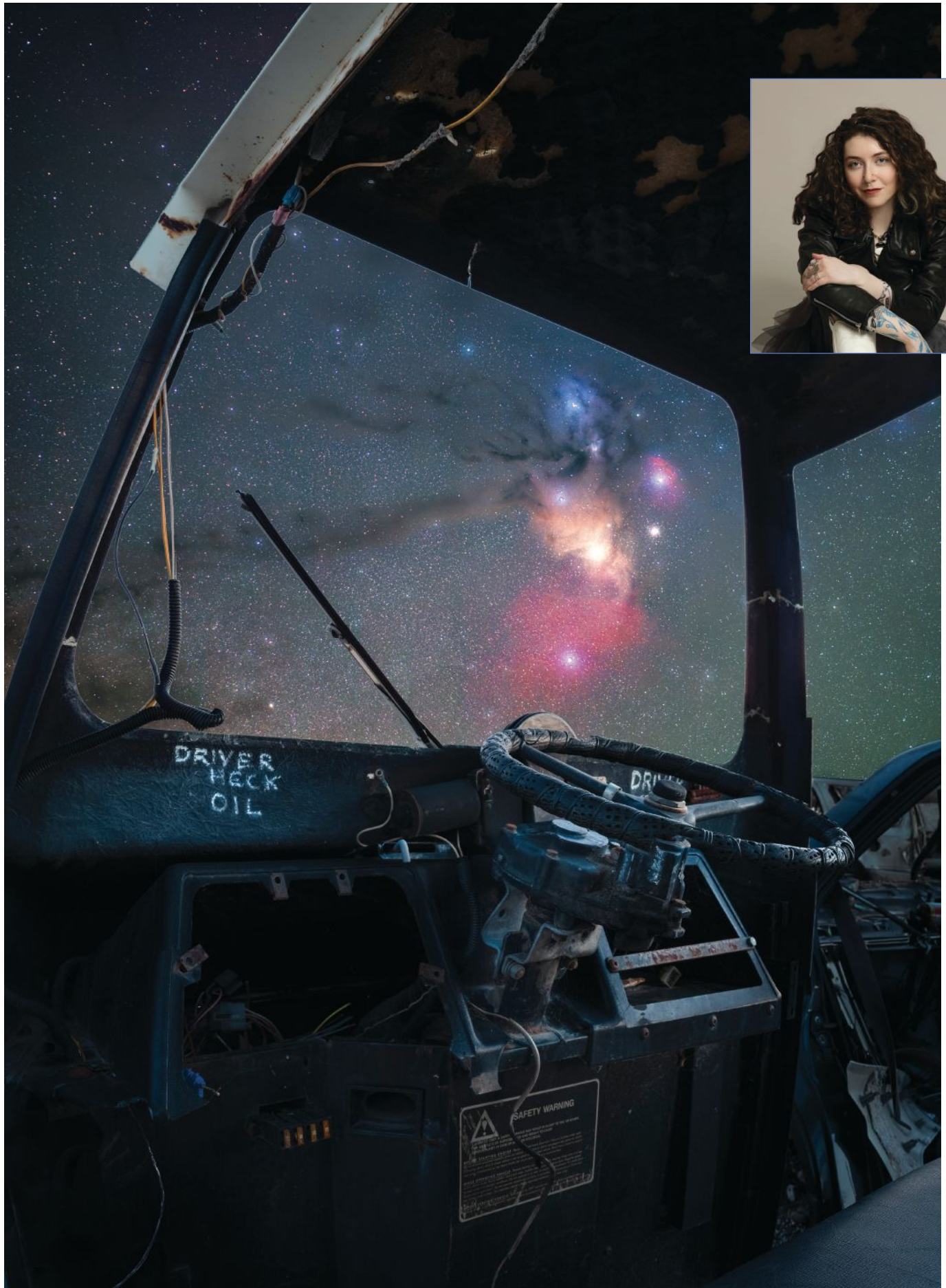
LOS ANGELES

Gabriel Perez Silva is a Colombian-American photographer who built his career from scratch, starting as an unpaid intern in New York City earning \$20 a day. His breakthrough came at age 22 when he photographed MAC Cosmetics' 25th Anniversary Viva Glam campaign starring Winnie Harlow recreating RuPaul's iconic original shoot created to raise awareness for HIV. The campaign launched his career and established him as a photographer with a distinctive visual voice and a sensitivity to meaningful storytelling. Today his work appears in *Vogue*, *GQ*, and *V Magazine*, and he works regularly with Prada and Paul Smith. He was named to the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 Class of 2025, and he has made portraits of celebrities including Winnie Harlow, Bella Hadid, Issa Rae, Jenna Ortega (left), and Nicholas Hoult. He has lived with scoliosis for his entire career and uses his platform to advocate for awareness.

 @_youngshot

 @_youngshot

 @_youngshot



©DARBY DAVENPORT

IMAGES ©ALLISON KALT

Allison Kalt

NEVADA CITY, CALIFORNIA

Finding light in the dark. That is astrophotographer Allison Kalt's quest. Dealing with the progressive complications of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, a rare genetic connective tissue disorder, Kalt found catharsis in photographing the cosmos. Today she spreads her love of space by capturing the Milky Way in the field, teaching astrophotography in the classroom, and engaging in efforts to have her city certified as an International Dark Sky Place. She hopes to inspire others through her dark sky activism, disability advocacy, and the resilience she demonstrates by adapting her artistic approach to her dynamic physical condition.

 @allisonkaltphoto

 @astro.alli

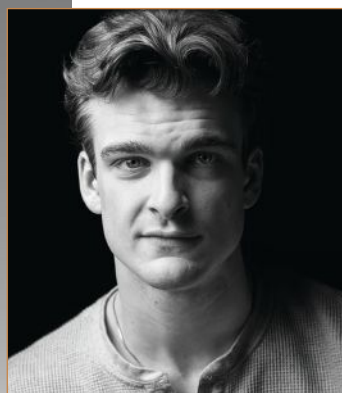


Vincent Livecchi

TOLEDO, OHIO

Vince Livecchi is a museum photographer dedicated to preserving cultural heritage. As a collections photographer at the Toledo Museum of Art, he specializes in photographing thousands of pieces of ancient glass. His images reveal the craftsmanship and beauty of objects that have survived for thousands of years. His work supports conservation, scholarly research, and digital access, and helps make the museum's collection available to audiences

around the world. Livecchi uses careful lighting and color management to produce photographs that faithfully represent each work while honoring its original maker. Through his photography, he contributes to the long-term preservation and accessibility of art, demonstrating how museum photography serves as both a documentary practice and a bridge between art and the public.



 @vincelivecchi

 vince-livecchi



Roman, Double Head-shaped Flask: Two Similar Childlike Faces, early 3rd century, glass, mold blown, 3 3/8 x 1 13/16 in. (8.6 x 4.6 cm), Toledo Museum of Art (Toledo, Ohio), Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1923.515

Alanna Bellisario

VAUGHAN,
ONTARIO, CANADA



 @alannabphotography

 @alannaphotography



©ALANNA BELLISARIO

Portrait photographer Alanna Bellisario specializes in wedding, family, maternity, and newborn photography. She is passionate about creating a welcoming experience where everyone feels as beautiful as they are. Whether she's documenting a wedding day, welcoming a new baby, or celebrating everyday family moments, she considers it a privilege to preserve memories that will be cherished for generations. Her greatest joys are serving others with kindness, building meaningful relationships, and creating timeless photographs that remind people of their worth, their love, and the beauty of every season of life.



©ALEX YUAN



Alex Yuan

CHAMPAGNE, ILLINOIS

Alex Yuan is a photographer, creator, and entrepreneur dedicated to inspiring the next generation of creatives. Through his full-time photography business, Yuan has photographed thousands of students, graduates, couples, families, and organizations while also building a community of creatives through his educational and behind-the-scenes content. Via photography, storytelling, and video, Yuan hopes to make creativity feel accessible, exciting, and achievable for anyone willing to take the step, no matter their age or background.

 @uiucalex

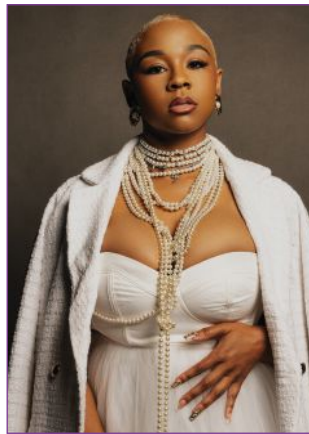


Donnie Stevens

BELLAIRE, OHIO

Entrepreneur Donnie Stevens is the owner of Blackwater Fine Art Portraits, a fine art studio for heirloom family, senior, and animal portraits, and DLS Innovations Photography, dedicated to school, sports, and organization photography. Together, his companies photograph more than 15,000 subjects each year, serving clients across Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Stevens has raised the standard in school and sports photography by introducing efficient systems, professional lighting, and a media-day experience. He believes that every photograph should tell a story worth preserving. He combines creativity with innovative business systems to elevate both the client experience and the photography industry.

 @dls_innovations, @blackwaterportraits_



Alexis Smith

ATLANTA

For Lexi Photography owner Alexis Smith, photography has never been just about taking pictures. It's about preserving legacy, telling honest stories, and helping people see

their value. Through her business, Smith captures people, brands, and productions via intentional, cinematic storytelling. Her sessions are designed to ensure clients feel seen, encouraged, and confident. Whether it's a portrait, brand campaign, or documentary-style production, her work carries purpose, emotion, and impact, as she believes every person has a story worth remembering.



©DAVID ASHER



Chris Carter

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Louisville, Kentucky, native Chris Carter has spent his five-year career photographing various sports, including soccer, football, baseball, and softball. In 2025, he graduated from the University of Louisville with a bachelor's degree in communications and became team photographer for professional soccer teams Louisville City FC and Racing Louisville FC while also freelancing for Getty Images. At the root of his work is a desire to tell stories; he's learned that the smaller details are just as important as the game action. Carter is always willing to new learn new things and support other up-and-coming photographers in his community.

 @chriscarter.media

 @chriscarter22

IMAGES ©CHRIS CARTER





©LEYDI GONZALEZ

Leydi Gonzalez

HOUSTON



Leydi Gonzalez is a first-generation Salvadoran American photographer of music concerts and a music journalist. Her passion for the arts began at the age of 15 and has continued to grow. She is now the host of the web series "Leydi Listens," available on YouTube and TikTok, where she interviews emerging Houston

music artists. She is the co-founder of "The Music Journal," a platform dedicated to using music and culture to unite communities, support meaningful causes, and uplift local artists.

 @leydilistens

 @leydigonzalez15

Kobie Abram

HOUSTON



 @kobieryanphotography

Wedding and portrait photographer Kobie Abram is the founder of Kobie Ryan Photography, which also specializes in capturing images of vacation/hospitality properties. He markets himself as having the eye of a designer, the heart of a counselor, and the warmth of an innkeeper. Abram has a degree in counseling and a deep love of photography and event design, which includes producing

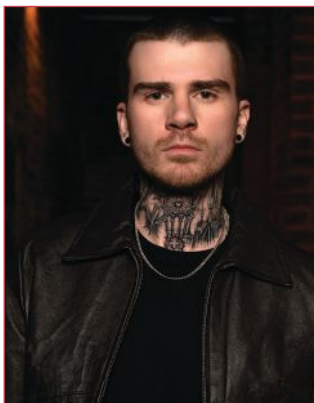
weddings with six-figure budgets and a stint running a bed-and-breakfast at a historic inn in Virginia.



©KOBIE ABRAM



©PATRICK GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY



 @iampgphotography

Patrick Gibson

DANVILLE,
VIRGINIA

After getting sober in 2023, Patrick Gibson picked up a camera for the first time “and found a passion that completely changed my life,” he says. Six months later, he became

a full-time photographer and today runs Patrick Gibson Photography. A board member and district leader of the Virginia Professional Photographers Association (VPPA), Gibson photographs weddings, portraits, commercial campaigns, editorial work, and live events. His work has been recognized in state and national image competitions and featured in publications, and his clients include local businesses, national artists, and brands. Whether creating for a client or teaching fellow photographers, his goal is simple: to create images that people remember.



Kalyn Barbary

ATLANTA



Kalyn Barbary is the founder of Always Elizabeth Lanaé Photography, which strives for emotion-driven storytelling, elevated client experiences, and intentional creative direction. Barbary has built a presence within the wedding, portrait, and creative photography industry by combining artistic vision with authentic human connection. She creates spaces for her clients that encourage emotional safety, confidence, and self-expression. Beyond photography, Barbary has produced large-scale editorial concepts and partnered with fellow creatives and vendors within her community. She contributes to the photography industry through education, mentorship, speaking opportunities, and collaborative creative work that encourages growth and artistic exploration among other photographers and creatives.

 @always_elizabeth_lanae

 alwayselizabethlanae.com

Andrew Selby

COLORADO SPRINGS,
COLORADO

Wedding and portrait photographer Andrew Selby began his career in 2015 directly out of high school and now serves as vice president of the Professional Photographers Guild of Colorado Springs.

From the beginning of his career, nothing spoke to Selby like capturing relational connections.

His motto is "your story matters," and he excels at putting his clients at ease, getting to know them and their values so he can make that the focal point of his photography. He believes human stories are everything, and having the chance to immortalize those stories with a camera is what makes his job worthwhile.



 @andrewselbyphoto

 @andrewselbyphotography



Soren Goldsmith

BOSTON

Soren Goldsmith is a wildlife photographer, engineer, and National Geographic Explorer. He specializes in designing custom imaging tools like camera traps to document ecosystems that are difficult to reach with standard gear. A student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Goldsmith is a founder of Goldburn Engineering, where he develops amphibious motion-activated cameras. His work focuses on using engineering to capture wildlife without human disturbance, particularly in overlooked environments like salt marshes. In 2023, he was named a winner of the National Geographic Slingshot Challenge for his documentation of at-risk urban Massachusetts forests. His goal is to use engineering and imagery to deepen our understanding of wildlife and illuminate the wonder of the natural world.



Alexis Graham

ATLANTA



 @butterfly_dynamic

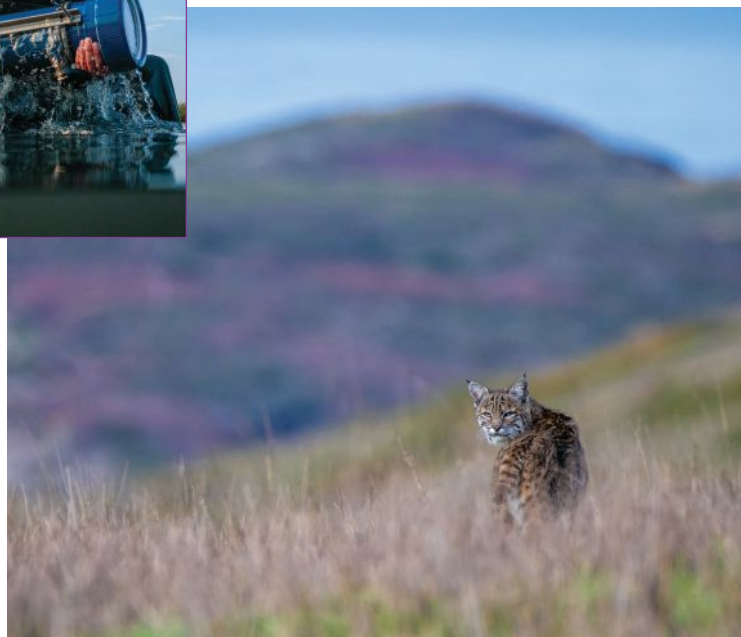


©ALEXIS GRAHAM

Alexis Graham has an associate's degree in design and media production technology, and is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in film and media at Georgia State University in Atlanta. She's gained experience in photography, videography, writing, and directing through internships at companies including creative agency INMO Creative, production company EYEAM Cinema, nonprofit performing arts company Atlanta Workshop Players, Georgia Public Broadcasting, and the Professional Photographers of America headquarters in Atlanta.



[in @soren-goldsmith](#)
[sorengoldsmith.com](#)



Benjamin Mack-Jackson

CLERMONT, FLORIDA



Benjamin Mack-Jackson is a journalist, author, and founder of the nonprofit WWII Veterans History Project. His work focuses on preserving firsthand accounts of war and conflict, past and present. Through his nonprofit, he's interviewed and photographed more than 400 World War II veterans and produced documentary films, a book, and educational programs on their stories. Since 2022, he's completed multiple reporting trips to Ukraine to document the war as an accredited journalist with the Ukrainian Armed Forces. His work has been published in Politico Europe, and he is currently a graduate student at New York University.

[f @benjaminmackjackson](#)
[@benmackjackson](#)



Grace Puffer

NEW YORK

Grace Puffer is a commercial and editorial photographer who grew up in the mountains of North Carolina and is now based in Brooklyn. Her work is full of intention and spontaneous, ephemeral moments. Puffer believes there is no equal to a hands-on education, and her artistic process is simple: Make it happen. Working in the fast-paced commercial photography hub of New York, Puffer says, "I always feel like I am learning. ... I have been lucky enough (and motivated enough) to assist some of the most talented and most well-respected commercial photographers in the industry." She makes a point to reach out to other young people in the field to collaborate.



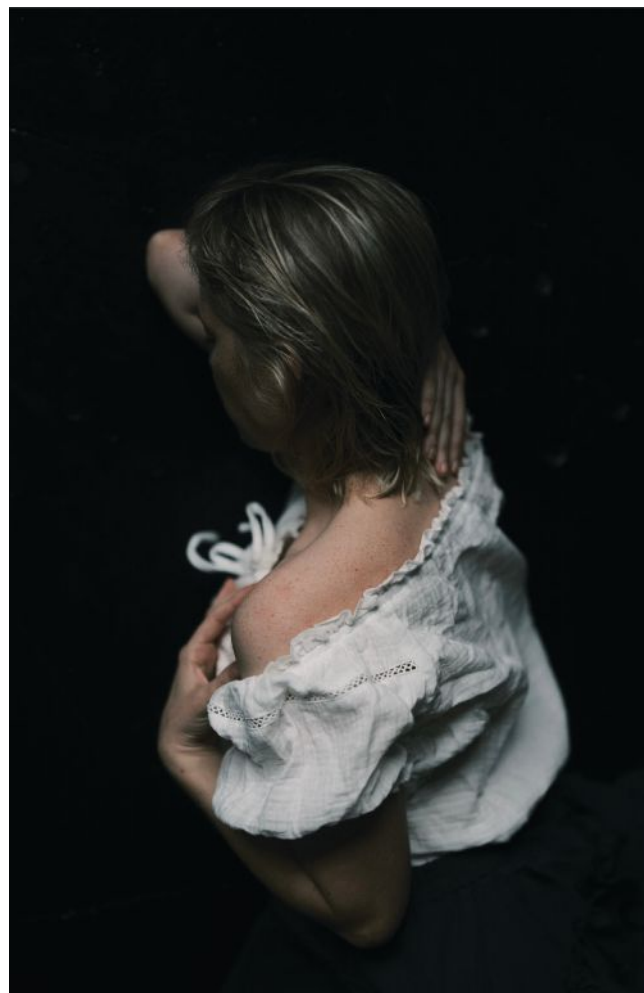
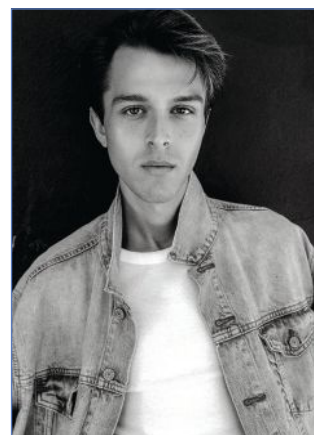
 @gracepuffer

 gracepuffer.com

Timofey Abel

NEW YORK

Timofey Abel, born in Moscow, is a New York-based street and portrait photographer and entrepreneur who works in studio and also teaches classes on photography and business. He has had works exhibited in galleries and publications, and in 2025, he released his debut monograph. When Abel was based in Atlanta, the media outlet Rough Draft Atlanta profiled him as "lighting the way for Atlanta's next creative wave."





Daniel Livingstone

CHICAGO

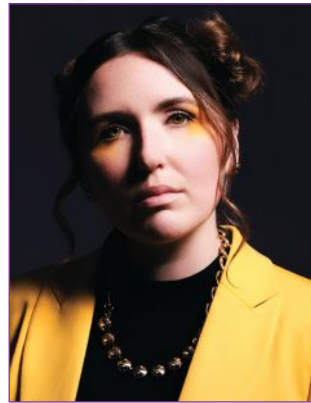


[f @daniellivingstonephoto](#)

[i @daniellivingstone](#)

Through his commercial photography, Daniel Livingstone strives to make active lifestyles feel more inclusive and less intimidating. His images celebrate real people and authentic movement. His curiosity drives his creative practice; he has nearly a decade of experience including photography, videography, retouching, and content creation. Livingstone believes authentic stories come from firsthand connections. Beyond his commercial work, Livingstone is passionate about helping other

creatives grow. As an Adobe Community Expert, a mentor for Adobe Creative Club Chicago, and host of local workshops and photo walks, he creates spaces where photographers can learn, connect, and develop their craft.



Dominique Murray

PITTSBURGH

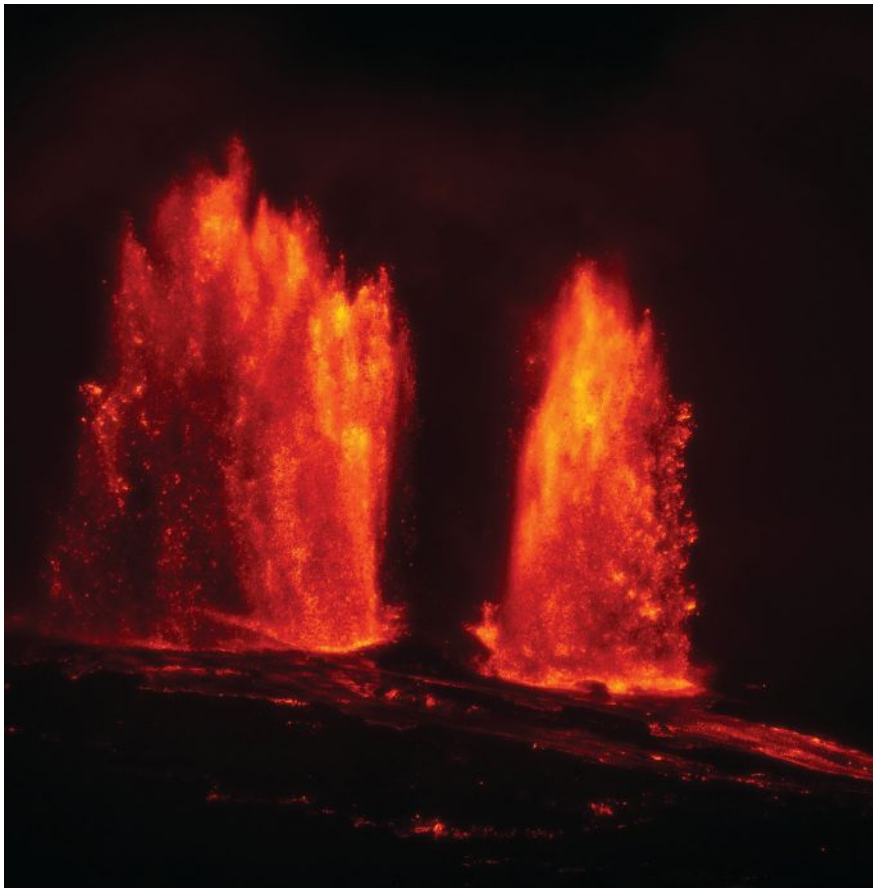
Dominique Murray is the creative force behind Dominique Murray Photography, a luxury full-service portrait

studio with a brand that posits, "imagine loving every photo of yourself." With a fine arts degree in photography from Robert Morris University and a background as a former Disney cast member, Murray brings a bit of magic to every session. She specializes in personal branding photography, along with headshots, weddings, family sessions, and seniors. Her work has been featured on national and international publication covers and in collaborations with Project Runway and international designers. Beyond the studio, Murray hosts a philanthropic event called Splatter Me Crazy, serves on the board of the Southwest Chamber of Commerce, and teaches at La Roche University.

[f @murrnugg](#)

[i @murr_nugg](#)





Houston Vandergriff

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

A travel photographer from Tennessee, and a Nikon Creator 2024-2026, Houston Vandergriff invites people to see the world through a different lens. Born with Down syndrome, Vandergriff has made the camera his voice. He has spent the past decade documenting landscapes, cultures, and moments of human connection across more than 30 countries, all 50 U.S. states, and all 95 counties in Tennessee. Vandergriff is one of the 47 artists whose works now sit on the surface of the moon, as part of the Moon-Mars Museum aboard the Blue Ghost lunar lander. His work has been exhibited internationally and has been featured through partnerships with destinations, national parks, and accessibility organizations. He is also the first artist with a disability selected for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park's Artist-in-Residence program. Through his travel photography website, downsandtowns.com, he reminds us that "the view is better when everyone is part of the picture."

 @downsandtowns

 @downsandtowns

Lauren Sopourn

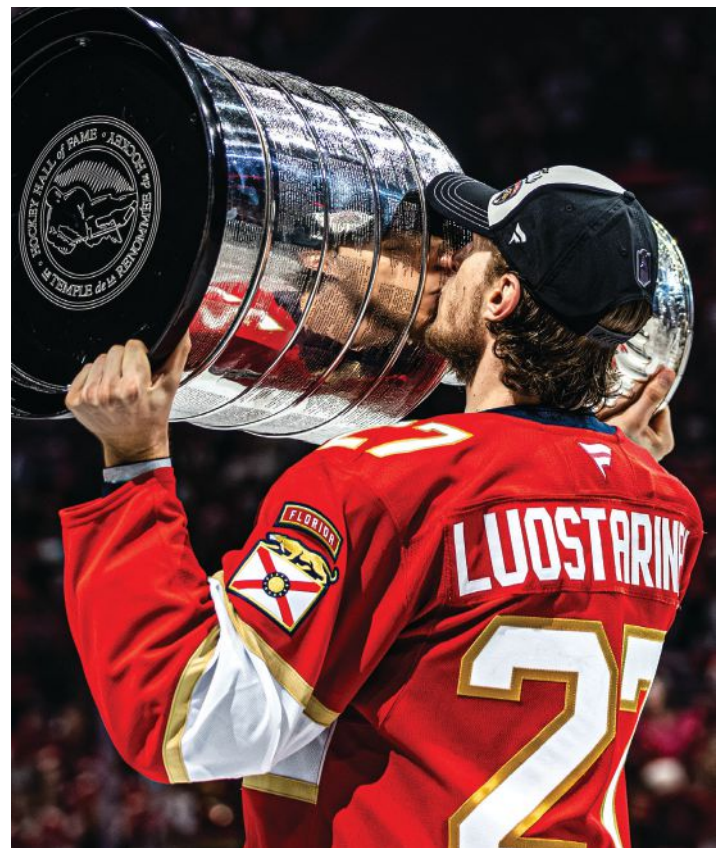
CORAL SPRINGS, FLORIDA



 @l_sopourn

Lauren Sopourn is the founder of Sports & Media Nation, a women-led sports media company specializing in visual storytelling and brand identity for professional sports organizations. She is in her fifth season documenting the Florida Panthers, and has also worked with the Miami Dolphins and Inter Miami. Her imagery appears in publications and large-scale campaigns. Sopourn also mentors

female photographers pursuing sports media. She is a 2025 Broward Cultural Division grant recipient for The Home Team, a photography exhibition documenting the Florida Panthers' Stanley Cups, and was named a 2026 South Florida Business and Wealth 40 under 40 honoree and 2025 WISE Rising Star. Her work received national and international recognition with Pro Football Hall of Fame Photography Awards and World Sports Photography Awards.



©FLORIDA PANTHERS

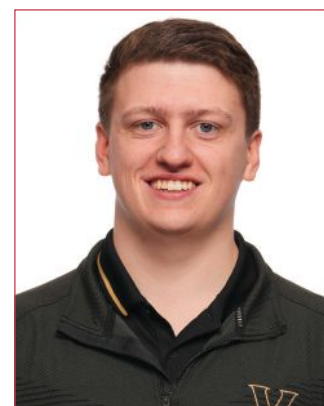


©BRENDAN ROSS



Brendan Ross

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



Sports photographer Brendan Ross is the director of social media and creative content for Vanderbilt University's athletics department, where he leads the overall social media and creative strategy with a focus on the university's football program. Before joining Vanderbilt in 2022, Ross worked with Team USA during the Tokyo Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in 2021, and returned in 2024 to document coverage of the USA Gymnastics Olympic Trials. A 2022 graduate of Xavier University, Ross earned his degree in digital media and public relations while serving as digital media team lead for the Musketeers men's basketball team.

 @brosspix

 @brosspix

Dimitri Rodriguez

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY



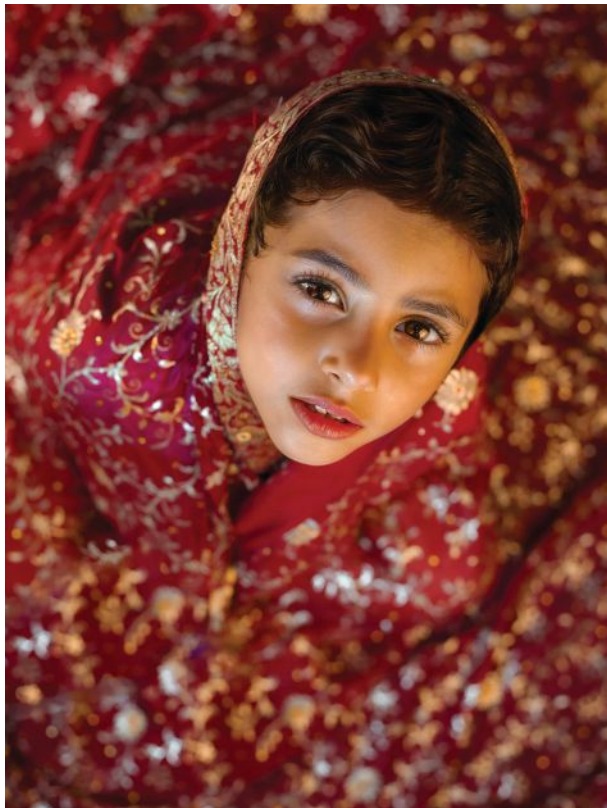
 @dimitrimrodriguez

Dimitri Rodriguez is a photographer, educator, and program leader dedicated to inspiring the next generation of visual storytellers. As an alumnus of the same Jersey City high school commercial photography program he now teaches, Rodriguez has revitalized the classroom experience through industry-standard technology, real-world opportunities, and a culture that encourages creativity, confidence, and artistic growth. According to the high school's assistant principal who nominated him, Rodriguez's students have earned local,

national, and industry recognition while developing the technical and creative skills to succeed. Blending his background as a former photojournalist with his passion for education, Rodriguez bridges the gap between the classroom and the professional world and empowers his students to find their voices behind the camera.



©DIMITRI RODRIGUEZ



Noof Al Siyabi

MUSCAT, OMAN

Noof Al Siyabi is an award-winning photographer from Oman whose work explores emotion, culture, identity, and the relationship between people and nature through compelling visual storytelling. Her photography blends artistic vision with technical excellence, and has been recognized through numerous exhibitions, publications, and photography competitions across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

The most notable of these are the gold medal at the 41st FIAP Youth Biennial, Norway 2023, the Best Young Participant Award at the German International Photocup 2025, and having her work featured on the cover of the Germany Association of Photography's DVF-Journal. Her image graces this month's magazine cover.



 @noof.alsiyabi

 @noofalsiyabi



IMAGES ©KIAH LUNDE

Kiah Lunde

SANDPORT, IDAHO

Kiah Lunde, Cr.Photog., has been surrounded by the western and outdoor lifestyle since her childhood in Northern Idaho. A prolific nature, wildlife, and commercial photographer, Lunde earned her craftsman degree from PPA and is working toward her master of photography degree. She also teaches western lifestyle workshops in the region, sharing both her technical knowledge and her love for the outdoors with others.

 @k_ography_

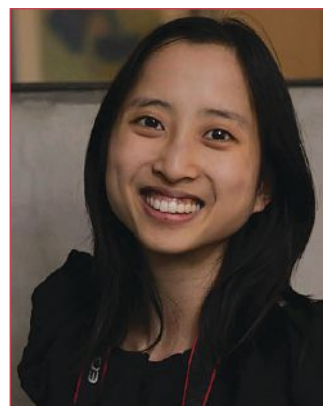


©LUCY KUO

Lucy Kuo

SAN FRANCISCO

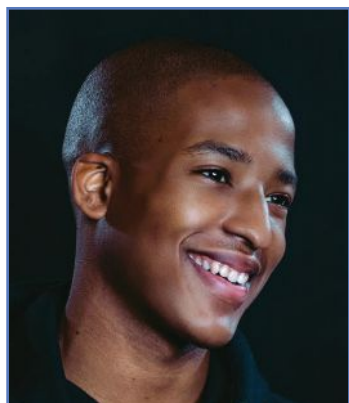
Lucy Kuo is a San Francisco-based photographer whose work spans fine art and photojournalism, guided by a singular philosophy: revealing the profound, overlooked beauty in ordinary moments. Her love of photography began with a simple point-and-shoot camera in high school. Her images have been recognized in the Minnesota State Fair Fine Arts Exhibition, SF StoryFest, various publications, and as a global finalist for the Google Messages Wallpaper Contest. While a student at University of Wisconsin-Madison, she was the official historian and photographer for multiple university organizations. Today, Kuo is a co-organizer of a community photography club in San Francisco, and regularly photographs workplace cultural events. She also offers portrait sessions that help peers and friends see themselves in a beautiful, confident light.



 @lucy.kuo



©PATRICK ROGERS



Patrick Rogers

MARIETTA, GEORGIA

Patrick Rogers is a photographer, cinematographer, and content creator based in metro Atlanta who specializes in portraits, storytelling, and teaching both photography and videography. Rogers, a creator for Fujifilm, says, "What I love about this craft is that every project tells a new story." Music was his first love, and he discovered photography at age 17. A natural community organizer and educator, Rogers has a distinct visual identity that illustrates his overall creative aesthetic. "Because I love creating in so many different avenues," he explains, "you won't see me only in one particular niche. I believe you can be a jack of all trades and a master of all too."

 @patrickrogers

 @patrickrogers

Coco Tolentino

NEW YORK



@coco.tolentino

@coco.tolentino

New York-based Filipino filmmaker and photographer Coco Tolentino works through observation and connection, capturing intimate portraits, street photography, and personal films that center community. He co-founded Cine Balikbayan, hosting screenings in both New York City and the Philippines. Tolentino has taken on roles in festival programming, producing, writing, and directing, with photography as part of his skill set. He seeks to inspire by doing, and to keep storytelling spaces open to all.

His latest short, "Dyahe Piece," tells a story with themes of family, identity, expectation, and belonging. His goals include establishing a film festival in the Philippines to amplify diverse voices and create access for emerging storytellers. He understands that building a stronger industry means lifting others alongside yourself.



@COCO TOLENTINO

Shea Wolcott

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

As a former foster child, Shea Wolcott spent much of her childhood facing abuse and instability while helping care for her three younger biological siblings. Eventually, the foursome was adopted by Matt Wolcott, a professional photographer, and his wife Kristin. Wolcott began accompanying her new father to his studio, where photography

became a place of healing, confidence, and creativity. At age 13, Wolcott started homeschooling to devote more time to her craft. Today, she works alongside her father through Matt & Shea Photography, serving clients in family, children, wedding/engagement, sports and dance, seniors, pets, and professional branding/headshot photography. She also volunteers her time and talents with Tennessee Kids Belong, creating portraits of older children in

foster care, and regularly provides complimentary portrait sessions for foster families and foster children, including high school seniors.



@SHEA WOLCOTT

@mattandsheaphotography

@mattandshea_photography



Dancing into Adulthood

Maria Randolph's images
mark an important milestone

BY SUZANNE WRIGHT







MARIA RANDOLPH

There's no shortage

of scenic locales in Colorado, and no shortage of clients who trust high school senior portrait photographer Maria Randolph, M.Photog., CPP, to memorialize this fleeting time of young adult life. "Colorado Springs is blessed with stunning beauty that makes for beautiful backdrops. The dramatic red rocks of the Garden of the Gods, a place I hike myself, is my most requested location," she says.

RECORDING MEMORIES

Randolph grew up in communist Poland with scant resources. "My family immigrated to the United States in search of a better life," she says, and she later met her husband in Nevada. The couple soon moved to Colorado for his work, a place they "absolutely love," she says.

Randolph doesn't have many photographs of herself as a child. So, when her daughter was born 20 years ago, she often took her to photography studios for portraits. "I didn't want my daughter to feel that same absence of memories," she says. Recognizing her passion for photography, Randolph's husband bought her a camera, which wound up kickstarting a career. "Once friends saw the images I was creating, they started asking me to photograph their families," she explains. "I loved working with families, but as my daughter got older, I realized how much I enjoyed photographing her one-on-one. That's when I discovered my passion for senior portraits," which she has specialized in for about 12 years.

She's also known for her dance photography. "My daughter danced competitively for many years, so I spent a long time as a dance mom before ever photographing dancers professionally," she explains. "I started by photographing my daughter and volunteering at recitals. Eventually I realized how much I loved the artistic side of dance photography."

With dancers, Randolph simply tells them to dance, and she captures the emotion and movement as it happens. Her senior portrait sessions are more structured. Regardless of who she's photographing, Randolph knows she captured something special when she has a physical reaction. "It's the same feeling I get when hearing a beautiful song or watching an emotional performance," she says. "Goosebumps don't lie."



PLEASING TWO CLIENTS

Senior sessions take place the summer before senior year, and Randolph knows she has two different clients to satisfy: the senior and the senior's parents. The seniors and their parents often have different expectations as well, Randolph says. "Seniors like more of a backdrop, whereas parents like a more traditional headshot-style portrait." So, she creates a variety of images while staying true to one goal: "I want seniors to feel comfort-

able, confident, and genuinely seen," she says. "I want them to recognize themselves in the images."

In separate questionnaires sent to seniors and parents, Randolph asks her senior clients about their hobbies, activities, sports, music, personal style, and comfort level in front of the camera. She asks parents how they envision the session, whether this is their first senior, and how they plan to use the images. During the pre-session consultation, she

and the senior work together to decide which outdoor locations will best fit the subject's personality, interests, and style. She often makes family portraits at the beginning of the session as well. "It helps everyone relax, and it allows me to get to know siblings and parents better, too," she explains.

Randolph schedules one session per day so she and the client don't feel rushed. "I want to put all my creative energy into one client at a time," she says,



EQUIPMENT FAVES

Most of Colorado Springs-based Maria Randolph's senior portrait sessions take place outdoors, and most of her dance clients are photographed in her home studio. When a senior is also a dancer, she often combines both studio and outdoor photography into one experience.

FOR OUTDOOR SESSIONS:

Randolph uses a Nikon Z 8 with a 24-70mm lens to capture Colorado's mountain landscapes, and a Nikkor Z 135mm f/1.8 S Plena lens for headshot-style portraits. For off-camera flash, she uses a Godox AD400 or AD600 with a 25-inch Glow EZ Lock beauty dish.

FOR INDOOR SESSIONS:

Her equipment of choice is four Godox AD600 lights with a 60-inch soft box for the key light, an 86-inch double-diffused umbrella for the fill light and two 1x6 gridded strip lights for the rim lights.



adding that she also builds in time for unforeseen circumstances. “Colorado has quickly changing weather, and sometimes we need to move to a different location.” Sometimes, it’s not Colorado’s weather that disrupts a session but one of its other residents. One of Randolph’s most memorable sessions was with a young woman who loved reading. She brought her favorite books, spread a blanket under a tree, and had several moving moments with her mother during the photo session. Randolph was lost in the moment, taking pictures. That is, until they realized they weren’t alone in the wilderness. “There was a mama black bear with three cubs in a tree behind us,” she says. “That’s very dangerous, so we retreated to the car.”

LIGHT AND FUN

Another layer of Randolph’s senior sessions involves what she calls the transformative power of clothing. “Growing up, we didn’t have much,” she says. “I remember my grandmother once sent me a kid’s blue gown from America. I later learned it came from a thrift store, but to me it was magical. I would dance around in it constantly, pretending to be a princess trying to escape the reality.” Randolph wants every senior she photographs to feel that same magic. The memory of the blue dress inspired her style closet, which contains upwards of 80 gowns and dresses in different lengths and styles, and she is considering purchasing some suits as well.

That closet is one of several ways she helps her teenaged clients relax in front of the camera, especially if they’re shy or hesitant. “My favorite part is the one-on-one connection. Every senior is different, and I love learning who they are beyond the camera,” she says. “From the very first inquiry, whether it’s a phone call, text, or website inquiry, I focus on building



a relationship.” During sessions, Randolph keeps the atmosphere light and fun. “I don’t keep them in one location too long. I encourage outfit changes. And I always try to incorporate things that are meaningful to them, whether that’s sports, dance, music, or even pets. I absolutely love when seniors bring their dogs.”

She also jokes a lot during sessions. “During consultations I’ll often tell seniors, ‘It’s OK if your mom made you do this. I’ve heard that story many times. Don’t worry, I got you.’ That usually gets everyone laughing.” And if someone is especially serious? “I’ll suddenly start speaking Polish or use my strong Slavic accent, which almost always cracks them up.”

Randolph also encourages seniors

to showcase their heritage in their sessions. This year, Randolph had a client who was originally from Latvia (above). “She wore a traditional folklore outfit paired with a handmade flower crown, and honestly, I teared up behind my camera,” Randolph recalls. “There was something so powerful about seeing her proudly carry her roots into this chapter of her life. It reminded me so deeply of my own heritage, my own family, and the beauty of where we come from. These photos become more than portraits. They become love letters to our roots.”

GENUINE CONNECTION

To ensure her business continues to flourish, Randolph is always building and maintaining relationships. Most of

“I want seniors to feel comfortable, confident, and genuinely seen. I want them to recognize themselves in the images.”



ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

LOCATION: Home studio

CAMERA AND LENS: Sony a7R V, Sony FE 50mm F1.4 GM lens

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

LIGHTING: Four Godox AD600 lights with a 60-inch soft box for the key light, an 86-inch double-diffused umbrella for the fill light and two 1x6 gridded strip lights for the rim lights.

PHOTOGRAPHERS NOTE: "The image, titled 'Infinity,' is very personal to me. It was captured in a single take and features a sister and brother who share an incredibly close bond. She was preparing to leave for college, and in that moment she was gently pushing him away while he was still trying to hold on. Even though life would take them in different directions, they would always remain connected. Their hands unintentionally formed the infinity symbol without any rehearsal, which made the image even more powerful and authentic. To have an image recognized primarily for its emotion and storytelling meant the world to me. What made it even more meaningful was that the image itself was not heavily edited. I love the process of creating an image, but editing has always been my least favorite part."



Learn how to
prepare your images
for competition and
merit review
on PhotoVision.

her clients come through referrals or are returning families. “I have two families who are sending their fourth senior child to me,” she says. “That kind of trust is the greatest compliment.” Relationships come first, Randolph emphasizes. “People remember how you made them feel long after the session is over. Build genuine connections and stay in touch.”

She has also worked hard on SEO and improving her website, an effort that is finally paying off through consistent inquiries online. Though Randolph doesn’t rely heavily on social media, she does capture short behind-the-scenes videos that she tags with a senior’s permission. Those reels, she says, create excitement for the

student and have boosted Randolph’s branding. She also credits Professional Photographers of Colorado and Professional Photographers Guild of Colorado Springs with helping her hone her craft. “Colorado is home to an extraordinary community of photographers who consistently rank among the best in IPC and World Photographic Cup competitions. They’ve been incredibly supportive and motivating throughout my journey,” she says. “Being surrounded by that level of talent and excellence inspires me to grow both creatively and professionally.”

Her own work has also brought her acclaim. One of her images (left) made the final four of PPA’s International Photographic Com-

petition at Imaging USA 2026. “I broke into tears with the recognition of my peers,” Randolph says, adding that she also attends other PPA events and photo workshops, and earned her CPP and master of photography degree. Her next goal is to complete the photographic craftsman degree, “hopefully by the end of this year.” When not behind the camera or building her credentials, Randolph enjoys taking long hikes in those same scenic places where she photographs seniors, including Garden of the Gods. “Preferably,” she laughs, “without bears around!” •

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

Field Notes

BELONGING TO SOMETHING BIGGER

In May, PPA board members Marcela Limon, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, and John Gress, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, visited Escuela de Fotografía y Publicidad George Eastman (the George Eastman School of Photography and Advertising) in Mexico City to give a presentation at the PPA Community Network School's three-day workshop covering portraiture, business tools, and lighting techniques. The presentation, titled "Membresía Internacional de PPA: Todo Lo Que Debes Saber Acerca de PPA y sus Beneficios" ("International PPA Membership: Everything You Need to Know About PPA and its Benefits") introduced the attendees to PPA's core offerings, including:

- International Photographic Competition (IPC)
- Merit Image Review (MIR)
- Certified Professional Photographer (CPP) certification
- Imaging USA
- PhotoVision
- Relationship-driven community



A model poses in a workshop on advanced lighting.



Mexico-based portraitist Alvaro Balderas, M.Photog.Cr., invited Limon and Gress to the school's event, along with its founder and director, Juan Parcerisa. Left to right: Juan Parcerisa, Marcela Limon, Alvaro Balderas, John Gress

"PPA has so many resources that the international community can benefit from," Limon says. "These tools help them expand their businesses, grow as artists, be involved, and find their network."

Gress and Limon's visit to Mexico City launched PPA's new Field Notes initiative, in which PPA staff and board members travel across the country

and around the world to raise awareness of PPA and its offerings for photographers and visual media creators. Over the past few months, PPA was represented at the Maternity and Newborn Photographers Summit in Grapevine, Texas, and at photography events in New York and Florida and, at press time, was scheduled to have a presence at Fujifilm's Fujikina NYC

2026 photography festival this month. The Field Notes program's goals are to create new Community Networks, build PPA membership, and, most importantly, equip creative professionals with tools and resources to grow their businesses and level up their skill sets.

The attendees' excitement in Mexico City was contagious, says Limon, who noted that several traveled more than 10 hours to learn from instructors and connect in person with photographer peers. The students buzzed about opportunities like IPC and CPP certification and were eager to strengthen relationships and grow together, she adds. When it comes to finding friendship within the photography community, "Who wouldn't want to belong to something like PPA?" Limon asks. No two photographers approach their work the same way, from technique to subject to story, but running a business, seeking creative inspiration, and desiring connection with fellow creatives are universal experiences.

"International photographers can



PPA board member Marcela Limon presents information about the organization to attendees in Mexico City.

© JOHN GRESS

see themselves in the programs that PPA provides," Limon says, emphasizing the importance of these visits to various photography communities. "Our outreach resonates because we have

the potential to change a business, change a photographer, and change their future." •

ppa.com/community-networks



YOUR LAST MONTH TO LOCK IN RECORD IMAGING USA SAVINGS

SAVE \$100 THROUGH OCTOBER

PPA Full and Full Plus members who register by Oct. 31, 2026, for Imaging USA 2027 in Charlotte, North Carolina, will save \$100 on their all-access pass, which is double last year's savings.

The all-access pass gives members entry to more than 90 classes led by industry-renowned speakers, as well as hands-on photo walks, opening and closing parties, and the lively expo floor, where you can peruse and shop for the latest gear, props, backdrops, client products, and more.

For deeper dives into photography education, sign up for an additional fee for one or more of the 40-plus pre-con classes Jan. 28-30. To bring a friend, purchase buddy passes for \$199 each when you register by Oct. 31. After that date, the buddy pass rate increases to \$249.

imagingusa.com

COMMUNITY NETWORKS DIRECTORY

When you get together with other photographers in your area, you'll see a world of opportunities open up to you.

One of the best ways photographers hone their craft is through peer interaction. Finding a mentor, meeting with like-minded people in your area, and relying on a network of business friends are keys to your success. Thanks to the Community Networks program, you can easily find and connect with professional photographers near you.

PPA has Community Networks across the United States. No matter where you live, odds are there's a Community Network to welcome you.

ppa.com/community-networks

INTERNATIONAL

American Society of Photographers

Mel Carlil
(661) 775-3375
info@asofp.com
asofp.com

MEXICO

Escuela de Fotografía y Publicidad George Eastman

Alvaro Balderas
abc261273@yahoo.com
georgeeastman.com.mx

Sociedad Mexicana de Fotógrafos Profesionales

Alvaro Balderas
(814) 442-6136
alvarobalderas@gmail.com
facebook.com/smfpac

ARIZONA

Arizona PPA

Thomas Cheswick
(602) 493-1833
tomcheswick@cox.net
arizonappa.com

ARKANSAS

Arkansas PPA

Mike Kemp
(501) 472-0678
mike@mikekempphoto.com
arkansasppa.com

ARKANSAS, MISSOURI, OKLAHOMA

PP of the Ozarks

Jackie Strain-Mahar
(501) 472-9447
ppozarks@gmail.com
ppozarks.com

CALIFORNIA

Channel Islands PPA

Michael Mercadante
(408) 504-3592
mmjmercadante@gmail.com
cippa.org

PP of California

Marcy Dugan
(661) 429-3640 Ext 1
president@ppconline.com
ppconline.com

PP of Los Angeles County

Mel Carlil
(661) 904-3612
mel@scvpphotocenter.com
plpac.com

PP of Orange County

Duane Murphy
(714) 863-2126
duane@shashinphotography.com
ppoc.org

PP of Sacramento Valley

Jeff Galinovsky
(916) 705-0110
president@ppsv.org
ppsv.org

PPA of Santa Clara Valley

Roberto Gonzalez
(408) 460-7549
nuevafoto@sbcglobal.net
ppscv.com

PP of Wine Country

Norah Burrows
(707) 327-7570
norahburrows@gmail.com
ppwc-online.org

West Coast School

Tim Meyer
tim@meyerphoto.com
westcoastschool.com

COLORADO

PP of Colorado

Jessica Vallia
(719) 232-4275
president.ppcolorado@gmail.com
ppcolorado.com

PPG of Colorado Springs

Carrie Cleghorn
(571) 389-7334
carriecleghornphotography@gmail.com
ppgcs.com

DELAWARE

Mid-Atlantic Regional School

John Capone
director@marsschool.com
marsschool.com

FLORIDA

Bay PPA (Sarasota)

David Graham
(941) 302-4495
bayprofessionalphotographers@gmail.com
bppafl.com

Florida PP

Jim Dwyer
(239) 565-0010
dwyerimages@gmail.com
thefpp.org

Florida School

Kevin Boller
kevin@kevinbollerphotography.com
thefpp.org/2026-fl-school-of-photography

Image Creatives (PP of SW Florida)

Kevin Boller
(239) 230-8977
kevin@kevinboller.com
imagecreatives.com

PP of Central Florida

Jenny Eggers
(352) 615-7662
jeneeggiersfl@gmail.com
theppcf.com

PP of North Florida

Jonathan Lee
(352) 647-5955
jon@jwleemedia.com
theppnf.org

PPA of Palm Beach

David Summers
(561) 310-1035
ppapalmbeach@gmail.com
ppapalmbeach.com

PPG of Florida

Jesus Cabrera
(305) 255-9922
cabreraerphotography@gmail.com
ppgf.com

Tallahassee PPG

Kate Bellflower
(904) 614-5234
kate.bellflower@gmail.com
tallahasseeppg.com

Tampa Area PPA

Darin Heinz
(813) 324-1230
mdarin@heinzfoto.com
tappa.org

GEORGIA

Georgia PPA

Lisa Hill
(404) 226-1451
info@gppa.com
gppa.com

HAWAII

PP of Hawaii

Dwight Okumoto
(808) 591-9044
s3fx@aol.com
pshawaii.org

IDAHO

PP of Idaho

Michael Collins
(805) 588-0376
ppofidaho@gmail.com
ppofidaho.com

ILLINOIS

PPA of Northern Illinois

Michael Lee
(917) 604-3116
michael@mikelephotos.com
ppani.org

INDIANA

Daguerre Club of Indiana

Sarah Crail
(317) 397-7559
dagguerein@gmail.com
facebook.com/daguerreclub

Indianapolis PPG

Tami Mohs
(812) 371-8801
tamimohsphotography@gmail.com
ippgonline.org

IOWA

PP of Iowa

Jaime Ellis
(319) 430-2703
info@ppiowa.com
ppiowa.com

KANSAS

Kansas PPA

Kathleen Pearce
(785) 835-6580
kathleenrockers@hotmail.com
kppa.org

Kansas School

Cindy La Barge
cindy@jcimaging.com
kpps.com

MAINE

Maine PPA

Rebekah Wheeler
(207) 318-0421
info@maineppa.com
maineppa.com

MARYLAND

Maryland PPA

Lidia Miller
(301) 524-2910
president@marylandppa.com
marylandppa.com

MASSACHUSETTS

PPA of Massachusetts

Cassandra Sullivan
(508) 335-2369
president@ppam.com
ppam.com

MICHIGAN

Detroit PPA

Robert Meek
(596) 216-6882
president@dppa.net
dppa.net

Great Lakes Institute of Photography

Amanda Scott
fae@laumephotography.com
glip.org

PP of Michigan

Pamela McCormick
(248) 342-4749
president.ppfmi@gmail.com
ppofmi.com

MINNESOTA

International Society of Animal Photographers

Ellen Zangla
(703) 727-3368
info@lisaasp.com
theisap.com

Twin Cities PPA

Emily John
(612) 229-9334
president@tcppa.org
tcppa.org

MISSOURI

PPA of Missouri

Aaron Cooper
(417) 483-4651
aaroncoopersphotography@gmail.com
moppa.com

MONTANA

Montana PPA

Andrea Reiger
(406) 971-5834
andreareigerphotography@gmail.com
montanappa.com

NEBRASKA

PP of Nebraska

Cory Loomis
(402) 604-0969
cory@coryloomis.com
ppofn.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire PPA

Nicki French
(603) 345-8739
artbynickifrench@gmail.com
nhppa.com

NEW YORK

Capital Champlain PPSNY

Robert Near
(518) 698-2967
rjnear3256@gmail.com
capitalchamplain.com

Hudson Valley PPS of New York

Steve Moses
(845) 401-8774
steve@stevemosesphotography.com
hvppsnyc.org

PPS of Central New York

Amy Davis
(315) 383-8958
amy.davis1@yahoo.com
pps-cny.com

PPS of New York State

Timothy Daley
(646) 509-1609
timothy@daleylight.com
ppsnys.org/about

NORTH CAROLINA

East Coast School

Ann Norment
ann@anormentphotography.com
eastcoastschool.com

Photographic Society of the Triangle

Cecil Hudgens
mchudgens@nc.rr.com
facebook.com/groups/32259093485

PP of North Carolina

Ann Norment
(803) 322-2701
ann@anormentphotography.com
ppofnc.com

Prof. Imaging Group of Eastern NC

Jim Woltjen
(252) 675-1631
jimwoltjen@gmail.com
plgoenc.com

OHIO

PP of Northeast Ohio

Eric Arnold
(330) 203-1460
president@ppofneohio.com
ppofneohio.com

PP of Ohio

Jeff Rose
(937) 464-9942
staff@ppofohio.org
ppofohio.org

OKLAHOMA

Metro PPA

Mandy Womack
(580) 284-2310
hello@metroppa.com
metroppa.com

PP of Oklahoma

Michael Scalf, Sr.
(405) 815-7806
michael.scalf@ppok.org
ppok.org

Tulsa Area PPA

Bob Holder
(918) 417-2170
inppa.tres@gmail.com
tulsaareappa.com

OREGON

Oregon PPA

Thea Martin
(503) 706-3239
sunstramals@gmail.com
oregonppa.org

PENNSYLVANIA

Northeast Pennsylvania PPA

Joshua Rose
(575) 226-7676
jrose@omegaimagephoto.com
facebook.com/nepaphotographers

PPA of Pennsylvania

Ronald Bookwalter
(717) 249-6366
ronfoto4u@comcast.net
ppaofpa.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

PP of South Carolina

Jennifer Curtis
(864) 724-9096
presidenttppsc@gmail.com
ppofsc.com

TENNESSEE

PP of East Tennessee

Jen Willis
(865) 567-5364
jen@jenniferwillisportraits.com
ppetn.com

PP of Middle Tennessee

Michael Gustafson
(615) 569-9222
m.g.photography@comcast.net
ppmtonline.com

Tennessee PPA

Karen Fox
(615) 939-6151
kfox@kfpimages.com
tnppa.com

TEXAS

Dallas PPA

Kenny Richard
(817) 296-0301
kennyr.dppa@gmail.com
dallasppa.com

Fort Worth PP

Andy Lay
(817) 475-5301
andylay@andylay.com
fwppa.org

PP of San Antonio

Trey Homan
(210) 827-2933
trey@ehoman.com
pgsa.org

PPG of Abilene
Steve Morrow
(325) 513-2514
steve@stevemorrowphotography.com
facebook.com/groups/1939706649889107

PPG of Houston

Duane Blocker
(425) 320-8229
dbblocker@comcast.net
ppgh.org

South Plains PPA

Cris Duncan
(806) 781-2747
dee@cjduncan.com
westtexasphotographers.com

Texas PPA

Steve Kozak
(972) 601-9070
steve@stevekozak.com
tppa.org

Texas School

Cris Duncan
cris@texasschool.org
texasschool.org

UTAH

Intermountain PPA

Brian Russell Ford
(801) 867-3652
brford64@gmail.com
intermountainppa.org

VERMONT

Vermont PPA

Jonathan Adams
(802) 355-2435
jon@jonadamsphoto.com
vtprophoto.org

VIRGINIA

Virginia PPA

Lisa Carter

(434) 822-6143
lcarterphoto@gmail.com
vppa.org

WASHINGTON

PP of Washington

Faye Johnson
(360) 509-6994
office@ppw.org
ppw.org

WASHINGTON, D.C.

PPS of Greater Washington

George Singleton
(301) 873-5382
george.singleton6@verizon.net
ppsgw.com

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia PPA

Anthony Rumley
(804) 513-3106
anthony@anthonyrumley.com
ppww.org

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin PPA

Jamie Steeno
(920) 655-4380
wppajamie@gmail.com
wppa-online.com

WYOMING

Wyoming PPA

RJ Pieper
(307) 389-2822
wyomingppa@gmail.com
wyoppa.com

COMMUNITY NETWORK SCHOOLS

EDUCATION NEAR YOU

Looking to update your photography education and skills? Find inspiration, knowledge, and camaraderie by attending a Community Network School, many of which provide educational opportunities on a statewide or regional basis during one week of the year.

EAST COAST SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS

NORTH CAROLINA

Contact: Ann Norment
ann@annormentphotography.com
eastcoastschool.com

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

FLORIDA

Contact: Kevin Boller
kevin@kevinboller.com
thefpp.org/2026-fl-school-of-photography

GREAT LAKES INSTITUTE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

MICHIGAN

Contact: Amanda Scott
fae@laumephotography.com
glip.org

KANSAS PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS SCHOOL

KANSAS

Contact: Kathleen Pearce

kathleenrockers@hotmail.com
kpps.com

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL SCHOOL (MARS)

DELAWARE

Contact: John Capone
director@marsschool.com
marsschool.com

TEXAS SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

TEXAS

Contact: Cris Duncan
cris@texasschool.org
texasschool.org

WEST COAST SCHOOL

CALIFORNIA

Contact: Tim Meyer
tim@meyerphoto.com
westcoastschool.com

© Masai guide, Name Unknown, Amboseli National Park, Kenya



FACES OF PPA

HAMZA QAROONI CPP

Maqabah, Bahrain | PPA Member Since 2024
BeautyAndCameraLens.com

Pursuing my certification has provided a structured learning experience, helping me expand my knowledge and communicate more effectively about photography in greater detail. I joined PPA to get certified and become a part of a large community of professional photographers.

It's my goal to organize professional wildlife, culture, and landscape photography tours worldwide. I'm proud of the recognition and awards I've received for my wildlife photography. It brings me joy to share the beauty I see through my camera lens. My inspiration and creativity come from my search to find and show beauty in its purest form.

SHARE YOUR STORY!
PPA.com/Faces



BACKGROUND

Through her Southern California-based company SeaStone Productions, freelance videographer and certified drone operator Carly Stone specializes in construction videos, including timelapses of projects, highlights, and sizzle reels. She films and edits everything herself and uses Sony cameras, GoPros, and DJI drones, occasionally subcontracting additional camera ops. She also records sound bites and even occasional interviews, depending on the client. "I don my safety vest and hard hat and I'm good to go," she says. "I love getting right in the action."



©CARLY STONE / seastoneproductions.com

For this assignment documenting a construction project for the city of Newport Beach, California, Stone traveled among five different crews working simultaneously all over Balboa Island on trenching, installing underground vaults, utility pipes, and pouring asphalt/concrete.

"It's so fulfilling to capture a project from start to finish and highlight work that normally goes unnoticed or that people don't realize the extent of," she says, adding that she is proud to be a woman in this male-dominated industry. "I believe I have a unique eye for framing and can easily be a fly on the wall while someone is performing his/her work."



©BEN WEAVER

SHARE YOUR BEHIND-THE-SCENES IMAGES WITH US AT EDITORS@PPA.COM

**Did
you
see
this
page
?**

Use the QR code below to help us show potential advertisers that *Professional Photographer* magazine readers notice print ads and that their support of your professional association matters.

No personal information will be asked for or gathered.



**PROFESSIONAL
PHOTOGRAPHER**

“

**I'M NOT HIRING
ANYONE WHO
DOESN'T KNOW
CAPTURE ONE.”**

— Seth Miranda

PPA

CAPTURE ONE ©

KNOW CAPTURE ONE. GET HIRED.

Professional photographers are judged by what happens long after the shutter clicks.

GET CAPTURE ONE CERTIFIED FOR FREE



Community Network
with PPA

Stronger Together

Join Your Local Association

Photographers helping photographers is what Community Networks are all about. These local creative communities nurture and provide the support and tools to help you grow. As a member of your local Community Network, you will:

- ♦ Connect with peers and mentors
- ♦ Sharpen your skills by competing in your local image competitions
- ♦ Earn merits towards your PPA degree by attending or speaking at a PPA Merit Program
- ♦ Get recognized, build credibility, and set yourself apart
- ♦ Give back to your photographic community
- ♦ And much more!

There's never been a better time to get involved. After all, it's together that we thrive.

Find a Community Network Association near you:

[PPA.com/Community-Networks](https://ppa.com/Community-Networks)