

EXPLORING



BY GLADE GAUGER, JAY PATEL, NEAL YU, ROBERT BEIDMAN, PAUL MARCELLINI, SHAWN VOGT, AND VARINA PATEL

HVOLSVÖLLUR

Iceland is a deceptively-named country, as this beautiful island has predominantly mild weather and a beautiful, dominant green color for most of the year. With a population of only about 300,000 and a land mass the size of the US state of Kentucky, Iceland offers plenty of opportunity to explore completely undisturbed landscapes.

This small island country offers incredibly diverse photographic opportunities - glaciers, mountains, desert-like terrain, colorful foliage, waterfalls, beaches, icebergs, and geothermal areas.

Our incredible, eight-day trip to Iceland was organized by Robert Beideman and Shawn Vogt. We are all grateful to them for their hard work and careful planning!

We also want to provide some information about the hotels, and rental car and tour companies we used during our stay. These business owners went out of their way to offer their knowledge, time, and experience to our team. We want to thank them for their willingness to help us during our stay. In the next pages, we will highlight the Hotel Ranga, SADCars/HappyDays, and Superjeep.is.

This group of seven photographers had an opportunity to spend one week exploring a tiny portion of this beautiful land...

This book showcases some of our images and describes...in our own words... our thought process and workflow as we explored these breathtaking locations. We hope you'll enjoy the journey!

GLACIERS

VÍK

HIGHLANDS

KIRKJUBÆ- JARKLAUSTUR

LODGING & TRANSPORTATION



HVOLSVÖLLUR

SWAN SUNRISE

© Paul Marcellini

LOCATION

North of Hvolsvöllur. Easy access, just off the side of the road. The fall colors in the low lying shrubbery caught my attention.

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Canon 5D MKII,
Lens: Canon 16-35 F2.8L II @
35mm
Exposure: 1/30s@F16, ISO
200

WORKFLOW

I didn't use filters, but I did blend three exposures in order to represent the entire dynamic range. One for the foreground, one for most of the sky, and one for the brightest areas. I also blocked the sun with my hand for the foreground exposure to block any flare. The key to picking this exposure was the timing of the swans flying through the image.



SELJALANDSFOSS

© Shawn Vogt

LOCATION

This location is Seljalandsfoss in Southern Iceland. I love this spot because it's one of the only falls in Iceland that I know where you can walk behind it. This opens up unlimited possibilities for shooting the falls at various angles.

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Canon 5D MKII

Lens: Canon 17-40 F4L @ 17mm

Exposure: 1/13s @ F13, ISO 100

Filters: Circular polarizer

WORKFLOW

I used two exposures to create this image. A separate exposure was used for the sky and blending was a bit tricky since I had to define the waterfall against the sky. To the naked eye, it seemed as if the water was flowing in sheets -- I felt it important to demonstrate this in my photo. By carefully selecting the appropriate shutter speed, I was able to capture a more realistic effect.

ABLAZE

© Varina Patel

LOCATION

Near Mýrdalsjökull Glacier

EQUIPMENT

Canon: EOS 7D

Lens: Canon: EF-S 10-22mm

F3.5-4.5 @ 10 mm

Exposure: 2s@f/16, ISO 100

WORKFLOW

The Autumn colors stretched for miles, and stood out starkly against the sandy black soil. I chose this spot because of the contrast between the bright colors, and because of the pattern of leaves that seemed to lead toward the distant mountains. I set up my tripod close to the ground and added a graduated neutral density filter to help reduce the brightness of the upper part of the image. In post processing, I was careful to avoid over-saturation of the colors, and loss of detail in the clouds.



FIST

© Glade Gauger

LOCATION

Dyrhólaey, Near Vík

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Canon 7D

Lens: Canon 24-70 F2.8L @
27mm

Exposure: 1/125s@F8, ISO 100

WORKFLOW

I was attracted by the “S” curve of the river through the black sand beach. Also, I chose to shoot towards the land since it kept the wind gusts to my back, and kept the salt spray off my lens! I set the tripod low for stability, and kept a hand on it to prevent it from blowing over. I timed the waves as I shot. I liked this shot because of the layers of waves traveling up the beach.

I converted to B&W using Silver Efex Pro. I worked to keep the texture in the clouds without losing the low-contrast foggy look. I also increased the contrast on the rock cliffs to bring out the texture and add interest to the mid-ground.

VÍK



BLOWHOLE

© Robert Beideman

LOCATION

Dyrhólaey, a small peninsula on the south coast of Iceland that was once an island. Accessed by a nicely renewed road.

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Nikon D3x

Lens: Nikon 17-35mm f2.8 @ 19mm

Exposure: 1/13s@F11, ISO 64

Tripod Rig: Gitzo Explorer with Acratech Ballhead. Tripod and ballhead leveled with RRS nodal rail set up for pano capture.

WORKFLOW

This image is a panoramic image of four frames that were each captured in vertical (portrait) orientation. The right-most frame is a focus-stacked image of two discrete frames, as the rock arch begins on the right at a position of approximately 24 inches from the lens.



STANDING GUARD

© Varina Patel

LOCATION

Dyrhólaey, Near Vík

EQUIPMENT

Canon: EOS 7D

Lens: Canon 70-200mm F4 @ 200 mm

Exposure: 30s@f/6.3, ISO 100

Filters: 1.2 ND filter

WORKFLOW

Capturing this image was very difficult. Extremely strong wind gusts rocked my tripod constantly, and crashing waves coated my lens with a fine mist. Rather than fight the elements, I chose a sheltered space in the lee of a large rock to minimize the effects of the wind. Even there, I couldn't eliminate camera-shake entirely, so I weighted my tripod by hanging my camera bag from the hook at the base of the center column. I wiped my lens frequently to keep it clean, and kept it covered in between shots. I wanted an extremely simple composition – so I zoomed in to place these imposing sea stacks alone in the frame. I used an aperture of f/16 and a neutral density filter to increase my shutter speed for smooth water – in order to simplify the image even further. In post processing, I worked to maintain the subtle textures in the sky and water, without losing detail in the rocks.

KIRKJUBÆ- JARKLAUSTUR

AMONG THE MOSSES

© Paul Marcellini

LOCATION

Southwest of Kirkjubæjarklaustur,
just off the side of Highway 1

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Canon 5D MKII,
Lens: Canon 24-105 F4L @ 93mm
Exposure: 1/6s@F11, ISO 200

WORKFLOW

No filters, although a polarizer would have been helpful. The wind and rain were blowing of course, with a terrible gray/white sky. This led to intimates, and mainly those sheltered from the wind. These especially compact plants didn't blow around as much and made the photography a little easier. I still had to bracket 2 exposures for depth of field. The color contrast is of course, what caught my eye. This scenes was photographed no more than 10 feet from the vehicle.



GREEN MOSS

© Neal Yu

LOCATION

Right off Highway 1 just to the west of the town Stóridalur, Iceland, the highway cuts across an old lava flow. The area is vast and you can spend hours just looking for the right set of flowers, moss, and rocks to photograph.

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Nikon D700

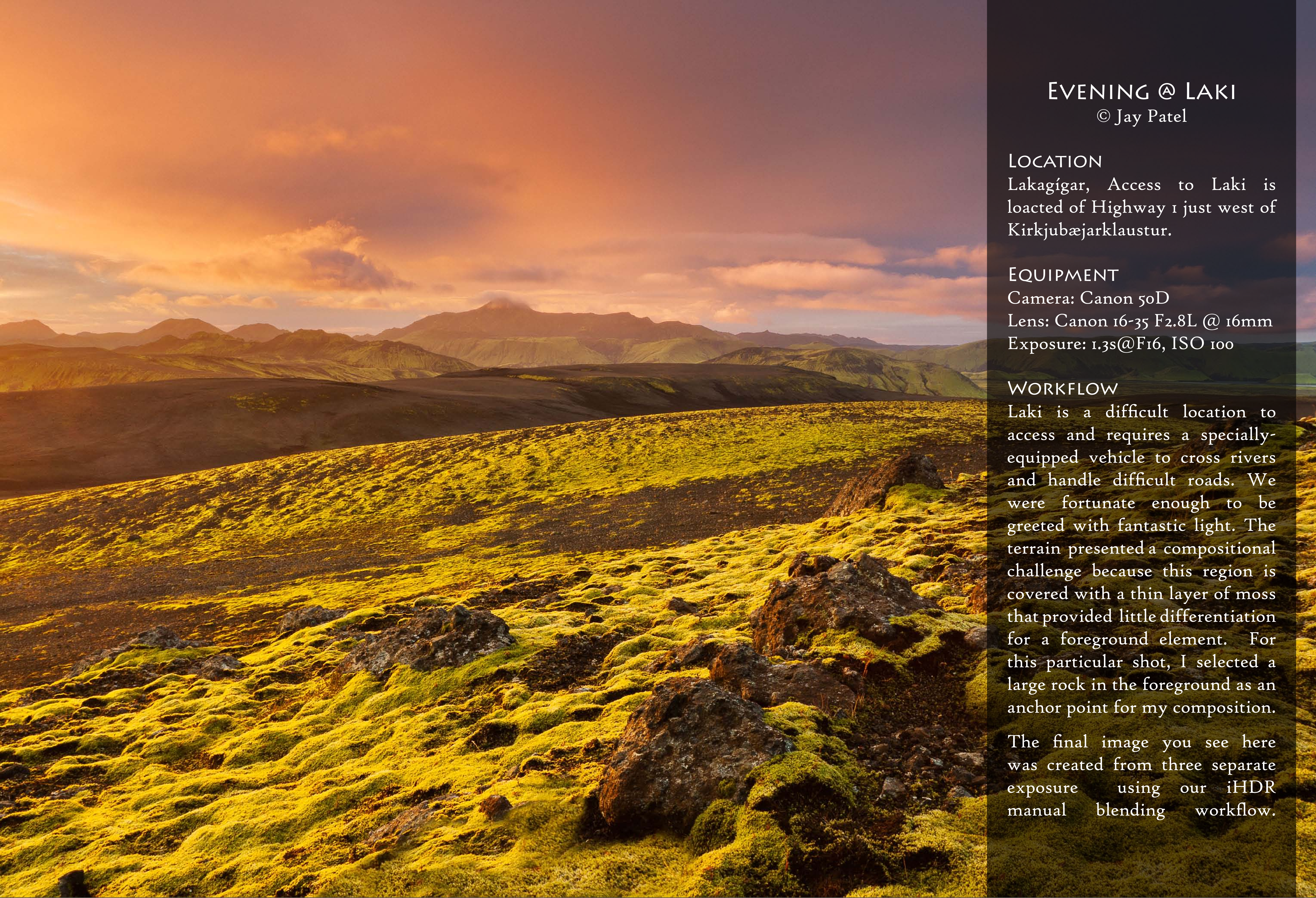
Lens: Nikon 16-35 f/4 @ 18mm

Exposure: 1/200, f/11, ISO 400,
Bracketed

WORKFLOW

The clouds were breaking that morning and we were hoping for good colors in the sky. However, the strong winds made it very difficult as just about everything from the foreground to the moss in the back was shaking in the wind. I increased my ISO to 400 so that I would have slightly higher shutter speeds to try and combat the winds. There was not enough time to take out my ND filters so I fired off a 3-shot exposure bracket. The resulting image is an exposure blend of the +1, 0, and -1 exposures.





EVENING @ LAKI

© Jay Patel

LOCATION

Lakagígar, Access to Laki is located off Highway 1 just west of Kirkjubæjarklaustur.

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Canon 50D
Lens: Canon 16-35 F2.8L @ 16mm
Exposure: 1.3s@F16, ISO 100

WORKFLOW

Laki is a difficult location to access and requires a specially-equipped vehicle to cross rivers and handle difficult roads. We were fortunate enough to be greeted with fantastic light. The terrain presented a compositional challenge because this region is covered with a thin layer of moss that provided little differentiation for a foreground element. For this particular shot, I selected a large rock in the foreground as an anchor point for my composition.

The final image you see here was created from three separate exposures using our iHDR manual blending workflow.

GLACIERS



ICE BABY

© Glade Gauger

LOCATION: Jökulsárlón

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Canon 5D,

Lens: Canon 180 F3.5L

Exposure: 0.8s@f8, ISO 100

WORKFLOW

The beach at Jökulsárlón is littered with melting icebergs. The surf is constantly re-arranging them, so when I saw this composition I reacted quickly. I quickly composed and shot it while keeping one eye on the unpredictable surf. I liked the contrast of the clear ice against the black sand, and the positioning and shapes of the two pieces of ice.

I processed the shot in Photoshop. I used a fairly complex mask to isolate and darken the bright and distracting surf in the upper part of the frame. The mask has a hard edge around the ice, and a graduated edge along the beach. I also used the shadows/highlights adjustment to bring out the detail in the ice.



FROZEN IN TIME

© Shawn Vogt

LOCATION

This is the edge of the Vatnajökull Glacier in Skaftafell National Park, Southern Iceland.

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Canon 5D MKII
Lens: Canon 100-400 F4.5-5.6L
@ 400mm
Exposure: 1/100s @ F16, ISO 100
Filters: Circular polarizer

WORKFLOW

I framed a section of the glacier that had the most interesting detail and chose to place the waterline at the lower 1/3 of my image. The RAW image didn't look like much due to very low contrast. In post processing, I increased the contrast, paying close attention to the highlights to ensure no details were lost. More emphasis was placed on the face of the glacier than on the top or bottom of the image. This was achieved by darkening the top and bottom and also reducing contrast in these areas.

WASHED UP

© Neal Yu

LOCATION

Jökulsárlón, Iceland

The name translates to “Glacier Lagoon”. It is the largest glacier lagoon in Iceland. Located right along Route 1 between Höfn and Skaftafell.

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Nikon D700

Lens: Nikon 24-70 f/2.8 @ 34mm

Exposure: 1.6s@f/16, ISO 200

WORKFLOW

Technically this image was not difficult to capture. Processing was done completely in Lightroom with some exposure, color, and curves adjustments and slight record. I made sure I had a long enough shutter speed to blur out the retreating water to convey a sense of motion. I also made sure the camera and tripod were placed firmly in the sand, so they didn't tilt. I timed the shutter to release as water was retreating past the ice. I was able to find a row of ice that gave me a nice clean line leading up to the ocean. The difficult part of the entire image was to setup, compose, and shoot between the onrush of waves.



MOUNTAIN LIGHT

© Jay Patel

LOCATION: Hrauneyjar

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Canon 50D,

Lens: Canon 90 F2.8L TS-E

Exposure: 0.8s@f8, ISO 100

WORKFLOW

This image is all about light. While shooting the waterfalls in a nearby valley, I noticed this fantastic magenta glow lighting up the clouds behind me. I dropped my camera bag and sprinted 1/2 mile to get a better view of the mountain from the nearby ridge. All I took with me was my tripod, camera and lens.

Options for composition were rather limited, because Canon's 90mm TS-E is a prime lens. I used Liveview on my Canon 50D to manually focus for the best possible sharpness. The final exposure was determined by looking at the histogram on the back of the camera. The finished image you see here is the result of a single RAW image processed twice and blended using our iHDR workflow.



NATURE WINS

© Robert Beideman

LOCATION

A hidden location nestled between two man-made reservoirs in the Central Highlands of Iceland. The beauty of this place is that the waterfalls literally pour out of the walls of rock. When the Icelandic people build the reservoirs, the porous rock allowed the contained water to find a new path to the ocean... the result...over 50 waterfalls pouring out of the side of a gorge!

EQUIPMENT

Camera: Nikon D3x

Lens: Nikon 17-35mm f2.8 @ 17mm

Exposure: 4s@F13, ISO 64

Filters: Reverse-Graduated 3-stop ND filter on top of a 105mm B+W circular polarizer

WORKFLOW

An image that substantially leverages the iHDR process pioneered by Varina and Jay Patel. Four exposures combined (three for the gorge, foreground highlights, and background/sky) and one for the sunburst which was manually blended.



LODGING & TRANSPORTATION

AURORA OVER HOTEL RANGA

© Shawn Vogt

LODGING
Hotel Ranga

CONTACT
www.hotelranga.com
Telephone: +354 487 5700

The Hotel Ranga is the only 4-star hotel in the south of Iceland. We chose to stay at this hotel and its sister properties, for most of our trip. The Hotel Ranga is a superbly-designed property with an award-winning restaurant, not to mention a stellar view of the northern lights! Their service is second to none in all of Iceland...and each member of their staff, from the owner Fridrik to each of the members of the entire service organization...are professional and courteous. There is no better group of hotelstostayatifyou'reheaded for a tour of southern Iceland!

SUPERJEEP ADVENTURE

© Shawn Vogt

TRANSPORTATION

Superjeep

CONTACT

www.superjeep.is

Telephone: +354 660 1499

Superjeep is...in a word... amazing. We traveled on a privatetourwithownerRagnar and two of their incredible superjeeps high into the Laki area during our trip. The flexibility that this company offers the traveling landscape photographer is unmatched. They maintain an incredible sense of safety, they are open to variations from standard tours to accommodate any special needs or desires, and we had an absolutely thrilling day on the highland roads! We were able to visit places that we'd never have reached...and explore them at a pace that was un-rushed. What more could a group of 7 photographers ask for?



MYSTIC

© Jay Patel

TRANSPORTATION
SADCars/HappyDays

CONTACT

www.sadcars.com, +354 577 6300
www.happydays.is, +354 540 0000

SADCars offers the most affordable car rentals in Iceland. Iceland is not a cheap place to visit, and the rental car places that you'll find online will prove that to you very quickly! Especially if you're looking for a vehicle that is certified for "Highland Use." Check out SADCars...and you'll find rates that are more in line with what most travelers would expect. Their service is fantastic, and they also can offer the "Iceland Discount Card" from HappyDays.IS...which can save you an amazing amount of money as you travel through this beautiful country!



CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

GLADE GAUGER

Photography is an excuse. It is an excuse to travel. It is an excuse to hike. It is an excuse to get up early. The images are a bonus, the real payoff is in experiencing the sunrise.

Contact: ggauger@gmail.com

Google+: <http://www.photographybyglade.com>

NEAL YU

Neal has always been around cameras. He grew up taking pictures with various SLR cameras. The evolution of digital cameras allowed the instant feedback he needed to grow technically and creatively. While passionate with all things photographic, landscapes have the added bonus of being out in the incredible wilderness that surrounds him.

Contact: neal@theyus.com

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/u/0/102713491022300512194/posts>

PAUL MARCELLINI

Paul Marcellini is an award-winning landscape and nature photographer based in Miami, FL. Internationally published, his work features dramatic light and fleeting moments. Hoping to promote conservation of Florida's wild places, he seeks out scenes that appear frozen in time, unaffected by development and pollution.

Contact: Paul.Marcellini@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.paulmarcellini.com>

ROBERT BEIDEMAN

All too often, we're surrounded by the day-to-day of our daily lives. Hopefully...at least once in a while...we each escape this humdrum to reconnect with the real world that we live in...the world of mountains, oceans, fire, and fresh air. And hopefully, but likely more rarely, these escapes lead us to a moment...a particular place and time...where the majesty of the natural world around us comes together in a way that



© Robert Beideman

leaves us completely awestruck. If, at those moments, we're fortunate enough to have a camera with us...it's most common to come away with images of that moment that scarcely reflect the magnitude of what was actually seen with our own eyes. We certainly try...but the images typically captured are but pointers for the brain to remember what was experienced in vivid color...and such images are only useful to those who have actually lived the particular experience. I strive to capture images that can convey such intense moments of beauty to those who hadn't the chance to experience the particular place and time themselves. Once in a while...I get it right. I'm a work in progress...but aren't we all?

Contact: robert@windmillchaser.com

Website: <http://www.windmillchaser.com>

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/u/0/107555775204015275919/posts>

SHAWN VOGT

Contact: Vogt.Shawn@gmail.com

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/u/0/107656189087549539176/posts>

JAY PATEL

Seeds of Jay Patel's appreciation for beautiful places were planted early in his childhood on numerous trips to some of the most breathtaking locations on the Indian subcontinent. His passion for such magnificent places now manifests itself in a continuous search to capture nature's majesty with his camera. Jay's career in photography began in the summer of 2001 when he purchased his first digital SLR. In subsequent years, he spent much time reading photographic magazines and Internet articles and studying the styles of great landscape photographers. He has had no formal education or training in photography.

Contact: pateljx@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.jaypatelphotography.com>

VARINA PATEL

There is nothing more remarkable to me than the power of nature. It is both cataclysmic and subtle. Slow and continuous erosion by water and wind can create landscapes every bit as astonishing as those shaped by catastrophic events—and miniscule details can be as breathtaking as grand vistas that stretch from one horizon to the other. Nature is incredibly diverse. Burning desert sands and mossy riverbanks... Brilliant sunbeams and fading alpenglow... Silent snowfall and raging summer storms... Each offers a unique opportunity. I am irresistibly drawn to the challenge of finding my next photograph, and mastering the skills required to capture it effectively.

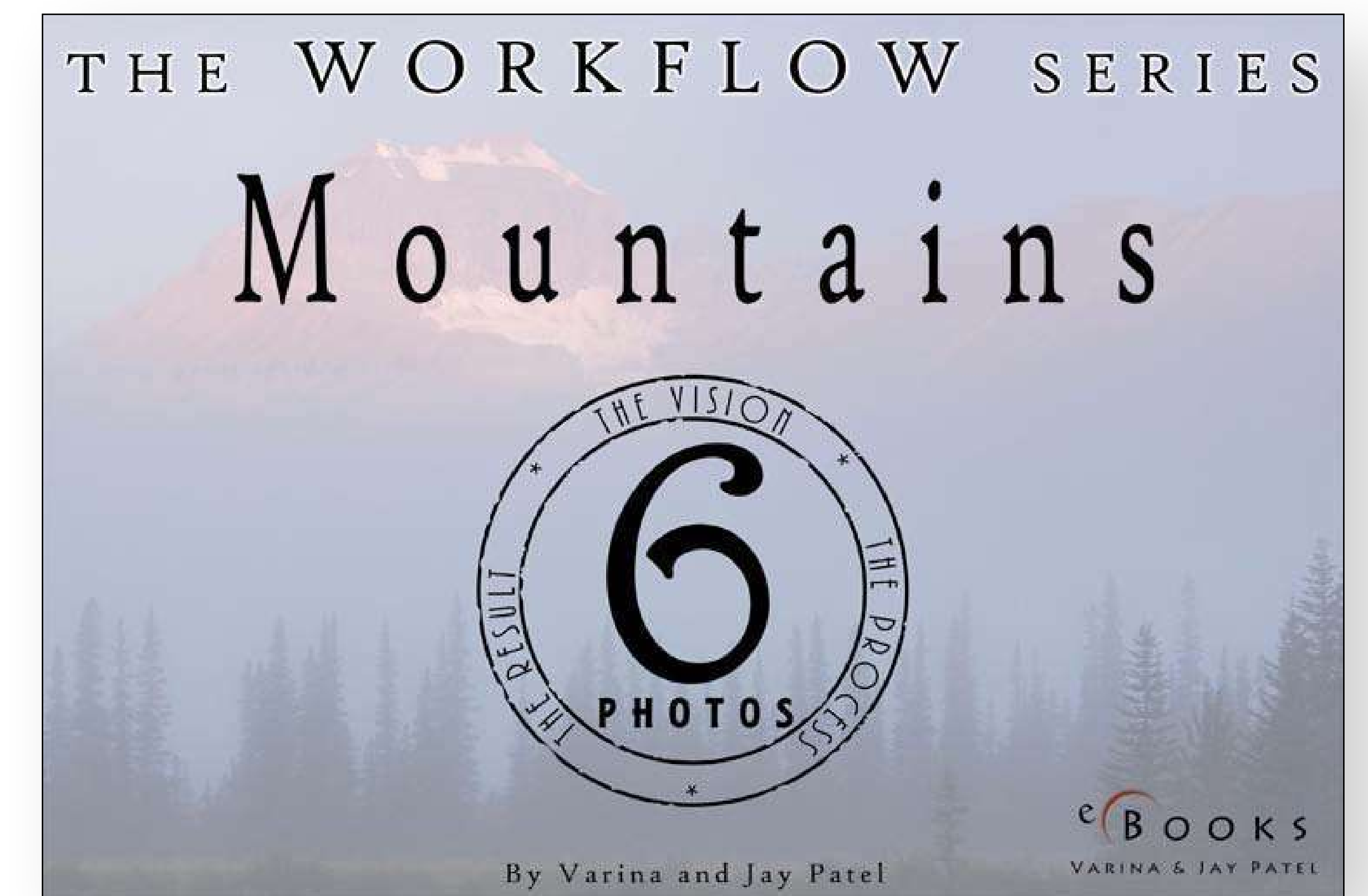
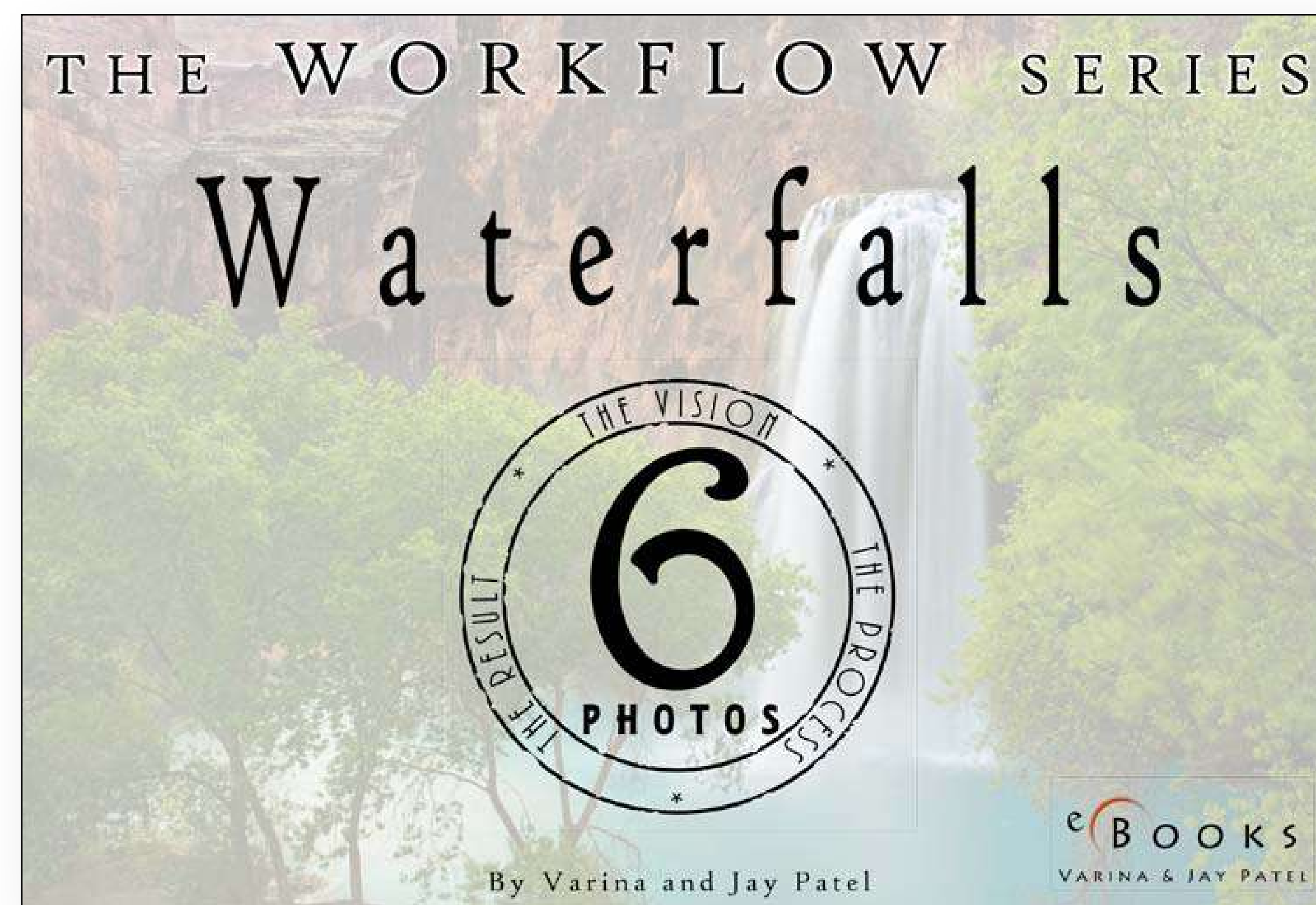
Contact: varina.patel@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.photographybyvarina.com>



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