

CAMERACRAFT

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 THE GUILD OF PHOTOGRAPHERS



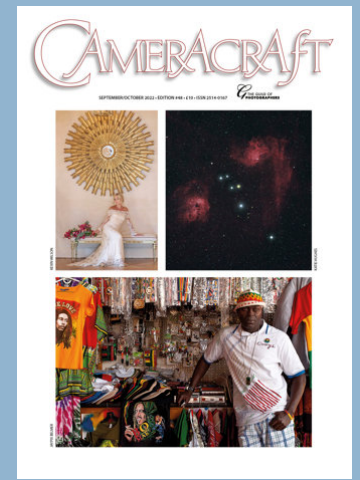
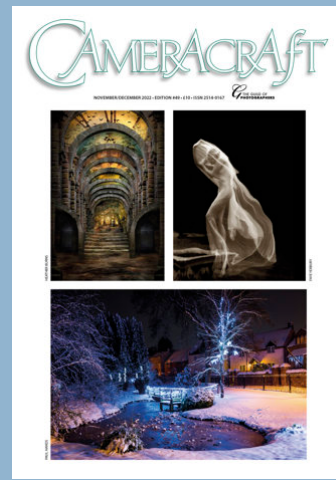
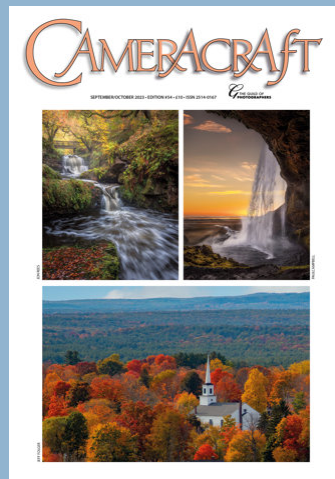
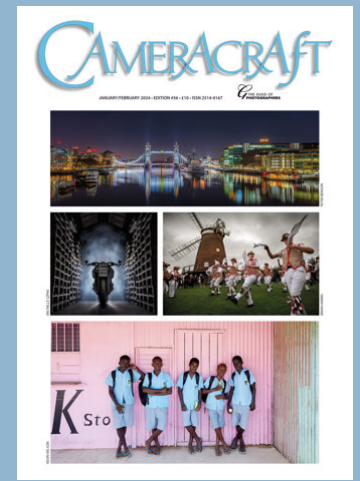
GILES CHRISTOPHER



DAVID BOSTOCK



NICK BRANDT



The last 12 editions of Cameracraft show how much variety we pack into our 48-page format. It's built round editorial not advertising and the contents don't mirror other magazines. If you are reading this you're probably already receiving the magazine as it is available only by subscription or membership of The Guild of Photographers which supports it as an independent publication. If not – subscribe to print or to our digital high resolution PDF download released on the 1st of every second month. Just visit <https://www.cameracraft.online/subscribe-to-cameracraft/>

You might assume that producing a photographic magazine means I don't have to buy anything but just borrow it. That was never the case even in the heyday of magazines, though there's every sign that 'influencers' whether under their own TikTok steam or just vlogging their way through the SEO swamp may have few scruples about taking hardware in exchange for soft sell. The fact is that most kit loaned out for review is on a tight schedule, a week or two, and often an inflexible one so if the diary or weather rule out several days what seems like a reasonable assessment period can mean a day's real shooting and day conducting odd tests to find things out about the way things work.

This is an aspect where the 'ambassador' given a kit to use permanently until replaced by the next generation wins out – long-term trial. It once happened with photo magazines, resulting in some memorable disputes with brands. A certain Japanese make fired a salvo at one of Britain's biggest publishers over forty years ago by providing just about everything in their system for the house pool, but insisting in return that their brand should be the one seen in the hands of the magazine staff when they produced how-to and inspirational features.

If there was a hide for bird photography, it would be their lens poking out of the hide, and if there was yet another wide-angle view of the Fairy Pools or Buchaille Etive Mhor it would be their camera on the tripod for the behind the scenes shot. It was an unwritten agreement but well understood and continued advertising, competition prizes and facility trips depended on honouring it even if that maker could not prevent favourable reviews of their competitors.

Not all magazines would play along and some were associated with other brands indirectly – I edited *Creative Photography* and *The Master Photographer* while producing *Minolta Image* and running the Minolta Club of Great Britain. One brand blocked advertising entirely for years because of this. Things change, and Future Publishing's *NPhoto* (entirely Nikon mag) and *PhotoPlus* (entirely Canon) established a position where a publisher can have a brand specific title and not be cold shouldered by others.

Even so, what the editor or team uses can affect content. *Creative*, as an example, was based partly on translated material from Verlag Photographie of Schaffhausen, Switzerland. They had very close links to Linhof, Sinar (notably), Ilford as part of the Swiss Ciba-Geigy group, Elinchrom, Broncolor, Leica, Hasselblad, Zeiss and European brands. As it happened, *The Master Photographer* later in the 1980s was far more aligned with large and medium format where these makes dominated – even most wedding and portrait work was on roll-film and Hasselblad was the aspirational system. A connection with a second-tier Japanese 35mm brand was of no concern.

Forty years later I'm still using 'Minolta' though it became Sony, and still using Elinchrom. We don't have anything begged, borrowed or stolen... in the last month, inspired to get an extra flash head by editing Giles Christopher's feature in this issue, I paid WEX all of £90 on a used D-Lite 2 RX. And £480 on a low mileage Sony A7II (2014 vintage!). I only had one body after selling A7IV and A7RIV to get the A7RV, and hate having no back-up. I didn't overpay – recent production, mint, boxed, 3,000 actuations plus a spare original battery. I was able to get a 1-year Sony warranty as it had never been registered.

Not being able to borrow everything, and buying and selling on the same terms as any reader, gives me a better perspective even if it means doing some things on a shoestring!

– David Kilpatrick

Email: editor@iconpublications.com

IN THIS ISSUE

Giles Christopher, Claire Osborne, Nick Brandt, David Bostock, Gary Friedman, Tom Hill, David Kilpatrick, Richard Kilpatrick, James Hall, Peter Karry, Tony Jones.

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 THE GUILD OF PHOTOGRAPHERS

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FUJIFILM



Benro SuperSlim tripods designed for smaller lighter mirrorless systems

BENRO's new SuperSlim tripod series is designed for photographers who demand portability with performance.

Available in two models – the TSSL08AN00P Aluminium (£115) and the TSSL08CN00P Carbon (£160) both including head and a storage bag – these tripods have a slim design just 6.1cm diameter around the folded legs. Twist leg locks offer quick setup and the dual panoramic Arca-mount N00P ball head allows versatile camera positioning. With four-section legs and a splittable centre column they cover eye level down to low-angle shots and macro photography.

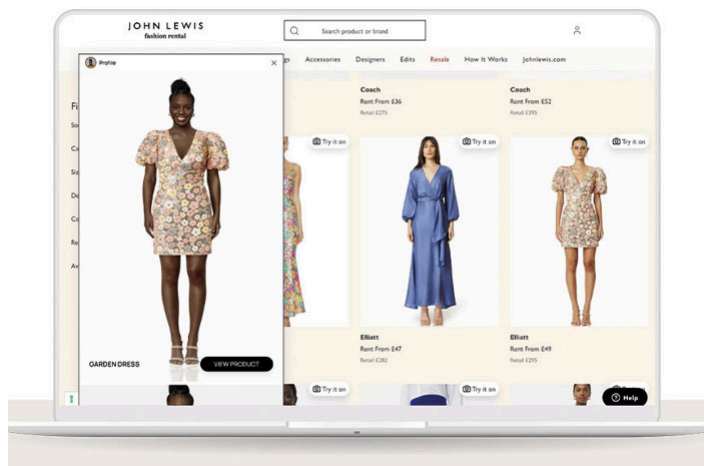
Bubble levels on both the N00P head and legs help ensure that your shots are level. Multiple ¼" accessory mounts let you to attach accessories such as lights and microphones.

Maximum operating height: 156cm
 Folded length: 52cm
 Maximum weight capacity: 4kg
 Weight: 1.15kg (Aluminium model), 1.02kg (Carbon model)

<https://uk.benroeu.com>



Retouching software firm shortlisted for fashion program Zylar Virtual Try-On



READERS WILL KNOW Anthropics Technology for *PortraitPro*, *LandscapePro* and related photo software. But their big business asset is AI-powered fashion virtual try-on, *Zylar*. This visualising program has been named a Finalist in the "Retail Partner of the Year" category of The People in Retail Awards. The People in Retail Awards are organised by *The Retail Bulletin* and aim to drive innovation and people-centricity in the retail industry. The winners will be announced in September 2024.

Being a Finalist in "The Retail Partner of the Year" category positions *Zylar Virtual Try-On* among the top innovators driving retail forward through technological advancement and people-centric solutions. The

Awards aim to inspire change in the retail community and celebrate teams and individuals making a difference within the retail sector.

"We are thrilled to have made the highly anticipated shortlist for the prestigious People in Retail award. This recognition highlights our commitment to placing people at the heart of everything we do while driving technological advancement in the retail industry," commented Alexander Berend, CEO. The criteria are based around retailer success advocacy, collaboration and teamwork and community empowerment.

For more information about *Zylar Virtual Try-On* and other products from Anthropics Technology, please visit [zylar.com](https://www.zylar.com)

Tamron 28-300mm f4-7.1 Di III VC VXD full frame E-mount

FOLLOWING A TREND for improved AF despite limited maximum apertures, Tamron's new 28-300mm f4-7.1 VC achieves a 10.7x zoom ratio while measuring just 126mm in length and weighing only 610g.

It uses the premium VXD (Voice-coil eXtreme-torque Drive) linear motor focusing mechanism, and VC (Vibration Compensation) with an unstated level of shake reduction. At focal lengths below 100mm, a special video stabilisation mode is activated. Focusing down to 0.19m with a subject scale of 1:2.8 at the wide end, it's almost macro.

It has an assignable Focus Set Button and a connection port for Tamron Lens Utility software. Moisture-resistant construction is completed with a fluorine coating on the front element. It takes 67mm filters in line with most Tamron lenses in this series.

It is on sale now at around £870.
<https://www.tamron.co.uk>



Photographs by Itsuka Yasumo



GoMatic camera bags – direct or Amazon



THE LUMA Camera Pack 18L (above) combines form and function with its slim profile and over twelve noteworthy features. Internal pockets, an external water bottle slot, and an integrated tripod carry boot make organisation seamless and intuitive. The adaptable internal divider system allows photographers to customise their gear layout plus openings at the back, side and top of the bag make it easy to access. It costs £210.00 and is available in four colours: black, rust, sage and stone.

The Luma Camera Sling 12L at £130.00 in the same colour choices can be seen open and closed above right. Inside there are customisable, shelved dividers and the top opens fully for immediate access with magnetic closures. The bag features internal pockets for small essentials plus an external pocket for quick-reach items like phones.

The Luma Camera Sling 9L, below, at £110.00 houses a smaller camera gear setup. Pivot rivets paired with the adjustable shoulder strap means users can move around when using the bag. The quick-grab secondary handle can also be attached to luggage. Other features include an external pocket on the lid, magnetic closure, a zippered inside pocket with two stretch mesh pockets. This sling pack has a metal frame to keep its shape at all times.

www.gomatic.co.uk





Catching up with Cameracraft followers – of merit!

We receive images sent by readers and past contributors, and it's always good to see them. **Tony Jones** is a prolific garden photographer and keeps us up to date with the gardens in his home in Midhurst, West Sussex. He's also a dedicated user of MicroFourThirds systems. Of the picture bottom left, fellow Olympus user **Peter Karry** says: "It was taken in Valencia and is one of the many double exposure images that I created from the multiple examples of Street Art that can be found on the house walls inside the old city. It explored this opportunity because I did not want to just copy the artwork that someone else had created."

In 2022, we published a spread entitled 'Timeless' with selected images from 'Age Can Not Wither Her', a portfolio of mature female nudes created artistically and respectfully by **James Hall**. James has sent us several body-painting nudes and the one bottom right caught the eye for the use of colour. James's website is <https://www.jameshallphotography.net>





TOM HILL

Our moral responsibilities when photographing animals

The excellent article elsewhere in these pages about the accomplished work of Nick Brandt is a refreshing change from the seemingly endless number of images churned out on social media of people's safari holidays and trips to see exotic animals kept in zoos throughout the world.

Brandt is clearly passionate about climate destruction and the looming consequences to life on our planet as a result; but the subject matter got me thinking about how photographers can, often unwittingly, create conditions where animals are likely to be abused and/or kept in terrible conditions solely to turn a profit for someone running an animal-centric business.

I have to confess I too am guilty of this, albeit unknowingly, after photographing animals in controlled situations across the world when travelling on various road trips. I wouldn't do it again with the benefit of hindsight, then again that facility has 20/20 vision, as we all know.

Of course, there's an effective continuum of how culpable any person can be when examining the concept of animal rights and dignity vs photography.

At one end, the least harmful, I find people anthropomorphising their pets to dress them up in sunglasses, clothes and hats to be merely a bit irritating and potentially unfair to the animal concerned. But there's very little actual harm done, and if it means that a person gets emotionally closer to their pet as a result of the interaction – it's really just a bit of fun and probably no bad thing. Indeed, there are times when some dogs seem to actively enjoy being photographed in crazy outfits.

Cleo dawg – online celeb

There's a dog who has many thousands of followers on Facebook called Princess Cleo – a Staffordshire Bull Terrier described as a 'Staffy Ambassador' by her owner. She's also on Instagram under the handle "woof_woof_cleo".

She's often featured online in a variety of outfits doing human-like activities, from being walked in a pram like a human baby to driving a kid's electric Mercedes sports car, every day something different.

I'm unsure why Cleo's owner



does what he does by featuring the dog on daily posts. I met him briefly at Liverpool Pride in 2016 and took a snap of Cleo (pictured) in her pink sun visor and aviator shades resting on the back of a bicycle carrier.

The owner doesn't seem to be motivated by money, I've not seen a fundraiser for the dog's welfare like so many pet scammers can do online, so I guess if the dog doesn't feel abused there's no harm in a little (or a lot!) of canine cosplay.

Mean streets

However, where the situation turns darker and more pernicious is when photography is a motivator for visiting curios, zoos and sanctuaries that are ostensibly run for the welfare of the animals involved, but in reality, the motivation is pure profit.

Behind the scenes, some poor animals are often not treated with dignity and worse, abused. Then there's the similar concept of photographing people for no other reason than producing a strong 'editorial' or 'travelogue' shot – looking back, I feel that the young boy here pictured holding his cat



has not only had his dignity transgressed, but equally, the process denigrates me for taking the picture. Looking again at this image 20 years on, it's as if the boy had suddenly held up the cat for the camera – the furry fella doesn't look particularly relaxed or comfortable. I guess he was expecting me to throw him a few coins or something.

Similarly, I felt uneasy attending a 'monkey theatre' at one Thai tourist 'village' – you can see (below) the poor primate holding a sign with his assigned name written on it. His trainer would grab a



microphone and shout over the stage PA system "Kalmuk! Flip a somersault!" – and he would do just that.

Likewise, I photographed a fortune-telling parrot on a street vendor's stall in Chiang Mai – you give the parrot's owner some coins and the parrot chooses and picks up a small notebook containing predictions of your future. Probably harmless entertainment and the parrot was very cute – but does the size of the animal dictate its level of dignity to be stolen? Is it OK to use a parrot for a bit of street entertainment, but not ride an elephant?

Tom Hill is a travel writer, copywriter and sometime photographer living in the Scottish Borders in the UK.

Tom's book fundraising for the British Heart Foundation 'The Cobbler's Children' depicts his 40 years in the imaging business... check out details at bigfrogsmallpond.co.uk



Buddhists won't even step on an ant if they can help it – they see every living being as sacred – and if you don't respect karma, you could come back in your next life as an earthworm. Maybe the world would be a better place if all humans stuck to that ethos.

Animal 'sanctuaries'

In fairness, I never knew about all this behind-the-scenes abuse when on a visit to an elephant sanctuary in The Golden Triangle, north-western Thailand, in 2005.

I snapped some images of elephants being ridden by tourists and the daily activities that the elephant handlers perform for all those holidaymakers' lenses. River washing of the elephants and having them paint artwork with their trunks were just some of the tricks the creatures would be made to perform.

The perambulating pachyderms appeared, at first, to be treated well and didn't seem stressed or unhealthy, unlike the poor elephant I snapped (*top right*) at a Thailand zoo. That unfortunate creature, incarcerated on its own, seemed to spend the entire time merely swaying from side-to-side aimlessly – apparently elephants do this when they have become mentally ill and depressed due to loneliness or extended captivity.

However, take a look at the smiling elephant handler pictured on the back of one of his animals. The 'crop' that he's holding in his right hand appears to be a sharp miniature pick-axe, which I'm sure must be designed to give the poor creature a painful exhortation to go, stop, stand on its hind legs or whatever.

If I'd known what I do now about the realities of how elephants



were treated at such places, I'd have avoided that sanctuary like a plague. I have rarely posted these images shown here on social media, but when I have, it's been in support of animal rights organisations, not to celebrate the fact that I sat on the back of an elephant for an hour while it carried me through a Thai jungle.

Apparently, according to Australian charity World Animal Protection:

"...every captive elephant is subject to a brutal training



If trophy hunting photographs were regarded as equally morally bankrupt as sexualised images of children, such hunting activity would probably cease overnight. Of course, there will be an argument that some creatures have to be culled in order to protect populations or if an animal is painfully terminally ill – but this doesn't detract from the vile concept that someone achieves some sort of pleasure in murdering a sentient creature, then celebrating the fact with an image posted on social media.

And this is what it comes down to – what is deemed socially acceptable in societies. Bear baiting was once commonplace in medieval England. Bullfighting still happens in Spain. But as the world changes (in many ways for the better) one arbiter of what is deemed 'acceptable' will be the online posting of images that will offend an increasingly animal-friendly global audience.

As soon as social media platforms are held responsible for what their users publish (and that day is coming soon) – trophy hunting and elephant riding imagery will become a thing of the past – and such photos will be found as publicly unacceptable as cock fighting or child pornography.

It was Mohandas Gandhi who said:

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

We should all remember that as depictees of the world around us, as photographers, we must consider our moral responsibilities every time we press the shutter release button.

process known as 'the crush.' To break their spirit, they are torn from their mothers, isolated, chained, starved, and beaten until they are submissive enough to perform distressing tourist activities...

Trophy hunting

Even worse still is the practice of wealthy people travelling to Africa and such places to kill defenceless majestic animals with rifles, then be photographed with their foot on the poor creature's barely cold body.

LIGHT EATING

With his work seen in countless hotel group brochures, on restaurant websites and fine dining advertisements Giles Christopher has been known to tell fibs – “that’s got to be thrown away, it’s been sprayed...” is a very good way to get to eat that superb dessert which has not seen a drop of glycerine or lacquer.

He admits that all food photographers, or the expert stylists who came into the studio with chefs and art directors and marketing teams, do pad out the flatness of food reality when needed. A burger patty which already puts whoppers to shame will look even better opened from the opposite side to insert a cardboard support. It’s not as common for dishes to need such tweaking now, as the business has moved towards natural and real looks.

Part of this is down to light, and lighting methods. “You can’t always work at that table on the upper floor next to a high window”, he says of his location shoots visiting the restaurants themselves. “I’ve been expected to set up in the cellar, and it can be my job to create the look of daylight inside, just as we would in the studio.” When he started shooting food stills over 20 years ago, he was moving from a TV and video camera to the newly arrived pro digital systems. He had an architectural eye and shot room-sets and furniture but rarely featured people. “I like to have full control over everything in the picture”, he says, “and there were not a lot of food photographers around. I did interiors alongside food for the first five years.”

Back then, flash was the most common lighting, and that was a big step from previous decades where tungsten or HMI continuous light which worked well for still life or interiors had serious drawbacks for food. “When a dessert or a cocktail is prepared you may have

The studio recipes behind Giles Christopher’s pixel-perfect plates and sparkling glasses



just 30 seconds to get the best shot”, he explains. “It needs to look real so no boot polish on the roast chicken!”

In the last few years, aided by the excellent quality at relatively high ISO settings of cameras like his Sony A7RV, very high output LED sources which can run all day without heating the food or drinks have changed the game. He’ll still bounce a base-level soft light over an entire setup from a A1 white card sheet or light through an 8 x 4ft scrimmed space-frame, but uses F&V (fvlight.com) LED panels and a Nanlite Forza monolight-style head with a tight source taking Bowens flash accessories, including a fresnel spot which can cast beautiful sharp shadows and create specular highlights and texture. These panels and heads are RGB with adjustable colour, usually from warm tungsten to a cool blue daylight, and Giles uses colour temperature contrast as another tool to enhance the appeal of food.

The change to continuous light has coincided with the need in the past four or five years to include movie clips alongside stills. “The Sony is ideal for this”, Giles says. “I just move a switch and I can capture the movies needed for reels, often just a six second take for each shot”. His past experience in TV studios helps greatly, and of course he has invested in gimbals, sliders and everything needed to get the effects required.

Overhead view

One very important requirement is the flat-lay – it’s term used in on-line sales sites for fashions when a mannequin or live model can’t be used, but it’s also the term for those directly overhead views of table settings, plating up, cutlery and drinks in view. It was about this that we initially contacted Giles for an insight into his methods, realising that the scale of some of the flat-lays could not be achieved by just standing on a chair (been



there!) and hoping not to fall into the shot.

"I was able to find a nine foot high FOBA camera stand", Giles told us – a wheeled heavyweight column with arms, used in studios for large format monorails. "I don't want to crouch down arranging things on the floor, and a low table is ideal for the chef and food stylists to do this. I'd much rather risk working at the top of a stepladder than on my knees."

Knowing that even with articulated rear screens, setting up a mirrorless camera at the end of a three or four foot horizontal arm is almost impossible, he only does the initial geared-head alignment that way, often working with one of his trio of Canon EF tilt-shift lenses which allow the flat-lay table to be clear of the studio stand base. A 10m USB cable links the camera to a Mac which feeds two large screens so he can compose and fine tune the shot, while the client sees what's being done. Tethered shooting with *Capture One Pro* means that a layout overlay can be superimposed (just shoot the art director's visual) for advertisements, brochure pages and anything which demands precise positioning of elements in the composition.

With a 1,200 square foot space and 20 foot ceiling height, his Shepperton studio is not quite on the scale of the movie studios which made the place famous. It's actually a conversion from a herb farm barn! But the space means he can shoot the largest lay-flats, and also work very easily on table-level oblique shots. "I can set up lights all round the subject the day before", he says, "so they do not need moving around all the time during the shoot. I like to create daylight in the studio, including shafts of light through glasses, and even shadows cast from outside the shot, using objects as if they were gobos. I will light directionally, with shadows falling in the same direction as you read the text if there are product packs to be included in the shot."

He's not a fan of octa or circular softboxes because food often needs reflections to look appetising, and multiple circular or broolly-shape reflections look very wrong. Square or rectangular light





sources, whether Nanlite or F&V panels or softboxes on mono heads, look more natural reflected in bottles, glasses, cutlery and food. “We’re used to seeing tables in rooms with many windows”, he explains, “the rectangular reflections look like window light. You don’t get multiple suns, so more than one source which is round looks wrong.”

It’s often the specular highlights and reflections which give food its 3D look, Giles says. He also advises photographers to use the ‘three-quarter back light’ basis for location food shots, where the main source is never next to the camera but looking back to the camera from behind and to the side above the table. And he will create random light effects by reflections, quoting a sheet of disco mirror ball decor he has mounted on one flat. Anything to make the subject seem to be in an appealing and atmospheric setting.

This kind of attention to detail means most pictures are perfect out of the camera, but he still may have to retouch or do an alternative set up – “I might need to lose the watch from a cocktail waiter’s wrist, or move a carrot a bit to the left”. For this, AI image retouching is beginning to gain ground, the watch being a real example. *Photoshop AI Generative Fill* can, with a few tries, do this kind of work quickly. It can remove all the poppy seeds from a burger seen in a bun which appeals to European eyes but is taboo in the Emirates where those narcotic ingredients are not allowed!

However AI may not be good enough for the side of a bus, and the same goes for the ISO 640 he’s happy to go beyond for editorial. He stays below that when a very large use is planned. He’s also aware of the need to have colours match perfectly across a set of images, and knows that his Canon, Sony and Laowa lenses in the 90mm-100mm range are all slightly different. The Smooth Transfer Focus Laowa is a touch green compared with the others, but he loves it for video. He has no such complaints about the Voigtlander 65mm f2 Macro which is rapidly becoming his favourite for those eye-level shots with differential focus, more like the best pictures







Set-ups in Giles's studio show the importance of high camera positions and using large monitor screens to aid composition and previewing.

people take of the food they are eating... but beautifully lit and perfectly composed, without the worn cutlery and dishes messily plated up that even very expensive restaurants suffer from.

Surprisingly, he'll often shoot crop factor, 26 megapixels on his 61MP body, because switching between still and 4K movie in this format means only a tiny shift in image size. Full frame still imaging turns to 1.2X 4K 16:9, so needs a significant composition change. The Super 35/APS-C switch removes this extra work or delay. And while his clients will often grab shots of his screen or even the food

itself on their phones, they know his viewpoint and the quality of composition, depth of field control, colour and fine detail will far exceed those.

It's all come a long way from flash heads and getting a DSLR up to the maximum height of a Manfrotto Triaut tripod (*still more than useful, see left*). Giles Christopher has embraced the benefits of full frame high end mirrorless and jumped into the world of Reels and TikTok while keeping one foot firmly on the solid ground of studio still photography.

To see much more, visit: <https://www.gileschristopher.co.uk>

MIND AND BODY EXPOSED

In 2019 I started on a path in my photography that has led me on such a journey of discovery. Having spent the last 27 years of my life living with a husband suffering from military PTSD gave me so much insight into life with mental health disorders, it has helped me and some of the people I have worked with to show the world parts of them that many keep hidden. For me at least I have found this to be a healing experience, and from the messages I receive it helps so many others to understand they aren't alone.

The first images I shot (*right*) were of my husband in his army uniform, I wanted to show a part of him he doesn't show anyone, the part of him he had kept locked away since 2009 when he fought front line with the army in Afghanistan. This led me to shoot a panel of images (*below*) to portray his journey with military PTSD which gained a Master Craftsman with the Guild of Photographers and a Fellowship with the Societies of Photographers.

Shooting this panel was incredibly, difficult but also a fun and healing experience to undertake with my husband, we got to show

Claire Osborne's portraiture reveals and explores more about her subjects than most would find comfortable to confront – even herself and those close to her



the world how this has affected him and how it has changed our lives. This panel broke a lot of the traditional “rules” and formats and I was so worried how it would be received. Shooting this panel was also a time we spent together when he opened up and talked to me about things he had never talked about before. It really helped us both so much and I gained both a deeper understanding and a love of working with people suffering from mental health disorders. We both wanted to shoot a few images a couple of years later, as a finale to this panel, images that depicted him breaking free from his PTSD world. These have become my favourite images and I proudly have them hung on our walls at home (*right*).

I found such a passion for this type of photography, getting inside people's heads – finding ways to help them open up, be vulnerable and so brave – but before I delved into working with others I had demons of my own I needed to open up about, a part of me I had never discussed before, not even with my own family and often even denied it myself.

I had been obese my entire adult life, I have binge eating disorder, a





drive to binge eat that was often insatiable. Growing up I never understood this was an eating disorder, it led me to eat myself to a point I was destroying my health, life and my relationship. The relationship I had with food was and still is so toxic – it was my entire world I woke up thinking about food, thought about food all day and dreamt about food.

In 2022 after years of ill health I made the decision to take action. I had a gastric sleeve surgery, where 80% of my stomach was removed taking away my option to binge, over the last two and a half years I have lost 10 stone. This has changed my life. I will never have a normal relationship with food, I still have this drive to eat myself to death I don't think that will ever go, but now my body won't let me.

In January of 2023 I shot self-portraits (*example, left*) showing that difficult battle, how I still want to and try to binge eat but can't to

the point I used to. They were very well received in competition and they are to this day some of my proudest work. I realised how hard it was putting yourself bare out there, letting the world really see you. I gained a deeper understanding of how the models I work with expose their emotions and hidden sides.

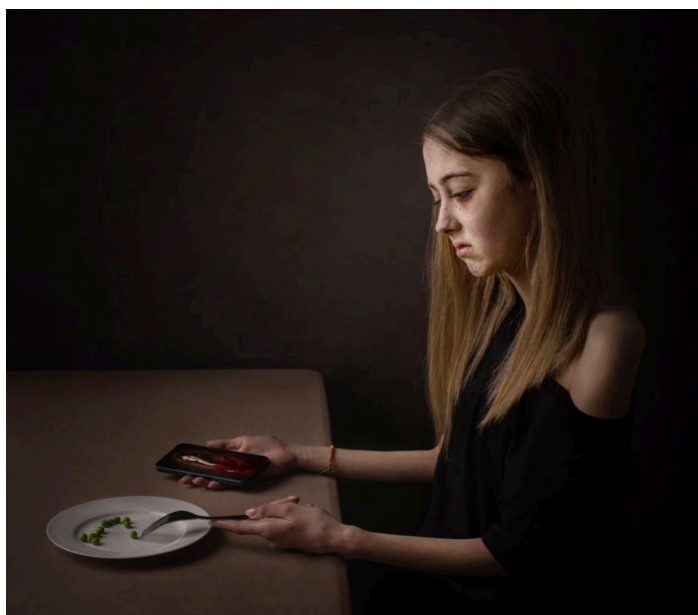
Renia's story

Shooting and sharing these images led so many others to open up to me about their eating disorders, one of these people was a young girl I had worked with so many times in the past called Renia. She was suffering so many battles with her mental health among those she is fighting with AFRID which is Avoidance Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (which has led to Anorexia) along with depression and self-harm. At the time she came for her first shoot with me she was about to be admitted to a feeding clinic as her weight had dropped so dangerously low. We shot images (*centre column top two*) that highlighted how she felt about being faced with food and how overwhelmed it made her feel.

A year later and starting to show some recovery we shot another series of images (*facing page*) that showed how these eating disorders will always be by her side even though she is outwardly showing signs of recovery, inside she will always face this battle, something I really understand and even though my eating disorder is on the opposite side of the scale to Renia's I have the same battle. Outwardly I now look normal and in recovery, but I still have times I lock myself in my house and eat till I am sick.

Working with Renia during these shoots was so difficult. I was in a position where I needed her to expose her emotions, show a side of her she hated, talk about the one thing that she avoided talking about, I had a few talks with her Mum before the shoot (one of the most supportive people I've ever met, she is her daughter's rock) and we talked through ways to get the images we wanted while still making the shoot fun

The latest images we shot were composites so we had mum stand in for the side of Renia to help the composites work in post, which



meant Renia got to strangle her mum with a tape measure (*left*). It really was so funny, but the seriousness of the images I produce and the emotions I bring to the surface during the shoot and when the images are released is never lost on me. I know how careful I need to be, and ultimately I always make sure the models I work with can cope with how these shoots may make them feel.

The self-harm image (*overleaf*) I shot was the one that worried me. Shooting this image was

at the request of Renia. She knows how taboo the subject is and she wanted to help other young people out there, to show them they aren't alone. Finding a way to show this in photography wasn't easy. I wanted to show Renia being vulnerable, pained and hurt. This shot was entirely dependent on her expression and pose, that image is so raw and haunting.

My journey with extreme weight loss uncovered the reality of how we perceive our bodies, and sometimes how fixing one part of us exposes other parts of us that we aren't happy with now. It's almost the human condition for some that we will always find parts of us we aren't happy, especially in the world of perfect social media posts. This led me to shoot another series of self-portraits (*page 29*) where I show how I felt now I had lost weight, how there are parts of me now that I find upsetting, how I only show the world a perfect edited picture and try to keep the reality hidden. How after we have surgery to help a part we aren't happy with we can always find another thing we would like to improve, shooting these images and the feedback I got online has helped me to come to terms with the new me.

The rocky road

Choosing a path of mental health photography is both very rewarding and also taking a chance. I am showing a side to people that so many can find hard to see, being faced with a dark side that so many hide can feel jarring and scary. There is always a worry that it can upset someone causes a reaction that people weren't ready to face especially posting the images online and through social media. Luckily I have always been met with such positivity and praise, I've had so many messages from other parents who are going through similar things saying how it made them feel less alone to know it's not just happening to them.

Exploring these emotions in photography has been the most rewarding thing I have ever done. It helps me heal and with so many I speak to, I know that putting these images into competitions is also a risk, it causes emotions to rise and can make judges react in so many extremes., One of my images in a







recent print competition caused a judge to step out in tears, seeing this reaction up close really made me question what it is I do, but after speaking to the judge afterwards I understood and was reassured that I need to keep doing what I do. It upset me to see this reaction, but then it makes those emotions so real, it reminds me of how so many out there are facing their own battles.

So, I will keep shooting images that are jarring to look at, if it makes someone uncomfortable or causes an extreme reaction I feel like I have filled my own brief. I have so many ideas and images planned, and what I shoot for competitions is such a juxtaposition to my day job of newborn photography, I feel like it shows my personality perfectly.



*Claire Osborne is an award-winning portrait, newborn, maternity and baby photographer based in Birmingham. You find her as **claireosbornephotography** on Facebook, Instagram and .co.uk*



SETTING THE STAGE

I grew up in England. Home of the elk, lynx and brown bear of the wolves and wolverine and cave lion. Of the woolly mammoth and woolly rhinoceros. Glorious creatures. A wonder to behold as they roamed across the hills and forests of southern England. Of course, this was before my time.

It's the primal glory of such a land shared by so many different creatures. That has a visceral impact on most humans that see this, that has the ability to fill the most jaded of

us with a profound sense of wonder.

But the destruction of these animals, of these African places is not happening in the past where we grew up. But in our own immediate present. If we follow our present path of development and destruction in just a few years' time, rural African children will be as uncomprehending that elephants and giraffes once roamed the fields in front of their home as we are that woolly rhinos once lived, where our nearest shopping mall now stands.

Nick Brandt's works remind us of what All the World is, and it's not just humans who are players on it. Gary Friedman talked to him.



That was Nick Brandt's introduction to his 2016 work, *Inherit the Dust*, where he explained about the disproportionate impact that humans have had on the environment, and how he's set out to illustrate the environmental decline.

"Nearly twenty years ago I started photographing the wild animals of Africa as an elegy to a disappearing world", he writes. "After some years, seeing the escalating environmental destruction, I felt an urgent need to move away from that kind of work and address the destruction in a much more direct way. This led to the series, *Inherit the Dust* (2016) and *This Empty World* (2019).



Nick started out documenting issues like ivory poaching in medium format to studio quality. In 2016, he published 'Inherit the Dust' with directed panoramas like 'Wasteland with Elephant, 2015'; below. The set-up, typical of this series where large printed panels were erected on location, is shown above. The figures in each work are people going about their lives on the scene at the time.

"These were mainly about habitat loss and biodiversity loss, significantly as a result of human expansion and development. *The Day May Break* addresses perhaps the biggest crisis of all: climate change, or a more fitting phrase, climate breakdown, which negatively impacts every living creature on the planet." This is the level of detail, thought, and work which goes into all of his photographic ventures. When people and animals are seen in one image (pages 26-27), they are photographed in the same frame at the same time. Nick's level of effort and vision exceeds that of what you'd see from a traditional activist photographer, extending to the methods and budget of a





filmmaker. No surprise there; as he was once a filmmaker. His history as an artist traversed many media, starting with painting and shifting to photography, where he was exhibiting when he was 18 years old. But he wanted to combine his love of image making with his even greater love for music. "Music is for me the art form that can emotionally most sweep somebody away."

So he switched to film when he was 19, so that he could use music with imagery. "I ended up initially directing music videos and, then trying to get films made. I was spending years writing screenplays and getting attached to films that never actually saw the light of day.

"I wasn't really creating. In addition, I was becoming more and more frustrated that I couldn't

Quarry With Lion, 2014 (left) and Alleyway With Chimpanzee, 2014 (right).

Underpass With Elephants (Lean Back, Your Life Is On Track), 2015 (below).



express my feelings about the natural world.”

He spent 15 years doing this and adds, somewhat regretfully, “I made a major error becoming a director. I wish I could have those 15 years back.”

A move to stills

His photographic activism started with the East African trilogy, *On This Earth/A Shadow Falls/Across The Ravaged Land* (2001-2012), where Brandt established a style of portrait photography of animals in the wild similar to that of the photography of humans in a studio setting, shot on medium format film, attempting to portray animals as sentient creatures not so different from us.

In *Inherit the Dust*, he photographed places in East Africa where the animals used to roam. In each location, life size panels of animal portrait photographs were erected, setting the panels within a world of explosive human development.

“As with all my previous work, this series was shot on black and white medium format film. Each panorama was constructed out of six by seven negatives stitched together in *Photoshop* to create the final widescreen view.” The final enlargements are truly magnificent. Just don’t ask him if he had montaged the animal pictures into the composition.

“Cue my silent scream”, he responds. “Months of work were spent on production of prints of life-sized animals. Giant panels were constructed of elaborate aluminium frames up to 23 men at a time, carrying ten meter long or high panels in 40 degree plus heat and heaving them up and strapping them down and leveling them and in theory, I could have just stayed at home and done it all in *Photoshop*.”

Once his blood pressure subsides, he explains: “A photo like underpass with elephants reveals so much more as a result of the panel being there. I never imagined that the elephants would look so trapped between the two gargantuan concrete pillars. The matriarch appearing to be looking almost sympathetically. The humans also rendered homeless. I never imagined that her trunk would appear to be practically resting on the ground in front of the panel.”



From 'This Empty World' – above, *Garage With Blind Rhino, Kenya, 2018.*





Above, *Charcoal Burning With Zebras, Kenya, 2018*. Below, *Bus Station With Elephant In Dust, Kenya, 2018*.



A move to colour

Nick got even more ambitious with *This Empty World*, which addresses the escalating destruction of the East African natural world at the hands of humans, showing a world where, overwhelmed by runaway development, there is no longer space for animals to survive. He used colour for this series.

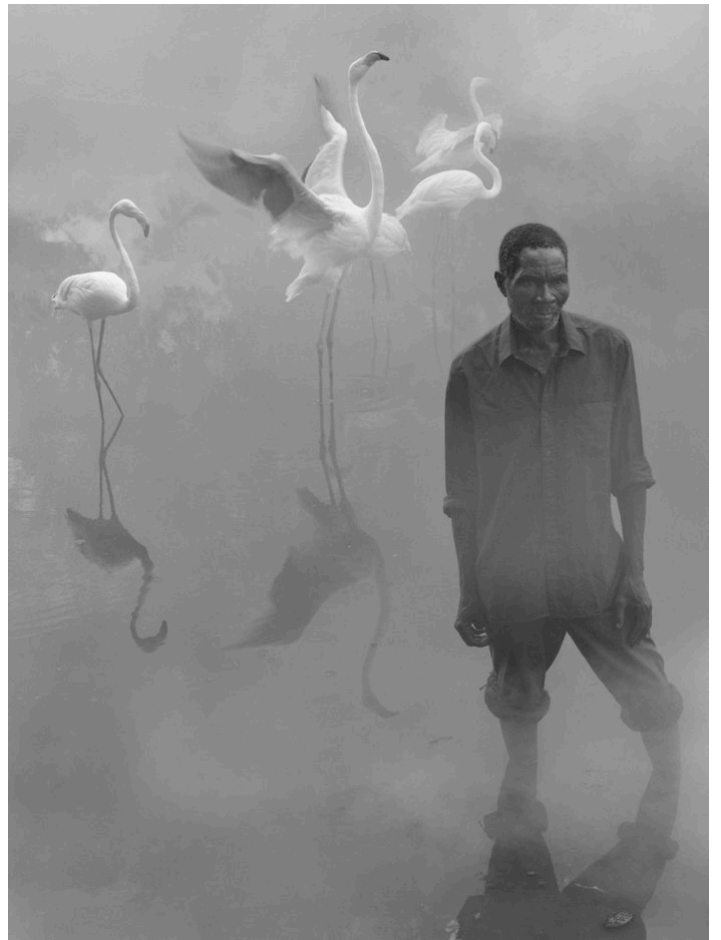
The people in the photos are also often helplessly swept along by the relentless tide of ‘progress’. Each image is a combination of two moments in time, captured weeks apart, almost all from the exact same locked-off camera position.

There are two steps involved in creating the images for *This Empty World*. First, a partial set is built and lit. Weeks, even months follow, while the animals that inhabit the region become comfortable enough to enter the frame. Once the animals are captured on camera, the full sets – bridge and highway construction sites, a petrol station, a bus station and more – are built by the art department team. A second sequence is then photographed with the full set, with a large cast of people drawn from local communities and beyond. After the shoot, the sets are dismantled and recycled with almost zero waste and no mark on the landscape.

His latest project, *The Day May Break* (2021-2023), is an ongoing global series portraying people and animals that have been impacted by environmental degradation and destruction.

Chapter One was photographed in Zimbabwe and Kenya in 2020; Chapter Two in Bolivia in 2022. In Chapters One and Two, the people in the photos have all been badly affected by climate change, from extreme droughts to floods that destroyed their homes and livelihoods. Many others in this series are, or were, farmers, impoverished by years-long severe droughts, and ultimately forced to abandon their land and move elsewhere. The photographs were taken at several sanctuaries and conservancies. The animals are almost all long-term rescues, victims of everything from habitat destruction to wildlife trafficking; the people and animals were together when photographed.

“The fog is the unifying visual, symbolically causing a once-recognizable world to fade from view.



Above left: Lucio and Chascas, Bolivia, 2022. Above right: Patrick and Flamingoes, Zimbabwe, 2020. Below: Harriet and People in Fog, Zimbabwe, 2020.





Above: *Alice, Stanley and Najin, Kenya, 2020.*

Below: *Kuda and Sky II, Zimbabwe, 2020.*



The animals and humans in the fog are both together—in the same frame—and yet disconnected, never making physical or eye contact. But they are there together. The fog is also an echo of the suffocating smoke from the wildfires, driven by climate change, devastating so much of the planet. The props in the photos represent the barest bones for living - a chair, a table, a bed. And for light, a single bare lightbulb to illuminate the darkness. Some people seem to interpret the lightbulb as a beacon of light, a symbol of hope. That's fine by me if they choose to see it in that way."

Chapter Three, named *SINK/RISE*, was photographed in Fiji in 2023, and focuses on South Pacific Islanders impacted by rising oceans from climate change. The people in these photos, photographed underwater in the ocean, are representatives of the many people whose homes, land and livelihoods will be lost in the coming decades as the water rises.

In her foreword to the book, writer Zoe Lescage writes: "Sit with these photographs and the others in

the series, and the subjects' expressions will change like water. Stoicism becomes resignation. Frustration becomes resolve. In their pensive faces, we can read tenderness, grief, and perseverance. Intimate and spare as these portraits are, the effect is expansive."

Chapter 4 was shot in Jordan, is currently in production and will be released in September of this year.

"I keep photographing countries with very low carbon emissions, where the people who are being most impacted, the rural poor, are the ones that are contributing the least amount. So it's not their fault and they're suffering for it."

An artist's impact

Does he think that his artwork has had the impact that he would like it to have?

"That's always an impossible question to ask anyone. All I can tell you is I am invariably disappointed. I think that it is increasingly very hard for creators in all fields to break through the over-saturated noise that is modern day life. I feel not just in relation to my work but all creators' work.

“For example, when I look at so many great musicians around today, and if they’ve been around in the 1970s, some would have been world famous. But right now they are consigned to this alternative music niche. On the flip side, social media can be a great democratizing platform, in that you can be this incredibly talented kid with some funky basic camera or even camera phone in say, a village in Mali. And somehow your work gets seen and it catches on, and you’re exhibiting in a photography festival in Lagos.

“Now, I’m not saying that my stuff is great or important. What I do think is that it has an important message, because for me, climate breakdown is the single most consequential issue to ever face humanity.”

He did try to make a more concrete impact. Back in 2010, he co-founded Big Life Foundation (www.Biglife.org), whose primary mission is to preserve 1.6 million acres of ecosystem in Kenya and Tanzania. Using innovative conservation strategies and collaborating closely with local communities, partner NGOs, national parks, and government agencies, Big Life sought to protect and sustain East Africa’s wildlife and wild lands, including one of the greatest populations of elephants left in East Africa.

“You are absolutely able to see a tangible concrete impact and difference that an organization has been able to have. This is very different to the much more abstract notion of how much impact can any creative piece of art work can have.

“In America we have to deal with right wing politicians under the influence of big oil money and industry lobbyists that systematically and wilfully undermine critically important environmental legislation. In decades to come, this will cost America, and by extension the world, far more money in the long term. This compared to the much smaller amount of money needed to start addressing these issues now.

“That doesn’t mean to say you stop fighting,” he concludes. “You keep on fighting because you can mitigate the harm, mitigate the damage. All of us need to become good ancestors, better ancestors, mindful of how we live, living in ways that help those billions of humans, animals and trees that we will never live to see.”

You can support Nick’s work and revel in his amazing imagery by purchasing his books at:

www.nickbrandt.com/-bookstore-/



Qama by Cliff, Fiji, 2023



Joel and Sosi, Fiji, 2023



Onnie and Keanan on Seesaw, Fiji, 2023



Serafina and Keanan on Bed, Fiji, 2023

INSIDE & OUT IN BLACK & WHITE

Seventeen years ago, I walked away from corporate life and a career in digital advertising to embark as a full-time wedding photographer. I have learned that to be a great wedding photographer you really do need to be interested in and to like people, and to be able to build an instant rapport/trust with them to get the best expressions and their patience.

From the very start back in 2008 I knew that somehow, one day I wanted to gain at least one Fellowship in Wedding Photography and following achievement of my Fellowship of the Master Photographers Association in September 2022 I gained my Fellowship from the BIPP in May 2024. Following this I was awarded my Professional Fellowship from the RPS in July 2024. Each Fellowship had a slightly different wedding panel, but all were 100% weddings in monochrome.

Being a wedding photographer certainly is not for the faint-hearted. You really do only get one chance to capture those fleeting moments. They need to be perfectly exposed and as sharp as a tack, no second chances. Modern mirrorless cameras help enormously but you really do need to perform at the top of your game week in week out if you are to exceed your clients' expectations – and believe me the expectations are deservedly high. I still approach each wedding, even if I am feeling a bit flat, with the words of Jerry Ghionis from a training DVD that I watched in my early wedding photography days ringing in my head... "shoot each and every wedding like your life depended on it."

Knowing your kit backwards and inside out is a given, as is reacting to time restrictions and weather conditions.

Black & White imagery is what I really love and many of the awards that I have received from the WPPI, SWPP, MPA, BIPP and The Guild to date, have been for my monochrome images. I approach each image in digital post-production exactly as I used to do when I had a

David Bostock has gained Fellowships from the British Institute of Professional Photography, Master Photographers Association and Royal Photographic Society with selections from his monochrome wedding portfolio



wet darkroom as a teenager, with selective dodging and burning to achieve the result. My 'go-to' B&W conversion software for competitions is Silver Efx Pro by NIK filters with my own distinct recipes I have developed over the years.

The edgy monochrome work of photographers such as Bob Carlos Clarke and the 1940s and 1950s work of fashion photographer Horst P. Horst for Vogue along with the backlit smoky jazz images of Herman Leonard and the pure wedding photojournalism of Jeff Ascough have provided a constant inspiration in terms of composition and lighting. So have slightly 'Film Noir' movies from the likes of Ridley-Scott, Alan Parker, Stanley Kubrick and Anton Corbijn. All started out as stills photographers or master lighting specialists. There are so many amazing film photographers from the past that I am still discovering. My inspiration is from the geniuses from years gone by and that's the work I seek out.

This Fellowship panel of monochrome images represents, after much procrastination, a collection of images I am proud to have taken. Without doubt there are many more images I would have loved to include but 20 is the rule. Some images here are carefully crafted, some relied on instinct and experience to capture a split-second moment in time.

As fellowship submissions are print-based the panel was printed on my favourite photographic paper Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gsm (which reminds me of the incredible fibre based slightly warm toned photographic paper Agfa Record Rapid). It's one of the best fine art photographic papers for monochrome prints that you can get in my humble opinion. Of course, it is expensive but just like the man from Harley Davidson once said "If you've got a ten-dollar head then buy a ten-dollar helmet..."

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'The Rushing Groom' (top): Kirtlington Park, Oxfordshire. Canon EOS 5D Mk3, EF 16-35 f2 L IS at 16mm, 1/100s at f4, ISO 1250. Available light only.

'Staircases to Love' (bottom): Ardington House, Oxfordshire. Canon EOS R5, RF 28-70 f2 L IS at 28mm, 1/125s at f2.8, ISO 1250. Speedlight off-camera flash.



'Bride with Cigar' (top right): The Langley, Buckinghamshire. Canon EOS 5D Mk4, EF 16-35 f2.8L IS at 20mm, 1/50s at f5.6, ISO 800. Rotolite NEO 2 continuous lighting. 'The Light That Caresses the Bride' (top left): Hedsor House, Bucks. Canon EOS R5. RF 24-105 f4L IS at 24mm, 1/125s at f4, ISO 800. Available light only. 'Bored Flower girl' (below). Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire. EOS 5D Mk4, EF 70-200 f2.8L IS at 70mm, 1/500s at f4, ISO 2500. Available light only.





'Water and Stone' (above). Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons. Canon EOS R5, EF 70-200 f2.8L IS at 70mm, 1/100s at f6.3, ISO 400. Available light only.

DAVID BOSTOCK

'Windows over Circles' (below). Rhodes House, Oxford. Canon EOS 5D Mk4, EF 16-35 f2.8L IS at 16mm, 1/125s at f6.3, ISO 400. Available light only.





'Love Across the Lake' (above). Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons. Canon EOS 5D Mk4, EF 24-70 f2.8L at 70mm, 1/250s at f5.6, ISO 1600. Available light only.

DAVID BOSTOCK

'Memories of The Great Gatsby' (below). The Savoy, London. Canon EOS R5, RF 28-70 f2.8L IS at 28mm, 1/80s at f6.3, ISO 1600. Available light only.



Fujifilm GFX 100sII, 32-64mm & 50mm

Why we refer to sensors 33 x 44mm as Medium Format stems from a forgotten era when there was such a thing as Large Format digital – scanning backs on 5 x 4" technical cameras. If anything, we should call 24 x 36mm Medium Format and the Fujifilm GF series Large Format. When the sensor packs 102 megapixels, the combination of its size and resolution gives results which rival previous large format film shooting demand the same discipline.

The new GFX 100sII puts this power in more hands by costing less than the slightly beefier GFX100 II or the former base model GFX100S. It shaves at least 150g off weight, a little in handling dimensions but not in thickness, and between £2,000 off the cost compared to the II. However at £4,999 it is now undercut by the remaining stocks of the 100S, reduced from a higher ticket than this to a bargain £3,499 at the time of writing.

When I looked briefly at the 100 II I was most impressed by its 9 million pixel 1.0X magnification EVF. It remains far superior to Sony's 9 million pixel EVF even if it uses the same technology – Fujifilm simply does it better. The S II has a 0.84X view and 5.76m dots, much better than the S if no match for the II. I found this EVF still impressed more than Sony's on the A7RV.

As for other handling and use aspects, the always-on OLED paper white on black top information panel seems at first a backward step from Fujifilm's tradition of using mechanical controls. It simply takes some getting used to, and like dials it's there showing you your settings at a glance before you switch the camera on. The PASM/Custom dial with Movie/Still switch below it remains very physical and alongside the usual buttons and menu accessed functions there's a dedicated S/C/M focus mode switch, a View Mode toggle button to make the EVF and screen behave as you want, a +/-



The camera with 32-64mm zoom, shown extended at 64mm on the right.



button, AF On button, AE lock, a Drive button to invoke that menu directly, front and rear control wheels with a useful secondary push action, a button to scroll through OLED display content including graphic simulation of dials and a live histogram, a customisable button which turns Face Detection on and off by default, and an inevitably fiddly too-small nubbin controller. That one control, call it a joystick or nipple or whatever, is the only one I didn't find ergonomic.

The large rear screen has a touch function which sets the focus point. This is very quick, but far too easily touched when handling the camera. It offers the usual nose-tip sudden shift of AF point to the lower left corner of the shot, and it's not just my nose, others report the same. It's not even just Fujifilm, it happens on most touch-to-set AF screens and it's a pity to disable it because the subject tracking from a quick tap is so useful.

The camera is not large to handle, and if you've got accustomed to the larger Panasonic, Nikon or Canon full-frame options moving to medium format with this will seem familiar. Sony has kept all body sizes



Sony A7RV left, Fujifilm GFX 100sII right, with (not directly comparable) zoom lenses.

relatively small, but even so the GFX 100S II handles much the same. This can not be said of the lenses. Fujifilm has never held back on substantial metal lens barrels, in the APS-C X system as well as the MF GF system. The size and the balance of lenses may limit the scope of outfits as much as the cost.

The two lenses

With this in mind, I opted to test two wide-angle choices with the camera, the new 32-64mm f4 constant aperture which is a 25-51mm equivalent, and the compact prime 50mm f3.5 which is close to matching a 35mm lens. The factor to use for working out the 33 x 44mm format relative to 24 x 36mm is a dual one. If you use the whole of the GF frame, it's an 8 x 6" image shape and 0.72 or 1.37X factor (50mm on FF = 68.5mm on GF). If you crop the GF image to make a 35mm shape 2:3 ratio, it's 0.8 or 1.22X (50mm on FF = 61mm on GF).

I chose these lenses as the purpose was landscape and architectural photography rather than social, portraiture or any other genre. The omission probably lay in close up ability, as the GF 50mm f3.5 R LM WR which could so easily have been designed with much closer focus, as it's a light small optical group and 50mm requires minimal extension to focus close. I'm used to minimum focus at around 30cm with a lens of this 60°

view angle, and 55cm would be a little distant even in a 50mm lens for full frame. It weighs only 335g and before adding the neat 'reverse cone' lens hood is 48mm long taking 62mm filters. That's not very different in size from a Hasselblad CF 80mm f2.8 Planar. Its 9 elements in 6 groups with one aspherical element give it a performance which could easily be compared – it's close to being a perfect lens, corner to corner, wide open, as tests with 400 megapixel multishot proved.

The GF32-64mm R LM WR f4 is a much larger lens and at 875g compares with large fast zooms for FF. It takes 77mm filters, and has a





Dials are replaced with the top display but buttons still rule.



correspondingly large barrel. The wide zoom ring is smooth and firm in action and the weight of the 14-element design does make zoom creep possible. It is claimed to be equal to a set of prime lenses, and that was borne out in use. It's extremely sharp all all focal lengths over the entire field and needs no stopping down. Once again I found the close focus a touch disappointing with a maximum image scale of 0.12X, but it has to be remembered it's a focal length range ideal for outdoor work, groups, and some interiors or architecture. The 32mm end is, after all, only a fraction less wide than Fujifilm's equivalent to a 24mm tilt-shift lens, the GF 30mm f5.6 T/S. Many will find the GF 20-35mm f4 R WR a more useful investment than either for serious wide-angle subjects.

When considering image scale, 0.12X on the GF format is similar to having 0.09X on FF. You can not fill the frame with an A4 copy subject (37 x 27.5cm is the field covered) but with 102MP does this really matter? It's quick to switch the GFX cameras to capture a 24 x 35mm crop format instead, and the 60MP resolution is more than adequate. You can also crop anywhere in the MF frame for effective 'shift'.

Though it was not an ideal subject for this camera or the lenses, I photographed a group of five musicians (the Feis Rois young Scottish traditional students tour) by room light from a seat close by. Wide open at 32mm, not all could be in focus at once but I could select the faces in turn and take overall pictures where this drew attention to different players. The resolution meant that single portraits of each one playing were easily cropped out and sent to the band in a social media friendly size, while a similarly reduce pixel dimension from a group shot worked well.

The sharpness of the Fujinon lenses combined with 102MP means you could compose a conventional line-up group shot and easily provide individual portraits from all in it. The same can apply to field sports, where the GFX 100S II offers 7 frames a second – just frame up the goal and box from the right vantage point, capture action, and crop to zoom in. That's how the sports photographers once did it on 5 x 4", usually with just one chance to time the shutter release right! You need to make sure depth of field covers all the group or all the action.



Two treatments of a group shot from the same position, one at 32mm, the second at 64mm using shallow depth of field and focused on the instrument, with some vignetting added in raw conversion. Feis Rois 2024 young musicians' tour. See: <https://www.feisrois.org>



From different 32mm group shots, individual portraits pulled out would be large enough for >10 x 8" prints.

A full 8 stops of stabilisation – hand held, 2.6 seconds

Taken with a 2.6 second exposure, hand-held with the 32-64mm at 58.6mm and f32, ISO 100. This isn't a tripod or even monopod shot, but had it not been for the ferns, grass and trees blowing in the wind it would be almost there. There's evidence of rotational shake in double imaged detail to the extreme corners. A better shot taken at 1/10s and 38.9mm, f11, ISO 400 has none of these flaws and is critically sharp but we've used the extreme example unretouched. This was the best of four similar exposures, the other three had visible shake. At speeds from 1/8s to 1/30s stabilisation worked to a high level for most shots, at 1/6s shake showed in most. However with some support, not standing full height on a rock, such long exposures should be routinely possible. This camera and the GFX 100 II share one of the best sensor-based stabilisation systems yet engineered, aided by the Fujifilm X-Processor 5. A similar shot at 1/10s is critically sharp thanks to being at f11 without diffraction cutting resolution.





After using the GFX 100sII's 16-shot pixel shift high resolution mode, I had to wonder exactly when it would ever be needed given the quality of the 102MP files – who needs 408 megapixels?

The architecturally corrected example above is pushing the limits of resolution for a Samyang 24mm T/S lens mounted on an adaptor. You can detect, at 100% view, a slightly soft texture to the grains of sand which form the sandstone masonry and in the mortar – this would undoubtedly be sharper with a Fujinon. There would be little point in shooting 402MP without 'ultimate' resolution optics and great care.

It is impossible to show the scale of a 408MP file on these pages. What we can show is what happens when a seagull lands in a similar shot and moves around. Anything which moves in a multi-

shot file will produce similar noise or pixellation, and the slightest disturbance to the camera during the shooting sequence will ruin the composite. Each individual raw image recorded will be perfect, so all is not wasted.

The sky in the shot may look like the result of a time exposure, but it's an effect from the combination of a very wide angle with moving clouds recorded in different positions as the camera takes a shot every two seconds. So the composite represents a 30-second exposure for certain subjects like sky or smooth moving water, and if you are lucky pixel artefacts will not appear. Be warned, they can!

It took a long time studying the file to hunt down eight ghost flying seagulls which created faint but recognisable pixellated disturbances. The clouds showed some signs of artefacts too subtle

to consider a problem, or retouch. The only way to avoid this with 16-shot high resolution (or 4-shot high fidelity) is a clear plain sky whether blue or cloudy.

Following on from this test shoot, I used the very high resolution 50mm f3.5 for a studio shot, comparing it to OM-Systems and Sony multi-shot high res. You can see the results opposite, compared with two other systems offering pixel shift high res. For whatever reason I could not get flash sync – the generic centre-contact Skyport triggers for my Elinchrom heads don't always mate properly with smart hot shoes. I used the modelling light and a 1.2s exposure for each of the 16 frames. The oversized cherries are not a highly textured target. I felt that the extreme resolution would render the smooth texture better, and it did. Processing the raws to



The GF system with its 25mm register and wide throat accepts adaptors for many SLR/DSLR/MF lenses, some with AF. Here a Samyang T/S lens in Canon EF mount is used on a K&F manual adaptor. Below, pixel shift artefacts on a moving detail.



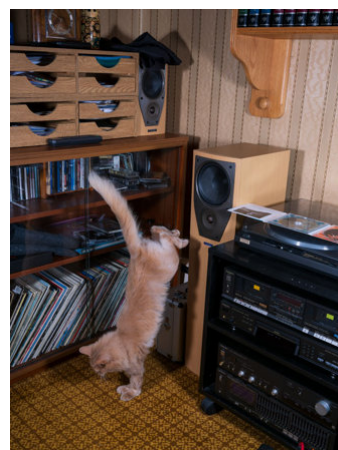
create the huge .DNG file did not take long on my Mac Studio M2 Max with 32GB/12 core and 30 GPU cores, but I am afraid the files took up so much SSD space I deleted all but one raw after each .DNG was created and forgot to time the process, since it was fast anyway.

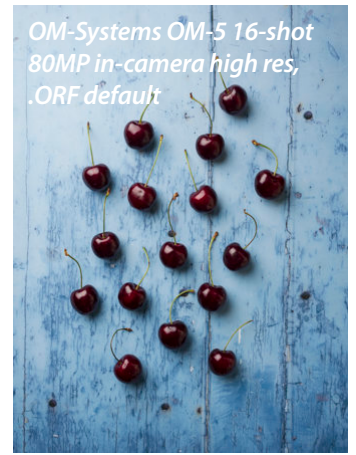
The quality of the 102MP normal files is superb. Even compressed raws have all the dynamic range needed, the colour as usual is unrivalled especially if JPEGs are made in-camera, or files go through Fujifilm's own software. The GF system has made medium-format digital easily affordable and the lens range is comprehensive, with affordable f4 primes and zooms. There's also a good stock of excellent used gear on the market, and medium format does not get the kind of abuse common with smaller format professional kit. The dedicated flash system is shared with the X-system.

Overall verdict, more than positive especially if you are considering a system switch to FF. Now's the time to look at MF – and specifically at Fujifilm GF.

<https://fujifilm-x.com/en-gb/>

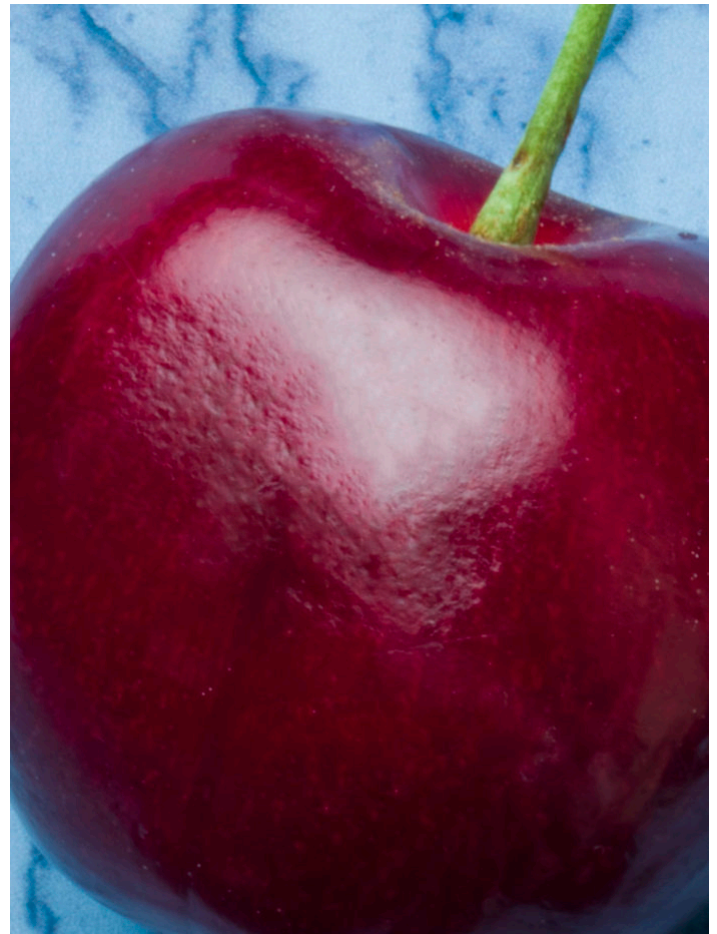
Flash sync here at 1/100th first curtain shutter speed, 7fps – the Summit 600C flash units at 1/64th power could not quite keep up and one of two heads didn't fire every time, these are selected from two seconds of Hi drive shooting.





Multi-shot high-res compared in studio conditions

To test multi-shot on **Fujifilm**, **Sony** and **OM-Systems** the cherries (very large) were placed on a matt inkjet print of an old door. A clamp was fixed to the stair baluster (stone stair and cast iron so vibration free) above the table, to hold cameras on a levelling mount with Arca plate. A single Elinchrom D-Lite RX4 with Portalite softbox was helped by fill from reflected light, but no second light, to ensure a simple reflection in the fruit. The GFX 100S II with 50mm lens produced a 17448 x 23264 pixel image from 16 shots, converting to an unprofiled 1.54GB .DNG which needed colour adjustment in Adobe Camera Raw. The Sony's 16 raws made 12672 x 19008, as either a 1.97GB .ARQ file needing considerable colour adjustment, or an accurate LZW .TIFF of 722MB. The OM-5 created, in-camera, a 7776 x 10368 70.9MB .ORF raw with good default colour. The GFX 100S II results were noticeable sharper and cleaner.



402MP high resolution 16-shot GFX 100S II, above, combined from raw files using Fujifilm Pixel Shift Combiner application on Mac Studio M2 Max, .DNG fully colour corrected in Adobe Camera Raw. File size 23264 pixels high, equivalent to a print 77.5"/197cm high at 300dpi. At 150dpi, suitable for mural or very large poster prints, the image seen to full height would be around 4m x 3m and we've shown exactly what a section of a single cherry would look like if you examined such a print as closely as you are reading this page. If you think the blue behind the cherry looks soft, you're right – it is an A2+ inkjet print, revealing the dot pattern of the Epson P3800 at 1440dpi. At 240dpi, considered a standard setting for exhibition prints, it would be a 250 x 187.5cm print (98 x 74") and at 300dpi as recommended for very close examination and litho printina. 2 x 1.66m/78 x 65". A standard GFX 102MP image prints to 100 x 75cm/40 x 30" approximately. at this resolution.

Tamron 50-300mm f4.5-6.3 Di III VC VXD

Extending the range of a 300mm zoom down to 50mm from the usual 70mm may not produce big sales for Tamron. Over the years, they have generally extended the long end in preference and the big challenge has been to keep the image crisp at the tele extreme when wide open. That's partly been down to a need to keep maximum aperture down to avoid size, weight and cost issues. Mirrorless redesigns have greatly improved optical quality, along with reducing the need for speed. New mirrorless systems focus fast and accurately even with lenses half the speed of traditional SLR/DSLR zooms in this class.

But for the user, having 50mm at the bottom end instead of 70mm can save the day. I found this trying the Tamron 50-300mm out on the Border Belle boat trip from Berwick, hoping for dolphins which finally appeared almost at sunset. I was using the 28MP crop format of the camera, making the

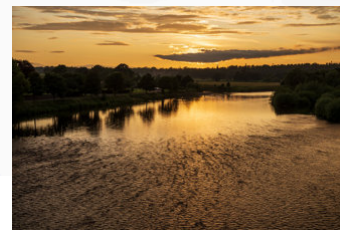
lens equal to 75-450mm and expecting long distance to be the rule. But they came so close to the boat that 50mm was essential, and all my best shots were at that minimum. I should have switched to full frame and cropped the 61MP file – it's better to have a wider field of view and high resolution when action can be so unpredictable. The example top right, was taken at f7.1, 1/800s at ISO 3200, and is a 4081 pixel wide crop from the top corner of one frame.

At 300mm, corrections are fully maintained and the VC stabilisation takes over from Sony's sensor IS. The heron is a 24 megapixel crop, equal to around a 450mm view, taken hand-held at 1/30s to catch the flow of water, and at this shutter speed most frames were sharp. At speeds of 1/20s or longer most showed double imaging.

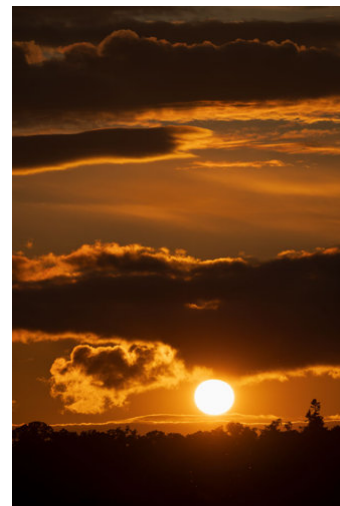
This lens also focuses very close, over its full range – to 22cm at 50mm (1:2 scale), 90cm at 300mm



(1:3.1). The rhea chick at Bird Garden Scotland was taken at 300mm, 1/250s at f6.3 maximum aperture and ISO 800. Here the focus to 90cm was important as chicks were the



other side of a fence and the camera had to be close – no stepping back to the 1.5m common as the closest 300mm zooms can go. With bird eye AF-C, all shots at f6.3, 1/250s at ISO 800, were critically sharp and made great 17 x 22" prints.



The sunset shots demonstrate the 6X zoom range from 50mm to 300mm and proved that the lens, not fitted with a filter (67mm thread), gave no flare or ghosting. No worries about sea splashes on the boat trip as the BBAR-G2 multi-coating has a fluorine finish. There's a zoom lock on the right hand side though the single tube design showed little tendency to creep, and a multi function bottom on the left, plus a USB port which allows the functions of this to be assigned and firmware updated.

It's a little longer and slimmer than Sony's 70-300mm G (f5.6 – and 72mm filters as a result) but when both are at 300mm – the Tamron wins (below with Tamron on the right in both shots). It has a 5-year UK warranty, fast VXD AF not the RXD of the £320-ish Tamron 70-300mm f4.5-6.3. It's worth its £800 typical cost and 120g extra weight for the range, AF response, functions and close focusing.



The 50-300mm comes with reversible bayonet lens hood. It uses a single zoom extension.

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





Laowa 10mm f2.8 C&D-Dreamer AF

Back at The Photography Show I briefly tried the Venus Optics Laowa 10mm f2.8 AF lens, and in truth it only took a few of my standard instant checks at full aperture to see it was an excellent design. Without excessive flare from light sources which can be hard to avoid when the lens covers 130° diagonally, it's named as a Zero-D lens in descriptions but as a C&D-Dreamer on the lens. The 7.5mm f2 AE lens for MFT, manual focus but electronically coupled, is just a C-Dreamer. The 100mm macro manual focus is a CA-Dreamer. Laowa lenses include many dumb purely manual focus and aperture models, which don't even record EXIF data to modify stabilisation settings, or provide lens profiling. It's very important to get the right model.

For this chunky and rather unusual (dark blue not black when you get a strong light on it) design there is no cheaper dumb option. You pay your £890 or so and get fast silent AF, AE, profile correct JPEGs out of camera and fully EXIF embedded raws which prove that minimal profile adjustment is



The 10mm takes 77mm filters and the lens hood is removable to fit system holders.



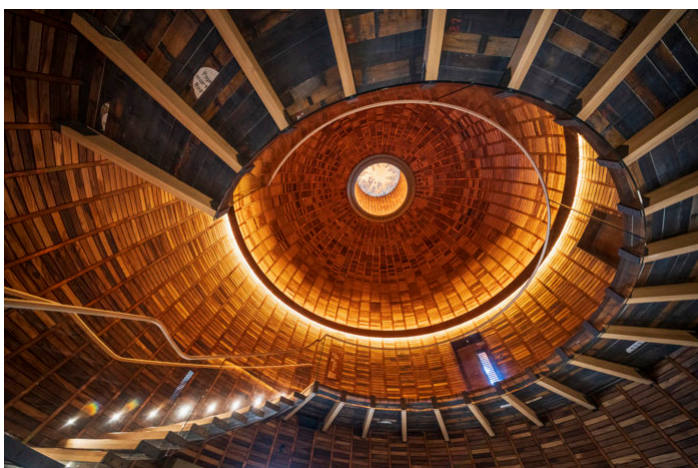
involved. The straight-line drawing is as good as classic large format wide-angles ever were and the lack of vignetting more so. Anyone who remembers the 15mm f8 Hologon needing a centre filter (around 2X neutral density on axis graded to clear at the rim) will know just how far ultra-wide design has come..

This is a lens for opportunities as well as assignments, and with such an extreme angle, it's made for high resolution full frame with the potential to crop down. You may

only need or want a 12mm, 14mm, or 18mm view. Cropping one end or a corner of the frame is like using a shift lens and if all you need is an A3 print Sony's 42, 50 or 61MP sensors will give you that from a quarter of the frame. This lens sold out after the show so I had to wait until July

to add it to my bag, and it proved a great investment from day one. It's stocked by WEX and most large dealers.

Left: two full aperture interiors of Ad Gefrin, new Northumberland distillery and visitor centre. Below: Leaderfoot Viaduct at f11, no filter used.



Viltrox 20mm f2.8 AF Z

Bargain basement 20mm f2.8 wide-angle, auto focus lens for Nikon Z mount. £159 – £169.

While smaller sensor mirrorless cameras often include a lightweight wide angle option in the range, Nikon's full-frame Z is not blessed with affordable, lightweight and compact wide primes. The closest lens to fill the role is the 28mm f2.8 which, at under £300 is at the lower end of Nikon's price list, but doesn't offer the wide angle of view you can get with some affordable zoom options.

As such the **Viltrox AF 20/28 Z** stands out, both for the full-frame 20mm perspective, and a sub-£200 price point offering the convenience of auto focus. Despite a metal mount and touches like a USB-C port for firmware updates, it weighs just 173g and feels every bit as insubstantial as that sounds in the hand, yet the matte-finish plastics and lens hood bayonet present a more upmarket, polished finish than the Meike 50mm reviewed in the previous issue.

Thanks to internal STM AF the 52mm thread does not rotate – ideal for graduated filters and polarisers. Focus is smooth, quite snappy and barely audible, and the closest focus of 19cm is convenient, though falls short of the typical smartphone wide angle lens now in most photographer's pockets.

Placed to take advantage of a new generation of photographers' familiarity with wide angle perspectives, the Viltrox is cheap enough to appeal to any beginner or student, as well as professionals looking for a fresh tool to distract from routine everyday shooting. It is, after all, a more usable lens than bundles of Holga weirdness or LensBaby instagram silliness.

Or is it? You want two things from a wide f2.8 – a snappy isolation of the subject with a bit of bite, and the potential for pleasingly artistic blurred backgrounds. If you don't want blur, you can opt for an f4 or a variable aperture zoom, so it's vital that the lens delivers fully open.

In some ways, it does. Subject isolation is good up to f8 on the

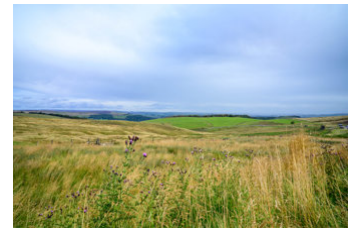
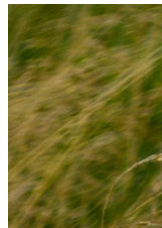
high-resolution Nikon Z7 II, and should be very satisfying on the 24Mp options. For relatively distant subjects the focus plane falls within the depth of field, sufficiently to deliver sharp rendering across the frame, but get close and you'll see it loses flatness... in line with the vignetting apparent at f2.8.

Contrast isn't great when considering a raw file, but out of camera JPEGs on the Nikon Z are acceptably punchy – apply the same colour profile and exposure adjustments and you can pull some great results out of this 20mm; it's a focal length that in close quarters, tends to be more about the subject and composition than nitpicking over the sharpness, but you soon notice that for landscapes it really lacks the bite and clarity you'd hope for unless used around f5.6 to f8 than f5.6. Diffraction-loss of sharpness kicks in on the 45.7Mp Z7 after f11.

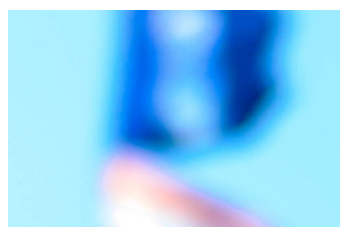
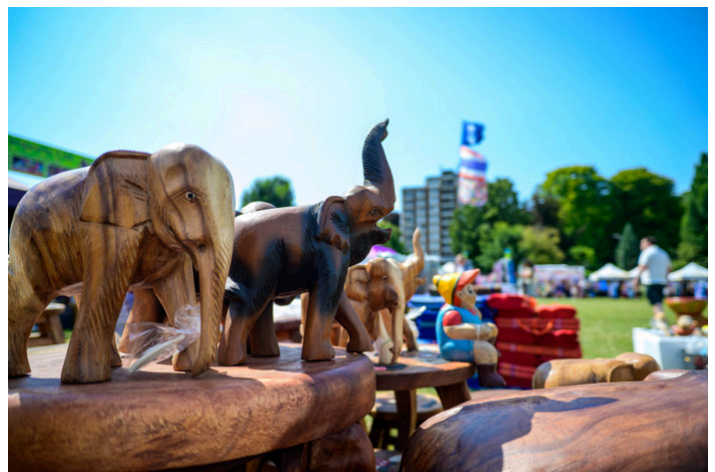
Blurred background to close subjects reveal an interesting trait. On our sample, chromatic aberration (colour fringing) in distant out of focus detail resembles an old 3D stereo glasses comic book. Defocused corners of the frame can have a double image motion-blur effect. It's hard to see many times when either will be welcome.

This really underlines the flaw in Viltrox's plan to bring a popular smartphone perspective to full frame SLRs, while retaining some of the convenience of light weight and low cost. The AF 20/28 on a high-end mirrorless body falls short of the results achievable with a decent smartphone camera. If you accept the need to stop down, you may as well use a wide angle zoom lens that is slower on paper, but almost certainly sharper in performance. It's a cheap prime, but it needs work to be ready for prime time – and you probably already have the means to capture that composition elsewhere.

It's available from WEX, Viltrox direct and other channels.



Above, the car shot has minimal vignetting at f16 and 1/40s to blur the passing vehicle. The landscape focused on the foreground thistles shows odd corner of field double imaging at f2.8, far left, not due to wind – 1/1600s! The centre clip, 1/100s at f11, has clean blur. Below, chromatic blur makes a large fringe at f2.8 (left hand clip) not removed by f5.6 (right hand).



CAMERACRAFT

REARVIEW



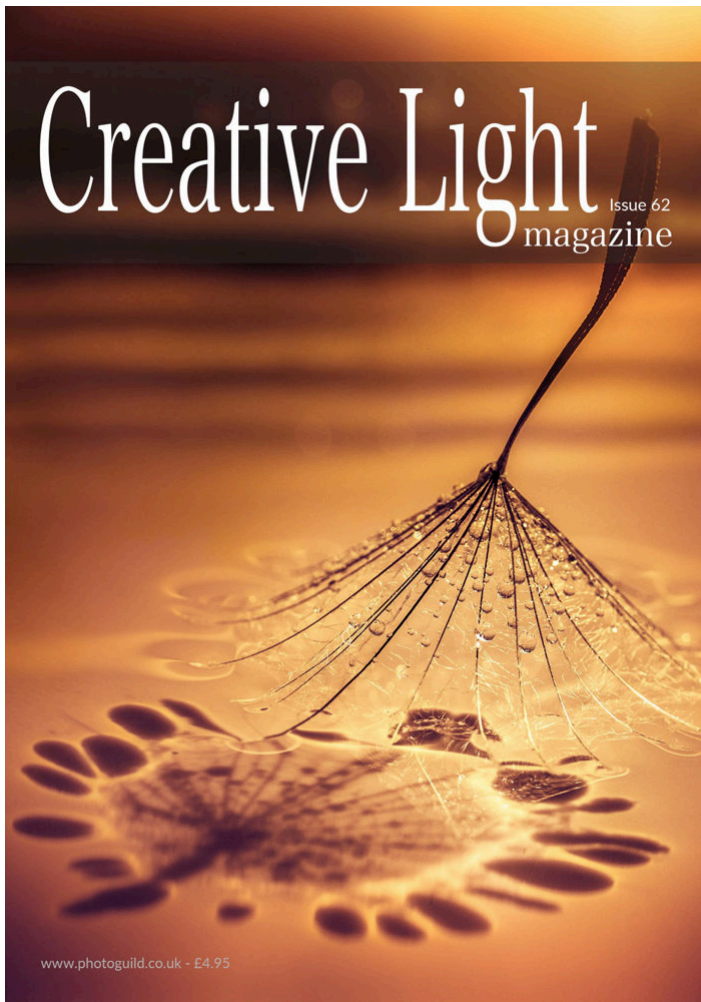
Above: by Rob Bentley, Silver Award winner in the Guild of Photographers Image of Month – all the pictures are from the May and June 2024 judging.
Below: by Huw Jones, Silver Award. Nikon Z8, 14-28mm f2.8 at 24mm, 1/8s at f11, ISO 64.





Above left, by Kristina Zvinakeviciute, Gold Award. Nikon D810, 105mm macro, 1/640s at f10, ISO 125.
Above right, by Joanne Eastope, Gold Award. Nikon Z7, 24-120mm at 92mm, 1/125s at f6.4, ISO 640.






Above, street photo by Steve Collins, Bronze Award. Ricoh GRIII, 1/200s at f7.1, ISO 640. The camera's 18.3mm lens is equivalent to a 28mm view.

Below, not a zoom in camera shot but post-process effect. By Helen Simon, Silver Award. Canon EOS R6 Mk2, 24-105mm lens at 105mm, 1/60s at f5, ISO 1250.



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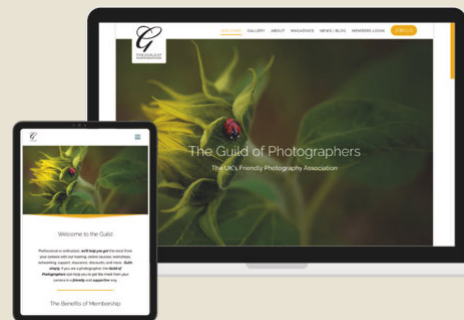
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