

CAMERACRAFT

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Photograph by Rachel Green

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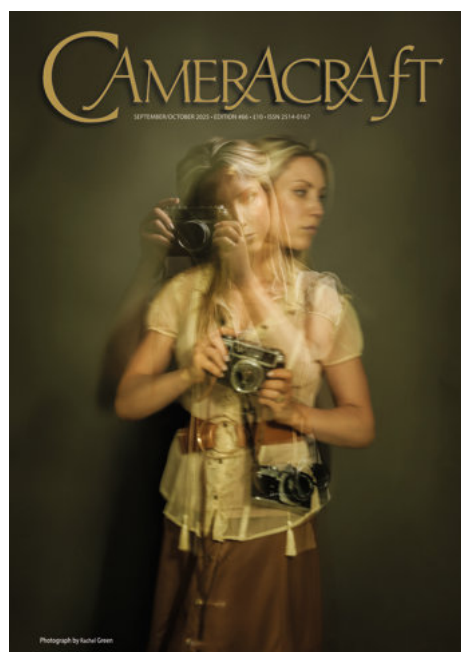
For *Cameracraft*, the correct choices are Magazine printing, Colour, Portrait orientation, A4 size, 130gsm Silk paper, stapled, 48 pages, no additional cover. The screen shot (right) shows this set up. It was made on April 29th and would, if a copy had been ordered then, have had a May 7th delivery date. The quality of print is identical to earlier printed editions.

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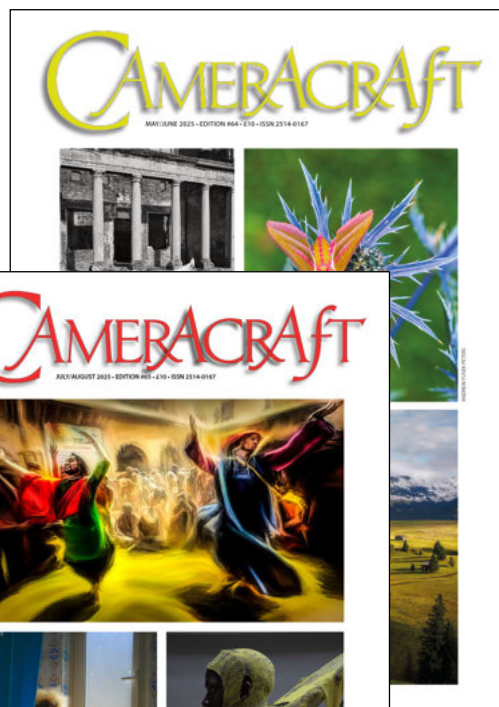
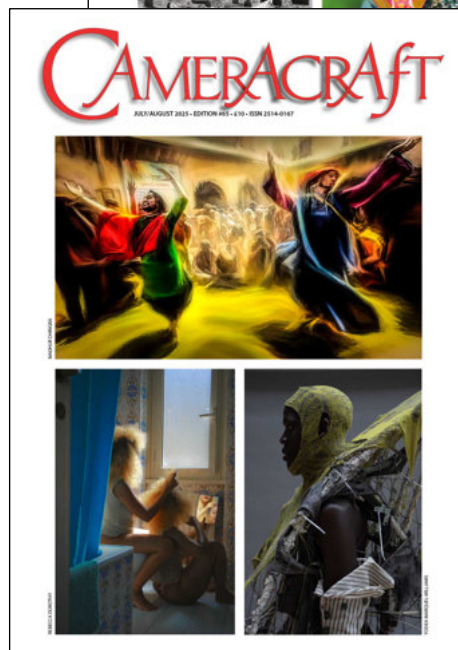
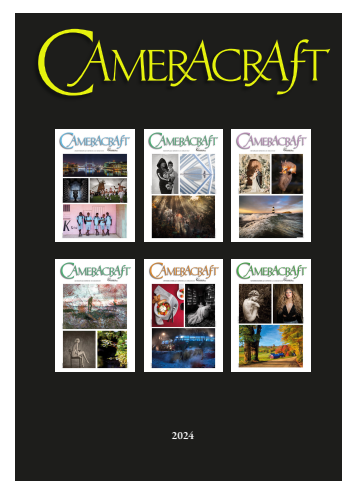
By far the best way to have printed copies of *Cameracraft* is to take all six issues from a year and make them into a book. We've done this for **2024** and now for **2023** as the combined file is tricky to assemble – it's necessary to find a day or two to get into the old documents and convert them as needed. We hope to add earlier 'annuals' the same way in future.



To order this edition, <https://bit.ly/46cTpKU>

To order July/August 2025 click <https://bit.ly/40yYObQ>; for May/June, <https://bit.ly/45QQyG8>

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You can order copies using our **PrintLink** directly from Mixam UK., for around £35 plus post.

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. 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.



For this issue, and probably from onwards for a while, we're reverting to a full page bleed front cover. It's not always easy to select a cover this way and the use of two or three smaller images on the cover has definitely made choice easier, but sometimes more difficult in terms of fit and the harmony or discord of the images.

Of course, the cover shot by Rachel Green is ideal for *Cameracraft* – it's evidence of that craft and also happens to feature some vintage hardware. However, it's not the image which persuaded me a couple of months ago to revert to full page. That image never made it as the photographer did not in the end want ANY of their work to appear.

I've been editing photographic magazines, with responsibility for choosing or putting forward the covers to co-editors, boards or committees for just under 50 years and it's the first time this has ever happened in quite the same way though many times there have been usage restrictions from big names, agencies like Magnum or sources like the RPS Collection.

When a photographer has asked for pictures not to be used in the past the reason has always been connected to client relationships, as with wedding and baby pictures, or a conflicting intended use in a competition, another magazine pre-empting the request to use, or a usage licence which prevented it. Some photo contests state clearly that entries must not have been published or won earlier awards, some stock photo uses demand exclusivity.

What happened was different. I set aside a day to meet the photographer in person – not a long meeting, during a busy Edinburgh Festival related spell for his business. I planned a cover and six to eight one-per-page images in the magazine – a portfolio with a profile write-up. A brief chat was all I needed. I trained as a newspaper journalist and know how to have questions ready. It all went well.

However, I detected some misgivings. The photographer said he had done on-line posts and videos and talked about his techniques but was going to stop doing it because too many 'followers' were following in his footsteps too closely. They were copying his carefully researched viewpoints and learning from his approach of blending the light and sky from several different exposures to make his beautiful and often dramatic views.

Maybe he told me too much about how he used different sky shots (all his) the way Turner used his memory and imagination of light and clouds in paintings. For some landscape photographers this is anathema. Maybe I did my wrong thing of speaking my thoughts, chatting about the results being a 'confection' and in one case (where he'd lit up a cobbled street's lamp-posts) making a reference to Thomas Kincaid... but at the time, he did not seem offended or wary. I bought a calendar for £20, went my way to take some pictures and drop in to The Captain's Bar for a music session and some songs. And £17 in parking charges!

Maybe he regretted telling me he only had about forty finished images, but at 42 the international on-line print sales from these files alone were his living, supported by art fairs. And all sales unmounted prints, and all just A4. This was a good story, and it's why I'm telling it now, anonymised.

A couple of days later on my getting back in touch to fill in a bit more and decide the pictures to use, he simply said he did not want to be featured or to provide any pictures for *Cameracraft*. Further communication was not reciprocated. Perhaps he is right – why should anyone whose living depends on an original working routine and marketing ability, and a special level of post-processing skill, give away any secrets? YouTube had already burned his fingers...

– David Kilpatrick

Email: editor@iconpublications.com

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Cameracraft has been published in print six times a year from March/April 2018 to date, 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 the website. A limited run of printed copies is also made, and subscribers are authorised to order digital printed copies (see inside front cover). Through previous titles *Freelance Photographer*, *Photon* and *PHOTOpro* it is the latest in a line of photographic magazines published from Kelso by David Kilpatrick since 1989.

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BACK ISSUES: because Maxwell Place is up for sale, most back issues have now been disposed of as they occupied a room. In future, though it takes more time than can be found now, a downloadable archive will be put on the website and print-on-demand copies enabled.

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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RPS relocates just over the road - HERE

IT HAS been talked about for some time now, but as of 31 July the RPS is no longer at RPS House in Paintworks, writes Victoria Humphries, CEO of the Royal Photographic Society.

We have sold the building to our neighbours, Crux (the designers of Team GB's cycling helmets). Crux are keeping the Tony Troman auditorium and AV equipment. The RPS Archives, RPS New Collection and Photo Book Library have all come with us and while they won't be as easily accessible as before they will be in a specially racked storage area and will continue to be preserved and protected for the future.

We haven't moved very far though and are just across the road in serviced offices at HERE (the old HTV building). Whilst it is of course sad that we don't have our own space to host exhibitions and events, it also presents a great opportunity for the RPS to get out and about a lot more.

For example, the Distinctions assessments in the autumn are being held at the Smethwick Photographic Society, Billy (our Exhibitions Manager) is busy building connections with galleries across the UK so that we can host exhibitions and events and the Marketing team is looking to develop new partnerships to ensure our outreach is as wide as possible. Meanwhile Liz and Ahsan in the Education team continue to expand our in-person workshop offering across the UK (if you know a good friendly venue do please let them know!) while still offering the online programme and they are planning to get more involved with community and education projects in partnership with other institutions.

The new address is 470 Bath Road, Bristol BS4 3AP.

See:
www.rps.org

V-mount battery comes to broncolor

THE STELOS 800 L is Broncolor's new high-end monolight with 800 joules of flash energy, battery operation with simultaneous charging, and a significantly more compact and intuitive design. It offers adjustable flash colour temperature, a feature previously reserved for high-end power packs. High-speed sync (HSS) is also supported for fast-paced, high-performance shoots. The LED modelling light also delivers variable colour temperature from 2700 to 6500

Stelos is powered by a universal V-mount battery system, not unique to broncolor but widely used now throughout the photo industry. It can also charge while in use via USB-C, (140-watt adapter included). It supports broncolor RFS 2 and 3 radio



transmitters, the bronControl app (via built-in WiFi), and bronAPI for custom integration. The full range of broncolor light modifiers, even the largest one such as the Para, can be used thanks to a robust mounting bracket with 90° tilt capability. The sales price excluding VAT is £2,705 (UK) and €3,107 (Ireland).

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

Extreme dynamic range, stabilisation and focusing in Hasselblad X2D II 100C



HASSELBLAD has launched the X2D II 100C, adding 'true end-to-end high dynamic range (HDR)' to the 100-megapixel flagship along with AF-C continuous autofocus², Hasselblad Natural Colour Solution with High Dynamic Range (HNCS HDR), and a claimed 10-stop in-body image stabilisation. Launching alongside the X2D II 100C is the XCD 2,8-4/35-100E, a 28-76 full frame equivalent.

AF-C continuous autofocus is new to the system. With it the Phase Detection Autofocus (PDAF) coverage has been expanded from 294 to 425 zones and works together with LiDAR-assist. A new AF illuminator further improves autofocus performance in low-light conditions and also serves as a self-timer indicator.

HNCS HDR harnesses high dynamic range and effectively reduces overexposure, retains highlight detail, and adds depth to shadow tones more naturally than earlier HDR methods. These images are processed in-camera as HDR HEIF or Ultra HDR JPEG and can be instantly reviewed on the new 3.6-inch OLED touchscreen at up to 1,400-nit peak brightness — 75 percent brighter than the X2D 100C. With Phocus Mobile 2, iOS phone/pad users can edit HDR images and apply HNCS HDR processing to raw files. "When shared on HDR-capable platforms, these images showcase the full brilliance of HNCS HDR, revealing colours and tones with unprecedented fidelity", the company says. It's all enabled by 16-bit colour depth (approximately 281 trillion colours) and a new native ISO of 50 with increased dynamic range of 15.3 stops.

The 5-axis, 10-stop in-body stabilisation system delivers up to eight times the stability of the X2D 100C when capturing distant subjects.

Users can now capture hand-held long exposures lasting several seconds without a tripod.

The X2D II 100C retains the 1TB of internal SSD storage of its predecessor and a CFexpress Type B slot. Despite the enhancement it weighs 7.5% less than the X2D 100C. Ergonomics have been upgraded and the screen tilts 90° upward and around 43° downward, pulling out to clear of the electronic viewfinder (EVF). A new 5D joystick enables swift focus point selection and intuitive menu navigation without touching the screen. With eight customisable buttons, the camera offers greater flexibility and a more personalised control experience.

The XCD 2,8-4/35-100E 3x optical zoom matches a range of seven Hasselblad prime lenses. At its widest aperture of f2.8 it is said to deliver the same edge-to-edge image quality as HXCD prime lenses. It is powered by the fastest stepping motor in the XCD lens lineup. A compact internal focusing group, paired with optimised control algorithms, enables smooth and accurate autofocus.

The integrated leaf shutter offers full flash synchronisation from 1/4000 second to 68 minutes. It is 138 mm in length, uses 86mm filters, and weighs just 894 grams. There is also a new Vandra 20-litre backpack to hold a Hasselblad body, two lenses, and accessories along with new 86 mm UV, ND8, and CPL filters.

The Hasselblad X2D II 100C is priced at £7,399/€7,200, the XCD 2,8-4/35-100E at \$4,599/€4,800. The Vandra Backpack is \$469/€429, the UV filter \$299/€259, the ND8 \$329/€289 and the CPL \$559/€469.

www.hasselblad.com

WEX – Body: <https://tidd.ly/3V19cRw>
Lens: <https://tidd.ly/3JCKpGk>



TOM HILL

Going backwards to move forwards – can the ‘magic’ of photography ever be recaptured?



Tom Hill ARPS is a semi-retired photographer / copywriter living in the Scottish borders

This subject came up the other day on the pages of social media when someone was bemoaning the fact that the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) had sold its Bristol HQ to ‘save money’. In fact, we’re told, it has sold the building to free up capital to invest in digital infrastructure and take its programmes into all regions of the UK. The society’s days of being location specific appear to be over, which is probably not before time.

Henceforth, exhibitions will be held in partner venues; for example, the 166th RPS International Photography Exhibition was opened by RPS President Simon Hill at the Saatchi Gallery in early August 2025. RPS staff can now work from a small office anywhere or from home. Thus, I suppose the need for an expensive flagship building is redundant.

But why would such a prestigious institution be needing to liquidise capital? Probably because it has been running a deficit operating budget for close to 20 years and the present Board of Trustees appears to have drawn a line on this policy. Whilst membership levels are actually growing – now at their highest for many years – they aren’t growing

as fast as the Chief Executive or the Trustees might wish.

Enquiries must be converted into new memberships but is the institution retaining its members? Perhaps not all newcomers are staying? The issue may well be one of demographic; very many RPS



members must be like me – middle-aged – who will eventually hang up their camera bags for good. Perhaps not as many youngsters are joining at a rate to match us oldies disappearing. If this is the case, why aren’t younger photographers becoming engaged?

My theory, which might sound trite, is that the medium of photography is simply losing its magic due to the technology available nowadays. I reckon that the breathtaking first time your own black and white image fades up on a sheet of paper as it floats in an inch of developer is a seminal moment. But your first digital capture appearing instantly on some sort of miniature digital screen? It’s no big deal.

My feeling is that once the time and distance is removed from image capture to print, e.g., developing the film then putting the negative into an enlarger neg carrier – or even waiting a week for your transparencies to come back from the Kodak lab – then the ‘specialness’ completely disappears.

The need to ‘get it right in the camera’ on film photography was always paramount, simply because you wouldn’t see the finished capture until hours after the decisive moment was over; cases in point being weddings or sporting events. Unfortunately, the medium of photography has now become too simple; it’s like the difference

between cooking a cheese soufflé from scratch and microwaving an Asda chicken curry. Granted, there are some youngsters who have taken wet film and paper photography courses at college, doing things the old ways, and these courses have been well received, but it clearly represents a tiny fraction of the general population. The majority of people with a slightly higher level of interest or curiosity in image making might instead watch a *YouTube* vlogger explaining how to take better iPhone photos.

Look at the picture here of a young woman viewing what *appears* to be a strip of 6 x 9cm 120 transparencies of herself at a studio shoot. I produced that image, pre digital and pre-*Photoshop*, at Blackpool college in 1985. The original shot was a B/W capture on a Hasselblad, the woman holding a roll of 120 film backing paper.

I then shot the sequence of 6 x 9 studio poses on colour C41 stock, then contact printed them onto a strip of colour EP2 print paper. Finally, I cut the strip of contact prints with scissors to exact size, placed the paper strip on a life-sized black and white print of the woman, then re-photographed the whole image in colour on a 5x4” Sinar camera on a copy stand. It was a couple of day’s darkroom work getting everything just right. It cost a small fortune in film stock,

and the college paid for my paper and processing chemicals.

Nowadays that would be a 15-minute copy > paste > edit > transform exercise on *Photoshop*. No chemicals, no processing, no copy stand, one 35 mm digital SLR and no materials costs.

No pain, no gain

In order for anything to become captivating, I feel that it needs to fulfil three basic factors:

Firstly, the subject in question must be truly interesting to the learner. If not, there will never be a passion for that subject and the learning process will be nothing other than a necessary evil.

Secondly, the process must be difficult to achieve. Anything that can be gained without any effort, by its very nature, can't involve multiple failures then the eventual pride and joy of success.

Then there has to be a practical reward, whether that be fixing a dripping bathroom tap or producing a photograph that one's peers find to be of a certain standard. Indeed, in the case of commercial photography, someone needs to pay real money to use and possess the photographer's output.

Photography no longer adheres to those three rules above. It's so commonplace that it's not particularly interesting anymore. People see hundreds of images on their phones every day, and can take as many pictures as they want, at zero cost. If phone pictures are rubbish, as they often are, they can just be deleted and nothing tangible is lost – or they get stored 'in the cloud' using another gigawatt of electricity to keep wrecking the environment.

Also, producing photos commercially is now considerably less lucrative than it once was. Consider the penny rates one gets now from library stock photos, or the expectation that a wedding can be shot by a few friends with iPhones in exchange for a few beers at the reception party. It all leads to the medium of photography just being regarded as nothing special.

Pre-*Photoshop* and pre-digital capture – and let's not even open that can of worms called AI synthography – can you remember all the things that were genuinely difficult and expensive to do, even for experts? For example...



Getting into the zone

...the B/W photos of Blackpool promenade, trees and telegraph poles were all taken on 120 Ilford FP4 or HP5 in various locations from the Derbyshire Peak District to Western Australia. I shot most of them in the early 1990s by using the zone system as taught to me by John Blakemore and his colleagues at Derby University. I always made sure the sun was behind me, used a Weston light meter and pegged Zone V at a given exposure. I then clip tested a frame or two (in total darkness in the developing room) from the first three or four inches of the film in ID11 chemical at exactly 20 degrees etc...

It became commonplace for me to halve the ASA setting of any B/W film (thus overexposing by a stop) and cutting the development time, with gentle agitation, by about 20% from the manufacturer's recommendations. This ensured no burned-out highlights while still retaining detail where required in the deeper shadows of Zone II.

The picture of the young lady in blue denim was commended in a

Levis jeans national competition (the model won a pair of jeans, and I a denim jacket!) – but that was a B/W image hand coloured with retouching dyes and a 00 artist's brush.

Then there's lighting to

consider. That's something much more difficult to correct in *Photoshop* – but I'm pleased with the combination of a big softbox on the camera axis and careful exposure to capture the tonality of the woman in a ball gown on the stairs of a





Georgian building in Derby. Again, taken on film in the mid 1990s.

Lessons of history

So, to inspire and educate the younger generation, and to exemplify the roots of photography, I'm suggesting that someone design a 'back to the past' app that can be used on phones by anyone, which deliberately makes image capture as difficult as it was in the 1960s. The RPS could offer it to any new members, say under 30 years old, as part of an affordable subscription / learning package.

The 'difficulty' would remain, but the cost and chemistry would be avoided. Here's how I'd see it working:

1) The app requires the user to check a light meter reading in the 'virtual viewfinder' then adjust sliders to an aperture and a shutter speed correct for the chosen ISO. It's all like having a Nikon F2 with a separate light meter. Or a handheld meter could be used if incident readings were desired.

2) There would be a depth of field preview that mimicked the

lens's focal length for various formats, enabling the photographer to alter the ISO and shoot wide open at a fast speed for, say, head-shot portraits, or longer exposures at small f-numbers for landscapes with foreground interest detail. But crucially, there would be no pre-view for the forthcoming capture as

a result of shutter speed and f-stop exposure settings. Only by getting those wrong a few times would users learn the craft.

3) The image is recorded by the phone at the point of capture, but the user wouldn't be able to view the result for, say, at least 12 hours afterwards! This would focus the



attention (sorry) of the user to know that they couldn't simply get it wrong, obtain the result immediately and just instantly re-shoot. Just like us wedding photographers used to have to do, pacing the car park of the pro-lab on a Monday morning, smoking half a dozen ciggies until the techie gave you the thumbs up through the window that your negs were all printable. (Remember?!)

4) When the image became available to view and save, if it was out of certain parameters of exposure accuracy and contrast range, it would be impossible to 'rescue'. The editing controls would be locked. If the exposure was within a given level of professional acceptability, tools that mimicked burning in and holding back like a darkroom print would allow the user to tweak the final image.

There are lots of other facilities such an app could have; various levels of fill-flash and focal plane shutter distortion to mimic what pre-digital capture was like for us oldies. Crucially, it would instil a discipline, a practice and process within new photographers, whilst providing an understanding of why apertures, shutter speeds and various focal lengths exist.

It would obviate the cost of a DSLR camera until the practitioner felt sufficiently skilled to buy one, if they ever felt the need to upgrade, and saved images could be sent directly to experienced RPS volunteers with distinctions, who could offer feedback and advice to app users.

Such facilities would only be available to junior RPS members under a given age as part of the benefits of their yearly subscription. It's learning from home, supported by proper experts, with an affordable benefit, that could lead to a recognised RPS qualification for a younger person, whilst perhaps appealing to a much wider demographic than the current intake.

In short, if the process of creating images became much more onerous, the reward for achieving a high standard would be so much more tangible. The process would be captivating, while offering an essential historical context to why photography used to be so satisfyingly difficult.

As my grandfather used to say: "That'll learn 'em..."



From first sight to final composition – why exact viewpoint matters

Half the skill involved in photography is nothing more awareness of what you see. For everyday scenes and also for any pictures of people, or just those around the home and garden, you don't need any of the advanced functions of the camera. You need to think about exactly where – maybe within 1cm – the eye of the camera, the lens, needs to be placed. Very often it is not where your own eye might be. You may need to crouch, kneel, step up on to something to raise your viewpoint – or move a few inches to one side or the other. This, combined with timing the exposure for the best pose/position or expression of animate subjects, is often what makes photographs work. It's not a technical ability, it's just seeing how the 3D world will be in a 2D image.

One summer weekend in 2021 I went to stay at Clennell Hall country house hotel in Northumberland, with outdoor camping and space and also the many large indoor bar, lounge, dining and other rooms. I didn't take any photographs of the event, even though this was one of the first musical gatherings after so-called 'Freedom Day' when Covid-19 was officially declared over – I just felt the privacy of all the musicians and singers, families and friends needed respecting as this was not their performance or gig, but a return to sessions and craic and remembering what used to be normal.

On leaving, returning to my car parked in the farm steading of the



The value of waiting, watching and changing the camera position. Left, the first sighting has an interesting distant landscape and terrible foreground. Below, with inset enlarged detail, moving to good viewpoint the horses were also not badly placed and 'posing' but from eye level sheds behind them are not wanted. By dropping kneeling, even from this distance some farm structures are less obtrusive, but the real difference is made by waiting for the horses to move to a point where this low viewpoint meant the white horse completely hid the most noticeable. I often move viewpoint to make foreground or middle distance objects hide distractions like signs, vehicle, and people.



Horses hiding the stuff behind and above them



But not the right 'pose' – so a few shots needed

hall, I saw rather good light on the hillside with horses in a field past a line of recycling bins. At first glance there's no chance of a decent photograph from this.

The horses were watching me as I made my way past the bins and wall to find a better viewpoint – so before they moved significantly, I took a few shots, one of which was the final selection cropped down and processed for better tones and to bring in the sky. In the rejected shots, one horse or the other is not well delineated in its pose. This is why I often take half a dozen frames (but no machine gun approach... I find I sell my cameras with a few thousand shots taken, other photographers sell them with tens of thousands!).

The final image below changes the OM .ORF raw conversion colour profile to *Adobe Landscape* (from *Camera Standard*) because this

works well with green scenes. Clarity is lifted to 20 because this affected the shadow bands on the hillside significantly. A graduated adjustment covers the sky with -0.5EV and -20 (I think) Highlights. The image is cropped to remove the steel barn but I was happy with the fence post, and of course the dry-stone wall. Everything is done using *Adobe Camera Raw*, there was no *Photoshop* except for the final image size and sRGB saving process for Facebook.

The pictures came up as a Memory on my Timeline, with words forming the basis for this article. But when recovered from Facebook despite looking normal on this page, in Mac Finder and Adobe *Bridge* previews or thumbnails, they produced the disastrous 'effect' above right. I've seen similar things from damaged camera sensors or corrupted files but these files don't



look corrupted and all render the same way. Finding the JPEGs which might have been downloaded from Facebook proved impossible. But here's the solution I found – open the same file in *Affinity Photo 2*, and it's perfect. The corrupted

effect above, seen in all the .jpg files opened into the latest *Photoshop*, is just not there at all. So from preparing this article I've found an unexpected problem and an answer.

– David Kilpatrick



Revealing the Self

Rachel Green's imagination

Rachel started photography around 2017 as a hobby then “fell totally in love with it and haven’t stopped clicking since”, she says.

“I’ve shot everything from weddings to food to products to interiors, to kids, babies, pets, wildlife, macro, landscape, abstract... trying to find ‘my thing’, and eventually found that in portraiture.”

It is in self-portraiture, alongside other creative portraits including family and children, that Rachel has made her mark on platforms like the weekly challenge of 52Frames, The Society of Photographers and The Guild of Photographers monthly awards. She won the 2024 Avant-Garde Image of the Year from the Guild, and we have already published some of her most acclaimed and striking images. All have been self-portraits, often far from easy to visualise and set up, so we looked for a fuller set to show here without reference to whatever the judges’ opinions have been.

What strikes a viewer is the range of treatments and the innovative use of lighting, camera techniques and post-processing. She often takes an idea, like the use of magnifying glasses or other optics, and creates many variations by experiment and observation. Her effects and compositions are never of a ‘me-too’ variety despite seeing so many examples of competing work. She stays ahead by inventing her own looks – the portraits on this spread are contrasting, and unique, examples.

“They’re all experiments”, she says. “It’s fun and challenging, also a form of self-expression and a type of therapy which teaches me about myself. It reveals things I hadn’t expected. I don’t think much about the meaning of the photo while creating it but I do analyse the works afterwards. Portraiture can reveal the soul through the lens. I also have three children and have always felt the need to freeze those tiny, magical moments in my family’s lives.”

Rachel finds time for her dog, music, fitness, reading and developing the photography alongside her main hobby after photography, painting. “I use many of my photographs as the basis of ideas for my paintings and also work on combining the two disciplines in art-works”, she says. Based in London, her business persona is RLG Photo, and her website shows many portrait commissions alongside the challenge of her self-set self portrait series.

“What started as a passionate hobby has grown into the most beautiful journey for me, allowing me to see and transform the everyday moments into timeless works of art for both myself and my clients”.

Rachel writes about her methods and setup overleaf.



52 Frames

I started practicing self portraiture as part of my 52 Frames weekly challenges. I had been on the site consistently posting one photo a week for the competition for a couple of years (52 Frames makes you build a streak and I was hooked), and every January the first challenge of the year was themed 'self portrait'.

I love a challenge and this was hard but I enjoyed it so I made the decision to carry on and set myself the extra challenge (on top of continuing my 52 Frames streak) of doing a self portrait every week for a year.

I found it hard but also very satisfying and at the same time quite freeing not to have to worry about posing anyone or taking up too much of someones's time by experimenting.

It also appealed to my quiet and introverted nature, I've always enjoyed spending time alone with my hobbies so this worked for me. On top of this the self-portraiture also evolved into a way for me to experiment with new techniques for lighting, colours, editing, lenses, motion, studio setups and so on – and to practice with flash which I was not confident with at all when I started the process.

In time the pictures I created each week took on a personal meaning and a way of self expression that I hadn't known I had in me.

Staging the shots

I set up my scene (background, lighting, props, clothes and more) then set the camera on a tripod and set it to wide autofocus.

I have a small 'pebble' remote that I hold to trigger the camera to focus. The setup is normally trial and error – I take many shots and review them until they look right. Often my initial idea doesn't work so I try something different and it's often the failures/mistakes and problem solving that make the most unique pictures.

The overhead jewel portrait was for the theme 'shoot from above'. I had my widest lens which was a 35mm at the highest my tripod would go and cantilevered the top as much as possible.

I put a black pop-up background on the floor and shot this



Rachel's black and white work is almost straight out of camera, created by lighting and composition alone though Photoshop/LR enables retouching and fine tuning to enhance. She loves the optical effects of lenses and prisms.

next to a window. Luckily the autofocus is amazing as it was taken at f1.4.

I often take a 'behind the scenes' photo of the lighting and camera setup which I pin to the comments below my 52 Frames submissions. Here's the link to my profile 52frames.com/photographer/7831 where you can see the photos and comments. I also add a brief description to each submission.

The studio setup

I have a makeshift studio at home. It's a spare room at the top of my house in the eaves, where I have my computer, and I've hung some background paper rolls from the ceiling with curtain rods.

It is not a big room and I'm constrained with the height as the ceiling slopes. It's definitely not the perfect space but I make it work and can shoot myself or two to

three clients there. If they're tall they need to sit though!

I don't have an assistant, I've always worked alone. I have tried the remote viewing app on the phone but I don't like it because it's distracting and sometimes doesn't work. The phone also gets in the way of the photo.

Sometimes I turn the flip screen on the camera backwards so that I can see what I'm doing but often I







Montage, movement and an unusual viewpoint with a wide aperture make these images work.

just shoot blind and shoot hundreds of pictures, review them and choose the only one that works!

Only very recently I've started tethering to my laptop which is very helpful and certainly cuts down on the number of errors I take.

I have also tried shooting continuously using the self-timer with the remote trigger so that I don't have to keep pressing the trigger every time, but this does not work well with flash recycling. It can be

very frustrating so I use the two-second delay button on the trigger, and drop it on the floor between shots. It did work however for the cello picture which was great as I couldn't hold the remote and play at the same time.

As for hardware, I currently have a Sony A7RV and a range of lenses but often use the 24-70mm f2.8 for self portraiture. I got it a year ago and it's extremely versatile and good in my small studio. I also have

a couple of primes, a 70-200mm and a few Lensbaby lenses which I love but never do well in competitions!

Lighting is a Godox AD200 and AD300 plus two speed lights. I mostly make prints for clients myself, using an Epson SureColor

700 A3 printer, and my favourite paper is Permajet Museum Heritage 310.

Unfortunately I rarely print my personal photos because I don't know where to put them... and I run out of time! My personal prints are always on my to do list!





All photographs © Rachel Green, RLG Photo
See: <https://www.rlgphoto.com>
See also: 52frames.com and photoguild.co.uk



NATURE'S LIGHT

Rain or shine, winter spring summer or fall, the camera lens can reveal a world of unexpected beauty. Especially in the legendarily damp climate of Manchester!

The city is home to photo-artist Kristina, originally from Lithuania. She finds her tiny subjects in woodlands, parks and her own garden and captures them using a Nikon D810 with the classic Nikon 105mm f2.8 macro lens.

While her photography is all about nature – her *Facebook* Page is NatureART by Kristina and her Etsy store similarly branded – it is also all about light. The extreme close-up lens has a narrow angle of view meaning very selective backgrounds behind the subjects, allowing backlight in particular to rim-light outlines and give a jewel-like quality to water droplets. She also uses an adapted Russian Helios 44M 58mm f2 – this lens with its

Kristina Zvinakeviciute turns the microcosm of woodland walks into wall art to bring nature indoors



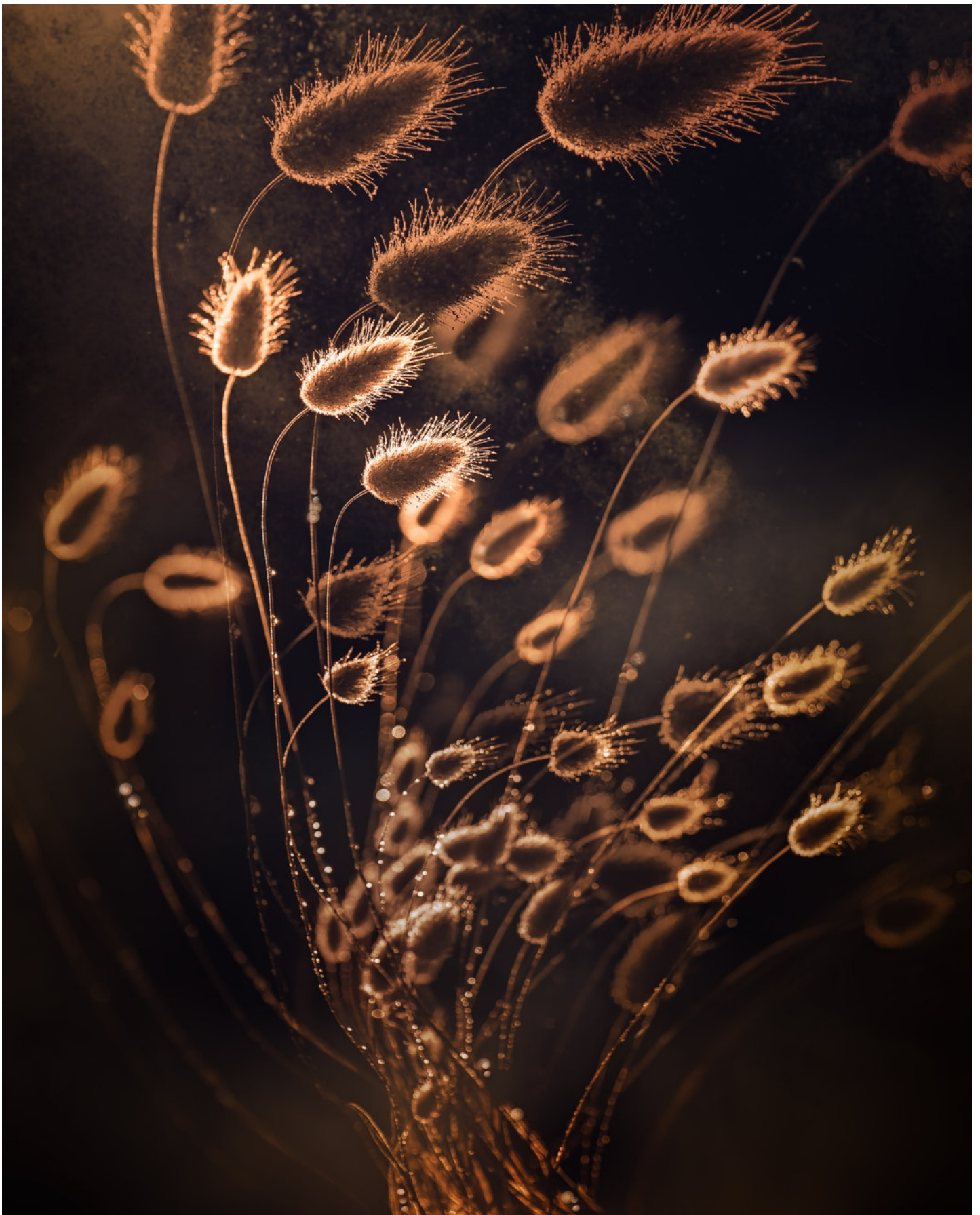
vintage Biotar construction creates bubble-like discs and ellipses from out of focus points of reflected light, which combine with the blended colours of defocused detail when used on extension tubes as in the bottom picture on this page. All the other shots are on the 105mm.

Kristina's work should be a great inspiration as we move through Autumn into Winter (and out again into Spring). The low sun with its high contrast and muted colours and be seen in many of her images. Getting extremely close, into the miniature world of mosses, colours pop back again helped by the optical effects from the lens. Many macro photographers stop right down to get everything sharp, or make focus stacks. She does not and prefers to use the qualities of wider apertures.

Kristina told *Cameracraft*: "I was born in Lithuania, where the four seasons are very distinct, with







warm summers and snowy winters. England's nature has shaped me as a macro photographer, and all my macro works have been created here.

"Strangely, I enjoy the soft climate, including the rainy winters, which feel cozy. Each season brings

new inspiration, and I love observing how nature is transformed."

We asked Kristina about her progress as a photographer through what has been a difficult decade for many, especially the last five years.

"My artistic macro photography

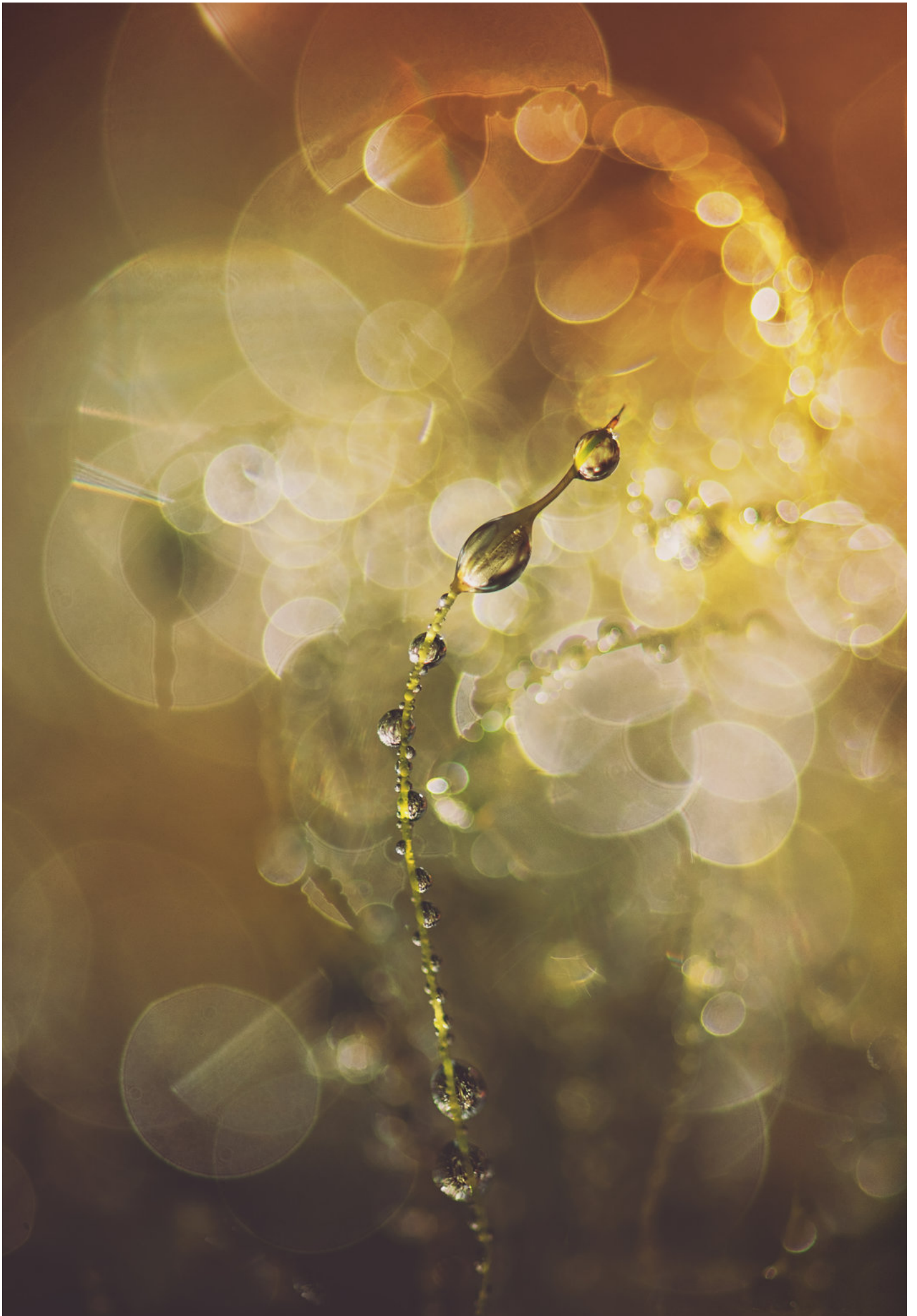
journey actually started around 2014", she explains, "long before the Covid pandemic which did not affect me much, because I had plenty of flowers in my back garden to photograph. Walking with the camera remained important, and this 'break' gave me more time to

slow down and observe the details of nature.

"My print sales also started before Covid. There were no sales during the pandemic, but I used that time to develop my portfolio safely on-line, so my work continued to grow.











"I rely entirely on natural light. It's not always easy to control or play with, but that's what makes it more interesting for me personally. I enjoy observing how light interacts with my subjects and using it to create mood and depth in my macro photography

"I live close to a park, so over time I've come to know certain places very well. Sometimes I return to familiar spots, other times I find subjects by chance. I let curiosity guide me, often getting low down and looking closely at small details that most people pass by. It's about slowing down, observing textures, colors, and light, and then the subjects reveal themselves.

"People often ask me what I am photographing. They are surprised when it's something small like a frosty leaf or a blade of grass. I love seeing their surprised faces, especially when I show them the image on my camera's screen. Sometimes they even get startled when they suddenly notice me sitting low in the grass

"For prints, I have been working with Sim Lab printing studio for 11 years. They help ensure that my



All photographs © Kristina Zvinakeviciute

See: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/NatureARTbyKristina>

Facebook: [natureARTbyKristina](https://www.facebook.com/natureARTbyKristina)

Kristina is a member of the Guild of Photographers, photoguild.co.uk

images are printed with the highest quality, maintaining the colours, textures, and details I envision. On Etsy I sell unframed prints only, in standard sizes from A5 to A1. For customers outside Etsy, framed

options can also be arranged if requested."

As this article was being prepared, the U.S. administration scrapped the duty-free postal import threshold, and we have been

asking British photographers what effect this may have.

"The change in the U.S. 'de minimis' rule doesn't affect me much, because most of my market is in Britain and Europe. I mainly sell to customers in these regions, so the end of the less than \$800 value exemption doesn't have a significant impact on my sales.

"I do undertake commissions. I enjoy working with clients on bespoke projects, whether it's creating a unique macro artwork or adapting my style to fit a particular space or vision."

We asked Kristina about the value of competitions, and the success she has enjoyed in these. Did this help with art sales, or more with personal development?

"Competitions are more about personal development and self-evaluation for me", she told us. "They help me to grow, refine my work, and see it in a wider context. Of course, awards can bring visibility and sometimes sales, but even without them I would still photograph and create, because I simply love it."



With a successful website gallery offering on-line ordering, many photographers would not consider devoting two days a week – up to four in the high summer season – to a market stall.

For Amanda Jayne Bird and her growing collection of views, mostly local to Alnwick where the busy town square market is now a visitor attraction in its own right, it simply works. People who might never find her on-line gallery given the number of photographers now offering views of Northumberland see her framed prints on display and stop to look. Many buy.

Alnwick is the heart of a highly photogenic district. Alnwick Castle is a major UK tourist stop boosted by the Harry Potter location connection and the transformation of the castle gardens. Photographers need no introduction to the nearby North Sea coastline, with Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh castles and the photogenic geology of their beaches. North en route to Berwick on Tweed there's the Holy Island of Lindisfarne and the National Trust

MARKET MAKER



Amanda Jayne Bird's local views are best sellers in one of Northumberland's busiest markets

birdlife sanctuary of the Farne Islands, with regular boat trips from scenic harbours like Seahouses, Beadnell, Alnmouth and Amble.

Lifelong Canon user Amanda has travelled worldwide and includes prints from New York, Singapore, Paris and other photo shoots in her collection – she also adds obligatory puffins which are closer to home. However, Northumberland from the Borders to Tyneside forms the heart of the galleries.

We met Amanda at the market and asked about her work, the popularity of different subjects both on-line and for on-the-spot local sales.

"I have been taking photos since a very early age" she says. Being neuro diverse photography was always my escape. I was never confident enough to go professional when I was younger so went off in a different direction, always taking photos along the way.

Below, Alnwick Castle in morning frost and mist. Top right, symmetry and reflection on the Holy Island causeway. Bottom right, November sunrise over Bamburgh Castle.







Amanda has views of the Angel of the North from the usual side seen as you drive on the A1 south of Newcastle. This view is the Angel's back side, which is not so easy to see but has more of the classic Anthony Gormley human figure shape. Barter Books is not just an iconic book exchange, it's designed to look great in photographs – here, with architectural accuracy, and no people. Right, the Alnwick Garden Tunnel tackled by Amanda the same way, as a careful monochrome composition free from visitors. The popular boulder beach north of Dunstanburgh Castle, below, gets equally thoughtful treatment, with a dramatic sky rim lighting the rocks, and sea with a realistic swell of movement rather than a long exposure mist.



"I had a successful career in the corporate world and reached board level, however there was always something missing. So three years ago I made the decision to follow my passion, I wish I had done it sooner. I am really grateful to Alnwick Markets who have given me the platform to be able to do what I do today. Having a stall has given me the opportunity to set up my business without the cost of renting a premises, it is a really great way to start and I have learnt so much along the way.

"I choose the Alnwick market because it is full of like-minded makers, artists and bakers – becoming more and more scarce in the UK. The market closes January and February. My work is also on display in the Alnwick Gallery, and I currently have two other stockists. I am hoping to grow this side of the business. The market works extremely well for me and 80% of my sales come from the stall. People like to view art before they buy it – my web orders are generally people I've met at the market, who they have gone home and ordered, or repeat customers."

Cameracraft: Do you sell worldwide views at all at the market, or is it almost entirely local/regional?

"Yes, I sell worldwide views at the market but more so online. There's a lot of people on holiday in Northumberland and they like to take a print or framed photo home with them to bring back memories. I've sent to America, Australia and New Zealand as well as Switzerland, France and many more countries in Europe. The locals don't always want pictures of Northumberland on their walls, my worldwide and more abstract prints are popular with them.

"I sell framed prints in three sizes at the market, and more framed than I do mounted. Customers tell me it is easier to buy framed

rather than get home and have to do it themselves. For those travelling on public transport or coach tours, my smallest size 10 x 8 inches is most popular. My web orders are generally people I've met at the market, who order after going home, or repeat customers."

Do you offer a wider range of sizes and framing if a buyer wants a very large wall print?

"The maximum framed size to buy at the market is 20 x 16 as there is limited space on a stall. I take orders for larger sizes which have proved popular with both locals and visitors.

"My business focuses on Northumberland therefore this is what I sell the most of, however I am always surprised by what catches people's eye, hence why I have prints of other areas in my portfolio."

You print some shots in both BW and colour – how do the BWs compare to colour for popularity?

"Black and white is becoming more and more popular, more so than last year. I think it evokes a

sense of timelessness and can have more emotional impact, whilst colour captures the vibrancy and context of a scene. I have been surprised this year at how many customers have asked me to convert one of my colour photographs into black and white for them! I am also a big fan of black and white. I use a professional print lab and my photos are printed on Fujifilm Crystal Archive DPII."



All photographs © Amanda Jayne Bird. See:
Website – <https://www.amandajaynebirdphotography.com>
Instagram – @amandajaynebirdart
Facebook – Amanda Jayne Bird Art



It's a business as well as an art – read the book!

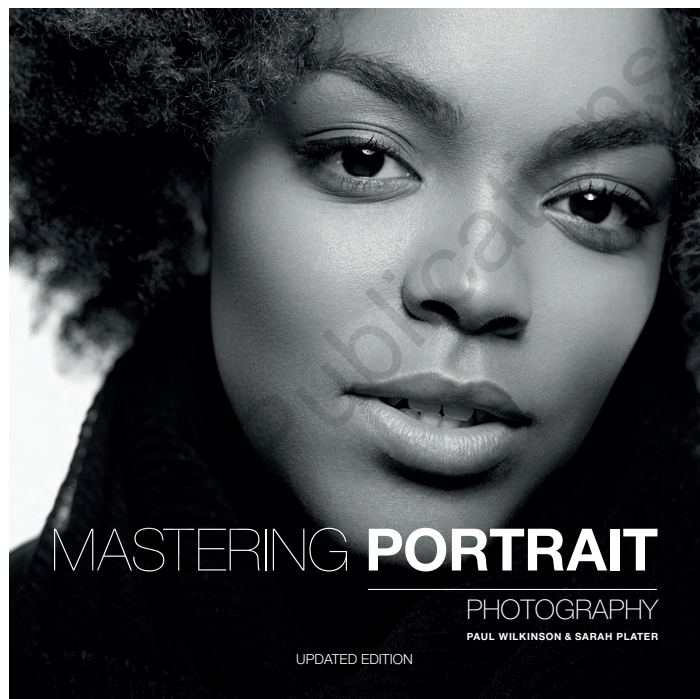
Paul Wilkinson has been for many years at the top of the portrait field in Britain, and although the new book from Ammonite Press concentrates on the art of taking portraits whether you're a beginner or a professional, the pictures in it are more often than not professional work.

Of course some are taken to illustrate the book, but what really makes it valuable is the variety of images drawn from Paul's recent work which would be impractical to set up for that. The text by Sarah Plater updates the reader on the many insights Paul has shared as a writer, educator, judge and mentor.

Sarah was the writer assigned to interview Paul over a six month period for the original publication of *Mastering Portrait Photography* by Ammonite Press in 2015, and has since become a photographer in her own right, partly down to the experience of creating what has become one of the best-selling books on the subject with 50,000 copies sold in five languages (including Chinese).

This is a brand new edition and Paul has rewritten or added to many sections to reflect changes in working methods, and most notably in software. It's thirty years since he gained his PhD in the computer science of Neural Networks, the foundations for what we now know well as Artificial Intelligence. In portraiture, early ventures like the introduction of *Portrait Pro* have been eclipsed by AI retouching like *Evoto*, which he says gives the photographer better control over the end result with a more natural look, though he admits to moving away from *PP* around v4 when it's now on v24.

He has always been an early adopter of new methods, which helped him in his career before full time photography – from roots in Industrial Design before his degree, to working in the City of London trading environment and then on the development of the burgeoning new media sector. The 2015 publication could have been an end in



itself, a book under his belt and time to move on, but instead he created an associated Mastering Portrait Photography website (just join the words and add dot com, and you are there).

This is not a static resource – it offers an interactive development with Paul and Sarah's input, and had expanded to produce YouTube videos and podcasts. The site offers membership access to valuable resources at £6.99 a month or £69.99 a year, with an option to include two full-day workshops with Paul for an annual £594.99 (the workshops on their own would normally cost £700). Finally there's a top tier where one workshop is replaced by a one to one personalised masterclass, for £1074.99.

This is an unusual way to build on the success of photographic book, even a best-seller, and points to Paul's expertise in business.

All his own work

We had to ask Paul, whose wife and business partner is also called Sarah, whether the book byline was her under a pseudonym! The answer is no, Sarah Plater's connection goes back to her involvement with the UK's leading professional photo magazine, now called *Professional Photo*, published by Terry

Hope's Bright Publishing. Though she is now a photographer, every image in this book is Paul's. He's also still a regular contributor to that magazine, with his ability to show lighting examples and provide diagrams of the set-up.

For the fully revised new edition – not just a reprint in any way – he went back into the studio and on location to create new images like this, but for the most part the book draws on the last ten years of his professional commissioned work. As it happens 2015 was a watershed year in camera design, sensor development, optical improvements and entirely new lighting solutions, but he comments that things now change so quickly even a 2025 edition may not be state of the art in a year or two. This is where the website, videos and podcasts and his articles for the photo media add relevance and value in future.

The real challenges presented by real people, whether clients or friends or models, have always made Paul seek new solutions. Thanks to this constant innovation every one of the pictures in the book is one taken for a client. Many photographers could not do this as they just repeat a standard formula and don't venture to experiment. Perhaps that should be a capital V,

though we know an elite of commercial studio brand photographers like Paul who broke the mould.

Paul is now an Honorary Fellow of the BIPP, Fellow of the SWPP, and though the organisation has now been consigned to history, of the MPA. He's not a great user of 'letters after name' and jokes about being 'Dr' from his PhD as well, but it gives him a bit of clout at international conventions, and when fronting professional outreach for companies like Fujifilm. He gained the British Institute Fellowship back in 2011 and his originality included a family portrait which showed only the backs of the mum and dad seated on a park bench while their toddler looked over their shoulders. It was also in black and white. Paul has never lost his love for the monochrome medium.

Paul said at the time that his back-to-front Thames-side bench shot led to many other clients wanting a similar pose. Kevin Wilson, commenting on Paul's Fellowship, said: "Paul has an amazing ability to create timeless, top quality work. Every picture he creates has its own emotion and a story attached. He has true creative flair, linked with substantial technical skill."

In the book's introduction, Paul says this – "What does it take to become a master of portrait photography? A sensitivity to the nuances of changing light? An intimate knowledge of your camera and lighting equipment? The appreciation that adjusting your subject's head by a tiny amount can have a huge impact?"

"All of these are vitally important, but most of all you need a love of being with and around other people. Too often, people buy expensive camera equipment, then stand in the corner and zoom in on the people around them. However, stunning portraits are created, not just captured.

"Don't raise the camera to your eye and look for a shot. Instead, begin with the finished photograph in mind. What kind of image are you trying to create?"



An example from the book – using the family posing idea which proved so popular for Paul. The overcast sky provided a softer light for this unusual family portrait. Although the strength of the sun is much reduced, the light still has directional qualities to it. Zoom at 98mm, 1/350s at f4.8, ISO 100.

Lighting – Overcast

On overcast days, clouds act like a giant diffuser in the sky, softening the light from the sun before it reaches the earth. This reduces contrast levels, making it easier to expose a shot without blowing highlights and losing detail in shadow areas. When the cloud cover is very thick, the light levels may be so low that you need to raise your ISO or widen your aperture to compensate. Alternatively, you could decrease your shutter speed for the same effect.

Cloudy but bright days are the easiest to work with, as there is still plenty of light available, although if the clouds are too thin you may need to look for shade to soften the light further. On days with lots of small, individual clouds, the light will keep changing as they pass in front of the sun then move away again. Care needs to be taken in these conditions—if you're shooting in Manual mode you will need to constantly watch the changing light levels and time your shots to coincide with the appropriate level of cloud cover.

“Actively search out the best light for the mood you are aiming for, choose a setting within that area, and position your subject in a way that flatters them. Then interact with him or her to generate an expression that will resonate with whoever views the image afterward.

“If you want the subject to like the photos you take of them, then the whole experience needs to be a positive one; otherwise the images will recall the discomfort felt at the time. You need to be likeable and willing to fall in love with your

subject for the duration of the shoot. Your enthusiasm needs to become infectious, and your images need to show emotion, not just your technical skill.

“When you are making considered decisions, you'll be creating rather than just capturing images—and when you can make people look and feel good, you'll be well on your way to mastering the art of portrait photography.”

— DK



Although light on a cloudy day is significantly less directional than on a clear day, there will still be some direction to it. Look up to the sky and note where the lightest patch is, as this is where the majority of the light will come from. Position your subject relative to the direction of the light in the same way as you would if using studio lighting.

If the cloud cover is thick, or the light on your subject looks overly flat, boost it by using a reflector; a white reflector will provide a subtle boost, a silver one will give a stronger effect, and a gold one will have a strong effect as well as adding a warm colour tint. Alternatively, other options include using fill-in flash to lighten any shadows and add catchlights to your subject's eyes or off-camera flash as a secondary light source. For example, you could position an off-camera flash to light up a dark, dull background or angle it toward your subject from behind to add a rim light.

For this feature we have selected just a very small taster of the 176-page book. The contents includes: Chapter 1, Equipment; Cameras, Lenses, Accessories, Lighting: Chapter 2, Technical Skills; Exposure, Aperture, Shutter Speed, ISO, Metering Modes, Shooting Modes, Focusing: Chapter 3, Lighting; The Role of Light, The Color of Light, Natural Light, Window Light, Direct Sunlight, Shade, Overcast, Golden Hour, Portable Flash, Studio Flash: Chapter 4, Locations; Getting The Most From Any Location, Indoor Portraits, Studio Portraits, Natural Locations, Buildings & Urban Locations, Environmental Portraits: Chapter 5, Composition; Use & Scale, Formats, Rule of Thirds, Golden Spiral, Angle & Viewpoint, Crop, Visual Balance, Space, Eye Contact, Lead-in Lines, Background Patterns, Frames: Chapter 6, Posing: Interacting With Your Subject, Creating Expressions, Posing Guidelines, Posing Women, Posing Men, Troubleshooting, Groups, Clothing & Accessories50: Chapter 7, Working with Children; From Kids to Teens: Chapter 8, Postproduction; The Role of Postproduction Workflow Essentials: How To Stay Creative: Glossary: Index.



A close crop and a completely relaxed pose create a sense of familiarity, while the direct eye contact makes it feel like you're right there having a conversation. 85mm lens, 1/160s at f8, ISO 160.

Composition – Eye Contact

Having the subject look straight down the lens gives a feeling of direct eye contact when the image is later viewed. As in real life, eye contact is arresting – it captures your attention and is a form of communication in itself. However, it also demands more of the viewer, so a whole set of images containing eye contact can become tiring and repetitive.

There are two alternatives to through-the-lens eye contact; a subject looking off-camera, but at something within the frame, and a subject looking off-camera at something outside of the frame.

When the subject is looking at something within the frame, such as an object or another person, it's as though the photographer has captured a private moment candidly, rather than a posed shot. It can enable more of a storytelling approach than with direct eye contact, as the viewer tries to determine the relationship between the subject and the thing they are looking at. The expression of the subject forms part of the story – is it a

look of love, of fear, or intrigue? When the subject is looking at something outside of the frame, this provides an unanswered puzzle for the viewer – what are they looking at? Again, the expression of the subject is key; if they look tense, the viewer will believe that they are anxious about the thing they are looking at, whereas a serene expression or a smile tells the viewer that the subject feels positive about it. If the subject is looking toward the floor, this can imply shyness and modesty, which is why it's a commonly used setup for bridal portraits.

When viewing an image, our gaze follows that of the subject, so be aware that if the subject is looking out of the frame, then our eyes are pulled toward that point, creating visual tension. Harmonious compositions usually aim to keep the eye within the image, with more space on the side of the image the subject is looking toward.

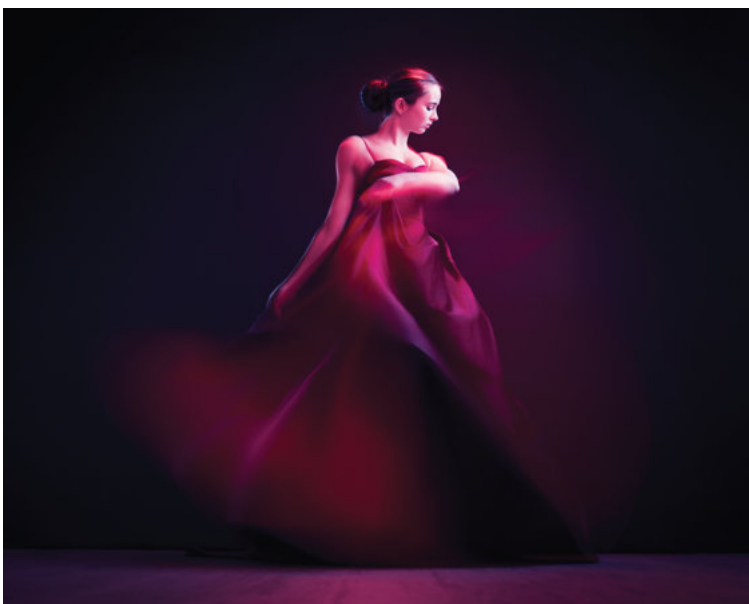
On Competitions and Qualifications

Enter Competitions (BUT DON'T TELL ANYONE). Competitions force you to look at your work differently. It's one thing to love a shot because you know how hard it was to get. But in a competition? None of that matters. It's about impact. Does the image stand on its own? And yes, rejection sucks. But winning isn't the point. The process of selecting and refining your work makes you better—that, and even entering, makes you push yourself harder.

Qualifications aren't about a piece of paper. They're about proving to yourself that you're good enough. Whether it's an official accreditation, a master's program, or putting together a portfolio for a qualification submission, the process forces you to develop your skills. It makes you critical of your own work, helps you understand what's strong and what's not, and pushes you to improve.

Working with dancers is always interesting. Here we've used a mix of studio lighting and a slow shutter to capture the essence of dance motion.

Zoom at 36mm, 1/3s at f5.6, ISO 320



Babies

Serene portraits of sleeping babies belie the behind-the-scenes effort that go into capturing them – expect to spend at least a couple of hours on a newborn shoot to capture a good, varied set of images. Of course, a baby has no understanding of your intentions when you lift the camera to your face, so your priority is to ensure that the basic needs of warmth, safety, and nutrition are met in order for a newborn to relax and drift off. To achieve the peaceful, curled-up, sleepy shots that continue to be popular with new parents, schedule the shoot for when the baby is between one and two weeks old. Any younger and they may not yet be settled and feeding properly; any older and they may resist.

My favourite way to photograph babies is to capture the bonds between parents and children. In this image you can feel the connection between mom and baby. Zoom at 102mm, 1/140s at f6.7, ISO 100.



The AI Revolution

As much as “traditional” applications such as *Lightroom* and *Photoshop* are at the heart of most photographers’ workflows, AI is going to form a more and more significant role in postproduction. What is ALREADY possible is not only saving you time but making edits possible (and repeatable) that even reasonably skilled retouchers would be pleased with. We use *Evoto* but there are new packages launching all the time.

To avoid doubt, I am not advocating that AI tools replace your entire workflow, though that may well be the ambition of those software vendors. Rather, I am convinced that when you couple great people skills, an understanding of light and posing, a strong vision, and a solid technique with the latest developments in software (both on your local computer and online), a whole world of possibilities opens up.

There are as many ways to get to the end result as there are photographers and applications – which is to say, too many to mention! If you work with large numbers of images, it might also be worth looking at AI-driven tools such as *ImagenAI* (a brilliant tool for colour correction based on your own images) or AI-driven culling tool *AfterShoot*, which vastly accelerates the process of picking out your “best” images.

When it comes to retouching, ground-breaking tools such as *Evoto* are saving vast amounts of time to add polish to your portraits.

Right: AI is increasingly part of the portrait photographer's world. As an exercise, this image was edited from start to finish using AI, including expanding the crop of the subject's figure, and it took less than five minutes. I am not saying you SHOULD edit all of your images like this, but being aware of what is possible won't do you any harm. Zoom lens at 103mm, 1/200s at f8, ISO 400

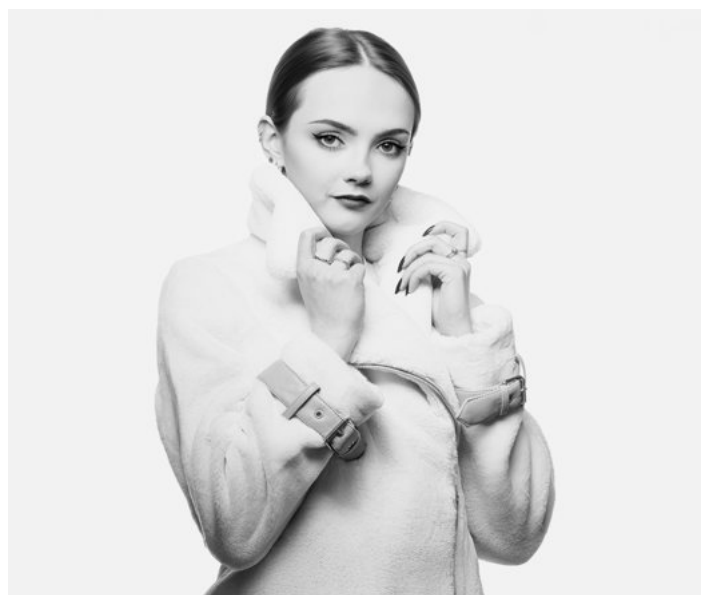
Mastering Portrait Photography by Paul Wilkinson and Sarah Plater, Ammonite Press, ISBN 978-1-78145-500-5, softback, 248 x 248 mm, £19.99. Publication date October 14th 2025.

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LENSES

Ten years on, 10X zoom revisited

Sony's 24-240mm was the first of its kind – is it still worth buying?

How long are you prepared to wait for a lens solution to your everyday shooting needs before you realise those needs are not on your chosen brand's road map?

In my case I held out for a decade, hoping that Sony would make a new generation superzoom for full frame to cover the 24-200mm plus range. Yes, it's ambitious to expect any lens with this specification to perform as well as top line fixed focal lengths or the workhorse pro zooms. Then you realise that OM-Systems achieved this in their 12-100mm f4 constant aperture zoom.

Superzoom skeptics should try it.

Sony introduced their own superzoom, with optical stabilisation, in March 2015. It's been ten years since the **FE 24-240mm f3.5-6.3 OSS** reached the market. We bought one then and



Below: en route to Edinburgh Zoo, the 24mm end works well for a famous view on the B6356. At the zoo, the Budongo chimpanzee house (Cooper Cromar architects, £4.5m in 2008) demands a wide lens.

the results were far better than many reviews of this lens suggested even with the then-new 42MP A7RII. The 780g weight was comfortable for a full day.

This year I found frequent switching between my 20-70mm and 70-300mm G lenses disruptive

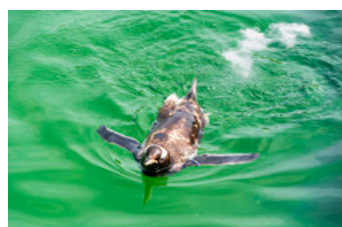
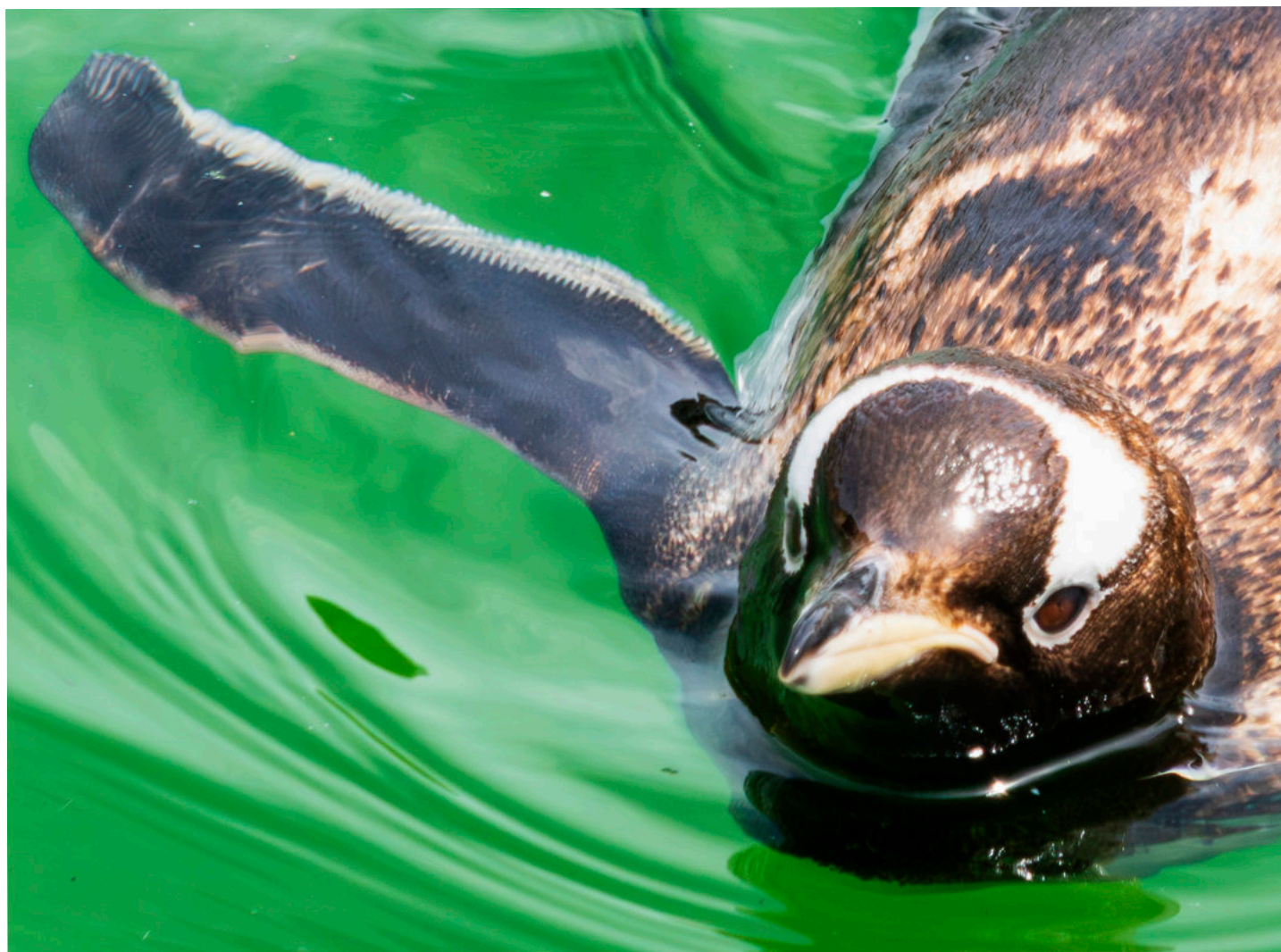
though they make a moderately light travel-friendly pair with superb performance. A used 24-240mm came up in December 2024 with an untypically low price-tag and studying some 2015 raw files I was curious to try it on my A7RV (60 megapixels). At under

£240 including reclaimable VAT it was not a difficult decision despite missing its lens hood (included when new as with nearly all Sony lenses). A replacement cost only £29.90 – totally reasonable compared to some other camera makes.

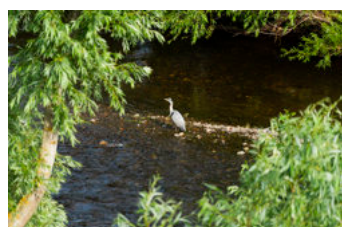
With the demands of the higher resolution sensor, the performance of a pre-2015 lens design lacking the advances made in materials, engineering and optics might not be adequate.

I have found that it is up to the mark centrally at the wide end and excellent corner to corner in the 30-100mm range. It's also usable wide open even up to 240mm, though at this length some soft uncorrectable CA sets in which can create a halo on high contrast edges. The more noticeable aberrations affect the edges and





Above, using bird eye AF-C, the penguin is accurately caught despite its speed towards the camera – 1/400s at f11, 240mm, ISO. The weakness of the 24-240mm is only really seen in the hazy CA fringe above the white top edge of the wing – at this aperture sharpness is otherwise good. Right, the heron is also at 240mm, wide open at f6.3. The finer detail of the beak and eye here are struggling against the ISO 640 setting used for both these on the A7RV, with necessary noise reduction from raw. Both enlarged sections are at 300dpi.

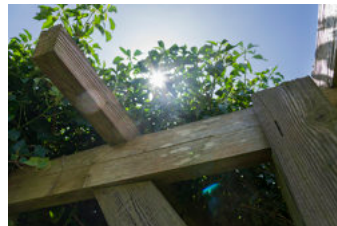




corners of the frame at 24mm, and the built-in profile correction makes them worse. Turn off correction, and it is a 22mm with curved lines, more vignetting, slightly sharper outer field and one or more cut off corners.

As far as colour rendering and contrast go, it can not match the latest Sony G and GM lenses, or designs like Tamron G2 and Sigmas with advanced coatings. It has the look of a pre-mirrorless era zoom in many ways, with strings of flare spots if the sun is off to one side and in the frame, very much depending on the aperture used. Bokeh is complex and focus transitions can be a bit wiry. This is very much what is expected from a lens with 17 elements in 12 groups. In comparison the 20-70mm, for example, has much better MTF and cleaner sharpness.

The lens is still being marketed and listed by Sony UK at £719 – significantly less than the 24-105mm f4 G's £959 – with reductions to as low as £633 without venturing into grey market listings. Like the often heavily-discounted original FE 50mm f1.8 it's a legacy design and if it was to be redesigned, a hefty hike in price



Resting cheetah (a recent RZSS arrival). Above, light sources in view will produce flare spots. Right, red panda eating – an ISO 6400 success with perfect AF and good fur detail.

would no doubt accompany improved performance.

Initially I planned to use my bargain copy on the Sony A7II which lives in the studio and produces product photos, while giving me the option to use the discontinued *PlayMemories Apps* which I paid for long ago. In practice I found the 24-240mm though unsuitable for the studio work in theory did it really well, no problems with sharpness or geometry at medium focal lengths and excellent close focus allowing quarter life size at 240mm at 80cm distance. This close focus actually starts around 100mm and holds through to 240mm, with a gradual shift to 30cm by 24mm. If you want 0.27X subject scale, 240mm is the only way to get it.

The lens design does mean that a filter system is likely to intrude at 24mm and even a regular screw-in polariser could clip the corners, but 72mm is a convenient fitting and happens to match the 20-70mm, 70-300mm and a few other system lenses.

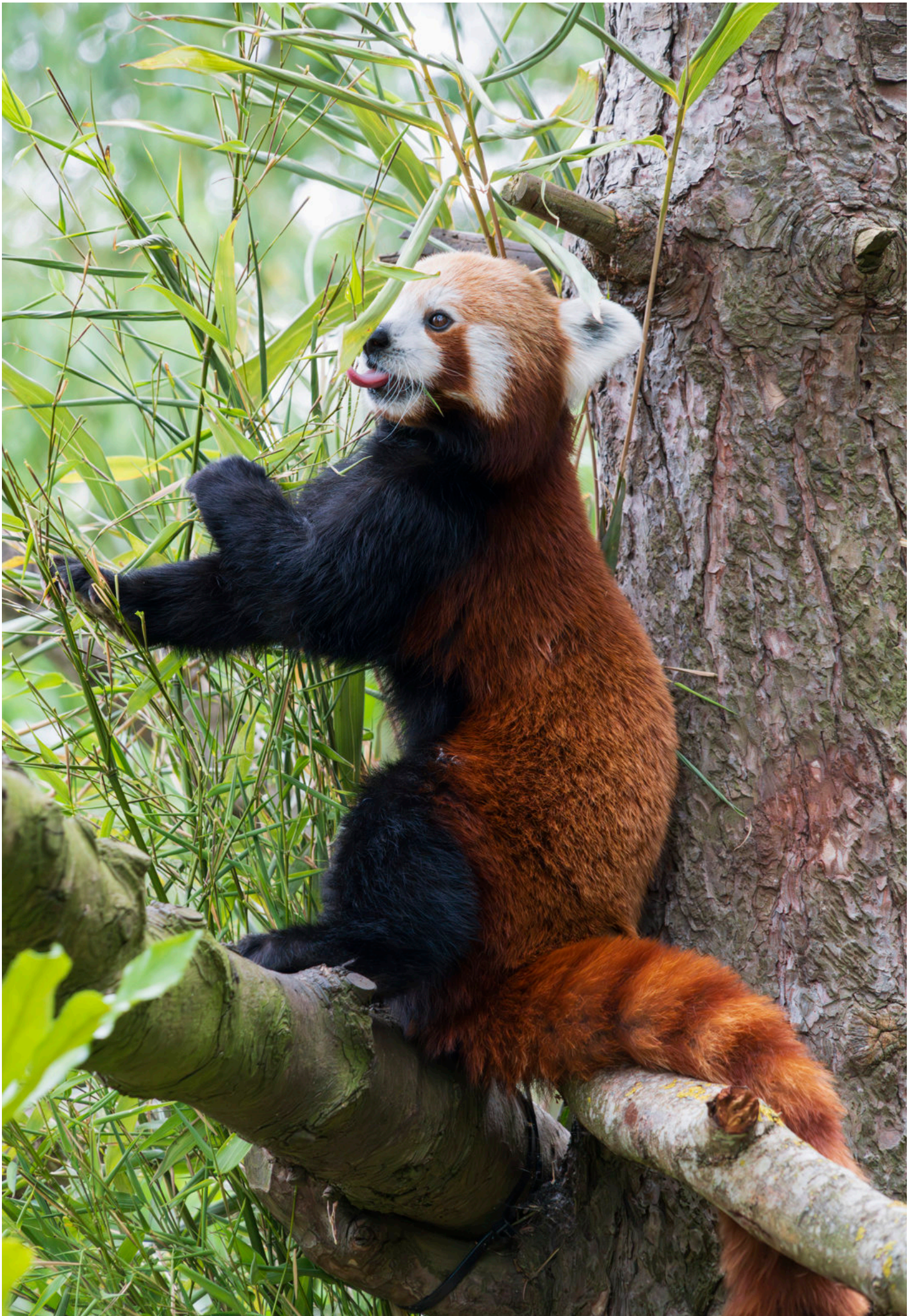
As for performance, the Canon 24-240mm f4-6.3 clearly does better, the Sony is weakest from 24-30mm but good stopped down to f8 or f11. The Sony at 240mm does focus perfectly on the A7RV and is surprisingly good with continuous AF for video, coupled to very smooth OSS. Because the focusing unit is an internal rear positioned assembly it is very light weight, quiet and fast. In most ways despite being older it's similar to the Canon and likely that both have origins in a third party design.

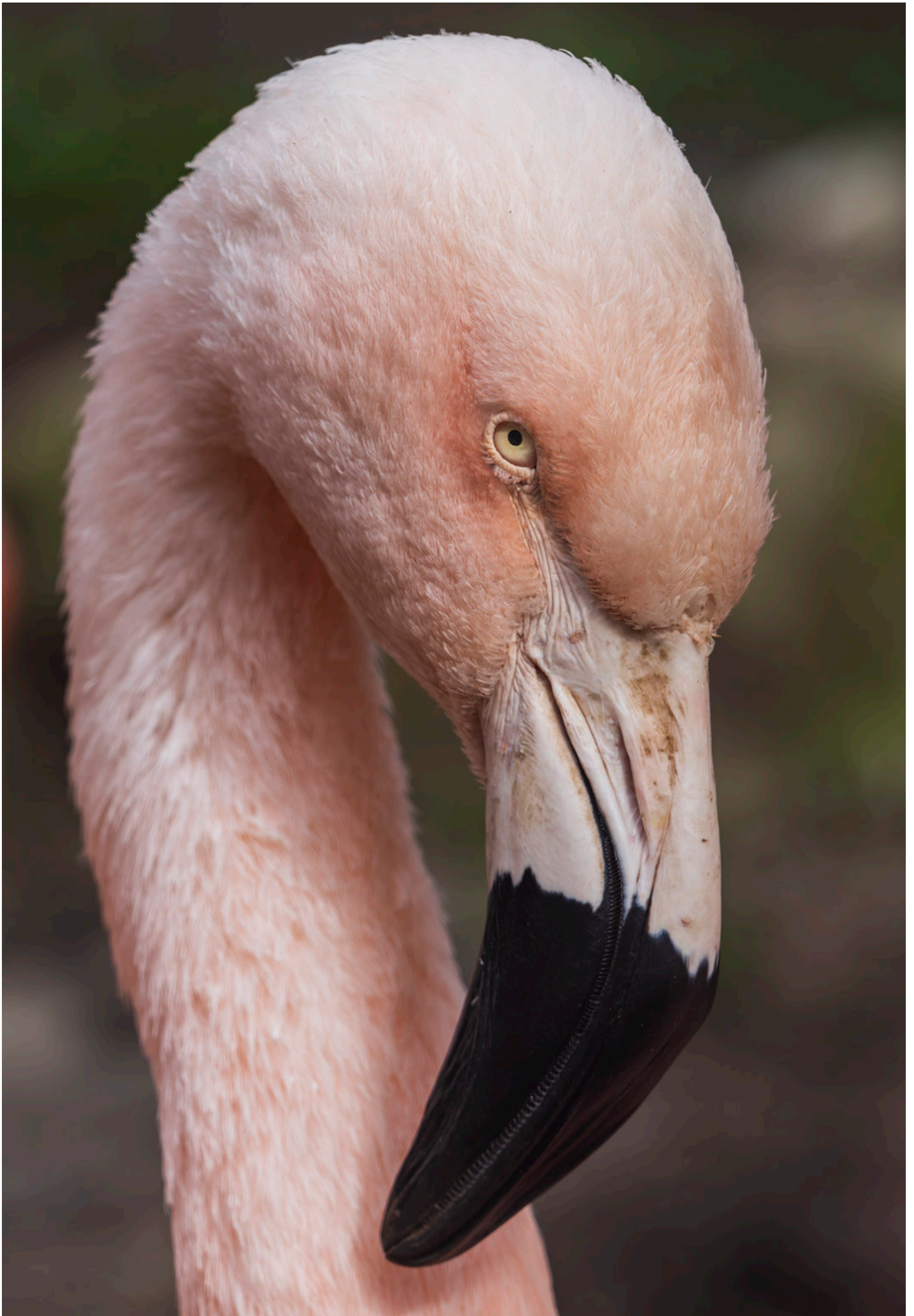
It really helps to enable Eye AF on Animal or Bird, and subject tracking – centre spot focus and recompose does not match the ability of cameras of this generation to hit sharp focus on the subject's eye even when well off-centre. The focus field is curved enough to need this. Wide open at 240mm, it's easy to see the pin-sharp focus but the picture will still

look soft. The contrast is fairly low and the overlay of hazing residual aberrations may have you cleaning your specs or rubbing your eyes when editing. I find that using a strong contrast curve, low ISO, minimum exposure and a degree of sharpening and clarity enhance visual sharpness which on first examination is below standard.

The solution is to shoot one stop or more down from wide open, to clean away the tiny halo of softness on the finest detail. Shooting a koala bear (through glass, indoors) at Edinburgh Zoo, the result of using 1/40s at f10 was better than 1/100s at f6.3. Even then at 240mm the depth of field is so limited that 60MP clearly shows the right eye as sharper, targeted by Eye AF. The fur though sharply resolved wide open just looked cleaner one stop down. Part of the softening halo comes from CA which is not removed by the profile, and can give a slight purple fringe on well-focused high contrast edges. It's easily fixed with a small soft Saturation brush but may crop up in difficult against-the-light shots at 240mm.

A few shots emphasised how MTF matters. The lens has good





contrast on fairly coarse detail, but this drops at higher frequencies (this is where the 30 cycles MTF graph line counts, especially with a 60MP sensor). So a study of a resting cheetah, actually very sharply focused and clean over the frame at 100mm and $f9$, shows the fine low contrast detail of the fur looking soft when both nearer and further grass is dominantly crisp.

If you want super-fine detail like fur to look at its best, you need a top grade lens and low ISO. Here a prime or macro between 75 and 105mm would have been visibly better, along with a wider aperture like $f5.6$ or even $f4$ to soften the grass. The 24-240mm does almost as well as a macro for the flamingo portrait here taken at the closest focus for 240mm

Conclusion: despite its age as a design, and being a secondhand lens of unknown age, this Sony 24-240mm example proved a valuable one-lens outfit even with the latest sensors. There's no sloppiness or zoom creep, a good thing as there is also no zoom lock. Improved accuracy of AF since 2015, including following off-centre Eye AF, helps overcome any focus field variations. Good used examples are normally in the £400-450 range and worth investing in with a second body as a daily walkaround lens. It is also useful on APS-C which crops the view to the best zone of resolution and contrast..

– DK



On Amazon at £699 –
<https://amzn.to/3UTmfcr>



Left, flamingo at 240mm and $f10$, closest focus possible, $1/400s$ at ISO 500. Upper right, koala in the lower light level of their indoor house, demanding ISO 6400 for $1/40s$ at $f10$. Adobe's AI noise reduction made this high ISO acceptable without losing fur detail. Below, Edinburgh Zoo has started using some very fine mesh fencing which is as easy to view through as glass provided it's not in full sunshine. Wide open at 240mm, and not held close to this barrier, the limited depth of field makes the mesh disappear completely.



The difference made by a large curved display



Richard uses his Mac systems for imaging and audio production. Here he's seen with a 34" AOC curved wide screen and one of his 'shot in one take' studio light table compositions.

Remember being obsessed with every detail of the latest computer systems, waiting for the next big thing? Since the disruption of the pandemic it's felt a little bit like technology has stalled, to me – I'd struggle to name a current Windows type of system off the top of my head, but a quick look at the catalogues feels like 'more of the same'.

This isn't that unusual for Apple owners, at least since the aluminium design era and the launch of iPhones and iPads. Until recently I was using a 2013 quad-core iMac quite happily and when 'upgraded' to a 2017 i7 and 2019 i9 in 2023-24, it really didn't feel like the i2017 machine was that big a leap forward – or that the i9, already five years old, was particularly outclassed.

Then again, an investment in a high-end display makes a big difference. The selling point of the 2017 and 2019 iMacs is a

Richard Kilpatrick looks at their vision and ergonomic benefits, and low cost solutions with 'good enough' colour and resolution

Retina 5K display at 27 inches. Try to buy a standalone 27-inch display of the same quality and capability, and you might spend as much as a refurbished iMac, and it won't be as well made as an iMac, or have such nice speakers.

However, you can't use this generation of iMacs as a main or second display for a newer CPU (which was possible with older iMac models). This meant that when it came time to finally bite the bullet and move my main computer on to Apple Silicon, I'd need a monitor to pair with a secondhand Mac Studio M1 Ultra. Yes, even at two years old

the M1 Ultra is impressively powerful. What's interesting in Apple's current marketing and 'same-again' styling is that you don't feel pressured to upgrade every year. When you do upgrade, maybe after four or five years, you really notice the difference. For what it's worth, the used price of my M1 Ultra still gets me more performance, RAM and storage than the latest M4 Mac Studio – I'd need spend twice as much to get a new machine this fast.

That budget-focused approach means picking a display is equally fun. The last monitor I bought was a colour-

calibrated, self-correcting Eizo for £1,400. They cost less now for a refreshed design, but still four figures for 24 inches. Check Amazon or Curry's and you'll see 'gamer' monitors from 30 to 45 inches, often curved, and frequently for less than £300. How bad can they be?

Speed versus accuracy

Most cheap large displays are based on less sophisticated LCD control. VA, or 'vertically aligned' panels are not as sophisticated as IPS (in-plane switching) in terms of how they control the liquid crystal 'shutters' that create a colour image, but they're fast, and capable of making dark blacks against a cheap uniform backlight rather than needing a sophisticated backlight array to dim and brighten zones of the screen.

There are many options from known brands and newcomers – I chose an AOC CU342GXP which

at £229 discounted on Amazon was one of the cheapest options. The maze of models is hard to navigate but it features a height adjustable stand and a USB 3.0 hub alongside two DisplayPort 1.4 ports, and two HDMI 2.0 ports. There's a headphone socket, too, but no speakers.

This is one of a popular group of monitors which are curved, theoretically better suited to gamers sitting close and looking around the screen without getting eye fatigue. At 3440 x 1440 across that 34-inch display, it's nothing like as 'smooth' as 4K monitors or Apple's Retina display, but it means elements of user interfaces are rendered at a human scale even for software that can't handle scaled resolutions. It also means that when you zoom in on an image for a 100% pixel view, you get to zoom in properly. The relationship between capture quality, print resolution and cropping is restored without challenging how good your eyesight and glasses are.

Curved screen success

I won't lie – I expected little from this AOC. It doesn't cost a lot and I'm coming from a Retina display and an Eizo CG. But this workstation isn't critical for colour work. I mostly use it for music and trying to get my head around a multi-track recording layout where the big pixels and huge real estate matter more than accuracy.

What's interesting is that the tales of poor viewing angles and lack of colour accuracy seem very overstated. It looks great, and I don't see an unreasonable colour shift in use. Does it shift for people glancing at the screen across the room? Maybe. I don't care what they can see.

Even better, the contrast ratio and colour saturation mean dark user interfaces are pretty easy to manage. But the real surprise is the refresh rate. I'm used to losing my mouse pointer; this

monitor is supposed to let PC games sport incoming attacks with time to react at the hardest levels. It can keep up with my Mac's rodent just fine. You need to use a Thunderbolt port and DisplayPort, as the HDMI output seems to stay at a pedestrian 60Hz, rather than the 175Hz via the fastest port.

The refresh rate does matter for video and rendering too, it's not just for games – it gives you a smoother experience. You can get 34-inch IPS panels, but their reaction time to change the pixel, and limit on refresh rate, are simply nowhere near VA panel potential utility you're into the top of the range, big-budget options.

On top of the reassuringly usable colour and contrast performance, the curved display does help when working close to the machine. I can take in more of a cluttered layout with instrument and effect windows clamouring for space; in theory, it's possible to have a second computer running PIP in certain modes as well. Overall I'm happier with this cheap display than I was with my iMac.

It's even matte finished for anti-glare. Apple will charge you almost as much as this whole monitor to apply an anti-glare finish on a 16" MacBook Pro. If you've been holding back to see if Apple brings out a bigger iMac than the current 24-inch models – check out some cheap gaming monitors and a Mac Mini instead. The gap between high-end displays and entry-level is smaller than you think.



For further information:
AOC CU342G2XP on Amazon – <https://amzn.to/47SMaJe>
Higher end OLED version – <https://amzn.to/3JGC4kY>

To follow Richard on LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bear-kilpatrick/>

Fujikina comes to London in September

FUJIKINA, a worldwide event dedicated to photography initiated by FUJIFILM, will take place in London this September, with a strong artistic dimension, workshops, exhibitions, photo walks, product demonstrations and more.

Since its launch in 2017, FUJIKINA has taken place across cultural capitals such as Tokyo, New York, Berlin, Stockholm, Prague, and Milan, establishing itself as a globally significant photography event.

This month, FUJIKINA adds London to its list, bringing the celebration of photography to the city.

Taking place over two weekends – September 18–21 and September 25–28 – FUJIKINA London offers a dynamic lineup of creative activities in a festival style designed to engage photographers of all levels.

Guests can attend events at three venues in WC2; The Stables (40 Earlham St), The Conduit (6 Langley St), and FUJIFILM's own House of Photography (8/9 Long Acre). They are all between Covent Garden and Leicester Square stations. Events include:

- Masterclasses & Workshops – Intimate, hands-on sessions led by photographers including Tigz Rice, Lateef Okunnu, and David Shoukry.
- Photowalks – Outdoor explorations of London, guided by photographers including Dawn Eagleton, Luke Davis, and Josh Edgoose.
- Seminars & Talks – Inspirational sessions from photography thought-leaders such as MAGNUM photographer Olivia Arthur, Sean Tucker, Emily Endean (*as featured in Cameracraft*), and Rebecca Douglas, on street photography, content creation, filmmaking, reportage and more.
- instax Instant Photography Experiences – Showcasing the fun and creativity of Fujifilm instax instant photography, visitors will be able to get hands-on with the latest instax products and photo printers with competitions to enter, a community photo wall, camera customisation opportunities, photo walks.
- Expert Panels – on a variety of themes, including storytelling with motion and film making as well as the importance of community, all hosted at The Conduit.
- Free Gear Check & Clean – an opportunity to have two pieces of photography gear checked and cleaned free of charge.
- Special Exhibition: Magnum Photos – *A World in Color: Magnum Photos*, in partnership with Fujifilm, a groundbreaking exhibition uncovering rare and unseen images from the agency's Paris colour archive.

In 2025, Magnum Photos began digitizing more than 650,000 colour slides from its archives using FUJIFILM's GFX100 II medium-format technology. Both a heritage and exploratory initiative, this marks a new milestone in the longstanding collaboration between Magnum and Fujifilm. In London, the exhibition will offer an intimate look at the United Kingdom through untold stories, alongside newly commissioned works from celebrated photographers Mark Power and Olivia Arthur, shot exclusively on Fujifilm's GFX range.

Tickets and pricing: Tickets are available starting at just £10 for general admission. For more information and to book tickets, visit <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/fujikinaldn>

If attending please be sure to tell FUJIFILM you saw the information in *Cameracraft* magazine!

It's not all about nostalgia... There are vintage Leicas and brand new Leicas. What's in between is a variety box.

When I started work, as a teenager in 1961, the camera I used did not use film. It was already electronic and it only shot in black-and-white.

The system was called television and I already had the feeling that, one day, the future of photography would be filmless.

But I was nostalgic and enjoyed looking back on the history of photography, especially to the time when a miniature camera using ciné film had been introduced.

Oskar Barnack joined the German Ernst Leitz optical company, famous for its microscopes, in 1911. He was a keen amateur photographer but the cameras of the day were too heavy for him to carry as he had asthma. So he developed a small compact camera with high image quality. It used 35mm ciné film in a horizontal 24x36mm format – quite revolutionary at the time.

The camera was introduced to the world at the Leipzig Spring Trade Fair in 1925 – one hundred years ago this year.

This small camera enabled unobtrusive street photography and reportage, enabling pioneers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson to develop a new visual means of expression and communication.



It was quite revolutionary and completely changed the world of photojournalism.

As an enthusiastic collector of important photographic ephemera, I wanted an early Leica – now known as the Leica 1 – for my collection.

So, long before eBay or other sites, I set about searching second-hand shops for one. I found two, at remarkably low prices in the early Sixties, and

they have pride of place in my collection.

The earliest of my Leica 1s is serial number 14794, which dates from 1929 – so it will have to wait another four years until its centenary is celebrated.

I have many other early cameras but the remarkable thing about all my Leicas – these and the later

models – is that all their focal plane shutters still work faultlessly.

This is the full-frame 35mm format that made photography mobile and suitable for everyday life. It was a major revolution.

Without a doubt, the introduction of the Leica camera revolutionised photography.

When I found my first Leica 1 it was about 50 years old. Now my first digital cameras are about 50 years old. What will they be like when they reach 100?

– John Henshall FRPS FBIPP



The Leica 1 had its origins in the first 35mm prototype made by Barnack, which was half-frame – the 18 x 24mm ciné frame of early movies. It was made to test exposure and settings for the movie camera operators, and only later became the 'double frame' 24 x 36mm Leica which transformed photography. The projector is from John's collection.

The Leica rangefinder series has never come to an end, and 100 years on you can still buy a 35mm film body – no screw thread only M bayonet mount – with a 50mm collapsible Elmar (now only f2.8 not f3.5).

But there was a period of uncertainty when TTL metering and electronic automation arrived in the 35mm domain. In 1972, Leitz and Minolta formalised a working relationship which had existed quietly for a decade. The result in 1973 was the Leitz Minolta or Leica CL, a compact short-base rangefinder baby brother to the M3/2. The body was made by Minolta in Japan and first called 'Leitz Minolta' (as Leitz had not yet adopted Leica as a company name). It had an M5-like through-the-lens metering system using a sensor which swung in front of the focal plane shutter, behind the lens's rear element, and snapped out of the way as the shutter curtain opened.

We bought a CL soon after it was discontinued in 1976. It had two lenses, both German-made – the 40mm f2 Summicron-C and the 90mm f4 Elmar-C (though there were Rokkor twins). Shirley used this camera because of its lightness and how well the optical viewfinder suited changing eyesight. The coupled rangefinder was far from accurate with such a short base between the finder and RF windows, good enough for the 40mm but at the limit with the 90mm. In contrast the 1929 vertically mounted rangefinder shown on John Henshall's Leica 1 is twice as accurate but the distance readout scale hopelessly lacking precision!

For this body we desperately wanted a 21mm lens, but Leica Super Angulons could not be used as that metering probe fouled the rear assembly. We found, at a modest price, a Minolta 21mm f4 Rokkor designed for mirror lock-up use



on 1960s SR single lens reflexes, and obtained an M-mount to SR adaptor from SRB Griturn engineering (still very much around). This would still have fouled the meter, but careful filing down of the rear lens element metal mounting let it be used. With guessed focusing and a viewfinder in the flash shoe, it

worked well. In due course that kit was sold, Shirley keeping her kit light and small with Olympus instead.

Then in the 1990s I wanted a tiny outfit. A 1980 Minolta CLE, the Minolta-branded non-Leica successor, proved the answer. Its TTL (with Aperture Priority auto!) is aided by a white pattern

printed on the shutter curtain, Olympus OM2 style. The rangefinder is even less accurate as the viewfinder is for 28, 40 and 90mm not 40 and 90mm. But it was usable, and with an accessory finder, even handled a 135mm f4 Elmar for landscapes. At the wide end, a 20mm f5.6 Leica screw Russar lens completed a very light and compact outfit. I used this kit for the entire testing of prototype samples of Paterson Acupan 200 film, made by FOMA in the Czech Republic, trusting its manual metering completely.

And then, of course, old Leica rivals Zeiss came out with the

Contax G and reprised the CLE concept in autofocus as well as auto exposure form.

I had a Leica much earlier, a double-stroke wind M3 with 50mm f2.8 in 1972, and loved the quality of the negatives but could never afford further lenses! In the mid-1990s I acquired a Leica IIIC with uncoated 50mm f2 Summar, a 1937 lens with very strong vignetting and some softening to the corners, but a unique rendering. It was just a curiosity to explore, with its (rare) reloadable film cassette. But in 2025 I thought the Leica X1 digital below might almost bring back memories...

Why even think of buying a 15-year-old 10 megapixel camera with a fixed lens and only a fixed rear screen for composing shots?

Easy. Leica's X1 was created to echo, vaguely, the simplicity of the Leica 1 and the later film models including the M series. It was a nostalgia trip at the time, with the red Leica cachet to help a pretty high price-tag, and was entirely made in Germany.

My experience with the Nikon 1 original 10MP sensor (a mere one-inch compared to the APS-C of the X1) made me wonder if Adobe's Super Resolution process, from the raw .dng files, could make the 24mm f2.8 Elmarit ASPH shine in a 40 megapixel output. The little Nikon does that convincingly.

So I found one, not at the £650 commonly asked, just over £400 on eBay with a neat third party red case. On first use I loved this camera. I put in a battery, set up the date and basic shooting preferences, and it felt great in the hand. The equivalent 36mm angle of view was great for street shots, and setting BW for JPEGs gave a BW screen view.

However, on removing the battery to put a fresh one in, all the settings and date were lost. Then I learned that the X1 has an internal battery which needs a factory service visit to replace.



Even the £600+ examples at MPB could not be affected. Meanwhile I'd bought a Leica 36mm view optical finder for £160 from MPB – one of the best finders you'll ever look through. But no use without the body... both eBay and MPB gave full refunds.

So despite good AF, very usable ISO 3200 and lovely in-camera JPEGs (dynamic range below with NO local or overall

adjustments) this faux-nostalgia trip ended. And the Sony sensor, with its AA filter, didn't work at all well with Super Resolution – no 10MP faking 20, 30 or 40MP! The X-series digital 'rethink' on origins fell short. But since then Leica has released many compact digitals which look back – even one called the CL.

The photographs of the X1 shows its pop-up flash, a design



error when a pop-up EVF would have transformed usability, the classic top plate layout and large rear screen. The one thing I might buy again is a Leica Brightline Viewfinder 18707.

– David Kilpatrick



CAMERAS

Small change? The Sony RX1R MkIII

The first time I took the RX1R III out with me to shoot was like going back in time. I remember carrying my father's old Ricoh 35 rangefinder out to shoot the world, which had no light meter (so I had to learn to estimate what the film would require in every situation). I remember the silent shutter. I remember having to "zoom with your feet" due to the fixed 35mm lens. And I remember what it was like to carry around a small and light and relatively unobtrusive camera.

But the RX1R III gave me problems I never had in the old days. When set to AF-C and Wide-area AF (my normal settings for all my other Sony cameras), it would occasionally choose the wrong subject to focus on. So I went back to the dark ages: I set my camera to Center [Fix] AF area and AF-S focus mode, defaulting me to the ancient focus-lock-recompose-and-shoot methodology. I'm telling you, it was like riding a bike for the first time in 20 years. It was just a different and, dare I say it, more grounding experience.

I'm not the only one for whom this provides a transformative experience. Legendary photojournalist Dave Burnett (Life magazine, National Geographic, and co-founder of Contact Press Images, just to name a few) called it "the best walk-around digital camera ever made"¹. Dpreview gave the camera a gold award. Not many cameras get those kinds of accolades.

The RX1R III is a small, full-frame, 60.2 MP camera with a fixed Zeiss-branded 35mm lens. It has a legendary following, and the world was surprised when Sony introduced the version III to the world, ten years after the version II. The version III inherits the same advancements AF and object recognition as the A1II, and the same tried-and-true sensor as the A7RV and A7CR. The flash sync speed goes to 1/4000th thanks to its leaf shutter. They even managed to do away with the pop-up EVF of the version II and include a fixed version built into the body.



70 years of progress – the RX1R III next to original Ricoh 35



The RX1R MkIII adds a build-in EVF which is much like the A6000 series or the A7Cs. In the head on view you can see how the large eyecup overlaps the rear screen. Top view, with the eyecup removed. Below, size comparison with A6300 and 16-50mm zoom. Above left, USB-C with charging, and mic socket labelled 'Plug In Power' which might confused – means it powers the mic! Above right, the unusual provision for mechanical cable release.

The lens is the same one used on the Mark I and II. It's soft until about f5.6. And because it can't zoom, Sony introduced a software-based function that simulates the field of view of a 50mm or a 70mm lens. All it does is crop the image in-camera, with no effort to upsize the image back to 60 MP.

Yet for all of these advances, the camera there are some areas where the camera went "backwards" – they replaced the tilting screen of the Mark II with a fixed screen (was it for greater weatherproofing? More durability since you didn't have to worry about cracking the ribbon cable? Sony isn't saying). The buttons are mushy, belying the image of a high-end luxury camera.

It is the rhetoric around this camera that is perhaps the most disappointing. Ever since the original RX1 was released in 2012, the marketing department heralded that a fixed lens can be optimized for the sensor, leading to potentially better image quality and a more streamlined shooting experience than with interchangeable lenses. Hogwash! Ignoring for the moment that this lens has been used on the RX1, RX1R, RX1R II, and RX1R III (all with different sensors), the closed-loop AF system used by all mirrorless bodies means the focusing would be no better than when using a fixed lens.

This camera is being marketed squarely to the Leica Q3 and Fujifilm X100VI crowd, which explains its hefty price tag of £4200. Is it worth it? No. This camera can easily be replaced by a Sony A7CR + 35mm f1.8 prime for just £2824. Not only is this combination about the same size as the RX1R III, the A7CR offers in-body image stabilization.

There's a lot more detail to convey about this camera than can fit here – I've included all of it in my just-released book on the camera (which I refuse to promote here):

FriedmanArchives.com/rx1riii



¹ Of course he's also a bit biased, being a paid Sony Artisan of Imagery influencer. But he's racked up a lifetime of street cred to make his opinion worth mentioning.



The 35mm f2 lens is good for low light. Centrally, sharp enough to read this menu (brightened, above, at 270dpi). But the trees and wires show marked CA needing profile, CA and Green fringe removal (strength 5).



Landor Phototex Digital Wall Covering

First I must apologise to Derric Landor for extracting a sample of a material which I would only order if I had a printer able to handle rolls, with a built-in cutter suitable for thick media, ideally in a larger feed width than the 17" of my vintage Epson P3800 or the 13" of my EcoTank ET8550. These printers use Epson's K3 pigment 8-ink cartridge set and 6-ink colour dye with pigment black tank refill inks respectively. Similar ink types are used in large format printers ideal for printing on wide roll material.

The sample was immaculately packaged, and sent with Landor's Colourjet fixative spray. In theory pigment inks don't need the physical and UV-fade protection this gives, the aqueous dye-based inks definitely benefit, protected from abrasion as well. The semi-matt clear spray can also be used on traditional art media like watercolour, pastel, charcoal and other media.

My first task was to cut sheets from the 17" roll. I have a 24" guillotine but it's ageing and Phototex demands a clean cut. The knife-cutter in a large Epson, Canon or HP printer has replaceable blades, and Phototex's fine but very strong fabric and its peel off backing will probably wear cutters faster than regular photo papers. If cut by hand, a brand new self-heal cutting mat would be advised along with a fresh craft blade. It is possible to cut circles or follow outlines to make montage elements but requires practice and a firm, even cut.

Once cut, despite the curl from the roll which can need correcting Phototex feeds easily and reliably – the P3800 is very picky but fed OK from its rear sheet feed and the the ET8550 was even easier. This was a pleasant surprise. The next concern was coverage and drying.

The suggested setting of Velvet Fine Art in the P3800

Only those with large format printers can make proper use of this unique repositionable self-adhesive fabric – but we had to see what it can do at home



seriously over-inked and the fabric was visibly wet on exit. Changing the setting to smooth matt, widening the platen cap, and reducing ink density by 50 solved this issue. The intensity of colour and d-max were reduced but perfectly acceptable on full photographic scale test prints. The denser first tests dried completely, but with a slightly uneven patina to very dark areas.

In the ET8550 Velvet Fine Art setting worked well. The 17" roll width produced useful A4 test sheets plus a smaller offcut suitable for testing. To make a photographic wallpaper, matching normal wallpaper widths, 24" Phototex is needed. The fabric texture is fine enough to be able to do a non-conservation patch for Chinese silk wallcoverings, typically from around 150 years ago, occasionally found in historic interiors. Colour matching would

be a very different matter – given the level of fading present in those wallcoverings, dynamic range is no problem but extensive tests would be needed.

For an initial test, I found a shot of Chinese wallpaper – not silk – and carefully corrected out some natural light variations. A B3/SuperA3 sheet was cut and loaded in the rear tray of the ET8550 without any snags. Rather than mess with profiles, I let the Epson use Printer Colour Management for Fine Art Velvet. The result was, frankly, quite lovely. After seeing how it looked on a blue door I tried sticking on tiles with a strong bumpy relief. It moulded well to these. The colour was perfect and the way the fabric rendered the old 24-megapixel Sony A900 existing light shot made me wish I could photograph more vintage wallpapers with proper lighting and aligned copying setup.

The blue door would really need white painting behind the area for the Phototex. It's fairly translucent and if stuck to clear or opal sheeting can be used to make decorative lamps or lightboxes. It's opaque enough to work on dark surfaces but definitely best on white.

A good way to use Phototex, given a small printer and test conditions, was to make fabric photo print panels to fill the flat panels of a traditional six-panel door. My study of aspen trees suited the room. I enlarged the JPEG from the 61MP raw to 200%, cropped and created the insets for a door recently painted and not vintage. I measured the print area, the position of the cross rail, lock rail and vertical mullions. From an overall 200dpi image 730 x 1760mm fixed size crops were copied using rules set to match the panel areas, pasted into individual new documents and printed.

Fixing the six Phototex sheets was amazingly quick and simple. No pastes, no squeegees, just clean hand pressure and care shifting slight bubbles from centre to edge. My 600mm prints were slightly over length but the extra 1cm or so was a white match to the door paint so no trimming was needed – just mould into contact.

The caveats are that not all printers will work, cutting needs very sharp tools and like any fabric care when cutting on the bias and 'just off' the weave. This material is best used in a large printer with software which put multiple images on the width intelligently and cut perfectly, and for full exhibition stand, temporary vehicle livery, theatre sets and similar applications it's really a job for a lab.

The Colourjet Fixative is similar to many I've used and sprays very evenly without sudden blobs, drying more satin than semi-gloss.

– DK





Cutting this circle was quick but not perfect. A much sharper blade was needed!

Landor Phototex is also made in higher opacity and stronger tack versions. I tested a sample of the regular product, the more opaque version is ideal for dark surfaces.

Top left – a test print moulding into the tiles. Top right, its translucent quality, a close-up of fabric texture, and how it peels off without damaging paint. The guitar case festival sticker is an example of non-damaging use, peeling off despite being pressed home into moulding on the case, and re-usable on others.

For further information see:
<https://www.landoruk.com/phototex>



CAMERACRAFT

REARVIEW



An actual rear view from the Guild of Photographers Monthly Awards, by **Paul Oldham**. A portrait does not always have to be face-on or conventional in pose. You can also find Paul on LinkedIn, Instagram @pauloldhamphotography, in Frames Magazine and Purpleport. See: <https://www.photoguild.co.uk>