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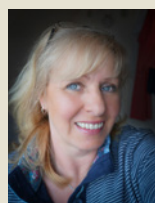
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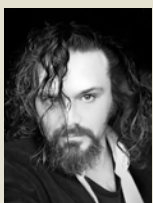
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Sigma 35mm f1.4 mirrorless design cuts size and weight, boosts quality



ON YOUR LEFT the Sigma DG 35mm f1.4 based on DSLR design adapted for mirrorless (shown in L-mount for the Leica/Panasonic/Sigma system). On your right the new DG DN variant gains two initials along with an on-lens aperture ring in third stop settings with optional de-click for movie work. These are precisely matched scale photos and probably tell you all you need to know – it's just a much neater glass for full frame mirrorless bodies. If you are

watching the Sigma range expect to see the same process applied to other focal lengths. The Sigma 35mm f1.2 DG DN ART in the same mounts takes 82mm filters rather than the friendly 67mm used by both these, and weighs over a kilo, the new f1.4 is only 645g, 110g lighter than the DG. Don't forget there also the 35mm f2 Contemporary, at just 325g taking 58mm filters. Have we ever had so much choice?

<https://www.sigma-imaging.uk.com>

Olympus 8-25mm f4 beats the bulge and goes wide to standard

THE 'PRO' LABEL on the new Olympus M. Zuiko Digital 8-25mm f4 tells you all you need to know if you've been torn between a 9-18mm f4-5.6 Zuiko, the Panasonic-Leica Vario Elmarit 8-18mm f2.8-4, Panasonic 7-14mm f4, or the Zuiko Pro series 7-14mm f2.8. If you want all the functions of the later series OM-D bodies like Pro Capture and very fast sequence shooting only the Pro labelled lenses offer this, and the only properly wide angle option was the relatively large and heavy 7-14mm. It has been popular enough for several special filter system adaptors to appear, because its curved front element and built in petal hood rule out regular ones. The budget Panasonic f4 also has a curved front element.

Now the 8-25mm f4 brings a filter-friendly (72mm) rectilinear zoom with a range equivalent to 16-50mm on full frame. It looks like the perfect choice for most MFT systems and do not need a 114° coverage.

<https://www.olympus.co.uk>



Below: why the 8-25mm wins – the 7-14mm's front.



A shoulder pouch ideal for mirrorless and compact systems from Peak Design



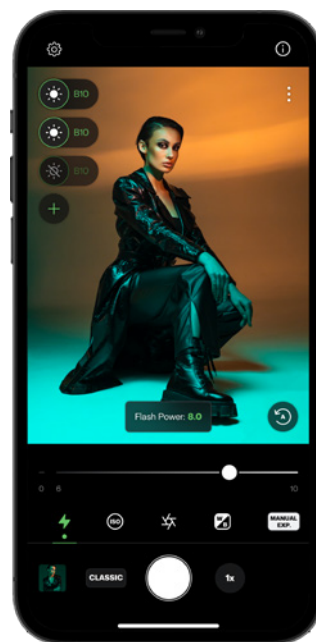
V2 FIELD POUCH from Peak Design is a versatile and expandable roll-top pouch with multiple carry options. It can be a solo daybag for essential carry, or a wing-bag (*new term to us!*), keeping smaller items organized within a larger bag. A unique hook-and-loop roll-top opening grants easy access and great expansion as it doubles in volume. Inside there is a thoughtful layout of stretch pockets and a zip pocket to keep cords, cards, batteries, keys, small lenses or camera bodies, organised and not jingling around. Included ultralight adjustable strap enables cross-body or shoulder carry, and integrated belt loops allow for waist carry. For a lightweight shooting setup, the Peak Design Capture Clip can be fitted either side to hold a camera outside the pouch and increase storage space for accessories. All fabrics are recycled and Bluesign approved,



including the soft internal felt liner and the 400D double poly-coated weatherproof nylon canvas shell. The pouch carries a lifetime guarantee. <https://www.transcontinenta.co.uk>

Profoto app transforms your smartphone camera

WITH PROFOTO CAMERA installed on an Apple or Android smartphone, professional photographers can use the full range of Profoto's flashes with the what they call the 'first professional smartphone camera'. With two modes smart and classic, the app adds a function to shoot in Profoto RAW format. Profoto AirX links the company's professional flash and smartphones. Profoto RAW enables files with 5–8 times more information than JPEG, leading to higher quality, significantly more details and. Classic mode allows you to either manually adjust exposure and flash settings or to use AirX Smart-TTL, the new automatic exposure algorithm. Smart mode lets you choose between a set of mart contrast and warmth effects with the swipe of a finger, enabling a seamless integration with the use of flash. The Profoto Camera app is out now in App Store and Google Play Store. Supports: iPhone 7 or later running iOS 14 or later; Samsung Galaxy S8



line, S9 line, S10 line, S21 line, Note 9 line running Android OS 8 or later. Supported Profoto products are C1, C1 Plus, A10, B10-series and Pro-11.

Dealer's Digest

How the vision of two men at the end of WWII set the standard for professional camera systems for the coming half-century – and into the future even now.



My story actually starts much much earlier, in fact in 1879 when Carl Koch opened his photographic studio in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, working as a portrait photographer whose love was landscapes

Fast forward to 1947 and Carl Hans Koch applies for a patent on a new camera whose name was an acronym of **S**tudio, **I**ndustrial, **N**ature, **A**rchitecture, **R**eproduction or in other words – Sinar.

The following year Sinar was founded.

The camera was designed from the start to use standardised parts with system building in mind. Now-famous models include the Norma, F and F2 (for Field), P and P2 (for perfection).

The system rapidly evolved with new products added on a regular basis. In 1951 a shutter was launched with integrated aperture control for the complete range of lenses. In 1984 the Sinar P2 was launched, a true masterpiece of precision engineering allowing an extreme range of movements.

Most of these cameras were 5 x 4" and a conversion kit could be used to take this to 10 x 8". As we now know the world of digital capture was creeping up. Although able to accept digital camera backs, the P2's geared movements were designed for these larger formats and not ideal. So in 2002 the smaller version of the P2 was launched.

The P3 suited the needs of digital photographers much better but it still kept to the principles of full compatibility with the Sinar system. In 2013, Sinar merged with Leica.

Taking a trip back to 1946 this time, in Sweden a certain Victor Hasselblad files a patent for a camera now known as the 1600F although the original concept name was Rossex. In 1948 prototypes and images appear, with the camera launched in October that year in New York.

What a pivotal and fantastic year for photographers that was! These two systems became the bedrock of equipment for social and industrial photographers for decades to come. It amazes me that both founders had the insight and imagination to design modular systems which they knew could adapt to a photographer's changing needs. Of course it made excellent business sense as well.

In 2021, over 70 years since the launch the 1600F, I am selling the latest Hasselblad digital backs



which attach directly to the V system transforming it into a powerful imaging tool fit for the 21st century.

I wonder what Victor would have thought of it?

I have been privileged to have been a Hasselblad dealer for many years and in 1991 I won the UK Hasselblad dealer of the year award. The prize was a week in Sweden as guests visiting the factory amongst other trips.

I had been to the factory before Göteborg before but never failed to be amazed at the contrast between the high tech machinery used to manufacture certain parts and the old school hands-on skill that individuals use in finishing this finest of cameras.

In fact only this week I purchased from one of my existing customers the most stunning Hasselblad 501CM complete, still boxed with not even the strap being fitted. A picture is shown here. It came in with a selection of lenses and a PME45 metered prism as well. I don't think it will take long to find it a new home but I do have another 503CXi outfit arriving next week if that happens!

Not only have I been adding to the Hasselblad inventory but I was recently kept busy buying what can only be described as a vast amount of Sinar camera equipment.

It filled my Freelander 2 to capacity with a selection of Sinar P2/P3 cameras and over 70 Sinaron digital lenses from 35mm upwards.

Also included were all types of bellows, multiple rails, frames, front and rear bearers, Sinar Modular Shutter M, and so much more. If you are looking for anything Sinar then please call me.

Both the Hasselblad and Sinar systems have so much in common, from the vision of their founders driven by a passion for quality to both utilising a modular design to meet the changing needs of the working photographer over many years. Although both were created in the age of film they were able to adapt and evolve and integrate when the market went to digital capture.



www.commercialcameras.co.uk

The Sinar system, top, has been able to adapt to all film and digital formats. Hasselblad's classic V system, left, includes the 50 megapixel back here which works with bodies over 60 years old.

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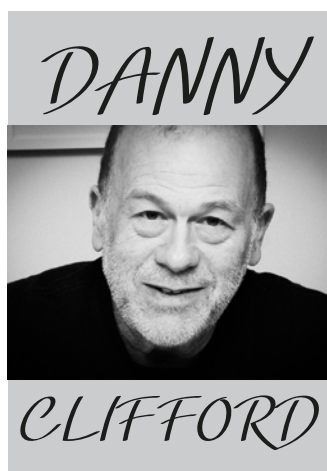
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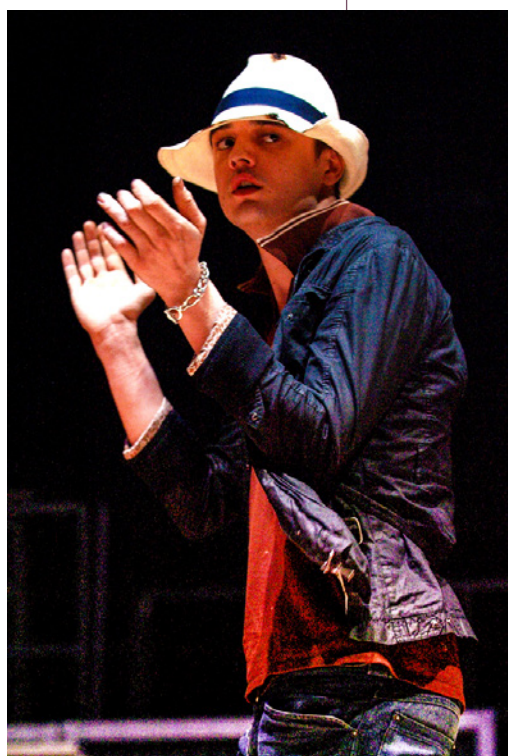
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Another average day... in the life of Doherty, MacGowan and me



Danny Clifford has a lifetime of music photography under his belt and is now a popular speaker inspiring new generations. See: <https://www.dannyclifford.com>



In 2005 I became acquainted with Peter Doherty. I was introduced to Peter by our mutual friend, Shane MacGowan. I was very busy with many bands at that time, but I quickly realised something special was occurring here. I started to hang around with Peter and the band. Almost from the beginning it was quite crazy.

On our way to meet Peter for the first time, Shane was passenger in my car as we drove through the

other. In the back seat we had another lovely guy, the Northern Irish singer Bap Kennedy.

I suggested to Shane that he serenade the North London commuters with some of his Pogues songs by singing through the megaphone. He agreed that it was a good idea and proceeded to do just that. It was early evening in March and still light. Many people recognised him and were clearly thrilled as we drove slowly through

going to perform. Up until that minute, I had no idea that they were going to perform at all!

The Streets were headlining and Peter (without his band, Babyshambles) was supporting. So tonight, the support was Shane, Peter, Bap and Alan Wass. Alan also had his model friend Emma Ford with him.

What we didn't know was that one of the headline band had a problem with Shane and made sure that there were no lights on his rapidly assembled band when they performed. That made my life complicated.

Later, when The Streets started their set, we watched from the side of the stage. There was a bit of aggression and noise directed towards us – or towards Shane to be precise. It was allegedly an alcohol thing. Shane has no problem with it as long as he has a pint of gin in each hand, but that's not an easy thing for anyone who's had to give it up to watch.

Maybe it was one of those things, I don't really know. All I do know is that I said let's go, and we did. We left the stage and headed out the back door into my car and off towards a pub.

I then spent about four years documenting Peter Doherty and his band Babyshambles, as well as his then girlfriend Kate Moss. That was quite a crazy four years! Note to self; I must write a Babyshambles book!



streets of North London. Shane was dressed in some old stylish vintage clothing along with a broken and collapsible top hat. He was in the front seat with a pint of gin in one hand and a megaphone in the

the rush hour traffic, towards Alexandra Palace, to meet Peter.

Once we arrived, we raced to the dressing room where Peter, Shane, Bap and Alan Wass quickly worked out what songs they were



The limits of our images are only constrained by what we can imagine

Iain K Poole is a semi-professional photographer specialising in cosplay and landscape, and has won many awards over the last few years and is a Master Craftsman of the Guild of Photographers. Iain is based in the seaside town of Hornsea in rural East Yorkshire. <https://www.iainpoole.com>

THE ART OF IMAGINING



As creatives we are constantly forced to push boundaries as we strive to stand out in a world where everyone is trying to be the next big household name.

As such we are always trying to create something which has never been seen before. This is even more difficult as I would say just about everything has been photographed in some way, with no doubt a crazy social media filter been applied to it. So how can we create impact when the whole world can capture the same

Iain created a pure fantasy from many elements above, but he's just as at home with pure landscapes, as below. Mixing the two can create a scene which is familiar but not real, like locations used as the basis for film CGI.



images we see every day – how do we stand apart?

Imagination. The American naturalist Henry David Thoreau sums this up beautifully ‘The World is but a canvas to the imagination’. What Thoreau means is we can take our dreams and bring them into the real world. This for me is so apt, as the tools we have at our fingertips as creatives allows us to create whole new vistas – we can make places which no other person can go and see, as they have been brought to life only through our actions.

Now this may seem straightforward but having the ability to see something that is not there takes a little patience. You must first see in your mind what you want to create while looking at the world around you, trying to envisage how this would fit into your art. Knowing when to press the shutter on a scene that most would walk away from can be tricky, but it can also be a lot of fun.

Sometimes this can be as quick as point and shoot, but if you can see the potential a image has this is all you need. As a creative I have an over-active imagination, with more than often ideas coming to me at the most random of times, but more than often when I’m inspired.

For me inspiration can come at any time, these days I find myself always looking at light, and how it interacts with either the surroundings or a subject.

A prime example for me was on a trip to Scotland and while driving on the shores of a very quiet Strachur Bay, while stopping for a spot of lunch at the Out of the Blue Bar-Bistro I chanced upon a scene which I knew I had to capture. With the wind blowing up the loch the water was very ‘meh’ but the clouds and the sun rays coupled with the hazy mountains in the distance made for a compelling scene, and right away I realised I had the start of something amazing.

Upon returning home I started to realise my vision. I had an image of Eilean Donan from late 2019 which was a more of a record shot, of the castle shooting south-east. I felt this would fit perfectly as the lighting was in the correct direction the north-west side of the



castle was in the shade. I took the image into photoshop and using a layer mask to cut out the castle from the background (hard brush and zoom right it to make it easy on yourself) , I positioned it on the horizon so it matched the other landmass. I flattened the layer, which then allowed me to create a copy; I mirror flipped and applied a motion blur to give the effect of water. Creating a mask and using a soft brush I then blended the layers together, which was easy as they are both very dark. Afterwards



again I flattened all current layers to a new layer which then allowed further work. I then moved into *Colour Efex Pro 4* by Nik Collections add some more tonality and punch to the image. Finally, I brought it back into *Photoshop* where I added a Levels adjustment layer. Saved and exported back to *Lightroom* for final level tweaks and some little final edits.

I look back and what I had created did not exist anywhere, and regardless of what it scored in any competitions I knew I created

a truly unique image as no-one knew what I had done to create the image. A few people thought they knew the location I had shot from... it is always fun to play and let them guess, but what I had allowed is my imagination to create a new location that people think they have been too, which for me is what I wanted to achieve.

So do not be afraid to push boundaries, be yourself, lose yourself in your imagination and have fun.



When conditions don't match your imagined result...

David Kilpatrick researched a location to catch the sunset and tide, but the clouds came in. Landscape Pro provides a 'fix' to create the previsualised shot.



Although I will work on raw conversions to the limit of tonal control without thinking it's cheating, I don't use sky replacement and enhancement programs. I've replaced skies 'manually' in the past just as once did in the darkroom by methods dating back 150 years to the days when blue-sensitive black and white emulsions didn't record tones or clouds in a normal exposure. Even Adobe now provides sky replacement, but the impetus for their innovation was pioneering software like Skylum *Luminar* and Anthropic's *Landscape Pro*.

Landscape Pro also offers tools for enhancing the rest of the scene, including selective adjustments for elements such as water, mountains, trees, rocks and even those stray people. It's actually a better program for the urban photographer, where buildings create a clean break with the sky and trees are a very different colour from architecture. It takes a lot of work to deal with my own local scenery where everything is just a different shade of green and skylines have a complex furry edge

THE ART OF
IMAGINING

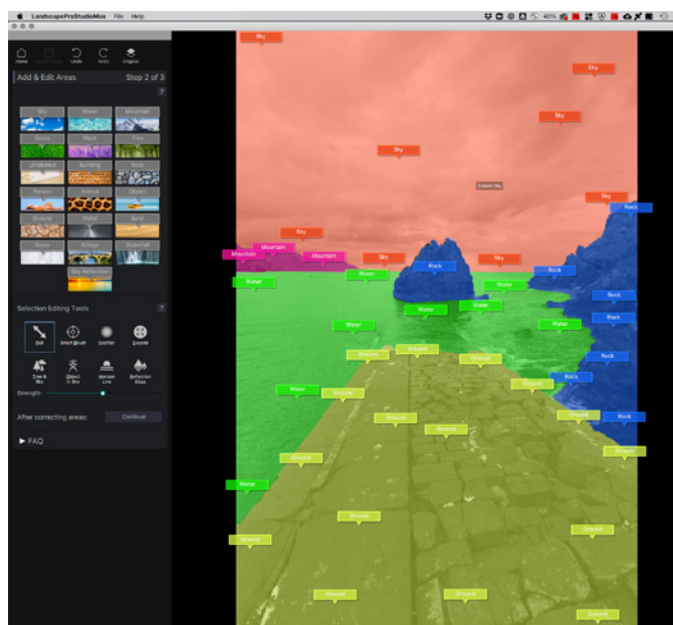
created by forests or moorland. It doesn't matter much which program or method you use for sky replacement, it's an uphill task if the skyline is blurred by your love of bokeh or just messed up by adverse light and slightly out of focus rendering with a bit of aberration.

If the skyline is clean and sufficiently distant, or benefits from something like a sea horizon, turning your 'failed' shot into something which might be accepted in a travel brochure is possible. Stock photographers have been combining shots to get the right sky ever since there was a demand for attractive images.

I visited the small bay called Pettico Wick (which I think is the rock itself) in St Abb's Head Nature Reserve on the Berwickshire coast. The stone boat jetty points almost at the rock, and the two align with the setting sun at different heights from mid-May to the end of July. The tide tables for St Abb's told me that the jetty rocks would not be in their ideal wet state with a receding tide until after dark, but weather conditions looked promising for a visit. You can see from the natural shot (no post-processing) that there is indeed a sunset behind the rock, but it's behind the clouds and without any real colour.

One a sky from the *Landscape Pro* built-in library looked pretty much exactly as the scene might have been. The water enhancement in the program (used as a plug-in to *Photoshop* and perfectly able to handle a 60 megapixel image) had an effect which would be difficult to achieve, though the effects on rocks and jetty would have been easy. So, the fantasy image came together, taking half an hour allowing for previewing many different levels of effect. It very much matches what I'd hoped to achieve, or the conditions I would have liked to have found.

The screen shot shows the different coloured multiple masks which *Landscape Pro* uses after you define the elements of the image. This state can not be saved and returned to – it's a process you must start and complete in one session. It can also be done stand-alone without *Photoshop*.



Landscape Pro mark-up in use, above. See: <https://www.anthropics.com> – discount code **CC7821** adds a further 15% off the already 50% cut in price, making the program available from under £30.

The second example below shows the Waverley Line train with the Eildon Hills beyond. Although it was bright, the sun didn't match the train's arrival in shot and the sky over the hills was too white with poor clouds. In this case, another picture taken at the same time with better sky and clouds was used along with enhancement to the trees to give a result ideal for stock sales – a new angle on one which has already sold well.

It's important to match the sky colour to the scene and raw processing or camera profiles can have a big effect on this (compare Adobe Neutral to Adobe Landscape to see how great).





Pictures I never imagined I would take – the orangutans of Borneo

After 35 years working in education Jayne now enjoys spending time outdoors, photographing wildlife and nature as an amateur enthusiast, constantly learning and striving to achieve better. Jayne has achieved Craftsman status with the Guild of Photographers.

<https://www.studiomlino.co.uk>
Facebook – studiomlino
Instagram – studiomlino



Sepilok Orangutan – Canon 5DMkIII, Canon EF 70-300mm f4-5.6 IS USM lens, 1/200s @ f5.6 ISO 3200. Below, my first wild orangutan, Canon 5DMkIII with 24-105mm (see story).

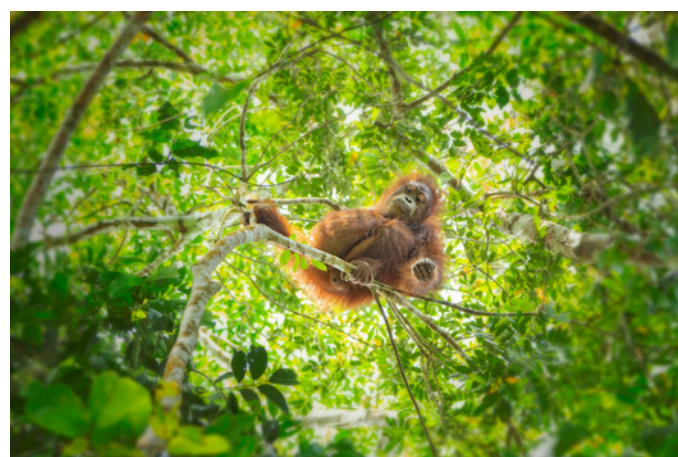
Do you ever sit quietly on your own and let your imagination take you somewhere special – a place you can only dream of? For as long as I can remember my dream was to see orangutans in the wild. Coming from a 'two up-two down' terrace house in Wigan where the furthest we went for a family holiday was the island of Anglesey, venturing to the Island of Borneo was the most extreme pipe dream I could ever imagine!

For half a century I held on to that dream, until 2015 when my daughter was in her final year at university. She chose to spend her elective time at Tacloban Hospital in the Philippines where Typhoon Haiyan had left a trail of devastation the previous year. Of course any parent would worry about their child travelling to such places but she had a golden nugget... I can visualise her now saying:

'Look at the map mum, look how close the Philippines are to Borneo. You could meet up with me and we can go and see the orangutans.'

What an amazing experience for both of us!

We met up in Singapore and travelled to Borneo together. First stop was the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre. Such an amazing place and my first orangutan experience. Many of the orangutans are orphans, and although they're free to come and



go they have their diet supplemented by daily feedings – hence are considered semi-wild.

It wasn't until we travelled to the Kinabatangan River that we saw our very first, truly wild orangutan. I can not put into words the emotions I felt at that moment in time. I was carrying my relatively new Canon 5DMkIII and a 24-105mm lens. My hands were shaking, my eyes were watering and all I could do was point the camera and shoot. The raw image leaves a lot to be desired – the tree canopy takes up 90% of the original image, the orangutan is in dark shadow, and the sky is totally blown out.

What you have here is a moment in time when a dream became a reality, a personal image that despite its technical flaws

remains the most special image I have ever taken. Thankfully, over time my processing skills have improved, but despite editing this image numerous times I still feel it's important to keep it authentic. Shadows have been lifted, colours enriched and the brightness of the blown out areas toned down. A slight crop, keeping the reality of the vast tree canopy and slight blurring around the edges to draw the viewer into the main subject of the image — a pregnant female orangutan looking straight down at us.

We always strive to produce images that tell a story – this is my story, an imaginary world which became a reality. Hold on to your dream folks, because one day they may just come true.





THE ART OF IMAGINING

Making the unreal become a reality

In my world of product and commercial photography there are two very distinct styles of images; there are those that need to accurately portray a product and those that need to grab the viewer's attention whilst also including a product. It is common to utilise similar lighting techniques in both of these styles, however, the major difference is in the approach and overall concept of the image.

Ian Knaggs, a UK based advertising and product photographer specialising in studio product photography, is a popular instructor in studio set-ups and lighting, digital processing and Photoshop.
<https://www.ianknaggs.com>



An imaginative approach to an advertising image allows us to take a very definite step away from reality whilst still incorporating easily recognisable items. This allows a huge amount of flexibility of the composition, content and style of the image along with the ability to make the viewer consider and question what they are seeing.

However, there is also a lot of background work involved in generating a cohesive concept for this style of image. There are also a number of other constraints that need to be considered such as coherence with product branding and market messages and making space for text.

There is also the task of fitting the concept to different formats, as a billboard is very different to a magazine page. The most important aspect though, is to keep the viewer's attention for as long as possible. There are

many tricks that can be used to help with this such as shifting and distorting perspective to draw the viewer's eye through the image, complementary or contrasting colours – or the use of out-of-context scale, or supplementary components.

In this image, the slogan of which is "Have you heard how good this tastes!" is highlighted by the incorporation of the shape of a pair of headphones that is constructed from the constituent products of the product. This creates a consistence and coherence between the content of the image and the message whilst also utilising realistic elements in an unrealistic or impossible situation.

The five main elements for this image were shot individually and composited together in post production. The headphones 'headband' was created by threading blueberries along a

length of wire allowing them to be held in place and photographed. The apple was cut and shot individually.

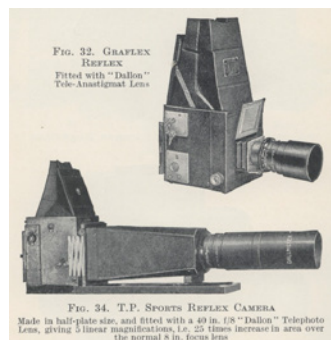
The oats explosion is a combination of a number of images during which a centre piece of polystyrene was covered in PVA glue and rolled in oats and held in place on a piece of wire. Loose oats were then thrown around this and again added together in post production.

As with all composites, one of the most important things is to keep the lighting between elements consistent so that they can be pulled together seamlessly.

The next time you are leafing through a magazine, have a think about the advertising images you see and consider why they work well and hold the viewers' attention.

Telephotography is the title of an old Pitman book my father bought in 1936 – though even then it was a period piece. Its author Cyril Lan-Davis FRPS was a key member of the team at J H Dallmeyer Ltd during the Edwardian golden age of photographic and optical innovation. T R Dallmeyer had invented the telephoto lens in 1891. Lan-Davis wrote the first version of the book before WW1. He lost his life in the Mediterranean in 1915, six months after assembling a home-made aerial camera rig and flying over Gallipoli recording trenches and Turkish positions. Later editions introduced 35mm and rollfilm formats and under H A Carter FRPS a considerable emphasis on ciné from 8mm to 35mm.

I could almost reprint sections of the book and they would be as relevant now as then, right down to zoom-like features which first appeared in Adjustable telephotos like the Dallmeyer 'Adon' 100 years ago. But here's a tiny taste – the big lens at the bottom is a 40 inch f8 on a halfplate sports reflex. That is roughly equivalent to a 300mm on full frame in today's systems.



We don't know how easy we have it!

What has attracted my attention today comes initially from Canon – the 800mm f11 lens you can see on the right. The bottom perspective view shows that the whole design is more like a pre-war lens, with its main front barrel resembling a telescope and the rear tube unlocking to extend from collapsed storage into the shooting position. Without a tripod collar, it does have a built-in tripod mount and the focus limiter has just two distant ranges of 20m to infinity or full range. There's no close range of the minimum 6m to 20m though. Stabilisation is either on or off, so is AF and that uses the

TAKING THE LONG VIEW

by David Kilpatrick

Mirrorless systems have had the surprising effect of making very long tele and zoom lenses practical to use – limited maximum apertures no longer mean dim viewfinders or inaccurate focusing

STM motor type found in budget lenses. It's made in the mirrorless RF mount and not in EF for DSLRs, and can accept either 1.4X or 2X converters to create 1200mm f16 or 1600mm f22. It does not have an aperture adjustment but early buyers report that the ISO range of the Canon R5 and R6 enables fast enough shutter speeds to stop

action while the lens stabilisation, with or without added in-body IS, helps reduce shake. The similarly designed 600mm f11 is much smaller, and both use Diffractive Optics which keep the size and weight down. They are mostly constructed from plastics, and at low prices of under £700 and under £950 including VAT in the UK it's no surprise the almost-essential lens hoods are an extra £60 or so.

No similar basic AF long teles exist in other systems (yet) and the DO elements are a Canon exclusive patent. You can easily find manual lenses with similar apertures, closely based on those 1920s adjustable telephotos. One you'll find under many names is a manual T-mount 420-800mm f8.3-16 where you space the front and rear groups then lock the focal length. Amazon had a no-brand version at £59 so I bought one to find out just how bad it could be – see page 18 after this article.

Sigma, Tamron and more

Though it's not the done thing to put two rival independent makers under a heading, the simple fact is that these two Japanese companies have done more in the last 60 years to advance tele and zoom design and affordability than all the big camera marques.

Few photographers younger than 80 will have bought the original Twin or Duo Tamron of 1958, a simple 135mm f4.5 manual preset SLR lens supplied with a matched converter to create a 225mm f7.7 combination. That year saw the massively important Brussels Expo which persuaded so many photographic manufacturers to turn prototypes into a new generation of gear. The Russian MTO 500mm and 1000mm mirror lenses and 300mm f4.5 TAIR helped introduce many to telephoto work.

From foundation in that year, Tamron went on to pioneer teleconverters and zooms. Their emphasis moved away from very long lenses to zooms with an exceptional range, the first 28-200mm and in due course designs including 16-300mm and 18-400mm for APS-C DSLRs. Their 150-600mm f5-6.7 SP AF for DSLRs returned to pure long zoom design.

From the early 1970s on, Sigma experimented with designs and by the time the autofocus SLR generation arrived in the mid-1980s lenses like their 600mm f8 MF mirror lens and 400mm f6.3 AF APO tele (late with 'macro') filled gaps in the camera makers' line-ups. Ultimately Sigma created one of the rarest and most expensive independent lenses, the 200-600mm f2.8 AF. However for most photographers it has been their range of affordable super-teles which stands out. Sheeple tend to call any large Sigma a 'Bigma' but that name originated with their 800mm f5.6 EX DG APO HSM which still sells for the better part of £5,000 – and of course also to the 300-800mm zoom variant. The newer 500mm f4 stabilised model is a little less. For a third of its cost you can get their high end 150-600mm f5-6.3 DG OS HSM Sport (all these are DSLR lenses).

This year Tamron has moved firmly into this medium-price, high performance long tele zoom field with their mirrorless (Sony only so far) 150-500mm f5-6.7 and Sigma's first design for L or E mount is a 100-400mm f5-6.3. Sony has created a relatively low cost 200-600mm f5.6-6.3, Canon has a superbly close focusing 100-500mm for RF mount, and Nikon has plans (not yet confirmed) for both 100-400mm and 200-600mm



Canon's new 800mm and 600mm f11 lenses



Top, the Tamron 150-600mm zoom for DSLR/SLR systems; above, the Nikon 200-400mm f4G ED VR II. Below, a full range of Sigma super-teles on show at a photo exhibition with the 200-500mm f2.8 EX DG in the foreground.



The Sigma DG DN OS HSM Contemporary 100-400mm f5-6.7 used at 400mm, wide open, captured a wealth of detail and colour in this evening shot (DK)



GUIDE TO FULL FRAME LENSES 400mm+

Canon

RF 100-500mm f4.5-7.1 L IS USM	RF
RF 400mm f2.8 L IS USM	RF
RF 600mm f11 IS STM	RF
RF 800mm f11 IS STM	RF
EF 400mm f2.8L IS II USM	EF
EF 400mm f2.8L IS III USM	EF
EF 400mm f4 DO IS II USM	EF
EF 400mm f5.6L USM	EF
EF 100-400mm f4.5-5.6L IS II USM	EF
EF 200-400mm f4L IS USM Extender 1.4X	EF
EF 500mm f4L IS II USM	EF
EF 600mm f4L IS II USM	EF
EF 600mm f4L IS III USM	EF
EF 800mm f5.6L IS USM	EF

Nikon

400mm f2.8E FL ED VR	NF AF-S
80-400mm f4.5-5.6 G ED VR	NF AF-S
80-400mm f4.5-5.6D ED	NF D
180-400mm f4E TC1.4 FL ED VR	NF AF-S
200-400mm f4G ED VR II	NF AF-S
500mm f5.6E PF ED VR	NF AF-S
500mm f5.6E PF ED VR	NF AF-S
500mm f4E FL ED VR	NF AF-S
200-500mm f5.6E ED VR	NF AF-S
600mm f4E FL ED VR	NF AF-S
800mm f5.6E FL ED VR	NF AF-S

No Nikon Z mount native lenses over 300mm yet available

Sigma

100-400mm f5-6.3 DG OS HSM Contemporary	SA/EF/NF
100-400mm f5-6.7 DG DN OS HSM Contemporary	E/L
500mm f4 DG OS HSM Sports	SA/EF/NF
200-500mm f2.8 EX DG	SA/EF/NF
150-600mm f5-6.3 DG OS HSM Contemporary	SA/EF/NF
150-600mm f5-6.3 DG OS HSM Sports	SA/EF/NF
60-600mm f4.5-6.3 DG OS HSM Sports	SA/EF/NF
300-800mm f5.6 EX DG	SA/EF/NF
800mm f5.6 EX DG	SA/EF/NF

Sony

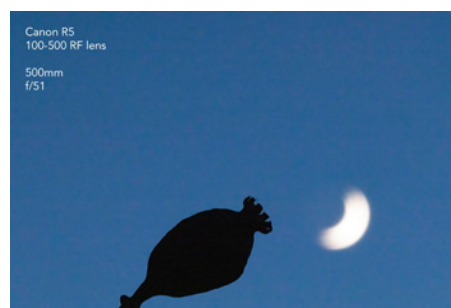
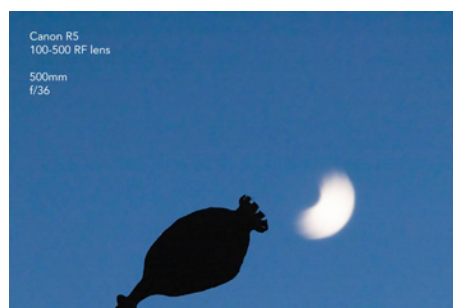
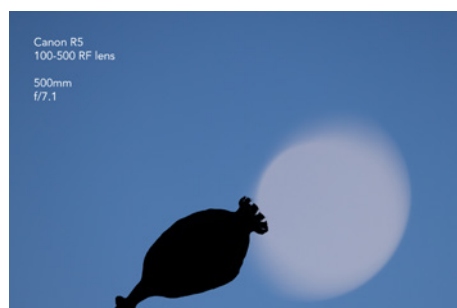
100-400mm FE f4.5-5.6 GM OSS	E
400mm FE f2.8 GM OSS	E
600mm f4 FE GM OSS	E
200-600mm FE f5.6-6.3 G OSS	E
70-400mm f4-5.6 G SSM II	A
500mm f4 G SSM	A

Tamron

150-500mm f5-6.7 Di III VC VXD	E
150-600mm f5-6.3 VC USD G2	EF/NF

Tokina

400mm f8 SZX Super Tele Reflex MF	T-Mount
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Jayne Bond shoots with the new Canon RF 100-500mm zoom and did a test for Cameracraft framing a poppy seed head at closest focus with the moon beyond. At apertures of $f7.1$, $f36$ and finally $f51$ the rendering of the crescent moon changes and interacts with depth of field in a most odd way.

Z mount zooms and 400/600mm primes. Much has changed in 100 years and it keeps changing. Just remember, however, that the little one-inch sensor cameras from Leica, Sony and Panasonic turn in amazing results equal to 400 to 600mm with apertures like $f4$ and all-day portability. Could a Sony RX10 MkIV be your ideal companion camera?

Sunset and moonrise

Whether you're shooting a sunset or a full moon, there has been one thing hanging over the era of film-based photography which has changed in the digital world. Once, the size of the celestial disc in your image depended only on the focal length of the lens but now it's a combination of focal length and sensor resolution.

Both Sun and Moon have an angular diameter just over half a degree, each varying a little in visual size around $32'$ (minutes) with the Moon's distance from Earth changing much more and producing those super-moons when closest. It's not just an illusion, there is around a 13% actual size difference between a mini-moon and a super-moon.

When it comes working out what this means for the size of the image on your digital sensor (or previously on film) a useful memory check is that a 500mm lens has a diagonal angle of view of 8° , or an angle over the 24mm height of full frame of $2^\circ45'$, which we can call 2.5° to simply rough calculations based on sun or moon discs at 0.5° . These will be appear a little more than a fifth of the short side of the image. Five full moons or sunset suns, taken using a 500mm lens, should fill the 24mm dimension.

Another way of working it out is to say the sun or moon will be



The reason long lenses may need to stop down much further than you expect can be seen here – a little girl reacts to seeing a meerkat, caught by a 500mm lens. Upper shot at $f6.7$, lower one at $f10$ – maybe $f22$ was needed.



Close focus can be important in long lenses. To frame this Scottish Wildcat (at Five Sisters Zoo, Livingston, as with the shots above) a focal length of 424mm was needed on the Tamron 150-500mm FE zoom. The lens was held up to an intrusive wire mesh but because this was not brightly lit the $f6.3$ wide open aperture was able to lose the mesh. This was not the closest focus of the lens, meaning that with AF-C if the cat moved it would stay in focus thanks to Eye-AF. 1/500s, ISO 2000, Sony A7RIV. (DK)

$1/100$ th of the focal length of the lens, in diameter – again that's a quick rule of thumb not a precise calculation. If your sensor is APS-C and roughly 15×23 mm, it will tell you that a 1600mm lens is going to make the sun too big to fit in the frame without clipping a bit. On full frame a 2000mm lens will fill with just a bit to spare. On MFT, with its 13×17 mm sensor size, a 1000mm would be effective and a 500mm give a scale ideal for positioning in a composition.

This may help you visualise your E.T. riding a bicycle in the sky, or a bride holding the setting sun in the palm of her hand. It's not the whole story, as the size of the disc is changed when you focus closer. Frame a dandelion seed head at 0.33X scale, which is the 1.2m closest focus for Canon's RF 100-500mm lens at 500mm, and the focus extension will make the sun setting behind it about 40% bigger. It will also be out of focus, but this lens can be stopped down to $f54$ at 500mm which enables a relatively sharp sun disc.

Such a close focus distance at 500mm is unusual. Tamron's new 150-500mm for Sony may manage 60cm at 150mm, but pushes the camera distance back to 1.8m although the subject scale only changes from 1:3.1 to 1:3.7 in the process

When you consider the resolution of the sensor, things change. The Sony A7RIV 60 megapixel image can be cropped to just 15% of the frame (3X zooming by cropping) and still yield a file size suitable for full page repro or UHD display. That crop is just 8×12 mm. In practice, a 70-300mm will be all that's needed for big sunsets or moons. The competing Canon R5 and Nikon Z7 with their 45MP sensors are not so very different. Olympus and Panasonic 20MP MFT sensors actually give



the largest pixel-level scale of our celestial targets, and the telephoto reach of this smaller format is a reason many use it despite inevitably higher noise levels limiting high ISO quality.

Distance and scale

While our heavenly friends are subjects where you just can't use your feet to zoom, many of the targets for lenses in the 400mm plus class are much closer. We buy long lenses to catch sports or wildlife at a distance, but every photographer must have experienced the moment when the action suddenly moves closer. That's why lenses like Sigma's 120-300mm f2.8 and 50-500mm zoom can be preferred for sports sideline shooting to pure 300mm or a 150-500mm.

In the world of very long lenses, close focusing is rare. You may need to get your lens right up against wire netting to blur it out, or shoot through a gap. The subject could be in a zoo or fenced park, or in a street demonstration with barriers. You can't control the subject and your long tele zoom only focuses down to 2.5 metres.

If you shoot on a small sensor, as on the APS-C camera used by Shirley Kilpatrick for this sun setting over the industrial complex of Porto Marghera, Venice, even an 18-250mm superzoom is a 375mm equivalent. Mirrorless systems have made it practical to use legacy lenses. A Tamron SP 500mm f8 RF Macro mirror lens framed the owl from across a garden, the fixed f8 exposure helped by flash, and focusing by magnified EVF. (DK)



The subject moves to 2.2m away but if you step back the barrier will spoil the shot. This has been a common situation.

Some long zooms still have this restriction. The new Sony FE 200-600mm won't focus closer than 2.4m even at shorter zoom settings. The competing Tamron 150-500mm reviewed in this issue focuses down to 60cm at 150mm, 1.8m at 500mm. No matter the difference between 500mm and 600mm, it's the difference between 1.8m and 2.4m which may decide if you get the shot. The Tamron focuses closer as you zoom out, down to just 60cm at 150mm, but the Sony is limited to 2.4m even at 200mm.

The two lenses are not far apart in price and are made for the same system. The subject scale also favours the Tamron. It achieves between 1:3.1 and 1:3.3X scale over its range where the Sony can only get 1:5 at the best, and has to be at 600mm to do so. There may be other issues like focus breathing for video, where the lens appears to zoom slightly if re-focused during a take but these should not affect most still photography.



A 420-800mm $f8.3-16$ for £59.95

Under more names than you would think possible, a Chinese varifocal telephoto based on 100-year-old principles can be found on Amazon at prices from under £60 including a T2 mount adaptor for Canon. They are all the same lens and we've seen them at photo shows for many years. At under £60 we just had to try one. Beware retail shops with the same but 'branded' for as much as £160 without the T2 mount!

It's a 'zoom' made the same way as 1920s Dallmeyer adjustable telephotos. The front imaging group is extended forwards and a rear telephoto negative group moves the same way but less. Front cell focusing then compensates for the non-parfocal shift in that respect. This lens has no aperture control. It's a fixed $f8.3$ at 420mm reducing to $f16$ at 800mm. When you consider Canon now makes an $f11$ 600mm and 800mm, this lens seems more usable. That's what mirrorless, EVFs and magnified focusing can do.

The *Lightdow* branded lens came with a pouch, lens cap,



The lens extended to 800mm, above



rear T2 cap, Canon EF manual T2 adaptor and hex key to tighten. Overall finish is acceptable. The push pull zoom tube friction is adjustable using an open-close ring which can also lock it or allow the rear part to be dismantled. At the front, a reversed 67mm filter thread accepts a short lens hood. 62mm filters fit normally, or 67mm on the front of the hood. The zoom tube and focus helicoid are well lubricated machined metal. At 420mm the minimum focus is about 2m. At 800mm it's around 2.3m, and the T2 mount's small diameter cuts off the extreme corners. The yellow poppy shots

are closest focus, difficult to nail as there is so much spherical aberration though the core of the soft-focus image is sharp. With a perfectly round aperture the bokeh is smooth but chromatic effects are present. Sharp edges and high contrast will show colour fringes.

BUT – this lens is a type which happily accepts an external aperture disc (not provided!). Using a couple of adaptor rings, an old afocal fisheye lens mount put a 24mm aperture in place. This turned a soft $f8.3-16$ lens into a fairly sharp $f17.4-33$. Limited? Well, the panorama below was made from four 420mm shots at ISO 100



and 1/500s. An 800mm single shot was not sharp enough for 60MP but fine for stock use or 17" prints when reduced to 24MP. Of course the panorama would have been better on almost any modern 400mm lens but the flare and glow (from the jury-rigged 'aperture') work well. This is an experimental lens for the mirrorless explorer...

– DK

Our Amazon link:

<https://amzn.to/2TG3blO>



800mm $f16$ – T-mount cuts off corners



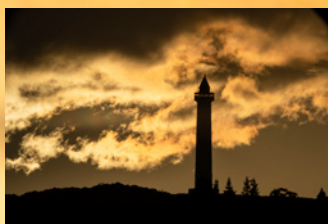
420mm $f8.3$ with 300dpi from 60MP file, right



Four-shot panorama at 420mm $f17.4$ (aperture disc added), 1/500s at ISO 100, Sony A7RIV



With an effective f33 aperture placed in front of the lens, the sharpness is good enough to allow a 17" print or double page spread. This is a crop of less than half a landscape format frame which was downsized from 60 megapixels to 24 (6000 x 4000 pixels). Mirrorless camera systems allow you to experiment with all kinds of glass, old and new, with the benefit of critically accurate focusing. Slight unsharpness of the edges is caused by heat haze over 1.5km of fields and woodland.





Imagine all the people... welcome to the Hotel Photographica!



Hotels are imaginative – they imagine how the guest needs to feel and make it happen. Here's a welcome from the Radisson Blu in Sligo – upgraded room and a host of free goodies. Instagrammed, Facebooked and Twittered... and I would never consider staying anywhere else!

Kenny is currently one of the most successful One 2 One Business Consultants and has lectured on both photography and business matters in over 16 countries. Photography Website: kennethmartinphotography.com Training Website: thestudiadoctor.co.uk If anyone would like to find out more about Kenny's TCMP program please pop an email to info@kennethmartinphotography.com to arrange a no obligation totally confidential chat!



Sweet summer sweat... Kenny shooting professional dancers in his Edinburgh Venture studio at pre-Festival time a few years ago. A portrait studio does not have to be limited to lazy lighting and fixed poses.

In the world of photography, imagination is a key factor in the image making process, creativity and imagination are often the key factors in elevating safe normal images into world beating show-stoppers. These days, more than ever, with the advent of social media and especially the Instagram generation the quality of images we produce as professionals is often surpassed by kids taking their own selfies and applying filters. Whatever you think of these images we need to up our game and produce modern, creative portraits that appeal to them – otherwise we are doomed.

So often – in fact 90% of the time – I see a complete family session that is just lazy, lacklustre and boring. This is because the photographer has simply stuck a gigantic soft box onto the flash and placed it 10 feet away and flooded the place with light. This is NOT lighting this is illumination. Then each of the smaller family groups within the main family and the individuals portraits are shot with the same light in exactly the same



Smartphones can't match studio lighting and professional flash kit – creative expression in a plain space with Elinchrom ELC Pro-HD flash.

position. This is where you need to add some imagination to the session to create variety, making the portraits individual to each of the members of the family and giving you more chance of achieving a high sale

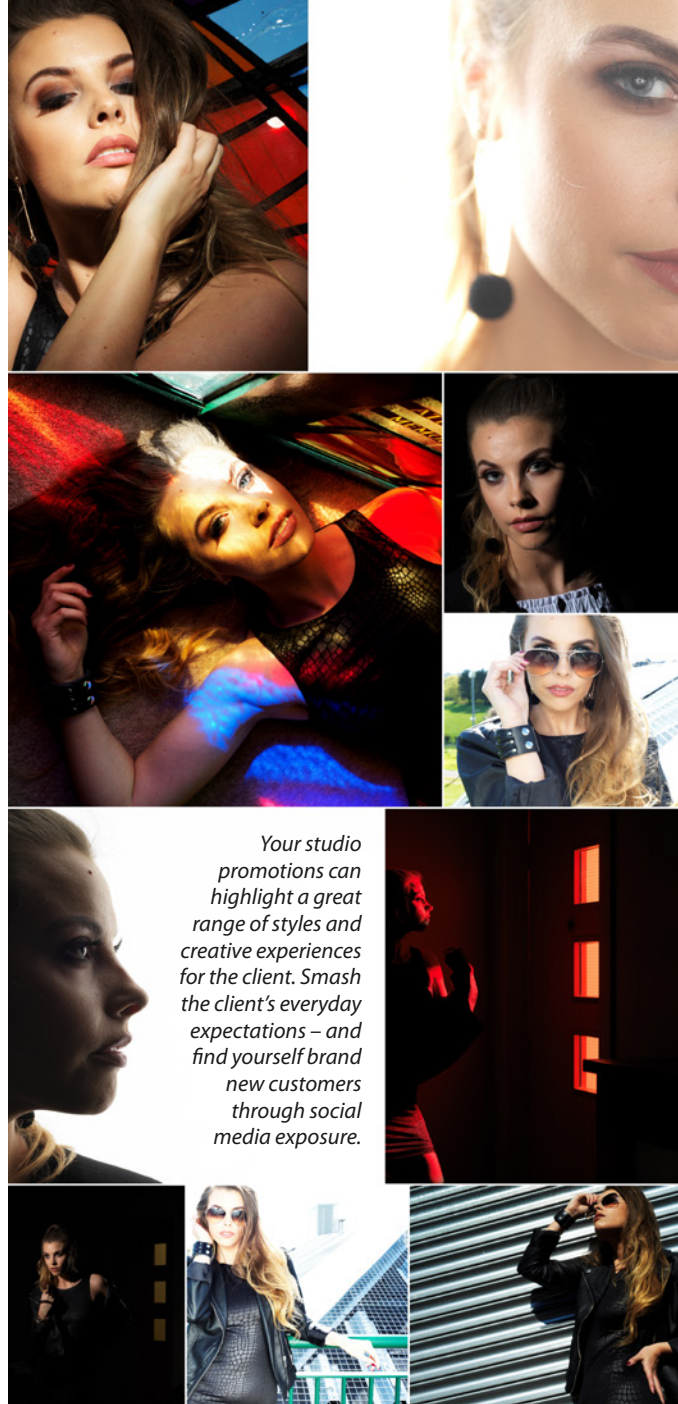
Variety sells, it's an absolutely vital part of the process. When you have finished with the main family groups and got the key shots in the bag, move the lights in closer, feather the main light and create beautiful softly lit

portraits of the smaller groups. Add in background and kicker lights for effect. When you come to shoot mum or the daughters, change the lighting pattern from a 45° position and use butterfly lighting instead with perhaps a reflector to glam the portrait up. When you shoot dad and the boys stick a harder light modifier on, a snoot or small dish reflector and make them look manly with deeper shadows and more drama. This simple approach to shooting a family will reap the rewards for you in regards of upping the sale and it's also much more satisfying to create such individual portraits.

But it's not just in the shooting process that imagination needs to be applied, the approach to business also requires some creativity and imagination. How do we up our game and WOW our clients? Remember every client who comes through your studio door will have an expectation of what they expect to happen, this applies to both customers who have never actually been to a studio and also for those who have experienced a really professional portrait setup. The former will probably have a pretty low idea of the process and client experience and the latter will be expecting more. We need to absolutely smash their expectations. Sometimes we do not need to do too much – the simplest thing can delight a customer. You need to use your imagination to come up with ways to do this.

Pink champagne on ice

I worked with a studio in Brighton for a couple of years and used to stay in a little hotel in Campdown. This particular hotel managed to wow me in a simple and imaginative way. Firstly when I was being shown to my room and given some orientation of the hotel, the receptionist pointed out the carafe of complimentary port in my room (about four glasses). Wow! At breakfast I chose my cereal and juice from the buffet and the server came to the table and explained in detail the cooked breakfast – where the bacon, eggs and sausages were from and their organic credentials. And whilst I was waiting for my cooked breakfast, the server returned with



Your studio promotions can highlight a great range of styles and creative experiences for the client. Smash the client's everyday expectations – and find yourself brand new customers through social media exposure.

a small glass on a silver tray and proceeded to explain that it was the chef's chilled smoothie of the day... mango, lime and passion fruit. Now this probably cost the hotel less than 10p but WOW it had an impact on me.

In other words a man who has stayed in 15 hotels a month every month for the last seven years (pre-Covid of course) was knocked sideways by some creative and imaginative thinking on the hotel's part. That is what I am talking about, as a studio you must create a process that is beyond what the customer expects, if you can do that and you can get the variety you are on a winner.

So imagine if you, rather than simply offer Tea or Coffee to your clients, have a full drinks list or you create an airport lounge

area where everything from beverages, fresh fruit and snacks are available. Wow! At the sales presentation why not offer a glass of prosecco, wine or beer as well as your drinks list. Wow! Look at your toilet, would you want to spent time in there? Look to spas and high-end restaurants for inspiration – this can be a real winner, as clients often base their impressions on the toilet.

Look at your business from your clients perspective, take the journey your client takes, walk the walk and see how many things you would change. Lots of small improvements can make a huge difference. Look at your staff, are they smart, do they represent your brand? Standards slip and you must keep looking for ways to improve.

You can never leave

In 1996 I started to work in the late, and much missed, David Campbell's studio in Lisburn. I remember the first pep talk David gave me on the way from the airport to the studio. He waxed lyrical about all my awards and distinctions and the quality of my work and then proceeded to tell me that if I didn't give his clients an incredible experience every time I would be out on my ear. He then said this to me – "the experience is more Important than the pictures".

I hear this every day – I have lived it for 25 years, I have taught all my studio staff over the years and all my mentor studios this message. It's the most important message I have ever received. He was a wise man, David, and 100% correct. Your aim is to have the customer absolutely buzzing with excitement and delight when they leave the studio after the session. If not you have not done your job.

When it comes to Routes to Market and getting the clients through the door, again we must use our imagination to come up with different and inventive ways to secure those sittings in the diary. With everyone and their dog now advertising (usually badly) on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and other social media platforms, we need to up our game in the way we approach our advertising. The effectiveness of these adverts and the results are being affected, as the market is flooded with these mainly sub-standard adverts.

Why not arrange to advertise on another local business Facebook page rather than on your own? Make sure they are a company with lots of likes and followers, aligned with your target market, and run a competition with them. You will be exposed to a whole new group of potential clients. Simple if you use your imagination.

So get your thinking caps on, look at other luxury industries and brands – what can you take from them and adapt for your own business model? We can then WOW our clients and improve our average sale dramatically in the process. It just needs some imagination!



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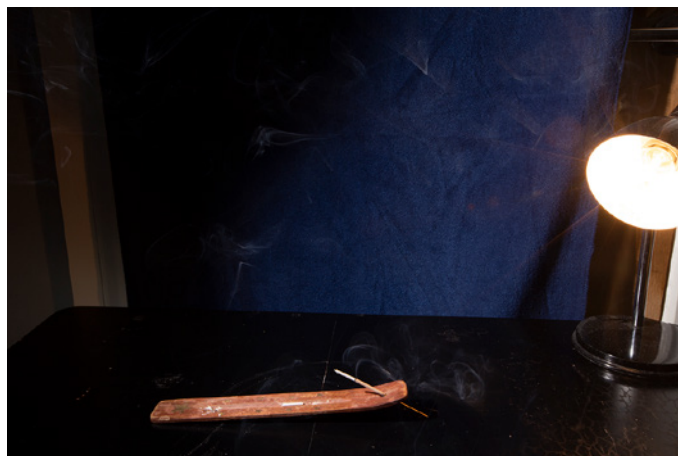
sky dancer

Katie Hughes loves her astrophotography... but brings luminous gas clouds to life in a new way on the studio table with dancing wraiths of smoke assembled from many shots



My 'Smoke Dancer' image earned me my first Silver award with the Guild of Photographers. The response to it has been amazing. Normally I would be shooting nebulae and galaxies – all things night sky – but with Covid restrictions and bad weather I was unable to do this. I had to put my creative head on and try my hand at something else, something that I could do from home. A few years ago in my local camera club, we had taken photos of water splashes and smoke images, this got me thinking and I decided to set up and play with some smoke images.

I set up a small table with an office lamp and some incense sticks. I then put a flash gun on the opposite side of the lamp and set



up my camera and tripod. I don't have any barn doors for my flash gun so I cut a piece of A4 black paper into two small squares and stuck them either side of the flash gun to keep the light directed on the incense stick. Once I had taken many shots of different smoke shapes I then uploaded them to my laptop and had a look at each and every one. Some shapes looked like a head and body of a female, others reminded me of limbs and flowing hair – this got my brain thinking and I started to stack and blend them together to make the

final image. *Photoshop* liquify tool was used to allow me to slightly bend the limbs a tad more to give the idea of movement.

The feedback I received was immense and I have since been asked if the image is available for prints. I've now had a client wanting to purchase a print of this in acrylic glass for a large wall theme.

This has given me ideas for more creative and imaginative projects.



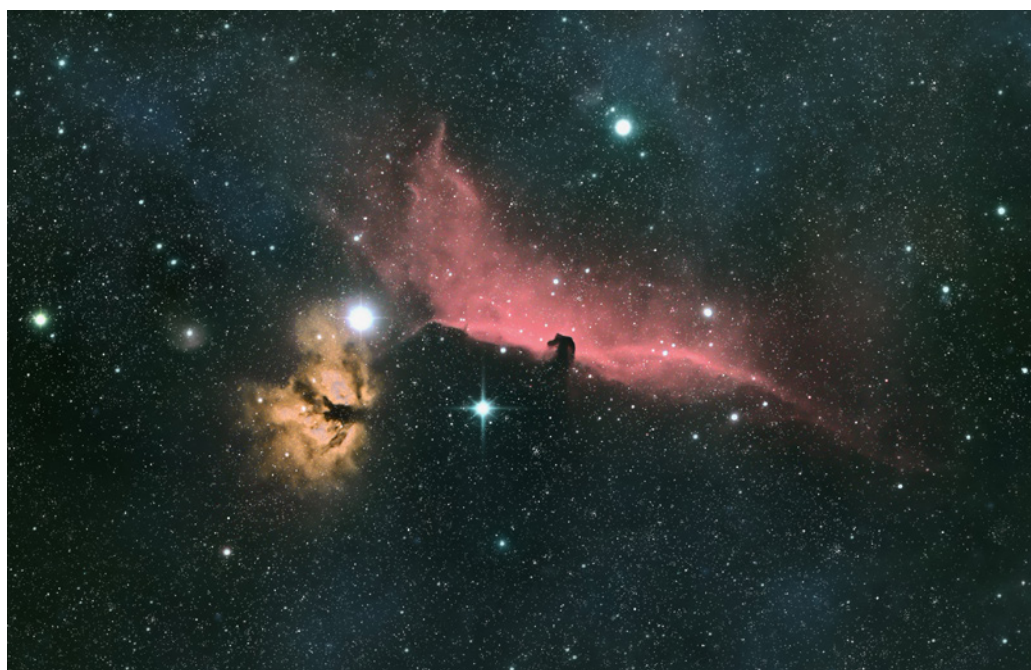
Instagram: *Shutterbugscotland*



Examples of the component shots



Below, Katie's first love in photography – the stars and gas clouds of the Horsehead Nebula



Matt isn't dead... it's not all about d-Max, more about feel

The look and feel of a photographic print can add to its perceived value.

The value is fairly obvious when you see a Loxley Alumini print on metal, or a floating high gloss acrylic sheet in a box frame from One Vision. Getting it right in plain inkjet prints you may make yourself or put out to a lab is another matter.

In the art repro world, papers like Epson Fine Art Velvet or Cold Press have a texture you can detect as well as substantial weight. This can slightly disrupt fine detail, and catch the light. Gloss papers may show detail well, but have all kind of problems with framing and lighting conditions – lustre, which works well in albums where it resists handling well and can be angled to avoid reflections when viewed, is little better.

There's one surface which is either completely ignored or highly valued – traditional smooth matt on a fibre base with baryta layer. There are many matt papers described as proofing, archival, 100% cotton and so on but most are just a paper treated to accept ink whether dye or pigment. The printing tends to be absorbed and may look a little soft, typically lacking black or colour density.

The few genuine FB baryta matt papers are all based on classic darkroom materials. The EG Platinum range from Fotospeed uses the "old Agfa Record Rapid fibre base" (researched and sourced from the same mills). The matt finish is 280gsm acid free and pure white and the alternative Gloss and Pearl papers, whether white or warm base tone, are 285gsm.

This reflects how matt darkroom processed silver (often warmer chlorobromide) papers used to be. The emulsions were essentially the same and the gloss, lustre or silk finishes were created in the 'supercoat' – a top layer of clear gelatine. Supercoated papers had real benefits in darkroom processing, because they resisted

Photo quality matt inkjet papers give black and colour-graded darker tones a cinematic art look ideal for wall prints.



marks from fingers or tongs. Non-supercoated matt papers from Agfa and Lumière/Ilford looked beautiful when perfectly printed, dried and mounted but the every print had to be made with ultimate care, no batch processing with several swimming around in a dish.

Between removing the paper from its pack and getting it safely into the stop bath and fixer, handling could produce dark scuffs which appeared even in white areas of the image.

Partly as a result of this fragile emulsion surface, matt prints from

the last 50 years are fairly rare. When resin-coated or PE based papers for rapid processing and drying arrived, they didn't have a matt option and were always supercoated. The new Pearl surface introduced for Ilfospeed, which had not existed in fibre-based papers, was a close replacement for Matt, Satin and Velvet classic finishes.

Matt in the inkjet era

One of the first popular matt inkjet materials came from Harman Photo (née Ilford) in 2007, and was discontinued ten years ago – Harman Professional Inkjet Matt FB MP (microporous) on a 310gsm base, white or warm tone. It was claimed to be the first photographic base matt inkjet paper with a baryta subcoat – that's the bonding, stiffening and reflective barium sulphate layer between the fibre base and the ink receptor layer. This paper still has a following and you can find remaining stocks on eBay.

If you want to find a current equivalent, Harman's range (now 'Crystal') does not offer it. For a while both Fotospeed and PermaJet, the two best-known British makers, have offered FB baryta matt papers like Fotospeed's 280gsm and PermaJet's FB Matt 285.

It's worth printing the blur from PermaJet – "The FB Matt 285 is the bedrock of the PermaJet Fibre Based range with an ultra smooth 285gsm, acid-free base and an advanced matt coating. The sumptuous, natural white paper has a velvet soft feel and appearance whilst retaining crisp rigidity and lay flat production values. Create striking images with extremely high detail." Leaving aside adjectives, this is very much what choosing an FB baryta matt paper is about.

Now Canson has reinforced an existing presence in this field with an updated paper – Canson

Infinity Baryta Photographique II Matt. They say it has "an extremely smooth surface with a totally matt finish which, due to the lack of grain interference, accentuates the detail in the printed image. The matt surface also has no light reflection from any viewing angle, ideal for photographers or artists that wish to display their final work."

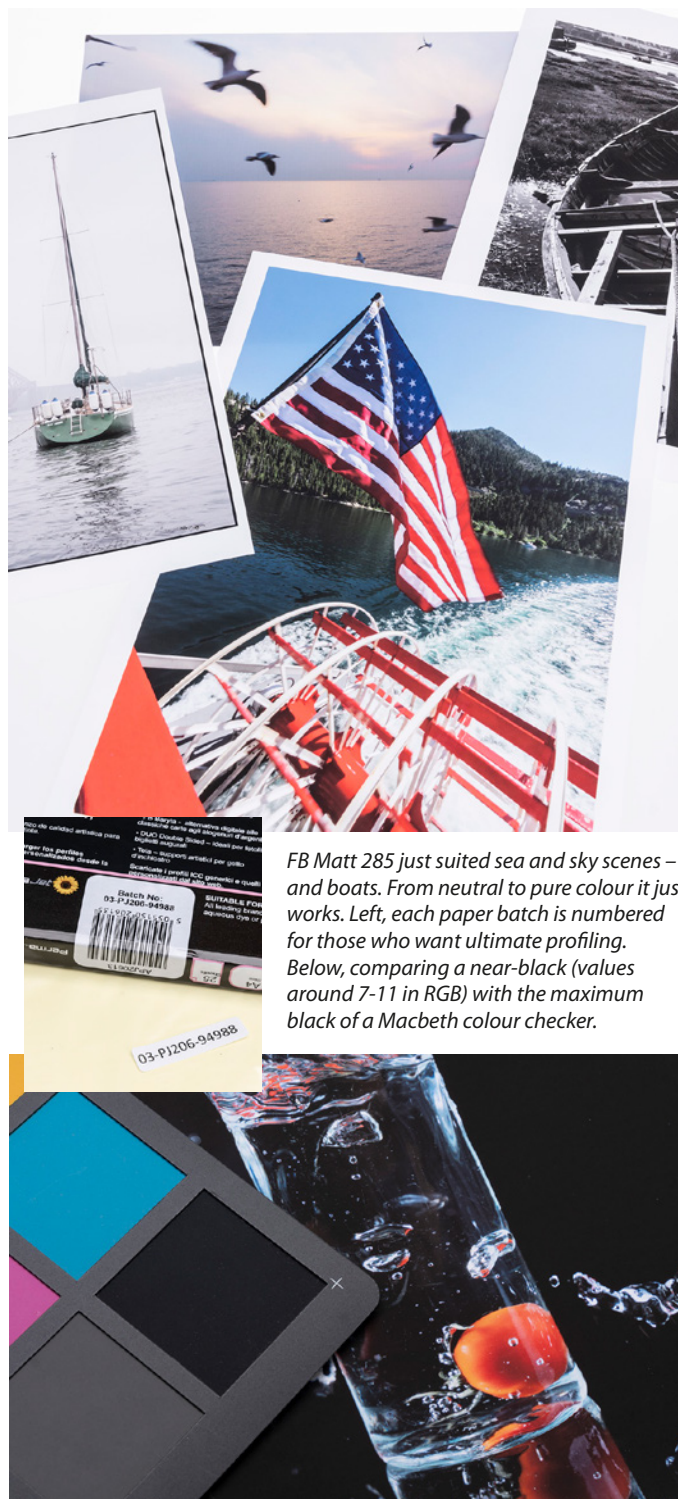
Baryta Photographique II Matt and all the other FB baryta matt types should be printed using matt black ink as opposed to photo black in printers which give this choice. They claim a very high d-Max, though measurements often won't confirm this. It is better to assess the density of the papers visually..

Fashionably flat

One of the trends right now is to apply so-called cinematic profiles or picture looks to images. Despite years of trying to get the very brightest and most realistic colour, it turns out that the harshness of full gamut TV screens makes viewers long for the soft diluted shadows and colours experienced in a projection cinema showing real film. There's even a longing to see those shadows turned blue by the lingering haze of smokers in the auditorium, even if all the younger generations promoting these styles are lucky enough never to have experienced a smoky cinema!

If you do grade your images to remove true black, it's not so different from a century ago when pigment and carbon prints were popular. Like lithographs, they didn't have deep photographic blacks and the softness of the processes enhanced portraiture. They also had a matt finish. Inkjet reproductions or versions of platinum prints are best done on these matt FB papers, and you can give a matt print that vintage look with the right grading.

When setting up the Epson 3800 printer (still going strong after 15 years thanks to Murrutt refillable cartridges and inks) I used some remaining Harman paper to be sure the matt setting was all running well after a few weeks printing only with gloss ink. Despite no profiles being available



FB Matt 285 just suited sea and sky scenes – and boats. From neutral to pure colour it just works. Left, each paper batch is numbered for those who want ultimate profiling. Below, comparing a near-black (values around 7-11 in RGB) with the maximum black of a Macbeth colour checker.

on-line now for such old paper, it worked well using a close modern equivalent.

FB baryta matt inkjet paper is more prone to handling marks than gloss or textured surfaces and much more so than fine art papers like Epson Hot Press (a smooth non-baryta matt). But it's nothing like those classic darkroom papers and you don't need to wear cotton gloves. 280-310gsm is light enough to load in the sheet feeder in a stack, maybe not an entire box of 25 but certainly a dozen sheets. The papers are also stiff enough generally to feed an A3 without a supporting card (advised for A2).

PermaJet FB Matt 285

We were able to obtain a sample of PermaJet's paper and make some test prints using their off-the-shelf downloaded profile (it is in the zipped complete set). Though it might seem contradictory, images with large areas of black look much better on this than on gloss or lustre. The matt black ink gives a very good d-Max and there's simply no reflected light, which makes positioning a display print much easier. A print without glass can be positioned directly facing a window, where glass in a frame or a different paper surface just will not

work. It is best to mount FB Matt in matte overlay, loose, rather than use any kind of bonding to a base. Wear cotton or silk gloves and if the image is dark, use a large make-up brush or blower to remove dust when it is on display.

Full bleed printing gave light bands close to the ends, but that's not the paper at fault. I've generally made display prints on oversize paper with white margins, A3 for an 11 x 14" or smaller overlay in a 12 x 16" frame.

Some FB Matt Baryta papers use paper setting such as Velvet Fine Art or Watercolor Radiant White which can only be selected if you use single rear manual feed. PermaJet FB Matt 285 uses the Epson Enhanced Matt Paper setting and the regular sheet feeder. Because of the matt finish the paper doesn't stick together and also grips and feeds reliably (if you have a 3800 you'll know this is often not the case). Maybe I would not stack a full box of 25 sheets but a dozen at a time, no issue.

The results were very true to the calibrated screen colours both on iMac 27" (2013) using Adobe CC, and BenQ SW240C printing from Affinity Photo on a Mac Pro tower with 8GB high-end display card. The paper is great for softer looks, like seascapes or vintage-style portraiture, but also capable of revealing very fine detail like fur or feathers, film grain or image noise. It's lovely for black and white especially if you use a NIK SilverEfex preset for a darkroom toned look. The paper combines surprising colour saturation with low metamerism making b/w prints neutral even from most plain CMYK inkjets, though six-colour or more with additional greys do this better. If you can sheet feed manually, it is possible to set the Epson Velvet Fine Art paper type for printers with more than six inks, and get PermaJet to provide a custom ICC profile. For printwork proofing, the PermaJet MattPlus 240gsm paper is the usual choice as you get 100 sheets for a little more than the £24.95 RRP of 25 sheets of the fibre-based 285. You don't ever need to make test prints on the 'special reserve'... keep it for the final product!

See: <https://www.permajet.com>



Picture yourself in a boat on a river* – and you could take trips where the sky does have diamonds...

Christopher Funk likes to “Travel like a local”. Wherever his destination, he’ll get onto social media and ask if they want to join him or show him around. They don’t even need to be a photographer – this way he can find places that only local residents know about. “My favorite part of traveling is getting to know the locals and meeting amazing people and tasting new foods.” He paused and then added, “More so than taking photos.”

Christopher wears a lot of hats – he’s a private pilot, he’s a coach for his brother’s Special Olympics team, he’s a retired real estate mogul – and he travels the world, bouncing between his homes in Florida and Ireland and exploring with his camera and drone; often doing promotional videos and stills for hotels around the world. One theme you’ll notice in his work is he likes to be his own subject – in a relaxing position, in a familiar setting with great light, sometimes holding an umbrella, usually taken with a drone. How does he get those shots?

Let’s start with the story of his first selfie, right. “That was in Bora Bora. I specifically picked that hotel because of that view. They had two pillars at the end of the dock. The left pillar was perfectly placed so the mountain in the background was centered.” So he scurried up a 10-foot pole to stick his tripod and camera up there. “To take the picture I used a little waterproof remote shutter I had in my hand.”

The shot below of Chris floating below glass was taken on a three-month cruise through the French Polynesian Islands and Australia. “That was one of my first shots to go viral. On my first trip to Bora Bora I thought how cool would it be if I contacted this hotel and asked, ‘Hey, can I stay with you guys for a night?’ ‘Sure, that’s fine’ they replied. ‘We’ll book you in one of the beach suites’. So they tendered us out to the hotel (that took awhile), and then I asked, ‘Do you have any of the over-the-water bungalows?’ ‘Since it took us so long to get you out here, sure!’ So they let me stay there for the

He fuels his world travel with his images, often posing as his own key subject in iconic scenes, and always making them sing with colour. Gary Friedman talked to Instagram star Christopher Funk.

**© J. Lennon*



price of their tiny beach bungalow.” He then had a three-hour window the next day to take all his photos. “I had to be quick because there was a little shark and sting-ray swimming by.”

He was walking along in Berlin one day and excitedly recognized the white building (right) he had seen earlier on Social Media. “When I walked up to the 60ft building I got excited as I noticed that I could access the roof! The sides go all the way down and connect to the ground. In between each narrow point on the roof is a small platform about four inches wide. I could carefully, and slowly, walk all the way up. What I thought was pretty cool was the roof is made of a hard rubber so it wasn’t slippery. As you walk up the narrow points it gets increasingly steep, almost vertical by three-quarters of the way up. It was pretty scary but exciting and that’s what I love about this getting this shot and will remember it forever!”

So he set his camera at the bottom, and put it on an interval timer to have it take a picture every two seconds. “I ran up there, and jumped and posed at the same time. I was actually really scared because the first few times I jumped and I landed, I had to land at an angle and then I slid back down. And then I had to run back up, jump, slide again until I got the perfect shot.” And then, as if it wasn’t obvious, he added with a smile, “The timing had to be really good.”

Probably the most serendipitous story he tells is of how he got invited to shoot at a resort in Greece. “Before COVID hit, I was working with the person behind the Instagram handle ‘Wonderful Places’

[instagram.com/wonderful_places](https://www.instagram.com/wonderful_places)

She invited us all over to Greece for her birthday. So we got together and did a big shoot of Cavo Tagoo, the big resort out there. 15 of us all got together and did a bunch of photos and videos and brought the resort from 500,000 to 1.2M followers. It became the most followed resort on social media.” In the week and a half he was there he took about 600 photos, and sent them about 250 finished images.

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“To this day they’re still using our photos.”

The serendipitous part is how he met the resort’s owner in the first place. “If I’m going somewhere, I just look for someone who’s posted from there recently on Instagram, and ask “Hey, do you want to meet up and shoot?” That’s how I met my buddy in Florida who has half a million followers. We became best friends after that. We later traveled to Arizona to shoot, and that’s where I met his best friend who was behind *@wonderful_places*.” Full circle.

So traveling like this has been his hallmark. Back in 2017 he was on the road so much he was home maybe two weeks out of the entire year. Some of it on cruise ships, some camping in National Parks, some of it fixing up his second home in Ireland.

The equipment he brings depends upon where he’s traveling – if within the USA he’ll bring his Phantom IV Pro+ which has its own 20MP camera. Outside the US he’ll bring his more travel-friendly DJI Mavic Air 2, which has its own camera and 48MP sensor. “I’m still blown away by the quality of that little drone.” For stills, it’s a Nikon D850 with at least three lenses: 14-24mm wide angle lens (“my everyday shooting lens”), a





24-70mm and a 400mm for safaris or big city stuff .

He also brings a set of Lee ND filters for extremely long exposures. “I go on a lot of cruises, and it’s difficult to take pictures of ports on a cruise (*like Santorini on the previous page, a night-time long exposure*) since they’re always packed. And so I use a 15-stop ND filter and a tripod to take a 3-4 minute exposure, long enough to average all the people away.” His favorite example of this technique is shown top left, in the Dark Hedges. “This is a place that’s always busy. There were about 30 people on the road and I had to stand still for 1.5 minutes to get the shot.”

Then there’s the image he took at Horseshoe Bend in Page, Arizona. “That’s a funny story. One of my friends has over half a million followers. I became friends with him and this is one of the first big trips I did with him through Utah, Arizona, and Las Vegas. We get to the Horseshoe Bend and we wanted to be there for sunset. Technically it’s a national park so you’re not allowed to sleep there, but I wanted to make it look like I slept there.”

So he covered his bases by taking a few photos without any props, then he set up the tent in just a few minutes. There were some early 20-year-olds on the side, watching what they were doing. “‘Yeah, we’re doing this for Instagram, and we’re making a youtube video as well’, I said. ‘When you guys come back we’ll show you some of the local spots’, they said. It turns out that, unlike the tourists, local residents



can have access to the river and you can camp down at the river bank.” In order to process that high-dynamic range image, he used a tripod and bracketed about 10-12 shots and merged them later in *Photoshop*.

“One of my favorite hotels is Ashford Castle in Ireland (*left*). I contacted them and asked if I could come and hang out, because they have a school of falconry there where you can actually walk around the grounds with a falcon on your arm.” He gave them maybe 20 pictures which they posted.

“The second time I went there they approached ME, and said ‘Hey, would you like to do another photo shoot with us again?’ ‘Sure, but let’s negotiate a bigger compensation so I can do something bigger for you guys.’ Techniques like this help break the ice with resorts and often result in repeat paid engagements later on.”

What impresses his clients the most – the stills or the drone footage? “They do love the videos; I’m not going to lie. They love little tidbit videos because they put them on Instagram Stories. But they liked the stills too; and not just the landscape stuff – sometimes I’ll go in and stage my photos with my Neewer flashes and light the interior with them (*TWA Hotel, right*). They like those the most.”

The most interesting place he’s visited, he says, was Lanzarote, in the Canary Islands (*above*). “It was very volcanic – it was really cool to just pop up the drone. On a lot of the island you’re not allowed to drone [‘drone’ is apparently now a verb – Ed.], So I got permission to fly my drone in a certain area where, when I popped it up, you had a view of ten or so little volcanoes which was quite cool.”

And one trip he found particularly memorable was in Finland, where he stayed in a hotel called the Arctic Fox Igloos (*top right*). The igloos are actually made out of glass so when you’re lying in bed they have a glass canopy so you can see the stars and, if you’re lucky, the Northern Lights above you.

“I was always dying to go there”, he mused. “I asked for a specific unit that was in the front, that’s the most





Many of Chris's shots are selfies – with him as a figure in the scene. Sometimes they feature friends or people he meets.



photogenic. “Well, we only have four available – pick what you want, said the hotel clerk.” The one I wanted was one of the four – “I’ll take it!”. Normally the Northern Lights appear between 2am and 7am, but their appearance is never guaranteed. He met one couple who had been coming to the hotel for six years and had never seen the Aurora. (“That’s an expensive miss at USD \$500 per night!”) So imagine his delight when he saw them the very first night!

“The hotel puts in a little buzzer in each room, and whenever the Northern Lights go off you hear a ‘bzz bzzz’. So the buzzer goes off; you open your eyes and the sky is green. Everyone is rushing out to get their cameras... I got really lucky with that shot. We were there for three days and two nights. We did the whole dog sled adventure. It was one of the best things I’ve ever done.”

One of the most challenging shots he’s had to take was the night shots of a SpaceX rocket

launch in Florida (*left*). “You go there, you get set up, then they cancel the launch. They did that 20 times to me! Or sometimes the exposure or the focusing is off and you can’t adjust for it because “infinity” on a lens isn’t really infinity. It’s frustrating.”

When he’s not traveling, Chris plays pretty much every sport imaginable, performs occasional maintenance on his properties, and devotes much of his spare time to his brother, who Chris describes as ‘special needs’. “He came to live with me around nine months ago”, he says. “My mom decided she likes her chosen lifestyle more than her son’s safety. So I was recently awarded full guardianship of my brother. So my life right now caters to him and taking care of him”.

So what’s next for Chris? “Now that the world is opening back up, you can expect to see me traveling more; either solo or with my brother. Hopefully get to travel with old and new friends. So, don’t be shy, say ‘Hi’.”





You can see more of Christopher's amazing travel photos on his instagram page at https://www.instagram.com/christopherfunk_/



Drone shots are very popular – along with movie clips.



21st Century DREAMS OF YOUNG GIRLS



Choosing work by Peter Rooney for this issue, we wanted to show how imagination mattered in this genre. The set-piece montages had a dream-like (or possibly nightmarish) quality reminiscent of illustrations in early books on Freud and Jung. But Peter's dream scenarios turn out to be more of a commentary on today's external world than the workings of the mind. Here's the background to the photographer and some of these visual stories.

Peter writes –

I was born in Fulham, London, in the 60s and although my father was an amateur black & white

Fifty years on, David Hamilton's airy Provençal 'Dreams of Young Girls' look more like dreams of a middle-aged male. The dream-like scenes PETER ROONEY places his subjects in are darker – whether the subjects are young girls or the older generation.

photographer and we had a dark-room at home, my own journey into photography – regrettably – wasn't to happen until many years later. I bought a Minolta camera and macro lens in the early 80s and fired off an entire roll of 36

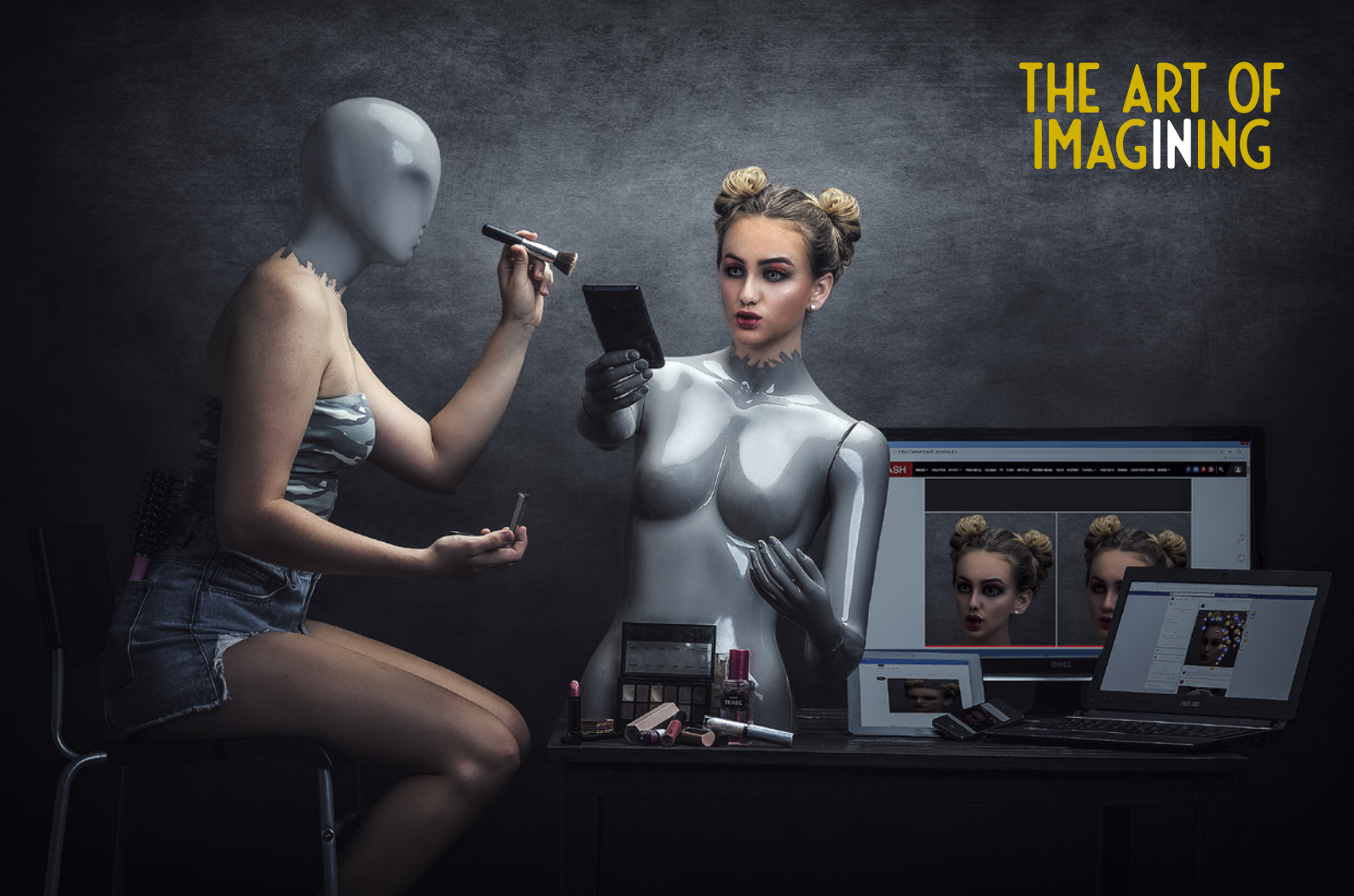
frames of ISO 400 colour film in the garden in about five minutes, convinced I would make the next cover of *National Geographic*. However, as I looked through the prints on my walk home, I soon realised that there was a lot more

to taking a decent photograph. When I got home, I gave the camera to my father and didn't pick one up again until over 30 years later.

It was my wife's decision to relocate our family to SE Asia (which ultimately meant I needed to find a new occupation for myself) that caused me to get back into photography. This time round, however, I decided to do it 'properly'.

I threw myself into an intense two-year long period of self-study, learning everything I could from Creative Live and various other online learning resources about

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lighting, composition, posing, and so on.

To begin with, I had no idea what my 'style' was, or what I was especially passionate about, so I tried just about every genre. But by paying close attention to images I

really loved – work by people like Sue Bryce – I realised I wanted to aim for portraiture, and that a fine art style was one I wanted to emulate.

The inspiration for my images comes from numerous sources.

Sometimes it comes from other photographers: I see an image they have created, and I think, "Wow! That's such a cool idea! Now, how can I put my own spin on that?". At other times, inspiration comes from the make-up artists I work

with: they might have ideas for looks they want to try, and then I envisage a scenario, story or a pose that would warrant that look, and the image evolves from that. This is what you're seeing in the two facial shots – the black and



white face under the black silk hood, and the face that is half 'normal' and half stylised skull. The MUA wanted to try some asymmetrical make-up ideas, and I finalised the concepts of the 'characters' we'd create.

Other image ideas come from TV shows and even well-known fairy tales. The idea for the two-headed girl came from the TV series 'American Horror Story: Freak Show' (if you've watched it, you'll recognise the character!). I

tried to imagine what growing up must be like for Siamese twins, especially if there is serious rivalry and antagonism between them. The image can be taken as either a depiction of Siamese twins, trapped in the same body and

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battling with each other. Or it can be seen as a single individual, with the two 'heads' representing the battle going on inside the minds of many young people nowadays between their self-loathing and their self-confidence.

The images of the Toymaker and The Toymaker 2 were inspired by the story of Pinocchio. All of the characters in them are friends of mine, with the two main characters being husband and wife. The comic twist I introduced in

Toymaker 2 came from the fact that this image was intended as a sort of satirical 'response' to the first one – the wife's mickey-take of her husband's original pose!

The shot with the mannequin came from two sources of

inspiration. The first was finding some discarded mannequins in a skip, and thinking, "They'd make a cool prop: what could I do with them?". The second was noticing the impact of the 'selfie' trend on young people like my daughters. I



feel the pressure they succumb to in order to look 'perfect' in social media posts is just one big exercise in homogenisation. They're effectively losing their own identity (hence the mannequin head on the girl's body) in seeking to portray

what they believe is a 'perfect' depiction of themselves which isn't actually real (hence the same girl's head on the mannequin body).

Mostly, nowadays my aim is prioritising narratives in my images. For me, this has become

the key component of what I would say is my 'style'. I am increasingly interested in creating series of images, too, rather than 'stand alones', and two of the images here (the ones with the rhino and the shark) are examples of that.

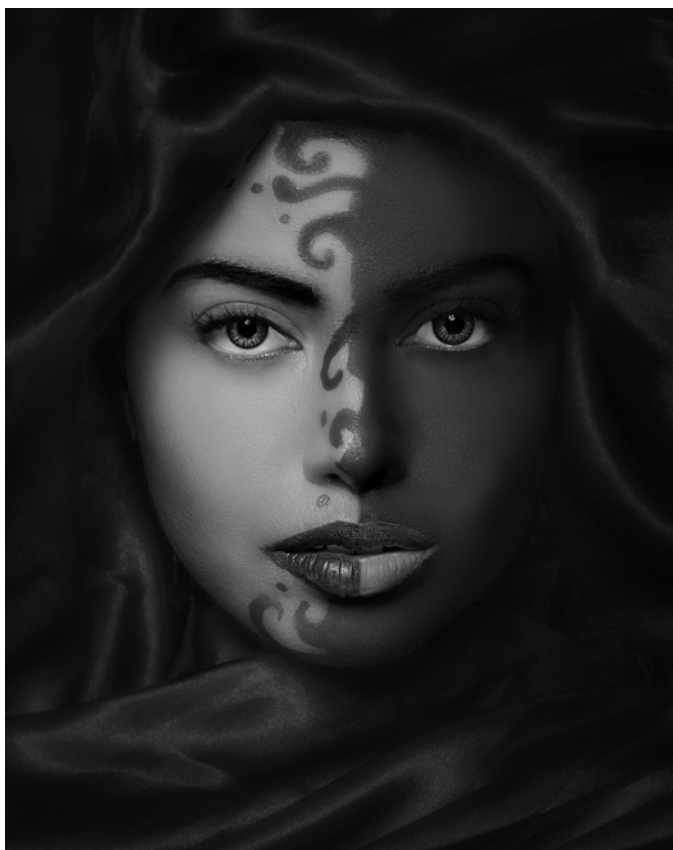
THE ART OF IMAGINING



Two examples devised to use the skills of a make-up artist – they still seem to comment on the psyche and society and are not just a visual exercise.

This series focuses on specific species that are being pushed to extinction solely by humanity's insatiable lust for their body parts: with rhinos it's their horns and with sharks it's their fins.

This entire situation leaves me speechless with anger: such beautiful creatures being wiped off the planet for the stupidest of reasons. Depicting the respective body parts for which they are hunted as being on fire is intended to convey the ideas of devastation and destruction. The common elements in the images – the child, the hourglass and the cuddly toys – all serve to accentuate the injustice of what is happening. I'm trying to depict symbolically the inescapable idea of time running out, and to highlight the fact that our children won't share the planet with these animals if we wipe them out – their only opportunities for 'interaction' with them will be through cuddly toy versions. The idea of the animals 'melting' away into the surrounding air and water



See: <https://www.peterrooneyphotography.com>
and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/peterrooneyphotography>

represents the way I see these species disappearing.

Due I suppose to the direction my photography has taken, the sort of commissions I do now are primarily quite creative portraits. The image on the front cover is a prime example: this client asked if I could turn her into Medusa. "I don't know," I said, "but I'll see what I can do!". The head-dress and costume were all made from scratch, and the client spent around two hours in make-up having the prosthetics attached to her face and her make-up done. There was a lot of post-production work involved to get the image to the finished state – things like grafting heads on to the snakes in her hair, and putting a snakeskin texture over their bodies (the 'snakes' themselves are just a load of lengths of rubber pipe).

Nonetheless, the client was ecstatic – and so all the effort paid off.





Turning the tables on the Toymaker theme above, Peter created the sister image below. All the pictures used here have been featured in the Image of the Month competition of The Guild of Photographers, but the rhino has been reworked with a new sky and shift in dominant colours.

THE ART OF IMAGINING





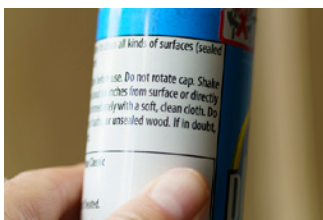
Tamron 150-500mm f5-6.7 Di III VC VXD

The difference between getting a great shot and not can be down to whether or not you've got the gear with you. Today it's hard to miss out on a general scene, a friend, a group of people, a building or even a night scene or dramatic interior because most smartphones will get you at least a 12 megapixel shot with excellent detail. Some will do extreme wide-angle better than system cameras of any format.

But they won't do long telephoto views as 'zooming' is digital and loses resolution, and they won't capture small subjects from respectable distances even if macro is possible almost touching the focus point.

This is where lenses like the new Tamron 150-500mm f5-6.7 zoom, only available in Sony E/FE mount, win. It is the most compact such lens when set to 150mm though solid engineering weighs in at over 1700g. It is shoulder bag or mini backpack friendly, unlike Sony's own physically long 200-600mm. It's exceptionally sharp wide open and maintains a good aperture – f6.3 to just before you hit 500mm and f6.7, f5.6 right to 390mm, and f5 up to 240mm. It has useful but not intrusive optical stabilisation, and a close focus range which allows around one-third life size between 0.6m@150mm and 1.8m@500mm.

In practical terms this means at 150mm you can focus on subjects on the ground at your feet, or even held at arm's length. Yes, I checked. I don't have abnormally long arms and I could!



Not a very inspiring shot but shows the scale (standard furniture polish spray can in my left hand).

The normal zoom lock fixed the lens at 150mm for carrying. This is the first lens to add something I've

been asking for repeatedly over the years – a zoom lock which works at any focal length for when you are shooting. The regular lock is shown in the top photo below.



The free lock is shown by the white ring – you just push the generous zoom barrel forwards, and the focal length locks. It takes just a gentle nudge back towards

the camera to restore zoom operation. This works well because if you reach for the lens to shoot, you'll generally grasp the zoom barrel when it is aiming downwards and lifting will cancel this lock. At no time did using the free lock result in any delay.

The lens breaks from Tamron's matching set of Sony FE glass by having 82mm filters (of course) and VC stabilisation. This has three modes – standard 1, a panning mode 2, and a framing priority

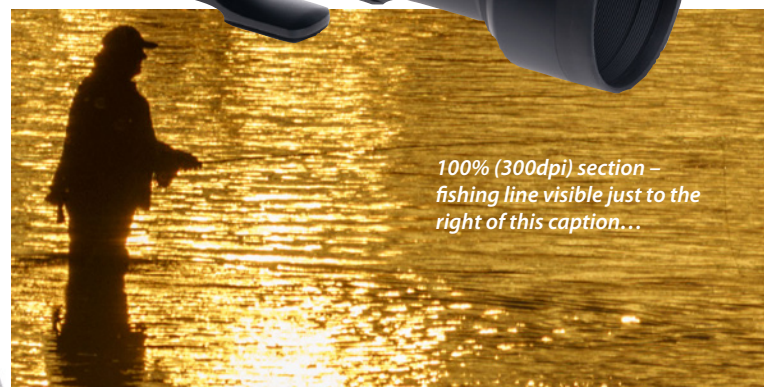


The latest in Tamron's series of lenses dedicated to the Sony system is built to out-perform expectations

mode 3. If you've ever used a stabilised lens and seen the viewfinder image float or wander making composition difficult because the IS kicks in on first shutter pressure. This lens already suffers from much less 'swimming' anyway and mode 3 stabilises your EVF during composition, as well as the vital moment of exposure. It uses more battery power. The VC works alongside Sony's in-body stabilisation but there is no cumulative bonus. If you switch it off, you also turn off in-body IS.

Working with the VC is the best AF drive Tamron has made,

The Tweed fisher, facing page, was taken at 244mm and full aperture of f6.3 (to blur out thousands of mayflies) 1/4000s at ISO 100.



100% (300dpi) section – fishing line visible just to the right of this caption...



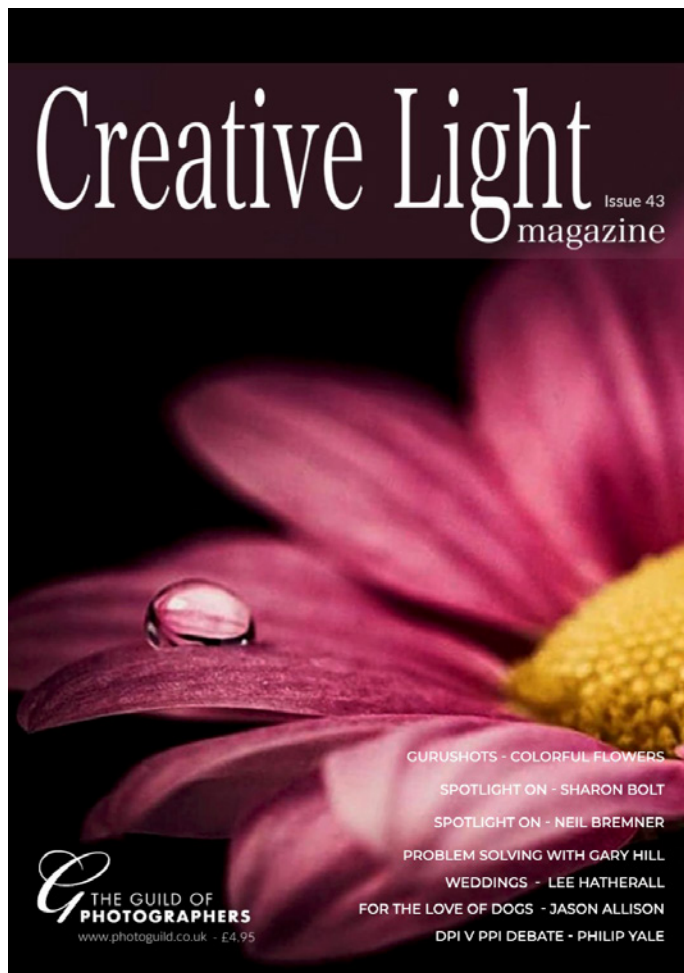
A selection of 500mm shots – the lambs are at $f11$, the hillside landscape at $f8$, and the three birds' eyes all at $f6.7$. The distance in these cases is just beyond the close focus limit, to allow the AF to function properly, so probably around 1.9m and all are uncropped full frames. Although the Sony A7RIV high ISO is not as noise-free as their 50, 42 or 24 megapixel sensors the difference between the bottom shot at ISO 160 and the Guinea Turaco (right) at ISO 2000 is not extreme.



VXD – Voice-Coil Extreme Drive. There must be a very small and light internal focus group because it just snaps silently into focus almost every time. When it fails, it's down to choice of camera settings not the lens. All the functions are enabled, including human and animal eye-detection and tracking. Flexible point also enabled eye AF locking on. I found the three-zone AF on the A7RIV generally better than Centre or Wide when moving subjects demanded something less picky than the flexible spot. Because the lens focuses so close and the working distance changes as you zoom, it's easy to get a touch too close but this didn't result in hunting, just in an out of

focus not-quite-there. Zooming out or shifting body position back normally fixed this quickly. I found continuous AF essential with live subjects. The bird eyes were all photographed at the same time at Five Sisters Zoo near Livingston, and are all at 500mm set to 1/500s shutter priority and auto ISO, so at full aperture for all shots. It never missed, and on a wide range of zoo subjects out of over 60 shots including a good few 'losing the wire' there was only one mis-focus. The focus limiter offers either 20m to infinity or full range. An option of 20m to closest focus would have been useful and I never needed to use the distant setting. The BBAR-G2





Free to read online – Creative Light bi-monthly e-magazine –
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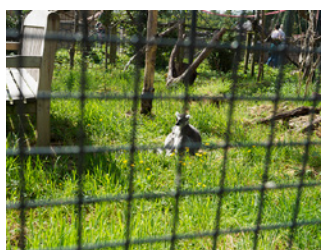
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The 82mm front element of the zoom means wire or netting is easily lost by working at full aperture. Here, at 460mm, that is f6.3 as this lens does not drop to f6.7 until set to 480mm or longer. It is f5 up to 250mm, then f5.6 up to 400mm. These are very good full aperture/zoom figures.

multicoating eliminates flare even with the hood reversed (practical as the zoom ring is still accessible). A direct sunset sun can produce a symmetrically positioned flare spot but if it's dead centre there will be none. For the shot of the angler in the river at sunset, the focus point was the figure and the 60MP file when viewed at 100% shows the filament of the cast fishing line with perfect clarity. The bayonet reversible lens hood, below, fits securely and easily and has a soft silicon front rim to resist impact. The detachable rotating tripod mount collar has an Arca-Swiss foot, and two well placed strap lugs

which allowed the camera and lens assembly to be safely hung on a strap. I also kept a second strap on the camera itself, slightly longer, for when changing lenses. Having the 150-500mm on its own strap avoids needing to put it down.

The Tamron 150-500mm is a lens we can recommend without hesitation. It has a high specification and a superior build quality to support the density of 25 elements in 16 groups. It costs £1,379 retail including VAT and it's worth every penny.

– David Kilpatrick



<https://www.tamron.co.uk>





Aim for the skies – from the depths of the galaxy to castles in the clouds



*With a thirty-five year history in photography, from a schoolboy freelance for local newspapers all the way to covering international sports for media and picture agencies. His photographic areas of expertise focus on news, sports and events.
robgrayphotographer.co.uk*



Well, when you get that call warning you the deadline for the article is approaching fast, and 'can you do something connected with imagination?'... it's scary that you are old enough for the first thing you think of to be *"Imagine there's no heaven, It's easy if you try, No hell*



below us, Above us only sky"...

Once the laughing stopped I was left to ponder what to scribe.

Let's take just part of that – "Above Us Only Sky".

As photographers we take many hundreds of images, sometimes in a day or sometimes over several months in a project or assignment, often taking an odd frame as the light or composition grabs us at a moment in time.

But how often do we go out and just spend time to look up and see what is there – above us? Many people capture images of landscapes, seascapes or even townscapes, without a care about the sky and they edit and rework

in post capture. Worse still they replace the whole sky! I remember having once viewed a submission panel for a well-recognised photographic society or pro association, matters not which. The images were all clouds, blue skies and nothing more than skiescapes.

It could be time to step outside your comfort zone, take an upward tilt to that tripod or make that composition extreme and create an image about the sky above us.

Long exposure of the stars? Find a space with less light pollution – those new downward-facing streetlights have helped. Tilt the lens heavenward. You may not see the Milky Way (other sweets are available) but after letting your eyes adjust and *not looking at your phone*, find some foreground interest using a wide-angle lens and try a 30 second exposure at f4 on ISO 1000. That's my normal base. The camera can show the night sky as we imagine seeing it.

The next time you're out and you like a landscape in front of you don't forget to include the sky and make it about what's above you – break the rules, go 90% sky 10% land.

Since the start of the pandemic and the ongoing crisis, many photographers across the country have had to use their imagination and creative talents and skillset in new and forward-thinking ways to keep working, for those that have weathered the storm and raised their skills to take on the new challenges and hopefully prosper in future.

Keep looking forwards... and occasionally look upwards! Remember why you are a photographer, and create the images that fill your imagination. Realise what you have visualised, and produce photographs that represent what you want to show to your clients or customers.





The dream lens of 60 years ago which made Canon's reputation – and lived on into the world of TV filming



Tim Goldsmith has spent much of his working life in the photographic industry. From working in a central London studio straight from school, to marketing manager at Paterson and full time camera dealer. He is currently a self-employed photographic auction consultant. Tim is a long-time member of the Photographic Collectors Club of Great Britain (PCCGB) and the Stereoscopic Society and is a trustee of The Disabled Photographers Society. You can reach him at info@cameravalues.com or on Facebook as Monark Cameras <https://www.monarkcameras.com>

I might not have a particularly vivid "imagination" (the theme of this issue), but like Martin Luther King Jr., I do have a dream. Actually, at the moment I have two "Dreams". One is on a Canon 7 in my own collection and the other has just come in with some unusual lenses for the photographic auction I help run. Both are examples of the legendary super fast Canon 50mm $f0.95$ lens, often referred to as their Dream lens.

When introduced in the early 1960s, this was the fastest standard lens with a 39mm screw mount available. Like several other very fast lenses, the rear element had to be slightly ground away to make room for the rangefinder coupling. This lens only fits the unique external bayonet added to the Leica screw mounts of Canon 7 series cameras.

Then, in the early 1970s, a version of the Dream lens for use on television and ciné cameras was introduced, easily identified by the engraving on the inside rim. My TV example has W1000 stamped on the mount locking flange which means I can date its manufacture to October 1982.

With the exception of the rear element, both lenses look the same but the still camera version weighs 600gms whilst the TV version "only" weighs 545gms, even with a C-Mount adapter. And although at first glance the mounts look identical, the TV version will not fit directly to a Canon 7 camera so, at a later date, many TV lenses were converted for use on Leica M series cameras. Luckily this TV lens came with a rare C-Mount adapter so I thought I would try it on my MicroFourThirds OM-D, for which I already had the correct connections. Sadly, no luck as the mount adapter on the camera didn't allow the lens to fully screw in, only holding on by a few threads. With such a heavy (and expensive lens) it didn't feel at all safe. Luckily, I managed to find a x2 C-Mount tele converter which then provided enough clearance to allow the lens to screw all the way home. If I am working things out correctly, I think I now have (roughly) a 200mm $f1.4$ lens (a 50mm lens on a M4/3rds = 100mm, plus a x2 converter = 200mm, less



The C-Mount adaptor and TV mount lens (left hand in shots) work on the MicroFourThirds OM-D camera with no cut off on the 13 x 17.3mm format despite the very small mount aperture – like the TV cameras it was made for.



one f-stop for the converter).

So how was this combination in use? I think "hard work" just about covers it. Even though the electronic viewfinder of my camera remains bright even when a lens is stopped right down, there is no focus confirmation indication. Add that to the almost non-existent depth of field with this set-up and the ungainly way I had to hold and focus the lens, I really struggled. The other, more obvious problem is that using a $f0.95$ lens wide open means you often run out of shutter speeds, even on overcast days and with a low ISO setting. The top speed on my Olympus OM-D is 1/4000s and even then I was occasionally overexposing. Stopping the lens down to $f11$ or so cured the problem, but then that makes using this lens almost pointless. It really wants to be used wide open.

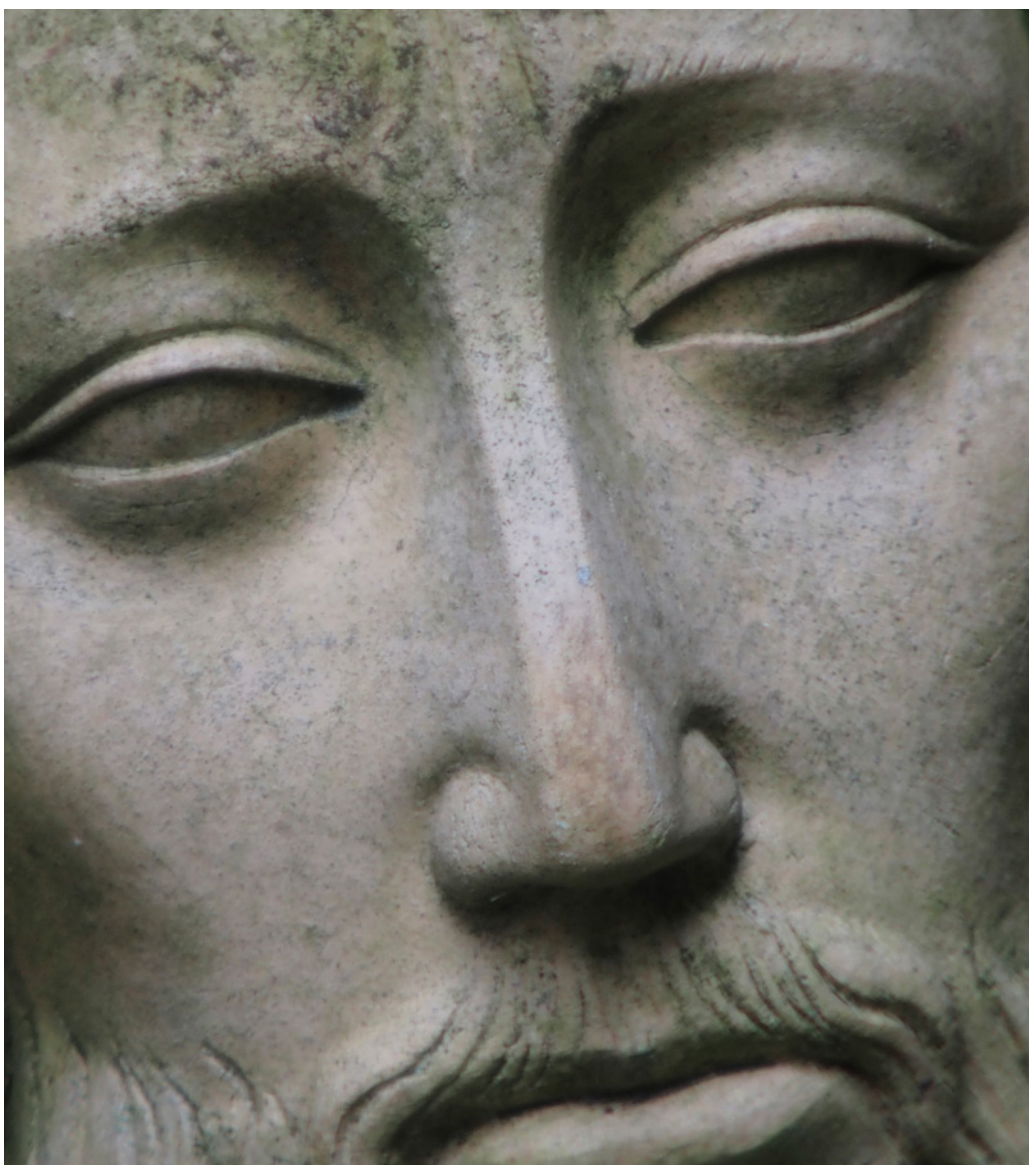
Next was the quality of the results. Wide open the images were soft (possibly compounded by my focusing difficulties) and suffered from colour fringing. In images of an unloved planter in a very dark corner of my garden I noticed the colour of the image in the viewfinder changed considerably as I stopped down. Once I was down to $f8$ or $f11$ things improved dramatically, producing some pleasing results.

These lenses have achieved cult status today and high prices around £2,000 abound. Even the prices of original lens caps, hoods and filters will make your eyes water.

Although they wouldn't be an exact comparison, I had hoped to run these two lenses side-by-side and compare the results. I shot a roll of film with my own lens on the Canon 7 over a weekend and popped into my local Kodak Express franchise first thing on Monday. I was told they would send it off on Wednesday and it would be back the following Wednesday... I make that a 10-day turnaround, a far cry from the one-hour service we all got used to having not all that many years ago! I nearly told them they might want to reconsider the name of the shop, but thought better of it.

My saviour however was Dave at AG Photolabs in Birmingham. I sent the film to him (Freepost) Monday afternoon and by lunchtime Tuesday he emailed me back a set of digital files and the prints and negatives arrived Wednesday morning. Sadly, the only colour film I had to hand was over 35 years out of date and unsurprisingly the images suffered considerably. On to the backburner for a second try I guess.





Top – tests on Olympus digital format of the TV lens at $f0.95$ and $f11$, but with 2X TV converter and correspondingly close focusing with the MicroFourThirds crop.

Centre – tests on (outdated) colour negative film of the Canon 7 version, again at $f0.95$ and $f11$, with the limitations of focus distance given by the rangefinder lens.

Bottom – a digital test at full aperture, and a 300dpi final print size clip. The level of detail given by the lens is excellent. At wide apertures there can be visible changes in the colours of the out of focus image depending on the subject and lighting.

Olympus E-M1 MkII bargain deals

The camera division of Olympus changed hands last year, much as Minolta's camera brand did over 15 years ago. Many owners thought this meant the end of the system, new products and support. The Olympus UK headquarters, with London gallery and memories of the glory days with David Bailey as champion in the days of the OM-1 and OM-2, was replaced in January by OM Digital Solutions with dedicated staff who immediately found themselves plunged into Covid home working.

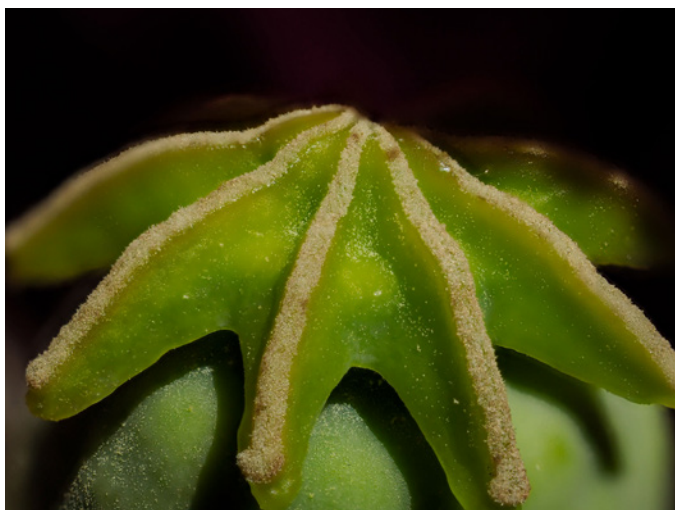
In the meantime Olympus EU, from a German warehouse and shipping base, became an unexpected survivor of the Brexit shambles. Orders placed from the UK to the EU continued to be delivered without unexpected demands for duties and VAT, reaching individual UK customers quickly enough and with excellent communications and documentation. The website and web shop functioned perfectly and have continued to, at a time when countless industry on-line presences have deteriorated (perhaps under the pressure of their success, perhaps through neglect of backroom code).

In May, Olympus started selling off the excellent O-MD E-M1 Mk II which has been updated to Mk III. In fact the upgrade is no way as significant as the qualities the Mk II brought to the range, even when later E-M5 and E-M10 models have pulled in features which made E-M1 series owners envious. All the three size and build levels of the OM-D series now offer more clever functions than you need. They all have unique features related to the LiveMOS sensors which have enabled live long exposures (see the exposure build up as the shutter remains open), ProCapture (never miss the critical moment in an action continuous sequence), general and macro focus stacking, and at the top end high resolution multi-shot using interpolated pixel shift.

The big changes in the Olympus production and distribution setup have not spelled the end of the brand – instead there have been on-line deals such as the OM-D E-M1 MkII with pro 12-40mm f2.8 for £1099 – and an extra lens for £1



MFT may be the best format for macro. Above, large silk poppy at f11 on the 30mm macro positioned as shown, top – a decent working distance. Below, not the closest 1.25:1 but around 0.8:1, focus stack 15 shots step 7.



It's easy to forget just how useful all this is on a pro spec body like the E-M1 MkII until the price falls to a level where the body and one of the best lenses made costs about the same as a decent one-inch sensor bridge camera.

The web shop showed all the normal prices and then a skinny banner at the bottom with an offer on this now-discontinued but still very up to date model. The 12-40mm f2.8 Pro lens is still totally current and one of the best zooms made in this 24-80mm equivalent category. It's rugged and well enough waterproofed to get soaked in rain or snow or survive a white water splash, just like the body. It sells for over £800 retail and good used examples fetch £500-600. So getting this brand new with E-M1 MkII body for £1099 made the body at most cost £599. Looking at deals it's better than half the price of the MkIII, but remember it's a closeout price on a four year old model.

Original macro offer

What made this deal even better was that the site initially added the option of buying the 30mm f3.5 Zuiko Macro lens for just £1 extra. These are worth £200+ in new condition on the used market, often more. They are not popular, perhaps, because some buyers don't understand that on MicroFourThirds, a 30mm lens is equivalent to a 60mm on full frame. The favoured 60mm f2.8 Zuiko Macro is equal to a 120mm and that's a pretty long macro lens (still one of the best made and well worth buying).

The 30mm a very small lens physically and tapers towards the front rim. It does focus insanely close but achieves 1.25:1 before your subject threatens to touch the front glass which is only 14mm diameter. Since this is MFT and a 13 x 17.3mm sensor, the crop factor is 2X already making this extreme close up equal to 2.5X magnification on full frame.



The 12-40mm showing how focus stacking in-camera works. Left, framed view at 34mm and $f4.5$ focused on second finial. Right, 15 frames stacked at focus step 2 (range is 1 to 10) still keeps the background slightly defocused. Some very minor artefacts are produced, and easily retouched if needed.

To actually get that on full frame with a 50mm macro, the closest equivalent, you would need 300mm of bellows extension. Most macro work is done without needing this image scale! On the Zuiko 30mm you'll get 6cm between the lens and a typical subject 3 x 4cm in size.

Where the 30mm comes into its own is focus stacking. It's compatible with in-camera merging of a stack and the great depth of field and wider angle of the 30mm make it easier than with the 60mm. Without resorting to software macro focus stacking working from a series of raw or JPEG files, a final JPEG is created in the camera which will not display any artefacts unless something has moved or the focus spacing has been too ambitious. This function also works with the 12-40mm lens in this deal, and it's worth noting that only specific lenses support Olympus special features such as 18fps sequence shooting or 60fps Pro Capture bursts (where a silent shutter buffering stores a series saved when the shutter is fired, showing the moments before the photographer does so). You may find lower cost Panasonic MFT lenses for sale, or older Olympus ones, which look like bargains until you realise some advanced

functions are disabled. MFT now goes back 13 years and was the first true mirrorless system. It's come a long way from those early 12MP sensors.

Changing offers

By the time I came to write this in June, the offer has changed to the 45mm $f1.8$ Zuiko for £1 as the bonus lens. This is a 90mm equivalent portrait lens, desirable for its bokeh and usefully 5mm longer and over a stop faster than the 12-40mm. I would not have wanted the 45mm and I'm glad I picked up the deal with the 30mm. Others have been glad they held off as they didn't want the 30mm but did want the 45mm.

The widest angle lens for the Olympus MFT system is the 7-14mm $f4$ Zuiko, used here at 7mm and $f5$ which gives great depth of field. Taken on the E-M1 MkII at 18fps, 1/3200s, ISO 800. Report and pictures: David Kilpatrick.



Both have always been affordable and subject to package deals and offers. It remains to be seen whether a different option like the 17mm $f1.8$ arrives in turn or whether the whole deal ends because the MkII finally sells out.

How good is MFT?

The 20MP sensor of the E-M1 MkII is identical to the E-M1X and MkIII. It's equivalent, roughly, to cropping from an 80MP full frame sensor. I decided to test against a 13 x 17mm crop from the Sony 60MP full frame sensor, and also against a pixel match (20MP cropped, which is a touch larger as the Sony pixel pitch is 1.13X the Olympus). Testing ISO settings up to 16,000 and raw

files, my conclusion was that the Olympus sensor has a slight edge in terms of noise levels, visible from ISO 800. You would expect it to be worse but it is not.

If you sample a 60MP full frame down to make a 20MP file, the big sensor wins hands down. But if you actually want a telephoto which delivers, the 75-300mm on MFT is equal to a 150-600mm full frame, and would need 340mm on cropped 60MP to get the same subject size and a 20MP file. The MFT sensor has an AA filter so it's never as crisply detailed but this may help reduce noise. It also has a highly effective system for dust elimination which means MFT files generally *never* need dust spotting.

Whether I'll keep the E-M1 MkII long-term depends on what kind of photography I may do in future. There is no doubt about the macro advantages, the light system weight and the extended battery life. Combined with the dust and water sealing of the body and lenses, it's a great travel kit. The introduction of a new 8-25mm $f4$ adds to that and also gives a firm clue that the new Olympus setup has NOT abandoned the future of the system.



For offers and ordering see:
https://shop.olympus.eu/en_GB

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REARVIEW

A selection of recent Gold winners from the Guild of Photographers Image of the Month competition.

Main image –
by Sinéad Bunn
Instagram @sineadbunnphotography

Right hand column –
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<https://www.davidconway.photography>
Centre, by Rob Howarth
<https://www.robhowarthpghotography.co.uk>
Bottom, by Jayne Bond
<https://www.studiomlino.co.uk>





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REARVIEW



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