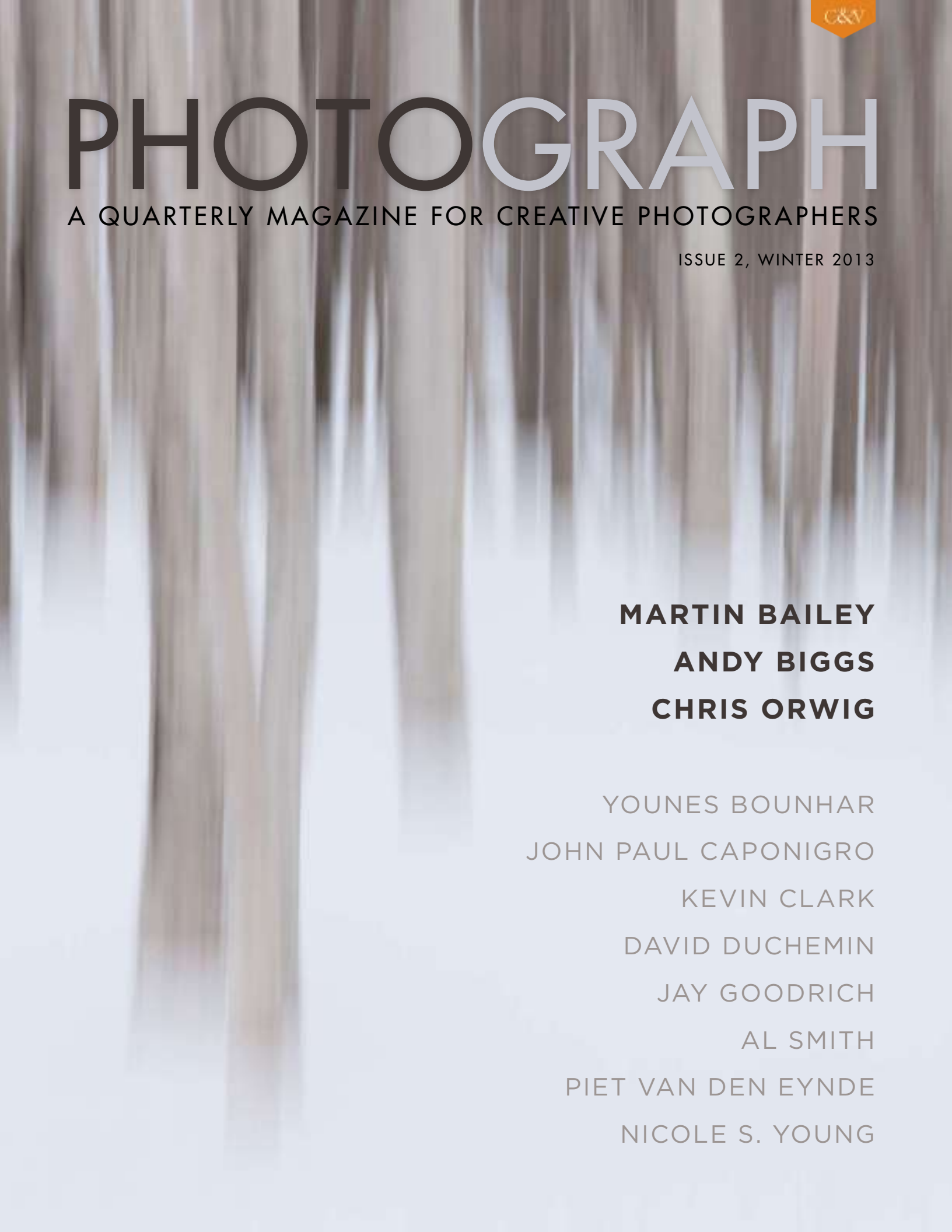

PHOTOGRAPH

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHERS

ISSUE 2, WINTER 2013

MARTIN BAILEY

ANDY BIGGS

CHRIS ORWIG

YOUNES BOUNHAR

JOHN PAUL CAPONIGRO

KEVIN CLARK

DAVID DUCHEMIN

JAY GOODRICH

AL SMITH

PIET VAN DEN EYNDE

NICOLE S. YOUNG

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DAVID DUCHEMIN, EDITOR

Photo Credit: Michael Jordan

Three months ago, the first issue of PHOTOGRAPH came out. We released it holding our breaths, hoping so much that the reaction, by those for whom we made it, would match our own hopes for it. Much to our collective relief, the reception was immediate and over-the-top positive. Time and time again, we've been hearing how inspired you've been, how much you like the ad-free format, the mix of artist and geek articles, not to mention the huge, gorgeous photographs from our featured artists.

So first, thank you! We set ourselves a simple goal; to create something beautiful and inspiring, something that didn't yet exist in this space and would represent strong value. We think we've done that. But there's a problem that comes with these hopes and reaching them so quickly: the standard we've created is only a starting point and we're hoping to get better. That's a creative challenge that will keep us focused on making this magazine something special, issue after issue.

One of the things we're strongly committed to is finding photographers to feature who are not pulled from the stable of usual suspects. I write that in the most respectful way; we still very much want to present work from people you know and love. But we also want this to be a place that reflects our core values, among them our unabashed love for the amateurs. So to do that, we want to hear from you. Sure, send us links to your own work, but even better if you'd also send us links to people whose work inspires you. We're looking for beautiful street photography, stunning portraits, commercial portfolios, quirky stuff shot on 4x5 film, as well as abstracts and stuff we've never seen. If you know of a photographer creating extraordinary art, we'd love an introduction.

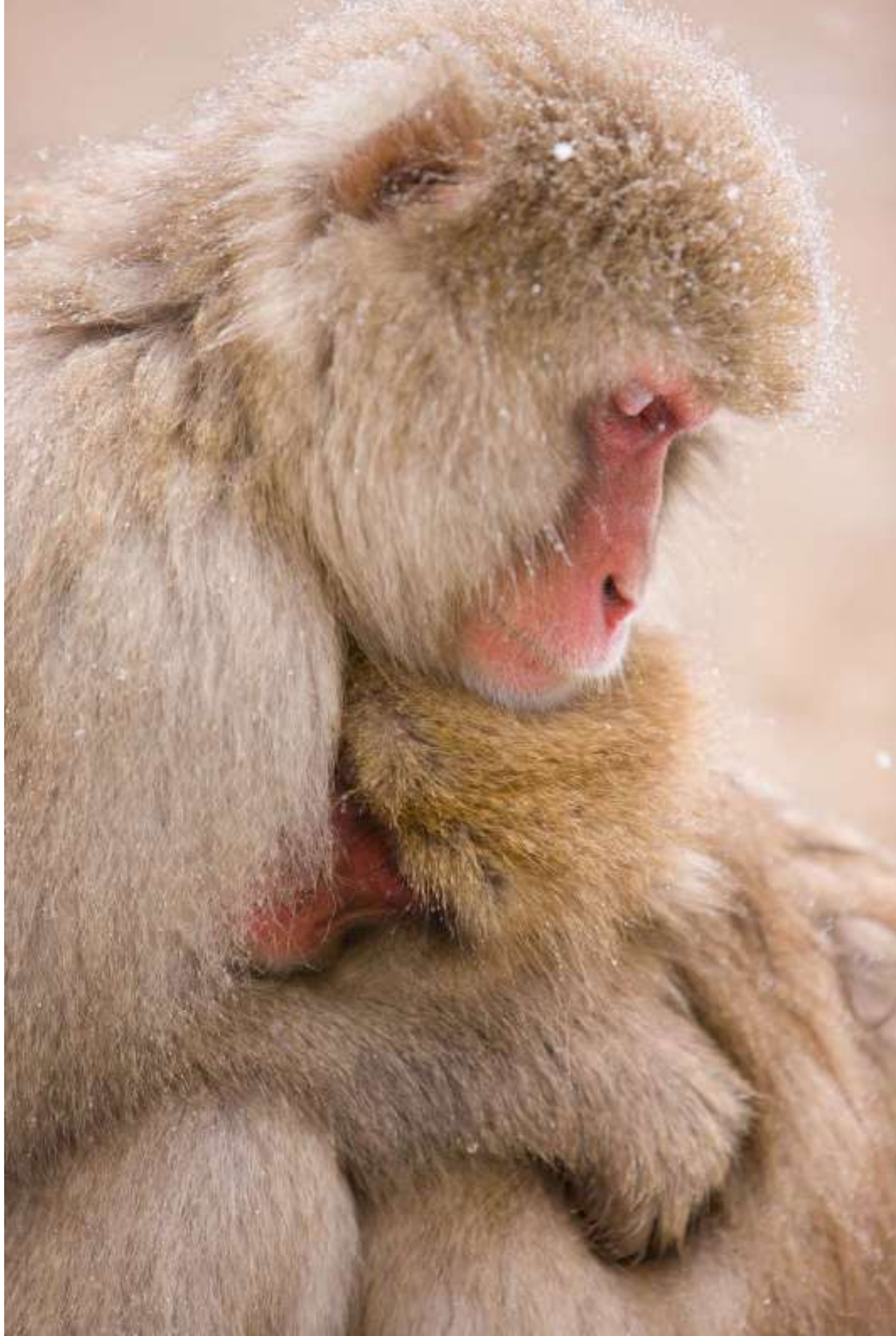
The other thing we need is your feedback. We'll never please everyone. In fact, we're going to try hard to make sure PHOTOGRAPH doesn't become that magazine, the one that's so homogenous it offends no one and inspires even fewer. But if you've got honest feedback, we still want to hear it. As we hear this collective input we'll be better able to identify our strengths and build on those, and to spot our weaknesses and either shore them up or abandon them in favour of things we do better. Like all artists, we're a work in progress creating a work in progress. I'm just so thrilled to have you along for the ride.

Would you do me one more favour? If you like this publication, will you tell the people in your world? We're working hard to do this right, and because we respect our contributors and their work, we pay them all. We're committed to paying them more, and one day soon to be industry leaders in the way we honour our photographers & authors. We've made the conscious choice not to accept advertisers or sponsors. The only way we'll keep this growing is with a growing subscriber base. If you'd point people to the magazine, or show them a copy, we'd be grateful. I suspect we'll always be the little guys, and I'm so OK with that, but with your help we can be the little guys creating something special for years to come.

David duChemin
editor@PhotographQuarterly.com.

FEATURED **PORTFOLIO**

MARTIN BAILEY



Q+A MARTIN BAILEY

WHEN DID YOU BEGIN TO MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS, AND WHEN DID THAT LOVE BECOME YOUR LIFE'S WORK?

I've enjoyed photography to some degree since my friend's dad let me snap the occasional frame with his old Russian Zenit camera on family holidays when I was a kid, and I had a few very basic cameras of my own in my teens and early twenties. I moved to Japan when I was 24, and the culture and natural beauty started to draw me in. I soon became the proud owner of a film SLR camera, and began spending my free time photographing the landscape of northern Japan.

I was using mostly slide film, and occasionally black and white negative film, and really enjoying it. However, I wasn't fully drawn in to photography until the advent of digital and my first DSLR - the Canon EOS D30 that I bought in 2002 - opened up all sorts of creative doors. Although the quality was nothing compared to what we have now, being able to view images you'd just shot right there on the back of the camera and play with exposure and depth-of-field like never before started to really transform my photography. I gave up my other hobbies and threw all of my time into photography.

YOU MOVED TO JAPAN YEARS AGO AND BECAME A CITIZEN, WHICH, AS A BRIT, IS UNUSUAL, BUT I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW HOW LIVING IN JAPAN AND BEING EXPOSED TO A UNIQUELY JAPANESE VISUAL CULTURE AND AESTHETIC HAS SHAPED THE DIRECTION OF YOUR OWN WORK.

I have a tendency to overcomplicate my images by trying to include everything of interest into a single frame, but Japanese art and culture is often about finding beauty in a minimal number of elements. As I've lived here and the Japanese culture has become more native to me than my British roots, I feel my most successful work has become that in which I'm able to say what I want to photographically with as few visual elements as possible.

AS MUCH AS WE ALL CREATE A PATH THAT'S UNIQUE TO OURSELVES, WE ALL ALSO DRAW ON VARIOUS INFLUENCES; I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHO YOUR INFLUENCES HAVE BEEN VISUALLY.

I was influenced by the work of Michio Hoshino, a Japanese wildlife photographer who, sadly, lost his life in a bear attack in 1996. Although this may be a little cliche, I think there are few photographers who enjoy shooting the occasional landscape that haven't been influenced by Ansel Adams. I also really like Michael Kenna's work, especially his Japan series.

Although not related to my nature work, I enjoy Zack Arias' work and work ethic, and at the risk of sounding corny, , your (David duChemin's) images and pearls of wisdom through your books have most definitely left their mark.

Q+A MARTIN BAILEY

IF YOU'RE PACKING FOR A TRIP TO NAGANO TO PHOTOGRAPH THE SNOW MONKEYS OR HOKKAIDO FOR THE CRANES, WHAT'S GOING INTO YOUR BAG?

The Snow Monkeys are relatively close, so I tend to use my 24-70mm and 70-200mm lenses here, though I have taken my 85mm portrait lens as well. A 16-35mm is great for showing them in their environment.

As we move on to Hokkaido for the cranes and eagles, I'll ensure that I have my 1.4 and 2X teleconverters, and my 300mm and 600mm lenses. For some of our landscape opportunities, I usually drop the 14mm in as well, However, I shoot landscape just as much with my long lenses.

I also take two camera bodies (if not three, when possible), as this allows me to use multiple lenses simultaneously. I have found that this is important for shooting wildlife, as there is rarely time to switch lenses when something unexpected happens. One moment you can be photographing a crane 250 feet away, and the next, a crane or two can be flying 15 feet above your head; it's nice to be able to capture both.

A good tripod with a ball-head for landscape and a gimbal head for the long lens is useful.

YOU DO A LOT OF PRINTING, AND TEACHING ABOUT PRINTING, BUT I THINK THAT'S FAR FROM THE NORM.

WHAT ROLE DOES PRINTING YOUR WORK PLAY IN YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS?

In the Art of the Print column in this issue of PHOTOGRAPH, I discuss how I believe that photographers generally want to "complete" their work by creating that final tactile print. Before digital, the fruits of our labour weren't handfuls of negatives or boxes of slides; it was the print that we appreciated. Many people spent hours in the darkroom creating their own, which must have been incredibly satisfying. Digital printing now allows us to create great prints that can be even more satisfying to view, display and share.

Additionally, we learn so much from printing because the print shows you all of the faults in your work. If you have any weak spots in your technique, a large print will point them all out to you with stark honesty. I believe that printing not only fulfills us, but that it also makes us better photographers.

WITH SO MUCH OUT OF OUR CONTROL IN ENVIRONMENTS WHERE YOU DO SO MUCH OF YOUR WORK, WHAT DOES YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

In addition to using cameras and lenses that can take a little moisture, the keys to success with winter wildlife are flexibility and patience. For example, many of my winter scenes rely on a good covering of snow, and even when the conditions are right, the animals still have to perform – or act in a way – that conveys whatever

Q+A MARTIN BAILEY

it is you'd like to shoot. For example, when photographing the red-crowned cranes in Hokkaido in 2011, there had been no fresh snow, so what we had to work with was pretty messy. We'd gotten some nice shots, but nothing special. I'd been trying to capture a good dancing crane shot for more than seven years, but never got anything I really liked.

On the third morning during our 2011 visit, we were scheduled to drive to a different part of the island, but it was snowing as we left the hotel so I had the bus driver take us back to our first location instead. As we arrived, the cranes, also happy to see the snow, danced and sung in multiple pairs for about 30 minutes. I'd never seen anything like it, and I finally got that shot that I'd been trying to make for seven years. There was a very sweet, elderly Egyptian lady in my group that year who was giggling like a 13-year-old the entire time she was photographing the dancing cranes. That memory is as dear to me as the photographs I made that morning.

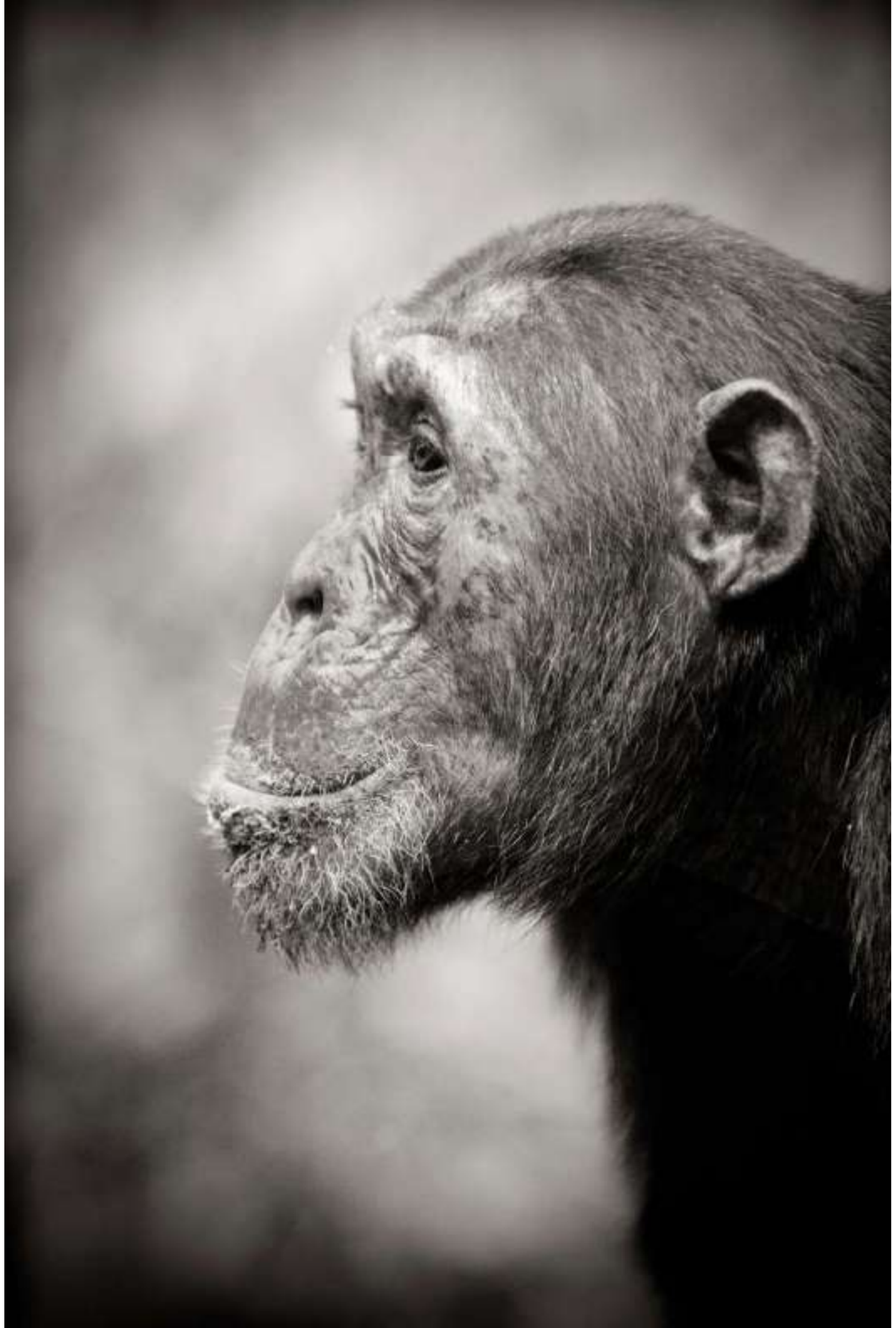
WHAT KIND OF SOURCES DO YOU RETURN TO TO FIND INSPIRATION OR CLEANSE YOUR PALETTE?

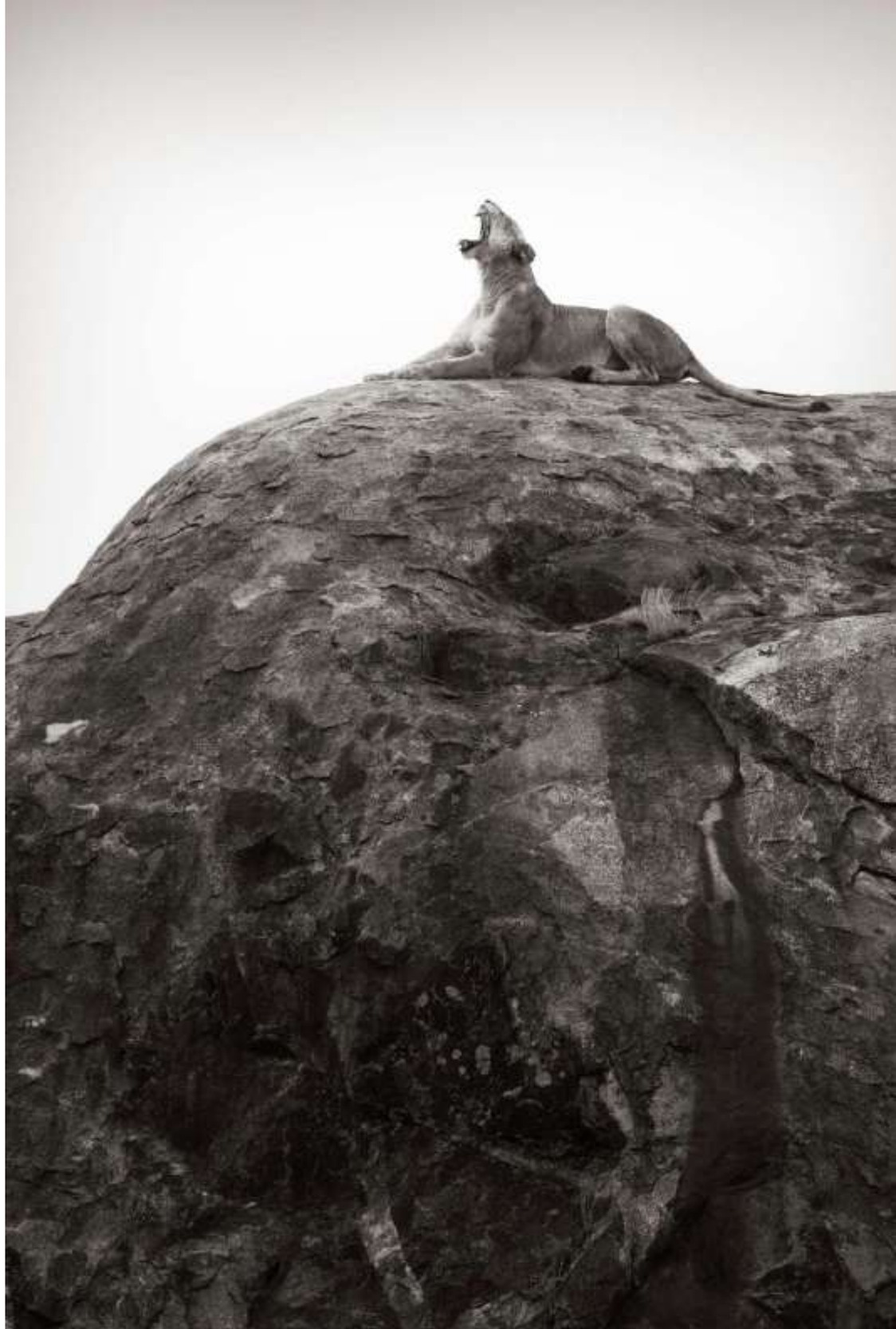
Although my wife doesn't join me on photographic trips very often, we spend a fair amount of our off-time visiting galleries and museums, viewing the work of artists from many disciplines, both living and passed. I enjoy looking at beautiful paintings and sculpture, as well as photographs. I also love to just sit with my iPad and flick through some of the amazing work on 500px, or pick up some of my Michael Kenna or Ansel Adams books, sit with a glass of the good stuff, and just pore over them for a while. +

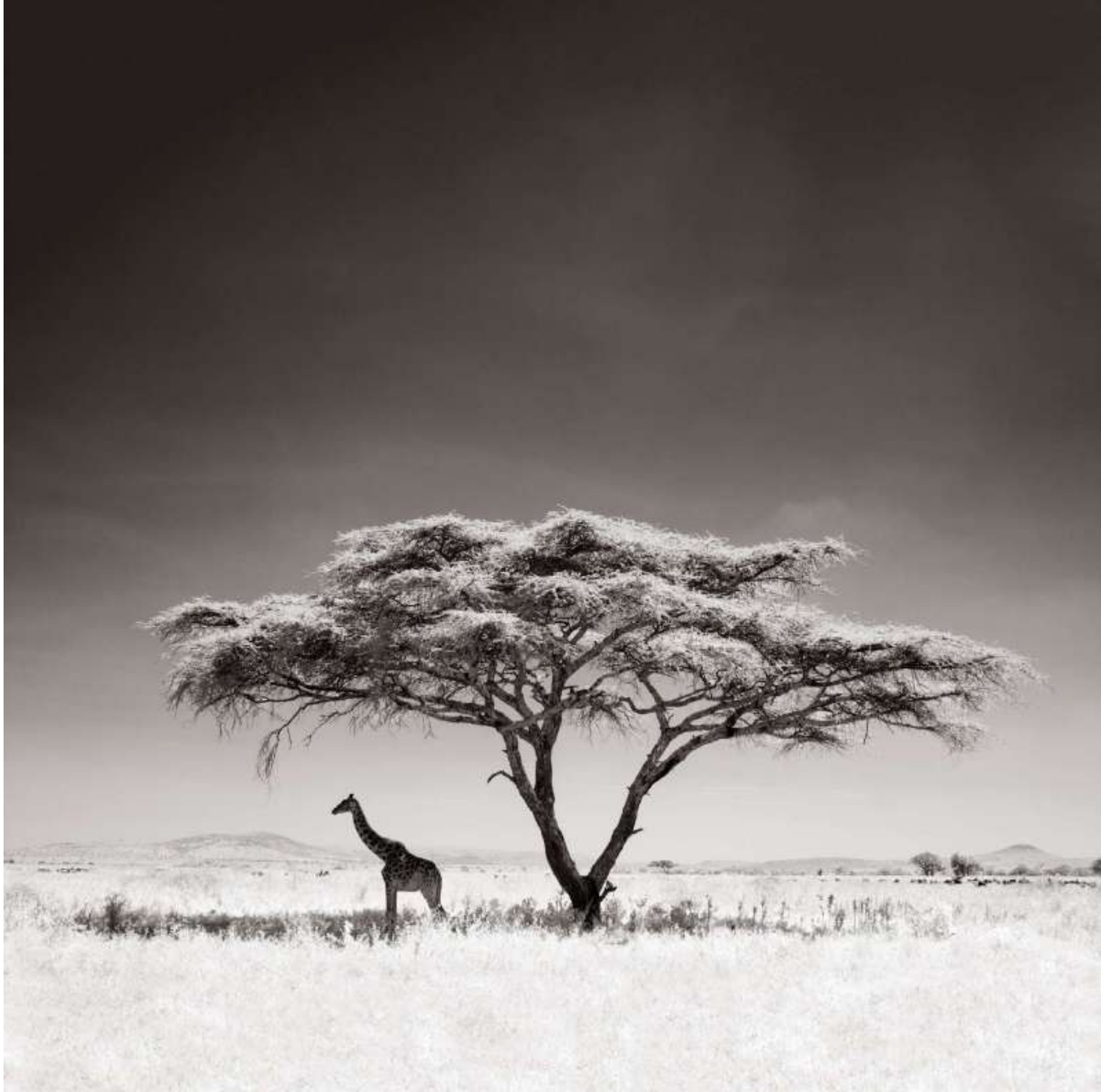
Martin Bailey is a British-born, Tokyo-based, art and assignment photographer who is passionate about creating images that evoke emotions, and helping others to do the same. He is an X-Rite Coloratti member, runs photography workshops and releases a weekly photography Podcast, along with a photography centric blog and forum. Learn more about Martin on his website:
www.martinbaileyphotography.com

FEATURED **PORTFOLIO**

ANDY BIGGS







Q+A ANDY BIGGS

WHEN DID YOU BEGIN TO MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS, AND WHEN DID THAT LOVE BECOME YOUR LIFE'S WORK?

I picked up my first camera in December 2000, and within a couple of years I was running safaris and selling fine art prints. After a couple of years of running African photographic safaris in conjunction with my software consulting job, I decided to cut the rip cord and run safaris as a full-time job. It happened right as we were expecting our first child, which was extremely fulfilling to start a new chapter in my life as both a full-time wildlife photographer and as a father.

YOU'VE RECENTLY MADE A TRANSITION TO MEDIUM FORMAT DIGITAL GEAR: TELL ME ABOUT THAT. WHY THE SWITCH, AND HAVE YOU FOUND THE CHANGE IN AESTHETICS ALSO CHANGES THE WAY YOU WORK?

Part of my photographic business involves selling fine art prints, and the larger I can make these prints the more opportunities I have of selling my work. In my pursuit to be able to print my work larger, I realized that I would need to incorporate digital medium format into my camera bag. I don't anticipate shooting everything in medium format; however, I will do so whenever it makes sense. I prefer to shoot animal-scapes where the wildlife isn't the entire part of the scene, so long telephoto lenses aren't always necessary or needed. My photographic style hasn't changed in this sense, and I am glad that digital medium format supports my overall goal of making images that stir the soul. The biggest drawback of my Phase One camera system is the limited ISO range and long lens selection, so I will augment this system with either Canon or Nikon 35mm gear for those situations when the Phase One IQ160 won't work.

YOU WORK WITH SOME PRETTY AMAZING SUBJECTS, AND HAVING SHOT IN AFRICA FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS I KNOW IT'S EASY TO BE SEDUCED BY YOUR SUBJECTS. DO YOU SEE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT IS MERELY A PHOTOGRAPH OF A BEAUTIFUL SUBJECT, AND A BEAUTIFUL PHOTOGRAPH OF THAT SAME SUBJECT? HOW DO YOU MOVE FROM ONE TO THE OTHER?

I recognize that photography is about visual storytelling, and one needs to figure out whether a single photograph, a portfolio of 10-15 images or an entire book of 130 photographs will be needed to tell a story. I am the type of photographer who prefers the single image to tell a story. This means that I

Q+A ANDY BIGGS

approach each and every photographic opportunity with a desire to fit emotion, colour, graphical simplicity and storytelling into a single photograph. A beautiful photograph might have most of these elements, but the kicker is trying to capture something that grabs a viewer and takes them to another place. In order to do this, I think of a series of adjectives to describe my ideal photographs. Some examples are: hopeful, uplifting, remote, timeless and regal. When I am out on safari I am always thinking of shooting to these adjectives, and that helps me edit my images later on when I am selecting my takes from the field.

AFRICA IS AN AMAZING PLACE TO PHOTOGRAPH, BUT IT'S ALSO UNPREDICTABLE; DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE STORY ABOUT SHOOTING AND TRAVELING IN AFRICA?

Back in 2006 I was in Namibia, and had the opportunity to fly along the Skeleton Coast in a Cessna Caravan airplane. On a typical day, you would have coastal fog out over the ocean and clear skies over the tall sand dunes that line the coastline. On that particular day, we had fog over the tall sand dunes and clear skies over the water. This made for some amazing photographic opportunities, and one of my images from that day won the 2008 Wildlife Photographer of the Year contest, landscape category. It was special to me because it was unexpected, unlikely and dramatic all at the same time. And for some reason my co-travelers in the back of the airplane were taking naps or reading books. Go figure.

WITH SO MUCH OUT OF OUR CONTROL IN ENVIRONMENTS WHERE YOU DO SO MUCH OF YOUR WORK, WHAT DOES YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

I prefer to do all of the hard work out in the field, similar to how a film photographer works. I don't enjoy heavy post-processing of images, so I make sure that I capture clean looking files that are sharp, well-exposed and free of all of the things that would require tons of work on the computer. I am a heavy Adobe Photoshop Lightroom user, and prefer not to use Photoshop if I don't need to. I do use NIK Software plugins, notably Silver Efex Pro and Viveza. For my Phase One files I am begin-

Q+A ANDY BIGGS

ning to use Capture One for my raw image processing, and use Lightroom to catalog my resulting images.

IF YOU'RE PACKING FOR A TRIP TO BOTSWANA OR TANZANIA, WHAT'S GOING INTO YOUR BAG?

I use Gura Gear camera bags (I founded the company back in 2008) for all of my camera gear. I use the following:

- Phase One IQ160 digital back on a Phase One DF camera
- Nikon D800
- Lenses ranging from ultra wide angle all the way 300mm. I have a 300mm f/2.8 with manual focus that I use on my Phase One camera, which is equivalent to around 190mm on the Nikon D800.
- Apple Macbook Pro with Retina screen
- Hard Drives
- Microfiber cloths
- Inmarsat satellite phone
- iPad
- Gaffer tape, made into small rolls. I use these for taping over VR/IS switches, as well as dials to prevent accidental settings
- AMOD GPS logger

AS MUCH AS WE ALL CREATE A PATH THAT'S UNIQUE TO OURSELVES, WE ALL ALSO DRAW ON VARIOUS INFLUENCES; I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHO YOUR INFLUENCES HAVE BEEN VISUALLY.

I have been a huge fan of Ansel Adams, Galen Rowell and Eliot Porter. Their work has had a huge impact on how I view the world around me. +

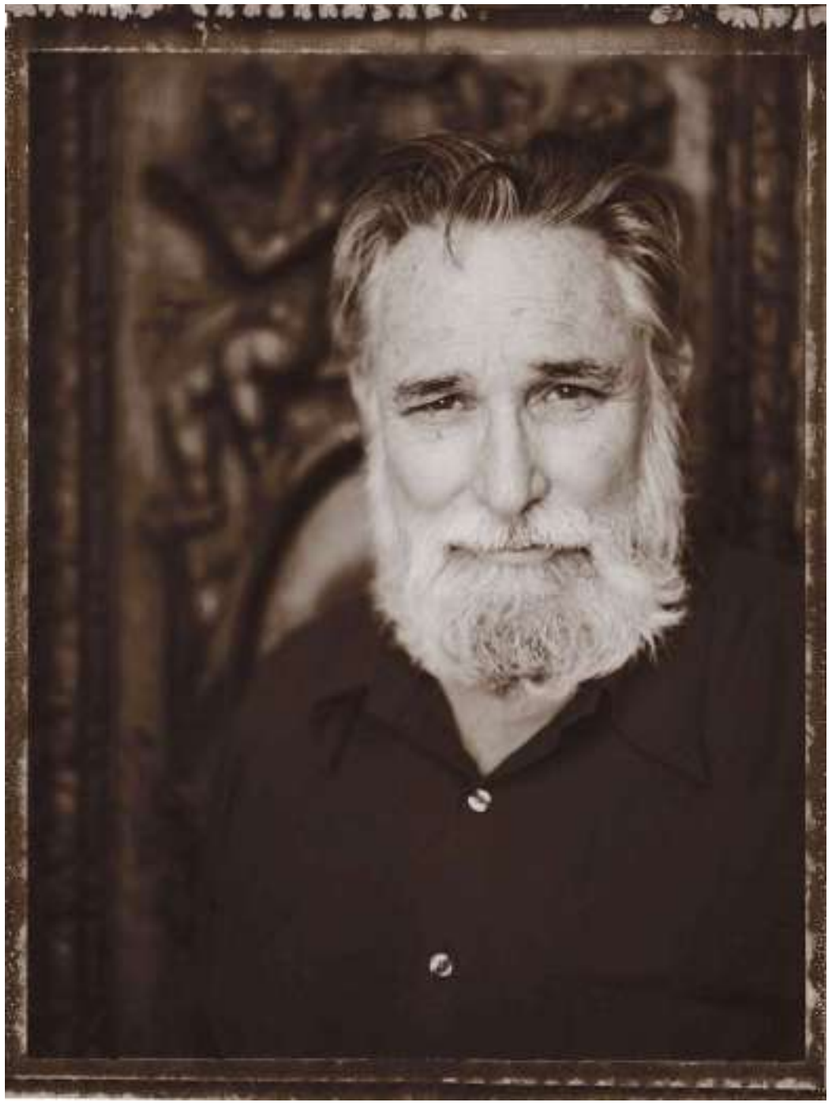
Andy Biggs is an avid adventurer, conservationist, teacher, and outdoor photographer whose photography celebrates the African landscape and its rich wildlife, people, and culture. With a deep respect and understanding for African wildlife, Andy unfolds the world of the Serengeti onto our doorstep with striking emotional depth. His photographic safaris allow the traveler to not only enhance their understanding of photography, lighting, and wildlife, but to develop a life-long admiration for Africa 's beauty and culture.

In 2008, Banana Republic used thirteen of Andy's photographs as the cornerstone of their Urban Safari campaign, and his images were seen in all 750 stores around the globe, as well as in their billboards, catalogs and annual report. Andy was also the winner of the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year in the 'Wild Places' category in 2008. Andy launched Gura Gear in 2008.

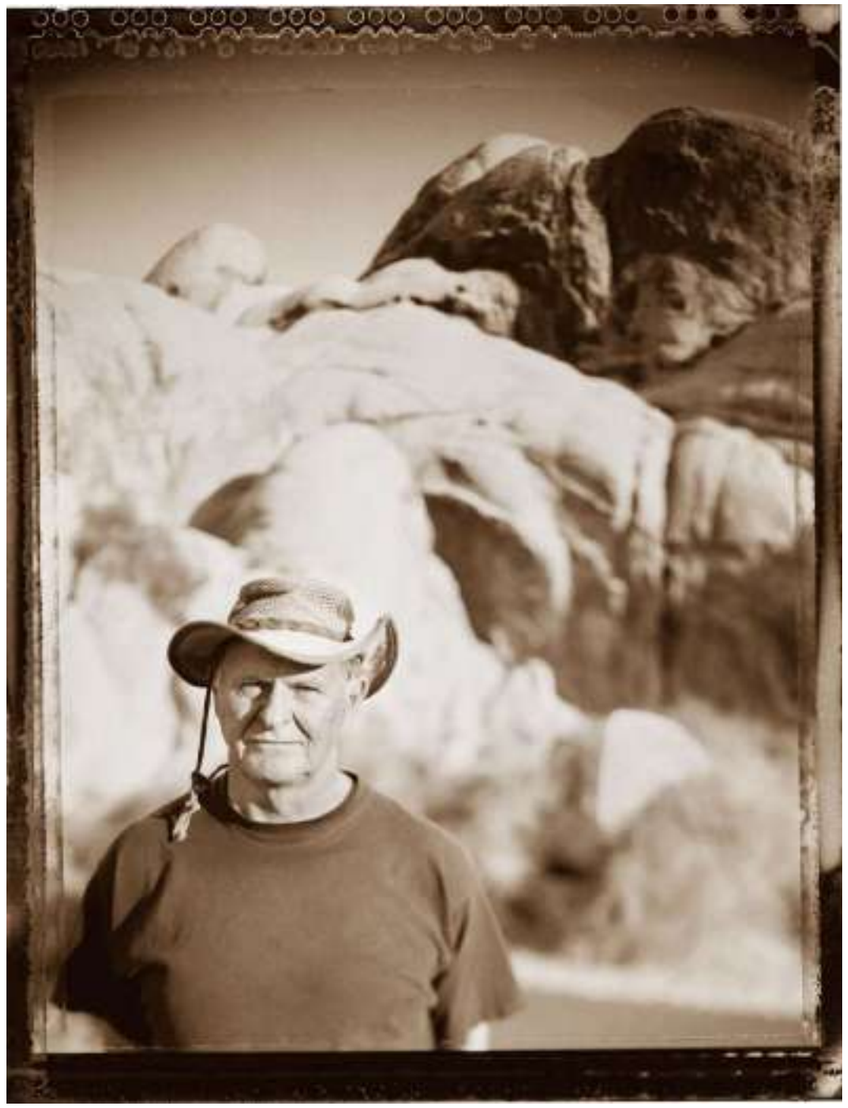
FEATURED **PORTFOLIO**

CHRIS ORWIG

Jeff Johnson – Outdoorsman, big wave surfer, big wall climber, writer and photographer.



Nick Decker
Legendary photographer and master printer.



Anton Hoffmann
A mentor and friend at home in the remote California desert.

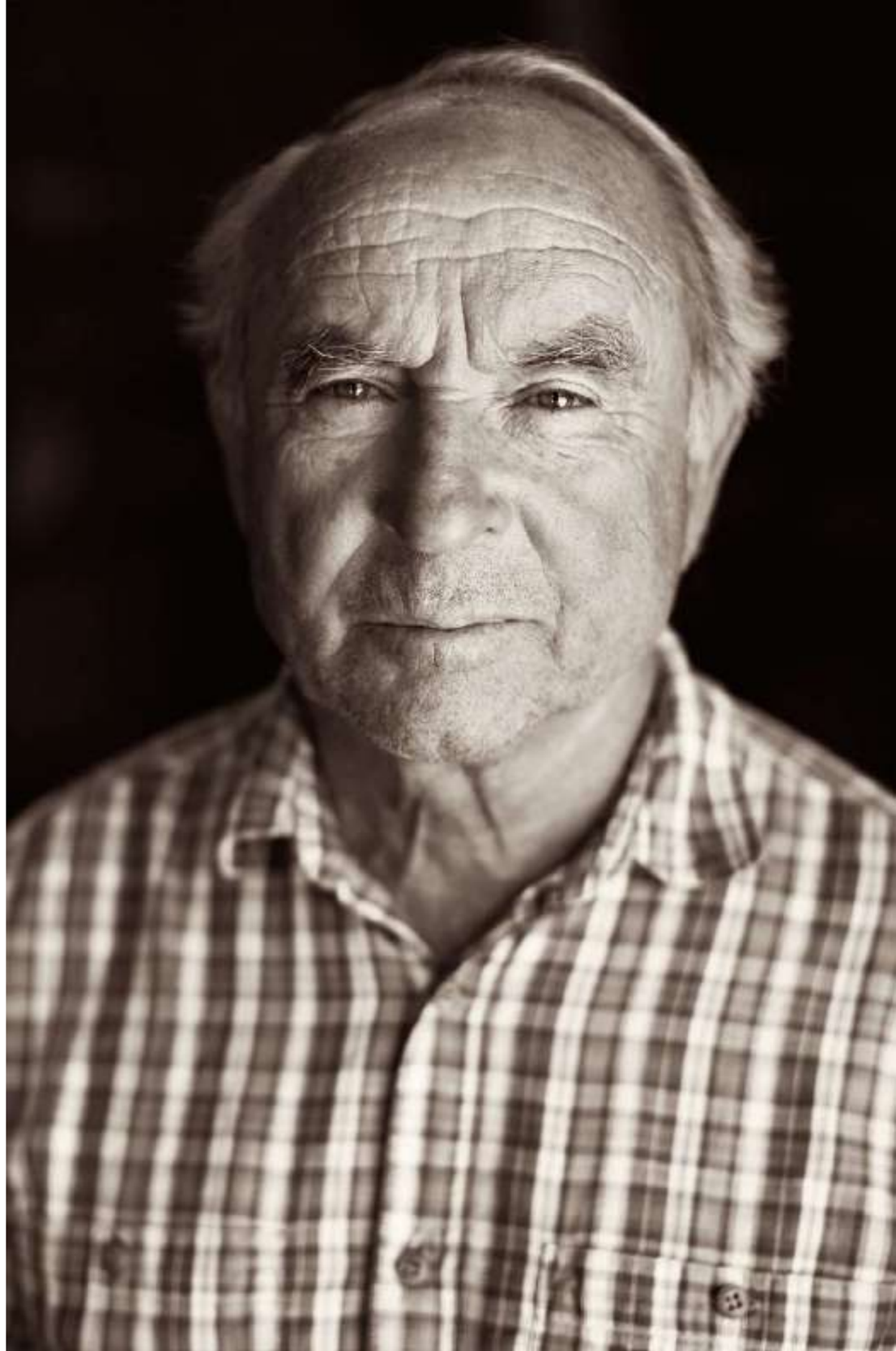
Taylor Knox
One of the top surfers in the world.
Known for his powerful style and fight.

Ben Harper
American singer and songwriter, instrumentalist and activist.

Keith Malloy
Waterman and world traveler.

Joe Curren
Celebrated photographer, surfer and artist.

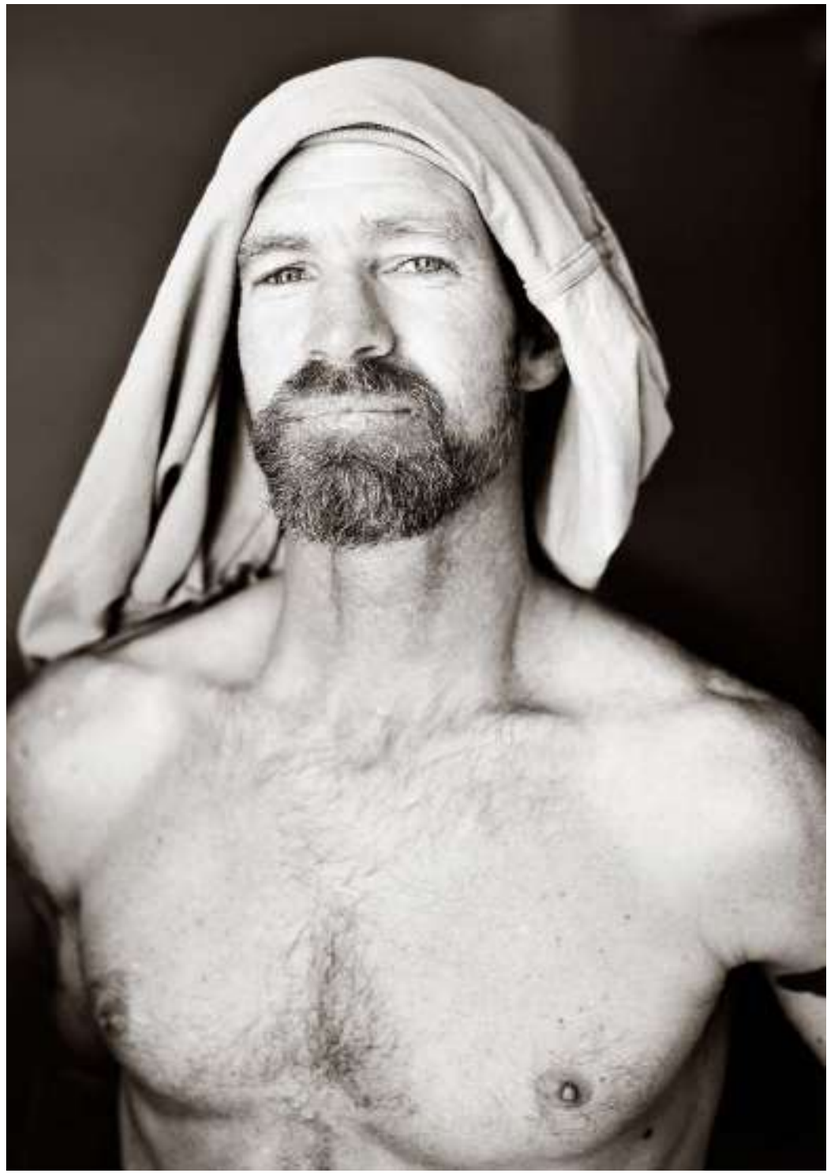
Rob Machado
Soul surfer known for his smooth style.



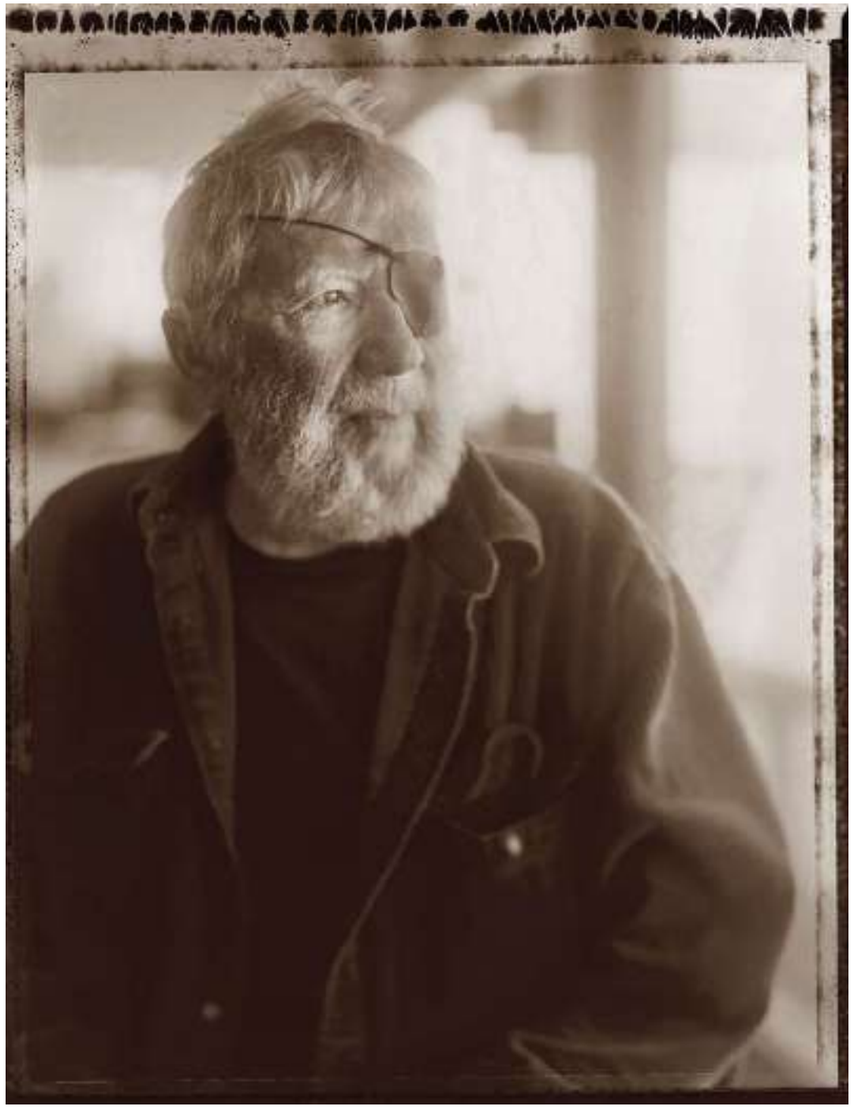
Yvon Chouinard
Climber, explorer, environmentalist, founder of Patagonia.

Chris del Moro
Artist, surfer, and environmentalist.

Dan Malloy
Surfer. Gracious, giving, kind.

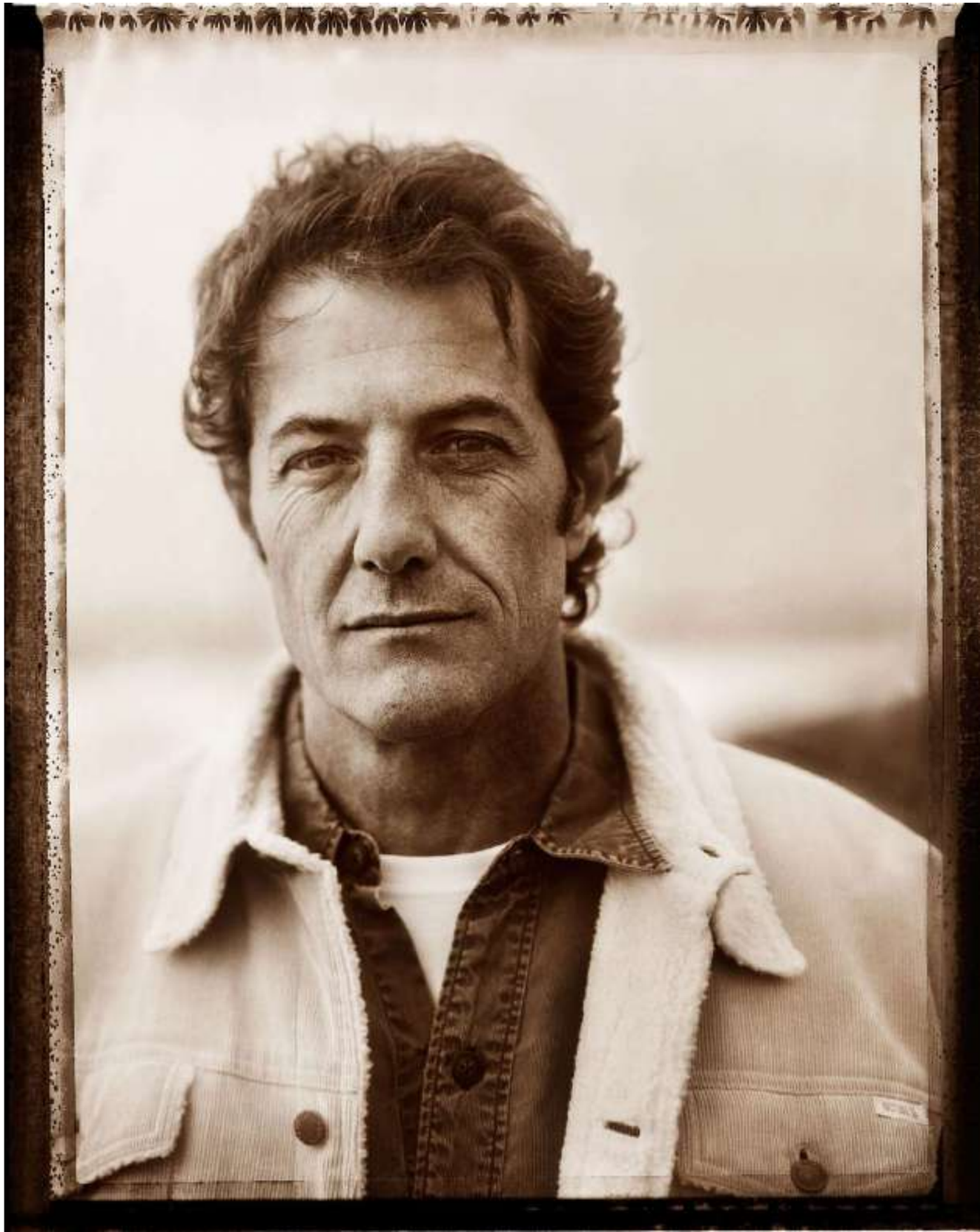


Christian Beamish
Wooden boat, rough seas.



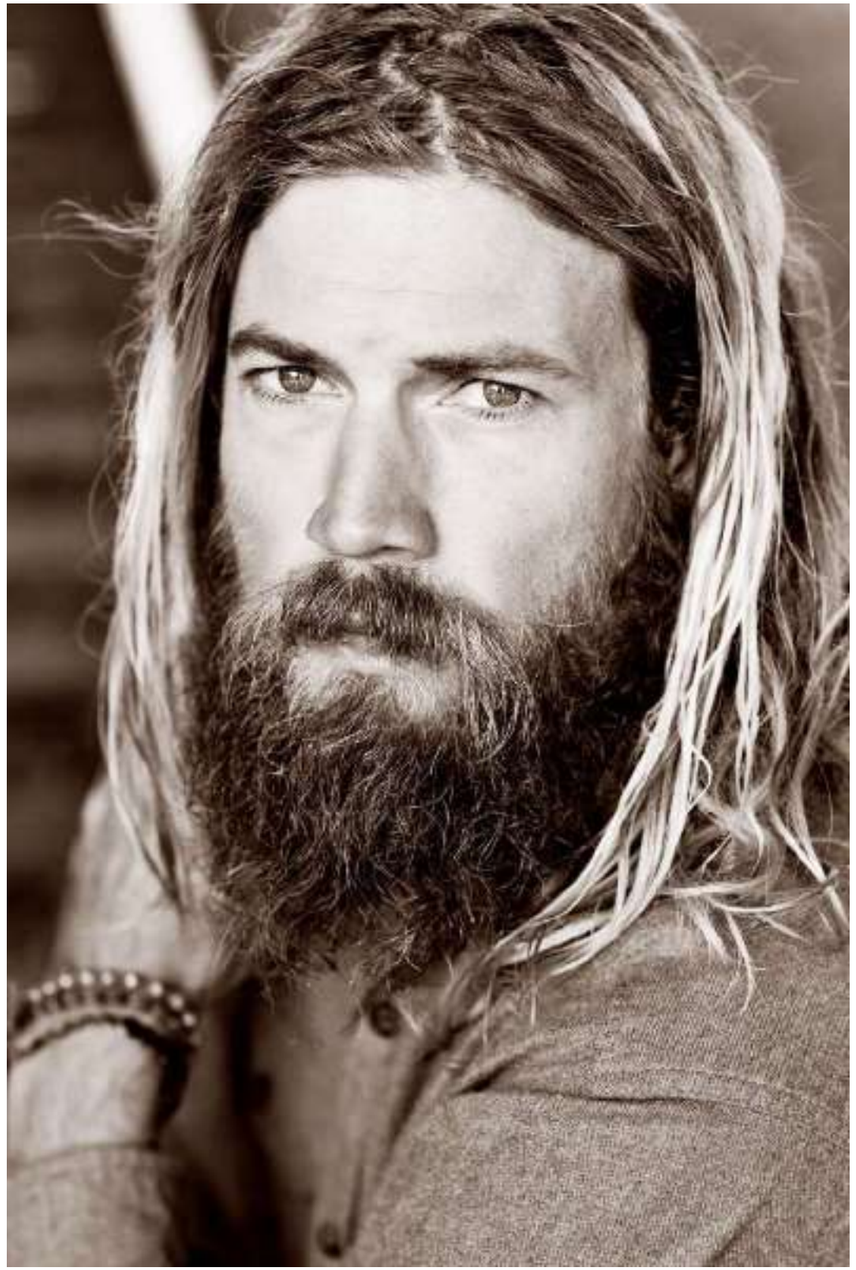
Jack O'neil
Inventor of the wetsuit.

Tom Curren
3-time world champion surfer, artist, and musician.

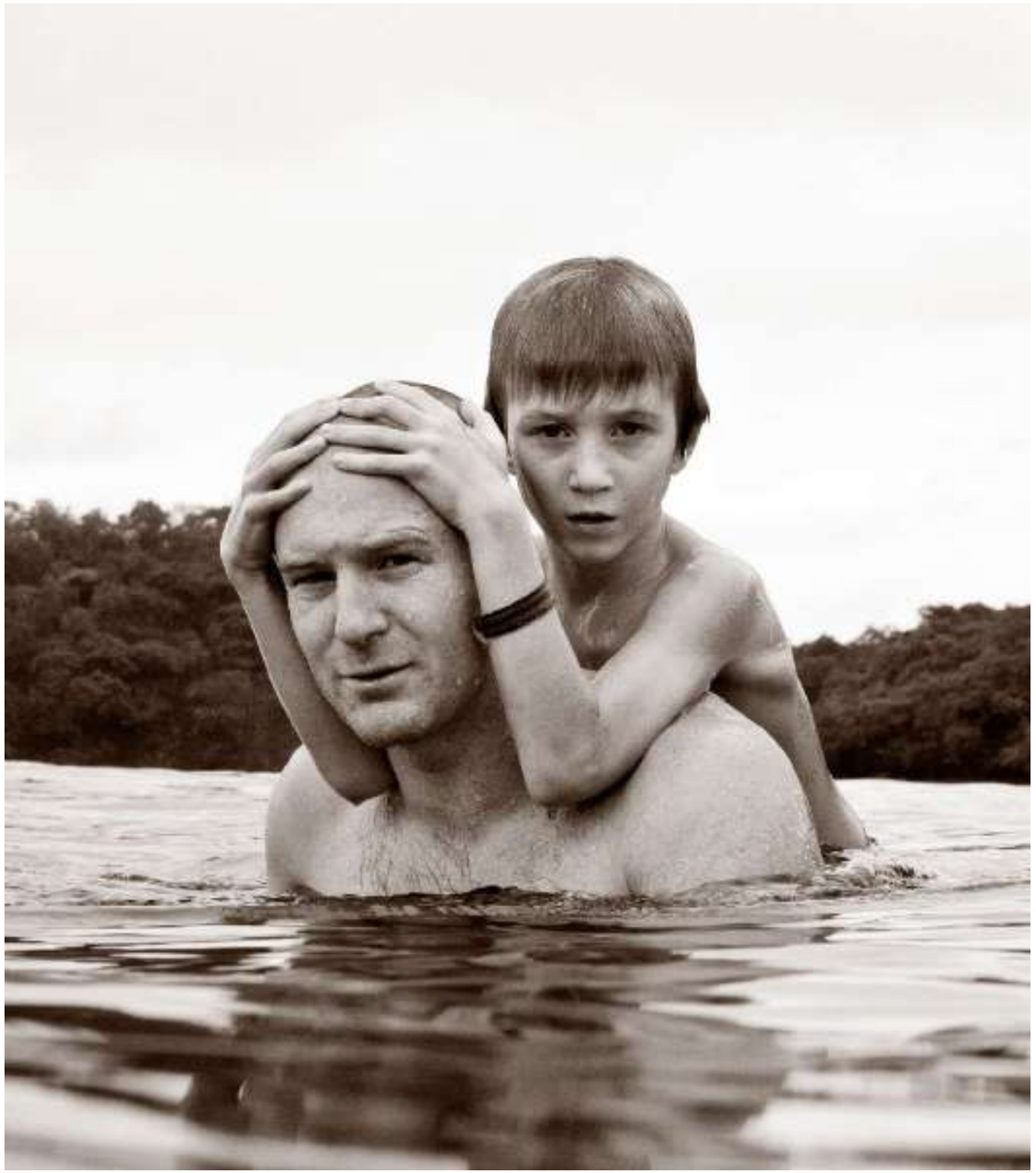


Shaun Tomson
World champion surfer.

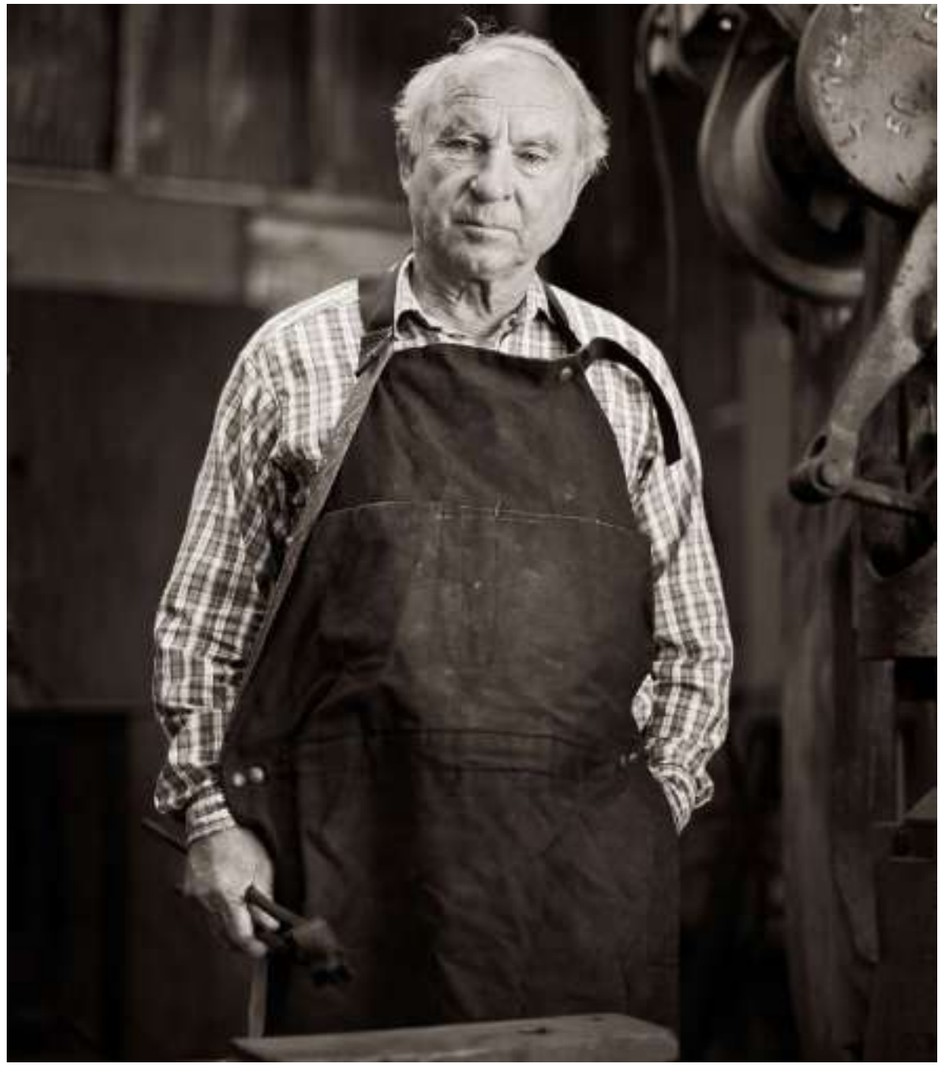
Angus Stone
Australian singer and songwriter.



Chris del Moro
Artist, surfer, and environmentalist.



Martyn and Dylan Hoffmann
Father and son in the ocean in Costa Rica.



Yvon Chouinard
Climber, explorer, environmentalist, founder of Patagonia,
in his forge in California.

Jeff Johnson
Outdoorsman, big wave surfer, big wall
climber, writer and photographer.

Q+A CHRIS ORWIG

YOUR WORK TENDS TO BE SIMPLE AND DIRECT, AND YOUR PORTRAITURE TENDS TOWARDS INTIMATE WITHOUT BEING SENTIMENTAL. WHERE DOES THAT INTIMACY COME FROM?

Being connected is something I value deeply; I wanted to be connected to my wife, my kids, my brother, my sister and my friends. Matters of the mind, heart and soul are what I cherish most.

When I pick up a camera, I see it as a way to dig deep. Aristotle once said, "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but the inward significance." That's what matters to me.

Here I may get into a bit of trouble, but this is why I've always had an issue with all the photographic emphasis on light: light is important, but it's not the whole deal. Often I see students who get more excited about the light than the subject itself. For me, it's completely the other way around. Of course, light matters (as does darkness), but what matters even more to me is connection. This is true whether it's a photograph of a person of a tree. I like photographs that help me get beneath the surface of things, bring new insight and create connections. I'm interested in pictures that are authentic, meaningful, full of life and not just well lit.

The older I get, the more I embrace that life isn't just pretty and nice; I don't want to make sentimental pretty pictures, but I do want to capture sentiment and the honesty and complexity of life. I like how Leonard Cohen put it: "Ring the bell that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There are cracks in everything, that's how the light gets in." When I go out to make photographs, I'm thinking about the reality of that complexity; I'm aware that something can be broken but still sing and cracked but still reveal light. It's the duality that intrigues me most, like how something can be both beautiful and sad or vulnerable and strong.

I'm acutely aware that photography is a way to delve into authentic life before it is gone. For me this is an optimistic pursuit: knowing that life's chalice will one day be empty makes me want to savour every last drop.

THE LAST TIME WE TALKED YOU SAID YOU WERE PULLING BACK FROM TEACHING A LITTLE AND RE-INVESTING YOURSELF IN YOUR CRAFT AND YOUR ART; WHERE DO YOU BEGIN WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT, AND WHERE IS THAT TAKING YOU?

Re-investing is a great way to put it. I had been feeling like I was in a bit of a lull, so I first began by taking the general advice of the photographic

Q+A CHRIS ORWIG

community to shoot more. “Do you want to be a better photographer? Shoot more photographs! Are you in a creative slump? Shoot more photographs! Do you want to develop your own photographic style? Shoot more photographs!” This type of advice seemed reasonable, especially because I have often given it to others myself.

So I decided to increase my volume of shots: I wanted to step out of my comfort zone and do something different, so with the help of a few friends, I had a few photo shoots set up. I showed up and made some pictures, but the results were horrible. They were so horrible that I ended up deleting each and every frame. My efforts in revitalizing my craft were a complete flop.

It wasn’t that the photographs were bad, it’s just that they were out of sync. There was a disconnect between the inside and out. Let me explain: I’ve come to believe that most good photographs are “sacramental” in the religious sense of the word. While in graduate school, I became friends with an Eastern Orthodox priest. I had never met anyone like that, so it was interesting to talk with him and to learn about his beliefs. In one conversation, he said in an offhand way that in Eastern Orthodoxy a sacrament is an “outward expression of an inward reality”. To this day, that’s become one of the most helpful ways for me to understand what makes a good photograph. The photographs that I had created, on my aforementioned shooting sprees, were anything but that; they were out of sync with what was happening on the inside. Even more, as I reviewed the photographs, they made me feel like I was impersonating someone else and they just felt fake. If I still had them and could show them to you, you would probably think they were good: good composition, good expression, good light. Yet just because something is externally good doesn’t make it internally right.

I had fallen into the trap of making pictures that were surface deep; many of the images felt like imposters as if I were replaying, repurposing or remixing old hits. What I really wanted to do was to make something new and it didn’t work . . . so I decided to try something else.

Rather than shooting more pictures, I sat down and put away my camera. I deleted a bunch of photographs. I got rid of half of all of my books, gave away three cameras and got rid of a bunch of extra clutter. I needed to dig into my soul, and all the artifice of photography was cluttering my path. The next step was to admit that I was in a creative slump. For someone who defines his life and livelihood by being creative, this was surprisingly hard to do. Once I proclaimed it, however, freedom ensued. This lead to growth and discoveries in ways I had not intended. For example, I’ve come to realize that sometimes I use the

Q+A CHRIS ORWIG

camera to dig deep and other times I use it to hide. Lately, the camera had become more of a shield than a shovel, and that just isn't right.

So, here I am taking this new creative journey one step at a time. I'm reaching out to friends, mentors and peers and seeking advice. I'm asking some of those existential questions like, "Who am I?", "Why am I here?" and "What matters most?". I'm reading books, writing in my journal and becoming a student again. I'm getting out on my bike in the mountains and on my surfboard in the sea. It's all becoming part of this creative quest. When I do press the shutter, which is less frequently than before, I'm doing so with more tenderness and thought.

THE LAST TIME YOU MADE A PORTRAIT OF ME I THINK YOU USED A TOTAL OF THREE CAMERAS, ALL WITH DIFFERENT MEDIUMS. WHAT ARE YOU USING THESE DAYS AND WHY?

I've always liked using a lot of different types of cameras and lenses. I've found that by having a mix of gear it challenges and broadens how I see, and how I'm able to convey different ideas. In a way, I think of my camera gear much like a surfer thinks of his boards.

Surfers typically have what's called a "quiver of surfboards"; each surfboard is suited for different conditions and for different ways to ride, whether aggressively or more relaxed. There are modern and retro designs, and then there are the boards for many different sized waves. That's why it's not uncommon to find a surfer's garage stuffed with surfboards of all types. To the outsider, the surfboards all look the same. To the passionate surfer, each board has a personality, purpose and drive.

So what's in my photographic quiver? On the digital side of things, I've been shooting with the Canon 5DMIII. The camera is simple and does what I need it to do. I like that. Most frequently, I have been using an 85mm lens; I appreciate the attentiveness and energy that it provides. The fixed focal length requires that you work with your feet and then to be thoughtful about how you compose the frame.

The other lenses that I reach for are the 50mm and the 35mm. I find that each of these lenses force me to be engaged; they are difficult to use. Like catching a big wave, you have to paddle like mad and hope for the best, but when you get into the flow, there is nothing that compares.

Recently, I have been shooting more and more film. It's an incredible way to learn. Here's what I use: large format 4x5, Hasselblad, Contax, Leica and Rolleiflex. Each of these cameras really has a personality that is unique. Shooting with different film cameras can be arduous and costly but somehow it has helped me to grow in fascinating ways. When I'm shooting something that is really meaningful

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to me, I'll often bring along a film camera as it helps to ground and deepen the pictures I hope to make.

HOW DOES YOUR CHOICE OF SUBJECT DETERMINE, OR AFFECT, YOUR CHOICE OF MEDIUM?

Some people approach their subject matter as a blank slate and let the cards fall where they may. At times I take this approach as it helps me to viscerally respond to the situation at hand. Most of the time, I like to think about the subject before I arrive. I do this by opening my journal and writing down some ideas. These ideas directly affect what gear I'm going to use, especially when I'm photographing people, because I want to have a sense of what I'd like to try. Otherwise, I tend to get distracted in the moment and then I find the photographs to be lacking in some way. To jump to another metaphor, it's like a composer selecting the key – G Major which is strong and bold, or D minor, which is reflective and sad. After selecting the key (or the camera and lenses), there is no telling where the song will go, yet that selection helps me to try to create or capture something that resonates with some internal ideas. There are many situations where my planning completely goes wrong, of course, and it's in those times that I'm grateful to have brought along some backup gear that will help save the day.

YOU ONCE DESCRIBED THE 50MM FOCAL LENGTH AS "THE MOST HONEST FOCAL LENGTH." DO YOU STILL FEEL THAT WAY? TELL ME ABOUT THAT.

Occasionally, someone will ask if I'm a self-taught photographer and I'll say yes, but that isn't quite true. It was the 50mm lens that taught me how to see, and I learned how to be a photographer with that lens. The lens doesn't exaggerate or lie. Using it requires that you push all gimmicks and trickery aside. The lens has a quiet salt-of-the-earth voice that gently nudges you to look and then see. In a way, the 50mm is like a good friend; it keeps you grounded and teaches you to be a humble and unpretentious viewer of the world. Some lenses are loud, like an electric guitar (think 70-200mm), while others are honest and true, like the 50. So yes, I do still feel that way, and the 50mm will always play an important part in my craft.

YOU'VE PHOTOGRAPHED SOME ENVIABLE SUBJECTS, ESPECIALLY FOR ANYONE ON THE WEST COAST OF THE AMERICAS WHO UNDERSTANDS AND LOVES OCEAN AND SURF CULTURE; HOW DID THESE OPPORTUNITIES COME ABOUT?

As ironic as this sounds, one of the reasons that I teach photography is because I never had the chance to go to photo school. When you are around aspiring and creative students, they really teach you a lot. A few

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years back I decided to ask one bright student to teach me how to use the 4x5. I was instantly enthralled and, in my excitement, didn't know what to shoot. In response, the student blurted out, "Well go and shoot what you are most passionate about." That was it; I knew what I wanted to do. I set out to photograph the waterman and surf legends of the sport. I was interested in gaining wisdom and insight from them and their lives, which were dedicated to understanding and enjoying the sea.

From the get-go, the project had two sides: I wanted to create timeless and strong portraits, and I wanted to learn. I wanted to be "mentored" by some of the best in the world. Next, it was about reaching out and connecting with the people I admired most. This happened one small step at a time. Looking back, I'm grateful that some of the pictures turned out well, yet I'm even more grateful for how the project has helped me to change and grow.

YOU TEACH AT THE RESPECTED BROOKS INSTITUTE, AND SEE PHOTOGRAPHERS EARLY IN THEIR GROWTH; IS THERE SOMETHING YOU SEE IN THE ONES WHO GO ON TO DO PHOTOGRAPHY IN A MORE SUSTAINED, CREATIVE WAY, AND THOSE WHO NEVER SEEM TO PROGRESS?

Being on the faculty at Brooks is one of my life's greatest honors; it's amazing to be a part of a photographic community that deeply cares about helping others succeed. Over the last decade I've seen so many succeed, while others have flopped. Through it all, I've spent some significant time digging into this strange mix. One of the things that I've discovered is that the students who only focus on photography rarely go far. In other words, it's the students who develop and nurture a passion for other aspects of life that really shoot the moon. Jay Maisel says, "If you want to take more interesting photographs, become a more interesting person." Interestingness is definitely a key trait that leads to sustained success.

Then there are a whole set of other traits like curiosity, authenticity, and drive, to name a few. At some point, in another article or book, it would be interesting to take some time to flesh all of that out. I think we all have a lot to learn from mistakes and traits of those who are just starting out because we are all in the same boat: we are all aspiring to move further along in our craft.

AS MUCH AS WE ALL CREATE A PATH THAT'S UNIQUE TO OURSELVES, WE ALL ALSO DRAW ON VARIOUS INFLUENCES: I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHO YOUR INFLUENCES HAVE BEEN VISUALLY.

My first visual influence comes from my dad; he's the one that planted the seed of passion for photography in my soul. Next, it was my elementary school principal Mr. Hagopian. He was an enthusiast photographer

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who shot all the photos for our annual yearbook. In looking back at those photos, many are really good. Then, while I was in graduate school, I was visually influenced by a group of non-photographers who were very ill. I had been required to volunteer in a hospital for three months and I was assigned the cancer floor, where I spent time speaking with, and listening to, people who were battling that brutal disease. Spending time with people who are dying, you cannot help but learn about life. It was there that I first learned how to see; they taught me how to savour the beauty, complexity and brevity of life.

I also really like old photography books, whether they are profound, like "The Family of Man", or trite, like "Kodak – How to Take Good Pictures". I have a whole set of "outdated" books that I think are amazing, and I have a collection of old Leica magazines that a library was throwing away which I often turn to for ideas. There is something about the early and somewhat anonymous photographers that strikes a chord. I think it's because their pictures do not look so contrived or forced: in the early days of photography, there were no rules.

There are, of course, many other photographers that I turn to for different reasons: I like Henri Cartier-Bresson's unobtrusiveness, Ansel Adams' quiet portraits, Elliot Erwitt's wit, Arnold Newman's gravity, Irving Penn's honesty, Vivian Meir's purity, Marc Riboud's curiosity, Walker Evans' hunger, John Sexton's solitude, Michael Kenna's simplicity, Keith Carter's mystery, Joni Sternbach's placid nostalgia, Rodney Smith's depth and Anton Corbijn's intensity.

Another huge visual influence comes from the written word; I frequently find reading as inspiring as a good photography book. It's astonishing how certain authors, poets and lyricists can use words to evoke such powerful and permanent visual ideas. Here are a few in that category that I enjoy: John Steinbeck, Jack London, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Alexander Dumas, J.R.R. Tolkien, Herman Melville, Ernest Hemmingway, Nathanial Hawthorne, Victor Hugo, Anne Lamott, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Elliot, Bono, Marcus Mumford, Robert Frost, Dylan Thomas. In another way, some of these wordsmiths have helped me to form credos, which shape the how, and the what, of the pictures that I make. Like Dylan Thomas' famous words, "Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Chris Orwig is a celebrated photographer, best-selling author and teacher who brings passion to all that he does. He is on the faculty at the world-renowned Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara California. As a photographer, he agrees with Marc Riboud's observation that, "Taking pictures is savoring life intensely, every hundredth of a second." For more information and inspiration, visit Chris online at www.chrisorwig.com and find his books on Amazon here: amazon.com/Chris-Orwig/e/B001IGJL9Q

CAPTURING THE MOMENT

Of all the skills we draw on to make a photograph, there are few of them that are actually related to the gear we use. I guess what I mean is that making a photograph and using a camera are only thinly related, which makes it all the more surprising that the culture of popular photography continues to crank out so much material and advertising related to the selling and buying and using of gear, and so little on everything else. That's what this column is about: the other stuff, the stuff upon which we draw once we've learned to make a decent exposure of a focused subject. While Canon claims their latest cameras allow us to unlock our vision and creativity, it's hard to suppress a cynical giggle at the audaciousness of their claim. What Canon and Nikon and their colleagues can do for us is get the photons onto the sensor; the rest is up to us. That's where technique ends; so much of photography is done without the camera.

I tell my students that photographs can be reduced to light, lines, and moments. Everything else is derivative. The more I study photographs from the past century - the incredibly short lifespan of our art so far - the more convinced I am that everything's been photographed, that our challenge now is to manipulate light, lines, and moments in the frame in a way that expresses our unique view of those so oft-photographed subjects.

CAPTURING THE MOMENT

In Within The Frame, I wrote that our craft consists of "painting with light, in slivers of time, within the frame of our image." Those slivers of time come and go, some of them lasting longer than others, some so brief even our cameras at 1/8000 struggle to keep up. But even when the camera is equal to the task, our own ability to anticipate and perceive moments, then use them in collaboration with light and lines (composition), is a photographic skill responsible for stronger images than any of the geekery on which we tend to focus. That's not to say the geekery can't serve us; it can. But perceiving a moment comes before the ability to capture it. To put it another way: what's the point of a camera capable of capturing even the most fleeting moment that we're unable to recognize it in the first place?

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

When Cartier-Bresson first spoke about the decisive moment, I wonder if he had any idea he'd be so misunderstood. I've written about this in other places, but it's worth a quick re-cap. The decisive moment is not simply about the moment that best represents a scene or an action; it's about that moment when the apex of the action coincides with the strongest possible composition. The decisive moment, as the name implies, has to do with decisions. Not merely about when we press the shutter but about how we frame it; not simply which moment we choose, but about where we put that moment. In street photography this translates in a million ways, but consider this scene: a man striding through a crowd, perhaps he's drawn your eye because he's walking against the flow and wearing bright clothes and a fantastic hat, in stark contrast to the men in business suits around him. How do you frame him? At what point does his striding walk become the most clear through the crowd of suits? At what point is his stride the strongest, carrying with it the most amount of energy? And where do you place him within the frame to communicate walking into the crowd or walking out of it? If simply capturing him is enough, then well and good. But if you want to say something about this bold man in a sea of homogeny, your decisions alone will make that happen. Which moment is decisive? Again, that's up to you because it depends what you want to say, but what matters in this discussion is that we recognize the importance of making these moments decisive and intentional. The moments matter all on their own, but which of them we choose, and where we place them, are what makes stronger photographs.

KNOW YOUR GEAR

A compelling photograph of a great moment is a hard thing to make, especially while the action is happening and we're fighting with technical considerations like focus and exposure. That's why the geek stuff matters; the more easily that focus and exposure comes to you, the more your camera feels like an extension of your hand, the more it gets out of the way and allows you to make not merely a photograph, but one over which you have control. For those of us who, on the spectrum from Artist to Geek, fall much closer to Artist, one of the best investments of time you can make is to sit down and make your hands familiar with your camera. Sitting down and closing your eyes as you run your fingers over the buttons and identifying them until you can do it from routine and muscle memory, without conscious thought, will mean that when the action is happening and the moment is fleeting, your attention is given to composition and capturing that moment, not fighting to remember how to access continuous focus, high-speed burst mode, EV compensation, or focus points. It doesn't take much - 20 minutes a day of intentional button-play for one week - and you'll be much closer to getting the camera out of the way.

CAPTURING THE MOMENT

ANTICIPATE THE MOMENT

Anyone who has ever missed an amazing moment bitterly remembers how fast it seemed to come and go, while our own movements and efforts to capture it seemed to slow in reverse proportion. Learning to anticipate the moment gets us closer to being ready when that moment arrives. In most cases, of course, we're guessing, but how good that guess is will affect how closely we anticipate the moment. Watch your subject. Be observant. Are there patterns to the behaviour, or rhythms to the action that repeat at intervals? Are there cues that happen before a moment that tip you off? When I still worked as a comedian I did - for a blessedly short time - a routine with a dove. She had a way of ruffling her feathers and changing her posture slightly before she relieved herself, with alarming frequency. I learned to recognize this slight shift, which allowed me to both avoid getting shat upon and to create a laugh. As the bird shifted in pre-sh*t, I would say, "Now, stay there. Just sit." And then she'd crap on the floor, at which point I'd look frustrated and say, "You know that's not what I said. I said sit." I know, it's juvenile. But it got laughs, I tell ya. Whether you're a wedding photographer, sports shooter, or portraitist, studying your subject(s) and identifying the cues that signal a coming moment, will make you a little more ready for those moments when they come.

SEIZE THE MOMENT

Arguably the hardest skill is simply the ability to quickly recognize those moments and capture them. Being familiar with gear and learning to anticipate the moment doesn't help in the least if we can't see that moment when it happens. One of the things I'm often surprised by is the tendency of digital photographers to look at the LCD screen after every few frames. The action's not happening there! You can't do a thing about the photograph: you've already made it. What you can do is keep your eyes open to the still-unfolding scene before you; look at your images later. Constantly ask yourself what's about to happen next and then wait for it. Patience is underrated as a photographic skill. If you find a great scene that only lacks a great moment, wait for it. If you're making a portrait and the mask still hasn't come off or the light still hasn't come on in their eyes, wait for it. If you're shooting landscapes, wait for the moment the light comes. That waiting can be minutes for the portraitist, and months, seasons, or years, for the landscape photographer, but a great moment is less often found or stumbled upon and more often waited out. Whether you make a photograph of that moment or not depends on your patience, and there's no camera setting for that.

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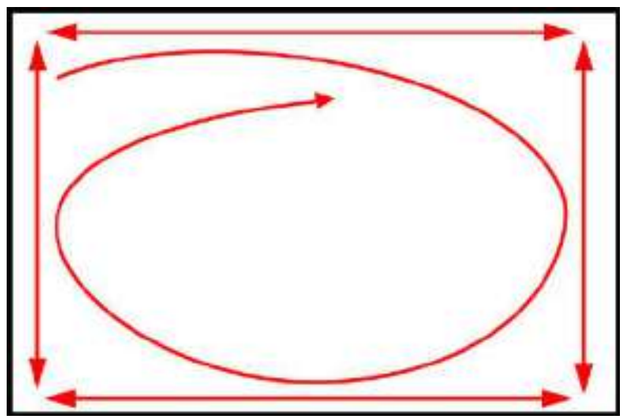
USING THE FRAME

The four most important lines of any image are the ones that are often least recognized consciously: the frame. Part of learning to make successful compositions is learning to become more conscious of the frame and how to use the forces it exerts on your images for desired effects.

WATCH THE MOVEMENT OF THE EYES WITHIN THE FRAME

Whether visible or invisible, every line creates vectors of force that encourage the eyes to first move along it, and second, to bounce off it. The eyes search the frame in a consistent fashion and these tendencies influence our experiences of all compositions, no matter how diverse. The general tendency is for the eyes to move within the frame from left to right and top to bottom, and then to return and repeat this process. The eyes quickly scan the frame itself (determining the limits of what's included and by extension what's not) before they scan what's within the frame. On the first pass, rather than scanning each line of the frame precisely, the eyes quickly average the competing forces of the four vectors in a single sweeping gesture. Afterwards, given time for a more careful examination of an image, the eyes may trace and retrace each line of the frame more precisely, until their quest for information is better fulfilled by other paths.

When it comes to motion, one must always consider momentum, gravity, and resistance. Some motions, like falling (within the frame, think top to bottom and left to right), are easier to get started and harder to stop than others, such as climbing (within the frame, think bottom to top and right to left). Once a motion is started, it tends to persist until modified by stronger forces. Place one or more barriers in the path of motion and it will shift and, sometimes, reverse. Individual compositions work with these tendencies, whether subtly or dramatically, reinforcing, modifying, or working against them.

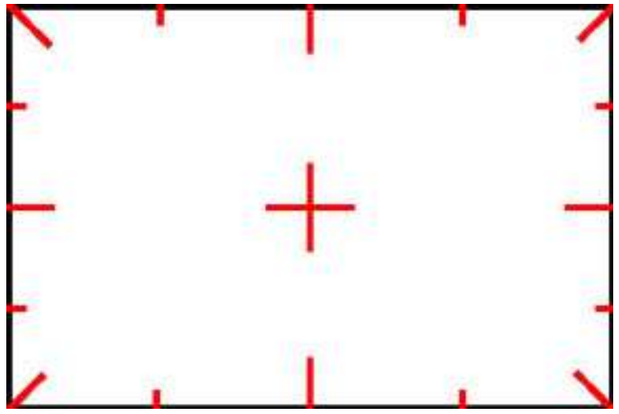


The motion of the eye within the frame.

USING THE FRAME

SCAN THE FRAME CONSCIOUSLY

Always be conscious of the frame. Scan it. Consciously move your eyes around the entire frame. Anything that touches the frame exerts a stronger influence in a composition (this is particularly true if it touches a power point, like a corner or the middle of a border.) If information that is not important touches the frame, it becomes even more distracting. To make a composition stronger, frame it in a way so that only important information touches the frame.



Powerpoints on and in the frame.

By emphasizing more important elements and deemphasizing less important elements (or eliminating them entirely), you make images stronger. Before exposure, you have an opportunity to make the composition stronger through reframing. After exposure, you have an opportunity to make a composition stronger through cropping (eliminating other image information that may or may not be significant) and/or retouching (including the image information surrounding the flaws).

USE PROXIMITY TO THE FRAME

Frame loose or tight? How you place elements relative to the border of the frame can have a profound impact on any composition.

Place elements far from the border to deemphasize them and to direct attention towards the spaces surrounding them.

Place elements a medium distance from the border to create a sense of graciousness; elements will be neither lost in space nor claustrophobically close.

Place elements close to the border to focus more attention on them and deemphasize the spaces around them. This tends to create denser more compact compositions, energizing them.

Place elements so that they touch the border to emphasize those elements, and to create strong visual entrances and exits into and out of compositions.

Place elements so that they are cropped by the frame to focus the attention of the viewer to create an interesting new shape, to highlight a particular part of an object, and/or to more strongly suggest the presence of off frame elements and the larger world outside the frame. If elements are incomplete and the pieces left behind within the composition don't become interesting elements on their own, they become distracting.

Use the frame to direct attention to the things and qualities you want to emphasize and away from the things and qualities you want to deemphasize. Ultimately, your use of the frame promotes one kind of seeing over another.

ORIENTATION OF THE FRAME

Horizontal or vertical? This choice has a major impact on any composition. A horizontal frame encourages the eyes to move from side to side. A vertical frame encourages the eyes to move up and down. Certainly, these are not the only directions in which the eyes will move; nevertheless, the frame will

create a strong tendency for the eyes to move in the same direction of its orientation.

ORIENTATION OF ELEMENTS WITHIN THE FRAME

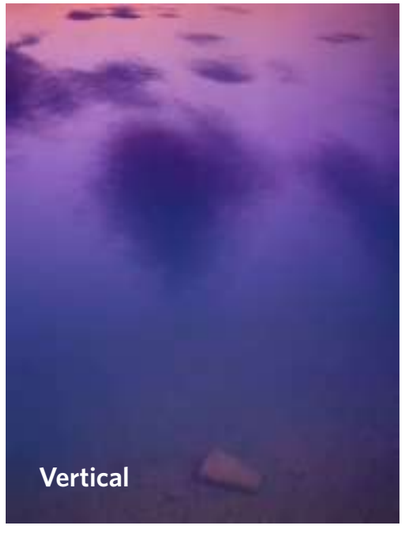
The frame determines orientation of the elements within it. Is a line horizontal, diagonal, or vertical? Those terms are usually determined relative to the frame. If the image lacks a horizon line or another clear suggestion of orientation, orientation is determined first by the frame and second by the horizon line of the viewing environment. In rare exceptions, frames are presented rotated. If the image contains a horizon line or strong suggestion of orientation within the scene, a rotated presentation will create disorientation, which the viewer may try to reconcile by physically changing their orientation. The difference between stable and calm and unstable and dynamic can be found in just a few degrees.

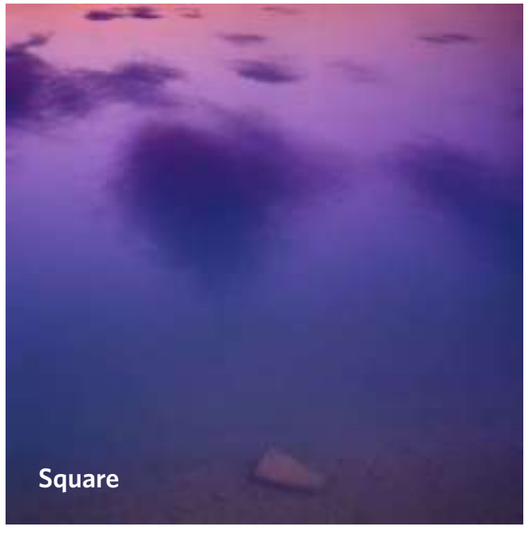
PROPORTION OF THE FRAME

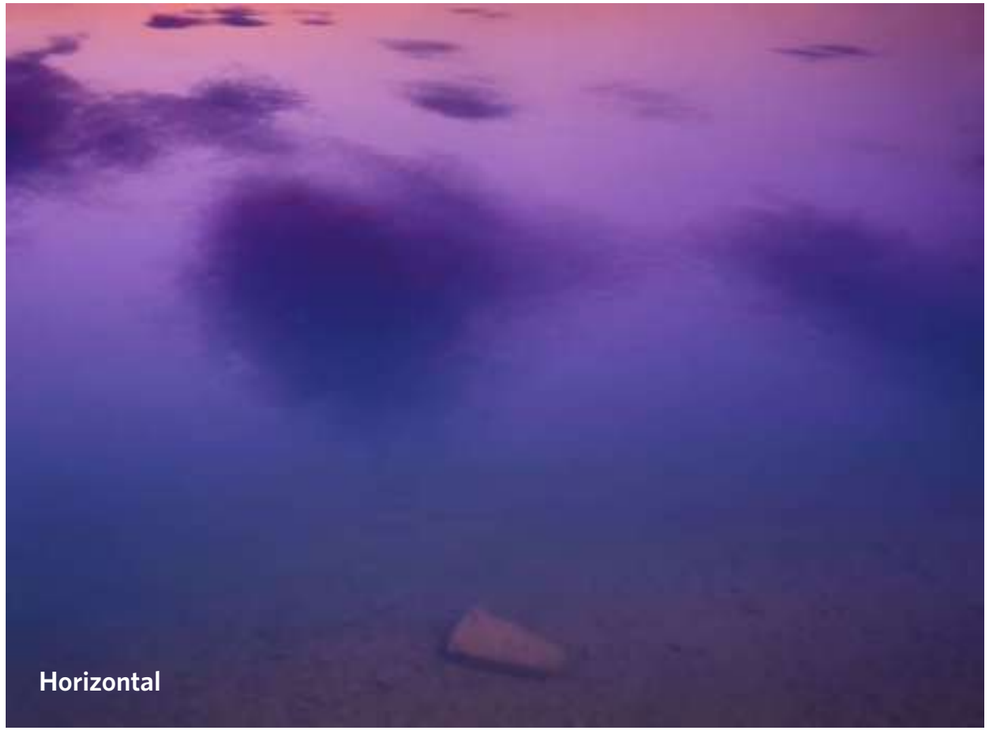
The proportion of the frame exerts a strong influence on any visual experience. While much is made of ideal proportions (such as using the golden mean, 1.618) and most widely used proportions (3:2 is the proportion of most DSLRs), every proportion has its own unique qualities, which can be used to make significant contributions to images. A potentially infinite number of proportions can be grouped into three broader categories: regular (square), irregular (rectangular), and extended irregular (panoramic).

Proportion functions independently of scale; whether small or large, it has the same affects. However, orientation can have a modifying influence on the psychological effect of proportion.

Cropping and/or distortion can be used to modify the proportion of an image. The new proportions function similarly to the nearest standard proportions, but take on an additional quality, much like making a musical note sharp or flat. Standardize your frame proportion to reduce its influence; repetition will desensitize viewers. Vary your use of frame proportion to increase its influence; variety will stimulate viewers.


Vertical


Square


Horizontal

USING THE FRAME

DIVIDING THE FRAME

The frame can be divided into pieces, either completely or partially. The affect of the division is felt more strongly as it grows and become more distinct, and vice versa. Dividing the frame creates new proportions within the proportion of the frame; a relationship of proportions. This creates multiple proportional relationships: the proportion of the frame (one side to another), the proportion of one unit to another and the proportion of those units to the frame, both individually and combined. The frame can even be divided more than once creating two, three, four, five, six or more distinct areas. Even when the elements in separate areas are extremely different, the frame creates a relationship between them, though there's plenty of opportunity for the creator to decide whether this relationship is one of similarity, contrast, or discontinuity. How important is dividing the frame? Consider the profound effects the placement of the horizon has on an image.

High

Low

USING THE FRAME

USE OF THE FRAME QUALIFIES THE CONCERNS OF THE AUTHOR

The influence of the frame can be strengthened or weakened to emphasize not only specific elements within it, but also specific qualities of images. As the frame is emphasized, images tend to become more graphic, highlighting the structure of the image: images as things in and of themselves; picture perfect. When the frame is deemphasized, images become more strongly oriented towards the literal information they contain: the things and events images represent; highly informative; sometimes perfectly imperfect. You can create significantly different kinds of images simply by changing the way you use the frame. Consider these three fundamentally different ways of treating information within the frame:

1. SCIENTIFIC COMPOSITION

Think forensics; focus is significant detail, often isolated. It describes structure or state. Information comes first, graphic structure second; the favoured graphic structure is found in the structure of the subject rather than created by the composition. If information is emphasized, this is done primarily to make key aspects of an image clearer. These types of images attempt to be objective and more or less without style: just the facts, ma'am.

2. REPORTORIAL COMPOSITION

Think documentary; context is king. Situate a subject in place and time and in relationship to other objects. Decisive moments or turning points are highly prized. It is history. These types of images strive to present an informed point of view, representing their subjects without embellishment and suggesting the larger context. Some stylistic treatments are favoured over others and strong stylization is generally discouraged. Eyewitness testimonial.

Reportorial

USING THE FRAME

3. GRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Think fine art; the elements of the image itself are emphasized in an expressive way, often favouring design over the literal content of the image. Personal interpretation is encouraged. Stylistic enhancement is often preferred. Show me your world the way you see it.

Consider the frame. When it comes to images, what four lines could be more important? If “all the world’s a stage”, the frame’s the stage upon which your visual stories are set.

John Paul Caponigro is an internationally-renowned fine artist, and the author of Adobe Photoshop Master Class and the DVD series R/Evolution. His clients include Adobe, Apple, Canon, and Epson. Learn more by visiting www.johnpaulcaponigro.com and get hundreds of free lessons with a free subscription to his newsletter, Insights, and more every month. Follow him on Google+, Twitter, and Facebook.

LONG TIME EXPOSING:
LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY IN A FEW SIMPLE STEPS

In the public eye, photography is often seen more as an accurate and realistic rendition of reality than a true art form; however, this could be no further from the truth. From the very instant one picks up a camera, reality is bent and distorted. From the choice of what you include or exclude from your composition to your lens selection or choice of depth of field, you can dictate the feeling you are trying to convey and the emotion you are attempting to capture. Long exposure photography (multiple seconds or minutes) crystallizes this notion to its very essence. In allowing the shutter to be open for longer periods, you open the door to whole new world of possibilities of seeing the invisible and creating something beyond that; something mysterious, unique and captivating. It takes you to a place that only your mind can see, and sometimes, to places you didn't even imagine. Nightfall allows you to make exposures that range in length from 30 seconds to several minutes, where the obvious lack of light forces you to leave the shutter open for longer periods than during the day. However, you can also make long exposures in full daylight. Here is how I do it.

STABILITY IS KEY

Despite advances in stabilizing technology, it is merely impossible to handhold your camera for longer exposures if you are seeking sharp images. As such, a good, solid tripod is an absolute must. If you want to make your tripod even sturdier, hook your camera bag under the tripod at the end of your centre column. This added weight will make your tripod less susceptible to vibration or wind.

In addition to a tripod, you will also want to have a remote release. This serves two purposes: first, releasing your shutter remotely allows you to avoid unnecessary vibrations resulting from pressing the shutter release button; and second, you may notice that once your shutter speed exceeds 30 seconds, your camera displays a "b" symbol. This symbol stands for "bulb mode" and means that the shutter will remain open

Composition remains as important in long exposure photography. Carefully crafted images will always stand out.

LONG TIME EXPOSING:
LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY IN A FEW SIMPLE STEPS

for as long as the shutter release is pressed. To avoid camera vibrations, use the remote shutter release to lock the shutter in the pressed position until you are satisfied with your image. Some remotes are equipped with a timer so that you can precisely - and easily - determine the shutter speed. While that may come at a significant cost, it beats the 1-Mississippi, 2-Mississippi counting method (although the Mississippi method can help you pass the time in certain occasions).

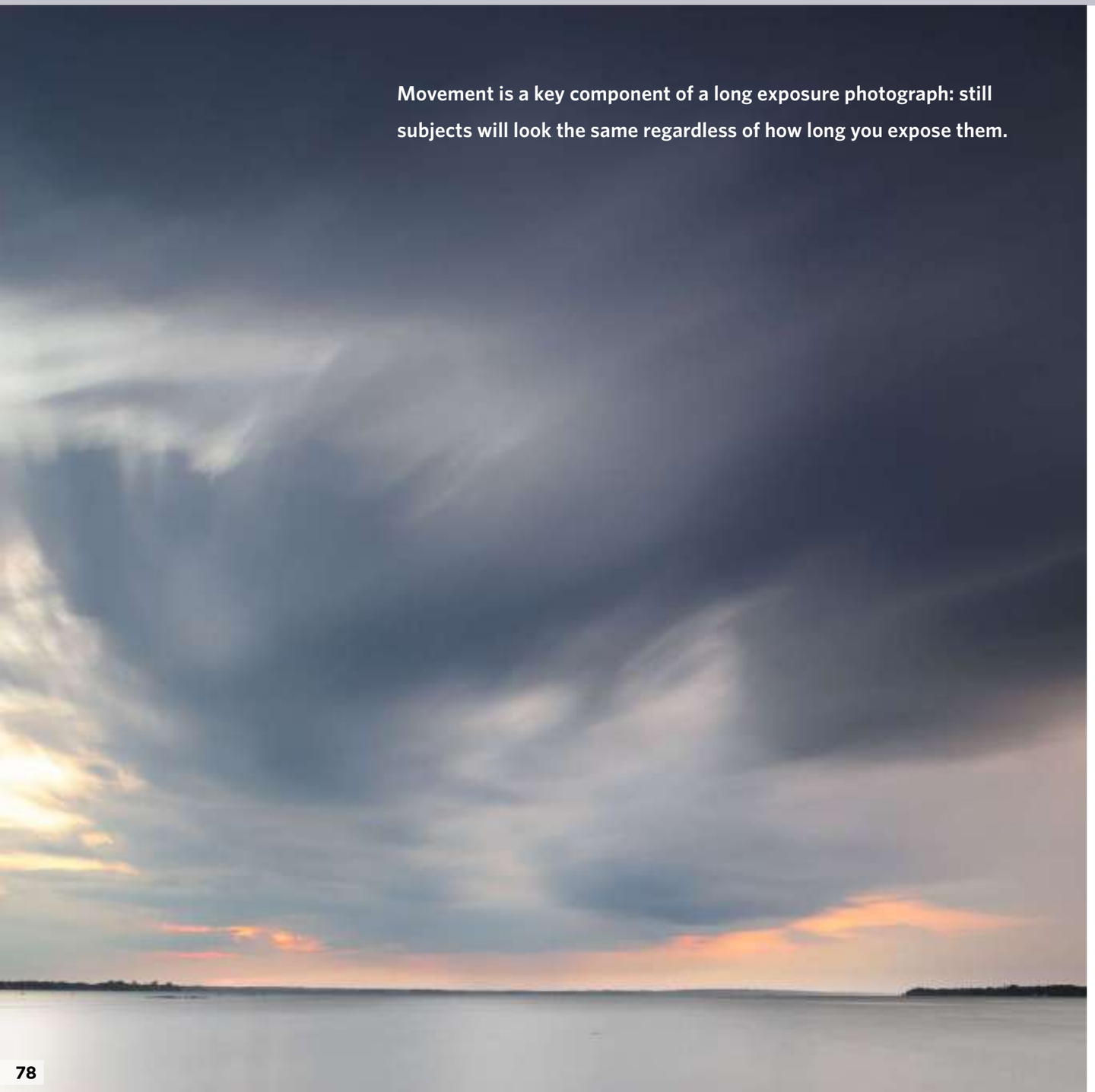
NEUTRAL DENSITY FILTERS

I have outlined what you need for sharp, vibration-free images. But to slow your meter to 30 seconds or more after you have steadied your camera, taken all the precautions, and then find that your meter still indicates an exposure of 1/100s, you might want to add a Neutral Density (ND) filter (not to be confused with the ND gradient filters often used in landscape photography to even out the exposure in the sky).

ND filters are dark pieces of glass or resin that reduce the amount of light entering the camera. With less light coming through, you will need to leave your shutter open for a longer period of time, but how much longer will depend on the filter you use.

With the help of neutral density filters, you can create some striking and dramatic images.

LONG TIME EXPOSING:
LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY IN A FEW SIMPLE STEPS

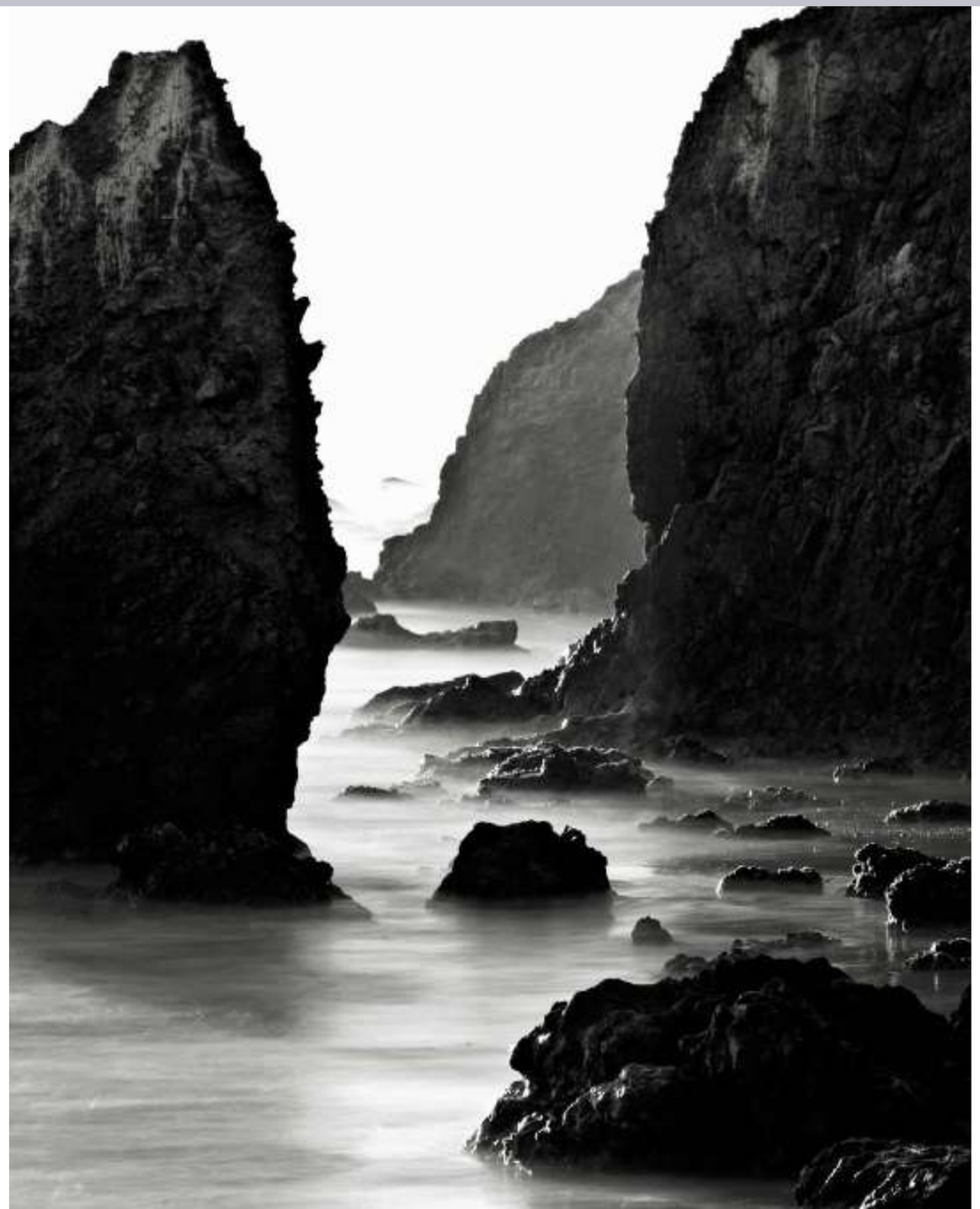


Movement is a key component of a long exposure photograph: still subjects will look the same regardless of how long you expose them.

ND filters come in a wide range of densities ranging from 1 to 10 stops (i.e. the extent to which they block light). For extremely long exposure times, especially in midday hours, you will want to get the highest density filter (8-10 stops), or you may want to stack two filters for even longer exposures. Note, however, that stacking filters will produce even more colour casts and vignetting than a single filter will.

A 1-stop filter means that the filter cuts the light entering your camera by 1 stop, thus forcing you to double your shutter speed. If your meter indicates a shutter speed of 1/100s at f/8, adding the 1-stop filter will require you to adjust the exposure to 1/50s at f/8. A 10-stop filter will similarly cut 10 stops of light, forcing you to slow your shutter speed by a factor of 1000 (2 to the power of 10). To summarize: 1/100s at f/8 will become 10s at f/8 after you add a 10-stop filter. Choose carefully when selecting your filter as manufacturers use different codes to indicate filter density. For example, some will indicate the number of stops (1, 2, 10 and so on), while others will use increments of 0.3 to indicate 1 stop (e.g. a 0.9 filter is a 3-stop filter). Others will provide numbers that indicate a multiplication factor: 2X, 8X, 400X, etc. (e.g., a 2X filter doubles your shutter speed and is thus a 1-stop filter, 8X is a 3-stop [2x2x2] filter, 1000X is a 10-stop filter). While most filters come with a fixed density, some manufacturers, notably Singh-Ray, offer variable density filters. Instead of owning a 3-stop, a 6-stop and a 10-stop filter, all you need is one of these variable filters, which you can then set to densities ranging from 2 to 8 stops. Although convenient, these filters can be expensive.

LONG TIME EXPOSING:
LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY IN A FEW SIMPLE STEPS



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

You have all your equipment, the light is right and you're ready to do some long exposures; where do you start? First, consider the importance of composition. Simply stacking a bunch of filters and making a prolonged exposure will not make a beautiful image. The end result we seek is not a gimmick or a fad, but an impactful, meaningful or beautiful image (if you can have all three, even better!). The choice of subject, angle, focal length and light remains as central to the image-making process as ever. There is an element that is absolutely necessary to consider when making long exposure photographs: a still scene will look exactly the same irrespective of how long you expose it, but a successful long exposure photograph requires a certain amount of motion to contrast with the stillness of the surroundings. As such, any composition you consider should include moving elements such as people, water or clouds.

I especially recommend you keep a watch on the weather as cloudier days make for terrific movement and great visual impact.

With respect to the actual mechanics of making the image, putting the ND filter on is essentially the last thing you do before releasing the shutter. First, determine your composition and place your camera accordingly, steadying it as well as you can. For the most accurate focus, I recommend you turn off autofocus and use live view instead. Once you find your focal point, set your ISO at its lowest setting and determine your base exposure - sans filter - and determine how long of an exposure you want in order to accomplish your vision. Sometimes only a few seconds are required to capture subtle movements, but other times, much longer exposures will be required. The only way to really ascertain what will best fit your vision is to experiment with various settings in diverse situations until you get a good grasp of what works and what doesn't.

Long exposures are perfect to simplify compositions.

LONG TIME EXPOSING:
LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY IN A FEW SIMPLE STEPS

For the sake of illustration, let's refer back to our summary: your meter reads 1/100s at f/8, ISO200. Supposing ISO100 is your lowest ISO setting, adjusting your ISO down to 100 will result in an exposure of 1/50s at f/8. If we are looking for an exposure in excess of 60 seconds, the difference between 1/50s and 60s is 11.5 stops (3000X multiplication factor, meaning 11.5 doublings or stops). In this case, a 10-stop filter will be necessary, but will only bring us to an exposure of about 20s. To get the additional 1.5 stops, you can either stop down the lens accordingly (i.e. f/13 instead of f/11) or stack an additional 2-stop ND filter on top of the 10-stop filter. Once the filters are attached carefully to your lens, you can trigger the shutter. All that's left to do is wait and enjoy your catch!

I hope that you now feel better equipped to go out and try your hand at long exposure photography. Despite all the technical advice, there is truly an element of magic at play with long exposures. It is sometimes impossible to predict what the exposure will actually look like - as if things had a mind of their own - making for constant sense of amazement and excitement.

Use a ND filter to instill some drama in an otherwise uneventful scene.

Younes Bounhar is an Ottawa-based photographer specializing in landscape, travel and architecture photography. He is also a workshop leader, running destination photography travel adventures in his home country of Morocco. His clients include St-Joseph Media, Apex Publications, K2 Impressions, National Institute of Scenic Arts and Music (Spain) and his work has been printed in *Canadian Geographic* and *PhotoLife*. Younes has his M.Sc., Neurosciences from McGill University. Younes can be found online at YounesBounhar.com and on Twitter @younesbounhar.

INSPIRATION AND FIGHT

Creative sparks are glorious when they catch, like a sparkler exploding with life or a blazing oak campfire giving off heat. Yet, what to do when the creative spark flickers and then disappears? In other words, how can we photographers stay vibrant, vital and alive? Such delving questions lead to others as well, like how do we create photographs that go beyond the cliché and trite? And how do we move beyond noticing light, to making photographs that actually shine? Because a photograph is good, not because of the light that was captured in the cage of the frame, but because it glows, gives off heat and is illuminated from within.

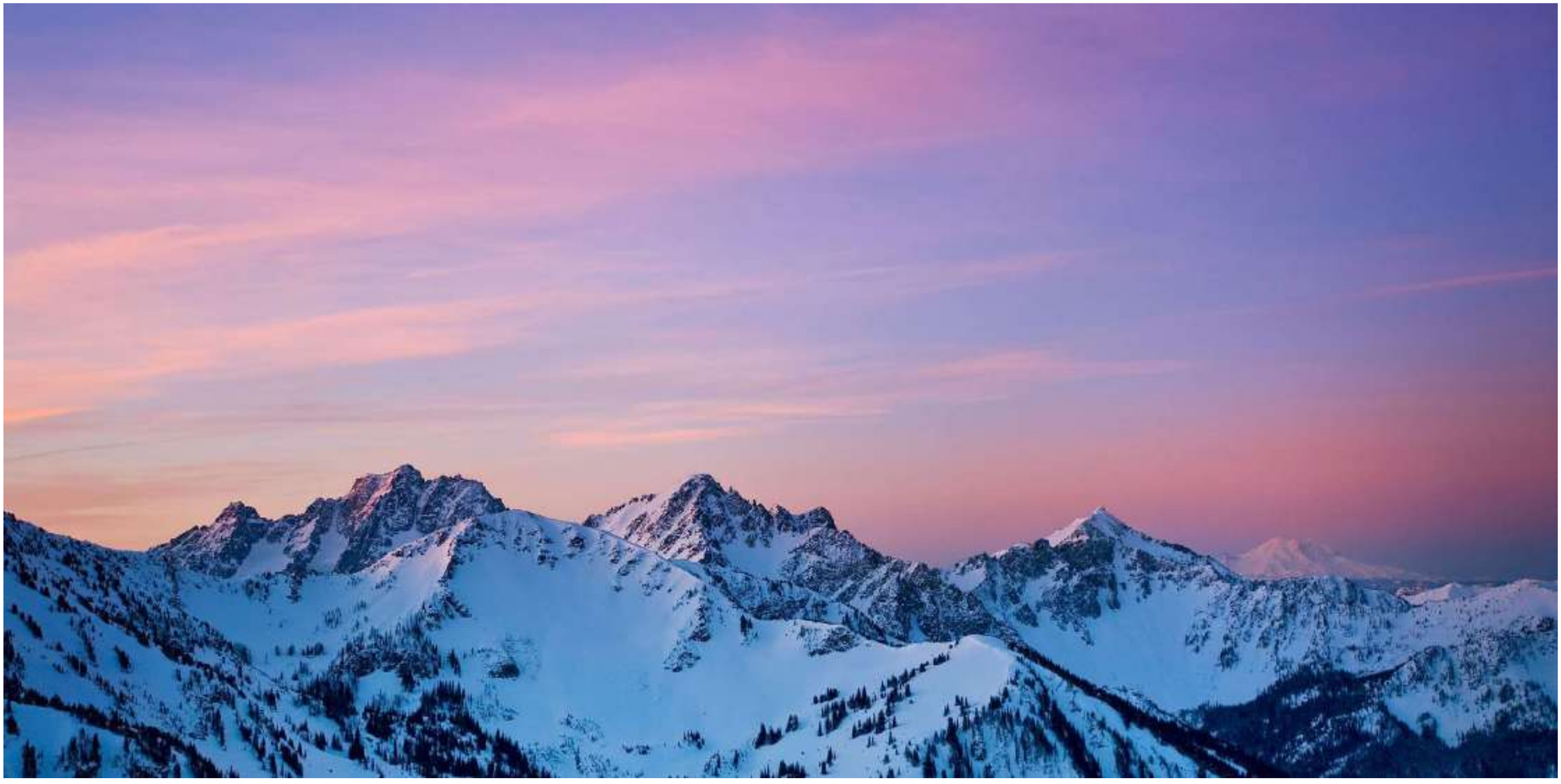
These are questions that get me up early in the morning and make me want to dig deeper into our craft. What I've found is that attaining the illusive creative spark and maintaining its force requires an immense amount of fight. Jack London was right: "You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club." For Jack, this wasn't some euphemistic insight, a cute metaphor, or just a catchy way to motivate others to get off their couch; rather, it was literal. It was about being hungry, and it was about fight. Jack knew what it meant to fight and he had witnessed the way a club could be used in the wild Alaskan frontier. If we take a closer look into his life, it might just give new meaning to the way we approach our own creative pursuits.

Jack London grew up in Oakland, California, and as a young boy often got into schoolyard scuffles until he left school at the age of 13 to work in a canning factory. London worked brutal 18-hour days and continued spar his way through whatever life pitched his way. In the midst of the labor, London met a local librarian who passed on an insatiable desire to read. Eventually, his time at the factory came to an end and he continued fight through a series of odd yet adventurous jobs, including illegal oyster thief, deck hand and sailor. Along the way, he learned to capture and reframe what he witnessed with written words on a page. Writing became a way to grapple with the complexity of life and to funnel his fervent desire to not waste a single drop from life's cup. His thirst for experience and adventure was vast. Eventually, this lead him north to follow and partake in the Klondike Gold Rush madness of the time. After a number of hardships and adventures in the frigid Yukon wilderness, London returned home. Brimming with visceral memories from his trip, he committed himself to a strict regimen of writing based on what he had seen. At just 27 years old, he finished writing *The Call of the Wild*, and it was a huge hit.

London's success from 13-year-old dropout to famous writer was not something that fell from the sky; rather, it was the culmination of a huge exertion of force and a philosophical approach to life. London explains: "The proper function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time." And use his time is what he did: London went on to write 50 books before he died at the age of 40.

How is it possible that someone could accomplish so much creative output in

INSPIRATION AND FIGHT



INSPIRATION AND FIGHT

so little time? And why is it that his creative spark never went dark? I think you can find the answer woven into the pages of his books, like *The Call of the Wild*: "Here was neither peace, nor rest, nor a moment's safety. All was confusion and action, and every moment life and limb were in peril. There was imperative need to be constantly alert." This type of a scene struck a chord with London, for there was always a great imperative to the way that he lived. When he put pen to paper it was like hitting flint with steel.

In comparison, most of us (including myself) have lost the imperative edge. When we click the shutter, it's as if the urgency, necessity and the fight are gone. The shutter snaps, and if we are lucky a few sparks fly, but their life is short-lived or just plain dull. And relying on luck is a passive and very unrewarding way to approach any craft. So how then do we actively ignite and maintain that kind of spark that will keep us constantly alert and alive? A good first step is to be raw and honest and to ask ourselves, "What's at stake?" and "What really matters about the photographs that you take?" Too often the answer is, "Not much," for most of our pictures have lost their bite. To move beyond this, we have to remember that photography isn't some housebroken or domesticated act. Photography is about capturing the wildness and wonder of life, and life is too short to be summed up with a few half-hearted frames.

INSPIRATION AND FIGHT

Next, it's critical to admit that being creative isn't an easy task. Most of us don't like to admit the truth that being creative is incredibly hard, but I will plant, fly and own this flag: creativity is hard whether you are seasoned or brand new. There is always an exception, of course, like when the lucky spark falls from the heavens onto the tinder of one's soul, but that's the exception and not the norm. Even then, if we sit around waiting for those moments, nothing will ever get done. Creativity requires more than that; it requires preparation and then a sharp focused strike that brings forth life.

If you are an artist of any stripe, and if you want to burn bright, you have to chase and pursue your passions with a clenched fist. This requires carving out the time and getting out into the world, like Jack London's winter trip up to the Alaskan frontier. You have to dig, search and claw for gold beneath the frozen snow. Creativity requires that you chart your own path, even if that means leaving the comfort of home to travel to a far-off frostbitten land; for it is only through these experiences by which theory can be transposed into truth and wishful thinking can be converted into photographs worth hanging on a wall. Along such journeys, you must resist the urge to compare yourself to those other photographers who have more clients, more followers, more gear, more gold; instead, you have to go out and make the photographs that matter most to your core. When you do that, when you pick up the club and get on with the work, don't be surprised when life, true life, courses through your veins and propels you to the summit of life. In regards to such a course, Jack London is right on with these words from *The Call of the Wild*:

"There is an ecstasy that marks the summit of life, and beyond which life cannot rise. And such is the paradox of living, this ecstasy comes when one is most alive, and it comes as a complete forgetfulness that one is alive. This ecstasy, this forgetfulness of living, comes to the artist, caught up and out of himself in a sheet of flame; it comes to the soldier, war-mad in a stricken field and refusing quarter; and it came to Buck, leading the pack, sounding the old wolf-cry, straining after the food that was alive and that fled swiftly before him through the moonlight."

Isn't that part of what we all want, to get lost in the flow, rhythm and wonder of the creative fight? For when we strain, strive and allow ourselves to let go, we become truly alive. It's in these moments that we transform into who we were intended to be and we discover that our art - our photographs - have changed as well: no longer cliché and trite, but now vibrant and alive. And if we look closely, we just might discover the warmth of new life all around as our photographs radiate and glow like embers in the night.

Chris Orwig is a celebrated photographer, best-selling author and teacher who brings passion to all that he does. He is on the faculty at the world-renowned Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara California. As a photographer, he agrees with Marc Riboud's observation that, "Taking pictures is savoring life intensely, every hundredth of a second." For more information and inspiration, visit Chris online at www.chrisorwig.com and find his books on Amazon **here**.

ON MISSING THE SHOT

When it comes to being consistently creative, there's no greater obstacle than our fears. When those fears are legitimate, it's worth the time to unpack those fears, hear them out, and see whether our responses to those fears either help or hinder us. In most cases, because this is what fear is so good at, our response to fear sabotages the very thing we're trying to protect. The fear of "missing the shot" is no different, and for some of us, our greatest fear as photographers. It might manifest in different words - for me it's the fear that I've shot my last good photograph - but it's there for many of us, and I think if we pull the fears into the light and look at a more reasoned response, we might just win this thing.

BE PRESENT

A friend recently remarked to me that his photographs sometimes seemed less a result of the old adage, "f/8 and be there," and more like "f/8 and be blurry." Focus issues aside (and we'll get to matters of technical competence), that old adage still resonates. Being there is half the battle, and it happens in two ways. The first is the most obvious, though I suspect not the most

challenging. If you want to photograph amazing vistas in amazing light, you need to show up. You need to wake early, stay late, and wait out the weather. You need to let your curiosity take you places you've never been instead of the ones to which you've beaten a well-worn track. In many cases you need to go time and time again because, while you might know the place inside and out, you don't know what the light will be doing, what the weather affects, and what else might be happening at the time. This means anticipation for some of you. For the wedding photographer it means knowing the wedding plans well enough that you can anticipate where key people will be and when. It means asking questions. For the journalist it means an ear to the ground and local intel. Sure, so much of what many of us do is simply a case of "right place at the right time," but I think the harder we work to be there, something will happen.

This is more than just about where we put ourselves with the camera; it's about how we are there. You can be there and not really be there: the mind wanders, worries, gets distracted by thoughts of work or play, and

ON MISSING THE SHOT

in this wandering we stop seeing, stop being receptive. You stop seeing things in front of you when you're mentally somewhere else.

Being present physically is relatively easy. You just show up. Being present mentally is less so, and while I suspect there are a million exercises to focus ourselves, I believe it's bigger than that.

I think it's less about just looking for specific things, but learning to be receptive all the time. Noticing the light, seeing lines and shapes, making notes of moments. It's not particularly about being Zen, I don't think, it's just about living life in the here and now. Practically, I think part of that is identifying, and then giving ourselves permission to abandon, our expectations. We look for what we're expecting, which is fine when that thing shows up, but blinds us to what's really there when it doesn't but we're too busy looking. The portraitist, making assumptions about a subject, and looking for a specific thing will miss whom that subject really is. The landscape photographer wanting serene waters and blue twilight, and unable to shift gears, will miss the chance provided by stormy seas and threatening clouds.

FEATURED ARTICLE / DAVID DUCHEMIN ON MISSING THE SHOT

I can think of two practices that will immediately change your photography.

SLOW DOWN

First, and simplest (but still difficult) is this: Slow down. I think the pressure in contemporary popular photography to produce so much work is responsible for more mediocrity than almost anything shy of the addiction to gear. We rush about, frantic that we'll miss the shot and in our hurry we stop being present. We get tunnel-visioned, which is the opposite of the kind of receptivity we need to experience when learning to see. Learning to see is about recognizing possibilities, and tunnel-vision is the opposite of that. It's a great survival tool, but a lousy creative space.

STOP CHIMPING

The second will be harder: Stop chimping. Chimping is the name given to the addictive practice of looking through your back-of-camera images to "make sure I got the shot," but which in fact pulls us out of the moment and often guarantees that we'll miss the shot. It happens with portraiture all the time. A few frames are made of a nervous subject, then the photographer puts the camera down to look at the LCD screen, and the subject relaxes and smiles. There are other ways of relaxing the subject, ways that don't involve losing that moment. Wedding photographers that chimp miss key moments, sports photographers miss key plays, and street photographers will miss whole dramas while their eyes are downward. At the beginning of our craft it's an advantage to see the LCD. It can provide excellent feedback. But once you are comfortable with your metering and your focus, spend more time with your eye to the viewfinder and less time looking at the back of the camera. It worked for decades for some very good photographers who shot film and had no choice; it can work for you.

Spend more time with your eye to the viewfinder and less time looking at the back of the camera. It worked for decades for some very good photographers who shot film and had no choice; it can work for you.

THE PROBLEM WITH GEAR

When it comes to gear, you'll miss the shot for two big reasons, aside from simply not knowing how to use what you have. The first is not having the right gear, the second is having too much. I'm not sure I can help with that first one. Only you know what kind of photographs you make and which gear you need to make them. Some photographers travel with Pelican cases full of strobes, some with none. It would be presumptuous of me to even hint at what you need. The longer you do this the more sure you'll be of what your work requires. Still unsure? Take a look at the work you've done over the last year. How much of your best work was shot with that 300/2.8 you keep dragging around? I've traveled for years without leaving my 70-200/2.8 at home until I realized that for certain kinds of trips I just don't use it, and when I do, it's never respon-

ON MISSING THE SHOT

sible for the images I truly love. I leave my flashes at home (more honestly that would read: I have no flashes), but I take my tripod. Some of you will do the reverse. Whichever you do, it might be in your best creative interest to choose carefully.

Why not take it all? Because most of us carry too much stuff, and contrary to the worries that less gear means more missed shots, it's equally true that more gear means more choices when the heat is on, and when those choices lead to paralysis, we end up with nothing. Switching lenses takes time. Carrying more gear slows us down. This might not be true of everyone, but it's true of me and I work much, much better (and much happier) when I work light and with comfortable constraints on me - like photographing Tihar, the Nepalese festival of light, with only my 16-35 lens and an 85mm I didn't end up using - than when I have fewer constraints and too much kit. Less gear might not sound sexy, but it might just help you stay in the moment, and capture the moments, a little better.

KNOW YOUR CRAFT

In this issue's "Without The Camera" column, I discuss the need to know your gear in order to capture fleeting moments. I think of this article as complementary to that one, and suggest that, in addition to knowing your gear, the stronger your working knowledge of the craft itself, the stronger your chances of not missing key moments becomes. In other words, you may be able to get to every button on your camera faster than anyone else in the camera club, but if you don't know when to use which focus mode, or how to quickly read a histogram, or - God help you - switch to manual and spot meter the scene in tricky light, then all the speed in the world won't help you. Knowing your gear is about how to use all those buttons and dials; knowing your craft is about knowing why to use them. There's no shortcut here, so the sooner you get out there and experiment and play with backlight or your servo mode, or whatever that challenge you keep bumping up against might be, the better.

ON MISSING THE SHOT

We learn so much better when we play than we do when the moment is before us and the pressure is on to perform and produce. Don't let it overwhelm you, just get curious. Spend a little time each week studying just one thing. This week it might be understanding the histogram, next week your metering modes, or even the Zone System, which gets written off as archaic wisdom from way back when but in fact can be extremely helpful in learning how your camera sees and meters the light.

DO IT THE OTHER WAY.

Lastly, I think we miss the shot because we all get stuck in our own ruts. We approach things the same way, from the same angle, the same lens, the same framing, and because we're not thinking laterally, we miss what's right there. Worse, if you're like me, you know you're missing it. You just can't figure out why. Assuming it's true that the definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over again but expecting different results, we'd be crazy to keep shooting the same way. It's in those times I remind myself to "do it the other way." What's "the other way"? I have no idea. And that's the beauty of it. It might mean shooting from a different angle to get different lines, or from behind to get backlight and silhouettes. It might mean shooting wide instead of tight, or with a slow shutter. Whatever it is, don't self-censor, or reject the idea because it's a "bad idea." You don't know it's not going to work "the other way," but you already know it's not working the way you're doing it now, so jump the rut and just do it differently. You have nothing to lose. You may find that different approach works, or that it doesn't but that it leads you to a new idea that does. How we get there is less important than that we do.

THAT'S LIFE.

Ultimately, we'll miss more moments, and more potential photographs will be left unmade, than we'll ever see or make. And that, as they say, is just the way it goes. That points to both the ubiquity of these moments and the preciousness of them when it all aligns and we get it right, putting our frame around a specific combination of lines, light, and moment, making an image of what otherwise have passed unnoticed, some escaped beauty or an unseen story. I believe celebrating that and allowing it to feed the hunger increases our creativity and receptiveness. Mourning over images never made, or fostering regret that our skill was, this time, no match for our vision or the speed of the scene before us, is a trap and saps us of the very resources we so need if we're to grow as artists. But working on our craft, being in the moment, and holding our breath for that next frame we've not even imagined, with neither fear, looking forward, nor regret, looking back, fans the flames of creativity and both the instigation and completion of work we love.

David duChemin is a world & humanitarian assignment photographer, best-selling author, international workshop leader, and accidental founder of Craft & Vision. When not chasing adventure and looking for beauty, David is based in Vancouver, Canada. His work can be seen online at www.DavidduChemin.com.

SIMPLE SUSHI SESSION

I started photographing food about eight years ago when my friend and chef, David Robertson, suggested we team up. He would do the styling and I would photograph the food. David is a great chef, and fabulous at presentation, but we quickly learned that styling food for the camera is not the same as preparing it for consumption.

MY FIVE BASIC RULES OF FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY:

1. KEEP IT SIMPLE

I hate clutter; it doesn't work well in photographs. I like to communicate things cleanly without a fuss. We live in a world with many distractions and we need to focus on what is important. In this case, it's food: everything else in the picture should take a back seat.

2. THE FOOD IS THE HERO

The food needs to be front and center, but not literally in the front or in the center: the most visual weight needs to fall on the food, not the napkins, the plate, or the flowers in the background. In many food publications I have trouble finding the food through the distracting tablecloth patterns, clashing colours and over-lit table scenes. Avoid creating a jumble in your photographs.

3. BACKLIGHTING IS KEY

It's a bit of an overstatement to say that backlighting is key, but it does help to bring out the shine, texture, and dimension of food. A more accurate statement would be to say that lighting should generally come from behind, as well as from the side, but not from the front. I use frontal lighting all the time in portraiture; it's great for getting rid of lines and texture in the skin. However, you want the opposite for food; you want to emphasize the shape, colour, and texture of food. The lighting I've chosen to use in this exercise is very simple, looks natural, but can be extremely versatile and modified in many different ways.

HOMEMADE FLUORESCENT LIGHTING

4. MY SETUP

I've used a variation of my "bounce-the-light-off-whatever-I-can-find" setup here, utilizing my white studio walls combined with two white V-flats. The general effect is to create a u-shaped wall of light behind and to each side of the set. I recently did a shoot in the back kitchen of a very busy restaurant where my stylist and I were shoved into a space six feet wide and eight feet deep. Fortunately, the walls were white tile and the pots and steel shelves were all a neutral metallic colour, so I used basically the same technique there that I'm using here and produced twelve beautiful food shots that looked like they were lit with soft, natural, window light. I used two Elinchrom D-lite 2s lights with bare bulbs set at full power (and fired by Pocket Wizards), pointed at the white wall and angled slightly toward the two V-flats. I also used a small silver reflector (about 4 inches square) and a small strip of silver card (approximately 1 inch high by 6 inches deep), bent in a gentle curve so it would sit upright. I placed a two-foot by three-foot black foam core card over the set, held by a Manfrotto magic arm. The tabletop is covered with a piece of black textured paper that I purchased at an art supply store. The dishes are saucers from a trip to Ethiopia a few years back, and the sushi is straight from our local sushi takeout.

HOMEMADE FLUORESCENT LIGHTING

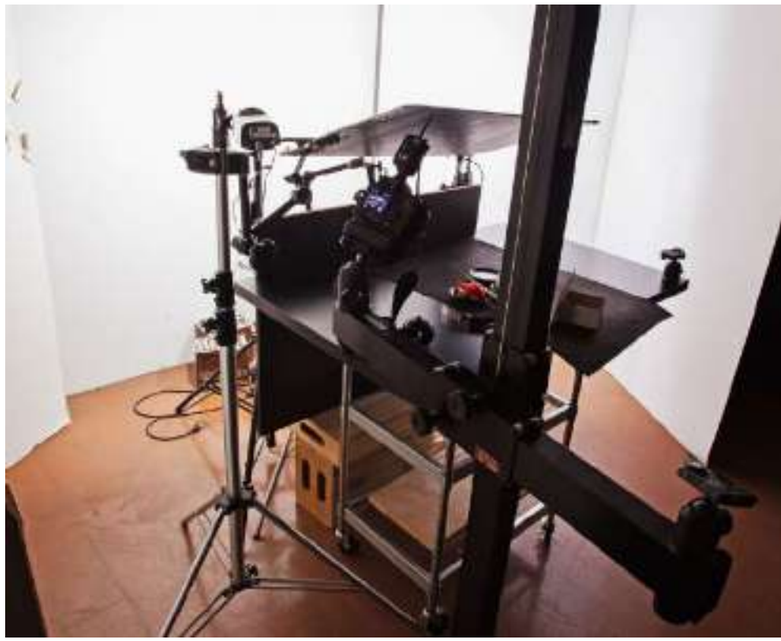
SHOT 1

My first shot relies heavily on backlighting. The main source of light (the white wall) is directly behind the set. The two V-flats are positioned on either side, and mostly behind the set. This backlit “u” shape creates a real wrap-around effect that requires very little or no fill. You’ll also notice a black tabletop piece sticking up six inches behind the set; this is there to keep the black paper surface dark. I want some light spilling on it for texture, but I don’t want to contaminate it with a lot of backlighting. The next element, and a very critical one, is the black foam core you see above the set (discussed in greater detail to follow).

HOMEMADE FLUORESCENT LIGHTING

SHOT 2

This shot is a modification of the first. I've moved the set 90 degrees and now the light (the wall) is to camera left. Most of the light is now coming from behind and to the left. This makes the look of the light a bit more contrasty and directional. I've added two reflectors on camera right (the 4-inch silver reflector and the six-inch silver strip reflector) to fill areas that have fallen into shadow.



5. SIMPLE LIGHT MODIFICATIONS THAT BRING OUT TEXTURE AND SHINE

I previously mentioned the black foam core panel that hangs over the set. This is my secret weapon for controlling the texture and shine that give the pictures that three-dimensional quality.

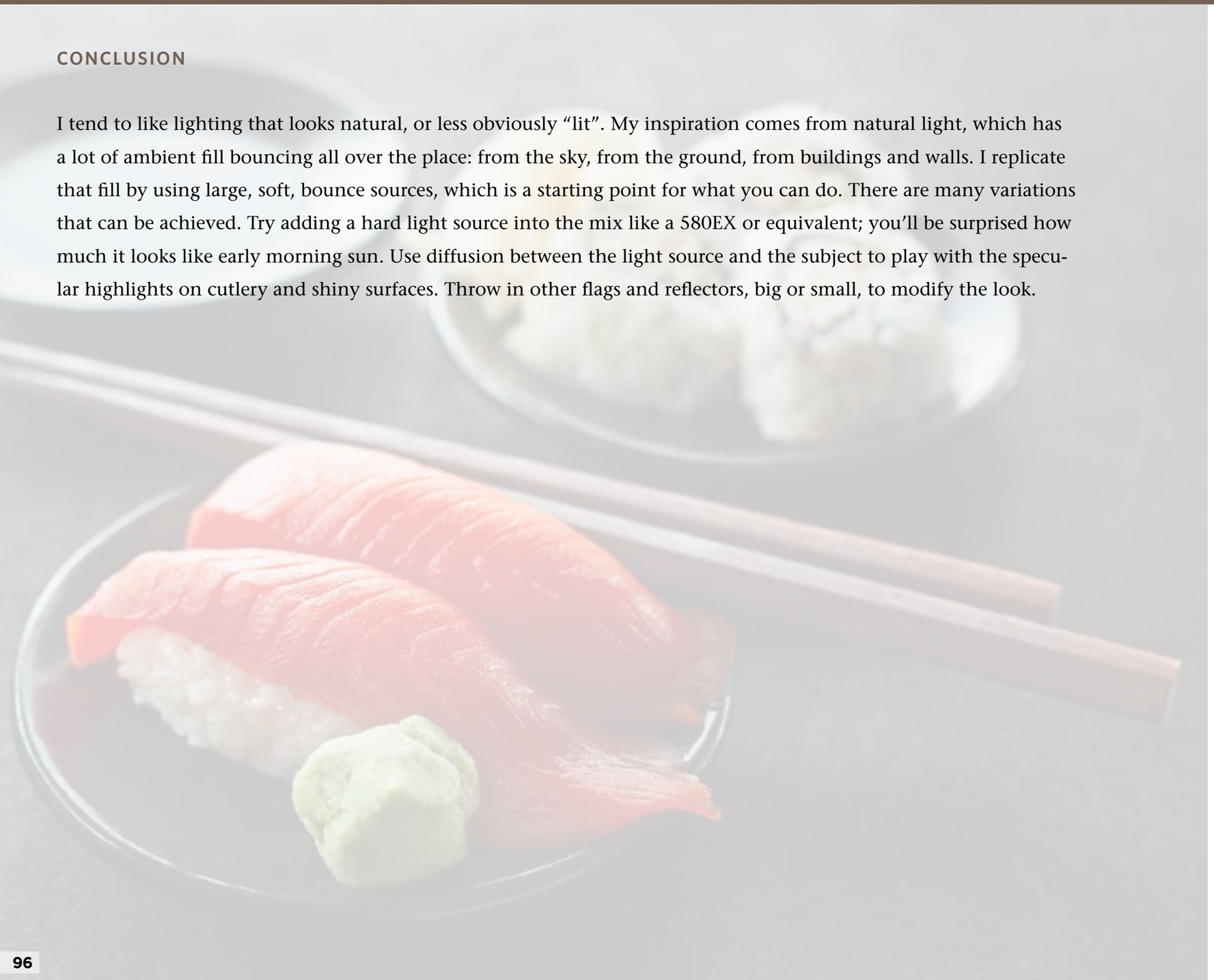
SHOT 3

Take a look at these pictures. The first one is a nice shot. Nice, even lighting shows the sushi well, but for my taste it lacks drama; it's actually a bit boring. Now take a look at the second one. Do you notice the way the texture and shine of the fish really pop? Do you see the way the rice has a real three-dimensional quality to it now? The difference between the two is the addition of the black card over the set. I use it to force the light to come in at a low angle, which really focuses the way the light interacts with the subject. I control it by lowering it up and down until I find the look I'm going for. I will often use this technique with natural light as well. Try it. It's fun!

HOMEMADE FLUORESCENT LIGHTING

CONCLUSION

I tend to like lighting that looks natural, or less obviously “lit”. My inspiration comes from natural light, which has a lot of ambient fill bouncing all over the place: from the sky, from the ground, from buildings and walls. I replicate that fill by using large, soft, bounce sources, which is a starting point for what you can do. There are many variations that can be achieved. Try adding a hard light source into the mix like a 580EX or equivalent; you’ll be surprised how much it looks like early morning sun. Use diffusion between the light source and the subject to play with the specular highlights on cutlery and shiny surfaces. Throw in other flags and reflectors, big or small, to modify the look.



Kevin Clark is a 20-year photography veteran of the commercial and advertising industry. He specializes in headshots for film and television and has photographed hundreds of stars. Kevin is a master of studio shooting and his expertise in advanced lighting technique is renowned. His niche work extends to high-production food, beverage and lifestyle photography. He works primarily out of his studio in Yaletown, Vancouver, and can be found online at KevinClarkStudios.com.

TAXI DRIVER. THE ARMENIAN REMAKE USING LIGHTROOM 4.

TAXI DRIVER. THE ARMENIAN REMAKE USING LIGHTROOM 4.

The image on the previous page was made during a recent journey through Armenia and Georgia (the country, not the American state, although you probably guessed that from looking at the vehicles in the picture). As my own mode of transport was a bicycle, I only took a compact system camera (a Fujifilm X-Pro 1), three prime lenses and a flash with me. In a way, my flash has helped me to appreciate and understand natural light better and recently, I've started to shoot a lot in sidelit or backlit ambient lighting situations. Up until a couple of years ago, digital cameras had a hard time coping with the extreme dynamic range of such lighting conditions and you either had to choose between keeping detail in the highlights and drowning the shadows in total darkness, maintaining shadow detail at the cost of blown highlights or shoot a bracketed series of exposures for subsequent exposure blending in software. Yet, both sensors and raw converters (see the boxed text "Still using Lightroom 3?") have improved dramatically, and while even today's cameras are nowhere near the dynamic range our eyes are capable of seeing, they do often manage to capture enough highlight and shadow detail to give you a broad post-processing leeway.

In PHOTOGRAPH Quarterly - Issue One I said that I want my image to reflect as closely as possible what I felt when I was making it. When cycling through less obvious travel destinations such as these, I'm always struck by the resourcefulness of the local people: on this blisteringly hot, dusty day, this taxi driver was trying to make an extra DRAM (the Armenian currency unit) by selling popcorn along this mountain road. It took me a while to figure out what I was seeing: at first I thought the taxi was just another old Lada having car trouble and was not related to the popcorn vendor but then it struck me that there was a cable zig-zagging from the hood to the stove under the umbrella and I realized the car's battery was being used to make the popcorn! That's why I chose to make the photograph from the side of the car with the vendor in the background rather than the other way around. I had already noticed yellow Mashrutki (local buses) driving by rather frequently so it was just a matter of kneeling and keeping one eye in the viewfinder and the other on the scene to wait for one to fill what would otherwise have been an empty space. The whole scene had an eerie, hazy feel to it and I wanted to reflect that in my post-processing.

STILL USING LIGHTROOM 3?

If you have not yet upgraded to Lightroom 4, I would strongly suggest you do: it's cheaper than buying a new camera yet for some users it will feel as if they did. For me, the ability to recover seemingly lost highlights is by itself worth the upgrade price (which has dropped considerably compared to previous upgrades). In fact, after having used Lightroom 4 for about half a year now, I was forced to use Lightroom 3 during a two-week trip because my old travel laptop did not meet Lightroom 4's minimum system requirements. I can only tell that, postprocessing-wise, those two weeks felt like a decade. Lightroom 4's Basic Panel has been entirely revamped and the new Highlights and Shadows sliders allow me to extract detail from a scene that previously required overly complex Photoshop techniques or even combining multiple exposures in HDR software. The fact that you can now do so much in the the basic panel without having to resort to local adjustments such as the graduated filter or the adjustment brush has the added advantage that you can synchronise your raw development across multiple images speeding up your workflow. This doesn't mean of course that local adjustments have become entirely superfluous. On the contrary: they also have been enhanced in Lightroom 4 and you now have local control over white balance, shadows and highlights to name but the most important new features.

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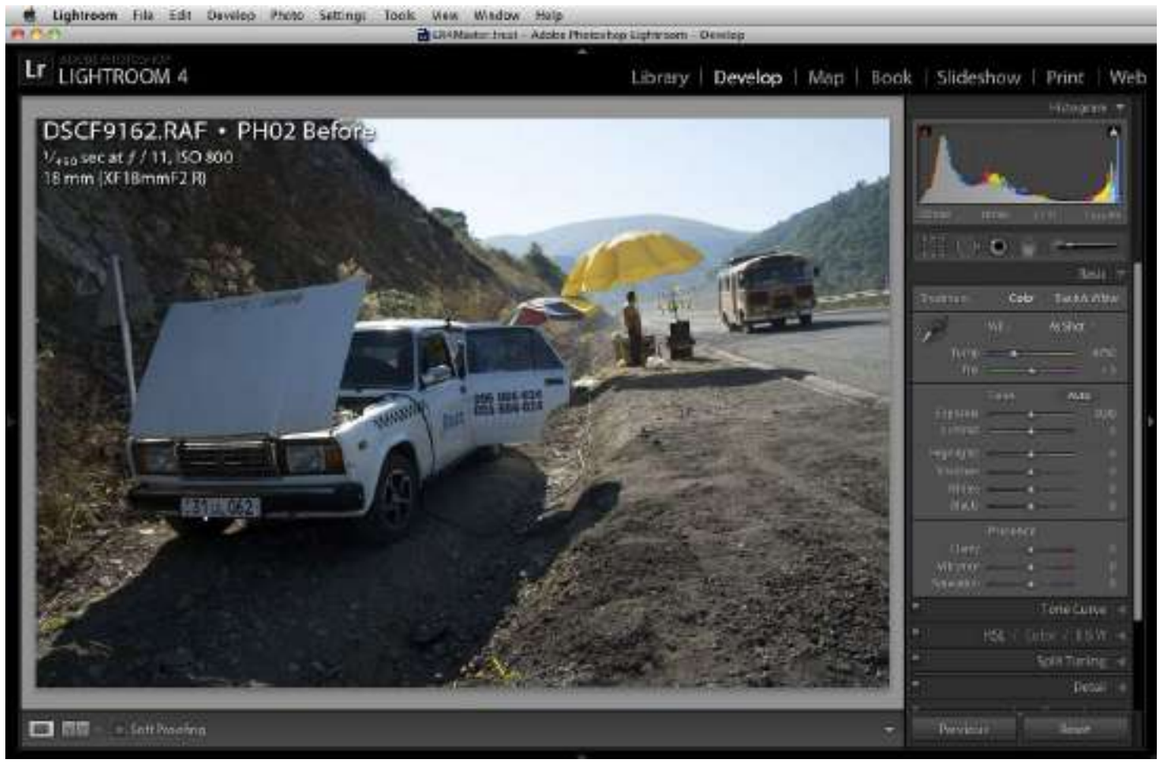
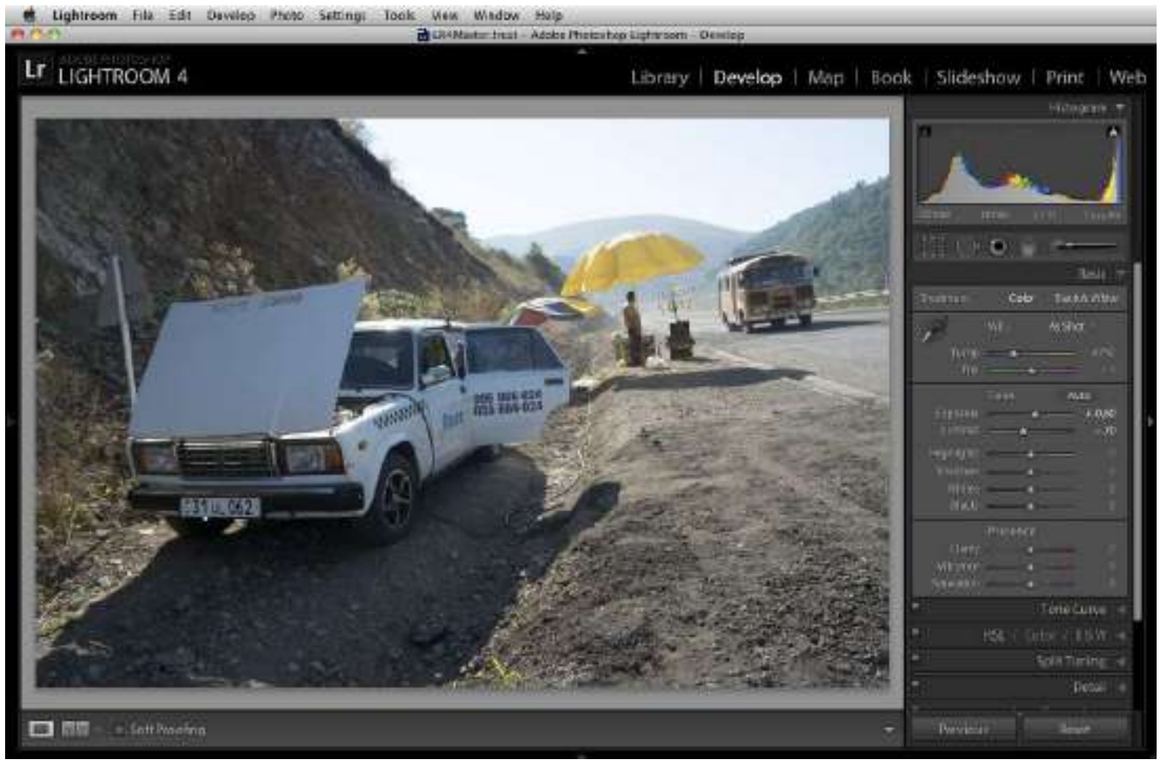
LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS IN THE BASIC PANEL

1) I always inspect the histogram first and quickly press the J-key, which shows me clipped highlights and shadows (and therefore potential problem areas). Histograms like the one for this image allow for lots of post-processing freedom.



2) The recommended workflow in Lightroom 4 is to work the Basic panel top-down. I started by increasing Exposure to set the correct (or at least what I deemed to be correct given the mood I was after) exposure for the midtones and decreased the Contrast.



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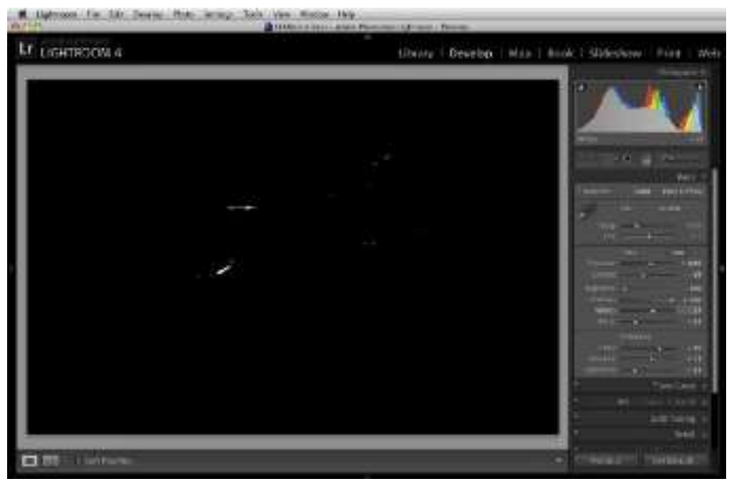
3) These changes had caused the sky to become almost blown out, so I decreased the Highlights slider to -100 as I did not want the viewer's eye to be dragged to an uninteresting bright patch of sky and increased Shadows to +100. The latter move made for the 'eerie' look I was after, but also caused the shadow of the taxi to look unrealistically HDR-ish, something that I would have to deal with locally later on.

4) Next, I set the black & white point by dragging the respective sliders. Holding down the Alt/Option key gave me a preview of the areas that would get clipped to pure black or white respectively.



Holding down the Alt/Option key while dragging the Whites and Blacks sliders gives a preview of which area will clip to white or black.

5) Next up was the Presence section (5). I like to think of this section as the 'moody section', as its sliders help to determine the mood of the image. I increased Clarity to underline the barren environment (Lightroom 3 updaters: be aware that PV2012 Clarity is like PV2010 Clarity on steroids, without the unwanted side-effects). As Clarity is basically a special kind of contrast enhancement, it also helps the backlighting stand out more, increasing the texture of the foreground.

Creatively, I often use a combination of decreased Saturation and Increased Vibrance to make the colours of an image look muted and washed-out.

6) I skipped the Tone Curve and went straight on to HSL, one of my favourite panels as it allows for local control over the Hue (the actual colour), the Saturation and the Luminance or brightness of that colour. I specifically targeted the blues, which I made more green and the yellows, the saturation of which I increased quite drastically. Our eyes are drawn to saturated colours over unsaturated ones, so this helped drawing the eye to the umbrella and the corn.

7) I added a mainly warm Split Toning effect with a strong warm bias towards the Highlights and a less pronounced cool effect in the Shadows. If I had simply wanted to warm the image overall, I could also have tweaked the White Balance in the Basic panel but the Split Toning panel allows for separate control over Shadows and Highlights.

8) I was OK with the default Sharpening (by default, Lightroom sharpens a Raw file with an Amount of 25; JPGs have a default of 0, as they have already been sharpened in the camera) and moved to the Effects panel where I added a slight vignette. I made sure to slide the Highlights slider all the way up to + 100, to prevent the vignette from making the top right corner (with the sky) too muddy. This limited the effect of the vignette to the foreground corners.

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9) I used a brush set to negative Shadows to darken the shadows in front of the car back down again. The global Shadows increase in the Basic panel had made that particular area look too HDR-ish and unnatural. If you need a specific effect on most of your image, but not in a small part, it's often quicker to add it globally and then paint it away locally, using a brush set to a negative amount of the same effect. I do this quite often with Clarity.

10) I cropped the image in a 16/9 aspect ratio and straightened it, because in retrospect, I did not like the 'Dutch angle' I had put in it during capture. This had the added benefit of tightening the crop; the widescreen crop enhanced the cinematic feel of the scene. I often experiment with alternative crops using Virtual Copies. As to when you should crop, it depends: if you're really sure you want only one specific crop, it's best to do so at the beginning of your post-processing, because you'll have the most accurate histogram to work with (the histogram is tied to the crop). However, if you want to use different crops for different purposes (a 2:1 crop for use as a spread in a square photobook, a 2:3 crop for your website, etc.) then obviously, it's best to postpone the cropping until the end.

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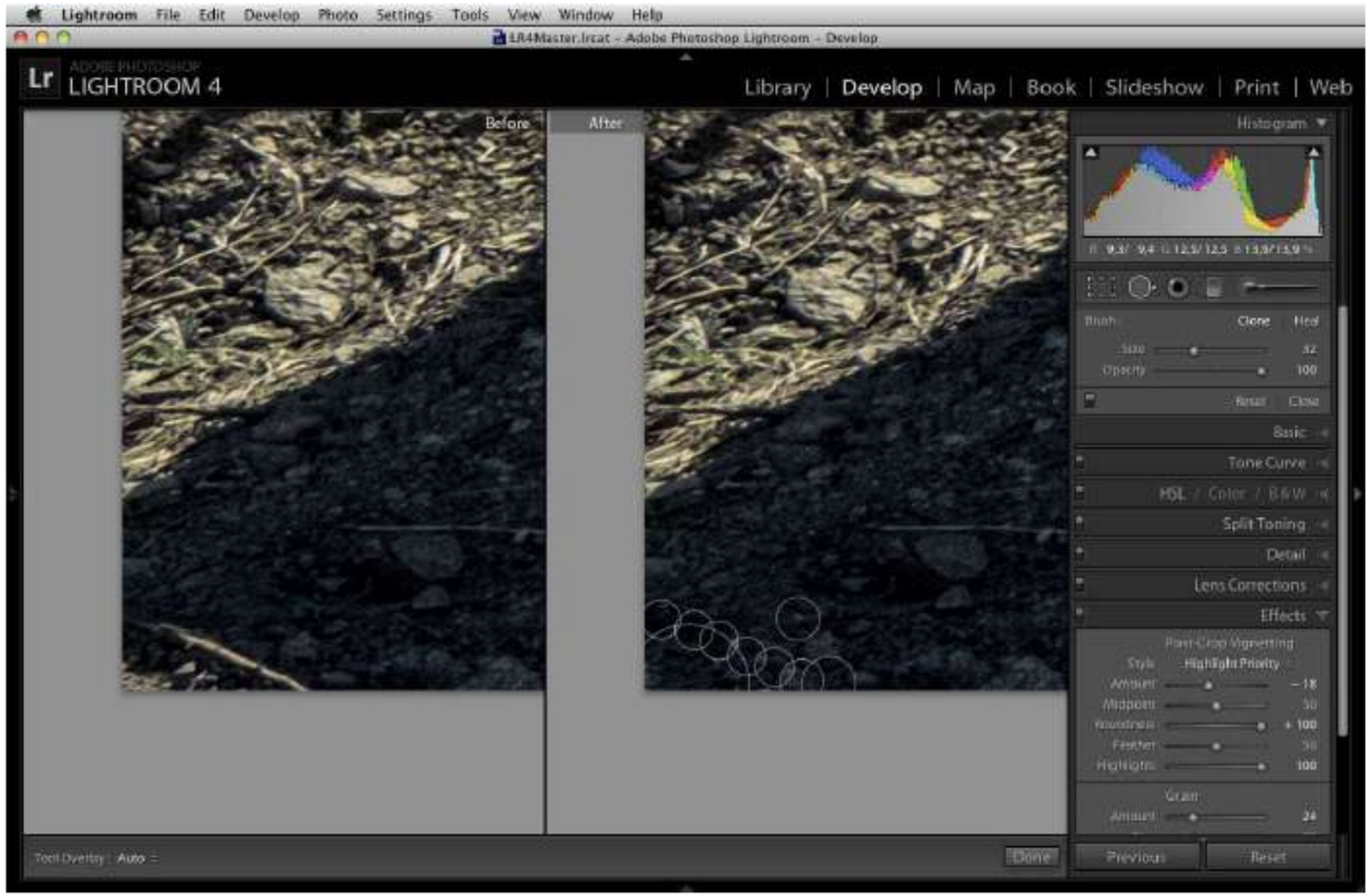
11) The crop pointed my attention to a little bright twig in the bottom left. As it was distracting, I took it out with a couple of overlapping uses of the Spot Removal tool (Short-cut: Q). It would probably have been faster and better to use Photoshop's Spot Healing Brush on a long and thin problem area like this, but this approach kept everything nicely and non-destructively on a raw level.



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WHY RESOLUTION MATTERS, BUT DOESN'T MATTER

As megapixel counts gradually increase, I've watched with great interest the discussion on why we do - and don't - need more megapixels. I have no intention of defending low or high megapixel cameras here, but we've seen a lot of changes over the last ten years or so. The Nikon D800 has obviously proved that the megapixel race is far from over, so let's think about whether or not resolution really does matter.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Although digital SLR cameras started appearing around 1994, the first usable, and relatively affordable consumer DSLRs from Nikon and Canon released a few years after that created images of just 2.6 and 3 megapixels, respectively. Kodak previously produced a 6.2MP camera, and was a forerunner in digital photography. It's surprising that Kodak failed to pursue digital with its initial vigor; we all know how that story recently ended.

WHY RESOLUTION MATTERS, BUT DOESN'T MATTER

One of my best-selling images was created with the 3MP Canon EOS D30, with the resulting image is so small that it doesn't even meet the minimum size requirements to be used in this publication, and cannot be uploaded to stock photography sites because it's too small for anyone to realistically license and use. It's still a relatively popular photo, and with a bit of coaxing I can just about print it at 13x19" with a large border. I've sold more copies of that print than any other photo in my archives, so go figure.

When you go back and look at the early reviews for cameras like the Nikon D1 and Canon D30, users were blown away by the quality of the images, and with good reason: this stuff was revolutionary! But what happened? If these cameras were so great, why did we have to keep on pushing the megapixels up and up? Obviously, an increase in computer display resolution and sizes meant that our images gradually became smaller in relation to screen size. As inkjet printer technology improved, we started to print at home, and our lower-resolution images soon became inadequate.

WHAT IT TAKES

To make a reasonably sharp print, you need at least 150ppi (pixels per inch), although 300ppi is really optimal for a quality print. My first popular D30 image can only be printed at 110ppi at 13x19" and only reaches 300ppi when printed at 5x7"; this barely passes as a snapshot to be passed around at family gatherings.

WHY RESOLUTION MATTERS, BUT DOESN'T MATTER

As digital photography became more widespread, the photographer's desire to "complete" drove photo-grade printer development; we started to see printers that could create up to 13x19" prints become popular in the early 2000's, and the quality really started to kick in by the middle of the decade.

The 12.7 megapixel Canon EOS 5D was released in 2005, and this took us to a respectable 240ppi at 13x19". I began to feel as though we were then able to print with the quality that would make photographers happy. It was only after we reached 21 megapixels with the 5D Mark II (or similar) that we were able to print native 300ppi at 13x19".

THE REALIZATION

When the 21 megapixel 5D Mark II was released, many people smirked that no one would ever need that kind of resolution. I recall recommending that people might want to try it before they condemn it, and invariably they came back with a "wow!" after their inevitable upgrade.

WHY RESOLUTION MATTERS, BUT DOESN'T MATTER

Many people talk at great length on how it's not about the resolution, but the maniacal clambering for the 36 megapixel Nikon D800 tells a very different story about photographers' desire for megapixels. Once you can have that level of detail in your photos - without losing dynamic range or restrictively poor high ISO performance - it's very hard to resist, and difficult to deny the benefits.

Admittedly the files are larger and require more computer power, but Moore's Law has already pretty much taken care of that aspect. Not only does this kind of resolution give you the ability to crop when necessary, you can now print so much larger without the need to take any extra steps to ensure your prints look great. People are finding, however, that they have to brush up their technique to get sharp shots at this resolution, but that will just make us better photographers, right?

So, does this mean that we all need to run out and buy a D800? Of course not, but let's just be OK with that. I find that the collective fervent defense of megapixel counts comes from our desire to love what we have: we paid good money for our gear, and few people have the financial freedom to buy every new camera that comes onto the market. Here's why that's OK.

WHY IT DOESN'T MATTER

I've previously talked about the kind of resolution we need to print at 300ppi or higher for great photo-realistic results, there are a few reasons why this is not a hard and fast rule. Firstly, it's all relative.

WHY RESOLUTION MATTERS, BUT DOESN'T MATTER

I licensed two images to be printed as a mural on a company's cafeteria wall, which was more than five meters wide. When the company first approached me, they wanted to license images that were made with my old Canon 5D. When I told them the images were only 12 megapixels, their printer said that this would not be enough resolution to get acceptable sharpness in the image at this size. Luckily, the client wanted to buy my work and not just some pretty flower photos, so they worked with me to find some alternative images made with my 5D Mark II at 21 megapixels, so I was still able to pay my rent that month.

Just think about that though . . . we already know that even the 5D Mark II will only print at 13x19" at 300ppi, so why was it OK to slap that image on a wall over five meters wide? Because it's designed to be enjoyed at a reasonable viewing distance. It's only photographers who walk up to large prints and inspect them from six inches away, a distance that obviously doesn't allow you to enjoy the entire image.

EMBIGGENING

Secondly, my image would have undergone some form of embiggenning (I love that word!) or res'ing-up. I recently did a test with a photograph of the Beagle Channel in Argentina. The image was shot with a 16MP camera, and then cropped to form a 1:2 aspect panorama photograph at 10.5 megapixels.

WHY RESOLUTION MATTERS, BUT DOESN'T MATTER

I wanted to print the image at 24x48" and the native resolution with the border I intended to use was 113ppi (we're back to the same pixels per inch as my first D30 photo when printed at 13x19"!). My test was to see if I could print direct from Adobe Lightroom with the sharpening on high. Lightroom usually does a great job of res'ing-up images on the fly, but having seen the first few inches coming out of the printer, I stopped the print job; it was way too soft for my liking. It would have looked OK from a normal viewing distance, but not great.

I opened the image in onOne Software's Perfect Resize, which used to be called Genuine Fractals. This is very similar software to Blow Up 3 from Alien Skin Software; both do a great job. You pretty much just type in the size to which you want to enlarge the image, specify the pixels per inch (which I usually set to 300), and then apply the changes. As a print this size needs a little extra help, I then used Nik Software's Sharpener Pro Output Sharpener, and I set the Sharpening Strength to 80% so as not to overdo it. Lastly, I masked out the effect of the sharpening from areas like the sky, which should be just smooth gradients anyway.

As you can see in the cropped image of a small portion of the larger panorama, the result is somewhat pixelated over the water and around the lighthouse and boat, and almost appears to be over-sharpened in some areas; however, when you print it, it looks absolutely beautiful. I have to admit that until I saw this image at 24x48", I hadn't even realized that there was a boat in the channel (next to the lighthouse).

Although there will be times when what we thought of five years ago as enough resolution may be too small in some extreme cases, but unless you have a requirement to print at five meters wide, even files of 10 to 12 megapixels have a lot of wiggle room when it comes to printing relatively large.

FUTURE PROOFING

Things progress, and we can and will continue to use our images in many different ways. I personally will take as much resolution as I can get, so as to future-proof my work for what will undoubtedly come in just a few short years. But I will not let that desire to future-proof chew me up inside. I am lucky enough to now own a 1D X camera for my wildlife work. This camera has only 18 megapixels, which is quite small compared to the 5D Mark III and the D800, but it's a trade-off.

When I reach for the 1D X , I have no complaints about resolution because this camera has a blazing frame rate that enables me to capture wing positions in flying birds that can difficult to capture otherwise. I don't worry that I only have half the resolution of the D800, because it's a clear case of horses for courses.

If you don't shoot sports or wildlife, or print extremely large images, all of this is moot; stop fretting, and get out and make some great photos with the megapixels available, however many - or few - that may be.

Martin Bailey is a British-born, Tokyo-based, art and assignment photographer who is passionate about creating images that evoke emotions, and helping others to do the same. He is an X-Rite Coloratti member, runs photography workshops and releases a weekly photography Podcast, along with a photography centric blog and forum. Learn more about Martin on his website:

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EXPOSURE AND METERING MODES

This image shows a balanced exposure with the exposure level indicator in the middle (at zero).

Proper exposure is a key ingredient to a successful photograph, but how do you determine the correct exposure for any given scene? This is something that may vary from person to person, and also can change depending on where the light is coming from in your photograph. Not many of us can look at every scene and know which aperture and shutter speed settings we need to use, so we often have to rely on our camera to help us with that information and get us to a good starting point.

In order to gain a deeper understating of finding this proper exposure, you first need to understand your camera. More specifically, knowing how to use the camera's internal meter to give you a reading of a balanced exposure is the first place to start. The meter can be found on the bottom or side of your scene when looking through your viewfinder, on the LCD panel, or on the LCD monitor on the back of your camera (Figure 1). This meter shows you when the exposure, as the camera sees the scene, is balanced, overexposed, or underexposed. You can achieve a balanced exposure by adjusting your shutter, aperture, or ISO, or a combination of these. Yet even if you take full control over your exposure settings (such as by using manual mode), you are still relying on this meter to give you information about the exposure of your scene.

EXPOSURE AND METERING MODES

Overall, the meter in the camera has one job: to let you know what a balanced exposure is, depending on where it's pointing. For a camera, a "balanced" exposure is equal to 18% gray; in other words the camera looks at a scene and decides where the center dot on the meter needs to sit to achieve gray tones for that particular spot. Most of the time the meter does a pretty good job and your scene looks perfect. However, when the meter reads pure white, it wants to underexpose the scene to make it gray, and with a black scene it wants to overexpose to make the black gray. Because of this tendency to want to balance your scene with gray tones, you can end up underexposing scenes filled with white (such as a snowman with in a field of snow) or overexpose a scene filled with black (such as a woman wearing a black dress on a black background). Theoretically you could photograph a black wall and a white wall with a "balanced" exposure and end up with two identically exposed photographs.

The key to getting around this tendency towards gray, assuming you're not in Manual mode and making these decisions yourself, is to use the exposure compensation feature on your camera to "trick" the meter into either under- or overexposing your image. This feature is the best way to take control over your meter and is typically only applicable to photographers using one of the auto modes, such as aperture or shutter priority. Here's how it works: you know your camera is telling you that a "balanced" exposure is actually quite overexposed for your scene, and that it needs to be reduced by at least one stop of exposure to achieve the look you want. So, you dial the exposure compensation meter to -1, and now your camera thinks that the -1 setting is the "balanced" exposure it's looking for. It then shifts its meter to compensate for that setting.

When I photographed this the sunset at Angkor Wat, I wanted to expose for the sky but my camera meter wanted to overexpose it to achieve a "balanced" overall exposure. To correct it I used exposure compensation to dial the meter down by one full stop (-1 EV).

Canon 5D Mark III, 40mm lens, 1/45 sec at f/8, ISO 100

EXPOSURE AND METERING MODES

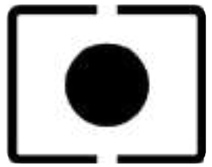
Let's review metering modes and how to use the settings on your camera to properly meter your scene. The metering mode in your camera determines how much the frame the meter takes the exposure reading from, and ranges from exposing only a small portion in your scene to an average exposure of the entire image.

I used spot metering to expose only for the bright light above the surgeon's hands. While the entire room was actually quite well lit, the bright light from the lamp was being overexposed when I tried to use a balanced exposure for the entire scene. To make this image work I chose to only expose for the bright light, which gave the rest of the image the illusion of being darkened.

Nikon D200, 50mm lens, 1/640 sec at f/2.8, ISO 100.

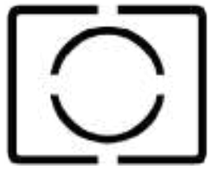
EXPOSURE AND METERING MODES

Here are some of the metering modes found in many cameras:



SPOT METERING:

With spot metering, the camera uses only a single spot within the frame, around 1-2% of it, and pulls the exposure from that spot. This type of metering mode is good when you want to highlight a small portion of your image, which is much brighter than the surrounding area, or to expose for a specific area of the image, like a models face.



PARTIAL METERING:

This mode is similar to spot metering, but will use a little bit more of the surrounding area (around 6-7%) over the location you meter your scene.

CENTER WEIGHTED METERING:

With center weighted metering, the meter weighs most of the exposure from the center and then averages it with the rest of your scene.

EVALUATIVE METERING:

This is more of an “automatic” mode for metering; the camera will determine the proper exposure for your image.

I photographed this scene using the Evaluative Metering mode on my camera.

Canon 5D Mark III, Canon TS-E 24mm lens, 0.7 sec at f/16, ISO 20.

EXPOSURE AND METERING MODES

Since many cameras do the majority of their metering from the center of the viewfinder, you may need to make some adjustments in order to properly meter and compose your image. For example, if you want to use spot metering to expose for a particular area of your frame, but compose the frame so it's off-center, then you'll need to lock the exposure with the AE lock function on your camera. This button will usually appear as an asterisk button near the LCD display, typically by your thumb on the back of the camera (Figure 5). Here's how to use the AE lock feature:

1. First, position your camera so that the area you want to meter is in the middle of the frame.

2. Then, half-press the shutter to activate the meter and get an exposure reading.

3. Now, press the AE lock button.

4. Then, recompose your frame and fully press the shutter button to take the photo. The exposure should be balanced for the area you exposed for in step one.

The AE lock button on the back of your camera allows you to lock your exposure for a particular portion of your frame.

EXPOSURE AND METERING MODES

There are also other button options on your camera if you want to fully control the exposure of your images, and some cameras even allow you to customize the buttons surrounding the LCD panel on your camera. For example, by default the shutter button controls both focusing and the activation of the meter. This is great if you want your focus and meter to always be in the same spot, but there may be times when you want to focus on one thing and meter on another. So, to change this you can go into the custom menu in your camera and set the shutter to measure exposure and the AF-ON button to activate your focus Depending on your camera, there are several other options for customization, so I encourage you to read your user's manual to find out what possibilities exist with your choice of camera.

Exposing your scene properly in camera is an essential skill for all photographers to strive for. While we have wonderful post-processing tools at our fingertips, it should always be your goal to get it as close to perfect from the start to save time and to enhance the overall quality of your work. A well-exposed digital file will always give you the most amount of room in development, resulting in lower noise and less artifacting and, therefore, stronger photographs.

Nicole S. Young is a full-time photographer and author currently living in Seattle, Washington. She specializes in food and stock photography and licenses her images through iStockphoto and Getty Images.

Nicole is an accredited Adobe Certified Expert (ACE) in Photoshop CS5 and is a "Help Desk Specialist" with the National Association of Photoshop Professionals. She is author of the books Canon 7D: From Snapshots to Great Shots, EOS Canon 60D: From Snapshots to Great Shots and Food Photography: From Snapshots to Great Shots published by Peachpit Press, along with eBooks published through Craft&Vision. You can find out more about Nicole on her blog at nicolesyblog.com.

FUJIFILM X-PRO 1

As photographers, we often let our egos get in the way of gear decisions; we all want the respect and adoration of our subjects and clients. We shoot because we want to make great photographs, but we also love and covet the positive reactions and respect of our audience. It makes us feel like professionals and strokes our egos when we walk into a room with a camera system that cost more than most people's cars. It's hard to ignore, but we have to set our egos aside when assessing new gear; the Fuji X-Pro 1 has shaken my safe little "professional" tree in a hard way.

I ordered my X-Pro 1 the day Fuji made the sales announcement because I wanted a simple camera to carry with me all the time to document my life. I was a bit frustrated with its quirks at first, but once I figured my way around the camera it became a real joy to shoot, so much so that it literally doesn't leave my side and I now own two of them. The number of my personal vacation and family shots started to soar and I love having it around.

One day I decided to compare the files I was getting to those of my "pro gear" and I was astounded; the quality of the file tore a strip off of my Nikon D3s in sharpness and dynamic range while matching it in feel, low light, and workability. I was shocked because up until that point I had only thought of the X-Pro 1 as my personal point-and-shoot with a decent file size.

The quality of the file got me thinking, and I recently shot a wedding with just the X-

FUJIFILM X-PRO 1

Pro 1 bodies and the three prime lenses they have launched so far. Here's where my ego started to get in the way. It really is a cute camera with its little lenses, SD cards, small size, and nearly silent shutter. I'm a big guy and it kind of disappears in my hands and looks like a toy when I'm shooting it. I began to get really self-conscious while shooting the wedding, thinking I didn't look very professional. In my head, I could hear the crowd questioning my qualifications and wondering where the bride and groom found me and why they chose to go with an amateur photographer. It didn't help that the groom was the manager of the local camera store and there were other pros there with Nikon D4's and Canon 1DX's.

It seemed like I was out-manned and out-gunned the whole day, but I sucked it up and kept on shooting. Although it didn't focus as fast as my D3s, the results were fantastic. I still delivered the same quality of storytelling images to my bride and groom that I normally would have with one small difference: the facial expressions of my audience felt consistently more relaxed and real. I finally figured out that it was because they were not intimidated by my little "toy" camera like they were my huge DSLR rig. It was an obvious and pleasant surprise.

After my wedding success, I took the two bodies and all my other pro gear on a month-long excursion to the Arctic Circle in Canada. It was here that I started to really fall in love with this camera and begin a love-hate relationship with my pro

FUJIFILM X-PRO 1

gear. The two X-Pro 1's sat on my passenger seat and were so easy to grab and use that they were the first cameras I reached for on the whole trip. I shot 90% of my photographs with the X-Pro 1's, including an evening of photographing the northern lights for almost four hours. My natural tendency would have been to reach for my "real gear" because I knew I could trust my D3s files, but I now had the same confidence in the X-Pro 1 files after my post-wedding experiment. I have since been shooting magazine and studio assignments with the X-Pro 1.

The build quality of the X-Pro 1 and its lenses is fantastic and the optical cyborg viewfinder blows me away. Its jpg engine is probably the best I have come across, and its size goes beyond portable compared to DSLR gear. The lens mounted aperture dial is a nice throwback, while the metal shutter speed and exposure compensation dials feel fantastic. They are all really easy to find while working with the camera. Fuji's new 16 megapixel APS-C X-Trans CMOS sensor produces photographs that are spectacularly sharp with great dynamic range. The Q menu and the Fn button make it easy to get to your most-used settings quickly and efficiently and there is no noticeable shutter lag. Once you get used to this camera, it just plain gets out of your way and lets you focus on making photographs.

The TTL contrast auto focus is a bit slow and hunts a little in low light, but the new firmware seems to have increased its speed. I would suggest ignoring the fact that it has continuous focus on it because it's pretty much useless in the long run compared to the DSLR's on the market. The frame rate and SD card write speeds are a bit slow, so I wouldn't plan on using it to shoot hockey or fast-moving sports subjects.

In terms of 35mm equivalency, there is a 1.5 times multiplier factor for the lenses, so the 18mm is more like a 27mm, the 35mm like a 52mm and the 60mm is closer to 90mm. I can usually tell the difference between a crop-sensor and my full-frame gear just by the look of the photo, but honestly, the X-Trans sensor with this lens combo and extremely short flange distance (the distance from the sensor to the back of the lens) gives me the same feel as my full-frame lenses, including depth of field.

Just like any camera on the market, the Fuji X-Pro 1 is not the camera for everyone. If you are shooting sports or fast-moving objects, give this camera a pass and grab a DSLR with killer autofocus speeds and massive frames per second. I would also pass on it if you can't handle the ego-crunching power of a small camera form factor that seems more like a tourist camera than a pro-looking rig.

On the other hand, if you want a small camera system that costs one-third of what your pro gear does, packs into a bag an eighth of the size, delivers equally incredible files, and can do 90% of your jobs, this is the camera for you. The X-Pro 1 has made me rethink what "pro gear" really is. At the end of the day, it's not about how your gear makes you look, it's about how your gear makes your vision and photographs come to life. In my book, the X-Pro 1 can and should be thought of as a pro-level camera. I can even see myself ditching my DSLR gear and using a combo of medium format cameras and the X-Pro system.

INFORMATION:

Fuji X-Pro 1 Body - $1399.95
Fuji 18mm f/2.0 - $599.00
Fuji 35mm f/1.4 – 599.00
Fuji 60mm Macro f/2.4 - $649
More information on Fujifilm.com

Al Smith is a professional photographer and entrepreneur based out of Victoria, Canada. Al's creative and charismatic nature, mixed with his ability to motivate, encourage, and cultivate people, have made him an expert at building relationships with his clients and building companies. Al shoots images for editorial and commercial content. He uniquely understands how to mix creativity with business goals to create stunning images that produce results. Learn more at alsmith.com

FALL IN

The noise from the seat behind me was eardrum rupturing. High-pitched screaming. Kicking. Writhing. Bouncing. Smashing. Knocking. Arms flailing as if they were snakes escaping from Medusa's head. No words. At least nothing comprehensible. I even sensed some flying mucous and saliva raining down on the back of my neck. It would have been the plane ride from hell, if I were on a plane. No, I was in a crisis of my own creation: a momentary lapse of adult sanity in order to push the limits of human existence. The 35 inch wheels of my FJ spun in sequential rotation up I-90 from Seattle, exceeding "suggested" limits as usual. We were looking for an unmarked fire road that contained, what we were told, was the best vine and big leaf maple of the season.

The monster in the back was my three-year-old daughter, Jade. Like an escaped con discovered and caught by marshals, she was having nothing to do with our aforementioned idea. She wanted out of the zebra print car seat and demanded . . . well, she didn't really know what her demands were at this point. But I should have known better at this point; this girl needed a nap. The kind you get in a crib. Behind bars. Once again.

As the truck motored on to higher altitudes with fellow passengers both ignoring the seemingly hour-long tirade of the escaped con, the wipers pulled the loading windshield free of water. All I had to do was steer hard right or left to end the pain. Alcohol could fix this. Recreational drug use could fix this. None seemed appropriate. It wasn't death that scared me. It wasn't jail either. It was the ramifications of Heather, my tyrannosaurus-daughter's mother. That is what any father/husband fears: the wrath of mom. Breaking the law is fine. Breaking the kid is a slow-roasting death over a mildly warm bed of coals that feel warm and fuzzy at first, but whose pain continually builds like a Trinidad Moruga Scorpion chile pepper (proclaimed the hottest pepper in the world). Death would be, in fact, the easy way out. We left the pavement and hit the dirt road.

All of a sudden there was quiet, with the exception of the building rain, the truck intentionally bouncing through monster pothole after monster pothole with muddy water flying everywhere, and the roar of the low-gear high RPMs. The off switch must have flipped with the turn to dirt. No one spoke. We reveled in the tranquility of a sleeping child. Serenity was now ours. She was a pistol. An attitude.

FALL IN

A confident little machine that already knew what she wanted at age three. The propositions of the future were bright on her, but scary on me, her father. She had an attitude - and to this day still does - that would take down that Scorpion Pepper. This is where things get interesting.

As an adventure photographer, I shoot powerful athletes dropping off gigantic cliffs, riding bikes down terrain that would scare a mountain goat, and caressing disaster at any given moment. I step back and watch in amazement that a human cannot only control these types of situations, but that they can perform in them. It is easy for me to create images of this. Lift camera to eye and press buttons as fast as I can and then see what works. Portraits? Those things are for the studio with flashy things and white paper and stuff like that. Right? If you aren't at risk of seriously injuring yourself or dying, "you ain't tryin". Most of the time. This is probably why I didn't have many images of my daughter to date. I was going to realize that it was something much different. And my take and look at photography was about to launch farther than I had ever thought possible.

We drove up, deeper and deeper into the Cascades. Colours were beginning to pop. The forest was alive. Then we reached the chain. The hand-written sign, that looked like kid-type, said "ROAD GONE AHEAD PARK AND WALK"; I guessed this was the end of the line. What about the back seat monster? Pleasantly sleeping. Peaceful. Demon-less. Beautiful in her slumber. "Do we wake her?" And with the turn of its head, consciousness began to come back over it. "Quick, taze it again." With a deep breath there was a hint of a smile. And a look. "Dadda, are we here?" "Yes, sweetie." "Can we hike now?" "Yes." Monster gone. We walked up the road and discovered tree after tree in striking yellow and red hues, and image after image, I watched a scene begin to unfold.

Jade picked up leaf after leaf, looking and looking for what she would eventually deem the biggest set of leaves she had ever seen in her life. "I'm takin' these home to Momma, since she not here." Done. "Dadda, look, leaves are bigger than face." As I turned I saw the scene. I saw the tyrannosaur. The confidence. The attitude that I had learned to love over the past three years. Cocky. Don't mess with me. I am gonna give you gray hair and high blood pressure for eternity. There was not time to even set the camera. In that split second I realized what the key to any great portrait was: capturing your subject's soul. I quickly pulled my Canon 1D Mark III set to ISO 200 at a 1/60th of a second with a 70-200 f2.8 IS USM lens set at 173mms to up to my eye and . . . CLICK!

Jay Goodrich is an internationally-published photographer and writer. He has essentially written and re-written the same bio for himself for close to 15 years and still hates doing it. When he is not busy giving himself a pat on the proverbial back, he is traveling the world, or riding on dirt and snow. Things that make him happiest are his wife, kids, and really expensive tequila. His work can be seen at www.jaygoodrich.com and his blog can be read at www.jaygoodrich-blog.com

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