



Smart Photography

Interview

**Arun Babu &
Haruto Iwata**

Showcase

- **Harshal Surve**
- **Ruben Alexander**
- **Srirama Raja**

Learning

Bokeh

Printing & Beyond

**Perspectives,
by Vimal Parmar**

Also Reviewed

Google Pixel 11

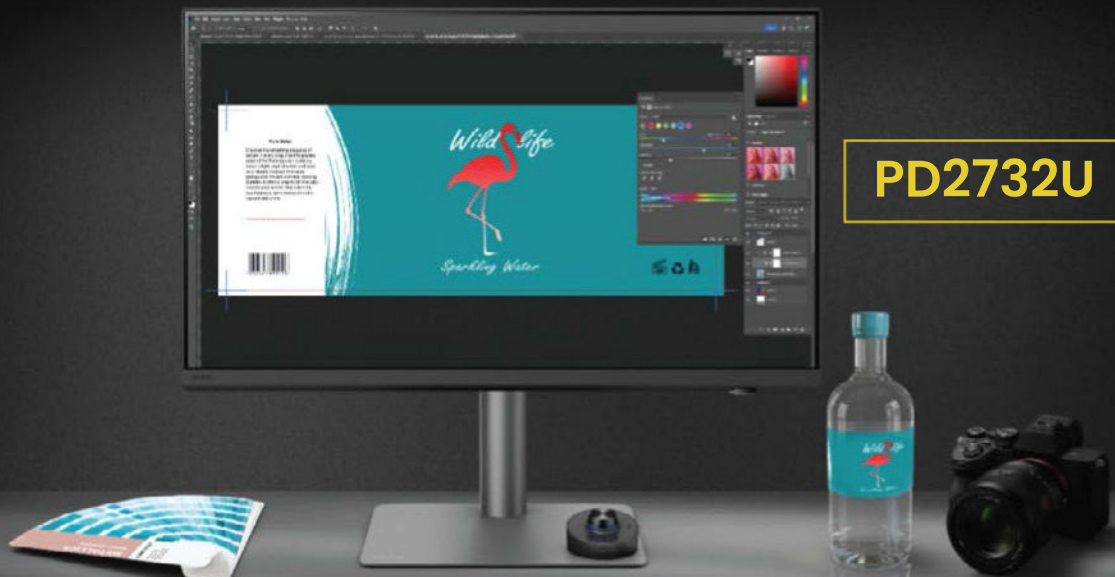




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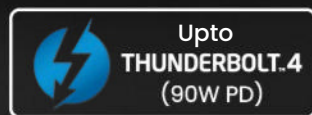
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TECHNICAL EDITOR

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FEATURES EDITOR & DIGITAL EDITOR

Jayashree Coutinho

PRODUCTION EDITOR

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Mahesh Reddy

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTRIBUTOR

Gandhi Mathi

HEAD-DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Ravi Parmar

ASST ART DIRECTOR

Prathmesh Vichare

PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR

Dinesh Bhajnik

PUBLISHER

Girish Mallya

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER &

GENERAL MANAGER (NORTH & EAST)

Ellora Dasgupta (Mob No. +98710 48666)

GENERAL MANAGER (SOUTH)

Girish Shet

PRODUCT MANAGER

Perseus Master

HEAD OFFICE - MUMBAI

608, Trade World, 6th floor, C wing, Kamala Mills compound, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel (W), Mumbai - 400013, Mob No. +91 93215 46598
Email: sp@nextgenpublishing.net

CIRCULATION AND SUBSCRIPTION

Kapil Kaushik (Manager Circulation (North & East)

Mob No. +91 98732 00589

Sachin Kelkar (Subscription Supervisor)

Mob No. +91 93215 46598

Email: subscriptions@nextgenpublishing.net

Apple Newsstand & Magzter Queries:

help@magzter.com

Zinio Subscriptions Queries:

http://in.zinio.com/help/index.jsp

MARKETING OFFICES

Bengaluru: 538, 1st Floor, 9th Main Road, Main Road, New Thippasandra Main Rd, HAL 3rd Stage, New Thippasandra, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560075

Chennai: Siva Shiva (Circulation),
Mob No. +91 98406 47812

NCR: Plot No. 170, 2nd Floor, Sector 16A,
Faridabad - 121002
Mobile No. 9818072458

Pune: 4, Dahiwadkar Building, Behind N Wittul
Shamsett Jewellers, 2433, East Street, Camp,
Pune - 411001, India

Hyderabad: Srinivas Gangula, Territory Sales Incharge (Circulation),
Mob No. 0900055756

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WELCOME

Smart Photography

INDIA'S NUMBER 1 IMAGING MAGAZINE!

For a few decades, all big inventions and innovations have been coming from Japan. Hold on! China is now getting ready. Laowa's Aksen ultra- macro zoom series are breaking new ground with full frame lenses that zoom smoothly from macro to micro scales (1X to 10X) without losing focus. Macro can range from 1-5X and 5-10X. Certainly, a breakthrough!

The EISA awards were held at a spectacular gala in the Berlin Palace Hotel on September 4. Nikon won 4 awards, Sigma 4 and Sony 3. Our hearty congratulations to the winners. Who knows? In the future, companies from Korea and China could be amongst the winners.



H. S. Billimoria

HERE'S WHAT MAKES US #1

WE ARE GLUED TO THE GLOBAL IMAGING INDUSTRY

Our team is updated with all the benchmarks and road blocks that the field of photography and imaging across the globe experiences. This helps us record the changes in the global perspective, thus making us the first to predict which products will be a rage in the Indian markets.

WE'RE IMPARTIAL

Loyalty towards our readers is a given, and their best interests are always on our mind. Every verdict is honest and not influenced by advertisers or personal favourites. So when we say a product is a 'BEST BUY', then, it is just that!

OUR TESTS ARE CONDUCTED BY EXPERTS

All equipment go through a series of tests at the hands of our experts. Our reviewers are experts in the field of photography across the country and have many years of experience. That gives us the foresight to distinguish between a passing trend and a big change in the field of photography and imaging. And finally, our reviews are not extended to just fill up the pages!

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU

There is no debate on why we are here. Our sole goal is to provide you options and better your judgement in product purchase while, sharing tips and tricks to improve your images. Our biggest joy is in building a bridge between you and your perfect picture!

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Editor - Hoshang S Billimoria

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News from the industry,
fresh from the oven

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Photographer : Harshal Surve



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SNIPPETS

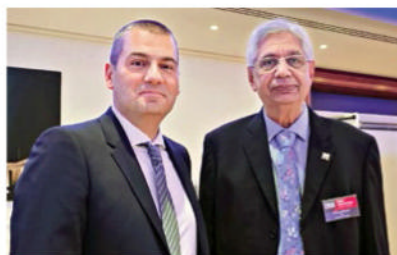
- Ricoh is to launch the GR IVx. The new camera will however come with a new 26.1 mm (40 mm equivalent in the 35mm format) F 2.8 lens. The new camera weighs a mere 265 gms
- 7 Artisans has launched a 10 mm F 2.5 fisheye lens promising full frame autofocus and high image quality. Minimum focus distance is just 15 cms. The lens is available in Sony E, Nikon Z and Panasonic L mount.
- Fujifilm's 102 MP compact medium format camera, the GFX 100RF, has won three international design awards. The awards are the IDEA, IF Design and Red Dot awards.
- Leica has announced a new APO Macro Elmarit SL 100 mm F 2.8 lens. This will be the first L mount macro lens from Leica.
- Action camera maker, Go Pro is being acquired by a AI hardware company called Starman Optical. The shares of Go Pro surged after the announcement.
- Latest figures from BCN, Japan give the following market share figures for the Big Three for mirrorless cameras. Sony 35.8%, Canon 26%, Nikon 14.5%
- Nikon is developing nine Nikkor Z Cinema T 1.9 lenses that cover larger than full frame. These lenses are specifically designed for Nikon's Z mount cameras.
- Laowa has released its first autofocus lens for the Fujifilm X mount. The lens is a 180 mm F 4.5 1.5 X Ultra Macro APO. On Fujifilm's APS-C cameras, the lens offers a 270 mm field of view. The lens comprises 12 elements in 9 groups. The lens weighs 526 gms and accepts 62 mm filters.
- Tata Electronics and Fujifilm are set to enter into a joint venture to build semi conductor materials in Gujarat.
- Nikon is expected to launch the Z 5II c shortly. The Z 5 II c is designed like a compact camera and comes with the EXPEED 7 image processing engine. AI powered autofocus and up to 7.5 stops in body image stabilisation are promised. An Indian launch is expected in mid October and a body only price of Rs 140000 is expected.



Members of the Photo Expert Group

EISA Awards Gala

The EISA Awards Gala was held in Berlin on Friday, 4th September at the historic Palace Hotel. EISA members from over 26 countries were present along with the award winners. President Ljuba Miodragovic addressed the distinguished guests and handed over the trophies. The glittering evening concluded with a sumptuous dinner and considerable networking.



The President of EISA with our editor



Camera of the Year Award being accepted by a representative of Sony Europe

New Sigma Lenses

Sigma has announced two new lenses; the first is the 85 mm F 1.2 DG Art lens. The lens takes 82 mm filters and is claimed to be weather sealed and offers great bokeh. The second is the 20-60 mm F 2.8/4 DG Contemporary lens. This lens is weather sealed as well and caters to the needs of a popular segment of the market. Both the lenses are available in Sony's E mount and Panasonic's L mount.





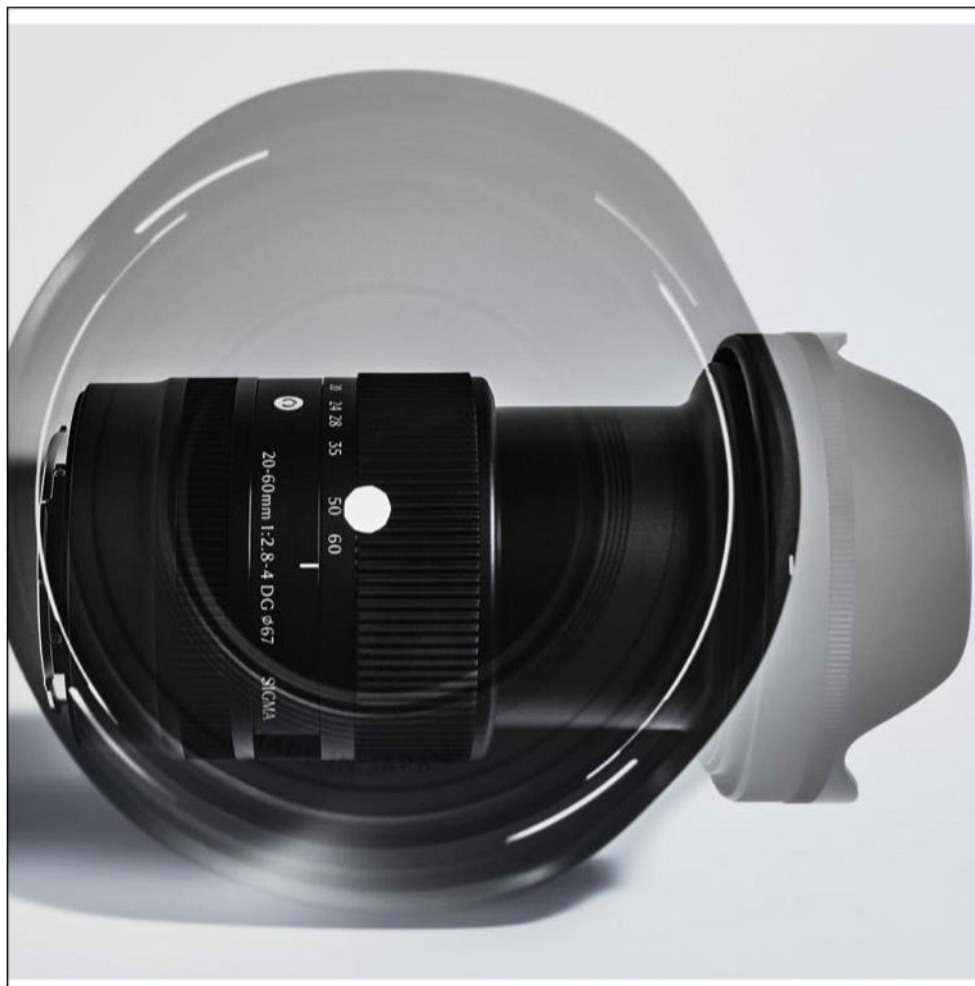
Canon Launches EOS R 8 II

Canon has just announced the new R 8 II with a 24.2 MP full frame sensor and 7 1/2 stops of image stabilisation. The camera body weighs 546 gms. and is a completely new design from Canon. On the video side, the camera can shoot

at 40 fps and has a pre capture mode. A fully articulating viewfinder which provides a 2.36 m dot OLED screen. Pricing is expected to slot the R 8 II below the R 6 III and is estimated at less than 2000 dollars.

Sony Launches new Fisheye Lens

Sony has launched its first ever full frame 8-14 mm fisheye lens with the announcement of the FE 8-24 mm F 3.5 Fisheye G lens. Further details are expected shortly.



CONTEMPORARY
20-60mm F2.8-4 DG

SIGMA

Fujifilm to Launch X 400 mm F 4.5 Lens

Fujifilm has announced the XF 400 mm F 4.5 R LM OIS WR telephoto prime. This super telephoto comes at an astonishing weight of only 1245 gms. On APS-C cameras, this lens delivers a focal length equivalent of 609 mm. The lens boasts 21 elements in 14 groups including two Super ED and four ED elements. Thereby, Fujifilm hopes to control chromatic aberrations. The lens is weather sealed and is particularly suited to wildlife and sports photography. 5.5 stops of image stabilisation make it more convenient to handhold. A 1.4 and 2 X teleconverter for this lens has also been announced.



Viltrox Launches New Lenses

At the 2026 IBC show, Viltrox launched several new lenses. These include: Full frame L mount lenses viz. AF 14 mm F 4, AF 20 mm F 2.8, AF 40 mm F 2.5 and AF 50 mm F 2.

- Full frame Pro Series AF 35 mm F 1.4
- APS-C 18 mm F 1.2 and 40 mm F 1.2

New Lens From Panasonic

Panasonic Lumix has unveiled a new full frame wide angle lens having a focal length of 20 mm and a constant aperture of F 2.5. The lens is compact, has weather sealing and weighs in at a mere 142 gms. Filter size is 62 mm. Panasonic seems to have aimed this lens squarely at S 9 owners.



Sony India Unveils New 400mm and 600mm G Master™ Super-Telephoto Prime Lenses

Sony India announces two new G Master™ super telephoto prime lenses for the Alpha™ full-frame E-mount system, the FE 400mm F4.5 GM OSS with a focal length of 400mm and the FE 600mm F6.3 GM OSS with a focal length of 600mm, both are the world's lightest lenses in their respective categories.

The FE 400mm F4.5 GM OSS weighs approximately 994g and the FE 600mm F6.3 GM OSS approximately 995g, achieving the world's lightest design in their respective categories. Their lightweight design makes them well suited to dynamic shooting styles that involve exploring the environment to identify and capture photographic opportunities and subjects.



In addition, their carefully optimised weight balance enables excellent control during handheld shooting, including situations where photographers need to continuously keep subjects framed or track moving subjects. These features enhance the flexibility of super-telephoto photography across subjects such as birds, wildlife and sports. These lenses are also designed to deliver

the exceptional resolution and beautiful bokeh that define the G Master series across the super-telephoto range, enabling photographers to capture distant subjects with fine detail. In addition, fast, precise and quiet AF performance allows photographers to quickly and accurately capture fast-moving subjects.

SONY

G MASTER

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α
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For details visit: <https://www.sony.co.in/electronics/g-master-lenses>



26 G-Master
LENS COUNT
79 E-mount

G MASTER

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Magic Moments – Through the Kiwi Lens

Padmashree Dr. Mukesh Batra – the renowned doctor of Homeopathy and a great philanthropist, conducted his 58th photography exhibition 'Magic Moments – Through the Kiwi lens' at the Kamalnayan Bajaj Art Gallery at Nariman Point, Mumbai, from 7th to 12th September 2026. As with all his earlier photo exhibitions, the entire proceeds from the sale of the photographs will go directly to the visually challenged children of the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind. Here are some images from the exhibition.



Left to right Padmashree Dr Mukesh Batra, Zayed Khan, Mandira Bedi, Graham Rouse (Consul General of New Zealand, Mumbai)





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Smooth Gradation



Bending Perspective: Framing the Cosmos with the Sony FE 8-14 mm F3.5 Fisheye G

Sony Lens : SEL814G

Umesh Gogna's transition into professional photography began while documenting ancient jewelry for his Ph.D. research. Driven by creative curiosity, he transitioned from commercial work to mastering travel, landscape, and astro-landscape photography. His evocative visual storytelling transforms vast Himalayan horizons and night skies into captivating art, encouraging viewers to look at natural heritage through a fresh, imaginative lens.



Umesh Gogna

Umesh Gogna is a Sony Alpha Brand Ambassador, mentor, and veteran educator with over 450 workshops and 40 masterclasses conducted across India. Recognized with Lifetime Achievement Awards and honored by the Governor of Rajasthan, he has served as guest faculty at premier universities. His work documenting Indian heritage and distant galaxies appears widely in books and international publications.



The Sony FE 8-14 mm F3.5 Fisheye G reimagines ultra-wide photography, delivering dual creative perspectives within a compact, highly portable lens. Weighing a mere 314 grams, it integrates seamlessly into travel and astro-landscape kits without adding unnecessary bulk, making it an exceptional tool for outdoor creators working in demanding environments.

At 8mm, the lens captures a striking 180-degree circular fisheye field of view,

sweeping entire sky-domes and horizons into a sharp central frame. Zooming to 14mm transitions the optic to a diagonal fisheye perspective, filling the sensor edge-to-edge while retaining dynamic, expressive curvature. A dedicated zoom lock switch prevents accidental shifts between these two distinct focal framing options during active shooting. Optically, the G Master-derived glass engineering yields outstanding resolution across high-megapixel sensors like the 50MP Sony Alpha 1 series. Advanced element

Switching from a traditional wide-angle to a 180-degree fisheye perspective completely changes how I visualize astro-landscapes. It transforms familiar night skies and mountain vistas into dramatic, fresh narratives, all in a featherlight 314-gram body. — Umesh Gogna



coatings control internal reflections, ghosting, and flare exceptionally well—a crucial feature when composing scenes with bright stars, urban streetlamps, or direct sunlight. Center-to-edge sharpness remains crisp even wide open at $f/3.5$, while a close minimum focusing distance of 0.15 meters enables impactful foreground emphasis with deep, surrounding environmental detail.

Autofocus is driven by quiet, high-speed dual linear motors, ensuring swift subject acquisition during rapid movement or night-sky alignment. The physical barrel design features weather sealing, a customizable focus hold button, and a click-less aperture ring, ensuring reliable operation for both stills and cinematic video in rugged outdoor settings. |SP



A gateway of colour, prayer and quiet grace. Bir's Tibetan heart welcomes you before the journey even begins.



Postcards Bir Billing

Srini Swaminathan's curiosity has taken him to 50+ countries. He began his career on oilfield rigs and is now a marathoner and long-distance cyclist who has cycled from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Bhuj to Assam. An author and a translator, he lives in Chennai and works on social development projects across India. He is @srini091 on Instagram and X.



Srini Swaminathan

Bir Billing in Himachal Pradesh is a paraglider's paradise and a photographer's dream. It is a landscape where ancient Buddhist monasteries stand sentinel over lush green valleys, adventure sports thrive in blue skies, and the rhythm of daily life is slow and fascinating to watch. This small village 2,400 meters above sea level is home to colorful prayer wheels, hand-painted paper-mâché art, organic farming communities, and moments of profound stillness.



Inside a temple kitchen in a pahadi village, the food is served in these leaves



Against the boundless blue sky, a paraglider descends toward the Bir Billing valley. This region's fame as Asia's second-highest paragliding site draws adventure seekers from around the world to experience the thermals and mountain winds.



The Kangra Valley Railway is one of India's most picturesque narrow gauge (2 ft / 600mm gauge) railway lines, and it connects the Kangra Valley with the outside world. The route is from Pathankot (Punjab) to Joginder Nagar (Himachal Pradesh), a distance of approximately 145 km



In Bir Billing, many houses are still built with bricks made with local mud and pine needles and sun dried like this



You can stumble upon such monasteries in Bir Billing. Colorful, serene and full of fluttering prayer flags, these places offer solace to those who spend time here.



An ornate prayer wheel inside a monastery, decorated with mantras and golden embossings, spins with devotion. Each rotation is believed to spread compassion and Buddhist teachings throughout the spiritual landscape.



A warm bowl of thukpa feels very soothing on a cold day



In Bir Billing you can see buddhist words carved on stones



Dramatic skies brood over the verdant Bir Billing valley.



A pahaadi dog gazes thoughtfully across the village landscape. They follow you for hours across the pathways in the hills and give so much love to the travelers.



Sunlight streaks through the tiles of the roof of a temple kitchen



A ladybird has made this plant her home. You observe many such delightful insects and bugs in the fields of the villages here



The Kangra Valley narrow gauge train leaves Baijnath on its way to Pathankot



A striking red-and-white Buddhist monastery with ornate rooflines and manicured gardens stands as a beacon of spiritual practice amidst the serene landscape of Bir Billing.



*Farmers cultivate many crops and fruit bearing trees here.
I am holding a fresh fig against the sky here*



You can find some quality walnuts in the Kangra Valley

Fujifilm opens its first **House of Photography** in India, the 11th in the world



Ellora Dasgupta

On World Photography Day, 19 August 2026, Fujifilm opened the House of Photography in Andheri West, Mumbai, its 11th such destination worldwide. The launch also falls in the year marking 200 years since the invention of photography. The two-storey, 5,795 sq. ft. space brings Fujifilm's imaging products and services together under one roof. It covers X Series and GFX cameras, Instax, QuickSnap, cinema lenses and printing. It also has a creator studio, a library, a workshop area and a changing exhibition gallery. The opening was attended by Arun Babu, Associate Director, Imaging Solutions Division, Fujifilm India; Haruto Iwata, Managing Director, Fujifilm Asia Pacific; Yujiro Igarashi, General Manager, Imaging Business Division; and Koji Wada, Managing Director, Fujifilm India.

On the sidelines of the launch, Babu and Iwata spoke about why Mumbai was chosen, how younger audiences are returning to cameras, the demand for the X100VI and the growth of the GFX system. They also spoke about what the House of Photography means for Fujifilm's India business. Excerpts follow.

The House of Photography Launch

- **India is the 11th global location. What made Mumbai the right choice now?**

Haruto Iwata: The cinema industry is already here, and our

zoom and prime lens series work well in this ecosystem. This is a global concept, not an Indian one. Opening a showcase only for digital cameras is something we've already done with X Space. Here we want to show Fujifilm's total solution: digital cameras, cinema cameras, Instax and printing. We already have Houses of Photography in Tokyo, London, Sydney and Bangkok, and we are considering New York and other cities. The aim is to establish a big brand around that total solution.

Arun Babu: Andheri West is a hub. Big production houses and the biggest rental houses are nearby, and the many stores across the street bring Gen Z and millennial walk-ins. It took almost a year to settle the floor plan, drawing on ten stores around the world. On the market side, the camera industry in India is growing in low single digits by volume, while Fujifilm is growing in double digits.

- **How do you see this space functioning beyond standard retail?**

Arun Babu: Honestly, it's an experience. We want customers to come here first, get educated, and learn from the masters who will run workshops and activities. Photo walks, workshops, creator meets and influencer meets will keep happening through the calendar. Customers get inspired and eventually make an informed decision. A traditional store works differently: those customers have already decided before they arrive, and they come only to

negotiate. That is not the purpose here. Our objective is the best experience, not pushing people to buy from here. They may buy from any multi-brand counter or online store.

We have a library, a studio, and a workshop area that easily seats 100. We also have an exhibition gallery that will keep changing, and that is the main highlight. We are running a nationwide event called Spectrum that displays only users' images. At the House of Photography the gallery currently shows our ambassadors' work. We will gradually switch it to user images, changing it month on month, based on selection criteria and contests. Users want to see their work displayed large.

- **Flagship smartphones are pushing AI photography. How do you convince casual mobile shooters they need a dedicated camera?**

Haruto Iwata: I'm 60 years old, and I've enjoyed SLRs and QuickSnap cameras since high school. What's interesting now is that young people across ASEAN and India are enjoying QuickSnap and analog film again. It isn't convenient or cutting-edge, but it matters to them. They wait four days or a week for developing and printing, and that waiting is fun. They also own smartphones, digital cameras and small action cameras, and they enjoy all of them, depending on the scene. Convenience isn't the only good thing for this generation. Sometimes they enjoy the inconvenience too.

Arun Babu: Take Instax and QuickSnap. They don't give you a picture-perfect image. They give you a hazy, old-school look, they still love it. We don't see this as a race against phones on AI features. A dedicated camera gives people something a phone doesn't: a distinct look, a physical process and an experience they want to repeat.

- **Are you seeing a real shift toward younger, smartphone-first buyers in India?**

Arun Babu: Yes. When we survey our database of X-M5 and X100VI buyers, the majority are Gen Z and millennials. People who started on mobile now want something professional, but not the very high end, so they start with APS-C. It's also a style statement.

Haruto Iwata: We see the same shift across the region, and negative film sales are growing too. That's one reason we opened the House of Photography. We can offer analog, high-end cinema solutions, Instax and prints in one place, so people can choose by their own taste and emotion.

- **How is Fujifilm India managing X100VI allocation so creators aren't kept waiting?**

Arun Babu: The X100VI has become a viral sensation in India. It's a highly demanded, fast-moving product and a Fujifilm style statement. We are making sure it's available, though stock comes and goes. People aren't even negotiating on price or discount. They just buy it. Some cameras become popular in ways that are hard to anticipate at the supply planning stage. We follow a rigorous demand analysis process and negotiate continuously with the factory to secure adequate allocation for India.

- **How actively are Indian creators using Film Simulations to skip mobile editing apps?**

Arun Babu: Film Simulations are our uniqueness. Longtime users know Provia, Velvia and Eterna by heart, and film recipes are now introducing those looks to a new generation. Many creators like getting the look in the camera and sharing straight from the JPEG, rather than editing afterwards. At the House of Photography, visitors can experiment with the simulations, and we promote recipes at our events. Fujifilm's technical experts also run sessions on film simulation recipes at the Spectrum tour.

- **How is GFX performing in India's commercial, fashion and automotive sectors?**

Arun Babu: As a system, we are the only ones with medium format. Even in weddings, some photographers now carry a GFX for portraits to stand out. But for GFX, commercial and fashion are the biggest segments, and we grow every year. It's mostly preferred by fashion, commercial and production photographers, and slowly weddings are coming up. For automotive, product shoots, hoardings and big commercial projects, GFX is preferred the most.

With the GFX Eterna, we are working closely with DOPs and cinematographers, and we've sold decent numbers in India. It's mostly bought by rental houses, directors and cinematographers, with an ecosystem of zoom lenses and our own GFX lenses behind it. The Eterna 55 has a 43.8 x 32.9 mm sensor, which Fujifilm calls the world's tallest large-format sensor for filmmaking cameras. For stills there are the GFX100S II and GFX100 II, and for a pocketable GFX there's the GFX100RF.

- **How critical are workshops, collaborations and media in educating the market?**

Arun Babu: Very critical. We believe a place where a community can form, with education through photo walks and workshops, serves customers across our whole portfolio. We reach Instax customers through colleges, festivals and fashion events. For cameras, we engage our core community through programmes like X Academy. Our staff have been trained for two months, and we hired many from photography backgrounds, so they understand how customers shoot.

- **Where is the biggest growth driver over the next three years?**

Arun Babu: From a camera perspective, Gen Z and millennials are driving growth right now. By product, the whole APS-C X Series is driving it, from the X Half up to the X-T line. GFX is growing too, but growth in the X Series is higher. So entry-level hybrid creators come first, with high-end commercial work as a steady second pillar.

- **Fujifilm India crossed ₹1,000 crore. What share is Imaging, and what targets have you set?**

Haruto Iwata : Our main business is still B2B, such as medical. But B2C products are growing rapidly, and we expect a good balance in the near future. **|SP**



Kurdus Dahi Handi

Harshal Surve is a Mumbai-based Indian photographer and visual storyteller whose work explores the country's culture, faith, traditions, and human connections. Focusing on festivals, rituals, and lesser-seen communities, he approaches each story with curiosity, patience, and keen observation. His work has been recognised through 33+ national and international exhibitions and awards, including honours from IPA, 35 Awards, FAPA, and the Pure Street Photography Awards. Through authentic, evocative images, he captures the character and emotion of people and places while preserving cultural stories and memories that might otherwise remain unseen.



Harshal Surve

A leap over a village well, a suspended Dahi Handi, and a moment where courage meets devotion — this is Janmashtami in Kurdus, Maharashtra.

Unlike the traditional human pyramid, participants leap from the edge of the well, attempting to touch the handi suspended above it. Each jump demands strength, precision, and fearlessness, turning the celebration into a thrilling spectacle of faith

and tradition. As the village gathers around the well, music, anticipation, and collective energy fill the air. Beyond the spectacle, Kurdus Dahi Handi is a living tradition that brings the community together and connects generations.

Through this photographic series, I document the intensity, emotions, and fleeting moments of a celebration where courage, devotion, and tradition converge. | **SP**















The Art of **Slowing Time**

Exploring cityscapes, landscapes and seascapes through slow shutter speeds



Lights of Vernaza

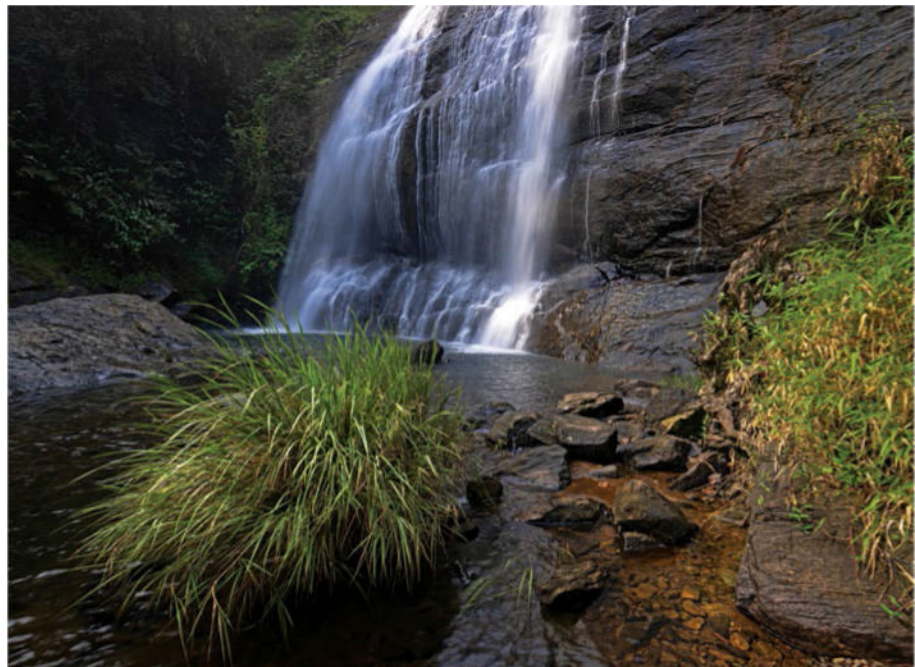
f/8 | 30 sec | ISO 100

Ruben Alexander is an enthusiast photographer based in Bangalore, India, with a keen interest in landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes, architecture and experimental photography. His approach to photography is driven by curiosity and a desire to explore how light, movement and time can change the way a familiar scene is perceived. Slow shutter speed and long-exposure photography form an important part of his creative work. He enjoys using extended exposures to capture the movement of water, clouds, light and people, creating images that convey a sense of atmosphere and the passage of time. His work explores the balance between documenting a place and interpreting it creatively. As an extension of his exploration of slow shutter speeds, Ruben has also been experimenting with Intentional Camera Movement (ICM), exploring the space between conventional photography and abstract art. His photographs have been featured in The Times of India and photography magazines in India and the UK. He is a recipient of the Askari Youth Photo Award and has received awards and acceptances in national and international photography salons, including a Master of Light award from the Master of Light Photographic Association. His photographs have also been exhibited as part of exhibitions organised by the Thank God It's Friday (TGIF) and the Youth Photographic Society (YPS) photo clubs. He continues to photograph and experiment across different genres, with a particular interest in finding creative possibilities in everyday landscapes, city environments and changing light.

Flickr Photostream: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/the-wanderers-eye/>
Instagram: @thewandererseye_rubenalexander/



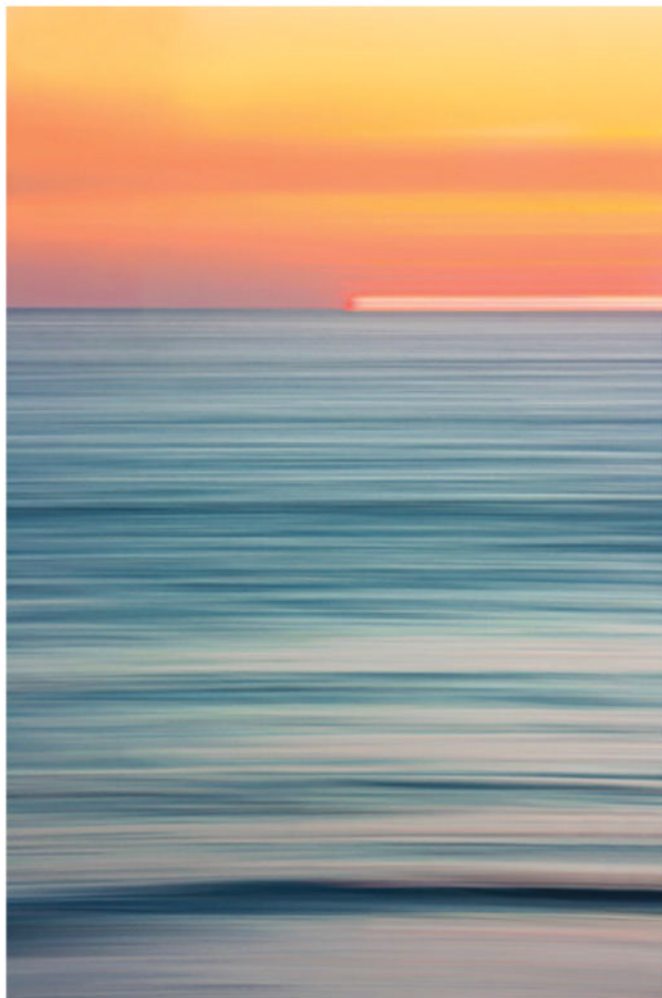
Ruben Alexander



Waterfalls at Coorg

f/10 | 1/13 sec | ISO 100

ICM Seascape
f/16 | 1/4 sec | ISO 100



Kollam Beach
f/13 | 1/3 sec | ISO 100

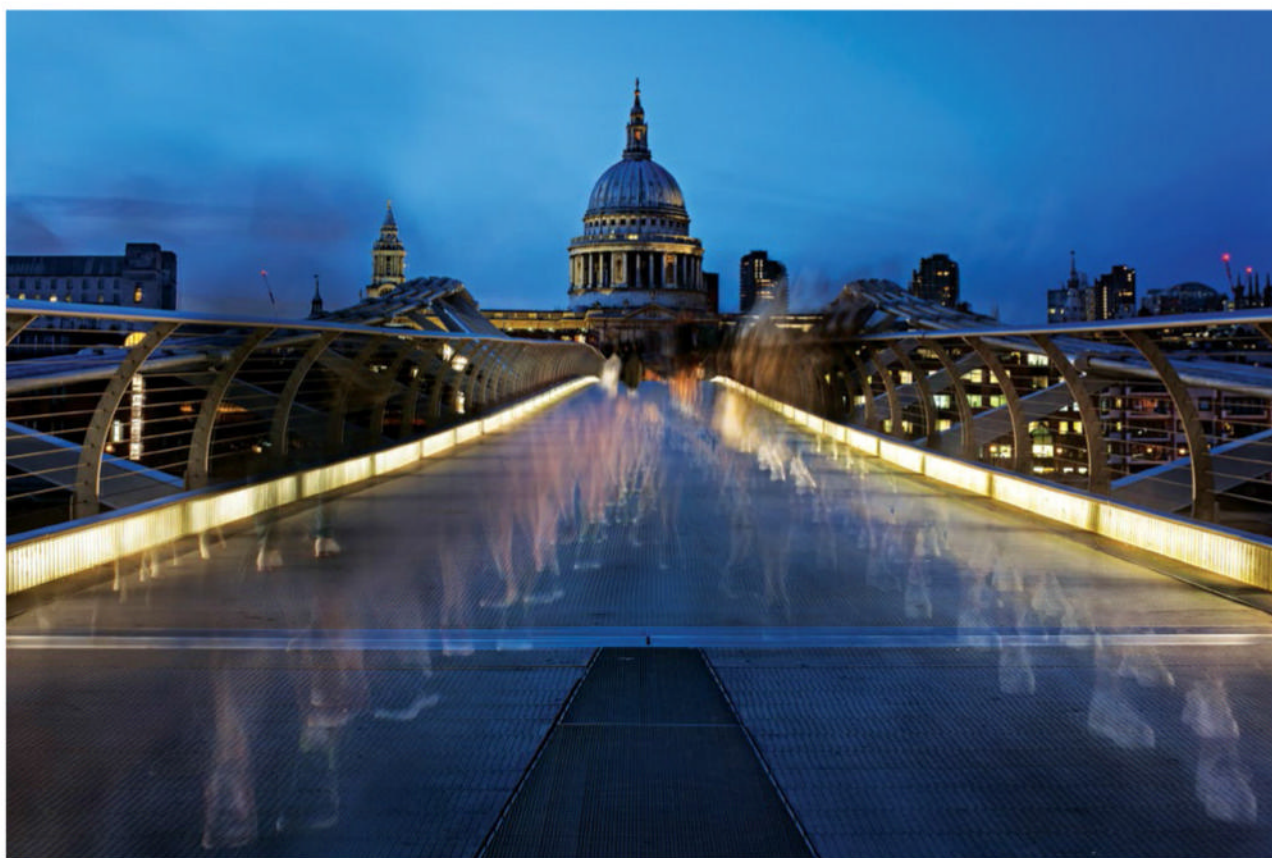


Manorala Seascape
f/11 | 45 sec | ISO 100

*Christmas
Rush*
f/20 | 1.3 sec |
ISO 100



*Foot fall on
Millenium
Bridge*
f/8.0 | 1.3 sec
ISO 100





*Light Trails
in the city*

f/13 | 15 sec |
ISO 100



*Oxford Street
Christmas
Lights*

f/3.5 | 0.8 sec |
ISO 100



Water pump
f/8 | 3.2 sec | ISO 100



Neist Point Lighthouse
f/2 | 1/3 sec | ISO 100



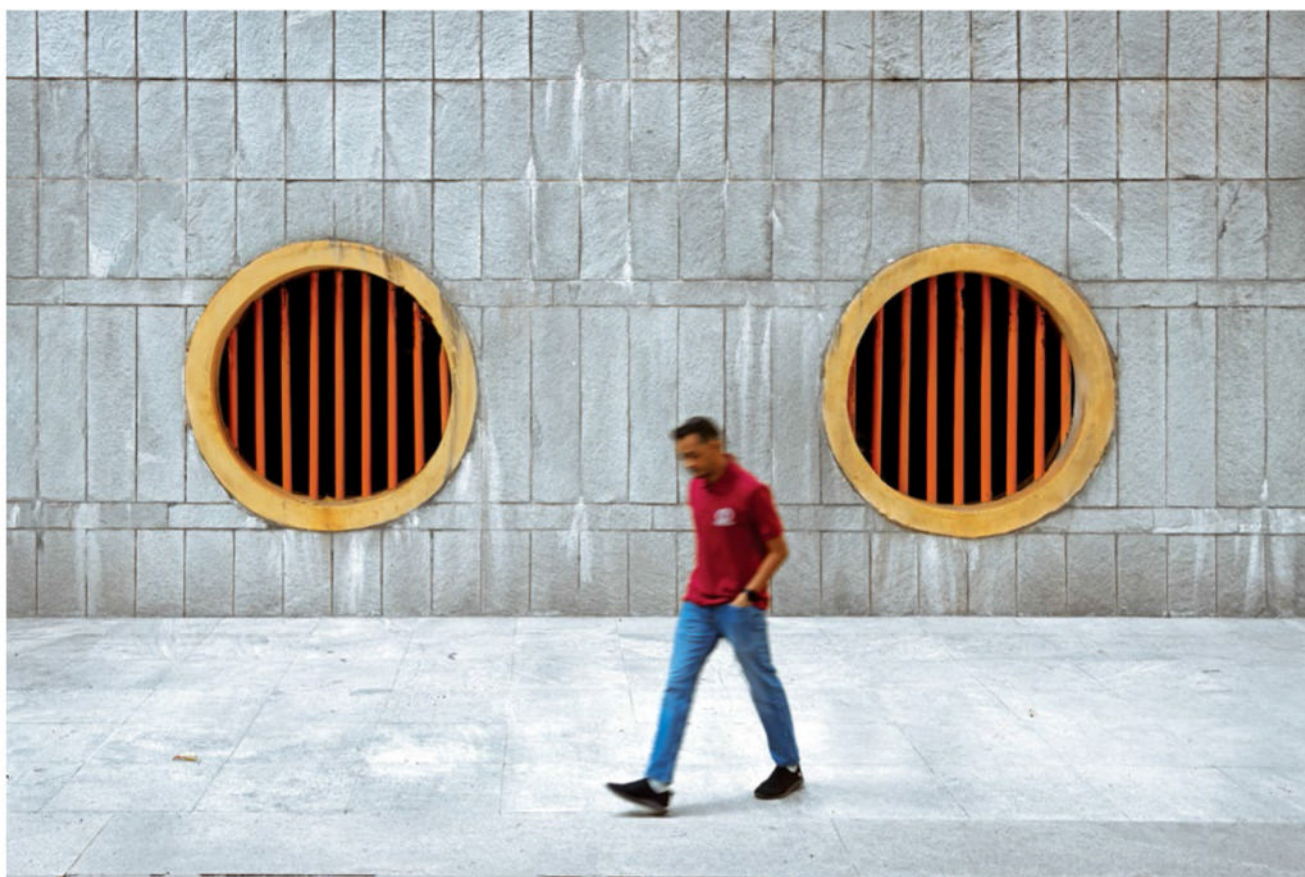
View of St Paul's
f/16 | 8 sec | ISO 100



Chinese Nets at Fort Kochi
f/8 | 5 sec | ISO 100



Hallstatt
f/9 | 3.2 sec | ISO 100

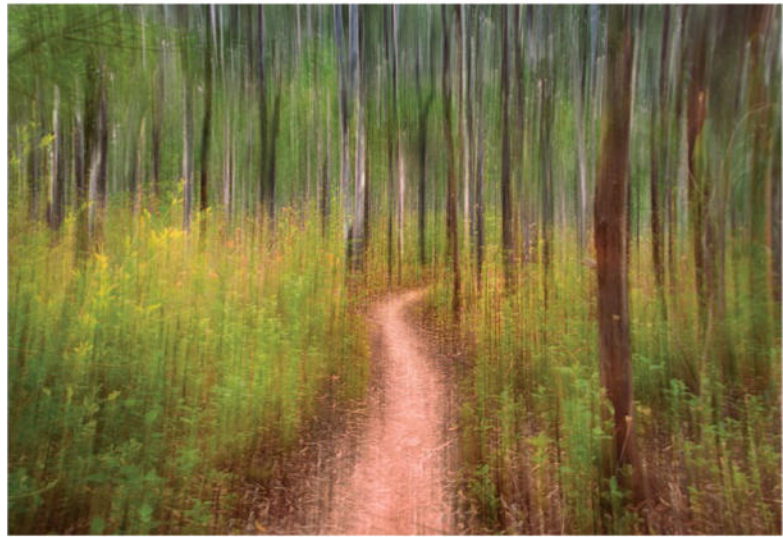


Urban
Atmosphere
f/7.1 | 1/30 sec |
ISO 200



Walking the streets of London
f/8.0 | 0.6 sec | ISO 100

ICM Landscape
f/10 | 1/6 sec |
ISO 100



Venetian Gondolas
f/16 | 5 sec | ISO 100



Panned Cyclist
f/4.0 | 1/15 sec |
ISO 100



Vidhana Soudha at Night
f/14 | 5 sec | ISO 100



The Hidden World

The Kamchatka Peninsula

Srirama Raja is a Chennai-based software engineer, entrepreneur and passionate nature photographer. Over the years, he has travelled to some of the world's remotest and exotic destinations, often seeking out places that remain off the beaten track and are seldom visited by photographers. These journeys have yielded distinctive images of landscapes and wildlife that offer a fresh perspective on these remarkable places. Raja has held several photographic exhibitions, including joint exhibitions with his son. He photographs landscapes with the Hasselblad X system and wildlife primarily with the Nikon Z9.

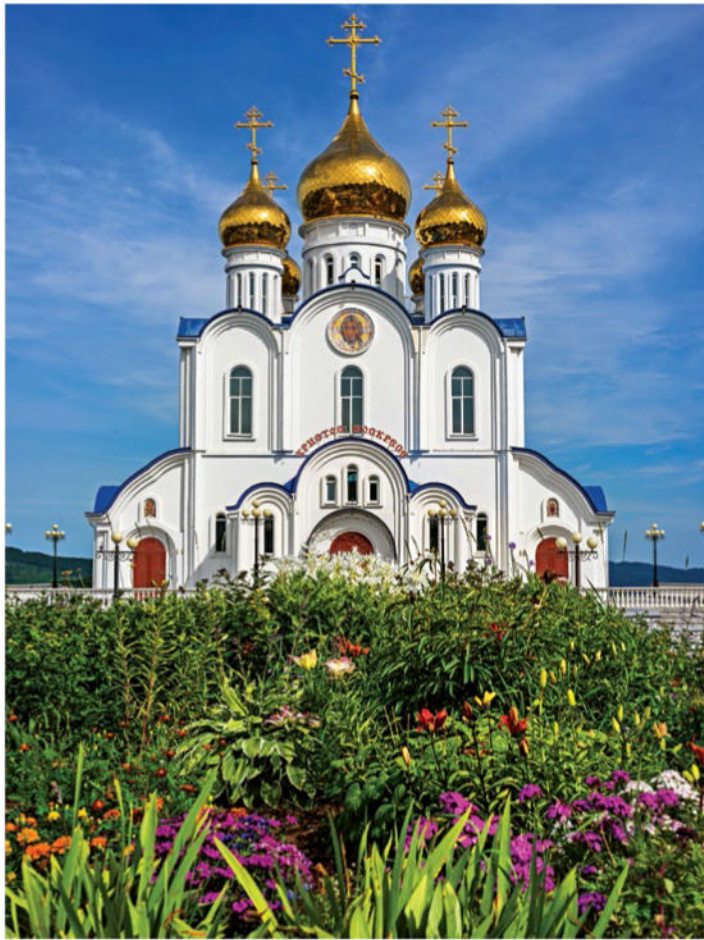


Srirama Raja

Far beyond the well-trodden paths of the world's famous destinations lies Kamchatka, a remote land where volcanoes rise from the earth, and wildlife roam freely. Few travellers know it, but for photographers it offers something increasingly rare: moments that feel truly wild and untouched.

The peninsula is best known for its large population of Kamchatka brown bears, but they are only the beginning. Seals, foxes, whales and orcas, and a remarkable variety of birdlife all share this landscape. And what a landscape it is. Snow-capped volcanoes tower above the wilderness, framed by glaciers, rivers and crater lakes. Steam drifts up from geothermal fields, giving the scenery an almost otherworldly quality. Along the pristine rivers, wildlife and landscape come together in a single frame, which is rare almost anywhere else.

Kamchatka may be one of the world's best-kept secrets, but for photographers in search of extraordinary wildlife and breathtaking scenery, it is a paradise waiting to be discovered. **SP**















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LEARNINGS

LEARNING

Ashok Kandimala

has been teaching at a photography school for over three decades and has extensive experience in both film and digital photography. He is a professional photographer by profession and a photographer by passion.

He has authored several books on digital photography and equipment, and has published more than a 100 articles on photography and some of the writings have also been published in the well-known international magazine *Popular Photography*. He is currently a senior lecturer in the faculty of photography and a pioneer for sharing the knowledge on photography through teaching and writing. He is the only Indian photographer to be featured in the *Black & White* magazine. He is currently working on *Management and Marketing of Photography*. He can be reached at kandimala@gmail.com.



Ashok Kandimala

BOKEH

Photographers strive for maximum sharpness in their images, leading them to spend large amounts of money on the best lenses and other accessories to get those tack sharp images. On the other hand, they pay scant attention to those parts of an image that are unsharp (blurred or defocused). In other words, most photographers put more emphasis on sharpness rather than unsharpness. However, there are some discerning photographers who pay attention to the latter.

Readers may recall that depth of field (DOF) is an important aspect that governs sharpness. When we focus on a subject, not only is the subject rendered sharp, but a zone of acceptable sharpness extends in front of and behind the subject. This zone is called the DOF. Parts of the image outside the DOF zone can be considered to be unsharp.

Before we go further, let us recall the term Circle of Confusion (COC). Despite its name, it is not difficult to understand. If you photograph a point, then it

should also be recorded as a point in the image if it is in perfect focus. On the other hand, if it becomes a disk with fuzzy edges (Picture 1), we can say that the point is out of focus. This disk is called the COC and is measured in fractions of a millimetre. We can tolerate it if it is sufficiently small, as the image will be acceptably sharp. The sharpness decreases as the disk becomes progressively larger, and at some point, we can no longer consider the image of the point to be sharp. This point of transition from sharpness to blurriness (or unsharpness) is, of course, subjective and could vary from person to person and also the end use.

Consequently, there is no measure of unsharpness, and hence we cannot quantitatively state how much it is. For the same reason, no standard definition exists for unsharpness, but there is another term to describe the 'look' of unsharpness.

That word is 'bokeh', and it is one of the least understood terms in photography

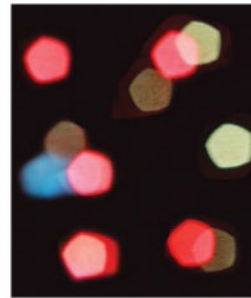
as it is **subjective** in nature, implying that the type of bokeh one likes may be chosen by another.

The word originates from the Japanese term 'boke', meaning blur or haze. For us photographers, it has a more specific meaning. Bokeh refers primarily to the **quality, character or aesthetics** of the blurred areas but **not** the **amount** of blur. This distinction is very important! Since it deals with defocused areas, it occurs for those parts of the scene that lie outside the DOF zone. Consequently, the effect of bokeh is most apparent at large apertures where the DOF is shallow.

Another important aspect of bokeh is that it is a very subtle effect. While many types of bokeh are talked about, it is difficult to differentiate some of them from the others. Also, note that bokeh is usually a complementary element to the main subject, though it can distract or divert the viewer's attention occasionally. Just as a photographer can make a pattern into a subject, a pattern of bokeh balls can be made into one, but this is rarely done.

So, is defocused blur the same as bokeh? It is not, and this is indeed the confusing part. Let us look at the blur (that is, defocus) first. This is the part that falls outside the DOF zone. The amount of blurriness depends on the following factors:

- **Aperture size:** The wider the aperture (that is, the smaller the f /number), the greater is the blur.
- **Magnification:** Longer focal lengths and/or shorter subject distance result in higher magnification. Higher magnification, in turn, leads to less DOF and hence, more blurring. Readers who do macro photography will be aware of this.
- **Distance between the subject and background:** The further the background is from the subject, the more it will be outside the DOF and hence will exhibit more blurriness.
- **Sensor Size:** As the sensor size reduces, the magnification decreases (for the same angle of view), and this extends DOF, reducing blurriness.



Picture 2: The bokeh often resembles the shape of the diaphragm, here a pentagon.

● **COC:** We have already touched on this important parameter. It is an empirical number depending on the sensor size, print size, viewing distance, etc. This is not under the control of the photographer.

Now what is bokeh? It is not the same as the blur or the amount of it, but how the blur looks. It follows that statements like a lens has 'more bokeh' is incorrect, while saying it has better or more pleasing bokeh is correct. One lens may produce a very soft defocused area whereas another can render it with double lines and halftones. Two lenses at the same aperture and the identical focal length will have the same amount of blur based on the laws of DOF but the bokeh could be very different.

We have seen factors that cause the blurriness. Let us do the same for bokeh.

- **Design of the lens:** Spherical aberration is a lens defect. It occurs

when light rays passing through the edges of a lens converge, that is, focus at a point that is different from the rays passing near the centre. How much it is corrected—and whether it is under- or over-corrected—has a major influence on bokeh. The correction aspect is determined by the design of the lens. Also, some specific lens designs give rise to unique types of bokeh. We will come to that later.

● **Aperture blades:** Both the number and shape of the blades play a role. More blades are better, and when paired with curved blades, produce a rounder, more pleasing bokeh. In fact, in many cases you can even see the shape and number of the aperture blades in the blurred areas. For example, if your lens uses a five-bladed diaphragm, you can see pentagons (a five-sided polygon, Picture 2) in the blurred area.



Picture 1: The concept of sharp focus and COC.

Ashok Kandimalla

has been in the photographic field for over three decades and has extensive experience in both film and digital photography. Being an electronics engineer by profession and a photographer, he possesses a unique

and deep insight into the technical aspects of digital photography and equipment. He has published more than a 100 articles on photography and some of his writings have also been published in the well-known international magazine *Popular Photography*. An avid collector of photographic books and vintage cameras, Ashok has a keen interest in the history of photography and a passion for sharing his knowledge on photography through teaching and writing. He is the only Indian photographer to be featured on the Nikon Centenary website. He is presently working as a Management and Engineering consultant. He can be reached at kashokk@gmail.com.



**Ashok
Kandimalla**

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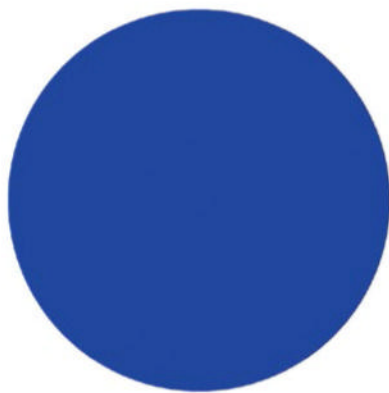
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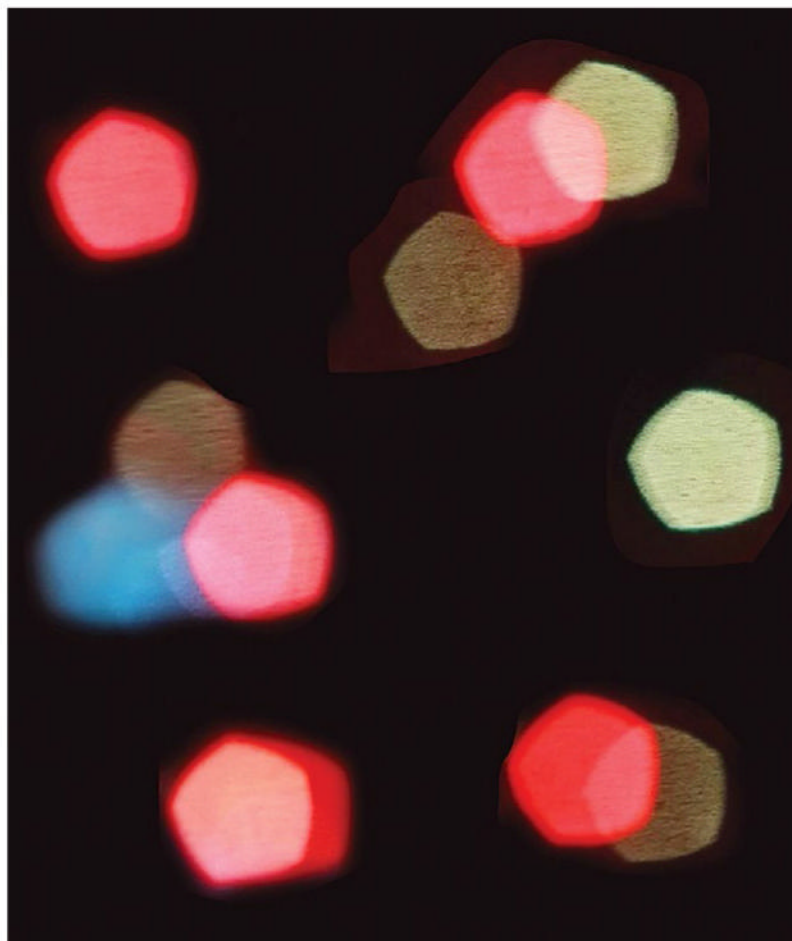
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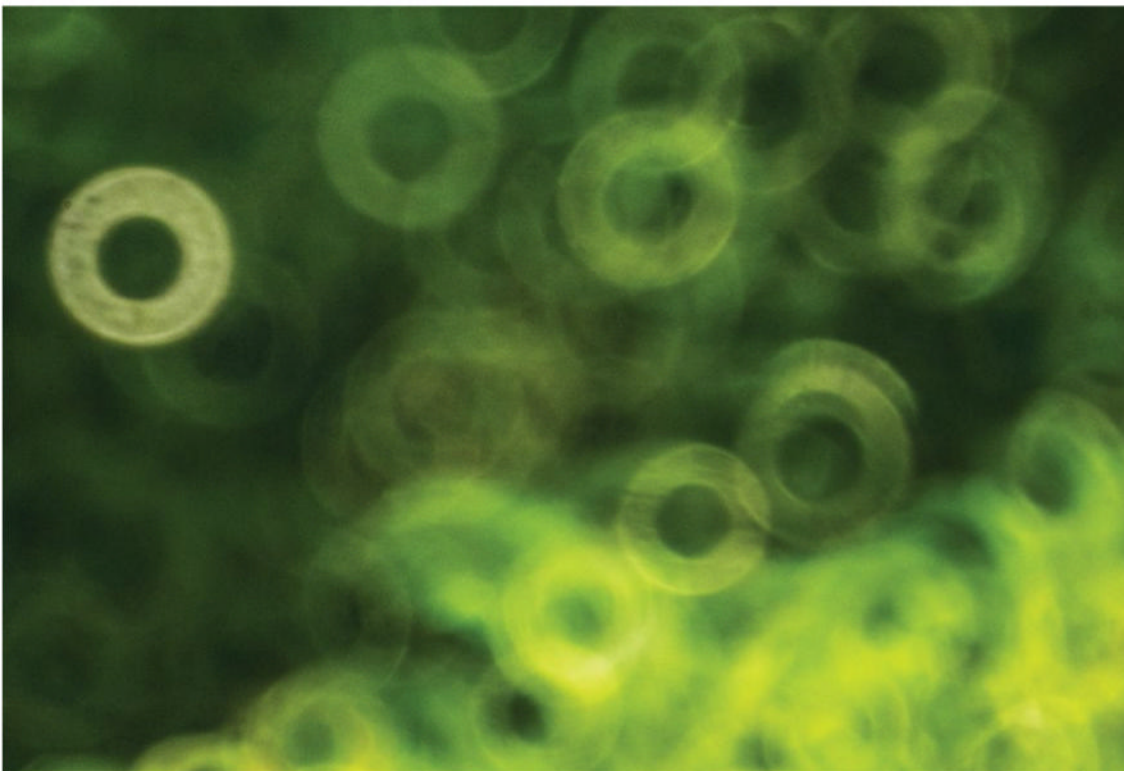
Picture 3: An image taken with a Leica Summilux with aperture at $f/1.4$. The lens shows bokeh like a wash of colours while maintaining excellent micro contrast. It has a price tag to match this performance.



In online sources and literature, several words are used to describe bokeh. Sometimes general descriptive words are used like beautiful, creamy, busy, harsh, etc. These are very subjective terms, but just to give you an idea, the famed Leica Summilux lenses are well known for their very smooth, buttery bokeh (Picture 3).

Many types of bokeh have some specific names. Let us see these in detail with some examples:

- **Doughnut bokeh:** Certain telephoto lenses called the 'catadioptric' type use mirrors in their design. These are commonly called mirror lenses and exhibit a very characteristic bokeh called the doughnut bokeh (Picture 4). In this case, defocused point highlights appear like doughnuts with thick bright disks with a central dark circle. This is due to the very design of a mirror lens, where the mirror at the centre blocks light. Some like it, some hate it, but everyone agrees that it is different.



© Ramesh S.A.

Picture 4: Doughnut bokeh.



Picture 5: Swirling bokeh. This photograph was taken with a Lomography Petzval 85 mm, which is a modern replica of the centuries-old original. The camera was a Nikon D750, and the aperture was $f/2.2$ (fully open).

- **Swirling bokeh:** This is a very well-known form of bokeh and is observed in the Petzval lens, which is one of the oldest lenses dating back centuries. Here, the background looks as if it is swirling, sort of rotating (Picture 5). Some of the older manual focus lenses that show this type of bokeh include the Carl Zeiss Jena Biogon and the Russian Helios-44 family. This look has become very popular now.
- **Onion ring bokeh:** Many modern lenses are

designed with aspheric elements. These are used to reduce aberrations and to decrease the number of elements. However, these are difficult to manufacture. Earlier, they were made by custom grinding and polishing of glass, which was very expensive. To reduce costs, most aspheric elements are now moulded. There may be machining marks on these moulds themselves and these manifest as a type of bokeh with concentric circles. This is called the onion ring bokeh (Picture 6).



© Srirama Raja

Picture 6: Onion ring bokeh (arrow mark). Lens used was Nikkor Z 85 mm $f/1.2$ S @ $f/1.2$.



Picture 7: An image showing cat's-eye bokeh (arrow marks).
Lens used was Nikkor Z 50 mm f/1.2 S @ f/1.2.



Picture 8: Note the soap bubble bokeh and also the harshness in the background.

- **Cats-eye:** In fast lenses, that is those with a wide aperture (small f-number), light enters the lens from many different angles, with light passing through the centre of the lens travelling almost straight to the camera sensor. On the other hand, light entering near the edges of the lens has to refract (bend) more to reach the sensor.

Because the light comes in at different angles, the blur circles that make bokeh are not all in the same shape. At or around the centre of the picture, the bokeh is usually round. Towards the edges of the picture, the circles get squeezed in one direction and stretched in the other and thus become oval (elliptical). These oval highlights are called cat's-eye bokeh

because they look like the pupil of a cat's eye (Picture 7).

- **Soap bubble bokeh:** This is somewhat similar to the doughnut bokeh, but the edges are thinner and less pronounced. These appear due to an aberration, a defect, in the lens. The most famous lens design that exhibits this is the Meyer Optik Görlitz Trioplan. There were some attempts to resurrect this lens also. The example (Picture 8) was taken using a 1960s vintage Super-Takumar 50 mm f/1.4 lens. This is a famous lens that was often called a 'radioactive' lens as it used thorium in the elements.

To satisfy the ever-increasing demand for higher optical quality, manufacturers

have made the lenses better and better. Modern lenses are now the sharpest ever, even at wide open apertures, with the excellent performance extending right up to the edges of the frame. All aberrations are very well controlled. All these improvements have led to excellent lenses that exhibit very good rendering overall. (Picture 9).

This has resulted in the opinion of some critics that the rendition of these lenses is very 'clinical' — excellent technically, but lacking a 'soul' or any individual traits. You might have heard of similar arguments among audiophiles – CDs vs. vinyl records. This is what led to the resurgence in the demand for vintage lenses, most of which are based on classic German designs. These go by names such as Tessar, Planar, Biotar, Trioplan, Elmar,



Picture 9: This is a picture taken with a high quality modern lens, the Nikkor Z 85 mm f/1.8 S @ f/1.8. Compare it with Picture 8. Both were taken at the same location using the same camera, a Nikon Z6. Note the smoothness in the defocused areas and how the highlights have been rendered without soap bubbles due to better lens corrections.

Hektor, etc., each of which has its own rendering of bokeh.

So, which of these do you like or dislike? Well, that is your choice!

DIY Bokeh: Not happy with the different types of bokeh? If you are a DIY type, you can create one that you like very easily. Many YouTube videos are available online. If not, you can purchase them from Amazon and for a few hundred Rupees, you get bokeh filters (Pictures 10 and 11) and have tons of fun.

In a lighter vein : Some critics say that few people (now that you read the article, you are among those) know what bokeh means and even fewer know how to

pronounce it. Don't let that bother you, as you can pronounce it in whichever way you feel is most convenient. I pronounce it as **bow-kay**. Bokeh, of late, has become a popular topic among trendy photographers. It has given rise to a set of words that are not found in any dictionary, examples being bokehrama, bokeawesome, bokehuyuck, bokehugly, bokehlicious, etc. I like the last one, though I am more inclined to satisfy my hunger by going to a nice restaurant rather than by ogling a photo. I also saw one used lens advertised as a 'bokeh monster'. This had my pulse racing. What will happen to me if I buy it? Will this monster munch on me? Unpleasant thoughts followed one after another, so I gave it a pass! **|SP**

CONCLUSION

Bokeh is very little understood by many. Some look at it critically, but most don't bother, taking the stand: if some part of an image is out of focus, so be it because they believe anything out of focus is inherently less important. Whichever camp you belong to, do not lose sight of the fact that the subject is always more important than the background unless the latter is so hopelessly bad that it destroys the essence of the photograph.

All text, diagrams, and images © Ashok Kandimalla, unless mentioned otherwise.



Picture 10: The ring on the left side screws in like a filter and the different inserts can then be placed for diverse bokeh effects.



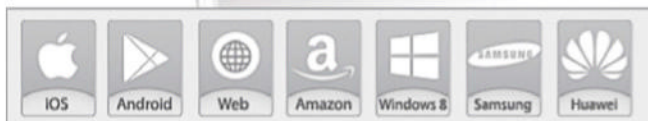
Picture 11: An example using one of the bokeh filters.

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PRINTING AND BEYOND



Vimal Parmar

An independent marketing consultant and digital print evangelist with over 40 years of experience in the imaging industry.

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When Photographs Leave the Screen

This month's feature takes us to Bengaluru, where the Youth Photographic Society's annual member exhibition demonstrates how printing can transform not just the way photographs are viewed, but also how photographers see their own work.

Dear Readers,

We take photographs with increasingly sophisticated cameras, carefully process them and share them on digital platforms. Yet most of those photographs remain digital files, viewed on a screen, shared and then stored away, often never to be seen again.

This month's feature is about what happens when photographs finally leave the screen. The Youth Photographic Society (YPS) has long understood the value of giving photographs a physical life. Its annual member exhibition, *FRAMES 2026 – Vertorama: Beyond the Frame*, is a wonderful example of how a photography club can bring creativity, learning, community and print together.

When I heard about the Vertorama exhibition, I reached out to Prema



Prema Kakade

Kakade, an accomplished photographer and Secretary, YPS, and requested her to share a report on the event. I thank Prema for doing so and for giving me an opportunity to bring this wonderful initiative to you.

What particularly appeals to me is that the exhibition was not simply about putting photographs on walls. The process encouraged members to explore something new, experiment, learn from one another and ultimately experience their photographs as large prints in a gallery.

And that experience matters. A print makes us slow down. It invites us to look more carefully, notice details and consider the photograph in a way that can be quite different from viewing it on a screen. The viewer, too, gets an opportunity to engage with the photograph rather than simply scroll past it.

Perhaps that is the larger message of *FRAMES 2026*. Photography is not only about making images. It is also about learning to see them and sometimes, printing helps us see better.

And now, I would like to hear from you. Have you recently made a photobook from your own photographs? Or has your photography club, school or college recently organised an exhibition where members' photographs were printed and displayed?

If you have a story to share, send me a message on Instagram at [@vimalparmar](https://www.instagram.com/vimalparmar). I would love to see the work and hear about your experience. Where appropriate, I may feature some of these stories in a future issue of this magazine.

After all, there are many photographers and photography clubs doing wonderful things with print, and their stories deserve to be shared. I hope you enjoy this month's feature.

Warm regards until the next time.
Vimal Parmar

FRAMES 2026 – Vertorama: Beyond the Frame

Youth Photographic Society's annual member exhibition in Bengaluru was a reminder of why an image deserves to exist beyond the screen.

I have always believed that a photograph is not truly finished when we press the shutter or edit and share it digitally. There is something special about seeing a photograph as a large print, framed and displayed on a wall.

That is one reason I have a special affinity for Bengaluru-based Youth Photographic Society (YPS). A 55-year-old photography club with around 600 members, including more than 350 Life Members, YPS has consistently emphasised printing pictures by and for its members.

When I heard about FRAMES 2026 – Vertorama: Beyond the Frame, I requested YPS to share a report, and I thank them for doing so. I hope readers will find something to learn from their experience. What follows is based on the report shared by Prema Kakade, Secretary, YPS, and an accomplished photographer herself. It makes for an interesting story, not just because of the unusual format, but because of how YPS challenged its members creatively and gave their photographs a physical presence.

A club. Not a classroom.

YPS's philosophy perhaps explains why such initiatives work. Prema describes YPS as much more than a place for workshops and competitions. One of its core ideals is simple: "A Club. Not a Classroom." As Prema quotes from the club's ideals, "Workshops teach technique. Member discussions teach vision." The emphasis is on participation and peer

learning. Perhaps the most apt description of YPS comes at the end of Prema's description of the club's philosophy: "Welcome to the real darkroom—where minds develop." It is within this environment that FRAMES 2026 took shape.

The Vertorama challenge

YPS holds three annual print exhibitions, with its Member Exhibition, organised in celebration of the World Photography Day, described by Prema as the "most prestigious and loved". Each year, a new theme challenges members to learn new techniques and "think out of the box".

For 2026, the Executive Committee chose Vertorama. "Unconventional Vertical, stitched images of multiple frames". The required aspect ratio was 1:2.25, with final prints measuring 16 × 36 inches. The exhibition was titled FRAMES 2026 – Vertorama: Beyond the Frame.

For the technically inclined, the exhibition prints were on NovaSign UMO175. This was more than an exercise. Members first had to understand the concept and then learn how to execute it effectively. An online theory session by Hardik P Shah was followed by a practical shoot mentored by Goutham Ramesh, with senior photographers helping members prepare their submissions. A WhatsApp group kept members engaged as they "tried their hand at shooting Vertoramas in different genres and kept the interest going."



YPS members with their families at the exhibition



Panoramic view of the closing ceremony and awards

79 members. 158 images. 79 prints.

A total of 79 members submitted two images each, with one image from each selected for display after curation. The exhibition was held on August 29 and 30, 2026, at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath in Bengaluru. The 16 × 36-inch prints gave the photographs considerable physical presence in the gallery.

The response was encouraging. Prema reports a strong turnout, with “good appreciation of the displayed pictures of different genres and perspectives”. Photography students and schoolchildren were particularly drawn to the unconventional images, and Sunday saw an even larger audience.

Making an exhibition an experience

YPS also ensured that the exhibition extended beyond simply putting photographs on walls. Vertorama posters, “Meet Me” creatives, photo booths and interactive activities such as Shoot, Share and Win and Reels helped engage visitors, helping the exhibition “go viral”, says Prema. All were conceptualised, designed and executed by the members themselves.

The photograph becomes an object

But beneath all the activity was a simpler idea. Prema’s observation is worth quoting: “Nothing comes close to a large print, framed and displayed on the wall, in a prominent and prestigious gallery, giving an equal opportunity to newbies and senior members of the club!”

I couldn’t agree more. A photograph experienced as a print is different from the same photograph viewed as a digital file. Physical size, reproduction quality, framing and the viewing environment all contribute to the experience.

More importantly, the photographer gets an opportunity to see the image differently. On a screen, it is easy to move from one photograph to another. A print slows the experience down, making us notice composition, detail, colour, tonal relationships, sharpness and visual balance. We begin looking at the photograph not simply as an image, but as an object. And then there is the moment when the exhibition ends and

the photographs go home. The frames were handed over to participants, while their second image was produced as a 3 × 8-inch fridge magnet. The photographs had found a life beyond the exhibition.

A role for every photography club

This is where I believe YPS’s example deserves attention from photography clubs across India. Imagine if every photography club, from established ones to school and college clubs, made printing photographs an integral part of its activities not just through occasional exhibitions, but by educating members about its benefits. It could help photographers understand their work better.

For beginners, a printed photograph can reveal aspects of composition, detail, colour, tonal balance and presentation that may be less obvious on a screen. Viewers, too, get a richer experience: a large, well-produced print invites people to stop, look and engage. Photography clubs therefore have an opportunity to do more than teach technique. They can help create a culture of seeing.

As I have said before, “The best memories shouldn’t live behind a screen. Print them, display them and let them become a part of your everyday life.” And perhaps the final thought from Prema captures it best: “Photographs should not remain buried among the digital images we accumulate. They deserve to be seen, shared and revisited.” That, she believes, is the magic of a printed photograph and how moments become lasting memories.

FRAMES 2026 challenged photographers to look differently, learn from one another and experiment with an unconventional format. Ultimately, it did something simple: it gave digital photographs a physical life and that is where a photograph begins its second life.**SP**

Vimal Parmar

With inputs from Prema Kakade, Secretary, Youth Photographic Society.

Photo Credit: Rakesh V C • www.ypsbengaluru.com



Fridge magnets featuring the participants' second submissions



Executive Committee members being honoured



Fun at the Vertorama photobooth



Executive Committee members in YPS T-shirts



Jog Falls Vertorama by Prema Kakade being presented to ADGP Dayananda B by Girish Ananthamurthy, Vice President, in the presence of Manju Vikas Sastry, President, YPS



Visitors and YPS members admiring the prints on display



Participant with family and the displayed photograph



Students of photography viewing the displayed works

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REVIEWS

FINAL RATING

The final ratings given in the reviews are not an indication of the performance or features of the reviewed device in isolation. It is a combination of all parameters including the price of the product.



66

Camera Review
Fujifilm X-T 30III

Lens Review
**Viltrox AF
85 mm F2 EVO**

70



76

Smartphone Review
Google Pixel 11

74

Monitor Review
**BenQ Creative
Pro PD2732U**



Fujifilm X-T 30III ₹1,19,999/- (Fujifilm.com)

Everyday **Creative** Companion

In the Box

- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Rechargeable battery
- ✓ Shoulder strap
- ✓ Headphone adapter
- ✓ Quick Start guide
- ✓ Warranty card

Rohinton Mehta

The X-T30 III is the latest addition to the line of cameras positioned as the compact, lower-cost alternative to Fujifilm's more expensive semi-pro range, which includes cameras like the X-T5. It shares most of the core imaging features—sensor, processor, film simulations, etc.—while trimming more advanced features and using a less robust build to keep size, weight, and price reasonable. Most importantly, it retains Fujifilm's famed colour science and the dial-and-button user interface philosophy.

Design & Build Quality

The APS-C Fujifilm X-T30III mirrorless interchangeable lens camera is compact, sleek, and features a retro design. The top plate and internal frame are made of magnesium alloy for strength and reliability. The dials are made of metal, while the rest of the body appears to be polycarbonate. Overall, the body feels strong and durable. We received the body with the 13-33mm f/3.5-5.6 kit lens attached. The camera is available in three body colours – silver, charcoal and black. Filter size is 49mm, and the equipment is made in China/Philippines. The camera body weighs 378g including the battery and the SD card.

Key Features

Note: The camera is feature-rich, and it isn't possible to describe every feature in this review. Hence, only some key features are mentioned.



The Fujifilm X-T30III uses an X-Processor 5 (image processor), which is supposed to be faster than previous image processors, along with a 26.1MP X-Trans CMOS 4 Back Illuminated imaging sensor. The sensor format is APS-C (23.5 x 15.6mm). It uses the easily available SD/SDHC/SDXC cards (UHS-1 compliant).

The camera uses a hybrid autofocus system combining both Phase Detection as well as Contrast Detection across 425 focus points. The Phase Detection covers 100% of the image frame. Subject Detection can detect human faces & eyes, birds & animals, airplanes & drones, trains, automobiles, motorcycles & bicycles, and of course, insects. The camera can focus on very dark conditions up to -7EV when paired with very fast lenses.

A Film-Simulation dial at the top left allows you to choose between 20 film simulations. This dial offers

three dedicated positions marked FS1, FS2 and FS3. You can save your favourite Film Recipes (custom user adjustments stacked on individual Film Simulations) to mimic certain films like Kodak Tri-X or Porta, Fujifilm Provia, Velvia, Acros etc. The camera features a 2.36-million dot EVF and a 3-inch 1.62-million dot LCD touchscreen at the back that allows you to tilt the screen up or down for different viewing angles. The screen cannot flip sideways.

Video: The Fujifilm X-T30 III offers 6.2K/30p recording, that uses a small 1.23x crop, not much of an issue. The DCI 4k/60p also uses a crop, but it is even less at 1.17x. A standout feature is the 10-bit 4:2:2 internal recording to the in-camera SD card.



The camera offers the F-Log2 profile, with Fujifilm claiming a very respectable dynamic range up to 14+ stops. If that is still not enough, 12-bit RAW is also available (via HDMI) but needs an external recorder. Slow motion, now a favourite with event videographers, is supported up to 10x. The recording limit is 60 minutes, but we suggest readers do a test run, as this depends on the ambient temperature.

If you shoot video seriously, the X-T30 III is a clear step up from its predecessors, with higher resolution, smoother frame rates, etc. The X-T30 III can be considered the first in the 'compact'-series suited for serious videography.

Ergonomics

We weren't too happy with the way one must fiddle through the shutter speed dial to select the A/P/S/M modes. Also, the 'Q' button (Quick Menu button) is too close to the point where your thumb rests – one inadvertently went into the 'Q' mode quite a few times when

operating the camera. We suppose users with smaller hands may have a different experience. The Fn (Function) button quite flushed to the body; in our opinion, it should have been about 2mm taller. Accessing video is through the tiny Drive button at the back (top left corner) – not an ergonomic thing. The Electronic Viewfinder (EVF) could also be improved.

On the other hand, we have an easy approach to the Focus Mode Selector dial (M, C, S) – Manual, Single, & Continuous -- on the front left of the camera. Also available is the small joystick button that helps in quickly moving through the camera menus.

Performance

All the review images were shot in RAW and edited to taste. White Balance performed very well. Images were sharp, and contrast was good. Colour reproduction with Fujifilm cameras has always been excellent and the same is the case here as well. Subject

Tracking was also good. We were happy that Fujifilm has offered a dedicated Film Simulation dial that eases and quickens the selection; but just for record, if you always shoot in RAW, this dial is of no help to you.

Digital noise performance is quite good. We found the cleanest performance from ISO 160-800, acceptable 'noise' between ISO 1600 and 3200, and of course with higher digital noise at the highest ISOs. With the high quality of modern noise removal software, we wouldn't hesitate to use the highest ISOs.

The video features and performance of the Fujifilm X-T30III surprised me. They went far beyond expectations for a camera at this price point.

Value for Money

The Fujifilm X-T30 III with the 13-33mm kit lens is available at an MRP of Rs.1,19,999/-The kit lens is not sold separately. In our opinion, for this price, I expected better ergonomics. **[SP]**



FINAL SCORE



Design and Build Quality



Key Features



Ergonomics



Performance



Value for Money



Overall



PLUS

- Digital noise is well controlled
- Very good image quality
- Good colour balance
- Lightweight, retro design
- Compact – fits into trouser pocket
- Serious video capabilities
- Easy access to 20 Film Simulations via dial on top left

MINUS

- No weather sealing
- No in-body image stabilization
- Slow readout – leading to distortion on fast moving subjects
- Only UHS-I SD cards (you can use UHS-II cards, but the speed is limited to UHS-I)
- No independent Mode Dial – you must select P, A, S, M modes via the shutter speed dial
- Single memory card slot
- LCD screen lacks full articulation
- Hand grip could have been better



VERDICT

The Fujifilm X-T30III with its 20-50mm equivalent kit lens can be very useful for photographing landscapes, travel, content creation, and shooting in confined spaces. It is compact and lightweight and can easily be carried in a trouser pocket. It can also be considered the first in the series suited for serious videography.

Images are crisp and sharp and White Balance is excellent. Digital noise is well controlled.

KEY SPECIFICATIONS

Image sensorX-Trans: CMOS 4, 23.5 x 15.6mm

Image processor: X-Processor 5

Storage media: SD/SDHC/SDXC card

Recorded pixels (L): 6240 x 4160 / 6240 x 3512 / 4160 x 4160, For Medium and Small size, please check the User Manual

ISO Standard Output: AUTO 1-3, ISO 160-12800

Exposure control: TTL 256-zone metering, Multi/Spot/Average/Centre-weighted

Exposure mode: P/A/S/M

Exposure comp.: (Still) +/- 5EV; (Movies) +/- 2EV

Shutter speeds: (Still, Mechanical shutter/ P & A modes: 30sec-1/4000s, (Still, Mechanical Shutter/S & M modes: 15min-1/4000s

B (Bulb) mode: Up to 60min.

Shutter speeds: (Still, Electronic shutter/ P & A modes: 30s-1/32000s/Bulb 1s, Shutter speeds(Still, Electronic shutter/ S & M modes: 15m-1/32000s/Bulb 1s, Shutter speeds(Still) EFCS/P & A modes: 30s-1/4000s/Bulb: Up to 60mm Shutter speeds(Still) EFCS/S & M modes: 15m-1/4000s

Note: Shutter speeds are mentioned only for still images.

Focus mode: Single, Continuous AF, Manual

Bracketing: Available for AF, Dynamic Range, White Balance, Film Simulation, ISO, and Focus

Viewfinder: EVF (0.39"), 2.36 million dots

LCD monitor 3", approx. 1.62 million dots

Dimensions: (W) 118.4 x (H) 82.8 x (D) 46.8mm

Weight: 378g, including battery and SD card



In the Box

- ✓ Lens
- ✓ Front & rear lens caps
- ✓ Storage bag



Viltrox AF 85 mm F2 EVO ₹29,990/-

Cool Price, Great Performance

Hoshang Billimoria

Chinese manufacturers have taken huge strides with their optical products and Viltrox currently seems to be the most aggressive. Viltrox is now well established in Europe and the US and has set up marketing arms in these countries. Viltrox sells its lenses in three versions viz AIR, EVO and LAB. Whilst AIR is the regular brand, EVO is better engineered and has features like weather resistance. LAB represents an optical peak. The Viltrox brand is owned by Shenzhen Jueying Technology Co Ltd. of China.

SP had the 85 mm F 2 EVO on its bench for review. The lens was fitted with Sony's E mount.

Design & Build Quality

The Viltrox is a diminutive lens but is well made with aluminium alloy and comes with a stainless steel mount. It is designed for full frame cameras and comes with a lens hood, front and rear lens cap and a lens pouch. Build quality is good.

The lens is also weather sealed. The front optical element has a water and smudge resistant coating. The rear lens cap of our sample, however, had a loose fit and would rattle a bit. Of course, the lens is built in China and is available in Sony and Nikon mounts. The lens accepts 58 mm filters and weighs a mere 340 gms. We did have some trouble fixing the lens hood which is made from plastic.

Key Features

The lens is squarely aimed at street and portrait photographers. 10 elements in 8 groups constitute the lens. Of these, 2 are extra low dispersion elements and 2 are High Refractive index elements.

The EVO features a switchable click / declick manual aperture ring. It also features an AF/MF switch. Importantly, it also features a customisable button. For autofocus, the Viltrox uses a stepping motor.

Dimensions are 69 x 76 mm. Minimum focus distance is 0.74 metres and maximum magnification is 0.13 X. An integrated USB – C port has been built into the mount for direct firmware updates.

Ergonomics

The Viltrox is small and light and handles extremely well. Compared to other much heavier 85 mm lenses, this one is a dream.

Performance

The EVO lens produces extremely sharp pictures. Even the corners are sharp at full aperture.

Using its STM motor, the lens focuses quickly and precisely. Given its F 2 maximum aperture, the lens produces pleasing bokeh. Flare is also well managed. Slight vignetting is present but nothing to be too concerned about. Overall image quality was very good.

Value for Money

In the US, the lens retails for around 275 dollars. Amazon India sells it for Rs 29990. This is an attractive price. **SP**

PLUS

- Light
- Compact
- Good performance
- Aggressive price

MINUS

- Fiddly hood

VERDICT

Viltrox's effort with the 85 mm F 2 EVO is to be lauded. Not only is the lens small and light, it also produces very good results. The icing on the cake is the price. Great Buy!

Lens: Viltrox AF 85 mm F2 EVO
Aperture: F/4
Shutter Speed: 1/2500sec
Focal Length: 85 mm
ISO: 160



Pic: Rohinton Mehta

Pic: Rohinton Mehta



Lens: Viltrox AF 85 mm F2 EVO
 Aperture: F/2
 Shutter Speed: 1/500sec
 Focal Length: 85 mm
 ISO: 160



Pic : Rohinton Mehta

Lens: Viltrox AF 85 mm F2 EVO
 Aperture: F/2
 Shutter Speed: 1/1250sec
 Focal Length: 85 mm
 ISO: 160

FINAL SCORE



Design and Build Quality



Key Features



Ergonomics



Performance



Value for Money



Overall



KEY SPECIFICATIONS

Focal length: 85mm
 Aperture range: F/2-16
 Lens construction: 10 elements in 8 groups
 Autofocus: Yes, STM Motor
 Image stabilisation: No
 MFD: 0.74m
 Max magnification: 0.13x
 Filter size: 58mm
 Firmware update: USB-C port
 Weather resistant: Dust & moisture resistant
 Angle of view: Approx. 29°
 Dimensions: Approx 69 x 76mm
 Weight: Approx 340g

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BenQ Creative Pro PD2732U ₹74,499/- (benq.com)

A Color-Accurate Workhorse

Ajit Manjramker

BenQ came a long way since its debut of colour accuracy solutions for the print graphic community in 2013-14. As the industry evolved and so did the requirements, BenQ understood it and integrated nicely in their Creative Pro PD2732U, a 27-inch 4K IPS professional monitor positioned for photographers, designers, video editors, and print workflows. Announced in mid-2026 as the lead model in an updated Creative Pro lineup and available around Rs. 75,000 (launch price Rs. 74,499 in India; \$699 internationally), it prioritizes wide-gamut accuracy, factory calibration, and connectivity over gaming or general entertainment features.

Design & Build Quality

It sports BenQ's premium design ethic of recent years and remains a cut above much of the competition in visual appeal and overall build quality. The stand offers full ergonomics—height adjustment, tilt, swivel, and pivot into portrait—plus a quick-release for 100 x 100 mm VESA mounting. The Nano Matte Black coating reduces glare while keeping blacks reasonably deep, a practical middle ground between glossy and traditional matte finishes. Construction feels solid and quiet in operation, with no audible coil whine. Combined with clean cable routing and the included wireless Hotkey Puck G3, the package supports long editing sessions without adding desk clutter.

Display Performance

BenQ emphasizes AQCOLOR for studio-grade consistency “from screen to output,” with factory calibration (average Delta E ≤2 plus included report), Calman Verified, Pantone Validated, and Pantone SkinTone Validated credentials. Coverage is 99% Adobe RGB, 99% DCI-P3/Display P3, and 100% sRGB/Rec.709. Uniformity Technology reduces edge-to-center brightness and colour shifts that can cause editing errors.



Dedicated modes (Adobe RGB, Display P3, sRGB, Rec.709, M-book, B+W, CAD/CAM, Animation, HDR, etc.) plus DualView/PIP let you compare colour spaces side by side. Out-of-box accuracy is strong enough that many users can start working immediately, with software calibration available via AQCOLOR Pilot for ongoing maintenance. Contrast is typical IPS (~1000:1 specified; measurements around 1140:1). Viewing angles are wide and colour shift is well controlled.

The Brightness and Refresh Rate Reality Typical brightness is 400 nits. Independent measurements land close to that figure (around 385–388 nits peak). That is adequate for controlled studio lighting and most print/photo work, but limited for very bright rooms or serious HDR mastering. HDR10 and HLG are supported, yet there is no local dimming and no VESA DisplayHDR certification, so HDR is more of a convenience feature than a reference tool.

Refresh rate is 60 Hz with a 5 ms GtG response time. This is standard for colour-critical professional monitors where motion is secondary. Overdrive helps, but scrolling and general desktop animation feel less fluid than on 120 Hz panels. For photography, design, and video colour work the trade-off is acceptable; for mixed general computing it can be noticeable.

Connectivity Excellence

Thunderbolt 4 single-cable setup (video + data + 90 W charging) is ideal for MacBook users—clean cable management, laptop power, and daisy-chaining a second display via the second Thunderbolt 4 port (15 W). HDMI 2.0, DisplayPort 1.4, a USB hub (USB-C upstream plus USB-A and USB-C downstream), and a headphone jack complete the set. Built-in KVM lets one keyboard and mouse control two systems (laptop + desktop). These reduce setup time, clutter, and context-switching, directly boosting productivity.

in multi-device or hybrid workflows. Mac-specific extras (M-book colour match, iDevice preview, keyboard brightness/volume control) further streamline Apple-centric studios.

Software That Actually Works

AQCOLOR Pilot and Display Pilot 2 handle calibration, ICCsync profile management, mode switching, desktop partitioning, and multi-monitor matching. Display ColorTalk aids consistency across screens. The wireless Hotkey Puck G3 allows rapid toggling of colour modes and inputs without diving into menus—useful when switching between web delivery, print soft-proofing, or client reviews. Firmware updates are supported via Display QuickKit. Software calibration (not hardware LUT) is the method used; results after calibration remain good to very good for the price class.

Audio and Camera: Bring Your Own

There are no built-in speakers and no webcam. A 3.5 mm headphone jack is present. For a colour-critical creative monitor this is an expected omission—most professionals already use dedicated speakers, headphones, or a separate camera for calls. Plan on external audio if you need sound during reviews or video playback.

The Value Proposition

Photographer- and creator-focused features target colour-critical tasks: editing RAW files, soft-proofing for print (CMYK), skin-tone accuracy, and multi-device consistency while reducing friction. 99% Adobe RGB coverage stands out for print-oriented photographers, enabling closer matching of on-screen

colours to final output. In practice these features support faster, more confident editing: fewer colour surprises at print stage, quicker mode changes during client sessions or batch work, and a cleaner, more ergonomic desk.

Comparison to Similar Models

ASUS ProArt (e.g., PA279CRV):

Comparable colour accuracy and Calman verification; ASUS is often competitive on price and may include speakers or slight differences in USB-C power. BenQ edges ahead on Adobe RGB percentage, Hotkey Puck convenience, and explicit Mac workflow tools in this generation.

Dell UltraSharp (e.g., U2725QE):

Dell frequently offers stronger hub features (sometimes Ethernet), higher contrast (IPS Black variants), and occasionally higher refresh (120 Hz on some). Colour gamut may be slightly narrower on Adobe RGB; speakers are also often absent. BenQ prioritizes photography-oriented certifications and modes.

Apple Studio Display: Apple's options excel in Mac integration, speakers, camera, and premium finish but typically cost more, emphasize Display P3 over Adobe RGB (less ideal for print), and may lack some of BenQ's multi-mode/Hotkey flexibility. Higher-refresh or OLED alternatives exist at premium prices but introduce different trade-offs for static colour work. The PD2732U differentiates on strong dual 99% Adobe RGB + P3 coverage plus photographer certifications at mid-range pricing, with workflow aids that competitors sometimes omit. It trails on audio and refresh rate where more generalist or entertainment-leaning panels score. **[SP]**

PLUS

- Excellent wide-gamut coverage and out-of-box accuracy
- Robust creator toolkit (Hotkey Puck, KVM, software suite, Mac integration)
- Solid build, ergonomics, Nano Matte coating for reduced glare
- Uniformity compensation and certifications build trust for professional deliverables

MINUS

- No built-in speakers
- 60 Hz refresh rate: Standard for colour-critical pro monitors (motion is secondary), but it can feel less fluid for general desktop use
- Brightness/HDR limitations: 400 nits is adequate for controlled studio lighting but not exceptional for bright rooms

VERDICT

The BenQ PD2732U is a focused, productive tool for daily photography and hybrid creative work. Its colour accuracy, uniformity, print-friendly Adobe RGB, and productivity features (Thunderbolt single-cable + KVM + quick mode switching) meaningfully reduce uncertainty and support reliable screen-to-print/output pipelines. At its price it delivers pro-level essentials without the cost of high-end reference monitors.

FINAL SCORE



Design and Build Quality



Key Features



Ergonomics



Performance



Value for Money



Overall



KEY SPECIFICATIONS

Panel: 27-inch IPS, 3840×2160 (4K UHD), 163 PPI, Nano Matte Black coating (anti-glare with improved black levels and reduced reflections).

Color: 99% Adobe RGB, 99% DCI-P3/Display P3, 100% sRGB/Rec.709; 1.07 billion colors (10-bit); factory-calibrated average Delta E ≤2 with included report; Pantone Validated + Pantone SkinTone Validated + Calman Verified.

Performance: 400 nits typical brightness, 1000:1 contrast, 5 ms GtG response, 60 Hz refresh, HDR10 + HLG support (basic, no local dimming).

Connectivity: Dual Thunderbolt 4 (one with 90W power delivery + data/video; one out with 15W for daisy-chaining), HDMI 2.0, DisplayPort 1.4, USB hub (USB-A and USB-C downstream), KVM switch, PIP/PBP/DualView, headphone jack. No built-in speakers.

Ergonomics & Extras: Height (115 mm), tilt, swivel, pivot; wireless Hotkey Puck G3; AQCOLOR technology with Uniformity Technology (micro-zone correction for corner-to-corner consistency); software including AQCOLOR Pilot (calibration), Display Pilot 2, Display ColorTalk (multi-monitor matching), M-book mode, and Mac keyboard control for brightness/volume.



panel paired with a satin-finish spacecraft-grade aluminium frame that feels sturdy in the hand. The most practical physical refinement is the camera bar, which is roughly 40 percent thinner than previous generations and features edge-to-edge glass flowing directly into the metal frame.

When you put the phone inside an official case, that camera hump becomes almost completely flush. The phone is available in four colour options: Frost, Pistachio, Hibiscus, and Obsidian. It doesn't have the rear HiLight notification LED ring found on the Pro models, but comes with the white circle at the back which might trick some into believing it's there. It's actually the flashlight.

Durability is well handled for real-world shooting conditions. The display is protected by Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2, and the entire body carries an IP68 rating for water and dust resistance.

Key Features

For readers focused on photography, the rear camera is where the Pixel 11 really shines. The main wide camera utilises an upgraded 48MP Quad PD sensor with a 1/1.56-inch sensor size, an f/1.70 aperture, Optical Image Stabilisation, and an 85-degree field of view. This larger main sensor captures 56 percent more light than the Pixel 10, delivering noticeably better dynamic range and cleaner shadow rendition in low light.

The ultrawide camera uses a 13MP sensor with an f/2.2 aperture and a 120-degree field of view, complete with Macro Focus for close-up textures. What truly sets this phone apart from rivals is its dedicated 10.8MP Dual PD telephoto camera with an f/3.1 aperture, OIS, and 5x optical zoom. While competing base flagships lack a telephoto lens entirely or top out at 3x optical zoom, the Pixel 11 gives you genuine 5x optical reach that stretches up to 30x Super Zoom. Up front, you get a 10.5MP selfie camera with autofocus and a 95-degree field of view.

Computational Tools & Display

The underlying Tensor G6 processor features an upgraded Image Signal

Google Pixel 11 ₹89,999/-

Power Pixel

In the Box

- ✓ Device
- ✓ 1 m USB-C to USB-C cable (USB 2.0)
- ✓ SIM ejector tool
- ✓ Quick start guide

Khumail Thakur

Google has formally repositioned its entry flagship with the launch of the Pixel 11, keeping the starting price tag to ₹89,999 as last year's model. While a higher entry price is never pleasant news, Google softens

the blow by completely dropping the restrictive 128GB entry configuration, giving buyers a standard 256GB of UFS 4 storage and 12GB of LPDDR5X RAM right out of the box. For mobile photographers in India who want a versatile camera kit without carrying an oversized Pro phone, the base Pixel 11 remains a standout option. Unlike competing base flagships that force you to rely on aggressive digital cropping, Google continues to include a genuine 5x optical telephoto lens alongside a larger, light-hungry primary sensor.

Design & Build Quality

In terms of aesthetics, the Pixel 11 builds on Google's established design language rather than trying to reinvent it. You get a smooth polished glass rear



Khumail Thakur

Khumail Thakur



Camera: Google Pixel 11
Aperture: f/1.7
Shutter Speed: 1/33 sec
Focal Length: 5.3 mm
ISO: 90



Camera: Google Pixel 11
Aperture: f/3.1
Shutter Speed: 1/25 sec
Focal Length: 14.2 mm
ISO: 500

Khumail Thakur

Processor and a 50 percent faster TPU, enabling faster computational processing. New software additions include Camera Looks, which lets you apply custom film-style aesthetic presets directly in the camera pipeline while preserving Real Tone skin accuracy. There is also Magic Capture, which records video while automatically extracting crisp still photos at the same time.

Pixels generally rely too much on computational adjustments to deliver a cooler image. For example, a portrait shot in a warm and dimly lit environment will be auto-adjusted to match the real skin tone and colour details that remove the yellow overcast, and thereby, the mood of the place.

Video capture reaches 4K at up to 60 FPS across both front and rear cameras, including 4K Portrait Video. It is worth noting that full manual Pro Controls and 50MP RAW shooting are kept exclusive to the Pro models. The 6.3-inch Actua OLED display offers a resolution of 2424 x 1080 pixels (422 ppi) with a 60Hz to 120Hz variable refresh rate. While it uses an LTPS panel rather than the 1Hz-capable LTPO screen on the Pro, outdoor visibility is stellar. The screen hits up to 2,000 nits in HDR mode and a peak brightness of 3,000 nits, pushing around 2,480 nits in sustained lab testing to ensure easy frame checking under harsh Indian sunlight.

Ergonomics

It's definitely much smaller than the Pro models and, weighing 197 grams, the Pixel 11 sits comfortably in a pocket or bag without feeling bulky. The satin aluminium side rails provide a reassuring grip when shooting landscape stills. Unlocking the device is smooth thanks to an ultrasonic in-display fingerprint sensor that handles weathered or damp fingers better than optical scanners, complemented by Class 3 Face Unlock for quick daytime access.

Wireless convenience comes via built-in Pixelsnap magnetic charging compatibility, allowing Qi2.2 magnetic chargers and tripod mounts to align effortlessly. Note that the NFC chip has been relocated to the top of the phone for easier tap-to-share interactions.

Performance

At the heart of the device is Google's 2nm Tensor G6 processor, paired with the Titan M3 security coprocessor that uses post-quantum cryptography during secure boot. With 12GB of RAM and fast UFS 4 storage, the phone delivers smooth daily performance and resolves the UI micro-stutters that occasionally affected its predecessor.

While synthetic benchmarks and heavy 3D gaming scores still lag behind top Snapdragon and Apple chips, real-world tasks like editing photos run without hesitation. For this price point, though, I think the Pixel needs to have a faster and more reliable processor.

Battery life is easily one of the strongest arguments for choosing the base model. Packing a 4,985 mAh battery, the Pixel 11 benefits from its lower-resolution FHD+ screen to provide over 30 hours of typical usage. Wired charging reaches 30W via USB-C PPS, filling up to 55 per cent in roughly 30 minutes, while wireless Pixelsnap charging operates at up to 25W.

Value for Money

Priced at ₹89,999 for the base 256GB variant, the Pixel 11 asks for a premium over its predecessor. However, justifying that cost is much easier when you consider that 256GB of storage and 12GB of RAM are now standard in a market where component prices have climbed significantly. Google also bundles valuable software benefits in India, including 6 months of Google AI Pro valued at ₹11,700 (normally ₹1,950 per month) with purchases of Pro models across the lineup. **|SP**

VERDICT

For photographers, the base Pixel 11 represents an exceptional value pick in Google's current lineup. You get the exact same Tensor G6 processor, the same 3,000-nit outdoor screen brightness, the upgraded 48MP main camera sensor, and a dedicated 5x optical telephoto lens found on pricier flagships, along with seven years of OS, security, and Pixel Drop updates. For mobile photographers in India looking for high-end optical performance and incredible battery endurance without breaking the bank for a Pro model, the base Pixel 11 is a stellar choice.

FINAL SCORE



Design and Build Quality



Key Features



Ergonomics



Performance



Value for Money



Overall



PLUS

- Compact, premium, comfortable build
- Strong cameras and software
- Solid battery, 256GB base

MINUS

- Tensor trails rival flagships
- Little new, higher price
- No LTPO; slow wired charge

KEY SPECIFICATIONS

Body: 152.8 × 72.0 × 8.6 mm, 197 g; aluminum frame, Gorilla Glass Victus 2 front and back; IP68
Display: 6.3-inch OLED, 1080 × 2424, 120 Hz, HDR10+, up to 3,000 nits peak
Chipset: Google Tensor G6 (3 nm); IMG CXTX-48-1536 GPU
Memory: 12 GB RAM; 256 GB or 512 GB UFS 4.x (no microSD)
Rear cameras: 48 MP main (f/1.7, OIS), 10.8 MP 5x telephoto (OIS), 13 MP ultrawide
Front camera: 10.5 MP, autofocus
Battery: 4,985 mAh
Charging: 30 W wired; 25 W Qi2.2 magnetic wireless

Insta360 X6 ₹81,990/- (www.insta360india.com)

Performance That Raises the Bar

Girish Shet

The Insta360 X6 is more than an upgrade to its predecessor—it is a serious imaging tool that pushes the boundaries of what a compact 360° camera can deliver. Its biggest leap comes from the new dual 1/1.1-inch sensors, which are 33% larger than those on the X5. The result is cleaner footage, better dynamic range and significantly improved low-light performance.

The X6 records 8K 360° video at up to 50fps, making fast-moving footage noticeably smoother while retaining plenty of detail for reframing. The increased resolution also gives creators considerable flexibility to crop into a scene without immediately compromising image quality. For stills, the camera can capture up to 120MP 360° photographs.

Where the X6 really impresses is image quality across different lighting conditions. In daylight, footage is sharp with good colour reproduction and impressive highlight retention. Insta360's AdaptiveTone processing helps manage high-contrast scenes, while the larger sensors make a more meaningful difference as the light drops. Its PureVideo mode produces remarkably clean night footage, retaining detail while keeping noise under control.

Another major advantage is its 10-bit colour across shooting modes, along with I-Log and Dolby Vision support. This gives serious creators greater flexibility during post-production and colour grading. FlowState stabilisation and Horizon Lock continue to make the X6 particularly effective



for motorcycles, cycling, travel and other moving subjects. The X6 also doubles as a conventional camera. Its Flat mode can record up to 5K/60fps, while 4K high-frame-rate recording adds useful flexibility for slow-motion sequences. This makes it far more than a 360 camera—you can use it as an action camera, travel camera, POV camera or even a secondary production camera.

Battery performance is another strength. The 2,600mAh battery delivers strong endurance, while the camera's rugged construction and 20m case-free waterproofing make it suitable for demanding outdoor use.

The X6 isn't flawless. Its premium price puts it firmly in the enthusiast/prosumer segment, while 8K files demand significant storage and processing power. The mobile editing app can also be inconsistent, although the desktop workflow is considerably more stable. **SP**



DJI Osmo Action 6 ₹54,999/- (<https://djiindiaishop.com>)

A Serious Camera in an Action-Cam Body

■ Girish Shet

Action cameras have traditionally been judged by how well they survive a fall, a splash or a high-speed ride. The DJI Osmo Action 6 takes a more photographic approach. While it remains a rugged and highly capable action camera, its biggest strength is that it now behaves more like a genuinely versatile imaging tool.

The headline feature is DJI's new 1/1.1-inch square CMOS sensor. It is significantly larger than the 1/1.9-inch sensor used in the GoPro Hero 13 Black, giving the Action 6 a clear advantage in dynamic range and low-light performance. The square sensor is equally important from a compositional perspective, allowing photographers and filmmakers to reframe a single capture for horizontal and vertical output without sacrificing the entire composition.

DJI has also introduced something rarely seen in this category: a variable aperture lens ranging from f/2.0 to f/4.0. This gives the Action 6 greater control over exposure and makes the camera more adaptable across changing lighting conditions than conventional fixed-aperture action cameras. The wide f/2.0 setting is particularly useful in low light, while the smaller aperture settings provide greater flexibility in bright conditions. With a Macro Lens accessory, the camera can also produce more creative close-up imagery.

Still photography is another area where the Action 6 impresses. With a maximum still resolution of approximately 38MP, images are detailed, vibrant and offer greater room for cropping. Colours are pleasing, while the larger sensor helps retain more information in highlights and shadows. For travel photographers, adventure shooters and creators looking

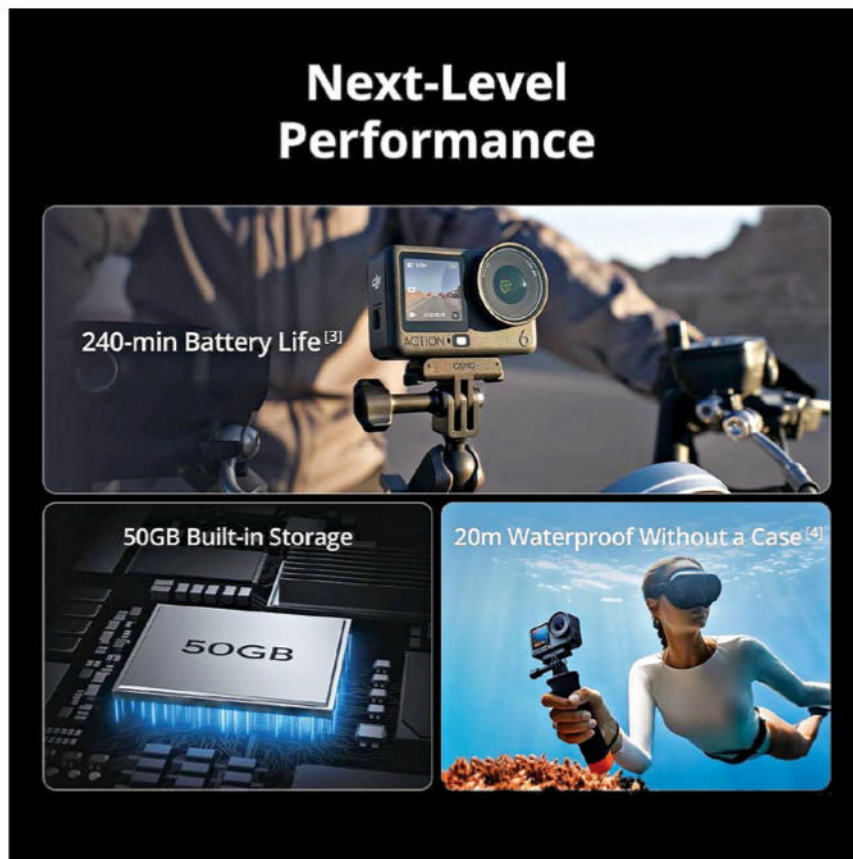
for a pocketable secondary camera, this is a significant step forward.

Video remains a major strength. The Action 6 can record 8K up to 30fps, along with multiple 4K options including 4K/120fps slow motion. DJI's RockSteady stabilisation and HorizonSteady further ensure remarkably smooth footage, even when the camera is handheld or mounted on a moving vehicle. Against the GoPro Hero 13 Black, DJI's biggest advantage is image quality and photographic flexibility. The larger sensor and variable aperture give the Action 6 better low-light potential, richer dynamic range and more control over exposure. The 4K Custom shooting mode also gives creators greater freedom to crop and

reframe footage for different platforms. The Action 6 is also well equipped as a practical camera, with 50GB of built-in storage, 20m waterproofing and strong battery performance.

Areas of Improvement

- **Built-in GPS:** For adventure and travel photographers, integrated GPS would have been a valuable feature for recording location data directly with images and footage.
- **8K Workflow Limitations:** While 8K is impressive, it comes with restrictions and requires significant storage and processing power, making it less practical for everyday shooting. **[SP]**





What's in a brand?

HI Fi and Hifi systems

Part II

Hoshang Billimoria

Manufacturers claim that music listeners are getting less and less fussy about the quality of music that they are listening to. This explains the challenging times the 'separates' market is going through.

Let's start with speaker manufacturers. At one time, British loudspeakers dominated the quality market. Brands like B&W, Wharfedale, Tannoy and KEF were world famous. Look at the situation today. Heybrook collapsed in 2000. So did Celestion. Brands like Wharfedale, Castle, Quad and Mission were taken over by the International Audio Group of China. Tannoy was taken over by the Music Tribe Group registered in the Philippines. KEF was acquired by the Hong Kong based Gold Peak Group. JBL and Harmon Kardon are part of Samsung. B&W after a series of buyouts is now part of Samsung.

Brands making hifi separates have similarly suffered. Denon



and Marantz are now part of Samsung. Arcam is owned by Samsung and Audiolab by the International Audio Group. Naim along with speaker company Focal were acquired by the Belgian company, Barco. Both Cyrus and Rega are still British owned. Bang & Olufsen is in winding down mode.

JVC was spun off by Panasonic in 2008 into a venture named JVC Kenwood. Today, it is hardly visible in the audio market. Of the Japanese companies, Sony, Panasonic/ Technics, Teac and Rotel continue on their own. High end manufacturer, Luxman was acquired by the International

Audio Group of China in 2009. Top brand Nakamichi was acquired by Nimble Holdings of China which now licenses the Nakamichi brand.

All in all, quite a number of mergers and acquisitions. So does your brand loyalty remain the same? **SP**

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