

CAMERACRAFT

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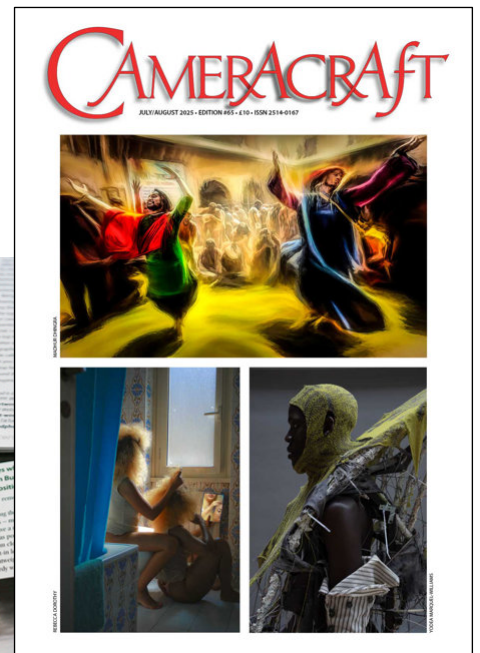
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By far the best way to have printed copies of *Cameracraft* is to take all six issues from a year and make them into a book. We've done this for 2024 as the combined file is tricky to assemble. You can order a copy using our **PrintLink** directly from



Above, the last issue in printed form. To order this issue July/August 2025 click <https://bit.ly/40yYObQ>
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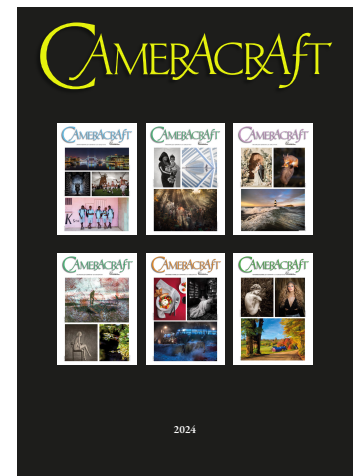
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This is a perfect-bound gloss laminated paperback (cover above). We first had one of these made – at much greater expense in the early days of digital print on demand – for the *Cameracraft* first series issues, 2012-2015 (see photo top). It takes up a fraction of the bookshelf space used for binders and for our archives all the past editions will be reprinted in this form. Coming soon, see cameracraft.online for back issue volumes!

Answering questions from readers used to be an important component of photographic publications, along with letters expressing many opinions, offering advice or making a critical dig at trends. During the life of the original US West Coast based *Camera Craft*, this extended to battles of words between leading exponents. Debates could continue for months.

Today much of this correspondence has simply disappeared and submerged itself under the surface of *Facebook*, blog comments and a few photo sharing sites which are not purely a popularity contest. You have to dive in to discover it.

I still do still get questions from subscribers and I try to give personal replies which are not superficial. Thinking about such questions makes me aware of the concerns, and the extent of experience, I should be addressing in reviews and articles. I can't respond this way to the whole world of random people who might fire off queries to me if I did this on-line – I'd rather pitch in to occasional discussions not related to *Cameracraft* if I have something useful to say.

Here are two replies, edited a bit, I sent to subscribers' direct questions recently.

Q (simplified): I have a Canon kit but I'm considering getting a Nikon D780 and 18-300mm zoom for air shows and motorsport, rather than changing to Canon R mirrorless. I'm thinking of spending £1,200-£1,500 and will consider used equipment. Will this be a good choice?

A: All that matters for motorsport and air shows is the resolution of the sensor and the tele range of the lens. For single images or sequence bursts with AF, either DSLR or mirrorless will do well. The 18-300mm Nikkor DX zoom is not brilliant, just OK – but it's next to useless on the D780 which is full frame 24.5MP. The lens is cropped format (DX) so only gets you a 15MP picture. The right choice for the D780 is the Nikon 28-300mm.

However, this is still limited for air shows unless you team it with a higher resolution sensor, for which the D850 is the step up. The 18-300mm is lighter, and when paired with a used Nikon D7500 (they dropped the DX system and never launched the expected D7600) gives 20.5 megapixels with good low light ability and 8fps. You would have to buy used.

For better tele reach, the Canon D90 has 31.5 megapixels in a 1.6X rather than 1.5X sensor. This means a significantly larger pixel for pixel subject scale. Again, Canon has pulled out of this market so used is the only option. The best lens for this is the Tamron 16-300mm f/3.5-6.3 Di II VC PZD Macro. With the D90 body around £950 used and this lens at around £300, a your budget would get you a very versatile combo. To match the distance reach of this on a 24MP full frame body would require a 600mm lens! MPB currently has examples of the D90 and this 16-300mm. With the 16mm end, it's also good for wide angle and general use. The same lens for Nikon gives better wide-angle coverage at 16mm than their 18-300mm – on Canon's smaller sensor, it's equivalent to 17mm.

Q: What camera for my partner for holidays etc?

A: For holiday photos I always advise an OM-Systems (Olympus) 'Tough' TG series, TG-6 or the latest 7. I still use a TG-5. Great shots on land, super tough for outdoor use, can be swum with, dived with etc. Excellent video including underwater filming. Not entirely bulletproof but even without any kind of case or cover can be shoved into a bag about as safely as a phone can be.

Benefit over phone – all weather underwater etc use, proper zoom lens good quality, great audio for gigs (seems excellent even with high sound levels). Image size is not huge, only 12MP, but it's enough, same as an iPhone Max pro on 2X magnification view.

– David Kilpatrick

Email: editor@iconpublications.com

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Cameracraft was published in print six times a year from March/April 2018 to March/April 2025, after dropping the f2 from its title, added after merging the original *Cameracraft* (2012-2015) with f2. The magazine is now published as a high resolution PDF edition for subscribers and on magazine platforms, with a low resolution page-turn version available free on [cameracraft.online](https://www.cameracraft.online). A limited run of printed copies is also made, and subscribers are authorised to order digital printed copies (see inside front cover). Following *Freelance Photographer*, *Photon* and *PHOTOpro* it is the latest in a line of photographic magazines published from Kelso by David Kilpatrick/Icon Publications Ltd since 1989.

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BACK ISSUES of *Cameracraft* and *f2* *Cameracraft*: we hope to move premises due to house sale after 37 years at Maxwell Place. It will not be possible to transfer the stock of back issues, or continue listing printed back issues for sale. When time permits, we will try to make as much of the archive available on-line as possible.

Create your Paypal UK or international subscription at

<https://www.cameracraft.online>

Back issues and searchable archive of free-to-read articles from many of Icon's specialist photographic titles.

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Fujifilm X-E5 lifts E series to X-Pro level



THE FUJIFILM X-E5, going on sale in August, is tipped to be the natural choice for anyone who loves the X-Pro line but mostly uses the EVF. It's got many of the qualities of the X100V too. Taking the full range of interchangeable X-mount lenses, is a lightweight and compact design weighing approximately 445g and using the back-illuminated 40.2 megapixel X-Trans™ CMOS 5 HR*2 sensor and the X-Processor high-speed image processing engine familiar from that model.

It's a step ahead of the regular 'E' line in build quality too, and the X-E5 is the first in this camera series to offer a five-axis IBIS mechanism promising up to 7 stops in the centre and 6 stops on the outer field.

For the first time in the X series, the camera features a top-plate crafted solely from machined aluminium similar to the GFX100RF. It has sharp top and bottom edges and curved ends in classic metal rangefinder fashion.

Classic Display 4 mode cleans up the viewfinder by arranging key information at the bottom of the frame. It's also been ergonomically designed for single handed operation. The rear top plate edge is stepped away below the two dials which overhang it to give rapid control of the shutter speed (1 to 1/4000s) and exposure override.

A newly designed Film Simulation dial features a precision-cut indicator window that minimises the gap between dial and body. You can individually set Film Simulation and image quality settings, saving your own Film Simulation recipes.

The enhanced EVF has a Surround View function which will show the images outside your designated format crop. You have to be using a cropped area of the sensor such as 4:3 or 16:9 for the greyed-out Surround View to appear with the clear composed view. The raw file will still capture the entire sensor image.



The camera features a digital teleconverter setting that allows 1.4x and 2.0x zoom levels. Using the high-resolution of the sensor, it enables zooming with minimal loss of image quality. The rear tilting monitor can be flipped upward and forward facing up to 180 degrees, which can accommodate a wide variety of compositions, from high to low angle, as well as selfies.

The X-E5 is capable of shooting in 6.2K/30P resolution. It features a tracking AF function during video recording, ensuring high-quality and smooth footage. For stills as well as movies, the ISO now extends to a native base of 125 (previous models started at ISO 200). The shutter can also range up to 1/180,000s on electronic mode.

The X-E5 features AI-based subject detection AF, which is claimed to work with animals, birds, cars, motorcycles, bicycles, airplanes, trains, insects, and drones.

The body, in silver or black, is priced at £1299 inc. VAT and a package with a brand new XF 23mm f2.8 WR lens is £1,549. This lens is designed to match the 40.2MP resolution – it has been slimmed down using new optical approaches, and the barrel been made thinner by using more but thinner metal parts for strength. It is only 23mm long, the same as XF 27mm f2.8, the thinnest XF lens, and it weighs just 90g. It will focus to 20cm, is dust and drip proof for 'light rain or dusty environments'. The lens on its own is priced at £399.

www.fujifilm.com

OM-System OM-5 Mk II



THE OM-5 Mark II is no massive step up from the Mk1 version but 'brings targeted upgrades where they matter most – based on feedback from creators who live for the outdoors. Compact, lightweight, and featuring splash and dust proof construction, it remains a trusted companion in all terrains and weather conditions.'

Retaining the proven formula of a compact, lightweight body the Mk II is improved with a redesigned grip for superior ergonomics and more secure handling, though this will increase its overall size. It retains but does not improve on the class-leading 5-axis image stabilisation for consistently sharp images in any situation.

The computational photography functions which are a stand-out for OM-System, such as multi exposure, hand-held high resolution and Pro Capture sequences are reached by a new dedicated CP button instead of on-screen navigation.

There is a new USB-C port combined with faster charging in-

camera, instead of the former Micro USB connection. This also allows running the camera itself from a power bank for extended outdoor shoots.

There are new OM-Cinema Video Profiles for 'looks' demanded in cinematic 4K movies.

The OM-1 series menu structure is ported over for more intuitive control, also making this camera a better second body for OM-1 owners.

It is splash and dust proof to IP53 with freeze-proof protection to -10°C which is the same spec as all recent Olympus and OM-System models in the 1 and 5 series.

The usual colours of black and silver are joined (for a while) by a limited-edition Sand Beige, 'inspired by natural tones and made for outdoor explorers.'

The OM-5 Mark II will be available from mid-July at a suggested retail price of £1,099 body only – the Sand Beige version will be available in limited quantities while supplies last.

www.om-digitalsolutions.com

Sigma makes cine lenses with AF

AS THE FIRST AF-compatible Cine Lens series from Sigma, the Sigma AF Cine Line breaks with making such lenses manual focus primes – these are autofocus zooms, and of a quality which may interest high end still photographers just as much as movie makers.

Building on the optical system of Sigma's Art lenses, the AF Cine Line offers 'exceptional rendering performance, along with high-precision autofocus with excellent tracking capability, combined with the ergonomics required for professional cinema production'. There are manual focus and aperture rings as well as a zoom ring marked with more focal lengths than usual, with the familiar geared design allowing control from rigs. But these are also AF/AE lens able



to be controlled entirely by the camera body except for zooming. The design can handle shooting styles and on-set environments that were previously challenging with either traditional still lenses or cine lenses. They are based on f1.8 and f2.8 Art zooms.

The lenses are – Sigma 28-45mm T2 FF, due on the market in November 2025 and the Sigma 28-105mm T3 FF coming in Spring 2026.

www.sigmauk.com



TOM HILL

Life is a journey, not a destination – hit the road whenever you can!

Tom Hill is a travel writer, copywriter and sometime photographer living in the Scottish Borders in the UK. Tom's book 'The Cobbler's Children' on his 40 years in imaging raises funds for the British Heart Foundation – see bigfrogsmallpond.co.uk

The quote about life being a journey as opposed to a destination was apparently said by Ralph Waldo Emerson, American transcendentalist philosopher of the mid 1800s.

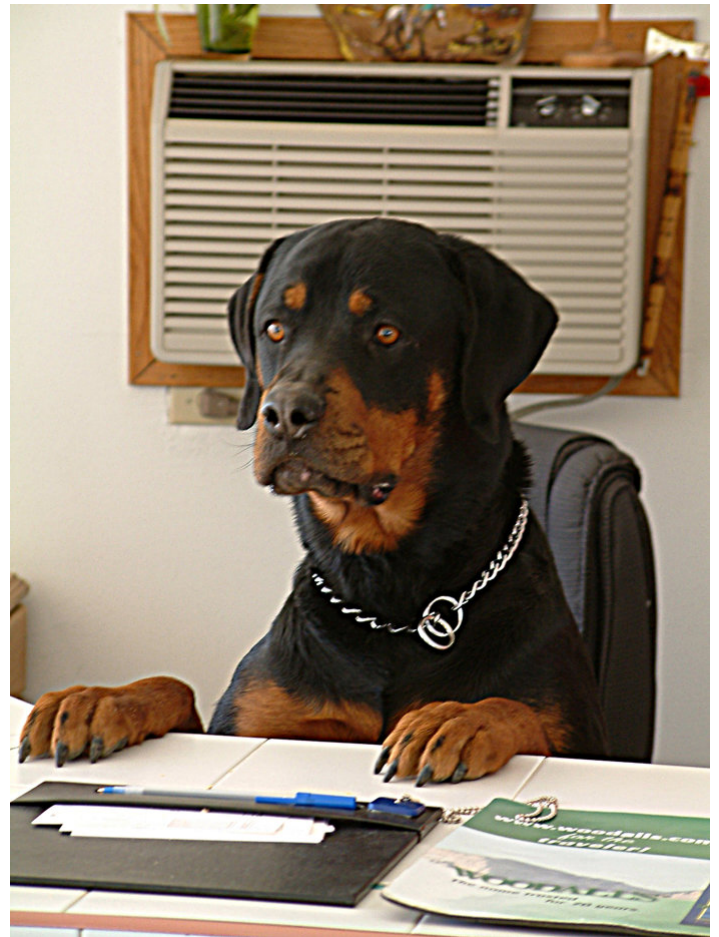
I feel that philosophy can be applied to help solve the mental health problems encountered by many people nowadays, especially when we're surrounded by advertisements constantly bombarding us with exhortations to be more successful/get fitter/lose weight/buy an air fryer/ditch bad habits etc.

It's somewhat like the concept of mindfulness, whose proponents effectively enjoy the here and now as opposed to constantly thinking 'I'll be happy when I...'

In short, live in the moment and enjoy every day of life, rather than spend those days hankering about a better paid job, bigger house, better car, whatever.

I also apply this philosophy to photography. Especially travel photography. When taking long road trips, and I have had many over the last 25 years, I rarely plan to take in the 'significant' or 'must-see' destinations. Rather, I love to use photography to make the mundane magical; to highlight the uplifting (and sometimes sad) aspects of everyday life.

For example, my last road trips across the USA and Australia in 2005-2007 took a total of around



180 days. I flew to New York City with my previous partner, then after a few days, we took a hire car and headed north up to New England, then dropped down to New Hampshire, de-hired the car and picked up a Harley Davidson Electra Glide Classic. We rode that Hog to San Francisco, hugging the Canadian

border all the way to Seattle, then down the Oregon coast ending up on California's classic Pacific Highway 1. I was photographing roadside Americana all the way.

Before setting out, we agreed upon a cardinal rule about accommodation. The total trip was around 4000 miles. We knew we had The Hog for 30 days, so we had to average around 133 miles per day. As no destinations were pre-booked - the journey being more important than the destination(s) - we agreed to set the odometer on the bike to zero every morning.

Once that odometer clocked up 130 miles, we HAD to stop overnight at the next hotel we saw; fleapit or five-star, cost immaterial, no arguments. At one Montana motel, there was a huge but (fortunately) friendly Rottweiler dog manning the reception desk. Apparently, customer complaints were few and far between!

This stopover technique was incredibly liberating and made the 'randomness' of the journey the best element. Some days I didn't even use a map (this was before the days of proper sat nav) - we just rode westward into the sun knowing we would reach somewhere on the Pacific coast eventually.





After the first trip west across the USA we flew to Australia and took a camper van from Sydney to Perth. I was fascinated by the simple stark vastness of the place. Whenever I'm on the road, I rarely photograph nor visit the 'must see' stuff. Consequently, I have far too many 'tarmac going off to the horizon' pictures. No kangaroos, nor Sydney Opera House, but lots of buckshot-riddled mailboxes and abandoned roadside fridges, the latter apparently used as mail drops for the incredibly remote sheep stations in the Ozzie outback.



Leaving my home near Edinburgh I drove a 1,200-mile loop over twelve days, taking in about ten good friends. The furthest point from home was to visit a cruise-ship photographer friend from 1986, now living in Paignton. There I photographed lots of 'amusement arcades under fading light' type stuff, along with typical pier and promenade pics. Deck chairs and the horizon, beach huts after hours, the vintage look of retro LED lights. It's the mundane or gaudy I find fascinating, rather like looking through the eyes of Peter Dench or Martin Parr.

Likewise, many of the photos I took in NYC were of street graffiti and interesting shop signs. New Yorkers have a dry sense of humour as you can see from the 'Business Sucks Sale' picture.



As part of this journey of rediscovery, I popped in to see an old mate in my town of birth, Derby. There I remembered so much that the medium of photography has given me, as well as shuddering at the hard work of my stints as a truck driver and even double-glazing salesman!

Also likewise, on the return trip, picking up a Buick car in Los Angeles and driving through all the southern states back east to NYC, I photographed not Graceland, nor Miami Beach – rather roadside oddities such as The Cadillac Ranch in Texas, as featured in the famous Bruce Springsteen song so named.

For example, I drove past the Qualcast foundry on Derby's Victory Road, where I remember photographing a crucible pouring molten steel back in 1990. The inside temperature at that shoot was so hot that the Mamiya RB67 bellows sagged and cut off the top quarter of the frame. I remedied this by gaffer-taping a piece of snapped pencil between the camera's lens and the body!

Recent health issues have now restricted my travel to the UK and Europe, not least considering the cost of travel insurance and the current political situation in the USA. Now in my early 60s with a progressive heart condition which is slowly killing me, I tend to work at keeping in touch with old friends. I've lived in Malta, Spain, France, Ireland, England and Scotland over the years, so I try to keep in contact with people I know in those countries. Life, for me especially, is too short not to.



Then there was recalling the simple act of eating a bacon sandwich in the small hours of the late 1990s at Lancaster Forton services on the M6, when I would get utterly exhausted from driving an HGV for 10 hours a day – always on the edge of illegality and tachograph regulations. Forton now apparently has some sort of listed architectural status due to its iconic restaurant

Consequently, last month I set out to see people across England.



tower. So I pulled over in the car and took a quick snap.

Then I returned to Bradford to visit what used to be called the museum of Film and Photography. Nowadays it's all about physics, video gaming and interactive stuff for kids – I was disappointed when I visited recently that there were no photographic exhibitions of any sort on, and little to interest a photographer. But I did manage a selfie via a thermal imaging camera on my iPhone. Good job the visit only cost a fiver. If you're planning to go, research first to see what's going on there. My experience was 'very little'.

The great thing about being a hobbyist amateur photographer again, as opposed to a paid pro, is I'm taking pictures for myself now; just a record of my life combined with how my eyes see my environment. The world's joys and injustices, the struggles and



successes, can easily be encapsulated in a photo of something like a discarded lottery scratch card or an ice cream cone dropped on a pavement.

So, if you've been considering a road trip anywhere, just do it. Don't put it off until you're too old to clamber over those rocks to get a great seascape shot or being afraid to get your shoes soaked in the surf.

I would urge anyone reading this to ensure that any regrets you might have should be for the things you did, not the things you didn't do. And as I mentioned earlier, keep your eyes out for the mundane. Are the US canyonlands essentially more worth photographing than Forton's abandoned restaurant?

Others may see the magic in the mundane. That's something any photographer can do too if they have the right mindset.



FEMALE IN FOCUS

An exhibition by the British Journal of Photography and Nikon



'The Rock Ceremony' – by Florence Bass

This image is part of a series documenting the Lesbian community in Skala Eresou, Lesbos. It was taken during a ceremony on Sappho's rock to celebrate Lesbian New Year. During the ceremony the women swim out to the rock with a bag of ashes containing the remains of love letters to old flames that they, for one reason or another, want to leave in the past. Each woman then takes a turn pouring the ashes into the sea with the idea that when they return to the mainland they have left their past behind them and are free to move forward in life and love.

Female in Focus x Nikon Vol. 5 © Florence Bass

'Basia' – by Kasia Ślesieńska

Carers, who are often elderly themselves, often suffer from arthritis or diabetes. The reasons why women in Poland choose to work abroad as caretakers are varied. While some seek to improve their appearance through cosmetic treatments such as Botox, or purchase luxury items like new televisions, most migrate because they are unable to achieve a dignified standard of living or receive adequate pay or pensions in their home country. This issue of economic migration is prevalent in Poland, where young people migrate to countries such as England and Germany to earn higher salaries for manual labour than they would upon graduating from Poland.

In my hometown, it is common for a family member to migrate to Germany and work as a construction worker or caretaker. I have had the opportunity to meet many retired women who belong to the caretaker group and travel across the western border, primarily to Germany, to provide

'Manas' – by Rebecca Dorothy

his series is called Manas (short for hermanas/sisters). It's the beginning of an ongoing collection of pictures celebrating the importance of family. Sometimes, especially if we live abroad, we might forget how little expressions from our beloved ones can be so meaningful. In this case I wanted to capture some simple routine gestures between sisters, sharing their love and taking care of each other. Sisterhood is fundamental to make you learn how to share not only material things, or moments, but also the hardest and deepest feelings. Sisterhood means being partners for life.

Female in Focus x Nikon Vol. 5 © Rebecca Dorothy



care for elderly people in their eighties and nineties. These caretakers are required to be available 24/7 and remain vigilant to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their clients. They are responsible for a wide range of duties, including washing and changing the clothes of their clients, cooking, administering medication, and even providing IV therapy when necessary. Although these women may not have formal training in nursing or caretaking, they are seeking a better quality of life for themselves and their families back home. The challenges and experiences of these caretakers are worth exploring to understand the broader social and economic issues surrounding migration in Poland. In this image, Basia takes a bath in the tub for the first time in a month. While caring for the elderly person in Germany, Basia had no time for herself; she had to constantly watch over her, never able to take her eyes off her. *Female in Focus x Nikon Vol. 5* © Kasia Ślesieńska



For this feature we have selected from the winning single image entries. To see more and find out about the Journal's other major exhibition sponsorships, visit <https://1854.photography>



'El Bravo Pueblo' (The Brave People) – by Victoria Ruiz

'El bravo pueblo' holds deep significance in Venezuela as a symbol of the nation's resilience, strength and spirit. The phrase translates to 'the brave people' and it is often used to honour the Venezuelan population's unwavering courage and defiance in the face of hardship.

Historically, it has been associated with Venezuela's struggles for independence, beginning with the fight against Spanish colonialism and continuing through modern-day challenges, including political

oppression, economic collapse and social instability. 'El bravo pueblo' represents more than just resistance; it embodies the pride and determination of Venezuelans to stand up for their rights, freedom and dignity, even in the most challenging circumstances.

It is a rallying cry that reflects both the collective memory of the country's past struggles and the ongoing battle for justice, democracy and survival in the present. *Female in Focus x Nikon Vol. 5* © Victoria Ruiz

'Never Too Many' – Najla Said

Never Too Many represents a common visual in my hometown, Cairo, of a family, or multiple people, riding on one motorcycle. It summarises the Egyptian mentality of 'we'll work it out, everything is possible'. However, what I never saw on the street, is a row of women, or even a woman driving the motorcycle. This image ignites that conversation by reappropriating this element of Egyptian street culture, and recontextualising it in a way empowering womanhood. It attempts to give hope for a new beginning for women to provide themselves the representation they deserve, and the agency to question the norms that limit us.

Female in Focus x Nikon Vol. 5

© Najla Said



'Azadi – Freedom' – by Bea Dero

This self-portrait was taken in Iran in the aftermath of the murder of Mahsa Amini by Iranian morality police in September 2022. This image is in solidarity with the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. While mourning the death of innocent Iranian activists, this portrait shows an Iranian woman centre frame, in the spotlight, on a white horse at sunset serving as a symbol of hope. Hope for revolution and hope for a future where women are free to stand in their power publicly, with dignity and choice.

Female in Focus x Nikon Vol. 5 © Bea Dero

The second *Female in Focus x Nikon* 2024 exhibition opened to the public on June 26th at The Glasgow Gallery of Photography, celebrating the extraordinary talent and diverse perspectives of women and non-binary photographers from across the globe.

Running until 27 July 2025, the exhibition brings together the winning series by Margarita Galandina and Alice Poyzer, alongside 20 exceptional single-image winners, selected from thousands of international submissions.

The works on display engage with this year's theme – **Renewal** – offering powerful visual narratives of rebirth, resilience and transformation. From intimate explorations of personal growth to reflections on environmental and societal change, the exhibition offers a reflection on the many forms that new beginnings can take.

Female in Focus, an international photography award by *British Journal of Photography*, spotlights the work of remarkable women photographers worldwide and to actively challenge gender inequality in the photography industry.

SOFTWARE

Let .XML replace Layers in post-processing

If you are still saving huge documents with multiple layers in 16 or even 32-bit depth just to be able to return to your *Photoshop* post-processing and fine-tune local adjustments, you're wasting massive storage space and processor power. Adobe *Camera Raw*, opened from *Bridge*, uses non-destructive editing. Not a single pixel of the original raw file, which is always to the maximum bit depth your camera provides, is changed. The same applies to *Lightroom*.

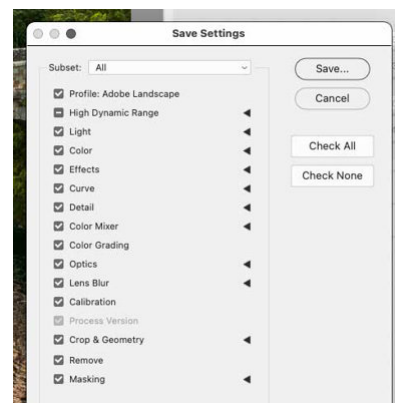
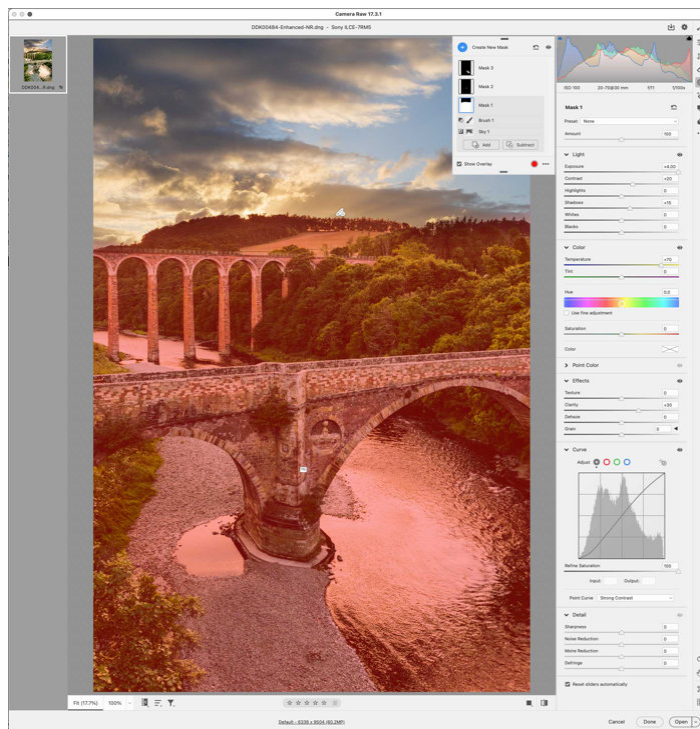
Working in the ACR window you have access to deep and detailed adjustments ranging from optical correction to gradients, brushes and auto masks (like Sky) each one of which can fine-tune exposure, colour, contrast, sharpness, clarity and more. The areas modified can be added to, subtracted from, drawn at pixel level or fill the entire frame. Multiple areas with different adjustments can be used.

All this is recorded in a text file, the .XML 'sidecar' file which lives with your raw file unless you opt in *Lightroom* to embed the data in the catalogue. I prefer to have .XML separate. If you use pano stitching or AI Noise Reduction (used in my shot to counter strong noise in the opened-up lower area despite shooting at ISO 100) a .DNG file is created to replace your raw – this does not have an external .XML file, it's all embedded. For this image as seen on the right, the .XML data used over 5,900 words and 42kB – much less than working with Layers!

Caveat – while the .XMP file includes all the main adjustments you make, to the whole image and to Mask areas, it does not record 'Remove' using AI. It does record the Heal and Clone Stamp tools. Try this – open a raw file, use the Heal tool to remove something like a wire or post in the sky. Open the image or mark 'Done'. The LR/Bridge Preview will show the edited version. Go to the raw file folder, open another window and drag the related .XML file out on to the desktop or just outside the folder. You'll see the preview sudden lose the retouch. Drag the .XML back in and the retouching will magically return. This also applies to all adjustments.

You can copy and save any number of .XML sidecar files into folders named for the image state, and simply moving them into the main raw folder will revert to their edit. If you have used Masks, when you open in ACR/LR every Mask area as well as the whole image will be fully adjustable. Doing all this is almost instant.

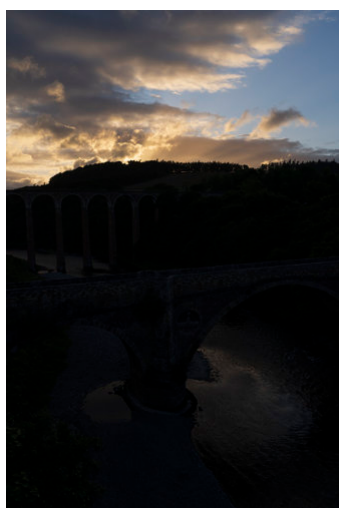
The raw file was taken at -1.3EV knowing the lower part would be near black. Exposing for the sky ensures zero clipping. Masks were used for this part (+4EV!), to feather in the tree line, to brighten the cartouche oval on the old bridge, and to reduce the river's surface highlights. The original is below left; an early edit below right. The final on the facing page is lighter, has corrected verticals, and these last two additional masks. – DK



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```

Top, selecting the land area using Invert on a Sky mask, with Curve and many adjustments. Above left, a Brush mask adds highlight control to the water. Above right, Save Settings (Selected), Subset 'All' includes every edit used for the final image.

The text shown here in red is a tiny part for the .XML text file which holds editable, copyable instructions for all the edits made in Camera Raw. For best quality AI Noise Reduction was used, resulting in a .DNG file with .XML data hidden by embedding, but exportable with one click.





Leaderfoot Viaduct and the old A68 bridge photographed from the new A68 bridge, July 4th 2024. Sony A7RV, Sony 20-70mm f4 lens at 30mm, 1/100s at f11, ISO 100, exposed for sky (-1.3EV on metered setting). Lossless Compressed .ARW file, seen far left unadjusted

DIRTY LOOKS

Photographers tend to get stuck in ruts and end up copying styles and content with a view to repeating the awards and distinction successes of others. To find new directions, look to art and fashion, news and industry. Don't avoid social media but be selective.

Recent reports highlight the huge problem of textile waste shipped by the USA and European 'recycling' and retail sectors to certain countries – notably Chile, where acres of bales of such discarded clothing scar the Atacama desert. They are burned because no recycling or resale capacity exists to deal with these recent 'exports' from other countries. Many African states and the Indian subcontinent have a longer history as a dumping ground. When bales are burst open, unworn new clothing with labels like Shein spills out along with clean and good brand-label jeans and dresses. While a small fraction can find a place in the society and climates of the receiving economies, much can not. The fashions are not wanted.

At home, sites like [notneedingnew.com](https://www.notneedingnew.com) influence the trend to cutting waste by keeping garments and much else in circulation – that site reveals a familiar name, as it

A show recommended if you're visiting London! *Dirty Looks: Desire and Decay in Fashion*, Barbican Art Gallery, 25 September 2025 – 25 January 2026.



was founded and is run by Anna Kilpatrick, your editor's niece, now well-known for her work. But there's an interesting flipside to this – new fashion created from rescued, damaged, buried, recovered and reworked textiles in the high fashion circuit.

'Dirty Looks' is an exhibition which looks at this, showing both the designer originals and photography of the created garments. A visit to the Barbican Gallery to see this should be inspiration – after all, it only took one 'Trash The Dress' editorial some years ago to have your brides ritually rolling in the mud after the wedding (or the divorce!), setting dresses alight, and wading into the waves for the camera.

Below is a press call (press corps visible in background) with models mud-wrestling at Elena Velez's Spring/Summer 2024 presentation, The Longhouse. Photo by Jonas Gustavsson for *The Washington Post* via Getty Images. The rest of the images should inspire. We've come a long way from T-shirts dyed in the red dust of Arizona, punk torn tops and knee-through denims. Their price-tags no doubt reflect this.

Hip, hype or hypocrisy?

– DK





Facing page, top: Paolo Carzana, Autumn/Winter 2025, *Dragons Unwinged at the Butchers Block*. Headwear and creative consulting by Nasir Mazhar. Styling and creative consulting by Patricia Villirillo. Photograph by Joseph Rigby. Courtesy of Paolo Carzana. Top left: Piero D'Angelo, *Physarum Lab*. Top right: Hussein Chalayan, *The Tangent Flows*, 1993. Bottom left: Hussein Chalayan, *Cartesia*, Autumn/Winter 1994. Above: Robert Wun, *The Yellow Rose, Time*, Haute Couture Autumn/Winter 2024.





Yodea-Marquel Williams, Ulmi, Graduate Collection 2024, Elm. Photograph by Callum Hansen. Courtesy of Yodea-Marquel Williams.



IAMISIGO, handwoven raffia-cotton blend look dyed with coffee and mud, Shadows, Spring/Summer 2024. Photograph by Fred Odede. Courtesy of IAMISIGO.



*IAMISIGO, clay-dyed barkcloth dress, Shadows, Spring/Summer 2024.
Photograph by Fred Odede. Courtesy of IAMISIGO.*



Maison Margiela, Artisanal Spring/Summer 2024. ©Catwalkpictures.

DIRTY LOOKS is at Barbican Art Gallery from 25 September 2025 – 25 January 2026 and is curated by Karen Van Godtsenhoven (Curator) and Jon Astbury (Assistant Curator). Architectural design is by Studio Dennis Vanderbroeck. Graphic design is by Wolfe Hall. The exhibition is initiated by Barbican, London. Leading philanthropic supporter, Tia Collection.

Accompanying *Dirty Looks* will be a catalogue published by MACK, with essays by internationally acclaimed authors including Fabio Cleto and Stefania Consonni, Sunny Dolat, Caroline Evans, Akiko Fukai, Sandra Niessen and Sara Arnold, Ellen Sampson, Lou Stoppard, and curators Karen Van Godtsenhoven and Jon Astbury, featuring original object photography by Ellen Sampson capturing the intimate, tactile and bodily qualities of the garments in the exhibition. Designed by Brian Paul Lamotte. Price: £30

The exhibition will be accompanied by an exciting roster of multidisciplinary events including a “Dirty Weekend” across the Barbican (29-30 November) and an exclusive poetic performance by Studio Olivier Saillard, “Wedding dresses always end up single” (*Les robes de mariées finissent toujours célibataires*) in January 2026. Full details to be announced in due course.

French-Vietnamese Director Caroline Guiela Nguyen makes her UK debut in Barbican Theatre with season opener *LACRIMA*, the UK premiere of her hauntingly beautiful, multi-lingual drama shedding light on the hidden personal cost behind the luxury fashion industry (25-27 September).

Venue: Silk St, Barbican, London EC2Y 8DS.

For further information, visit: www.barbican.org.uk

Paolo Carzana, Spring/Summer 2025, How to Attract Mosquitoes. Headwear and creative consulting by Nasir Mazhar. Styling and creative consulting by Patricia Villirillo. Photograph by Joseph Rigby. Courtesy of Paolo Carzana.



Piero D'Angelo, Physarum Lab, 2019. Photograph by Ladislav Kyllar.

Hussein Chalayan, Temporary Interference, Spring/Summer 1995. Courtesy of Niall McInerney/Bloomsbury/Launchmetrics/Spotlight.



Madhur Dhingra

Return to Sender

Why would an ambitious photographer moving to a metropolis famed for opportunity and creativity, keep revisiting his origins and culture, and photographing life in its unchanging and sometimes constantly repeated cycles?

You can find answers to this by reading Madhur Dhingra's short essays which introduce his projects, or seeing his work presented in exhibitions. Accompanying text panels are very much a part of today's gallery curation, and to put Madhur's work on these pages, we chosen a selected number of titled sets and texts in an edited form.

He started his career in photography in 1998 and now lives in Toronto and New Delhi. He has had exhibitions in Canada, the USA and France. In 2023, he gained first and second awards in categories of the American Art Awards and his work has been seen in many magazines.

The festivals and rites of India attract many photographers. Madhur Dhingra's vision is different and has blended an immersive eye with surreal manipulation.

His next exhibition, from this year into 2026, is scheduled to be at Flinn Gallery in Greenwich, Connecticut.

He says: "My images are part of a personal journey where I search for answers to some fundamental questions about life, its meaning and purpose and later trying to understand the ultimate nature of Reality. The quest is taking me to every nook and corner of India including nearby states like Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Zaskar, and Ladakh (Little Tibet) meeting Buddhist philosophers, Vedantic yogis, agnostic spiritualists,

scientists and charlatans alike.

Many of my image have been shot in Himalayan monasteries dating back 1,500 years or more"

"Constant interaction with brilliant Vedic and Buddhist scholars has made me understand that the whole concept of a 'Creator God' proposed by organised religions is a childish one. It had failed to fully comprehend That unconditioned, non-dual, eternal, omnipresent force. God is not a glorified 'personality' sitting somewhere in the universe, directing lives of its people or attending to minute details of its day to day operations.

We need to understand that the Universal Mind does not exist separately from the universe but in it and as it."

He's not immune to modern sensibilities and the setting of the final pictures here, the Burning Ghats, appalled him for its disrespect for the dead and the urban world just feet from their pyres.

Madhur's work has been widely published but his true medium is the fine art print. Since he set out photography has changed much. As a *Photoshop* creator from the start-some of the techniques he devised have remained as signature features of the finished images over time. He has embraced digital manipulation to blend, distort, and art-brush details, establishing a distinct style which has carried through from intense monochrome impressions to the vibrant colours of the subcontinent.

continued on page 21





Shunyara – the Ultimate Void, this spread and the next spread. This work is based on pictures taken in 'Little Tibet,' an area of Ladakh and Zaskar where thousands who fled from the Chinese incursion into Tibet itself have settled. There have been monasteries there for many centuries. "I would sit inside these monasteries for hours, hearing the prayer gong echo through the main

hall, breaking the pin drop silence. The filtering light from the doors and windows playing hide and seek with the shadows in the dark monastic interiors was beautiful." In the mountainous world outside, he found landscapes rendered otherworldly by his framing and his manipulations. The small figures of a monk, a child and a horse live in metaphysical spaces.





From 'Shunyara – The Ultimate Void'







continued from page 22

In 2022, he was invited by a collaboration of photographic societies in Brittany to exhibit his work in the town of Erquy in December 2022. French and Korean photographers involved produced a documentary on his approach, and this displayed in the town hall there during the exhibition. Good publicity ensured that many newspapers in France published articles on his work and style, and the exhibition was “a complete sell out”.

If you wonder how an exhibition can be described this way, the answer lies in Madhur’s approach to professional fine art photography. Every print he exhibits is for sale – they do not tour or make a return journey into storage. “All images have been retained by the gallery for sales”, he said of his most recent show.

From his website, directly ordered prints cost \$2,500 each. They are made on 91 x 61cm (36 x 24") Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gsm or a similar paper.

See: www.madhurdhingra.com

Kali – the Other Half of Shiva



Many of my friends in Delhi are from Bengal, and all inevitably talk excitedly of going back home during Durgotsav, or Durga Puja as we call it in northern India.

It made me wonder why the mention of these words is enough to enrapture them. I kept asking them this question only to hear this same reply – “Madhur, you need to go to Kolkata during that time to get your answers”. Many friends also told me that the frenzy witnessed then was more than that in the carnival of Rio De Janeiro in Brazil.

Hindu metaphysics is complex and the ‘same’ Cosmic Spirit is represented by different forms and names in different regions. In West Bengal it is ‘Durga’ that represents ‘shakti’ (energy), the divine force which pervades all cosmic ‘creation, preservation and destruction. Durga is self-existent, beyond time, indestructible and independent of the material universe as we know it. In a ‘personified’ form, Durga is honoured as a mother with extreme fervour during the annual ‘Navratri’ festival, marking the beginning of Autumn typically in September or October. Navratri means nine nights in Sanskrit, and on each day nine different forms of shakti or Durga are worshipped. I finally decided to make a trip to Kolkata to capture this on camera.



Holi – Krishna's festival of love, colour and dance





Krishna as a character has fascinated me right from my childhood. My family had a huge statue of Him playing a flute in our ancestral house in Old Delhi. On every Janmasthmi, the day Krishna was born, the whole family got together to sing devotional songs which echoed right through that moonless night. His black marble statue was bathed with milk and new clothes adorned. All names in our family are based either on Krishna or His immediate family.

It is from those early days that I have always wondered about this enigma called Krishna. He may be an enigma to someone agnostic like me but He is God to millions. This great exponent of the theory of Karma in the Bhagwat Gita, Krishna has influenced Indian thought, life and ethos in myriad ways.

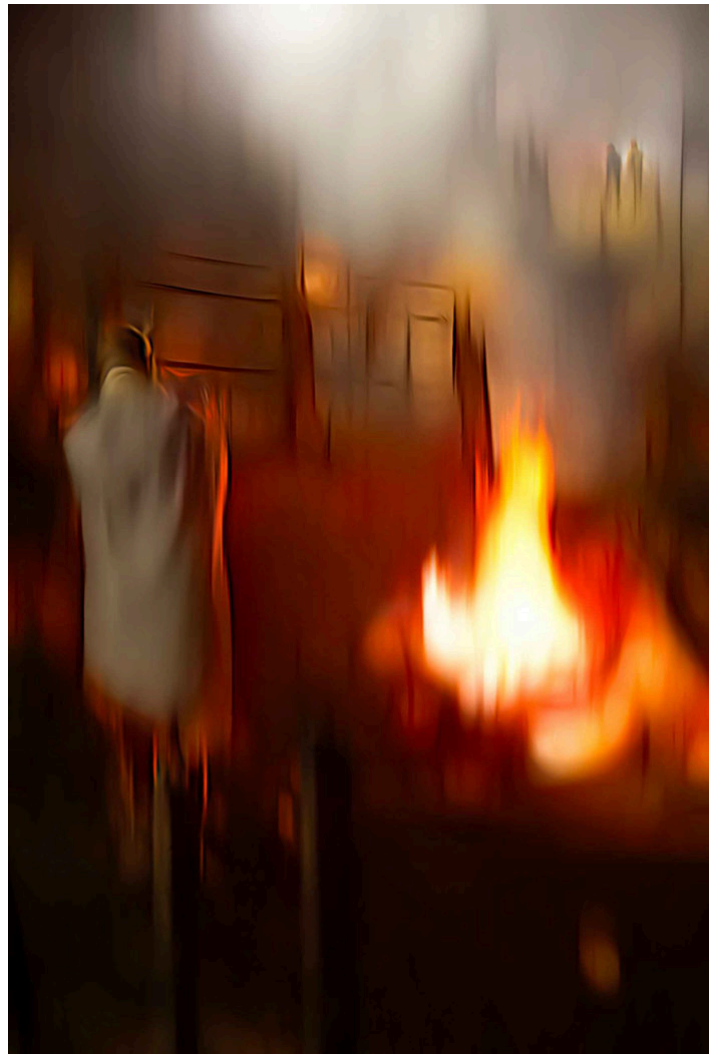
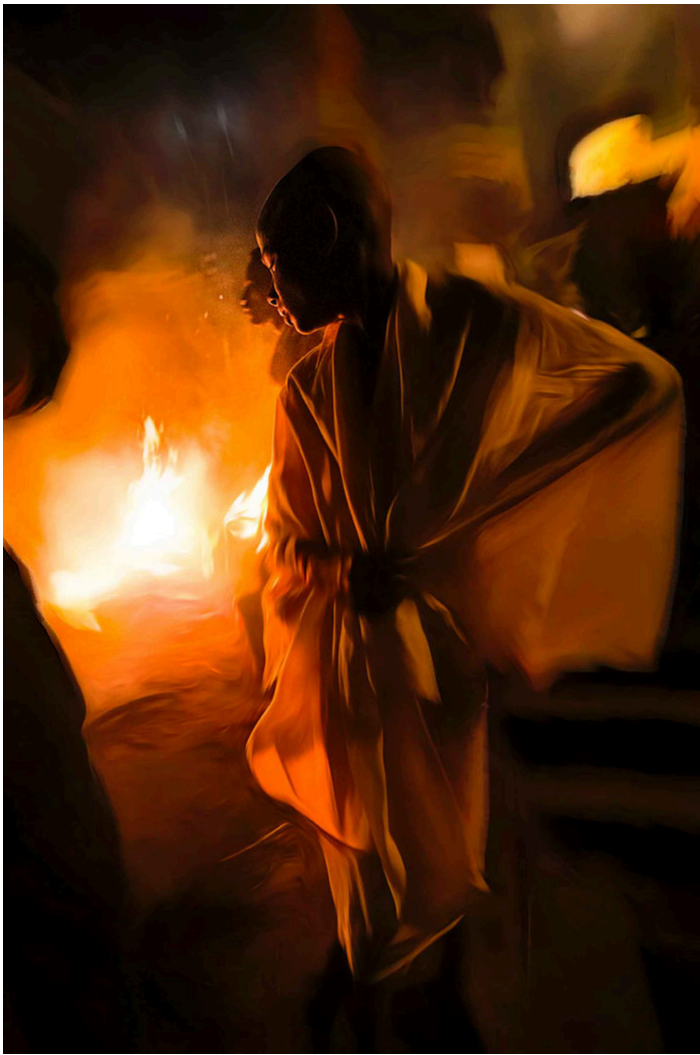
His impact has not just been on religion and philosophy, but has seeped into literature, poetry, painting and sculpture, dance and music. I have absolutely no hesitation in saying that the whole Hindu psyche is under the grip of this one man alone. Krishna was born around 3200-3100 BC at the stroke of midnight in a dungeon in Mathura (Uttar Pradesh), to Devaki (mother) and Vasudeva (father). He was later raised by his foster parents Yasoda and Nand. Nand his foster father was the maharaja (king) of Nandgaon, which was now to become the home for infant Krishna. As a child he was reputed to be very mischievous, stealing curd and butter and playing pranks on gopis (cow herding girls) Gopis were madly in love with this young prankster. They would run up

to hug him while he played his flute. There was one gopi named Radha who captivated Krishna. While all the village damsels yearned for Krishna, He was in love with Radha – extremely beautiful, pure at heart, the daughter of Vrishabhanu who lived in the nearby village of Barsana. She was ten years older to

Him and married, but the way she danced when He played the flute was a sight to see. The villages of Barsana and Nandgaon celebrate Holi with enthusiasm, remembering Krishna's love for their beloved Radha. Krishna who started this tradition by first applying colour on Radha's face. Women of Barsana even after

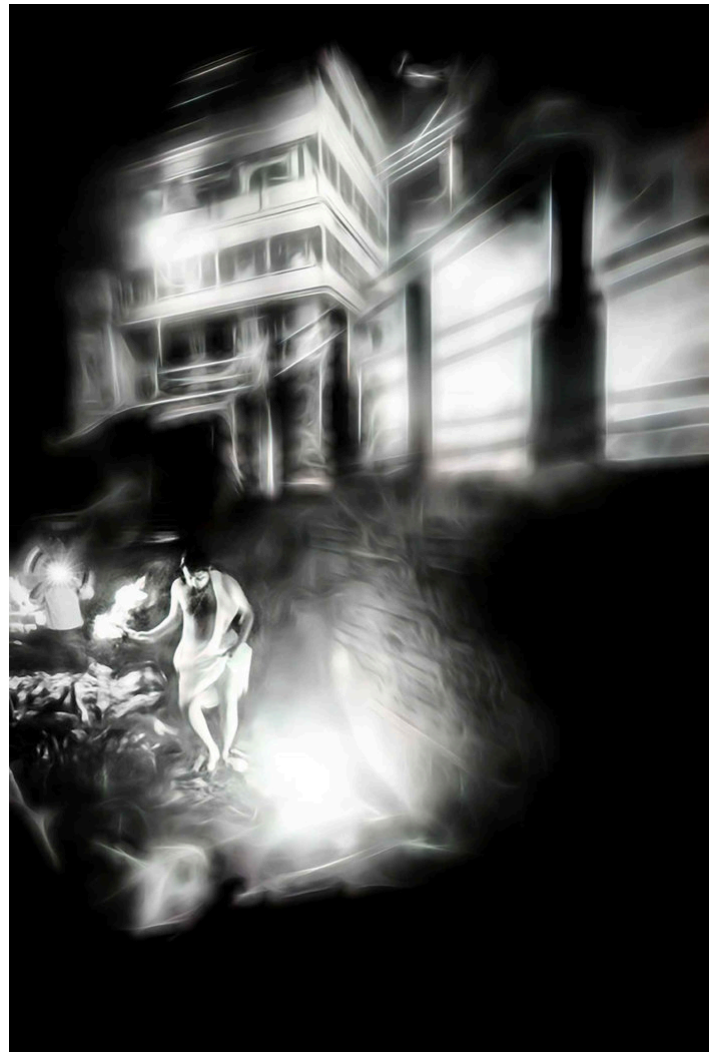
thousands of years still want revenge for Krishna's pranks whereas men of Nandgaon are full of mischief and eager to tease the women of Barsana This celebration of love has been happening year after year for over 5,000 years in both these neighbouring villages in the form of Holi.





The Manikarnika Burning Ghat of Varanasi





Death has always fascinated me along with the myriad unsolved questions and the mystery that surrounds it. I have raised questions about it time and again when in the company of mystics, researching through books, and findings of science.

An undeniable realisation has now dawned on me though there comes an end to experiences undergone by the self when it is in its finite mortal garb, consciousness never ceases to exist. Just as sound goes back into silence but never is lost, also so the individual self or consciousness merges back into the fundamental ever flowing sea of Universal Consciousness, from which it may re-emerge once again at another time.

It is this intense desire inside me to see death in its raw and naked form, that has pulled me towards the Burning Ghats of Varanasi called Manikarnika Ghat. People from all over India come to Varanasi to cremate their dead at Manikarnika. It is believed by the Hindus that a cremation at Manikarnika gives the human soul liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Pyres are being lit here continuously, and have been without once getting extinguished for the last 3,000 years.



The Bhagwat Gita, the sacred text of the Hindus written over 5000 years ago in Sanskrit, states:

"The soul is never born nor dies at any time. Nor does it come into being when the body is created. Soul is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval. Soul is not destroyed when the body dies.

"As a human being puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones."

According to Hinduism, the soul is immortal and it is the body alone that dies. Life, death and then rebirth are all a process of learning and perfection for the soul. Birth and Death are the game of Maya (4141). Maya has complex meanings but can roughly be described as a Matrix.

Life and death together form a never ending cycle through which each human being has to keep on going till he attains Moksha (aia) or Liberation. Birth and Death are merely doors of entry and exit on the stage of this material world. Death is not the end. Life is one continuous never-ending process.

All photographs © Madhur Dhingra

DOGS

Environmental canine portraiture wins every time!



Studio photography remains popular for dog owners – possibly more than for the human members of their families. But the best canine portraits are usually outdoors, and summer through to autumn is a good time.

As these pictures show, you definitely don't need or want direct sunshine. Fur, like foliage, looks better under an overcast or cloudy sky. Three of these pictures are professional, from The Guild of Photographers' Monthly Awards (www.photoguild.co.uk) and one – local to our offices – is amateur. **Sue Beck's** shot 'Dougal on bale at sunrise' is an out-of-the-camera JPEG from her Panasonic DMC-FZ200. It made a fine 12 x 15" print in Kelso Camera Club's annual exhibition and won the public vote as first in the show.

The Dalmatian in lavender is by **Natalie Taylor**, and the two on the facing page are by **Renate Zuidema**. All three won Guild Golds.





LENSES

Samyang Remaster Slim 21-28-32

Budget full AF/AE pancake socket mount trio

Innovation is always welcome even when it doesn't work particularly well. There is a strong chance the next generation will be better. It often takes three iterations to refine a concept. This is probably the case with Samyang's Remaster Slim compact lens concept.

This is a kit based on a shared AE/AF mount which houses the autofocus motor, while three optical assemblies contain the iris diaphragm to set the aperture manually or automatically. The mount is just 19mm deep and the lenses, when bayonet mounted into the 24mm diameter central tube, add nothing to the thickness. The 21mm f3.5, 28mm f3.5 and 32mm f2.8 full frame wide angles each weigh almost nothing and have a 32mm flange at the front with the focal length, aperture and minimum focus distance marked. The mount weighs only 59g and the lenses about 10g each. The 49mm filter thread is on the mount, not the lenses, and accepts the supplied clip-in lens cap. There is no lens hood option.

The camera mount has the usual 12 contacts needed to transfer focus, focal length, aperture and built-in correction profile which are added to the camera's own ISO, shutter speed and exposure compensation settings to provide the core EXIF data and adjustments in raw processing. There's a major difference between 'dumb' lenses and this level of control information. The most obvious benefit is that sensor-based stabilisation is correctly set. A second is that the way slowest and fastest shutter speeds and auto ISO ranging interact, especially when using intelligent program modes.

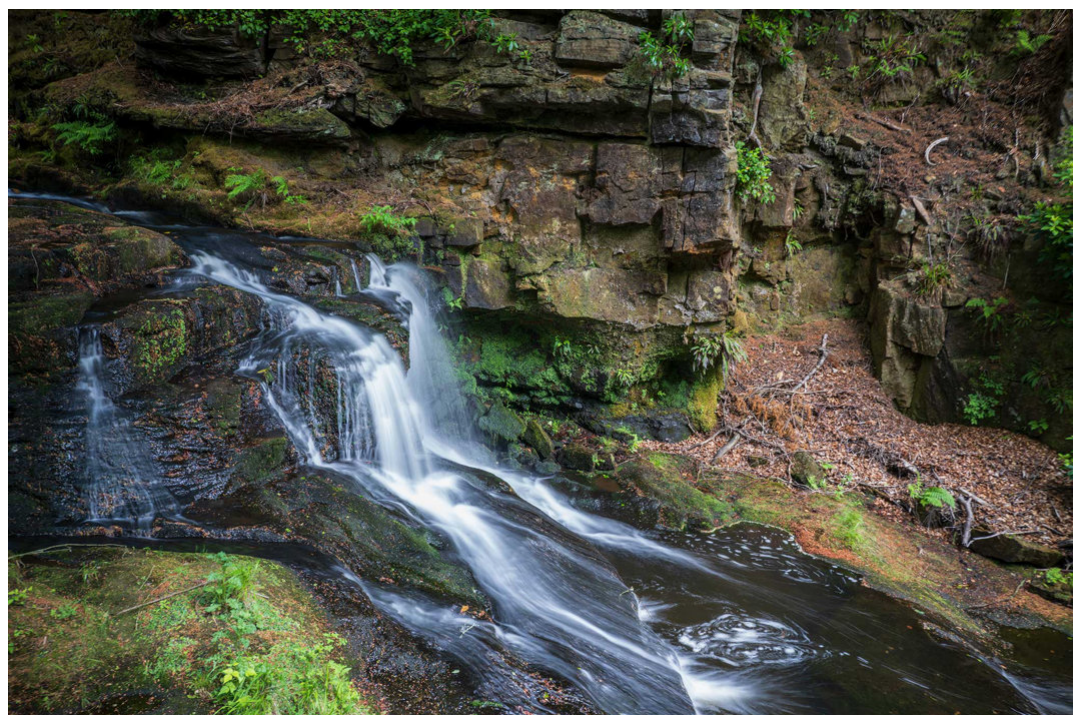
The mount unit also has an AF/MF switch and a USB port for firmware maintenance. Its focus-by-wire manual focus ring, slightly ribbed, is at the very front and works smoothly. Somehow a stepper motor AF is included in this minimal mount, with a fixed travel



The 35mm and 28mm lenses next to the mount with 21mm fitted.



The supplied mini flight case box, and the mount with module (right) showing just four contacts used for AE and EXIF.



The light weight of the Remaster with 32mm lens made hand-holding this Cragside, Northumberland, garden burn centrally sharp with stabilisation. Sony A7RV, 1.3 seconds at ISO 50, f16. Rotational shake gave slight double imaging at the extreme ends, but normal shots also show this lens has fairly marked peripheral aberrations and can produce purple fringes on bright highlights through trees. The f2.8 aperture didn't seem to make it faster focusing, or to have much benefit in low light. The two f3.5 lenses had no AF issues indoors or out.

of course. The difference between the three focal lengths means closer focus with the wider lenses. The 32mm focuses to 37cm, the 28mm to 30cm and the 21mm to 18cm. If you know your lens lore, you'll see that the wider angles give a larger subject scale at minimum distance.

In practice

I deliberately used only these three lenses for the better part of two weeks. They come in a handsome min-Pelican-like black gasket rim foam filled case, with a wrist strap. It's great packaging but not practical when out and about.

With one lens module fitted into the mount, the other two can live in their snap-shut translucent plastic pill boxes. Removed from the show-case, these are robust enough to put in your pocket. The only issue then becomes knowing which lens is in which box as they are identical and you will always put the last lens removed from the camera into the holder for the lens you replace it with. You just have to remember what is on the camera and which pocket has which of the other two lenses in.

The internal bayonet fitting into the central lens tube is aided by a large white marker on the mount but the lens modules have only a tiny cut or slot in their rim, about 1.5 x 0.5mm deep, which gives no clear visual clue how to align the lens for insertion, and no tactile clue unless you have very sensitive fingers. It's not all that easy to align and insert, and once pushed home against a final millimetre or two of travel with spring resistance, the module must be rotated counter-clockwise about 10° to lock it in. Despite this being a lightweight action, abetted by the mostly plastic construction, the electronic connection is positive and worked every time. But it's fiddly and needs small fingers.

The three lenses have slightly different standards of performance. The 21mm is like a classic rangefinder lens, with surprisingly good straight-line geometry and moderate vignetting wide open. It's not wonderfully sharp wide open but such lenses never were.



At f11 the 28mm did an excellent job, sharp close corners, slightly defocused sky. Simonside from Edlingham crags.

Though best used at f8 or smaller apertures, it was good at full aperture for 24MP, adequate on 60MP. Turning the built-in lens profile on and off in Adobe software made NO difference at all.

The 32mm f2.8 is more like a lens on a mid-century compact 35mm viewfinder. There's some sharpness loss to the outer field

which even stopping down to f11 or f16 can not overcome. I think it's intended to look this way and with the AF point on your subject that will at least be sharp. Avoid 'centre spot focus and recompose'.

The 28mm falls between the two, again with the look of a classic rangefinder wide, and has the best overall sharpness and field flatness.

The next spread may help you interpret how it handles low open and stopped down.

All vignette visible, most on the 21mm and 32mm. There are residual aberrations not unlike classic vintage lenses – if you consider these to be a revisit to a 28mm Leica Hektor, 21mm mirror-up Nikkor or a 32mm from a 1960s

The 28mm at $f3.5$ focused for flowers shows a clean bokeh and good sharpness within depth of field



Stopped down to $f11$ the sharpness in depth is excellent on 61MP





The 21mm used into extremely contrasty light in Cragside house, above left – heavy post-processing needed, but no issues with flare and enough depth of field at f7.1. Below, the 32mm at to f5.6 in backlight with intense reflection off metal tables. Sharpness excellent in a curved focus plane.





Left and above, the 32mm as a street lens. Too far away to get good composition with the leg in the window and the girls, but a crop (left) held up well. Note the distortion. Right, minimal straight-line distortion in this 21mm vertical-corrected Durham Cathedral interior – good sharpness at f3.5 too.

35mm compact the results have that feel. Even wide open parts can be critically sharp, even if just a few cm away the bokeh transition can best be called funky. But they are not lens-babies or novelty glass. They are also very contrasty, flare-free (unless catching some light from outside the shot) and give intense colour. I enjoyed using them but lost a few shots by not stopping down, or allowing for the non-plane focus field. These fixed focal lengths concentrate the eye. The 28mm was my favourite, the 21mm essential. However the 32mm is almost pointless, 2/3rds of a stop faster but 32mm versus 28mm is a small step. If this had been 35mm or even better 40mm the Remaster Slim concept would have more appeal. Make the 21mm an 18mm and it would be a must-have kit.

– DK



<https://www.holdan.co.uk/brand/Samyang>



Schneider-Kreuznach x LK Samyang 14-24mm f2.8

If you have a premium name and reputation in a field, it pays to maintain position by keeping it that way. Schneider-Kreuznach is one such company and over the years (112 of them!) the collaborations of Schneider optical works, Kreuznach, Germany have been many. The company acquired the Pentacon photographic works in Dresden after the reunification of Germany in 1991 to add to its ownership of Rollei, the former Isco, and B+W filters. Alongside rivals Zeiss it's developed the very high value movie lens market.

The Schneider name has not always been put first even on their own products, given the value of their other brands. Instead, it's added heritage and value to other names. Schneider lenses have graced the Leica system, Rolleiflexes and models like the Rollei 35 series, classic Kodak, and most recently digital cameras from Kodak and Korean maker Samsung. Twenty years ago Samsung and Pentax made related K-mount DSLR systems, and lenses apparently made by Pentax were branded as Schneider-Kreuznach for the Samsung GX-15.

Today Samsung is nowhere to be seen in the photographic world, as their own smaller sensor system with NX mount failed to compete with the widely adopted FourThirds and subsequent Micro FourThirds standards. Samyang, unconnected to Samsung, took South Korea's photo-optical industry forward with great success and is now part of the LK Samyang group.

The lens we're looking at here brings Schneider back into the picture, as it marks their first collaboration with Samyang visible in the lens naming, new styling and ergonomics. It's also the first full frame mirrorless 14-24mm f2.8 zoom to accept filters directly. It has a conventional 77mm filter thread.

German optical know-how meets Korean engineering in a fast extra wide AF zoom which can use 77mm filters.



Here is what Schneider-Kreuznach says about the AF 12-24 2,8 FE:

"Schneider-Kreuznach contributes its expertise in the form of optical design reviews, metrological analyses, and product fine-tuning. The company also evaluates and tests products to ensure they meet the highest standards."

That's a similar relationship to the collaboration between Leitz and Minolta 50 years ago, and presumably similar to Schneider's involvement with Pentax and Samsung. What you do not get is a German-made lens, though the nature of the industry is such that you may very well be buying a lens which contains German glass or even finished elements. The reverse applies, lenses made in Europe may include specific glass produced in Korea, China, Japan or elsewhere.

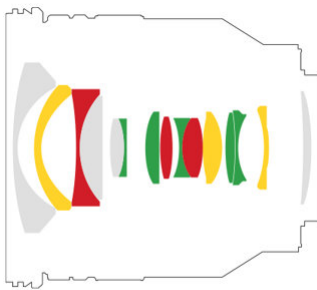
In this case, with a street price just north of £1,000 at present only in the Sony FE mount, you can expect a lens as good as the best Samyang regular mirrorless system designs. We won't say 'as good as the best Samyang' because, like Schneider, Samyang has entered the higher end cine-lens fields where MF lenses are pretty much blueprinted and have price-tags to match under their Xeen brand.



A tour of the Schneider-Kreuznach x LK Samyang 14-24mm f2.8. The front view shows its dual identity (in the USA, it's sold as plain old Rokinon). The barrel is as large as you would expect, with texture silicon rubber zoom and manual focus rings. It comes with a firmly fitting lens hood and pinch-fit cap. The barrel extends a few millimetres at the wide end. It's got a USB connection for upgrades, AF/MF switch essential for astro shots, and a function button.

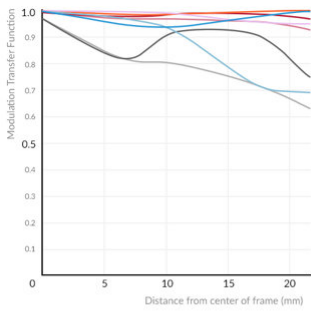


Distortion, above, with the lens profile disabled. Once downloaded Above Camera Raw automatically detected and used it – results, right. Well-known blue scuba diving huts at St Abbs. Below, the lens diagram and MTF charts at $f2.8$. Despite the apparent fall-off in contrast, the Samyang proved very sharp wide open at all focal lengths.

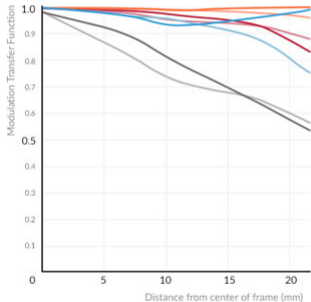


HR ASP ED

Wide(14mm)



Tele(24mm)



14mm		Direction	
Resolution		Sagittal	Meridional
10 lines/mm	—	—	—
30 lines/mm	—	—	—

24mm		Direction	
Resolution		Sagittal	Meridional
10 lines/mm	—	—	—
30 lines/mm	—	—	—

First impressions are as good as you might expect, with a new black LK Samyang box as solidly made as we've come to expect without the overdone luxury of soft-touch Chinese brands, or their free lens pouches and cleaning cloths.

The lens with its chunky matt black barrel and two textures of silicon rubber ring grips is 88.8mm long, 84mm diameter and weighs only 445g. It feels well balanced and the 15 elements in 11 groups, UMC

coated, don't occupy a huge part of the assembly. The front group is large, as expected in an ultra-wide zoom, and there's a slim element at the very rear which looks designed to correct the focus plane. There are three aspherical elements, three extra low dispersion and five high refractive index.

The MTF charts indicate a definite fall-off in fine lower contrast detail in the outer field and especially the corners, at both 14 and 24mm – presumably

at $f2.8$. However, in practice this isn't an issue and the lens seems very sharp with high contrast. It has strong barrel distortion at 14mm, and you need to visit the Samyang download page for its .LCP profile and load this into the correct (Adobe Application Support, or equivalent) directory on your computer. The geometry and vignetting are instantly fixed! This does *not* happen if you select Use Built-in Profile.

To download, use this link: <https://bit.ly/3TPdzDD>



With its 77mm filter thread and 14mm view, the Samyang can use Lee/Hitec/SRB 100 size filter holders with a wide-angle adaptor. It's a tight margin and the rotating polarisers, whether 105mm front adapted fitting like Lee or the custom 82mm screw-in for the rotatable SRB Elite, may cut off if the lens is set wider than 16mm. You may also need to modify to a single slot holder (above, SRB Elite with two filter slots and its rotating polariser – SRB Elite Lite with one filter slot removed, right). Screw-in ND1000 and similar light-sealed very high neutral density filters used between the lens and a filter system may also limit the range – officially, the Samyang can use

77mm filters with a maximum of 4mm rim thickness. But polarisers are not very useful with anything shorter than 24mm – and many filter kits are 150mm not 100mm.

This is a lens I absolutely love – had it existed two years ago, my everyday kit would have been 14-24mm and 24-70mm f2.8 (instead of 20-70mm f4) and 70-300mm. The Laowa 10mm would rarely have been in the bag as it's such an extreme – most shots end up cropped to more natural view angle. And this is where the 14-24mm wins.

– DK

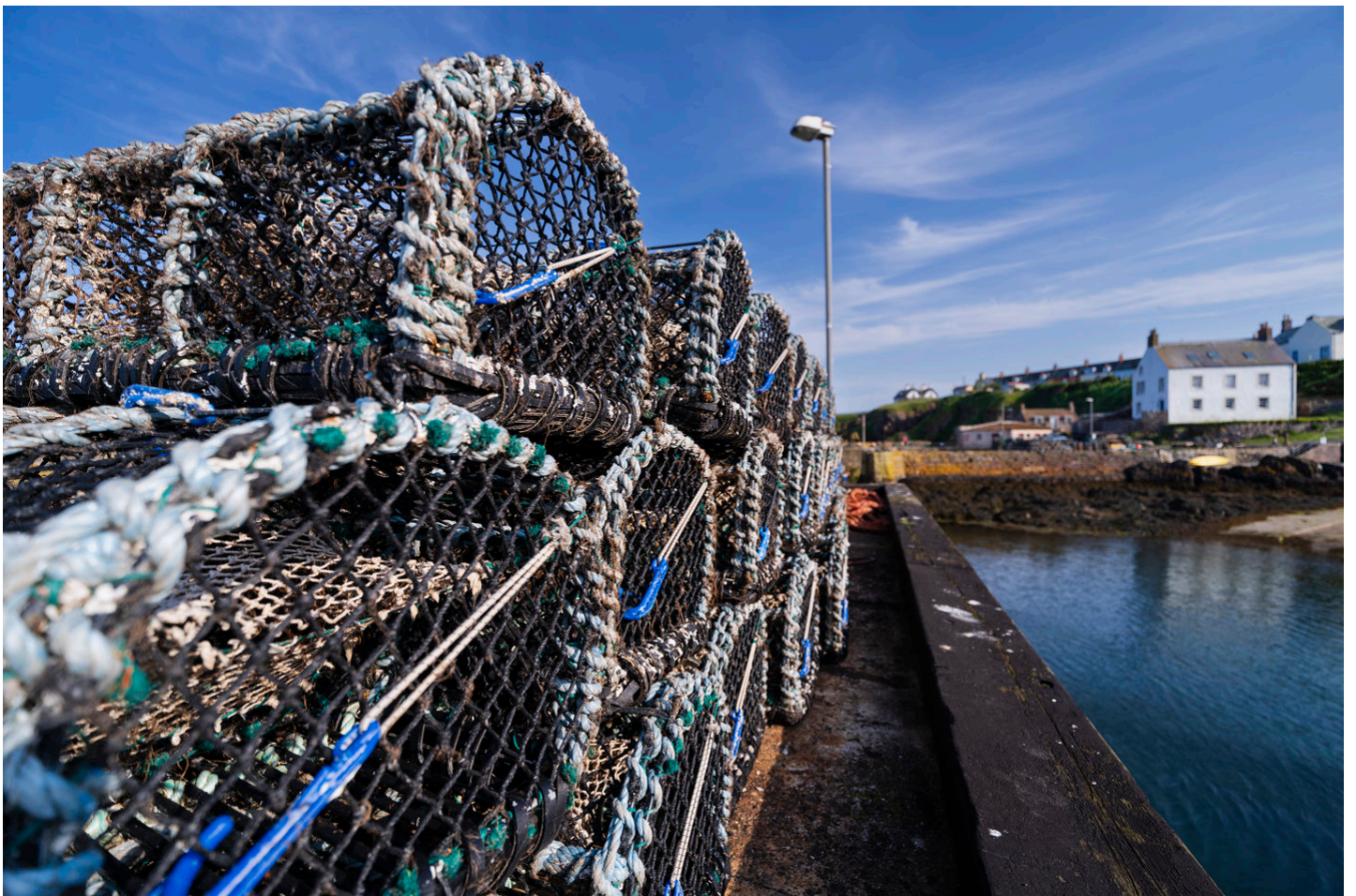


See: <https://www.holdan.co.uk>
<https://www.lksamyang.com>



Above – excellent geometry, no filter used, 14mm and f10 gives all the depth of field needed. Below – minimum focus distance, 14mm, and again f10.





For tests, the lens took a trip out to Eyemouth and St Abbs, a few minutes' drive apart (with more time, it's a great coastal walk). The top shot at 24mm and f13 is so sharp gulls in sky and a group of people on the cliff top match the bottom left corner for detail. Wide open at f2.8 for the creels and harbour above, it's all still going to look sharp on a small screen or print but the focus transition is clear on an A3 print or large screen. What's interesting is that focus was on the further end of the second creel in, middle row but both the left hand end of the top one and the edge of the harbour wall bottom right hit the focus plane. A movable magnified focus viewing point can help you judge focus distribution on a scene like this. At f10 the same shot was critically sharp corner to corner.

Permajet Fine Art Portrait Rag 305gsm

Any subtle change in the surface texture of a popular paper will have regular users ordering test packs. A change in the weight of the paper matters even more, and the two are closely connected.

You can't make a distinctively textured 100% cotton rag fine art paper with a light weight. The mainstream papers which have followed the popularity of Epson's original Velvet Fine Art have substantial thickness. With this come problems for many desktop printers, and almost all consumer or office grade inkjets. They can't feed heavier papers reliably, they do not have adjustable platen height, and often the paper must go round bends.

Even with photographic grade printers the difference between a 285gsm art paper and 305gsm can make the difference between reliable and difficult printing, or multi-sheet hopper versus a single sheet feed path.

Permajet's new **Portrait Rag 305** replaces their discontinued 285, and indeed the stock ICC profile behaves identically making it easy to switch. It's definitely a good enough match for landscape and black and white work, though if you are obeying its name and using it for portrait, figure, wedding or anything with skin tones a priority, custom profiling (free from Permajet) is recommended.

The 305 weight, and the stiffness of the stock, seem very carefully chosen to give the maximum thickness and best texture without hampering printing. This can not be said of some papers which are even heavier or more rigid. While single sheet feeding is definitely recommended, it did not need the special manual feed of the Epson ET-8550 or P3800.

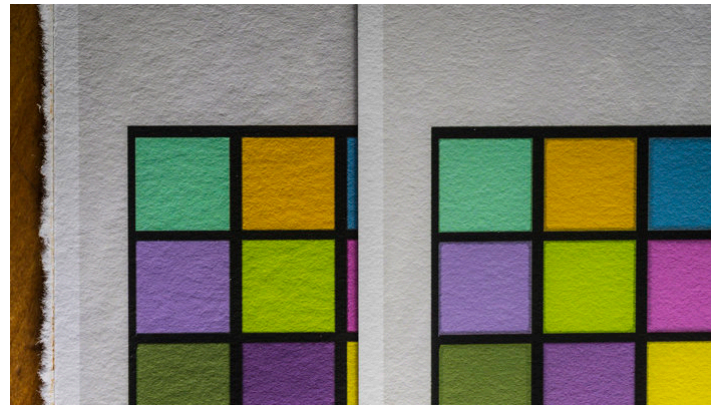
The box of A3 paper was delivered superbly packed – not just a good double wrap of corrugated, but custom made plastic cornerpieces to fit the box



New Portrait Rag 305, left, its texture compared under skimmed lighting with Permajet's previous Portrait Rag 285, right. We've left a badly guillotined edge on the 305 as this really well the substantial heft of the extra 20gsm. Further cuts on this trimmer were fine with the paper held firmly.

which is already substantial. The result was a perfect box, no corner bashing. The paper comes stacked printing side up, with a cover sheet and card underlay, and a clear instruction sheet for basic printer settings. The downloadable ICC profiles (for the 285 weight, already identified as suitable for the 305) are confusing because Permajet recommends Epson's Velvet Fine Art paper setting for both my printers but the profile for the P3800 is coded WCRW (Watercolor Radiant White) and the profile for ET-8550 is VFA.

So, using my own printer colour target studio shot with a Macbeth checker, jelly beans and a portrait (right), I made comparisons before printing from two selected files – my colour shot of the Devon Gorge (Clackmannanshire), and mono by Shirley Kilpatrick of meanders in the Stanislaus River, Sonoma, USA. VFA gave a better d-max, though for the 99% aRGB calibrated BenQ Photo 24" used with *Affinity Photo* on the P3800 system, an increase of +25% colour density helped with this and the highlight detail. The shadow gradation remained, as expected from aRGB, well separated in the black and white and colour alike. On the ET-8550 the results were deeper in the shadows, and slightly over-saturated from the colour file, printed from *Photoshop 25* with BenQ PD3200U Graphics monitor



(99% sRGB). See the next article for more on the colour management.

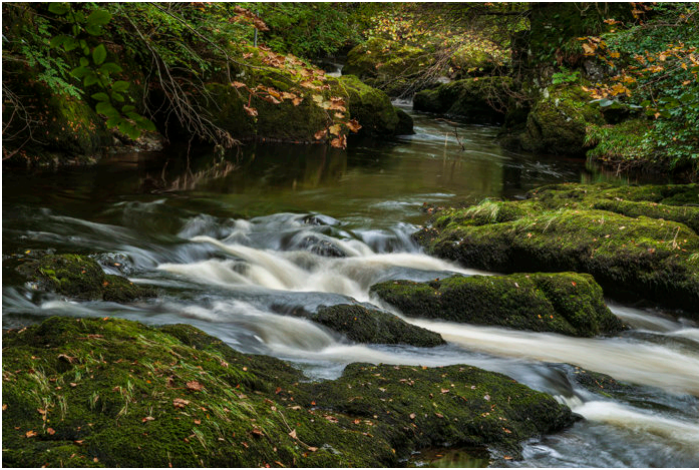
With a fine art rag paper like this, no ink lay or bronzing is likely – this is an issue with gloss, pearl, and lustre papers. Really high density pure black is easily achieved on Portrait Rag 305. Prints do not need extended dry-down time though it's a good idea to wait a few minutes before mounting. If framed in direct contact with glass, extend that to overnight. Dense blacks may show marks a from rough handling even when surface is thoroughly dry, so always treat a finished print with care and wear cotton gloves if you can. The paper lies very flat with a slight concave curl. and can be held in place by print corners or a double-sided tape strip when framed behind a matte overlay.

The finely textured surface should survive pressure mounting, hot or cold, but for best archival permanence the print should only be fixed at the top edge/corners allowing it and the mount/overlay to respond freely to humidity and the passage of time.

The 305 paper has more relief in its texture than the 285, as you might expect – the difference is visible under a loupe using skimmed lighting. It won't be obvious under normal print viewing conditions, but does enhance the 'handmade paper' look. Of course, it's not rag paper dried on a frame, it's an applied texture but it looks like an old mill material not a factory stock. It has a natural white base colour without optical brighteners.

You need a sharp heavy duty trimmer to cut it without making





a ragged edge. If you want that, it's a surprisingly tough stock to tear accurately. All round it's a premium heavy weight fine art rag paper and well worth the £37.96 for 25 A4 sheets or £73.96 for 25 A3. The superseded 285 weight may still be found for £29/£54 from dealers.

– DK

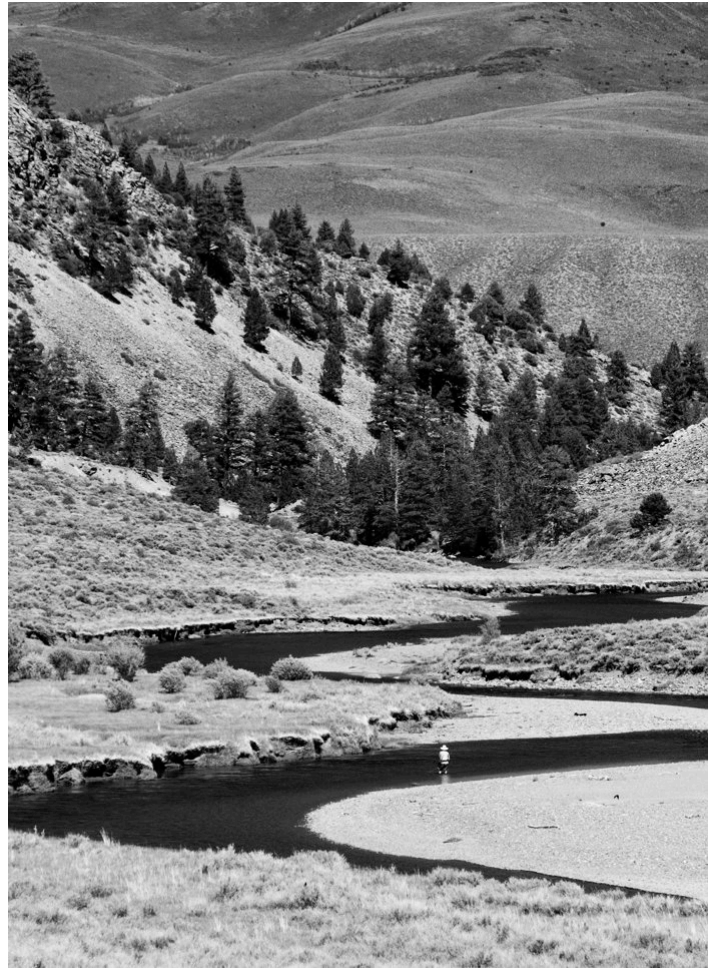


www.permajet.com



The box was delivered packed with four strong protective corners.

Above, the images we used for making prints on both the Epson Stylus Pro 3800 and Eco-Tank 8550. Reproducing from a scan or shot of the prints would not show much of use on this page. The prints below are from the P3800, which gave better shadow detail and colour matching.



A view from a seasoned Permajet paper user



NIGEL THOMAS, a Permajet Envoy and successful landscape photographer, has this to say – “Permajet Portrait Rag 305 has genuinely impressed me. Despite the word “Portrait” in its name, it’s a versatile, all-round fine art paper that excels with landscapes. The heavier 305gsm weight gives it a luxurious, substantial feel, and the slightly textured, 100% cotton rag surface exudes quality before you even make a print.

“I tested the paper with both colour and black & white landscape images (also using the 295 profile). Colours were accurate and nuanced, and the tonal transitions were beautifully smooth. Side-by-side with the same image printed in colour on the excellent and consistent Matt Plus 240, the Portrait Rag 305 held its own, with a very slightly richer depth and more tactile presence. The d-max is particularly impressive for a matte paper, allowing deep, detailed blacks without sacrificing shadow detail.”

Nigel soft-proofed using the Relative rendering intent, which he says gave a slightly more accurate match than Perceptual (which we used). “The result was... more than a match for the Permajet Baryta Rag 310 which I used for comparison. The only difference and a matter of personal preference was the Baryta Rag 310 has a subtle sheen and lustre type finish, compared to the slightly



Nigel prints on a Canon Pro 300 and the regular paper feed worked well.

textured and matt finish of Portrait Rag 305.

“The increased weight over the previous Portrait Rag 285 makes handling even more special. It feels robust and premium, ideal for exhibition prints or high-end portfolio presentations. The surface texture is just right: enough to add character, but not so pronounced that it interferes with fine detail.

Permajet Portrait Rag 305 is much more than a “portrait” paper. It’s a true all-rounder that brings out the best in landscape images, combining excellent colour fidelity, deep blacks, and a beautifully tactile finish. Whether you’re printing for exhibition, portfolio, or personal enjoyment, this paper delivers a premium experience in both colour and black & white from start to finish.

“I’ll certainly be adding it to my regular papers, and I suspect it may even challenge my long-standing favourite, the Photo Art Silk 290.”

Facebook: [nigelthomasphotos](#)



A ‘solution’ to running out of Light Black and LL Black

What should you do when a printer over 20 years old runs out of ink in a few of its nine very expensive cartridges, and the retail cost of replacing the six which are too low to rely on comes to more than the printer cost?

When it was ten years old, and officially past its service life, our Epson P3800 got a Marrutt Refillable Cartridge kit. Sometimes the 125ml ink bottle sets have been Black Friday discounted from the normal £230 making it an easy decision to order another set in advance. Buying single bottles as needed, with p&p, was never economical.

The Stylus Pro 3800 uses only one ink which differs from the newer P3880, the second magenta ink. It seems, however, that the remaining eight inks are generic to various Epson pigment ink printers from 2004 (the introduction of the K3 inkset with *Matt Black*, *Light Black*, *Light Light Black* and *Photo Black*) onwards.

The great appeal of this inkset is the quality of black and white prints, whether pure monochrome using only the ‘K’ inks or subtle toned effects adding some pigment colour. The appeal of the printer itself is that with a fairly small footprint it can produce 24 x 17” (A2+) fine art prints on almost any type of cut sheet paper or pre-mounted exhibition board up to 1.5mm thick. Gloss Ilford pre-mounted 20 x 16” stock was discontinued long ago but the printer remains able to feed even the stiffest and thickest stock.

However, two decades of use and with frankly minimal commercial application was about to persuade me to put the 3800 into the electronics waste cage at the local waste recycling centre. It ran out of LLK and LK (the extra light and normal light black) alongside *Light Cyan*, which is important for green landscape prints. I had some refill ink remaining for the Marrutt custom cartridges, but no LLK and the LK was too low to keep printing safely. I did have a fresh bottle of MK.

Logic says that LLK and LK almost certainly use the same black pigment as MK, and it might be possible to dilute them. A dig around on forums and web pages revealed that most who do this dilute PK (*Photo Black*) as they are trying to imitate gloss or lustre photo prints. I am not – I’m wanting fine art prints and back in 2004 Epson Velvet Fine Art was my favourite stock. Diluted matt black could surely not clash with this?

LK is apparently K diluted 1:7 with a clear base solution, LLK is 17:1. Users who want to do this regularly buy a clear ‘dye carrier’ ink base. I reckoned this had to be deionised water with a small amount of wetting agent to ensure even dispersion of the pigment particles. I added a couple drops of Ilford IN-1 to both dilutions.

My diluted-black inks worked perfectly for both colour and black and white. The P3800 running from a profiled aRGB monitor made a print which looked superficially a bit flat. However, it had better shadow detail than the ET-8550 which also was a touch over-saturated in colour.

The P3800 will keep going helped by affordable inks, even if the ET-8550 (limited to A3+ or 13 x 19”) costs much less per print and is faster. It’s good to be able to make A2+ and offer archivally permanent pigment prints, which the Eco-Tank mostly dye based inkset does not allow.

Having spent a good decade with the P3800 constantly failing nozzle checks when using Epson’s own inks, this was cured by switching to Marrutt’s refills, cutting the the massive ink wastage and constant filling up of the waste tank caused by repeated cleaning. I can leave it for days, weeks or months and switch it on and make a print without faults now – fortunately also the case with the ET-8550. I’ll wait to see how my kludged K3 set performs. And buy more inks!

– DK

<https://www.marrutt.com>



FOR THE KIDS

myFirst Camera 50 – a safe summer adventure!

Following the success of the original myFirst tech range which has included digital and instant cameras, the myFirst Camera 50 at £109.00 introduces a more child-friendly design, advanced AI editor – we can confirm this has amazingly clever functions kids will love, and safe sharing features. It's aimed at 5-12 year olds. The inclusion of myDiary and myFirst Circle apps fosters good mental health practices from an early age by allowing them to better express themselves and provide a safe space for them to store their video journal entries and share their stories.

The AI interface helps to organise footage, create voice-over recordings and share it securely, among other things. In the myDiary folder, children can keep track of

their memories over time, creating a timeline of their experiences and growth. The myFirst Circle cloud app allows easy sending, saving and sharing photos. The camera takes 20MP JPEG photos with the rear lens and 16MP photos with a selfie camera lens above the 3.97" very bright and clear screen with 480x800 resolution (12MP for each if selected). Videos can be recorded in 1080p or 720p. It has 16GB of internal storage and supports Micro SD cards up to 128GB. The internal battery life is four hours and it's fully USB charged in 2 hours. Thanks to its thick plastic frame, the camera can take a beating. It is shock and scratch resistant. It is 125.4 x 80.5 x 20mm and weighs a sensible 150g. It costs £109 but can be found for £97-99.



Above, the camera as boxed includes a sturdy neck strap and an alternative lighter weight wrist strap easily shortened for security. At under £100 it is very well specified and made, and the built-in apps and in-camera post processing effects make it great value. Any slight softness of results noted below was mostly due to a fingerprint right on the lens glass. Hard to avoid, so a cleaning cloth will be needed.

Available from <https://uk.myfirst.tech/products/myfirst-camera-50>

Field test by a primary school teacher and pupil

The myFirst Camera 50 was tested by a seven year old, although it is designed for any child within the 5 to 12 year old age range. On opening the box and setting it up Ellis was able to operate it immediately. He commented that it was like a phone. Within minutes of opening it he was able to take photos of his immediate environment with ease. We were on his Granny's farm so he took photos of flowers and the immediate landscape as well as his brother and dog, Wren.

It appeared to be fairly robust and well made. The front camera takes images at 20MP and the selfies are 16MP. There was a certain amount of lag when taking a photo. The quality of the 12MP setting was a little disappointing in terms of sharpness. Ellis didn't appear to notice this at all and was more than happy to snap away at everything around him, even indoor shots and near-macro close ups were fine.

He was able to add stickers to the photos and write the name of his dog on one photo using the crayon and touch screen feature. There is a myFirst Circle social circle feature to allow children to share

pictures and videos with close family members.

We wanted to test the camera in a school class environment, but it couldn't be set up in school as there are restrictions on downloading apps. I was able to download the app to my own phone, but we were unable to test this feature thoroughly due to not having anyone else in the circle because of the way primary school IT is set up, at least in Scotland, despite its safe dedicated apps.

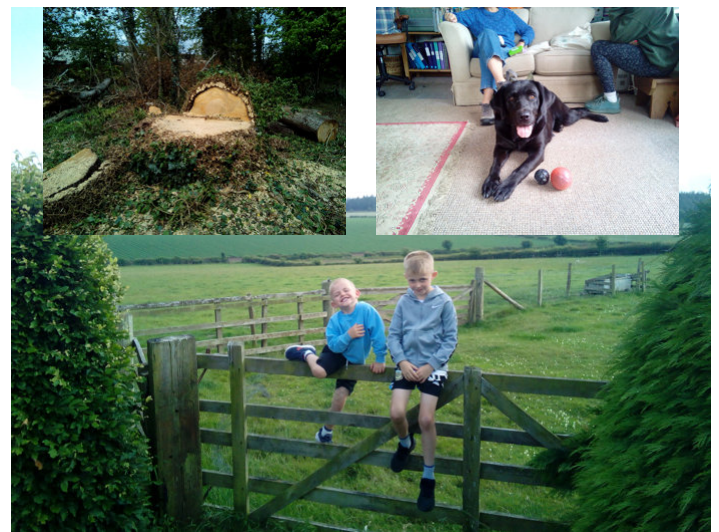
The sharing of photos looked to be fairly straightforward, as part of a 'Secure Vlog Diary' feature which would be an easy way to share and enjoy photos safely amongst friends and family installing the same app.

Ellis thoroughly enjoyed using it and it appears to be a safe and easy way to share photos between children and family members without exposing them to adult social media. The camera certainly got approval from Ellis – noted as a possible birthday present.

– Natalie Bays (teacher)



Top, outdoor in overcast light. Right, artwork inside a classroom. Inset, a wildlife and bee hotel, and dog Wren.



CAMERACRAFT

REARVIEW



Two from the Guild of Photographers Monthly Awards entries – above, by Ryan Hutton (Bronze) and below from Julia Healy (Silver). Both show just how important precise framing, timing, focus and exposure control make all the difference. See: <https://www.photoguild.co.uk>

