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CAMERACRAFT

RE-INVENTION ISSUE



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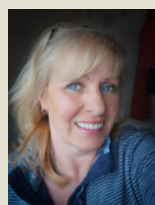
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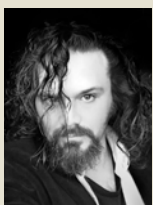
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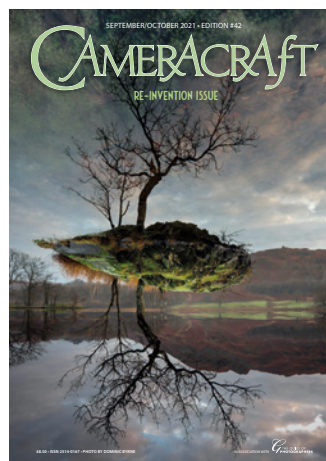
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From analogue
to digital

monarkcameras.com

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Sigma's mirrorless 150-600mm Sport undercuts the DSLR version



REDESIGNED to take advantage of mirrorless

mounts – initially for Sony E and the Leica/Panasonic/Sigma L fitting – the big surprise about Sigma's new 150-600mm is its £1199 retail price combined with a Sport designation.

In DSLR versions, there's a choice between Contemporary and Sport, with the fast focusing and better weather sealed version costing £1329 though some dealers have it discounted to £1199. The Contemporary version is £949.

The new 150-600mm DG DN OS f5-6.3 Sport is starting out at £1199 which is an exceptional price given the current trading conditions for worldwide imports to the UK.

The lens has optical stabilisation rated at four stops and a 'magnetic sensor' AF mechanism. The Dual Action Zoom system enables both push-pull and twist zoom. It has a dust and splash resistant design,

and customisable switches help adapt quickly and easily to different shooting styles. At the wide end of 150mm the lens has an impressive minimum focusing distance of 58cm (280cm at 600mm). For L-Mount users only, two dedicated teleconverters (1.4X and 2X) allow AF even up to 1200mm.

With 25 elements in 15 groups, new coating and mount design reduce any risk of into the light flare and ghosting which can be a problem with lenses of this power and range. The grip has a magnesium tripod socket and removable Arca Swiss-type foot. Maximum magnification ratio is 1:2.9 at a focus distance of 180mm, it uses 95mm filters, measures 109.4mmx263.6mm and weighs 2,100g (tripod socket included).

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

Elinchrom One – a truly pocketable TTL location flash for the pro system



ELINCHROM has launched a very compact Elinchrom ONE as their first battery-powered monolight. Similar in size and weight (1.5kg/3.3 lbs) to a 70-200mm lens, the ONE is ideal for travel and location work.

The internal Li-ion battery can be charged from any USB-C source and yields 725 full-power flashes on a single charge. With Active Charging, the ONE can be connected to power and continue shooting while charging. Designed around a bare flash tube for optimal light spread, it has a newly developed Elinchrom OCF light-modifier mount which is natively compatible with most Profoto® OCF light shapers. An included Elinchrom OCF to Bayonet Adapter mates it to existing EL accessories.

The Elinchrom ONE 131Ws power is claimed to match other 200+ Ws units. Its ISO100/m GN is 11.9 with the Diffusion Dome attached; when combined with the HP Reflector it can achieve GN 45.2. It has a touchscreen interface with newly designed menu structure. The bicolour LED modelling lamp matches 2700 to 6500K at 3000 Lumens/CRI 95. It recycles in 0.9 seconds at full power and maintains a +/- 150K colour temperature, and syncs up to 1/8000s with HSS. TTL with Manual Lock. Kit prices start at £799.00 inc VAT with accessories starting at £24.00 inc VAT.

<https://theflashcentre.com>

Tamron's first Fujifilm X mount zoom, fastest ever 35-150mm, and new 28-75

INITIALLY in Sony E-mount only, the new Tamron **35-150mm f2-2.8 Di III VXD** (Model A058) is claimed to be world's first f2 maximum aperture full frame wide range zoom lens. It is said to offer outstanding optical performance throughout the range, with a quiet fast VXD linear motor AF. It also has good close-focus down to 0.33m (13 in) at the wide end.

This lens introduces new Focus Set Button settings which can be modified by connection and a dedicated program. These include **A-B Focus** – Set 2 focus positions (A and B) and make the focus automatically shift between A and B; **Focus Preset** – Set your desired focus position and move the focus to the recorded point by a click; **Switch Focus Ring Function** (Focus/Aperture) – Switch Focus Ring Function from focus adjustment to aperture adjustment; **Assign function from the camera** – Assign custom functions from the camera body to the Focus Set Button. Arrival in shops and price not yet known.

In the same mount, there's a brand new version of the 28-75mm f2.8 Di III RXD – the **28-75mm f2.8 G2** which has a new optical design transforming the sharpness (30lp/mm) ratings in MTF tests as well as the contrast. This lens also has a TAP-IN accessory customisable button on the barrel, and uses the VXD AF motor instead of RXD, which should improve AF performance and silent operation.

Finally, Tamron is moving into the field of Fujifilm X mount lenses – recently the only other mirrorless system supported has been MFT with their excellent 14-150mm. Now there's an **18-300mm f3.5-6.3 Di III-A VC VXD** (Model B061) – the world's first1 all-in-one zoom lens for Sony APS-C mirrorless cameras featuring a 16.6x zoom ratio, and it is also being released in X-mount.

This lens, unlike the full frame 35-150mm and 28-75mm above, has VC image stabilisation to suit the camera bodies which often don't have it in this class. The close focus of this lens is achieved at the wide end, with a semi-macro 1:2 half life size (equal to 0.75X taking the crop sensors into account) at 18mm and 15cm focus. It has a moisture-resistant construction, fluorine coating and a zoom lock. It uses the VXD voice coil drive linear motor AF system.

We don't have any dates for availability of these new Tamron lenses but all say within 2021 subject to the conditions prevailing with Covid.

<https://www.tamron.eu>



Dealer's Digest

Why the part-exchange and used market is now the driving force in a reformatting High Street retail photo sector – and it's not all down to online competition.



The photograph is of the Christmas 1982 window of Harpers photographic in Woking, Surrey. Hard to believe I took this nearly 40 years ago! I had been working at Harpers for a few years and loved it. It was founded in 1925 and is one of the oldest camera shops in the UK – my old boss Martyn Rees still runs it and we are in contact on a regular basis.

The window was jammed full of cameras. SLRs from Canon, Nikon, Minolta, Konica, Yashica, Olympus, Pentax and more plus many compacts let alone the new-fangled Kodak Disc and ever-popular Polaroid cameras.

We were part of a buying group called Spectrum that allowed the smaller dealer to buy at better prices as part of a group. Special promotions advertised in *Amateur Photographer* magazine ensured really good business. It was normal for me on a Saturday to sell up to ten SLR kits with lenses, tripod, gadget bag, filters and so on.

We took in so many films to be picked up at night to go to Kodak that special containers had to be built. Christmas was crazy and every year I had lost my voice by the time the big day came.

In 1991 after a bad recession I went self-employed, but stayed at Harpers running a new company above the shop specialising in professional photographic equipment. As the shop was based in Commercial Buildings, Commercial Way, I called it Commercial Cameras.

Perhaps I can offer an insight or hindsight into how retail has re-invented itself to cope in an ever-changing market. I thought this would be quite easy having my finger on the pulse of this addictive trade.

The characters, the reps, the distributors' trips, the rivalry, the changing fashions, the rise of digital imaging, phones, the loss of friends and business colleagues.

I was wrong.

It dawned on me that the retail photographic business has not been re-invented at all. In fact it has hardly changed – which I suppose accounts for the fact that only about 10% of the bricks and mortar shops that were around into the 1980s are still going. The business has been through the hot wash and just shrunk!

In Shropshire where I am based, now that Jessops has gone into administration I am the last man standing with a retail shop



apart from Currys. Neighbouring Herefordshire has only London Camera Exchange in Hereford.

These shops are still mostly run by enthusiasts for enthusiasts, like myself – a meeting-place of like-minded souls, of friendship and banter, something that online shopping is devoid of.

The commercial reality of running one however is stark. With a dealer margin of maybe 10% gross when selling a major product such as a DSLR set against rent, rates, wages and other overheads it is little wonder retail photographic outlets are at an all-time low.

A leading distributor when I checked this week said they had about 80 regular customers and about the same who ordered infrequently. Phones destroyed the compact camera market and now threaten the lower end of the DSLR market. The rise of the online retailer with lower overheads impacts heavily. We are also dealing with with a shortage of supply caused (we are told) by a shortfall in semiconductors and a bit of Brexit for good measure.

A lot of dealers have turned to the growing demand for quality used cameras and lenses, part-exchange being vital to offset the low margins on new. If not coming in via part-exchange, the problem for the dealer is not in selling kit but in getting it. Lower new margins are also offset by dealers selling accessories that offer higher returns.

This market really has been changing fast with a huge leap in values of the most desirable kit such as Hasselblad, Leica, Nikon, and vintage lenses. There's a real demand for 120 rollfilm models like Plaubel Makina or Yashica 124G and large format like Ebony and Linhof. Quality fast lens compact cameras

such as Yashica T4, Olympus MJU, Contax T2 and the Ricoh GR series are selling at stratospheric prices. How long this bubble will last I do not know, but some models if faulty are difficult at best and impossible at worst to get repaired. Classic V can service and repair V series Hasselblad normally with no problem such as the 500C/M but if you have an 200 series I do not

know anyone who can help due to the electronics involved and the lack of spares. There's been a rise in demand for and value of certain fast Canon FD lenses like the 24mm f1.4 SSC for video use. If any reader needs a current valuation please give me a call – happy to help.

Adapting to the challenges of change is nothing new. I have just been re-reading the *British Journal Photographic Almanac* of 1959 for I find that the past sometimes holds the answers to current questions. In 'Challenge of the Future' by Charles Fraser FRSA AIBP he looks back at the previous 50 years in photography and to quote – "We need not gaze into the magic crystal or consult electronic computers about the future that lies before us. All we need to do is to read the message straws in the wind and put some recognised facts into perspective".

I do not know what the next 50 years will bring but I am more than happy to have devoted the last 46 to this wonderful trade..



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The return of The Photography Show – the NEC opens its doors from September 18th to 21st



<https://www.photographyshow.com/craft>
New opening times: 9am to 5pm every day

Despite premonitions that the physical, bricks-and-mortar Photography Show might not happen this year and would be forced to retreat on-line yet again, not only is it going ahead mid-September but it's got massive support from exhibitors and the photographic community.

We simply do not have the space in this entire magazine to list everything which is happening at the National Exhibition Centre from Saturday September 18th to Tuesday 21st. You really need to visit The Photography Show web pages to get an idea. You will find, for example, over 120 listed speakers giving talks or demonstrations and the range of topics is huge.

The principal sponsors of the programme are Graphistudio, EPSON, Canon, Cewe, and Affinity Photo. The list of exhibiting brands runs to over 160 though some are hosted by their distributors or retailers. Most of the major names are present including several who moved out of live photo shows in recent years. You'll find Sony, Canon, Nikon, Olympus, Sigma, Tamron, Fujifilm, EPSON, Fotospeed, Ilford, Hahnemühle, Interfit, Samyang, Tetenal, LCE, Cameraworld, WEX and a

Make sure you have your COVID-19 pass

The NEC will be implementing COVID-19 status checks at entry points to the building. Please be prepared to show proof of your status on arrival. Accepted proof of status includes:

- **The NHS Covid Pass via the NHS app** (note this is different to the NHS COVID-19 Test and Trace app). See NHS website for details. We recommend setting this up at least 48 hours before the show to ensure your records are showing. Certificates from outside England, including Scotland NHS, Wales, Northern Ireland, EU countries and worldwide will be accepted.

- **Proof of immunity** (shown by a positive PCR test result lasting for 180 days from the date of the positive test result and following completion of the self-isolation period.

- **Negative lateral flow or PCR test results** text or email, received within 72 hours prior to attending the event.

If you would prefer not to use the app or don't have a smartphone you can obtain an NHS COVID-19 Pass letter (proving vaccination status only) by calling 119 or visiting the NHS website.

Make sure you're free from symptoms

If you have any of the advised COVID-19 symptoms please do not attend the venue. If someone in your household COVID-19 symptoms please follow Government guidelines.

Pre-book your event tickets

Please register or book your tickets for the show in advance, and have your ticket or badge ready to present at the show entrance.

Pre-book your event parking

This removes the need to queue for or use any on-site payment machines. And pre-booking will also save you money! Pre-book parking here: <https://www.thenec.co.uk/visitors/parking/>

Pack your face covering

Face coverings are no longer mandatory but will be encouraged and recommended in crowded and enclosed settings. Such spaces include NEC shuttle buses and public areas, show theatres and seating areas, in show gangways and stands during busy times. You may be asked to wear a face covering on a stand, especially when exhibitors are busy.

surprising contingent of small specialised exhibitors like Solarcan and Adaptalux.

There is a new Analogue zone and this is reflected in some of the talks and demos. You can even that vital part of modern life, Zoom, taking a stand – had the situation been otherwise, they could well have been hosting the entire show! Photo walks and short workshops (another innovation) are added to the programme.

The Super Stage, which is essentially a lecture theatre separated from the exhibition with a ticketed £12 per event entry you can buy along with your main ticket, has an interesting line-up of prominent speakers.

All this is set in the same environment as before but with some big changes. The NEC has installed a brand new air conditioning and circulation system with provision to have large doors fully open. The aisles of the show have been widened to allow more personal space and there will be active management of visitors to ensure that popular spots don't get crowded. Also – see the centre column – you simply won't be able to turn up on a whim without having evidence that you are a Covid-safe visitor.

A different season

When the show was held in March, it was not unusual for snow to be on the ground and the closing time saw darkness about to fall (as our lead photo shows).

The mid-September show, an even earlier timing than the popular German photokinas of the past, is three months before the winter solstice where the March shows were three months after so there's still about the same length of day but it's in summer time so evening arrives an hour later. And it's in the early autumn season which can be far warmer than early spring.

You can expect the whole show to have a different feel with more potential to be outside, better light if you get a chance to test a camera or lens, a more pleasant walk from the car park (if you don't take a masked bus ride) or to the nearby Resorts World with its shopping mall and restaurants. Overall there should be a real feelgood factor just because of the new seasonal slot in the photographic calendar.

What we can not do here is dig up the usual archive pictures to show the show itself. The last show was in March 2019, two and a half years before this one. The interior of the exhibition halls will look different and so will the visitors in café areas or seated (and masked) for formal presentations whether on stands or in the Super Stage theatre.

There will still be sales of kit directly at the show and the chance to see and try out products. Every exhibitor will have a Covid safety process including cleaning and quarantining items so don't expect to be able to just pick up a camera in your bare hands and put it up against your face. With dealers right now already cleansing demo kit and putting it aside for 48 hours before the next customer can handle it, it will be interesting to see how all the stands tackle the requirements of safety.

We don't have a stand, with *Cameracraft* now our only publication it's not feasible. We know that every day at the show will see hundreds of our readers attend and many meet for the first time in months – or years!

– DK



The NEC has brand new ventilation and air conditioning systems installed post-Covid – and its large spaces will be used to make sure there are fewer queues and it's less crowded.

Left, the aisle space is being expanded between the stands (back in 2017 when this picture was taken a change in the booked hall space had the same effect and it was far more comfortable to walk round).

Below, talks on stands will happen but stands may ask audiences to wear face masks and have a reduced capacity.



DANNY



CLIFFORD

Stay
head and
shoulders
above
the rest –
whatever it
takes

Although music photography is my main thing, I decided to shoot the Royal Wedding. In 2011, William & Kate's wedding was fast approaching. With millions of people descending upon London, it wasn't possible to be in more than one position.

I chose to be on Whitehall. I knew that the happy couple, once married, would leave Westminster Abbey and travel slowly along Whitehall back to Buckingham Palace. Alarm set for 2:30am, I swiftly jumped in the shower. My camera gear was ready prepared and double checked, obviously not forgetting my plastic folding step that elevated me about a foot above everyone else.

I arrived in central London around 3:15am. I had to park about a mile from the actual event. I loaded up my gear on my back, filled both arms and started to march through the streets. Weirdly, they were becoming very crowded, even that early. I got to a spot on Whitehall that suited me and I had to make a snap decision to stay or move on.

became too compact there – one with 400mm f2.8, another with 80-200 f2.8 and third with a wider angle 24-70mm f2.8.

So, there I stood silently waiting for some action. I was really only there for one shot. That was all I could realistically hope for and that was going to be tricky. However, in these situations, I think of it as life and death. I know in the real world this is unimportant, but, for me right then it was very important.

The sun was now up and the streets were absolutely rammed. Finally after about eight hours of standing on a small plastic step with three bodies and lenses and back pack on my back, the procession started. First to arrive were the guests coming from my right and travelling down to Westminster Abbey. Lots of unknown guests and distant Royals started travelling past at about 20 miles an hour.

This was all well and good had it not been for the people in front of me – in fact everyone in the front five rows. As soon as any vehicle or mini bus went past, hands went up flags got waved. Cameras

Suddenly I thought, this is going to be a problem. Start considering plan B or even C. There I stood for another two hours just patiently waiting. Then just after 1pm, I could hear the crowd outside Westminster Abbey cheering and shouting. So, I thought, here we go. Wake up and get ready. Yes, I could see an open coach with William & Kate heading my way from my left. I could also see to my horror, what looked like a Mexican wave of hands, children, flags, objects etc all high in the air.

The coach was travelling at about 10 miles an hour and I knew that I had quite a short window to get the shot. Maybe two seconds! They were getting closer and closer, but, the hands and all obstacles were getting higher. I couldn't actually now see the coach or the happy newly-weds. So, as they approached the area I need to shoot them at, which was three quarters on, I hoped that they would look my way at that moment too. I did what one has to do.

I had my 400mm big lens up and ready, with big lens hood. Just a second or two before the coach was in my line to shoot, I leant forward and banged the lens on five or six people's heads in my way as quickly as I could. They all ducked and parted like the Red Sea. I framed up fast and pulled the trigger. Kate and William looked in my general direction and bingo. I got it!

I immediately said I was so sorry to all of the lovely people in front of me. They were all so understanding. I was prepared for someone to kick off, but, nobody did. They were all very nice. I did tell all of them that I got a lovely shot and I promised to send them all a print of it, which I did. So, after all that, I got about 2-3 seconds of shots. With that D3 I think I got around 20-30 shots in the time. However, only one or two shot did it for me and here is one of them. This particular shot did get published in many magazines and newspapers around the world and still gets used quite a bit to this day. Anyway, more importantly, when you just have to get that shot, you have to be creative and quick... bang a few heads and ruffle a few feathers..



The pavements were filling up very fast. I just stood behind about 5 rows of people, who were already in position. Anyway, there I stood minding my own business with a few inches space either side of me. I managed to get three Nikon D3 bodies out before it

went up in the air... (babies and small children too! I even thought someone held up a microwave (only joking). Seriously though, every single hand or item held up in front of me either blocked my view completely or knocked the focus out.

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>





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Just exactly why Sony took the trouble to introduced the LA-EA5 adaptor when the A7RIV arrived I'm no longer sure. As with the digital ECM-B1M high end hot shoe microphone, the lack of compatibility with the entire system of earlier camera bodies limits the appeal. For just a few new full frame bodies, this £269 adaptor enables almost all Minolta/KM/Sony A-mount lenses to work without needing a pellicle mirror even if they have the old so-called 'screw drive' mechanical coupling for an in-body AF motor.

Nikon has not done the same thing for pre AF-S lenses such as AF-D models which similarly used a linkage to the body. The FTZ adaptor is similar to Sony's LA-EA3, giving AF for lenses which have a built-in AF motor and just AE with others. Nikon's Z-mount adaptor is an identical £269.

Canon's EOS R adaptors for EF and EF-S lenses don't have this distinction, as all Canon EF mount AF lenses have been internal AF motor from the start. They do vary in motor type, with the ultrasonic USM models far better at mirrorless AF. The basic adaptor is under £120 but two premium versions add a control ring and drop-in rear filters, a trick which the other makers have missed. It makes EF fisheye and ultrawide lenses which are front-filter averse very much worth keeping around.

Any adaptor with electronic connections, with or without AF enabled, will normally feed lens data to the camera's in-body stabilisation. If the lens focal length shows up in EXIF data (in *Lightroom* or *Bridge* for example) the stabilisation should work well.

In the Leica/Panasonic L mount system there's no legacy of older lenses, but as with Sony for many years and the competing systems in future independent adaptor makers enable many different lens fittings to adapt to the slim mirrorless bodies. This is because the average mount to sensor distance of a DSLR is 43mm, and the average for mirrorless is 18mm. That vital inch is enough to accommodate an adaptor with a motor, one with a mirror and AF sensors, or one with field reducing converter optics that turn a full frame f2 lens into an APS-C f1.4.

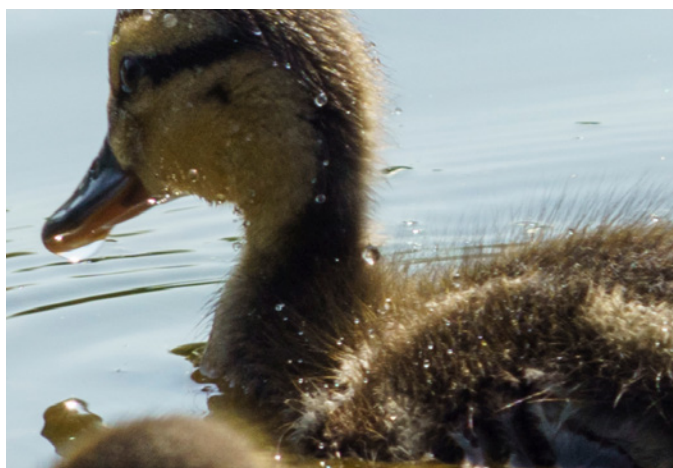
ADAPTED FOR SURVIVAL

by David Kilpatrick

You've got a cupboard full of old AF lenses and they're worth pennies on eBay – but are they even worth the cost of getting an adaptor?



At two stops down from full aperture, the 100-300mm Apo Minolta has absolutely no colour fringe or LoCA problems and a 100% clip from the Sony A7RIV file shows it's hair-sharp with AF bang on the target duckling. But at f11 nothing else in the shot is sharp. You'd need to be shooting at f64 to get all the family in focus at 300mm on 60 megapixels.



Over the past ten years my November 2010 *YouTube* demonstration of the many adaptors made for the E-mount has notched up over 130,000 views – and this was made under six months from the launch of the E-mount system, NEX-3 and NEX-5 cameras. It happened that way because Sony made the mount specification public and permitted third parties to make accessories, many ready by *photokina* 2010 just three months after the cameras went on sale. See: <https://bit.ly/3AGSvUz>

At this time, sensor based stabilisation did not exist. Manual, purely mechanical adaptors have never provided focal length info to the camera body but all cameras with stabilisation of this type allow manual selection of focal length through an on-screen menu.

How it all works

The LA-EA5 adaptor reveals a specific issue with older independent lenses in A-mount – the native lens range had a very limited series of

identity numbers (two-digit code) and Sigma and Tamron made lenses which had no Minolta equivalent. Generally, these simply don't autofocus but some will, including the excellent 90mm Tamron SP AF Di Macro.

Testing the LA-EA5, I needed to get some original A-mount lenses. The Tamron macro was only £139 from London Camera Exchange's used stock. From a private Facebook seller, I picked up a Minolta 500mm RF f8 mirror lens just to see if the AF would really work. The answer is that despite dating from 1989, it did, with surprising speed. This didn't help with final capture as the adaptor and lens mechanical drive did something common, a little 'kick' after focus with shutter lock on. Using rear button focus fixed this for some impressive results even on 60 megapixels, but there's no way you would ever want to shoot with this rather than, say, the Tamron 150-500mm at 500mm and f8.

A non-D Minolta Apo 100-300mm f4.5-5.6, good glass but an early 5-contact distance encoder, provided surprisingly good and so compact even with the LA-EA5 attached it could compete with a native 70-300mm for convenience. AF was noisy and slow but accurate. The later A-mount 70-300mm SSM G would no doubt work really well with its built-in AF drive, but it's above twice the size! The 100-300mm reminded me that lens designers have forgotten how to do some things well.

For just £20 on eBay, I picked up a copy of the first AF Minolta I ever used – the 35-70mm f4 with a hybrid glass-plastic aspherical element, in 1986 the first ever lens of this type. This was a real surprise, as high in resolution as some of the latest glass when stopped down to a typical daytime working aperture like f8.

With these classic 1980s to 90s Minolta AF lenses, the LA-EA5 proved worth the expense. The on-sensor focusing is SO much more accurate than the Phase Detection via pellicle mirror of the LE-EA4. This accuracy transforms the performance of older lenses which were probably never focused consistently on SLRs or DSLRs. Now, if old AF lenses

appear in fleamarket sales I can at least try them (we don't have the benefit of US-style 'thrift' shops where Leicas are found for the cost of a burger).

I should not forget that my Jintu Canon EF adaptor opens the door to countless old Canon lenses, though few have the character of the old Minolta AF 'series one' glass.

But – why bother?

Even when the adapted lens shows current functions like Eye AF and Subject Tracking as active, the speed and accuracy of all adapted lenses is always inferior to new native mount designs.

These also keep evolving. I've used Tamron 28-75mm f2.8 lenses since 2004. Every revision – which includes the Sony 28-75mm f2.8 SAM A-mount made by Tamron – has given better sharpness and corner to corner coverage. The latest 28-75mm f2.8 Di III G2 VXD replaces the Di III RXD and it's not just a big upgrade to the AF drive, the MTF function of the new design improves on what was already excellent wide open.

So, adapting older lenses may provide a few pleasant surprises

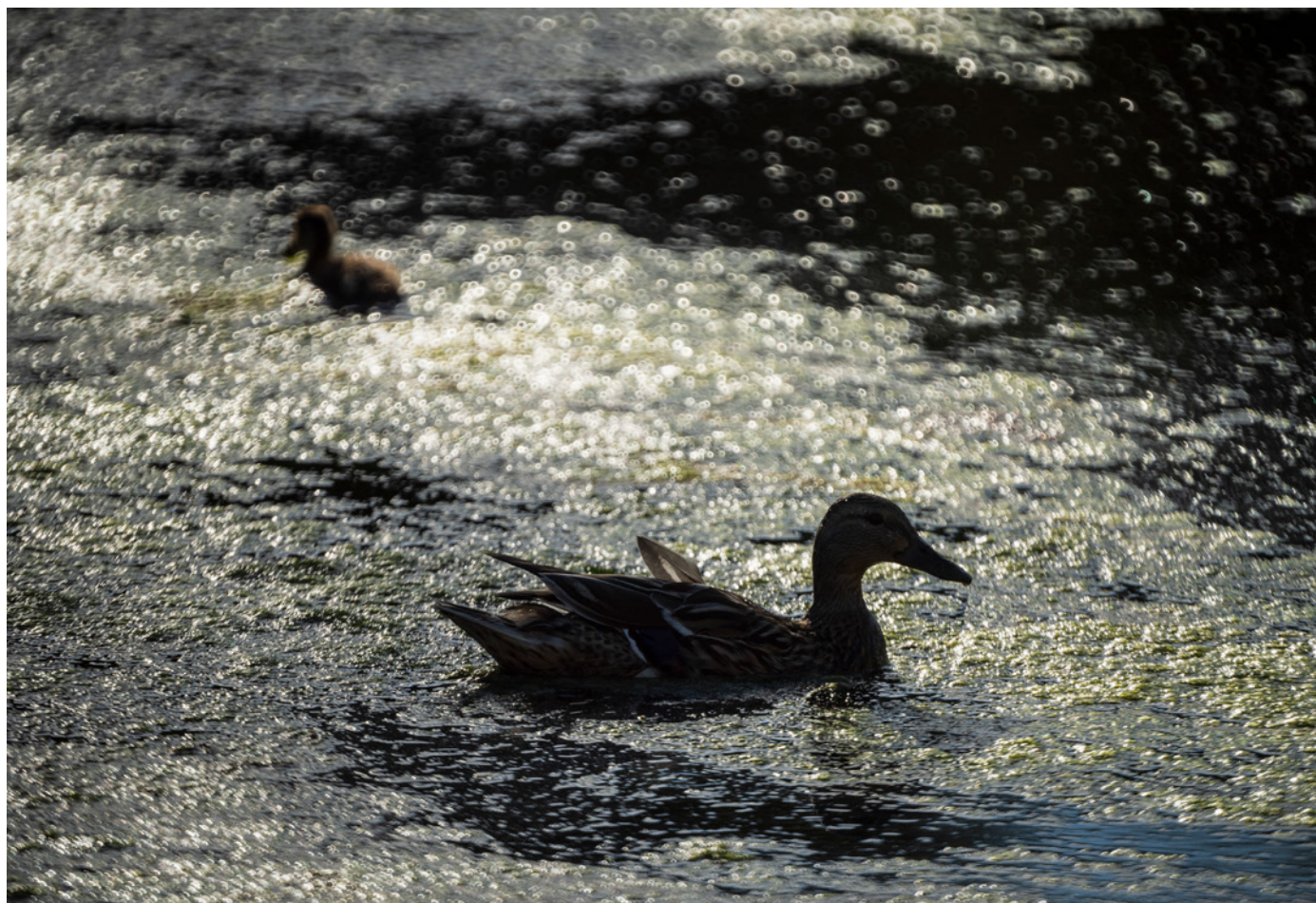


but in general terms they are for experiment and fun only. The advanced in lens design, mount materials, waterproofing, coating, AF drive and electronic coupling put the latest glass from all the mirrorless makers way ahead of anything they made for DSLRs. Even very recent DSLR lenses are being put in the shade a few years on by smaller, lighter, sharper designs in FE, R, Z or L mount (and MFT and Fujifilm X of course).

The very first cameras were, you will recall, 'mousetraps'. Right now the industry really has invented better mousetraps, and there is no point trying to re-invent your legacy glass with the help of adaptors and new bodies. You can adapt it to let it survive for occasional use. Perhaps you own something like an Irix 15mm manual focus ultrawide in Canon EF mount, and for the specific use in real estate it's going to be ideal on your Canon R. That won't be the case with your old 150-600mm AF when the new ones are so much better all round.



*Above, from about a quarter of a full 60MP frame, Tamron 90mm f2.8 SP AF Di macro in Sony A-mount.
Below, distinctive mirror lens highlights with 1989 Minolta AF 500mm f8. Both used on Sony LA-EA5, AF enabled.*





Find your new self by learning from others – the value of workshops, organised shoots and competition

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>

As photographic creatives we can be a solitary bunch at times usually content with photographing what we are used too, and staying within our own little creative bubble, only venturing away from the norm if we get a request from a client and learning what we need to get the job done.

I'm as guilty as the next person in this respect, and for most of the photographic life I just went along content in my own little bubble and for the most I thought I was doing 'OK'.

The reality is I wasn't growing as a photographer or a creative, after I joined the Guild of Photographers I started to interact with my peers, entering Image of the Month to see how I fared against my peers, and my eyes where opened.

Now let's get something straight – comparing yourself against your peers is completely different to fulfilling your client's needs. However, though the two are different they are not mutually exclusive, and one does impact the other.

If you are brave enough to compare yourself to your peers, you may find chinks in your armour. You may find you need to improve in certain aspects of your photography – the result is the same. If you take these shortfalls as a steppingstone to further improve your photography, then in turn you become a more rounded photographer for your clients.

But where do we go to learn? Who do we trust? Now this process varies from one person to another, I personally have learned from online resources and books. But I have always found learning from a workshop the most effective way to gain and retain new skills.

Not all the workshops I have attended are in my genre – in fact 90% of them cover fields I will never go into. I wanted to learn the processes behind what the photographers staging them produce. I wanted to understand how they approached the creative process. Understanding someone's thought process is deeply rewarding, and more than often helps you look at what you are photographing from a different perspective.

Who have I learned from?





Well, the list is not very long but it is very varied, I have learned from judges within the Guild, from fellow photographers some of whom I would consider competition, and from events outside the Guild of course. My thought process has always been simple – ‘I like what this photographer creates and I want to understand how they do it’.

Now you ask why? Do you want to emulate their work?

Well no, I don’t – but I will come away and try to recreate it, this means the techniques I have learned will be retained and I can call on them at any time.

The main benefit from learning from others this way is that you get access to techniques, equipment and situations that you may not normally have available to you. This allows you to test out ideas in an environment which will allow you to grow as a photographer, indirectly. You then can start to add these techniques and skills to your own repertoire, in turn helping define you as a photographer and refine that ‘style’ that you have been seeking.

I have attended both workshops and portfolio days and been inspired either at the event or afterwards to create images that I would have never even thought of before.

At the end of the day, we will only grow as photographers if we allow ourselves to learn from others. To this end we should take every opportunity to soak up every bit of information from our peers – don’t be afraid to ask for help, it doesn’t mean you are weak. On the contrary it means you are strong and you want to be a better photographer.



Top left: ‘Paparazzi’ – this was taken during the day with flash to create a night-time scene, the car was a non-functional prop, and I changed the background in Adobe Photoshop.

Top: ‘Spotlight’ – taken on a portfolio builder day in a building I would never gain access to on my own, again using flash to create pools of light, edited in Lightroom only.

Above: ‘Dance Like No-One is watching’ – taken one early morning in Leeds, inspired by a dance workshop I attended the previous weekend. I was lucky to find this location and have a few stragglers who didn’t mind being in the shot.

Left: ‘Lonely’ – inspired by an art nude workshop I had attended, not ‘my bag’ but the locations gave me great inspiration and encouraged me to create a series of images.



The call of the re-wild – wolves and lynx in the lens of your future?



Honey Bee collecting pollen, Canon 1DX MkII, Sigma 180mm macro lens.

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



Above left, Red Deer munching on leaves in Richmond park. Right, Exmoor pony grazing on shrubland in Dorset. Below, Fallow Deer in the Cairngorms. All taken with Canon 1DX MkII and Canon EF 100-400mm.

Rewilding is a term used a lot these days, and for good reason.

There is no doubt we need more space for nature, more space for our health and well-being, and, as a matter of urgency, we need to combat climate change. Individual and small group projects, alongside national and international initiatives are gathering speed but there is so much more to do.

Recent years have seen a mass of beautiful meadows and roadside wildflowers. Field margins creating corridors for wildlife, and individual gardens transformed to wild havens, but as these flowers wilt and die attitudes towards them change. They are seen as a messy eyesore. There are reports of individuals having notes put through their letterbox, and councils inundated with complaints and requests to 'tidy up'.

There is no doubt there is a continued need to reinvent the way we think about our local, national and worldwide environment and the wildlife that lives with it.

Biodiversity encompasses all life on earth, as well as the eco systems in which we all live, and each species has a crucial role to play. As a species is lost it impacts drastically on the ecosystem. By re-establishing species and restoring eco systems we replenish life.

Keystone species play a critical role in defining and maintaining the ecosystem and whilst some are predators not all are. By consuming plants, herbivores control the biological aspects of



the ecosystem. Understandably, the reintroduction of certain species, such as the Eurasian wolf or Eurasian lynx, is daunting for those who are concerned about predation, but for many it's a sign of hope that we can reverse the years of harm inflicted on wildlife from the very large to the very tiny species. Bees, for example, are crucial pollinators, supporting the growth of trees, flowers and other plants which serve as food and shelter for other species.

The Rewilding Britain website lists a group of species as 'Rewilding Superstars'. Alongside the Eurasian lynx and Eurasian wolf are red deer, fallow deer and wild ponies.

The deer population is a major shaper of our landscape. Through grazing, trampling, nutrient recycling and seed dispersal they help to maintain open spaces which have a significant impact on flora and woodland structure,

supporting insects and invertebrates and encouraging natural regeneration of shrubs and trees. There is a downside though – with no natural predators the population needs to be monitored.

Wild horses and ponies also play a leading role in rewilding due to their selective grazing of tougher grasses. In reality there are no truly wild horses in Britain but semi-feral horses, such as Exmoor ponies, are being used as part of conservation projects across the UK. They are extremely hardy due to their double winter coat and have the ability to thrive in all sorts of habitats.

The natural world is an incredible force. It underpins our economy, our health, and our very existence, but, because it is all around us and 'free' we have often taken it for granted and over exploited it. Our challenge now is to rethink and reinvent how we rewild, regenerate and revive the most precious thing we have.



Poppy in a flower meadow, Canon EOS R5 with RF 100-500 lens.





Photo Ken Hubbard: 150-500mm | 500mm | F/6.7 | 1/2500 | ISO 800

We've got you covered



Tamron Sony E-mount lenses are specifically designed to maximize the potential of your Sony full-frame and APS-C mirrorless camera. Their extreme portability and light weight design enhances the limitless versatility of each lens. A key feature of these lenses is the amazing

ability to shoot close-ups, especially with a shallow depth of field. All lenses in this series also feature a moisture-resistant construction and amazing coatings to keep them protected from the elements. Who says great things can't come in small packages?

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ENGAGING EXPERIMENTS

Optical adventures with Emin Kuliyeve and his shoot for Yiwei and Charles in New York

Few professionals are willing to take the risk of using adapted lenses even though LensBaby and Lomography have built their businesses replicating the effects of vintage and 'found' glassware. Emin Kuliyeve is an exception.

David Douglas Duncan's work with prisms and glass in front of the camera 50 years ago resulted in his book *Prismatics* of 1973 and the launch of generations of prisms and special effect filters. Emin treads in the footsteps of Duncan by finding and using not only a great range of manufactured

lenses, filters and attachments but also anything optical he can re-purposed to create unique images. Mirrorless cameras from Fujifilm and Sony have helped him put all kinds of glass into place, from old projector lenses to dismantled elements. Using prisms and mirrors, kaleidoscopic and extreme focus effects he is able to transform the New York settings for one of the premium offerings in professional art photography today – the pre-wedding shoot.

Some UK photographers, before Covid travel restrictions hit the market, were handling similar commissions for couples often from mainland China and South-East Asia where it's become almost a tradition to stage a projection show of adventurous and romantic shots of the couple during wedding festivities. It can also be a honeymoon shoot shown later at a party, especially if the newly-weds have been able to do a world tour or visit some iconic cities like New

York, London, Paris, Rome or Venice. The photographic work can range from accompanying them on a whole trip or meeting up at the choice destinations – or as often happens in Scotland covering just one location with the benefit of local knowledge.

Emin knows exactly where to go and how to use the New York settings which feature in his shots – where to get the couple to go, where to find his viewpoint, which architectural features provide









reflections or optical effects of their own. He also uses a full range of contemporary glass from makers like Voigtlander and Samyang, but will often work with manual focus only – the exact reverse of the 10,000-shot autofocus high speed sequence wedding photography popular today. His subjects must work with him to create the unique views and may, like Yiwei and Charles, be actors in scenes which almost need a stunt double. Emin himself is a graduate in both photography and graphic design.

You can follow Emin on Facebook (where we found him) – [em34](https://www.facebook.com/em34) – and see more of his work at

<https://www.em34.com>

– DK





Learning to light – and to recognise light which is there for the taking. It's the key to better studio and location work.

Part One of a new series looking again at a familiar theme

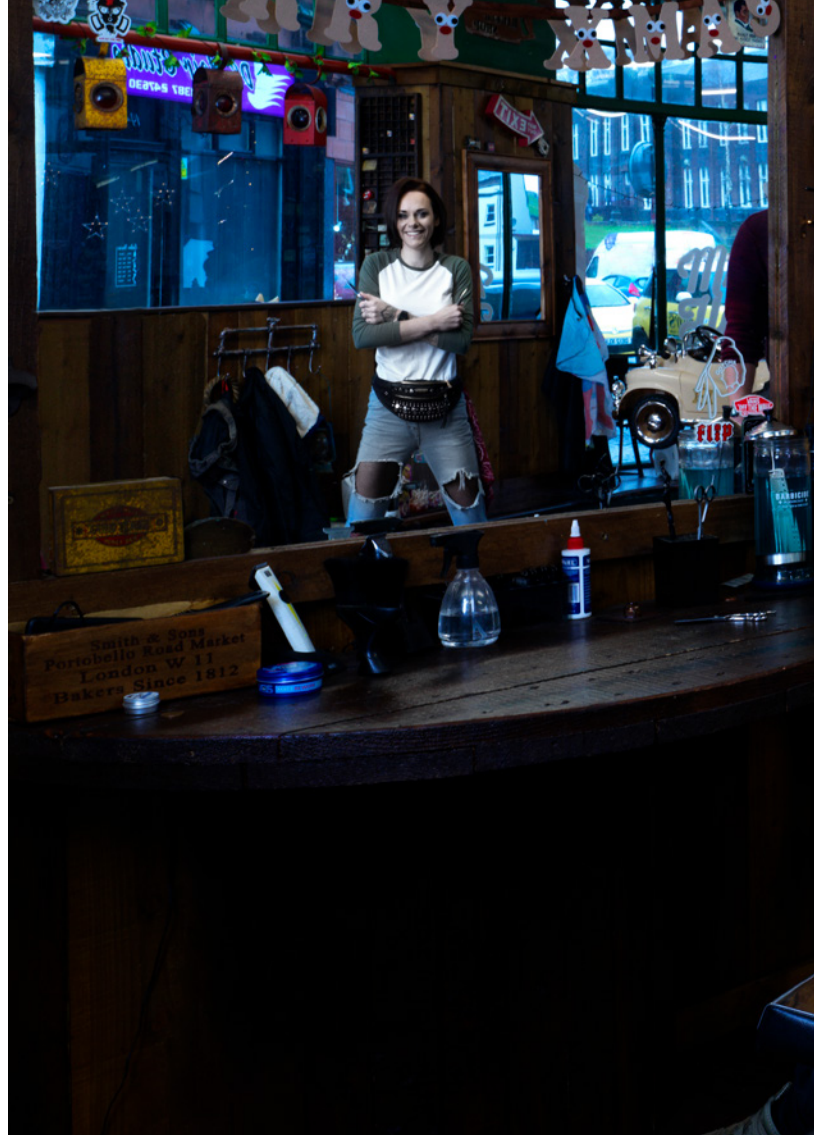
Kenny is currently one of the most successful One 2 One Business Consultants and has lectured on both photography and business matters in over 16 countries.
Photography Website: kennethmartinphotography.com
Training Website: thestudiadoctor.co.uk
If anyone would like to find out more about Kenny's TCMP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

Back in the late 1980s I wrote a series of articles, along with Mark Cleghorn, for *Amateur Photographer* magazine, called *Face Facts*. It caused some controversy amongst the professional ranks as the letters of vitriol piling up in my hall made clear. "What are you doing showing amateurs how to light properly?" and "You will destroy our living!" and much worse, no actual death threats but close.

I still have these letters in my archive, of course they seem ridiculous now but looking back at the actual articles recently I realised why they were the definitive guide to professional lighting at the time and virtually everything I wrote throughout the series holds true today. So I thought it might be the time to revive and update the series for *Cameracraft* magazine. I expect exactly zero correspondence and no controversy from the articles this time and I hope my simple pared down way of looking at light will help those new into portraiture and indeed hopefully give some old seasoned professionals a jolt.

In my opinion the direction and quality of light is the overriding aspect of my portraiture – not the styling, not the pose, not the background and not even the expressions (although in combination all these need to be evident to achieve portraiture of true excellence). It's the light first for me every time. I know photographers who select the background first which normally renders the sitter in less than perfect light and then use artificial lights, flash, LED panel etc to correct it and make a decent image. Using my method of 'light first', you really do not need to worry about how beautiful the background is, as you can soon knock a not-perfect background out of focus by selecting a wide aperture.

When I attend a professional portrait commission, an executive portrait for instance, I leave the studio with a boot full of lighting kit, stands and modifiers. However once I reach the location of choice, an office, factory or whatever, the first thing I do is to explore the area to 'find' the light, a chink coming from a window, an interesting pattern coming



from some stained glass, some interesting artificial light installed somewhere in the building. My reputation was built around a more natural, available light style of shooting.

I just love daylight. I find it confusing and wasteful even to see professionals enter a room to shoot a portrait, or even a bride, only to pull out a flashgun and ruin the mood when the window in the room is available and way nicer to shoot with. It's like a crutch for some, a safety mechanism.

It's simply about understanding the direction of light, where to position the sitter to create the light pattern you desire. Yes it's more difficult on location as you obviously can not move the lights to achieve beautiful patterns as you do in a studio, but once you learn to see the direction it's a skill you never lose and will speed up your portraiture as well as help you create more natural results. This skill is something that you perfect by practice, the joy of conducting workshops on finding the light is the moment where someone sees

it for the first time, it's a great feeling.

Going back to the studio, which of course we are covering in this series of articles, it's relatively easy to position your lights as you can see the shape of the highlights and shadows on the face because of the modelling lamps. It's also easy as you can position them by simply moving them around, turn the power up and down as required and of course moving them in and out to get the perfect lighting pattern. What we are trying to do is accurately recreate the same lighting patterns we create in the studio but using a window or outside in the environment. This is where the skill of finding the light really comes into play.

I sometimes think photographic trainers deliberately make the art of lighting more complicated and mysterious than it actually is. Trust me, this ain't no dark art, it's very simple and once mastered will have you producing extraordinary images.

During this series you will learn initially how to perfect your studio



It's so important to learn to see, and use, existing light – especially daylight through windows. You may take in all your gear to add extra light but first of all you need to understand the direction and qualities of available light. Above, barber shop in Dumfries – below chef at a French wine school.

portraiture, what lights to use, how to position them properly to create a series of different lighting patterns, what modifiers work best to achieve different looks and how to use a light meter correctly.

Then we will look at three invaluable styles to have in your locker – High Key, Low Key and Mid Key. Understanding these core skills and being able to set them up quickly and efficiently will make your sessions quicker and more varied.

Hard light is often ignored in the studio. The little dish reflector that comes with the light is taken off immediately and replaced by a 175cm softbox, which is thereafter glued to the light never to be removed! In this module you will learn that hard light is a far more creative tool than you may imagine. We will also explore some more creative options to really give your portraiture a boost.

Then we look at using natural light outdoors, how to find it, how to control it and how to exactly

recreate the same lighting patterns we made in the studio. We follow on with a module on window light covering the same points. This blueprint for lighting, both indoors and outdoors, will hopefully be the catalyst in elevating your portraiture to the next level.

I believe that we must firstly master classical traditional four-light portraiture, everything flows from this. It's about direction and control and once you understand these techniques even your most contemporary avant-garde images will be easy as pie. In the first module we will look in depth at how to achieve this style of classical portrait, which has actually had a renaissance in recent times with the Fine Art style of image once again being popular. I sometimes have a little giggle when I see this 'new' style and the excitement amongst photographers, not realising that it was pretty much all seasoned pros, of a certain age and maturity, shot back in the 80s and 90s!





LIGHTING RATIOS: In the first set of articles in AP there was a large section concentrating on lighting ratios, how to work out each ratio and the resulting images created by using them. Since then of course we have all moved onto digital and in many ways the traditional way of working out lighting ratios has become meaningless. With cameras now displaying third-stops rather than the film camera's traditional half-stops, it makes the working out a tad more difficult. What we mean by lighting ratios is simply the difference in *f*-stops between the highlight and shadow side of the face. So with a 175cm octabox in a light room we have a very flat style of lighting on the face, very soft transition of highlight to shadows but with a snoot or honeycomb grid on a small reflector we achieve a much more contrasty look to the image, deep black shadows and a hard transition from highlights to shadows.

In the first example we would be looking at a lower lighting ratio and in the latter a much higher lighting ratio. In the olden days each half stop converted to one lighting ratio value. So a 4 to 1 lighting ratio was the main light metered at *f*11 and fill light at *f*5.6 = 2 stops difference = 4 half-stops = a lighting ratio of 4. This type of lighting ratio would be a great place to start with general studio portraiture, shadows on the face being evident but soft enough to still appeal to the client and give shape to the faces. That is enough about lighting ratios from now on we will simply talk about hard light and soft light to keep things simple.

Above: building up studio light to shape the face and hairstyle. From the low ambient light of the studio, one light makes sure shadows have just enough detail. The main light models the face, and finally a hair light and background light complete the set-up using a hand-held meter throughout to set the lights and exposure.

Right: comparing white a black backgrounds, with appropriate changes to the lighting set-up – in both cases using multiple sources.

METERING: The next thing to discuss is the light meter, I am absolutely astonished how many photographers do not use a meter. It's the most important thing in my camera bag – why would you guess, if you can get the perfect exposure in camera every time by using it? It saves time in post production and creates a more consistent high quality set of images. Every time I move a light I take another reading and adjust the aperture, it takes seconds and can save hours. Again we will keep it simple – there are two types of meters worth using, an incident meter or a spot meter. I prefer a more sophisticated spot meter as I like precise control but you can easily get by with the most basic models.

An incident reading is the meter pointing from the subject's face aiming back to the light – in other words it's reading the amount of light reaching the subjects face. A spot reflected light reading is taken by aiming the precise measuring zone at the highlight side of the face. This reads the light reflecting back taking into account the reflectivity or subtractive qualities of the thing you are photographing.

I would always meter a face with an incident reading but the background is a different thing as the meter has no idea if it is a white sheet or a velvet black background you are shooting. The former will have huge reflective



6 Light Set-Up
White BG
BG Light - Elinchrom 500 10" Reflector - Grid - Red Gel
2 Elinchrom 400's - Strips as effect light
Hair Light - Quadra with 60cm Soft Box
Main - Bron HazyLight Feathered
2nd Main Light - Elinchrom 400 - Snoot + Grid
BG - Reflected f8 / Strips f11.5 / Main Bron f8
2nd main Spot f11 / Hair f8
Shot 1/125s @ f8

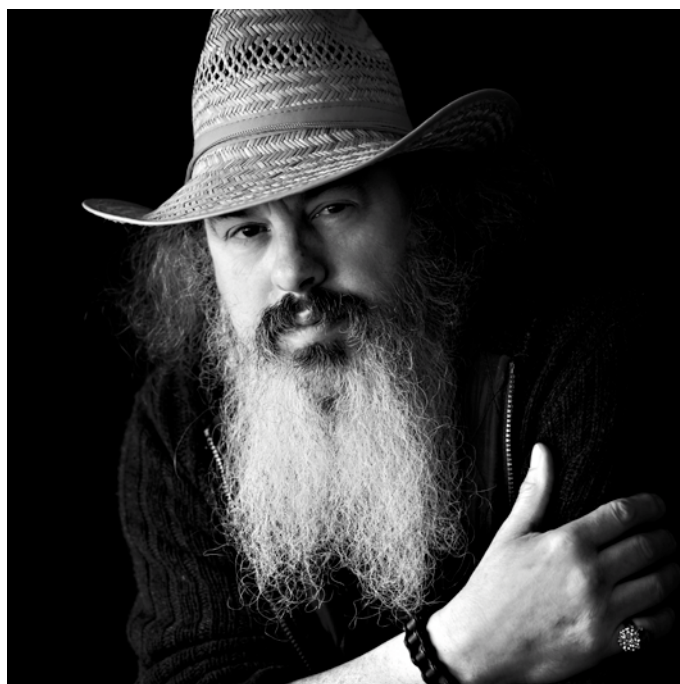
7 Light Set-Up
Black BG
BG Light - Elinchrom 500 + 10" Reflector - Grid
2 Elinchrom 400's - Strips as effect light
Hair Light - Quadra with 60cm Soft Box
Main Light - Elinchrom 400 - Snoot + Grid
Kickers to each side - Elinchrom 1's 8" Reflectors and Grids
BG - Reflected f8 / Strips f11 / Main Spot f8
Hair f8 - 2 Effect Lights f8
Shot 1/125s @ f8

qualities and the black will absorb a huge amount of light. This comes most apparent when you are trying to light a background behind the subject and realise once you take a incident reading that it does not even register on the background – black takes three or four stops more power to light because of the subtractive qualities. Modern meters are so sophisticated, they are mini computers and offer a huge amount of options. For our use in the studio we just need to use the most basic functions, set the meter to the same ISO as the camera, set the shutter speed to 1/125s (or whatever your sync speed is) and take a reading.

Your meter will have a white dome receptor which picks up light from all round the subject but biased to the light source you aim it at. It may have an optional flat diffuser or be usable with no diffuser at all – I use always meter with the dome as it gives a more accurate reading. Always aim towards the light you are reading and remember always expose for the highlights. As a general rule whether it be landscape, street or portraiture exposing for the highlights will give you a stronger, more saturated look. The shadows are the thing that actually makes the image, shadows are essential in creating shape and direction.



WHITE BALANCE: The next important aspect of lighting is the white balance. So many photographers keep the light balance in the camera on Auto. This is not advisable for studio work as, you will get shifts in the colour of light depending on backgrounds, clothing, lights used and so on. This just adds to the amount of time spent in post production. Much better to just use the Flash WB setting as at least it will be consistent—even better shoot your subject holding a grey card pointing to the main light at the beginning of the session and any time you change backgrounds or use a different main light modifier take another shot with the card. The Expo-Disk is a useful accessory – with this diffuser held in front of the lens, you take a photograph from the subject straight into the main light and use the result to set custom white balance. This without doubt gives the best results and the colours are always bang on. This shot for Stobo Castle retains warmth – but perfect white and skin tones.



LIGHTS: For most of the examples in this series of articles we are using high power studio flash units, normally mains lights or occasionally battery powered lights such as the Profoto or Elinchrom options. These of course can also be used outdoors to add some drama and control to your outdoor portraiture as we shall see later on in the series. LED panels are becoming more popular and do have their place but the extra power, controllability and modifiers available still make studio flash the perfect choice. Portable flashguns can also be used but the lack of power does not suit our needs here. Most people get talked into buying flash heads that are way too powerful for a small portrait studio, like 750 and 1000 Watt-second. 100, 200 and 400 Ws are perfect for most studios. Save your money and buy a good flash meter instead! Portrait of Marc Marnie.



You don't need a huge octo box – a 1m square softbox is often better.



MODIFIERS: There are of course a myriad lighting modifiers available from simple umbrellas, square, octo and rectangular soft boxes in hundreds of sizes, thin strip boxes, dish reflectors of various sizes, honeycombs and grids to fit on the front of modifiers to modify them even more, beauty dishes, snoots, projectors and much more.

Recently there has been a trend to buy the biggest octobox possible which I personally hate as you have absolutely no control. These are often used in the smallest of studios and simply flood the place with light. This is NOT lighting this is just illuminating a room. There is no control and the resulting images are flat and fat. In my mentor studios I normally ask them to get rid of these lights, which also makes the studios look spacious. Use a metre square or similar sized rectangular softbox to light properly and create shape

and definition on the subjects. This of course is the main light.

We also need a fill light depending on the colour and size of the room. In a smaller light coloured studio I would tend not to use a fill light as the walls are enough to fill the shadows but in a darker larger space it may be necessary to add a fill. Next is the hair light which acts as a separation light giving depth to the image and finally the background light which once again acts as a separation light and gives the image a 3D feeling. Other lights can be added for effect such as a kicker light to give some highlight on clothing or the side of the face or perhaps a snoot directed at the subjects face to make it jump out of the picture. We call this porcelain lighting... more on this later.

In the next part we will look at the Classical Portrait.



It's never too late to jump back in again

Gary Friedman has invented many things but now he's going to re-invent his photography – launching out in portraiture in a new home town after moving three thousand miles



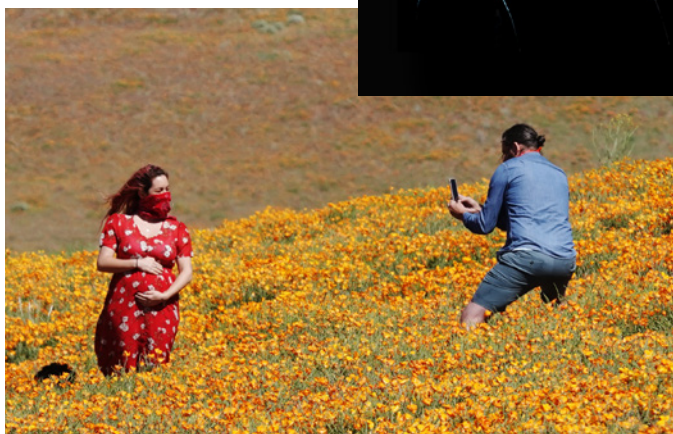
So many photographers post-pandemic have found themselves in the position of re-inventing themselves in order to adapt to a changing environment. I'm the poster boy for reinvention – I've changed careers from NASA rocket scientist to I.T. consulting firm owner to inventor to English teacher in China to photographer/musician/lecturer/writer.

More recently, I've moved twice since November across the USA to a new part of the world for me, and I'll be trying to start a portraiture business once my new basement studio is finished. So yeah... you can't count on the way things used to be anymore.

Still a demand?

Isn't portraiture an ancient endeavor? Who needs formal portrait photography in this day and age, since everyone is doing their own photography using their smartphones? Perhaps that's the wrong question. A better question is, "What can a traditional photographer provide that an iPhone just can't?"

And from there the answers became obvious. Good lighting can make your portraits pop, stand out, and draw more 'likes' on Instagram. Good light is what separates the wedding photographer from the smartphone shooters standing behind them. Good light is one of those qualities that don't register with normal people; they just think the image came out better because the photographer had a bigger camera. Most people are unaware of the role of light in a good image; yet have a subconscious visceral reaction to it.



Smartphones may be great 'in the field' with natural light (above) but they can't match studio lighting – top with four strobes, below with a standard white background setup, bottom with two flash units behind the subject.



My goal is to launch a new portraiture business to take environmental portraits – images that not only capture what people look like but also what they're all about, capturing the person in the environment in which they thrive. I expect half of these will be studio shots (we're converting the basement into a large studio – more on that in a minute), and half on-site using my wireless Godox flashes (*Cameracraft* May/June 2018).

Then there's the problem of building up a clientele in a new city, for marketing is the biggest challenge for all new businesses, no matter how skilled the proprietor. I've read that others set aside a Facebook marketing budget of \$5K a month for their local business; the problem with those stories is that not all ads are effective, and you don't hear the stories of people who invest the money and don't reap a profit. So the data points are self-selecting and one-sided. Because this is a small community I may try a more grass roots approach – bring my gear and lighting out to public gatherings and do some complimentary portraits; send the results via email and start my mailing list that way. I'll set up a separate website too to capture leads. I've done this before; about 20 years ago I had a modicum of success:

<https://bit.ly/3yUNAYr>

Don't judge the website design too harshly; back then all websites looked like they were designed in the 1990s. Then I left for China to teach English and potentially

start a new company (re-inventing myself yet again) and then moved onto other things.

The images in this article are examples of what I want to show people regarding what's I can provide – images that you just can't get with an iPhone. And the lighting has to be over-the-top because normally it just doesn't register with non-photographers.

One thing I'm NOT going to do is stick with the business model of low sitting fees, hold on to the 'negatives' (files), and charge highly for 'reprints' (usage). My value is in capturing the essence of a person or a family, and electronic access to the images will be part of the sitting fee. Easy-to-order upgrades will be available too.

The new studio

My old studio was small but made for efficient headshots. Over time it started to get cramped when I started taking group and full-body shots. It was so cramped that it would take me three days to switch from video to stills lighting – I had to knock everything down and set everything up again. Waste of consciousness. It would get so cramped that I had to move everything down to the garage to accommodate large groups. So the #1 most important thing in a studio, then, is not lighting and gear – it is uncluttered empty space. With this new space in the converted basement I'm going to have one end of the room permanently set up for video, and the other end permanently for stills.

The second most important thing is lighting, and I'm going to be heretical and claim that you can get high-impact shots by being a lighting minimalist. I was using only speedlights 20 years ago with wonderful results; the only reason I upgraded to conventional studio strobes was the recycling time – I was shooting portraits of kids whose expressions would change every nanosecond, and I didn't have the luxury of waiting 5-10 seconds for the flashes to recycle.

If you're just starting out you can get by with just three lights – one as a main light, one as fill, and one as a highlight or hair light. If I invest in anything new it will probably be two strip lights because



The new studio in the making, top, and some idea of the restrictions of my old space. Lifestyle environmental portraits often don't need a studio or lighting (left) or just need lighting taken on location (below).



the accents can really highlight the subject's form. And while there are LED lights out there now that can light both stills and video effectively (eliminating the need to constantly switch), I still prefer flash for stills because the light output is significantly higher than LEDs, allowing smaller f-stops.

And if you're looking for free guidance on starting a photo business, check out these pruned-back-but-free podcasts at <https://bit.ly/37vQ0Ys>. Yes, some of those being interviewed have something to sell to you, but the free advice is insightful, valuable, and difficult to find elsewhere.

Bigger online footprint

I used my pandemic downtime to dive into all sorts of side projects. I figured out how to do online streaming, and have been giving remote lectures to photo clubs during their meetings via zoom (all have been enthusiastically received. I can do this for your club too! I've documented what I've learned and have shared my streaming setup in this blog post, which also explains how to turn your high-end camera into a high-quality webcam:

<https://bit.ly/368p408>

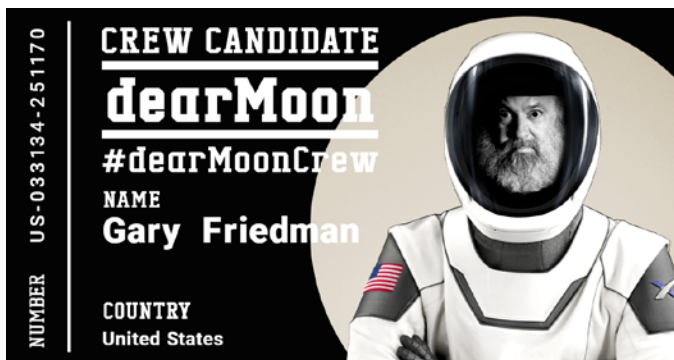
In September I'm planning on hosting a live Ask Me Anything event online using this platform, which will also include some surprise content. I also used the setup to experiment with

teaching children remotely via a platform called Outschool.com. On Outschool you can teach any subject you like; I taught classes on “How to get ‘Wow!’ shots using your Smartphone”, “The 10 Myths Every Budding Entrepreneur Needs to Know”, and a condensed version of my time at NASA, and an overview of the discoveries of the Voyager and Gailieo spacecraft. (The unabridged version appears here: <https://bit.ly/3h9SvoS>)

I also used the pandemic time to learn more about Instagram and to see if it was worthwhile investing time or money into the platform. It didn’t go well; see my blog post at <https://bit.ly/2TqVhNB>. That’s OK; in my experience you have to try 30 things in order to have one thing be successful. 29 more to go.

More opportunities

Two of the 29 things could easily be commercial and real estate photography, markets where traditional photography services are still in demand. And to a lesser extent weddings, although normal people still don’t understand what justifies the why they are so



One light can be enough especially for outdoor environmental portraits – editorial photographers have been using this technique for a century. The light accents the subject against a darker background. A single light, with the right modifiers, can work well in a studio setting. Below are two examples which don’t need a large space, just a black background and the ability to close blinds or curtains. The results are very different from smartphone shots and the light is under your control.

expensive (clue: it’s too stressful for me and most others).

For real estate photography you need a tripod, wide-angle lens, post-processing skills to balance interior room light/window light/scene outside – and a connection with an agent who likes you. In both markets all you need are a handful of clients that like you, and will continue to use you forever until you piss them off. That might sound a little obvious but the fashion industry is just the opposite – always looking for a fresh look and will dump you for a younger and less experienced (and cheaper!) photographer after a few ad campaigns even if they loved you. Of course if none of this works out, there’s always the chance of being selected for the *Dear Moon* project for which I’ve applied

<https://dearmoon.earth/> (top).

I’m also pursuing a teaching position for a high school immersive engineering course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology:

<https://bit.ly/2SJ0Rus>. Nothing but opportunity if you know where to look.



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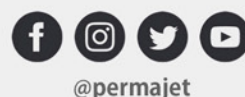
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THE FUTURE IS BRIGHTER

A new image look, a new personal brand and new optimism set star media photographer Stuart Wood on course to re-invent himself – as one the world's top wedding specialists



If there's one photographer used to the idea that roles can be re-cast it's Stuart Wood. He has been a mainstay of TV and film productions for years now, bringing the skills of unobtrusive and rapid reportage with positive direction to stills on set. He's been used to working with stars like Joanna Lumley and Sheridan Smith – every new assignment can find him capturing familiar faces but entirely different characters, as the actors change to play new parts.

Now he's re-casting himself, and the world he has chosen to work in demands the part is played perfectly. If you want to command premium fees to capture the world's most wonderful weddings, you have to fit in with clients who may have a net worth in the tens or even hundreds of millions and the exclusive venues, planners, stylists and services they use.

It's something which Stuart has written about in *Cameracraft* even when the topic has been his film and TV work. His intention to become one of the *Harper's Bazaar* Top Twenty world wedding photographers was not just a dream, it is a plan.

There's very little any photographer could teach Stuart about technique, but he invested in a top level immersive course with Greg Finck in Paris and reveals that everything else he learned set him firmly on his present path.

It has involved losing five stone and to get there he went on an 800 calorie a day diet. "I had to look right to fit in with the clients and the venues I now work with", he told us. "People at this level notice everything – what shirt and shoes you wear, your watch, your cologne... you have to get it right to be accepted." Even down, it seems, to how well your personal trainer and dietician have performed!

Left: Josh and Paige Gee were married at the magnificent Four Seasons Hampshire during a very wet August. "Despite downpours during the ceremony, we made the most of an unexpected 'golden hour' later and were able to secure pictures like this", said Stuart. Right: a classic destination wedding shot on a Santorini rooftop using the light and bright palette of tones Stuart is standardising on for his current look. It's a vital part of his brand.

His clientele now includes the uber-rich who are used to the very best of the best in all that they have, which is why he needs to look a little more like his target audience. "I believe a recent groom was worth a hundred million. I almost asked whether it was pounds or dollars and then realised that once you get to that level, it doesn't really matter..."

It goes beyond this to needing to create a brand – an identifiable look to marketing, and also to the images themselves which will be compared to other top photographers when the couple makes their

choice. In the last year's doldrums, Stuart has continued to take on a few select weddings and to include with these 'styled shoots' before the event using the same venues and the many luxury suppliers involved.

He's changed his wedding look radically, from punchy photo-journalism and bold composition to a light and airy pastel palette. It's so bright that the shadows sit well above midtone level and the highlights often have just the barest hint of texture and detail. This super-bright palette might get criticised by old school photographers,

but research has shown it sells. Light, bright, pastel images are preferred over low key or normal contrast and saturation.

He processed his work to one colour palette. "It's one of the most important things I have learned" he told us. "When a bride sees my work alongside other photographers, I am told by venues I work with that there's often a quick decision – I am the photographer they want, from the way these pictures look in my magazine.

"The Graphistudio magazine has been the greatest sales aid. For a cost of under six pounds I can



give away a beautifully produced magazine that has blown away some of the biggest wedding planners in the world.”

This can also be sent as a PDF but Stuart emphasises the value of having copies for the venues like Four Seasons in Hampshire to show prospective clients. When he started out seeking premium celebrations, ‘destination weddings’ often meant travel abroad from the UK. This has changed to push venues in Britain – especially in Scotland – up in popularity.

“I should have called in to see you”, he said. “A few weeks ago I was photographing a wedding at Floors Castle”. Floors would be within sight from *Cameracraft*’s base if not for the trees, houses and bridge getting in the way. The overseas destinations he’s taking enquiries for now are something to look forward to when travel becomes more predictable.

Stuart’s Graphistudio magazine does include images with stronger colours and darker tones, even silhouettes, to show variety. But it’s the light bright spreads like the example below which define the look of the book.

We asked Stuart for any tips and advice he can give to wedding photographers struggling to get

back into the rhythm of bookings, and anyone looking for inspiration to re-invent their pro persona.

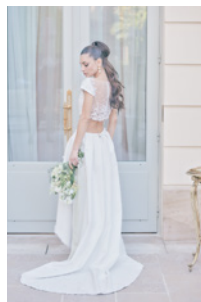
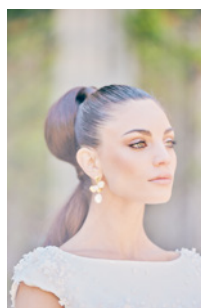
Stuart’s guidelines

We all need to make the most of our USP’s (unique selling points) and build our style around those. Be inspired by others but never copy, because no one wants an imitation. My USPs are working quickly – being very much a people person and therefore connecting quickly with my clients – and my signature lighting styles learned so that I could shoot at the very highest level editorially.

I spent a good few years thinking that if I worked hard to become the very best photographer that I could be, all the rest would slot into place. It doesn’t!

The good news is that I didn’t waste those years, because to succeed at the highest level you will need a good product to sell, but equally and if not more important is your brand. I was mentored a few years ago, which has proved SO important and would highly recommend this. It was important to hear a point of view from the outside looking in. At that time I feel that I was meandering and treading water and not

I came up with the idea of shooting a bride with a white horse in the very first light of day – a light like no other. Gentle and soft, it seems to have its own colour palette before the sun kicks in and takes over until dusk. We had our shoot planned at the magnificent Four Seasons Hampshire and they had a white horse! The picture would mean everyone working in the dark as we waited for daybreak and I expected some opposition – quite the reverse, as everyone enthused about the concept. We must have made a fascinating sight as our team of photographers, make up, florists, model and couturiers met at the manor house then disappeared into the autumn gloom... followed by a white horse! We managed to secure a dreamy dress by top couturier Suzie Turner and flowers by luxury florist Paula Rooney for our pictures. There is that moment when despite the best planning, all of your eggs are in one basket and the silent prayers for kindness to the ancient gods of the weather are uttered. There are hundreds of possible wrecking balls that can suddenly announce their unwanted presence. Perhaps my hushed petitions were actually heard that cold October morning because the light rose with a beautiful ethereal mist echoed in the crisp, white dew that surrounded our duo. We secured an image that showed me that crazy ideas are perhaps not always so crazy after all. Shot with added Elinchrom ELB portable battery powered studio flash.





really achieving what I wanted. I was asked to explain what I had achieved previously and went on to explain that my ambition for many years had been to secure a *Radio Times* cover. I told my wife that it would go on our kitchen wall and then never move. I would either get my cover or die first. Nothing else would do and I would never give in until I claimed my prize.

I got it in 2007. It has been looking down on us at every meal ever since and I also have a whole raft of *Radio Times* covers since then. My mentor listened carefully then explained that she knew exactly what the problem was. I had now not really got the same vision or a goal to aim for and that I was the sort of person that needs something 'in my sights' before I am driven to go and get it.

And she was exactly right.

Having made the move to luxury weddings, I therefore gave



Spreads from Stuart's Graphistudio magazine.



Above: Stuart's current Graphistudio magazine. "One of the best tools I have as a wedding photographer," he says – "any photographer not using the Graphistudio magazine is missing a trick".

myself another lofty target to aim for. Like all dreams, they seem at times to be so unattainable and maybe this new one is, but in the cold light of day, what have I really got to lose by pursuing is?

My new target is to make the *Harper's Bazaar* list of Top Twenty wedding photographers in the world. I may do this or I may not, but one thing I can promise you, I will give it my very best and have no regrets. We all need to stop overly concerning ourselves with the trivial and concentrate on the bigger picture. Who cares if that last competition entry got nowhere or a particular judge didn't get what you were trying to say? Get

over it! Stop listening to that inner voice that evolution gave us all to 'play it safe'. This is not a rehearsal, this and now is all our lives and they are happening now.

Mark Twain wrote "*In twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.*"

Perhaps the destination is never quite certain, but I've promised myself a hell of a journey along the way!



See: <http://www.stuartwoodweddings.com/>
<https://www.graphistudio.com/en/products/books-and-more/magazine/>
<https://www.elinchrom.com/product/elb-500-ttl/>



One of the classic destination shots from Santorini. This uses an Elinchrom ELB portable studio flash, which can't be seen because Stuart's son assisted from beyond and below the roof parapet holding the flash head on a stand pole concealed behind the bride. While Stuart was setting up and timing the shot to catch the sunset sky, wedding videographer Atha was watching. Afterwards, he asked Stuart how many times he thought he had been back and forth fine tuning the drape of the veil and position of everything in the shot – five or six times, said Stuart. The answer was sixteen times... to get every element perfectly placed and the flash lighting balanced and blended.



Left: a fabulous moment with model Julia Maria at a recent styled shoot with Conifer Events in association with Bridelux and Molton Brown with Balnakeilly House in Scotland as the venue for a complete set of images. Getting the right relationship with the subjects can make novel and fun pictures happen – the bubblegum shot with model Julia Maria, seen in a spread from Stuart's Graphistudio magazine, was singled out by one wedding planner as just the kind of shot they wanted to see. Many partners can be involved in wedding organisation. This shoot, the credits included Videography by We Are One Wedding Films; Bridal Designer Lorelle Atara Couture; Menswear by MacGregor & MacDuff and Briggens of Derby; Jewellers, Bercotts and Kendalls; Hair & Make-Up by Mademoiselles of Bearsden; Floristry by Wild Flowers, Edinburgh; Décor by Make Believe Events, Stephanie Smyth Events and Vintage Gathering; Stationery by Dimitria Jordan; Crockery by Whitehouse Crockery; Candles and Accessories by Molton Brown; Linen & Napkins by 88 Events; Cake by The Kilted Cake Company; Shoes by Emmy London.



Zeiss ZX1 – re-inventing the genre

Carl Zeiss deserve the utmost respect for sheer bravery in designing and finally launching the ZX1 digital camera. It's like nothing else on the market but it's got precedents. It's a 37 megapixel full framer with a fixed 35mm f2 Zeiss Distagon lens. That's not far from the Sony RX1 MkII, which has a similarly specified Sonnar and 42MP sensor.

There is a £2,000 difference in SRP and a bigger difference in size and weight. This is mostly because the ZX1 incorporates an Android computer with pre-loaded Lightroom Mobile and Instagram apps, a 480GB storage SSD and advanced Wifi/Bluetooth connectivity, all controlled by a big 4.34 inch rear touch screen. The precedents for this lie in early large screen Samsung Galaxy phone-cameras.

The 1280 x 720 pixel screen is fixed, can't be flipped or angled, and is curved at the right hand end to fit a grippy silicon-coated handgrip which accommodates a large lith-ion battery. The strip of screen past the curvature is for control functions, so the viewing or reviewing image is seen only on the flat section. At the left end of the display, an overlaid control zone echoes the right-hand strip with different options. Both only appear when swiped. This camera depends on touch screen gestures familiar from phones and pads.

Fortunately there is also an excellent 1920 x 1080 pixel EVF but both the big rear touch screen and the high resolution EVF are not designed with human faces in mind. The eyepoint is very close and your nose is likely to touch the screen and make unwanted adjustments even if stray fingers and thumbs don't get there first. Given the attention to the original design, surface finish, rapid disc-clip heavy duty strap, and premium boxed presentation it's an unexpected weakness.

Setting this aside until later the ZX1 has impressive performance. The lens is what you would



The ZX1 is one the larger fixed lens digital 'compact' designs and it's built like a monolith. The external finish combinations, with a grippy silicon at the right hand end, resist handling marks. The boxed presentation is typical Zeiss.

The rear screen cover glass is softly angled at the right-hand end and used for touch-screen control.



Camera website: <https://bit.ly/3ixwscz>



The kit includes a very robust strap with quick release 'coin' locks in two sizes.

expect, sharp to the extremes of the view wide open. The sensor is exceptional, with low noise up to ISO 3200 from the in-camera JPEGs or processing from DNG raw format. It's matched to the lens, and as a sealed unit there will never be sensor dust problems. As for colour and dynamic range, it's more film-like than most out of the box. \pm EV exposure, white

balance and contrast can all be fine-tuned on the touch screen, while camera top dials set the ISO from 100 to 6400 plus L and H, and shutter speeds from 1 second to 1/1000s plus L (B) and T. The lens has a physical aperture ring from f2 to f22 in third-stop soft clicks

and a manual focus-by-wire ring forward of this (AF or MF down to 23cm). When all three physical controls are set to A, the ZX1 enters program point and shoot mode. By mixing one, two or three A settings the whole gamut of modes can be used.

Left to itself the ZX1 prefers low ISO settings and fairly long shutter speeds. This can be over-ridden in Camera Settings. You can't save a setup, no M1/2/3 positions here, and touch screen fingerwork is needed to switch anything. The extremes of shutter times and ISO you are willing to use may be determined by how well you handle a large and solid camera with a whisper-quiet leaf shutter. There's no stabilisation but it is hardly needed.

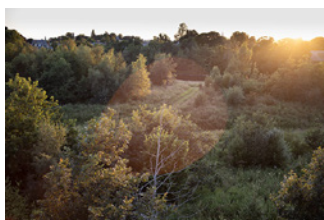
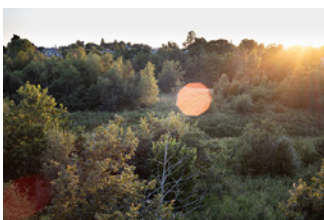
The ZX1 reminded me of a camera 20 years older, using film – the Konica Hexar which had a 35mm f2 lens, auto exposure with slightly too electronic manual options, a slow auto-wind and good autofocus but a leaf shutter speeded only to 1/250s. The ZX1 can officially achieve 1/2000s in Auto using electronic shutter but some of our tests showed 1/2500s in EXIF and there have been reports of 1/4000s. Flash is possible to 1/1000s and the hot shoe accepts the Sigma dedicated flash units with full TTL. One of the benefits of the leaf shutter is flash sync at fast shutter speeds without making demands on the sensor architecture or readout method.

The viewfinder eyepoint detracts from one of the larger and sharper EVFs around. While the rear screen has a wide viewing angle, you need to use WiFi connectivity to see the image any other way. No articulated screen makes for a very solid body and the glass is specially treated to resist scratches and fingermarks. The screen and EVF offer a full range of 'helper' functions like horizon level, grid screen, and histogram.

Beyond this, the built-in Android OS with its integrated Lightroom Mobile, Instagram and



The rear screen can be viewed from extreme angles – above, held at arm's length from a bridge with the camera flat for a perpendicular study of the riverbed and water seen in the flare-free shot, left.



Above, with the sun differently placed strong ghost patches can appear – f8 left, f2.8 right.



The ZX1 battery is one of the largest around and fills the handgrip shape. Charging is via USB-C, in-camera or using an optional charger.



Below, Edinburgh's new St James Centre is almost designed for a 10mm lens view, inset above. The 35mm lens can be effective – this f4 capture has minimal vignetting or distortion and is pixel-sharp corner to corner.



WiFi for sharing from the camera and transmitting files to cloud services or Dropbox (etc) leaves me missing something vital. The ZX1 does not use memory cards, relying on a 470GB (free space) internal SSD instead. At 90MB per raw file it begins to fill up quickly enough and if you shoot the excellent quality 4K 30fps or 1080p 60fps video even more so. 30 seconds of HD used about 200MB. The maximum video take is 15 minutes, a minimum of 6GB. The built-in microphones (no input or headphone monitoring) are very crisp and on Auto level a bit too hot for things like indoor concerts – manual control of volume is quick. The video mode imposes a 1.5X crop on the sensor, resulting in a 52.5mm lens effective view.

You can do some processing and adjustment, rating and file management using *Lightroom Mobile* on the camera but you need to consider exactly when you will ever sit there with the ZX1 sat on a table lens-down, or tucked between your legs, and spend ten minutes on a raw file conversion judging everything on the 338dpi screen (50% finer pixels than Mac Retina).

The operating system also allows a vast range of clever functions like Time Lapse, Panoramas, Albums/Slideshows and installable Apps.

Tethered to Lightroom

This brings me to the elephant in the room – the Lightroom to be specific. Like many photographers I prefer using *Adobe Bridge/Camera Raw* and managing the locations and cataloguing of my image storage without hammering processor cores. I had to launch LR CC and LR Classic on two different machines because these are the only way (except Apple's equally intrusive Photos app) to get images quickly by cable connection off the ZX1.

Not being able to just remove a card and pop it in the SD slot of my MacBook to check a single file (or any number) at any time is a minus point for what is a street, family, travel or general visual notepad camera. The option to transfer by the fast (5GHz to up to a/c) WiFi to a registered Dropbox or cloud



Pets in picture – above, a quick candid, only one at a time allowed in the fish shop, with masks, and no dogs... f5.6 was enough to get all in focus and the DNG raw format (as shot, left) had plenty of highlight and shadow range to allow the adjusted result (right). Below, the first shot taken on the ZX1 – at f2.2, ISO 500, single AF. No profile correction applied, 1/500s at ISO 100 stopped movement as this pose was not as static as it looks. The focus is perfect and fur-fine detail comes through. Enlarged section is at 300dpi, a little over a 16 x 24" print size.

service is fine if you are shooting in a studio or home with similar WiFi and fibre broadband. It's not much use in the next café you sit in to check over your shots on your travel laptop.

In practice when you've got 20GB of stuff on the SSD in the camera you do not want to be using WiFi, Bluetooth or even the USB-C cable. This is also used to charge the battery in-camera via a mains charger block which has USB-C output so the cable has identical connectors both ends. There is no USB-A (as found in cars, all chargers and plugs, most laptops except very new minimal-interface models) so a small adaptor is provided. Without the adaptor or buying an additional cable I couldn't get anything off the camera on to my laptop or desk machine as they've got no USB-C interfaces.

Lightroom on your Mac or PC is really needed to import the images. The Mac can see nothing until LR is launched – you can't get into the ZX1 SSD contents without it. I apologise to Zeiss for making a meal of this, but it's their 'flow' and I am afraid it is a flow which has been dammed at the source. The absence of a protocol allowing a host computer to access the file system at Mac Finder or



Windows Explorer level, and the lack of card storage, is not really compensated for by the ability to plug a USB-C storage device into the camera's socket and shoot to this instead of the internal SSD. Despite drawers full of adaptors,

cables and USB storage I could find nothing with the right male/female coupling to actually plug anything into the camera. It didn't see my Mac formatted Samsung TG5 1TB SSD which I was able to connect. Whether it works with any other

system I don't know. Tethered shooting from *Lightroom* on my iMac and MacBook Pro did not recognise the camera – but I do not have the latest iMac or MacBook Pro with USB-C.

A touch sensitive

The ZX1 is incredibly powerful and comprehensively equipped if you want to use things like Network Attached Storage, WiFi transfer, Dropbox, Instagram and of course your Adobe *Creative Cloud* storage if you tie in a main Adobe *Lightroom* login to the camera's built-in program (which does not require CC). For a reviewer, the problem is that any single one of the many options can take too long to set up with configuring the host storage, entering details and programming the camera. You can do things like pairing a Bluetooth keyboard to avoid needing to use the touch screen. But I had no time – and never would have with the rest of life to get on with.

This brings me to another critique of this innovative camera. The touchscreen itself is just too touchy. When setting WiFi details I found that it's extremely sensitive and entry required a light precise touch even compared to an iPhone. Once shooting, it took me a day or two to learn the essential 'switch off to sleep' after every shot. You turn on with the push of the lever round the shutter dial forwards, you switch from still to video with a second push, and you sleep the camera with a pull back towards you. If you turn the camera off completely, it takes about 17 seconds to start up because it is a small computer. When shooting or out and about, Sleep allows it to come to life almost instantly.

If you don't sleep the camera the touch screen remains active. Just letting the camera rest on my T-shirt and walking two or three steps could set EV compensation, change the white balance, alter the metering and focus settings. I once ended up on spot metering and +3 between taking a shot, dropping the camera on the strap, and picking it back up to my eye. Since it can also take shots with a focus-shoot tap of a finger on the screen (great function when enabled) it also took random shots unless

'slept'. If I accidentally flipped it to video, the video start button is on the touch screen – you can guess the result, a gigabyte of accidental video jogging along past shops. I must add that right hand thumb overspill and nose touching also changed things regularly.

Since it's not immediately obvious what settings have been randomly changed by the touch controls, you must keep a close eye on the display. It can then take a good few seconds to restore order (there is no process where turning off and on quickly gets back to default – de-sleeping always goes to the state active when slept). The practical ergonomics will only work for a minority of users and those may not be same minority which can spend £5,399 on a fixed 35mm f2 lens digital camera weighing 834g, 142 x 93 x 94mm.

The autofocus has been criticised elsewhere but it's very fast and accurate with or without the AF illuminator. Face recognition is essentially first generation, the choice of AF zone size is limited, but the whole frame can be used and the tap to focus or tap to focus/shoot options home right in even at f2. The lens unit is light in weight and there's little inertia from the silent AF. The only problem I found was a tendency to more flare and ghosting than expected from the T* Zeiss Distagon. It has slight barrel distortion and fairly strong wide aperture vignetting, correctable by Profile though doing so will increase noise.

I will miss the sensor and the lens and the physical dial controls. Scale the camera down by 20% linear, slim down computing functions and lose *Lightroom* completely, put in some physical controls to replace the volatile touch screen invocation while leaving more valuable touch screen aspects, and provide memory card storage.

Give us, in short, a digital successor to the Kolibri, the Super Ikonta or the Contax T rather than the Contarex bullseye. Zeiss has often made the best of their kind but sometimes gone overboard on innovative features. The ZX1 may be in that category – the 'best' but more than anyone really needs.



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



Edinburgh at dusk – above, samba outside the National Gallery at f2. Below, Malmaison Hotel at f2 no profile used top, Adobe profile and geometry correction applied below, hand-held 1/60s at ISO 800. The small crop is a mason's mark on the 1st floor window at 150dpi.



This is the same poppy as shown for scale – the lens is actually inside the flower with its lens hood removed and the petals pushed aside. The light comes through the poppy and the colours look very different. Sony A7RIV, cropped mode, 1/60s at f7.1 and ISO 2000, minimum focus with the Tamron set to 11mm.



Tamron 11-20mm *f*2.8 Di III-A RXD

We've been shooting with 16-35mm *f*2.8 lenses for years on full frame SLRs and DSLRs. Tamron never tried to clone that specification but from 2004 on offered a widely-acclaimed 17-35mm *f*2.8-4 which has been updated to the Di OSD stabilised model for DSLRs. Unlike the wide range and faster 15-30mm *f*2.8 this is a compact, lightweight lens which accepts 77mm filters directly. For Sony mirrorless, they opted to cut the focal length span to 17-28mm but gain a constant *f*2.8 and 67mm filter fit. This lens has maintained the reputation fully.

Now for the smaller APS-C format, but still Sony only which will disappoint Fujifilm X users, they have an 11-20mm *f*2.8 without stabilisation, otherwise matching the excellent 17-70mm *f*2.8 VC we reviewed in May. This again uses 67mm filters and continues the current series features of fast full featured AF and unusually close focusing. At 11mm it can focus to only 15cm with the subject at 1:4. Beyond this the lens is so simple there's little to describe. It weighs only 335g and is a pocketable 86.2mm

Below: poppy shown for scale.



long. Used on Sony A6500 the performance could not be faulted though the weather sealing was not given a workout. Flare resistance from the coating and

Below – sky gradation at 11mm and 20mm, no filter used. The poppy is at 11mm, closest focus.



A constant *f*2.8 comes to APS-C in a range matching popular full frame wide zooms



design is almost perfect and at *f*16 (above) the sunstar from the iris is clean. Vignetting and distortion are hard to criticise as they are corrected by the built-in profile, but if you want strong vignetting just turn it off and be surprised by how little the geometry changes. Comparing it with the now ten year old Sony 10-18mm *f*4 design the optical performance is simply ten years' better even without one stop in extra speed. It can almost do the same trick of covering full frame around 14mm, with some mechanical cut-off but sharper to the extremes. Examining full frame files shows it's a superb design with a large image circle even at *f*2.8.

At a little under £900 this is an investment not a casual buy. If you already have a 17-70mm it's the perfect travel companion, equal to a 16.5-30mm. At 20mm, it focuses down to 24cm and 1:7.1 scale. Used on a full frame body you can crop more than the APS-C frame to get a wider angle or a 'shift' and it's easily sharp enough for the highest resolution sensors. This is a lens which will make you happy.

– David Kilpatrick



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



Compared to Sony's 10-18mm, both the lens and the room interior are Sony left, Tamron right.



Panasonic S-R2060 20-60mm f3.5-5.6

With so much variation in sensor size and quality now that digital imaging has reached maturity, full-frame almost appears anachronistic. Die-hard photographers hanging on to the format established in 1934 are, frankly, getting outshone and outshot by kids with smartphones.

Chances are you're probably shooting half your environmental and enjoyment images on a smartphone yourself, even if your bag holds a DSLR or mirrorless for professional work. So what's a company like Panasonic going to do, with a big consumer presence and a new, expanding full-frame ecosystem to feed?

Beat the smartphone at its own game

Ultimately the smartphone's trick is providing, these days, two focal lengths (sometimes three) with acceptable image quality in a convenient package. Notice that the market leaders don't crawl into the murky, shaky depths of extreme telephoto (some Android-based Chinese oddities do, but we'll stick with the industry standard of iPhone and Google Pixel). You get a wide – often with rather dramatic distortion – a standard, and if you're fancy you've got a 'telephoto' that's more of a portrait lens. Why? Because the smartphone's AI uses the portrait focal length and one of the wider ones to create fake depth of field.

Full-frame cameras don't need fake depth of field. They do, however, need to be affordable if they're going to reach that Gen Y audience, and with the S5 Panasonic got their kits well under £2,000; within reach of the fanciest iPads and iPhones now when cashback offers are applied.

Thus, we have the new Panasonic Lumix S R2060 – a simple, lightweight and robust lens that is cleverly thought out to move outside of the established 35mm range thinking and redesign the compact zoom package for the iPhone generation.

Selecting 20mm as the widest angle is smart – it provides a

No other brand has anything like it. Panasonic's full frame L-mount zoom costs only £619.99 and covers a unique range from ultra-wide to standard. And it competes with smartphones!



A wet and dry landscape in Lincolnshire – the Jeep was driven through muddy puddles for video clips. The lens is designed for outdoor use – "dust- and splash-resistant construction and allowing you to shoot in temperatures as low as -10 °C", say Panasonic.

close-selfie friendly wide view without excessive distortion, and it's achieved with remarkable optical performance for the budget here. Background bokeh carries the desirable circular texture (achieved with a 9-blade rounded diaphragm, again unusual for a premium-brand lens at this price point). My main use for the 20mm is car interiors for work, where I have to quickly 'snap' a full-width dashboard shot hand held, relying on the S1's dynamic range, strong performance at ISO 640 and in-body stabilisation, but it's also a pleasing lens for the sort of landscapes where my iPhone just won't cut it. Will the iPhone shot look good on social media? Sure, but the choice is the massively distorted wide-angle lens, or the slightly cramped standard lens. The Panasonic's 20mm end offers something different.

A new zoom range

60mm is an interesting choice too. Part of Panasonic's design process is understanding that many consumer users just treat

their zooms as a 'dual focal length' lens, swapping between the stops; something which seems rather more reasonable in an era of high-resolution sensors and easy home cropping, whereas during the era of film and getting photos developed at Boots, your lens was your crop tool. Professionals with darkroom experience can scoff, but Panasonic can already reach that market; this is for a new generation.

Dropping from the usual expectation of 70mm allows the lens designers to drop weight, simplify the mechanism and adopt a new set of goals to compromise between; reduced focus breathing and macro-esque close focus at the wide-angle end. The 20-60mm can focus as close as 15cm providing the sort of flexibility iPhone users expect, but with considerably greater image quality. It's an unchallenging lens to get great results from in that regard.

The lens kit includes caps and a bayonet hood.

Many features are designed to appeal to videographers as well; stepless aperture control and smooth, positive controls with no creep and weather sealing (again, not always a given at this price), as well as essentially silent AF (without an optical stabilisation group this is a quiet lens).

Where we used to discuss vignetting and aberrations, there's nothing to see here. Vignetting fully open is minimal, there are no fringes, no flaws to speak of. It's a great lightweight lens that gives the S5 an edge, and is a fine companion for bringing the bulk of the S1 down a little too. As part of the wider L system, Leica and Sigma owners will want to pay attention to the R2060 as well; on the compact TL/CL bodies the 35-90mm crop is using the centre of an already optically impressive lens.

Unlike many reviews, this isn't based on a PR loan lens, but a pre-owned example bought from MPB for under £400. As an add-on to a Panasonic S5 body only, the 20-60mm adds just £200. It hasn't replaced the 24-105 I use normally because I rely on the 105mm end, but it's definitely made me consider selling my original kit lens and buying a 70-400mm F4 instead to cover car tracking and similar work. It's a clever, very well made and affordable lens that works remarkably well – and achieves the goal of keeping the iPhone at bay, while beating it at its own instagrammable game.



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





Shooting for a motoring website (<https://www.parkers.com>) the 20-60mm is ideal to take out with each different vehicle to get the essential location pictures and also the dashboard and windscreen view. Top, typical wide-angle perspective, and above right using the long end of the range. The 20-60mm also makes a great street photography lens as it is relatively small. The geometry, sharpness and absence of vignetting are all better than you might expect in a relatively low-priced model. The close-up shows how smooth the bokeh is from the nine-blade aperture, something which matters when smartphones use AI to create defocused backgrounds. The closest focus is at 26mm and 15cm, with 0.43X subject scale.





When it's time for a new book not just a new chapter



*New portraits by Rob:
Above, Andrew Elliott
Top right, The Butcher
Centre right, Paul McGreal
Bottom right, the Duke of Buccleuch*

*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*

Each issue I sit to write, facing a blank computer screen, that canvas, that needs to be filled with words to make sense and find a focus of interest. An issue for every artist or photographer throughout the years, to bridge that void, to find a challenge and find away around, over or through that mental block that stunts your creativity from time to time.

Whether an artist, a photographer, or a writer even – my press card now states “photo-journalist” – finding the subject to document or something more artistic that develops from a simple idea to a full-blown project.

I always find the first few words the hardest, like the first brush strokes on a canvas, or that wide ‘general view’ shot when your eyes start to scan the scene, before looking for some detail that makes your images stronger and bringing your own style to the fore.

Taking a camera like a sketch pad, even the smallest detail starts to provide a subject.

Sat pondering ideas, a photobook I was given a few years ago by a documentary photographer, catches my eye on the shelf and ideas of a project begins to grow. How can I do anything like that? Well – why not? A few simple images and maybe the odd portrait, not like some of the master photographers that fill these hallowed pages, just a simple documentary. Yes – why not? I can find something to take me away from years of capturing the same images, sports, events, just the same thing.

What’s stopping me from this? That spark that you need can be



as simple as looking at a book and saying *why not*.

An hour later I have a letter written, a mock-up made, a list of potential subjects and a model release for to get started, never know where this may end up – just to be safe.

You don’t always have to make huge sweeping changes to help yourself develop and grow in your business or skills, you sometimes just need an outlook and a challenge to take you forward from that rut you have been comfortably stuck in for the last few years, unable to see that it is just slowing you down and you are trapped by your own lack of imagination and drive, just

taking the easy path. Stepping off the easy route and making that leap, I would like to be able to say the book and exhibition will be complete next year and it will be the best project I have done... probably not going to come anywhere near to that but it will have given me an outlook and allowed me to meet people, hopefully create one or three strong images and just put a little crack in that mould that my images have become trapped by.

The idea will hopefully seen soon, but will just share some of the potential rough ideas that I have already been trying to work on and develop.





My journey: re-invention from portraits to product images



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>

Many interviews with photographers start with descriptions of how it's been an integral part of their life from a very young age. They fondly recall childhood days of endless summers seen solely through the viewfinder of their dad's old film camera... well, that's not my story. Not one small bit.

I bought my first DSLR with a view to documenting the early years of my children coupled with a whimsical notion of forging a career as a child portrait and family photographer. It was a long way from my background and education in engineering and little did I know how different my photographic future would turn out from my initial overly-optimistic, dreamy aspirations. I didn't realise how much I'd struggle with the communication with my subjects, posing them and so I started to dabble in off-camera flash to produce high key style portraits.

This was the point at which I discovered that I really enjoyed

learning the technical aspects of lighting and its ability to transform what the eye sees into something dramatic and dynamic. As my daughters grew, they started dancing and I continued to put up with my inability to pose people naturally and started to enjoy using the motion-stopping power of using flash to freeze dancers mid-leap. This diversion into dance photography meant that I no longer had to pose people as most dancers just love to show off what they can do in front of a camera. Things were starting to look up.



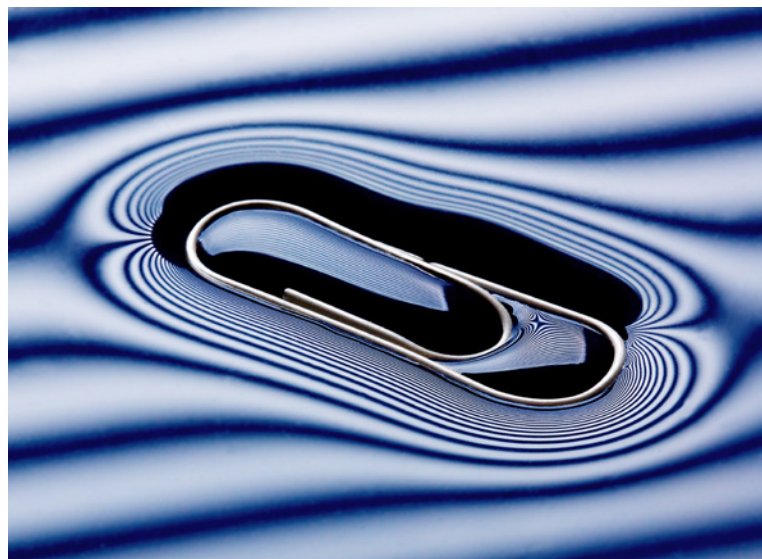
After a couple of years shooting dancers there was a natural progression to including shooting headshots. Using small speed lights I shot high-key, Peter Hurley style headshots for the older dancers who needed them for auditions, but the old posing problems reared their head yet again. I eventually came to the conclusion that I was just not built to be a portrait photographer. Sometimes you just have to accept the inevitable, take stock and work out what you really enjoy. I knew that I did enjoy my photography and had to start playing to my strengths. It was time to reinvent myself using the skills that I'd learned and that I enjoyed.

Enter the world of still life and product photography. As part of my self-learning using off-camera flash I shot all manner of household objects to practice my lighting and composition. This was something that I genuinely enjoyed. I could, and often did,

spend endless hours shooting random objects that didn't move, didn't need (much) posing and didn't need me to communicate with them and coax into getting the images that I saw in my mind.

The next turning point was winning the *Practical Photography* magazine Photographer of the Year competition with an image of a simple paperclip floating on water, lit with just one flash. I now knew that what I thought was an interesting image was also appreciated by others. My confidence blossomed and there were now endless creative possibilities ahead for me. The rest, as they say, is history.

From my uncomfortable and clumsy portrait beginnings, I had found my niche. I had found the thing that, to this day, keeps my interest and creativity alive. I am still learning and hope that it stays that way for a long time to come.





More than a faint disguise in these lyin' 'eyes' – from a transformer 110 to drinks cans and fag packet 16mm spycams



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>

When I heard that the theme for this issue was "Reinvention" I admit that at first I was struggling to find something to write about. On re-reading the editorial email I had been sent I noticed a suggested example was something like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. Now I was sure that several contributors would have numerous examples of exactly that subject, so I had to do some lateral thinking.

With a quick scan along one of the shelves of my camera collection, my eyes alighted on one of my favorite "toy" cameras, the Voltron Star Shooter, a 110 format camera from 1985. By the way, I can confidently state this is from 1985 and not "around" the mid 1980s as helpfully the date is actually printed around what looks like the lens, but what is in fact just a plastic moulding for show.

To the untrained eye Voltron looks for all the world like a simple point-and-shoot 110 format camera but, with a bit of manual dexterity, it reinvents itself, turning into a colourful toy robot. A bit like a poor man's Transformer toy from that era. But Voltron is far from being the only camera that looks like something else entirely but then 'transforms' into a camera, like the numerous 35mm 'can' cameras I seem to have amassed. Coke and Pepsi are among the most often seen cameras of this type, but there are literally hundreds of others advertising various soft drinks, and even well-known beer brands such as Budweiser.

Some versions even feature a built-in flash but they all operate in a similar way, the entire end rotates to advance the film and lifting the "ring-pull" releases the spool so the film can then be re-wound. Although many of these cameras are properly printed models, initially they started as generic coloured 'blanks' simply wrapped around with a plastic covering and used for advertising or promotions.

That's much like the several cameras I have which are designed to look like a packet of cigarettes. Some of these, such as the King's cigarettes and Drum tobacco examples, are obviously the same basic 35mm camera which has been 'wrapped'. Although the Marlboro camera is a 110 camera, it



has the same type of covering so I expect there are other versions out there which are based on the same body.

When it comes to cigarette pack cameras you might be lucky enough to find one of the several JPS examples, made in Poland in the 1990s. A less common version with straight edges features a hidden Kiev-Vega 16mm sub-miniature camera and has fake cigarette tips along the top. To complete the deception, there is even space for two real cigarettes alongside. Normally these sell for up to £200 each, sometimes a little more. But occasionally, very occasionally, at auction they can go ballistic. And I DO mean ballistic, as late in 2018 the camera shown here with its outer packaging sold to a determined bidder at one of the auctions I help run for an eye-watering £29,000 – and that didn't include the buyer's premium!



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WAVE BREAKERS

'Rumours' website entrepreneur Andrea Pizzini chose a superfast manual focus lens to create a study of Italy's Covid response as part of his truly eclectic output

Just look at those hands and those eyes. Shallow depth-of-field allows Andrea Pizzini to force you to look at what he feels is important – the seriousness of the healthcare workers. The weariness from a pandemic which overwhelmed the world. For this series of images, Andrea was an embedded photographer, documenting the exploits of the unsung workers in intensive care as the Covid pandemic ripped through Italy.

"The project in the Intensive Care Unit started by chance because a friend who works there as a nurse was attacked on social media by people claiming that Covid-19 was an overblown hoax. So I decided to take some pictures of her, just to show that she's a real person doing a real job and not faking anything." The hospital management was upset by the fake news as well, and granted him access to whatever he needed to tell the story.

"I was expecting to not see anything new; thinking the story had already been told by others."

Armed with a Sony A7R IV and a Voigtlander Nokton 40mm f1.2 manual focus lens, he intended to just do some documentary photography for a week or two. But once he got inside, he realized there's much more to show – many details that he didn't know about and was curious about, and he ended up staying on that project for six months. "I would have stayed even longer but the cases here are near-zero now." After about two months he got to know the staff and got a good feel for who he could talk to and started hearing interesting stories from some of the doctors. It was at that point he started shooting video, with the goal of making a documentary of this medical unit and their humanitarian work. "We live in a small region, and everyone here knows each other. I



The Voigtlander 40mm f1.2 Nokton is a manual focus lens in a full Sony FE mount which enables magnified focusing to kick in by turning the focus barrel. Andrea used its unique look at full aperture to isolate details and give his reportage of the Italian hospital teams battling Covid-19 a soft intensity.



saw people coming in that I knew – neighbors from the old town where you lived 10 years ago, so it was very personal."

That personal relationship with his subjects eventually took a toll. "It's not easy to distance yourself from your subjects if you know the people. They weren't letting family members in because it was a highly infectious area, so often I was the last person a patient saw before they died. I even recorded a video interview with one person at the last minute before he was 'put to sleep'. He really wanted to talk. That is one interview that I'll publish in my documentary."

Few people today would shoot a video documentary using manual focus lenses, but back in the day that's all there was, and in this environment all the reflections off the face shields would have thrown off the AF accuracy. So he uses Sony's Peaking function to highlight areas that are sharp, allowing him to do a very decent job in an environment where nothing stands still.

Andrea says being a former war correspondent helped isolate him from the emotions that normally would overwhelm a person in this

environment day in and day out. A few times it didn't hit him until he was reviewing the footage back at home. "Then it really hits you... then it really hurts. The strange thing about the pandemic, particularly in the western world, is that there are these two realities – the reality inside and the reality outside. And I think the job of the photographer and filmmaker is to build a bridge between these two realities so they can at least try to understand each other a bit better."

Emotionally moving clips from his upcoming documentary can be seen here – interviews with the patients and staff, some of which have subtitles in English:

<https://bit.ly/3ga0uS9>

War Zone Photography

Andrea was born in the Alps, in the middle of the Dolomites region in Italy. He studied Cinema in college and started working as a documentary film photographer in war zones out of college. For ten years he covered areas of social conflicts in South America and Africa (including Uganda and Rwanda), Australia, and China.

In 2004 he was in Bolivia to follow the protest against the privatization of the water. "Due to privatization the low income people couldn't afford to have clean water anymore. They even were banned from collecting rain water! The protests were heavy and people died. I was the only one there telling their story and to make a documentary about it." In all, he directed six documentaries, and was cameraman for two others.

"The saddest story from those years was in Columbia, where I was on the front between the Farc and some right-wing paramilitary groups. One day I met a three and half year old girl with an 18 month old brother who were alone; their parents were killed three days before. I ended up staying with them for one week. It was painful – I knew I shouldn't get too attached to them because I was a journalist, and they shouldn't get too attached to me because I would have to leave. The decision not to get too close to them was horrible. We ended up bringing them to an orphanage in the area, and I left without saying goodbye – it would have been too emotional otherwise." And then he added, with a touch of sadness and dismissiveness, "I'm sure they've forgotten me."



Then he had children of his own and, after having made six documentaries, decided to end this phase of his career. “I moved to pure photography because it’s a one-man operation and easy to organize.” And by chance, he says, he started some of his most popular websites:

sonyalpharumors.com
fujirumors.com
43rumors.com (for MFT)
canonwatch.com
mirrorlessrumors.com
L-rumors.com (L-mount)

“It’s a long story – I started them for fun, and in the early years it was fun because you got to watch it grow and you’re motivated. Then they became big, and they started using up too much of my time. I still get between 150-200 emails per day. I still work on them, but spend less and less time on them.”

The Cube Camera

The money from the websites helped support some ambitious art projects, such as The Cube Camera, which he claims is the largest color camera in the world. “It’s a cube 2m on each side; I’m inside with a colleague, a giant lens on one side and a large 1.2m x 1.2m sheet of Ilfochrome paper on the other. *Editor’s note: Ilfochrome is a direct positive printing process, formerly known as Cibachrome, used for making direct positive prints from slides.*

The Ilfochrome quality is much better than Polaroid. What makes the process difficult is that we had to develop our own images, which was difficult since the Ilfochrome paper and chemicals are no longer available. We bought the last batch of paper that was available anywhere, and we had to figure out how to make the developing



Above: each exposure is a unique print. Below: set-up in the landscape.



chemicals from scratch. “It took one day to take just one good shot. Then we didn’t know what kind of stories to tell with those images – it took us about six or seven years to figure it all out.”

The idea was to create one-of-a-kind images, and he says he ended up making over 250 of them. “After ten years there is no more paper or chemistry left – the project is done and it’s impossible to repeat it. Now we’re making a book of it and the prints have been touring Europe in art museums in the last three years.”

Why the mirrored exterior for the camera? “We liked the idea of the camera being one with the environment. So that it wouldn’t ‘disturb’ the location where we are shooting.”

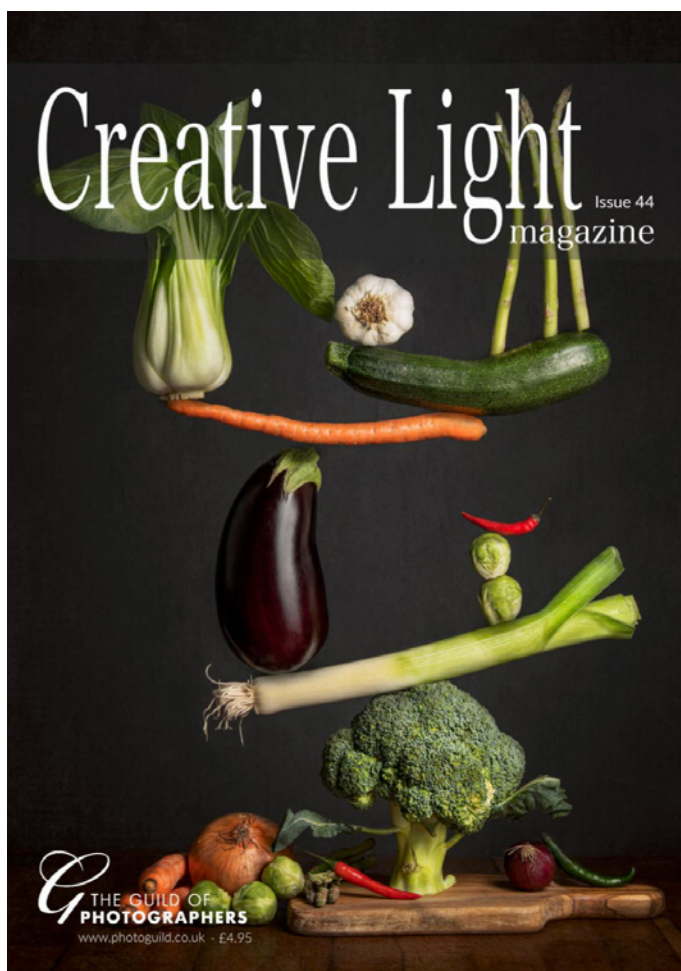
What’s next for Andrea?

“There’s a new project that’s difficult to explain. It’s about NASA, the European Space Agency, and the search for intelligent life in the universe. I have a friend in the gravitational wave detector project; I’m familiar with all the new spacecraft being launched to study newly-discovered earth-like planets which study their atmosphere to see if there’s life there. New information makes people think that finding intelligent life is less and less likely, but I want to follow some of those people involved in the project and be there when they find life.”

Andrea’s work – including more from the Wavebreakers project, plus still images from around the world during his war correspondent days, can be found at <https://www.andreapizzini.com/> And of course you should frequent his camera rumors websites to help support his work.

– Gary Friedman





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Creating a memorial to Covid-19 – the making of 'No Vaccine for Death' (overleaf)

Just as the coronavirus pandemic was finding its first victims, Shane Balkowitsch made his iconic wet place portrait of Greta Thunberg and came to international attention. Since then his output has been prodigious, and remarkable for someone who must create the materials for every unique exposure himself. He was not new on the scene, though, and had already been producing ambitious work including five years of annual collaborations to re-create art from the past. His volunteer subjects made have this event a special day and along with his directing and production team put months of work in beforehand.



Shane at work, above. Shots of the event courtesy of Chad Nodland.

Shane hopes his 2021 *tableau vivant* 'No Vaccine for Death' will be a postscript to pandemic. It shadows the haunted landscape and figures of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 'Triumph of Death' painted around 1562 in the aftermath of the black plagues which ravaged Europe across the turn of the 16th century. To create it he had to find a location with some features in common, costumes, animals and some macabre props. "It is the fifth large production that my friend, collaborator, project director and St. Mary's College (of Bismarck) film professor Marek Dojs and I have worked on together", Shane said of the event which involved 90 people.

He used an Alessandro Gibellini 8x10 inch bellows studio camera and Carl Zeiss Tessar 300mm f4.5 lens – no shutter, just a manual lens cap. Under the open haze of a Bismarck, North Dakota sky "artfully and unfortunately provided by the California wildfires" he made a one-second exposure at f11 after tests literally developed in the field.

Monsignor Shea, President of the University of Mary, allowed used of the sacred Marian Grotto in the college grounds, its stone arch resembling the painting of 459 years ago. Michael Stevenson and Michele Renner Oster, directors of the local Shakespearean theatre companies, stepped up with the creation of costumes. Over 100 people took part in the July 21st shoot. The final plate is being donated to the State Historical Society of North Dakota with a list of all involved.



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REARVIEW



'No Vaccine for Death' – the collaborative reprise of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 1562 'Triumph of Death' created in wet-plate collodion by Shane Balkowitsch with the help of an army of volunteers. Shane, whose front cover of Greta Thunberg 'Standing' appeared with a profile of the photographer in our November 2019 edition, says he hopes this work may be one of the last associated with Covid-19. See the brief story on page 49 – or for a fuller account visit <https://sharoncol.balkowitsch.com/novaccine.htm>



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