

Tuesday 26 August 2025

# Amateur Photographer

**PREMIUM EDITION**

SEPTEMBER 2025



**Best lenses for macro**  
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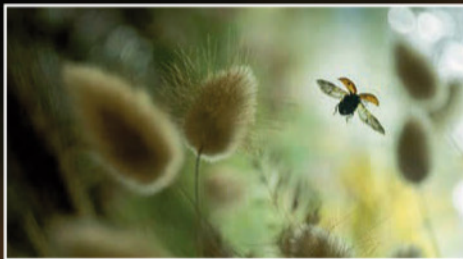


## **Favourite macro kit**

27 photographers discuss their go-to gear for great close-ups

## **Phones for macro**

Top close-range performers



## **APOY Macro results**

AP readers' winning entries



## **RPS Print Exhibition**

Highlights from the world's oldest annual photo exhibition

# Macro magic

Expert tips and best kit for better close-up photos



## **David Joseph**

Discusses his journey as a macro photographer



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## Inside this issue

- 3** 7 days
- 6** Viewpoint
- 8** From the archive
- 10** Books and exhibitions
- 16** It's good to share
- 20** Telling stories: RPS Print Exhibition
- 30** Fujifilm X-T5: an X-cellent all-rounder
- 32** Greatest album covers: *Rumours*
- 36** A life in protest: David Hoffman interview
- 40** Reader portfolio
- 45** Inbox and This week we asked...
- 50** APOY Round 3 winners
- 58** Best smartphones for macro
- 64** Best macro lenses
- 68** Life on the road: Bob Books
- 70** Accessories
- 71** Tech talk
- 72** Small world, big impact: David Joseph
- 76** CUPOTY photographers' top macro kit
- 83** Best buys
- 98** Final analysis

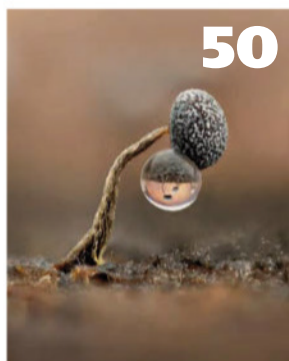


72

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64



50

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20



76

## Welcome



Much of this issue is dedicated to macro photography, and with good reason.

It's a perennially popular genre that is endlessly fascinating and can be enjoyed all year round, with an inexhaustible range of subjects, from bugs to bolts. Award-winning macro photographer David Joseph shares his insights on page 72, and we've also got lots of gear advice, including the best lenses and phones for macro magic. Don't miss the winners of the macro round of our International APOY competition too. Beyond close-ups, we also reveal the winners of the RPS's print exhibition and look back on 40 years of protest photography. Given what's kicking off at home and abroad at the moment, this is very timely...

**Geoff Harris, Deputy Editor**



MAIN COVER PICTURE: © DAVID JOSEPH; INSET PICTURE: MIDDLE: © FABIO SARTORI; INSET PICTURE: BOTTOM: © NAT HAY, COURTESY OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Our cover shot was taken by award-winning macro photographer David Joseph (visit Instagram @abcdee\_david). See page 72 for our interview with him

## THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



**TRACY CALDER**

CUPOTY co-founder Tracy talks to David Joseph; and also shares 27 prize-winners' macro kit picks



**ANDY WESTLAKE**  
Technical Editor

In our round-up, we reveal the best macro lenses that are currently available new



**AILSAL MCWHINNIE**

Our APOY project manager reveals the winners from Round 3: Close-ups and Details



**DAVID CLARK**

AP regular David finds out about the stunning award winners in the RPS IPE 166th Print Exhibition



**PETER DENCH**  
Acting Features Ed

Peter interviews David Hoffman about his new book documenting 50 years of protest



**JESSICA MILLER**  
Dep Online Editor

Manager of our social media channels, Jessica selects your best shots on page 16

## Connect with us

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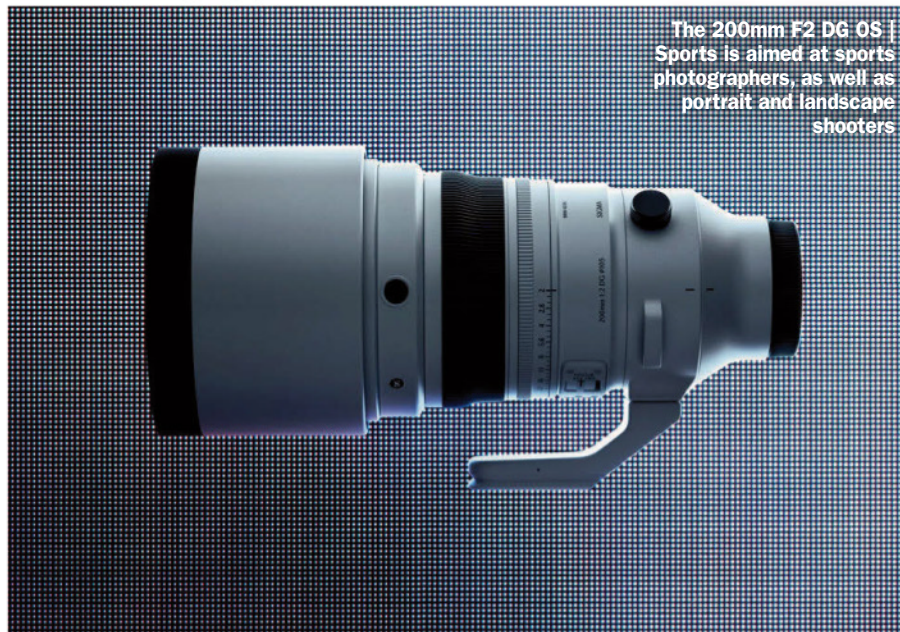
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The 200mm F2 DG OS | Sports is aimed at sports photographers, as well as portrait and landscape shooters

# Sigma 200mm f/2 prime and 12mm ultra-wide land

**SIGMA** chose the recent World Photography Day to announce two new lenses, the 200mm F2 DG OS | Sports lens and the 12mm F1.4 DC | Contemporary.

The 200mm F2 DG OS | Sports is the world's first 200mm F2 telephoto prime lens designed for full-frame mirrorless cameras, according to Sigma, and comes in Sony E and L mounts (full frame). Aimed at sports photographers needing a long reach and fast focusing, as well as portrait and landscape shooters, it features the company's HLA (High-response Linear Actuator) for accurate, high-speed AF, plus 6.5-stop image stabilisation. There are two optical stabilisation modes: Mode 1 for general shooting, and Mode 2, designed to assist with panning shots, even when the camera is moved vertically or diagonally.

Other key features include 9 lens elements in 14 groups, a new tripod socket with a longer base and wider spacing between it and the lens, 11 rounded diaphragm blades, customisable buttons and switches and a 170cm minimum focusing distance. The new lens takes 105mm filters, measures 118.9mm x 201mm and weighs 1,820g.

## The ultra-wide prime

Meanwhile, the Sigma 12mm F1.4 DC | Contemporary offers the widest angle of view of any F1.4 lens for APS-C cameras on the market, according to Sigma. Available in Canon RF, Fujifilm X and Sony E mounts, this 12mm lens (equivalent to 18mm in 35mm

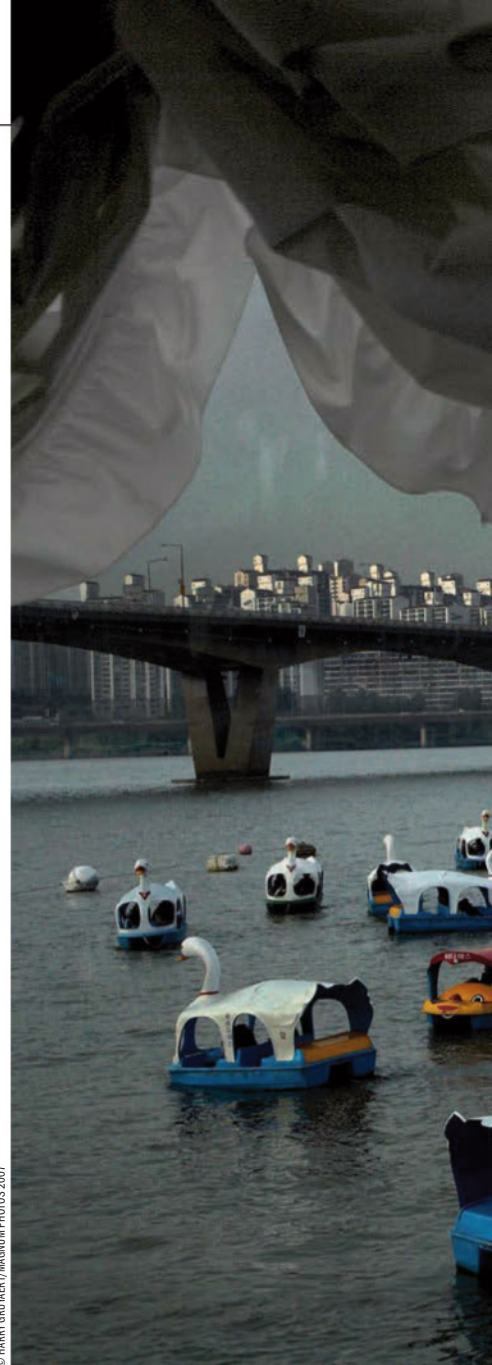
terms, depending on the mount) is relatively light at 225g, despite the large aperture. It should appeal to astro-photographers and landscape fans, as well as street shooters working in low light.

The lens features 3 double-sided aspherical lenses and 2 SLD glass elements for high optical performance when shooting wide open, 9 rounded-diaphragm aperture blades, an aperture ring, and 17.2cm minimum focusing distance. Dust- and splash-resistant, the lens takes 62mm filters.

Both lenses go on sale on 4 September, with the 200mm costing £2,999 and the 12mm costing £519. See [sigmauk.com](http://sigmauk.com)



The Sigma 12mm F1.4 DC | Contemporary



© HARRY GRUYAERT/MAGNUM PHOTOS 2007

## Harry's styles

**THE DEUTSCHE Börse Photography Foundation** is running an exhibition of the work of Belgian photographer Harry Gruyaert, a pioneer of European colour photography, at The Cube in Frankfurt/Eschborn, Germany, from 4 September 2025 to 25 January 2026.

Comprising around 120 images from the 1970s to the early 2000s, the retrospective is the most extensive presentation of Gruyaert's oeuvre in Germany to date. 'With his extraordinary sense for composing colour and space, he captures landscapes and urban scenes, emphasizing contrasts.' This memorable image, taken in Seoul, South Korea, in 2007, is a good example.


See [bit.ly/harrycube](http://bit.ly/harrycube)



Taken by Belgian  
photographer  
Harry Gruyaert




## Kodak: we are not going bust

 KODAK has strongly denied it's about to cease operations or go bankrupt. The robust response came after Kodak issued a statement to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in mid-August, where it stated its current financial situation 'raise substantial doubt about the company's ability to continue as a going concern.' Kodak's share price nose-dived but has since recovered. The company claimed media reports that it is going to the wall 'are inaccurate and reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of a recent technical disclosure the Company made to the SEC in its recently filed second quarter earnings report.'

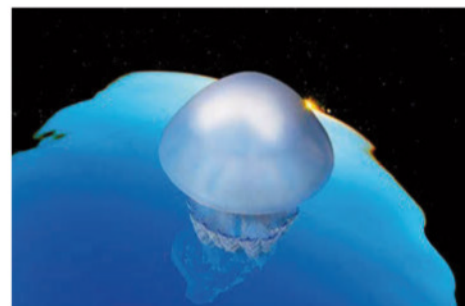


**Kodak has no plans to cease operations**

## Ocean colour scenes

 THE FINALISTS of the Ocean Photographer of the Year 2025

competition have been revealed, with the winners to be announced in September. Photographers were invited to submit images in a variety of categories including wildlife, fine-art and conservation, celebrating the ocean's beauty and the urgent need to protect it. This year's shortlist includes such oceanic curiosities as a marine iguana 'mid-sneeze,' a troupe of skeleton shrimps that colonised a gorgonian coral, and a spaceship-like jellyfish that appears to be departing the atmosphere (see image above). Visit [bit.ly/oceanshortlist](https://bit.ly/oceanshortlist)



**One of the shortlisted images, taken by Toni Bertran Regas**





# Viewpoint Dan Mold

Use multiple camera bags that make your area of interest easier, advises AP contributor Dan

Just one look at the camera accessories market and you'd think we have every shape and size of camera bag available to suit every occasion. Since I began testing photography equipment for magazines professionally back in 2012 I've used pretty much every style and brand you could imagine including Manfrotto, Lowepro, Vanguard, Benro, Tenba, Peak Design, Billingham and Think Tank to name a few.

Not only does my amassed cornucopia of shoulder bags, backpacks, slings, holsters, hard cases and even roller bags act as a secure home in which I can organise and protect my best camera kit when it's not in use, they're each suitable for different shooting scenarios and speaking from experience – you need to have the right tool for the job.

## Not painfully hip

I love shooting all sorts of photographic genres, and when it comes to wildlife or landscapes it might make sense to use one of my largest camera backpacks such as the Lowepro Flipside 500 AW II which can easily stash a 300mm f/2.8 prime lens plus others, plus a large laptop; and its front pocket is so large I've used it to store a collapsed 5-in-1 reflector or light tent for a paid product photography shoot. These larger backpacks also usually come with some sort of hip belt and better padding to make hiking through the outdoors with heavy equipment much less strenuous.

However, my approach for street and travel photography is very different. Partly because I use much smaller lenses, often petite primes like a 20mm or 35mm, but also for ease of use because I want to be able to get in and out of my camera bag quickly to take the shot before the moment is gone.

That's why my go-to bag for street



Bellroy Venture Sling 10L Camera Edition

photography is the Bellroy Venture Sling 10L Camera Edition. It's not cheap but it's the most comfortable shoulder bag I've used to date. It's not perfect though – with no space for a laptop or tablet, editing on the go is out of the question.

## Time for a ruck

Is there a camera bag solution that doesn't cost the earth?

One of my most-used camera bags isn't a camera bag at all – my daily driver is an inconspicuous Eastpak rucksack with a padded insert from an old Vanguard bag, though BYOB (Bring Your Own Bag) inserts are also available from companies such as Tenba. This is a brilliant setup that doesn't catch the eye and allows me to comfortably carry my camera into town or wherever I need to be that day, and I'm ready to go if a photo opportunity presents itself.

My overall advice then is try to find a bag that works with you and not against you, depending on what you're trying to shoot. And if like many photographers you enjoy photographing lots of different types of subject matter then you may want to consider having a bag that is specialised towards each, to give you the most enjoyable experience.

Dan Mold is a Cambridgeshire-based prize-winning photographer and journalist with more than 13 years of experience.

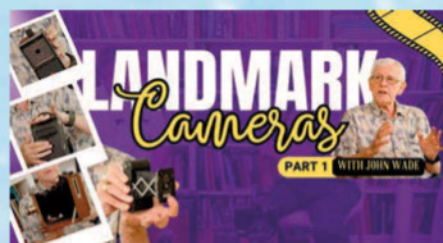
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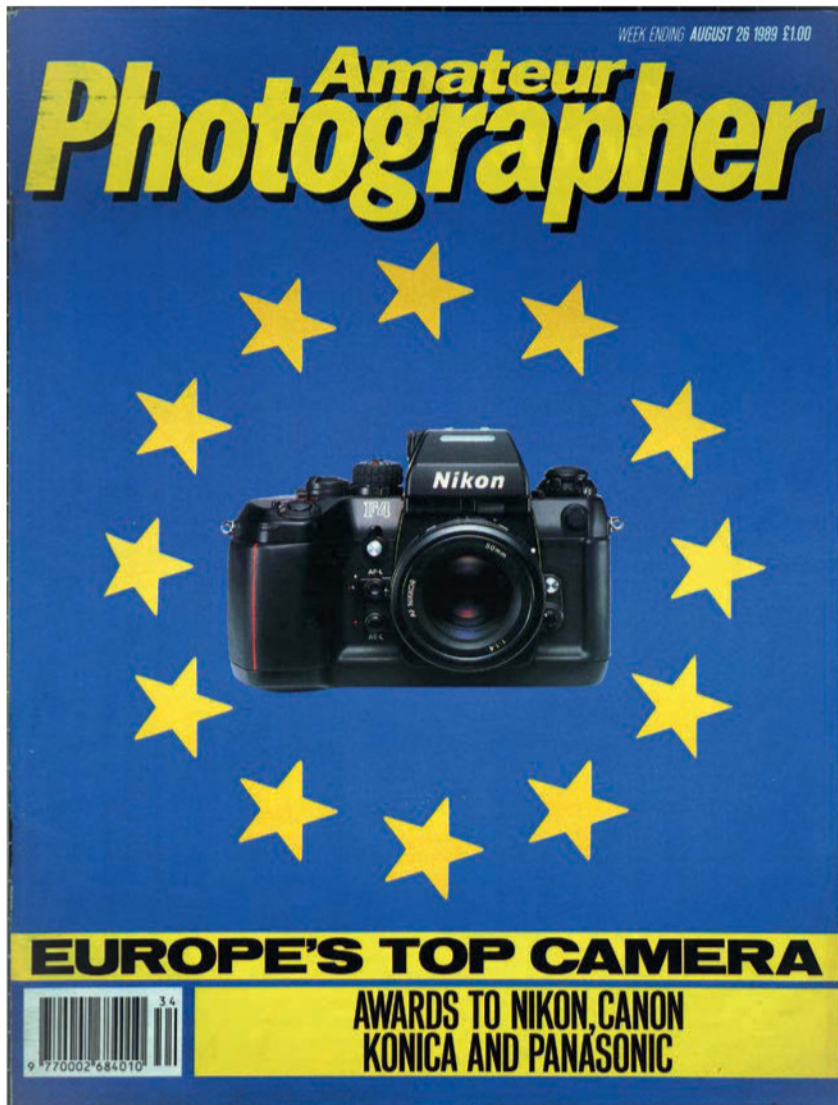
# From the archive

This week the AP Editor Nigel Atherton travels back to the Eighties for the European Camera of the Year

26 August 1989

With this year's EISA award-winning cameras and lenses just announced on our website, and appearing in the 9 September issue, it seems timely to revisit the early days of these awards (which began in 1982) when it was just called 'European Camera of the Year'. Judged by 14 photo magazine editors, including AP's Keith Wilson, the 1989 winner was the Nikon F4, an absolute beast of a pro camera which was my weapon of choice for over ten years. At the time it cost £1,210, which is equivalent to £4,388 in today's money. By contrast this year's winner (sorry, no spoilers!) costs quite a bit more. Who now remembers the other winners: the Konica A4 compact, or the Panasonic NV-MS 50 camcorder? Or the Canon Xapshot, which morphed into the Ion and was an early pioneer of digital photography (even though it wasn't technically digital). Also in this issue Liz Walker, who was my line manager and mentor when I first joined AP in 1994, presented some inspiration for creating special effects using slide projectors and filters.

The 2025 RPS International Print Exhibition (IPE) just recently opened at the Saatchi Gallery and a selection is published in this issue on page 20. But who among our readers remembers that there was once also an RPS Slide Competition too? AP gave the 1989 contest a plug by showcasing the 1988 winners. Finally, the AP-sponsored City Camera Show featured, besides the latest kit, jugglers, can-can dancers, 'characters', a bouncy castle and the inevitable glamour models.

Left: City Camera Show: three days of kit, models and 'characters'

Right: The Vivitar Twinset bundled the D535 compact with a Philips personal stereo for £79.99 (£300 today)

Far right: The Minolta Dynax 3000i cost £239 (£866)












ALL PICTURES © DEREK RIDGERS

Cannes Photographers, 1989

# Cannes

## by Derek Ridgers

£25, IDEA, softcover, 96 pages: ISBN n/a

**Derek Ridgers' *Cannes* is a gloriously unvarnished antidote to the usual glitz-laden imagery of the French film festival, says Peter Dench**

Spanning assignments from 1984 to 1996, Ridgers turns his lens not just on the stars, but on the circus that surrounds them – capturing the chaotic choreography of photographers, gawkers, sunbathers, starlets, and the truly surreal energy of Cannes in its tabloid-era heyday.

The strength of the book lies in its refusal to mythologise. This isn't red carpet reverence. Instead, it's a smart, slightly mischievous photo-documentary of the entire ecosystem – from Clint Eastwood glimpsed through a car window to amateur

photographers jostling for a shot of a bikini-clad hopeful. The images, many taken on compact cameras, feel immediate and unfiltered. There's a rawness and humour to them that lifts the work above nostalgia and into cultural commentary.

Ridgers is particularly good at photographing other photographers – capturing the strange, self-perpetuating theatre of image-making. In one anecdote, he recounts watching beach photographers critique his own photos (published in *PHOTO* magazine) without realising the man who took them was

standing beside them, camera in hand.

The celebrity sightings are deliciously throwaway – Mick Jagger, Damon Albarn, Justine Frischmann, Lou Ferrigno, Helmut Newton – yet they play second fiddle to the broader performance of Cannes itself. There's as much visual interest in the crowds, the chaos, and the sheer density of cameras as in the famous faces.

That said, the book doesn't flatter photographers. Many appear to be angling for shots of semi-naked women on the beach – part of an unsettling, almost predatory ritual that Ridgers captures without judgement but which now feels uncomfortable to witness. It's a reminder of how photo culture, and society's expectations around it, have shifted. *Cannes* is both an unfiltered time capsule and a quiet critique – an invitation to enjoy the spectacle while also asking what, and who, we choose to focus our lenses on.

Published in a run of just 500 copies, *Cannes* is as collectible as it is entertaining. At 96 pages, it's breezy but far from slight; a brilliant portrait of a specific time when glamour, sleaze, aspiration, and absurdity all shared the same stretch of beach. For anyone who remembers the era – or wishes they'd been there – this is star-drenched joy.





Clint Eastwood arriving at the Carlton Hotel, 1994



Jasmine, Carlton Beach, 1988



Sylvester Stallone, 1990

## Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography



© JOHN BOLLOTEN

### Blood Brothers

### John Bolloten: Margins

Abject Gallery, Sunderland,  
27 August to 20 September 2025

Bradford-based photographer John Bolloten has long been one of Britain's most unflinching documentarians of life on the edge. His retrospective exhibition, *Margins*, at Sunderland's Abject Gallery brings together more than a decade of raw, socially charged work – a body of images that confronts viewers with lives too often ignored or misrepresented.

The show spans multiple major series, including *This is Not a Life*, *It's Just an Existence*, his searing five-year project among heroin and crack users in Bradford, and *Trap Life*, which enters the underworld of drug dealing and gang culture. Also included are lesser-seen projects on bare-knuckle boxing (*Blood Brothers*, *Born For This Shit*), outlaw fight clubs (*No Rules*), and the often-forgotten Northern grime scene (*Generation Grime*).

There is nothing voyeuristic or performative about Bolloten's work. Having experienced addiction himself, he approaches his subjects not with detachment but empathy. His images are intimate, fiercely honest and deeply human. They come from years of trust built on the ground – not just visits, but returns. Not just images, but testimonies.

*Margins* is not an easy exhibition. But it's a vital one. Whether photographing football hooligans in Georgia (Tbilisi Raw), Red Bull-fuelled Sunday league teams in West Yorkshire, or the broken windows and broken dreams of Britain's declining urban centres, Bolloten holds fast to the belief that photography can illuminate, challenge, and – if not change the world – at least make it harder to ignore.



# America's Cup. Marc Newson Art Edition

£12,500, TASCHEN, hardcover, 564 pages: ISBN 9783836591003



Let's be clear: *America's Cup. Marc Newson Art Edition* is not a book, it's a broadside. A glorified trophy disguised as a publication. Yours for £12,500 – that's a year's rent, a used van, or about 3,000 issues of AP Full disclosure – I didn't receive a press review copy.

Published by TASCHEN, a house not unfamiliar with artistic audacity, the 7.65kg book comes sheathed in cotton sailcloth, fastened by a custom Louis Vuitton clasp, and hoisted onto a 9.8kg carbon-fibre stand designed by Newson that resembles the keel of a sailboat. Limited to 175 signed copies, it's less coffee-table book and more ode to privilege with a press release – ideal for displaying somewhere between the wine cellar and helipad.

Inside, though, it charts a genuinely compelling visual history of the world's oldest international sporting competition. Unseen photographs, archival ephemera, technical schematics, and anecdotal bravado recount how The America's Cup evolved from a plucky schooner trouncing the British fleet in 1851, into a multimillion-dollar gladiatorial contest for billionaires. There's plenty here for lovers of sleek design, tactical innovation, and salty egos.

It helps that the tome is steered by editor Pino Allievi, the Italian sportswriting veteran known for tackling the equally turbo-charged world of Formula One. He charts the nautical arms race with lyrical precision and a seasoned hand on the tiller. It gives the book ballast.

And yet. It's everything one might abhor in a photo book: excessive, exclusive, a lavish celebration of privilege under the guise of passion. It doesn't democratise the experience of great photography – it hermetically seals it in designer packaging and prices it out of reach of almost everyone, including, I assume, you, dear reader.

Still, there's a perverse thrill in its existence and one I couldn't help bring to these pages. In an age of dwindling print runs and digital domination, TASCHEN's chutzpah deserves a nod. This book sails straight into the storm, flying every flag of extravagance it can stitch together. You wouldn't buy it. But you might just admire the audacity of someone who did. Oh, and there is a Collector's Edition at a breezier £2,500 – still bonkers, just slightly less bonkers.



PHOTO BY KERSTINE-FRANZ/GAMMA-KERSTINE VIA GETTY IMAGES. © 1998 KERSTINE-FRANZ



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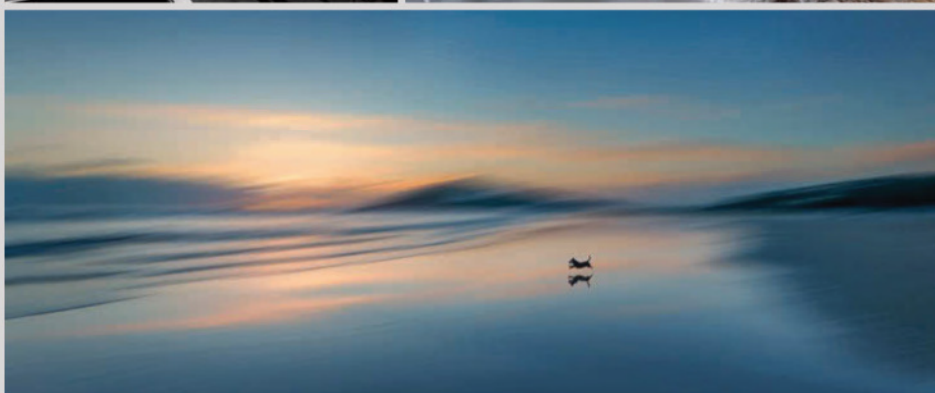
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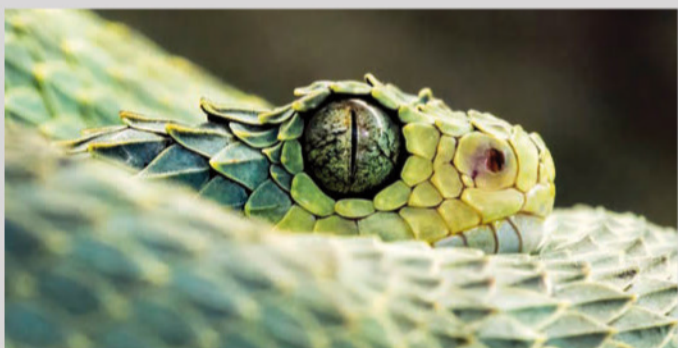


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BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: © ROY ELOFF; © NEIL GRIEVE OF TRIBUO CAMERA CLUB; © ASHLEY FOUNTAIN





**Resilience, from the series 'Décollage' 2024**

# Equivalents. States of Existence

## by Cristina Dias de Magalhães

€38, Kehrre Verlag, hardcover, 92 pages,  
ISBN: 9783969001882

Cristina Dias de Magalhães' *Equivalents. States of Existence* is a contemplative and poetic photo book that explores the emotional currents of grief, resilience, and identity through deeply personal, metaphor-laden imagery. Inspired by Alfred Stieglitz's pioneering Equivalents series – photographs of clouds intended to reflect emotional states – Dias de Magalhães updates this idea with a contemporary, autobiographical sensibility, blending nature, family, and inner life into a quiet but resonant visual diary.

Structured across three interconnected series (Essence of Life, Equivalents, and Décollage), the book is less a traditional narrative and more a visual meditation. Each photograph feels like a fragment of thought – a symbolic gesture, a moment of clarity, or an echo of memory. Natural elements (water, sky, trees) mix with contributions from her three daughters, whose drawings add a layer of innocence and emotional texture. This collaboration between mother and children grounds the work in a lived experience of care,

creativity, and transformation.

What elevates the book is its refusal to impose meaning. Instead, it gently invites the viewer to bring their own emotional interpretation. The photographs are spare but rich with metaphor – titles such as *Vulnerable*, *Resilience*, and *Guardian* guide the viewer into a psychological space without dictating it.

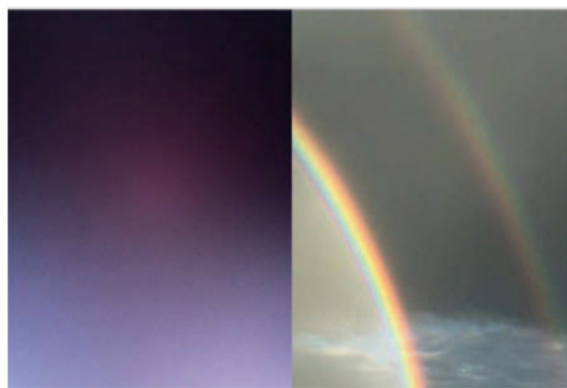
A notable and commendable aspect is the inclusion of audio transcriptions, making the book accessible to visually impaired readers. This rare gesture broadens the idea of what photographic storytelling can be – not just visual, but sensory, empathetic, and imaginative.

While some may find its softness and abstraction elusive, *Equivalents. States of Existence* is a rewarding experience for those willing to slow down. It is photography as reflection rather than documentation; an inner landscape shaped by maternal instinct, memory, and a search for emotional clarity.

Quietly powerful and beautifully produced by Kehrre Verlag, this is a book that lingers – not for what it shows, but for what it evokes.



**Adventure, from the series 'Décollage' 2024**



**View, from the series 'Essence of Life', 2021/24**





# It's good to share

Our favourite photos posted by readers on our social media channels this week

## AP Picture of the Week



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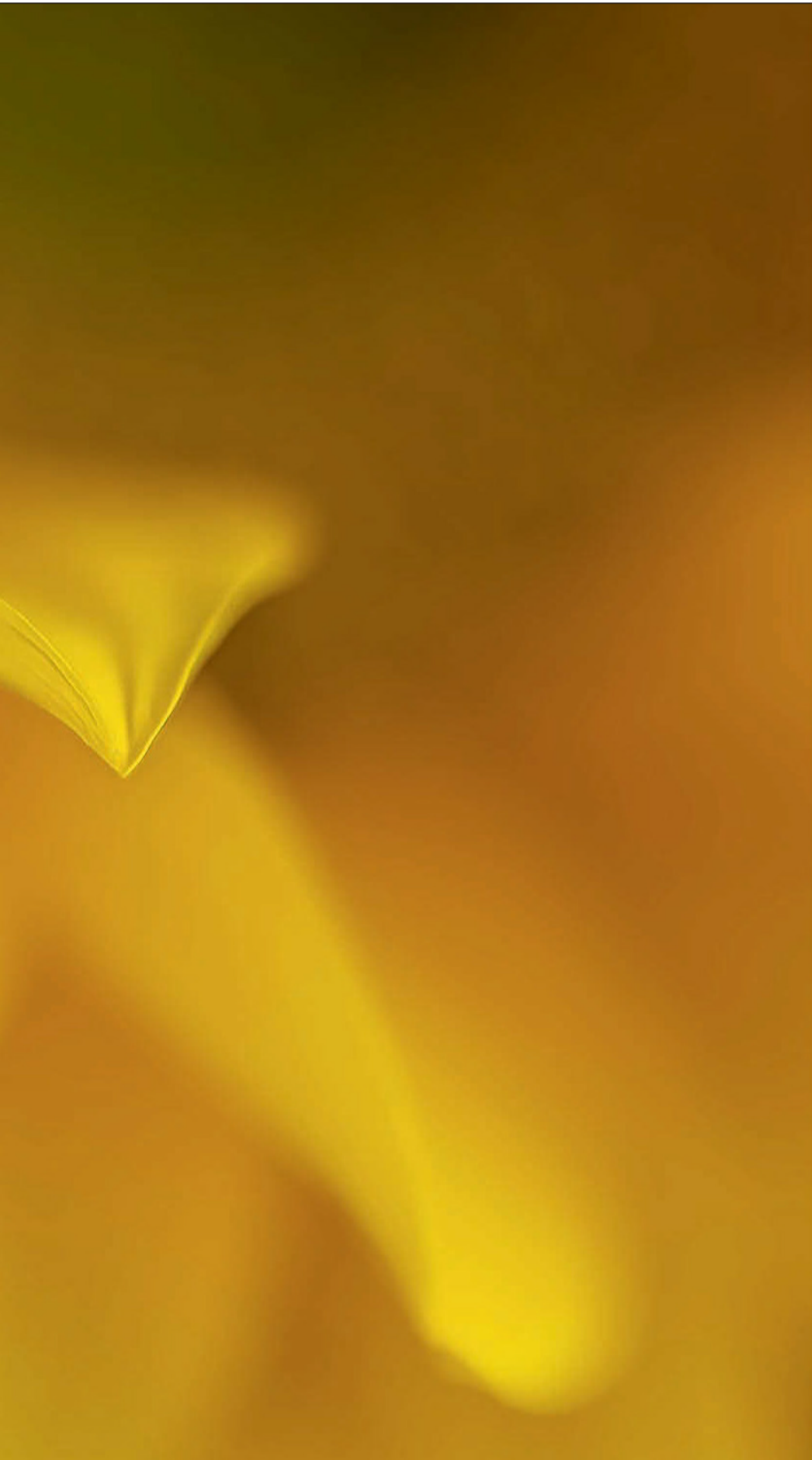
### Yellow Simplicity by Diane Langford

Olympus OM-1, 30mm macro lens, 10mm extension tube, 1/125sec at f/2.8, ISO 250

'I have always been interested in the small details of images, so flowers, especially their petals, provide me with the perfect subject to focus on.'

Instagram: [@cameracaptrephotography](https://www.instagram.com/cameracaptrephotography)









**It's good  
to share**

## Finding Lunch by Helen Cherry

OM System OM-1 Mk 2,  
300mm lens with 1:4 converter,  
1/1000sec at f/8, ISO 640

'This pretty ringed plover was taken when I was sitting, doubled over to get a low viewpoint, on a beach on North Uist in Scotland's Outer Hebrides. I'm mostly a wildlife photographer, spending a lot of time sitting on the ground, and years of practising Pilates comes in very handy!'

**Instagram:** @helenjcherry

**Website:**

[helensphotomania.wordpress.com](http://helensphotomania.wordpress.com)



# We also liked...



## Arctic Fogbow by Robert Hunt

Panasonic Lumix G80,  
Panasonic Leica DG Vario-  
Elmarit 8-18mm f/2.8-4  
ASPH, 1/2500sec at f/4, ISO  
200, 16mm

'Before my trip to Svalbard I'd imagined what I might see, and I'll be honest, a fogbow hadn't remotely entered my head. I'm not sure I'd even heard of one before. But, north of 81 degrees latitude (81°41.6'N), among the sea ice, we were treated to this spectacular phenomenon.'

**Instagram and Threads:**

**@roberthunt7**

**Foto: @roberthunt**



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# Telling stories

The RPS's IPE 166th edition is an accessible and diverse celebration of contemporary photography from around the world. **David Clark** talks to Curator and Exhibitions Manager Billy-Jay Stoneman

The Royal Photographic Society's International Photography Exhibition, first held in 1854, is the longest-running photographic exhibition in the world. It's now in its 166th edition (having missed out a few years along the way) and remains a wide-ranging and diverse celebration of contemporary photography in all its forms.

This year's exhibition, on display for the first time at the prestigious Saatchi Gallery in London, will show 113 prints by 51 photographers from 24 countries. The images have been painstakingly selected from work submitted by over 4,000 participants worldwide.

'The IPE is always really popular as it includes such a wide selection of images,' explains the RPS's curator and exhibitions manager, Billy-Jay Stoneman. 'The themes of the show change every year and reflect what people are talking about – not just in the art world, but the world in general. This year, we're really excited to have such an amazing venue in central London to showcase the exhibition.'

## Submissions and selection process

One of the distinctive features of the IPE is its inclusivity. It is open to everyone, whether professional or amateur, working in every genre. Everyone can enter one single image for free, and those who want to can enter additional paid-for-entry images. There are discounts for students and groups who might not be able to afford entry otherwise.

The selection panel always consists of notable figures



in contemporary photography. This year, it was comprised of Yuxing Chen, a Chinese artist based in the UK and recipient of the IPE 165 award; Kalpesh Lathigra, a British Indian artist and senior lecturer at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London; Anne Nwakalor, a British Nigerian curator, writer, photo editor and founding editor of *No! Wahala* magazine; Nicola Shipley, a curator, producer and mentor as well as co-founder and director of GRAIN projects; and photography consultant and historian, Dr Michael Pritchard.

As each photographer could potentially submit several images for consideration, there were something like 10,000 images in total to be considered for inclusion. The first part of the selection process took around a month to complete. Everyone who was shortlisted at that point was invited to send in prints, which could be ordered at discounted rates from digital printing service and exhibition partner theprintspace. Those prints, together with supporting text sent with the images, were reviewed during two days of print selection by the selection panel.

With such a broad range of images being entered, what criteria did the judging panel use for selecting images? 'Because it's open and there are no

**Left: Felipe Barrera Aguirre, traditional Chinampero farmer and agroecology teacher by Mat Hay**

**Right: The Tangential by Aidan Murgatroyd**

**Bottom: Angelo with his goats, near Otranto, Salento (2022) by Murray Ballard**







**From the IPE 166  
Award series Fuge by  
Lydia Goldblatt**

**Left: Lick**

**Right: Flame**

**Middle: Bone**

**Bottom: Folds**

**Far right: Kalle by  
Peter Holiday**

## **Lydia Goldblatt**

### **Winner of the IPE 166 Award**

Goldblatt has been chosen to receive the IPE 166 Award for her series *Fuge*. She is a British photographic artist born in 1978, whose work has been exhibited at prestigious venues including the National Portrait Gallery. Her previous series, *Still Here* (2013), was about her father, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease, and the period following his death. *Fuge* explores her experience of motherhood at a time of major transition in her life.

#### **Why did you choose the title *Fuge*?**

'I chose the word 'Fuge' as it holds two meanings; it refers to a musical composition with interweaving and repeating elements, where each layer adds to the whole to create a complex narrative. It also refers to a dissociative state or loss of self. Both meanings encompass the transformations that accompany motherhood and loss, and the personal and collective resonances of daily domestic life.'

#### **What inspired the work and how did you go about exploring the subject?**

'I worked on *Fuge* over four years, building a collection of photographs, and then writing – about loss and abundance, losing a mother and becoming a mother. My first book, *Still Here*, was about the landscape of love and loss generated by my father's death. The cultural silence around these emotions, the difficulty of navigating and giving voice to them, made me want to suffuse them in my work with colour and light. But when I became a mother, I found myself unable to make pictures. Somehow it was so much that it was too much.

'After my own mother died, I began to photograph again. It felt a bit like the immersion of new motherhood, as I began to explore the experience of loss, grief and love – both the light and the dark, the negative and positive. Perhaps because it is so difficult to explain, I wanted to be honest about what I was struggling with, about the feelings of claustrophobia and alienation, as much as intimacy and love. These are

feelings so often hidden by mothers, so often silenced as unacceptable. In this way, the work became a challenge to the intergenerational repetitions, archetypes and taboos of motherhood.'

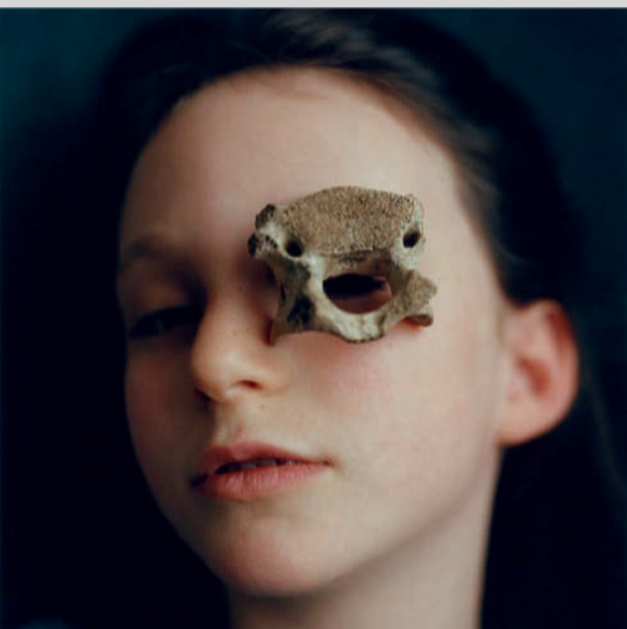
#### **Please talk about one image as representative of *Fuge***

'*Fuge* is rooted in the domestic space of care, and foregrounds the idea and role of "mothering". However, as the mother and the photographer, I am not often in the images – both because I am the person behind the camera, but also because a huge part of this work is about questioning who and what I am in this role of the mother, and what happens to women and their identities when they become mothers. In my picture titled *Lick*, that role is central. It holds both tenderness and desire (going both ways between mother and child), but also ambivalence, possession and surrender. It is a conversation between these paradoxical states.'

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To see more of Lydia's work, visit [lydiagoldblatt.com](http://lydiagoldblatt.com)





categories, we ask the selectors to look at the images that capture their imagination, that inspire them and elicit an emotional response,' explains Stoneman.

'Ultimately, the aim is to have a diverse and engaging exhibition at the end of the selection. The selectors always come from varied backgrounds in the industry and they always change for each edition of the IPE, which makes each edition of the exhibition unique every year.'

### Final selection

The predominant themes in the images chosen for this year's exhibition reflect society's current concerns and preoccupations. 'Stories of identity, the environment and the movement of people are really strong themes and matters of concern that are around us all the time,' Stoneman comments. 'They are obviously subjects that the photographers feel really passionate about.'

'In the two days where we have the final print selection in person, there are lots of discussions and careful consideration about what work should be included in the exhibition. By the end of the two





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**Above: Family Portrait by Ville Niiranen**

**Right: Our Lady of Fatima by Ana Paganini**



days, the selectors have worked together and listened to each other's views and they decide which images work really nicely together or whether certain subjects need more representation. Some years the selection is dominated by portraiture, while others focus more on environmental themes. This year there is a particularly balanced and diverse range of themes.'

She continues, 'The standard of entries was incredibly high, and I know the selectors faced a real challenge in choosing the final images. What continues to inspire me every year is the unwavering enthusiasm of the selectors. They approach the process with such care and passion and are really involved and engaged in uncovering the stories behind each print and selecting an inspiring exhibition.'

The selection in IPE 166 ranges from black & white contemporary portraiture to colourful botanical studies and still-life abstracts to wildlife images, shot on equipment from cutting-edge digital technology to large-format glass-plate analogue kit.

Projects by two photographers have been chosen for special commendation: the winner of the IPE 166 Award, Lydia Goldblatt, and the Under-30s IPE Award winner, Keerthana Kunnath (see separate





**Above: Men playing cards, Muro Leccese, Salento (2022) by Murray Ballard**

**Right: About to leave by Timon Benson**





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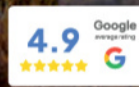
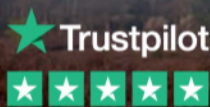
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**From the under-30s  
IPE 166 Award series  
Not What You Saw by  
Keerthana Kunnath**

**Left: Boomika 2**

**Right: Sandra**

**Bottom: Aishu**

## **Keerthana Kunnath** Winner of the under-30s IPE 166 Award

London-based photographer Keerthana Kunnath has been awarded the under-30 IPE award in recognition of her series *Not What You Saw*. Born in Calicut, Kerala, South India and based in London, she holds an MA from the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London.

### **What inspired your series, *Not What You Saw*?**

'The idea for *Not What You Saw* began when I came across one of the bodybuilders by chance on social media. She immediately stood out, she was nothing like what I had seen or expected. The title is a kind of literal translation of the thought I had at that moment. These women were challenging everything that I'd been conditioned to believe about how women should look, speak, or behave.

'Growing up in the region I'm from, there was always a clear, often rigid idea of what femininity should look like. These women were unapologetically breaking those norms, and that disruption really moved me. It inspired me to explore their world more

deeply and ultimately led to the creation of this body of work.'

### **What did you aim to achieve with the work?**

'My goal with this work was to create awareness and foster appreciation, both locally and globally for women in sports. While the series specifically focuses on female bodybuilders, it also opens up broader conversations about femininity and the societal expectations placed on women, especially in India.

'Female athletes here often face not only financial struggles but also deeply rooted social stigmas. In many communities, women pursuing sports, particularly those that demand physical strength, are judged for defying traditional gender norms. They're often discouraged by their families or pressured to prioritise marriage and domestic roles over their athletic dreams.

'Through this work, I wanted to challenge those perceptions and to advocate for systemic change, including increased financial support, corporate sponsorships, grassroots development, and most importantly, a shift in how society views women in sport. Only then can talented female athletes in India truly thrive and compete on an equal footing.'

### **How many female bodybuilders did you photograph and how did you meet and choose your subjects?**

'I photographed around ten female bodybuilders for the series. I initially connected with a few of them through Instagram, and from there, I met more women during regional and national bodybuilding competitions. It was a gradual process of building trust and finding individuals whose stories and presence resonated with the vision of the project.'

### **Please choose one image as representative of *Not What You Saw***

'My photograph "Boomika 2" shows female bodybuilder Bhumika against a quintessential Kerala backdrop. To me, this image encapsulates the core message, that being muscular doesn't diminish femininity.

'It challenges the rigid binaries we've been taught: that strength and softness, power and grace, cannot coexist in the same body. This photograph calls on us to rethink and reshape cultural constructs of gender and beauty. Bhumika, like the other women in the series, embodies the idea that womanhood is expansive and that strength, elegance, and muscularity are not mutually exclusive.'





To see more of Keerthana's work, visit [keerthanakunnath.info](http://keerthanakunnath.info)

[www.amateurphotographer.com](http://www.amateurphotographer.com)



**Above: Fabian,  
Equestrian  
Eventer by John  
Boaz**

➤ sections on these pages).

What does Stoneman ultimately hope that IPE 166 visitors will take away with them after seeing the exhibition? She says, 'I hope visitors are struck by how diverse the exhibition is and how expansive and expressive photography itself can be, especially in the contemporary photography world.'

'It's a great opportunity to view such a wide range of styles and approaches of photography. Each image and series of images is an artist using photography to express their passions, their voice and their stories and what is important to them. Ultimately, at its heart, it's about storytelling.'

'I also hope it will inspire photographers, whatever the stage of their career, to enter next year's IPE, because of how accessible it is. Many of the photographers who submitted and are included in the exhibition have never had their work shown in such a prestigious exhibition before. The RPS IPE is a great platform to launch a photographer's career.'



The RPS International Photography Exhibition 166 will be on show at Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York's HQ, King's Road, London SW3 4RY, from 5 August until 20 September. Open 10am-6pm. Entry free. Call for entries for the RPS International Photography Exhibition 167 opens on 2 September 2025.

See [rps.org/ipe167](http://rps.org/ipe167)





Attractive colour rendition, wide dynamic range and easily accessed controls make the X-T5 great for quick but effective portraits  
X-T5, 1/125sec at f/5, 31.9mm, ISO 200

# Fujifilm X-T5: an X-cellent all-rounder

As Deputy Editor **Geoff Harris** discovers, the Fujifilm X-T5 ticks many boxes if you are looking for a versatile body that can cope with a wide range of genres and shooting situations

A lot of enthusiast photographers like to try a range of genres – wildlife, landscape, travel, macro and street being perennially popular examples. So buying a versatile ‘all-rounder’ camera makes a lot of sense, and the Fujifilm X-T5 is a great example.

First and foremost, it’s a proper ‘photographer’s camera.’ This isn’t to say that the Fujifilm X-T5 is short on video features – far from it, as you can record 6.2K 30p / 4K 60p video, which will be plenty for most people. But the X-T5 is a very tactile and intuitive camera for stills photography, with great handling and analogue-style controls that fall easily to hand.

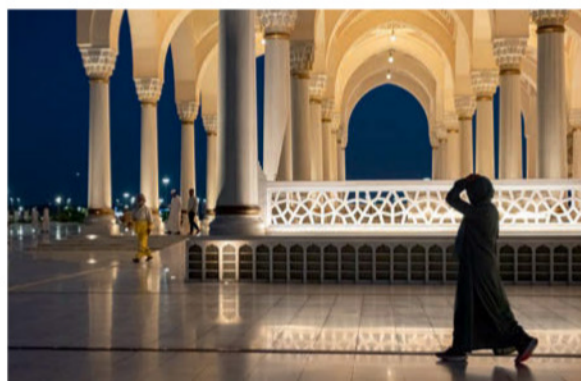
Furthermore, if you feel you are somehow missing out by not using a full-frame camera, the Fujifilm X-T5 puts such concerns to rest. Its 40.2MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS 5 HR sensor delivers very high resolution images, as we’ll see later. It is fast too. You can also shoot at 15 frames per second using the mechanical shutter, or at 20fps using the electronic shutter with a 1.29x crop

(which gives 24MP images).

The electronic shutter also offers super-fast shutter speeds up to 1/180,000sec. And all this comes at a very reasonable price – around £1,499 or \$1,700 body only. Another few hundred pounds gets you the body with a versatile lens, such as the XF 16-80mm.

I particularly love travel and street photography, genres where you don’t want to be lugging heavy camera bodies and lenses around all day. Despite

This is a great camera for travel, and noise is simply not an issue below 12,800  
X-T5, 1/125sec at f/2.8, 33mm, ISO 3200







**Left: Fast-moving events, such as the annual dragon procession in Glastonbury, present no problem for the X-T5. It's a fast, responsive camera**  
X-T5, 1/500sec at f/7.1, 55mm, ISO 200



**Left: The high-resolution sensor gives plenty of options for cropping, even more so with the pixel-shift multi shot mode**  
X-T5, 1/500sec at f/2.8, 28.1mm, ISO 200

**Right: For a pleasing retro look, the Reala Ace film simulation is a great choice. It really suits this old Triumph bike**  
X-T5, 1/500sec at f/2.8, 34mm, ISO 200

tripod, which is not really my style, but it will be a great option for landscape and architectural photographers.

No less than 20 raw files are generated and you can put together the high-res composite image on your computer. Needless to say, both standard and pixel-shift modes give you a lot of options for cropping.

### Lovely colours and film simulations

This being a Fujifilm, colours look great straight from the camera – vibrant and rich, without any of that lurid overprocessed look you often get with phone shots. I was very happy with the results when shooting JPEG, while raw obviously gives you more latitude at the editing stage. The Fujifilm's wide dynamic range comes in really useful for travel and landscape photography in particular.

I don't have much to say about the camera's low light performance as it's not something I ever needed to worry about. Image stabilisation and fast lenses obviously help, and you can push the ISO as far as 12,800 without noise ever becoming an issue. ISO is easy to adjust via a dedicated dial on the top plate of the camera, or the handy Q menu (which enables you to adjust a lot of other settings too).



featuring a tough magnesium alloy shell and weatherproof construction, the Fujifilm X-T5 weighs only 557g including memory card and battery.

The lenses I've been using with the camera, the XF16-55mm II and XF8-16mm, are light too.



**Left: Landscape photographers will also appreciate the high-res images possible with the X-T5, even more so if you mount the camera on a tripod and use the higher-res pixel shift mode**  
X-T5, 1/800sec at f/11, 49.8mm, ISO 400

### Fast AF

As well as featuring well-placed camera controls, a high-resolution sensor and compact dimensions, the quick reliable autofocus also makes the X-T5 an excellent day-to-day camera.

The AF offers 3.3 million on-sensor phase detection pixels that cover almost the entire frame, while AI subject detection, which can recognise and focus on faces, animals, birds, cars, motorcycles, airplanes and trains, greatly ups your hit rate.

Using the 3-way tilting rear LCD makes no difference to AF performance; this is a godsend for street and travel photographers who want to stay discreet, or if you need to capture architecture shots with minimal distortion.

### Cropping flexibility

Returning to the sensor, if you need even more resolution, there is the option to use a pixel shift mode which takes it up to a whopping 160MP pixel-shift multi-shot mode. You need to mount the X-T5 on a

### Not forgetting video

The Fujifilm X-T5 is designed to make stills shooting as intuitive and enjoyable as possible, evoking the best bits of using a 35mm film camera with all the convenience of digital. But the video performance is right up there too. You can record at 6.2K resolution at 30fps, with 4:2:2 10-bit colour and a 1.23x crop. 4K HQ output is also available at 30fps via 6.2K over-sampling with the same crop, while standard-quality 4K can be output at 60fps from the full sensor width. I don't shoot much video, but I found the X-T5 very easy to use for quick movie-making, and you have plenty of flexibility if you want to try longer-form projects. So to sum up, it's hard to think of a better all-rounder than the X-T5.



### At a glance

- 40.2MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS 5 HR sensor
- ISO 125-12,800 (standard); ISO 64-51,200 (extended)
- 15fps shooting (mechanical shutter, full-resolution); 20fps (electronic shutter, 1.3x crop, 24MP file)
- 6.2K 30p / 4K 60p video
- 5-axis in-body image stabilisation
- 3.69m-dot EVF, 0.8x magnification
- 3in, 1.84m-dot 3-way tilt LCD



**The X-T5 uses the same 40MP APS-C sensor as the X-H2**





#### FACT FILE

## Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*

Musicians: Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Christine McVie, Lindsey Buckingham, Stevie Nicks

Released: 4 February 1977 (US release, Warner Bros), 11 February 1977 (UK release)

Best chart performance: No. 1 in Australia, Canada, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, the UK and the US

Sales: Over 40,000,000 certified sales worldwide

Fascinating fact: *The Chain* is the only *Rumours* track that credits every band member as co-writer. Elements of the song from the band members were spliced together by recording engineers Ken Caillat and Richard Dashut. From 1978 the BBC used the bass and guitar solo part of *The Chain* as the theme tune for its coverage of F1 Grand Prix racing. It was dropped by ITV when it took over the F1 broadcast rights in 1997 but reinstated for the subsequent BBC and C4 coverage

# Rumours

## By Herbert W Worthington III

**Steve Fairclough** on the story behind the mystical image on the cover of a multi-million-selling album by a band in chaos...

**T**he story of Fleetwood Mac's 1977 album *Rumours* is one of broken romances, voluminous cocaine usage, inaccurate press gossip surrounding the band and a set of 11 songs that remain etched on the consciousness

of millions of rock fans around the world. It was 38 minutes and 55 seconds of pure musical gold dust and, despite being Fleetwood Mac's 11th studio album, it quickly sold in truckloads, with over 21 million copies sold in the US alone.

**The iconic front cover of *Rumours* only features band members Mick Fleetwood and Stevie Nicks**

During the recording of the album John and Christine McVie were divorcing, Nicks and Buckingham had a tempestuous relationship and Mick Fleetwood had discovered that his then wife, Jenny, was having an affair with his best friend. Soon afterwards Fleetwood and Nicks would embark on a short-lived affair. Nonetheless the 'romantic' friction between members of the band produced classic tracks like *Go Your Own Way*, *You Make Loving Fun*, *Don't Stop*, *I Don't Want To Know* and *Second Hand News*. Indeed, the late Christine McVie revealed, 'We were all writing songs about each other.'

The original Fleetwood Mac had its roots in the British blues movement of the 1960s but, from 1974 onwards, its then British members – drummer Mick Fleetwood, bassist John McVie and keyboardist Christine McVie – had been joined by the US couple Lindsey





The back cover of the 2013 reissue of the *Rumours* album kept the famous hugging images from the original back cover



The *Rumours Live* album cover from 2023 used the main band image from the LP's original back cover

Buckingham and Stevie Nicks. Buckingham and Nicks had released the album *Buckingham Nicks* in September 1973, on Polydor, with a black & white photograph of a seemingly nude (topless at least) Buckingham and Nicks shot by Jimmy Wachtel, who also designed that album's cover.

Whilst not a hit, the album was important because to demonstrate his engineering abilities the house engineer, Keith Olsen, at Sound City Studios in Los Angeles had played Mick Fleetwood the track *Frozen Love* from the *Buckingham Nicks* LP and Fleetwood liked it. He met Lindsey Buckingham, who was recording at the studio the same day, and invited him to join Fleetwood Mac. Buckingham only agreed on the condition that his girlfriend, Stevie Nicks, could also join the band, describing the duo as 'a package deal'. Thus, from New Year's Eve 1974 the classic line-up of Fleetwood Mac was in place.

### American success

In the *Classic Albums* documentary on *Rumours*, Mick Fleetwood explained, 'the reality was, there had been many incarnations of Fleetwood Mac and this *Rumours*



Herbert 'Herbie' Wheeler Worthington III (1944-2013) was a US photographer known for his iconic portraits of rock and roll musicians and album cover work. He began his photography career in the late 1960s. As well as his work for Fleetwood Mac he shot album covers for Buddy Miles, Paris, Jesse Cutler, 20/20 and Lita Ford. He also ran an antique store, House of Worthington, in Los Angeles and had a website that sold Stevie Nicks posters, prints, calendars, and T-shirts. In November 2013 Worthington died from heart disease, aged 69.

incarnation was, without any question, a huge mindset deal involving success, a huge amount of music put out and the only resemblance to that was the original Fleetwood Mac with Peter Green, which was very short-lived. We'd had all the number one hits, screaming girls and stuff like that and come down from it and then come over to America and had a period where we were feeling it out and then, suddenly, again [it went boom].'

The first album Buckingham and Nicks recorded with Fleetwood Mac was 1975's *Fleetwood Mac*, which spawned the hit singles *Over My Head*, *Say You Love Me*, *Landslide* and Stevie Nicks's classic composition *Rhiannon*. The cover of the *Fleetwood Mac* album featured a black & white image of Mick Fleetwood and John McVie shot by Herbert W Worthington III – the man who would also shoot the cover of *Rumours*. McVie was seen juggling with a crystal ball, whilst Fleetwood was carrying a cane and sipping what appeared to be a glass of wine – both men were in front of an ornate door frame. It was a simple, stark, yet striking album cover. Thus, both the musical and

artistic foundations for *Rumours* were firmly in place.

Herbert W Worthington III (he added the III himself) was a largely self-taught photographer who was directly connected with the music business by dint of the fact that he lived with the blues guitarist Buddy Miles. A friend had given Worthington a 35mm film SLR camera and Jimi Hendrix's personal photographer, Ron Raffaeli, had helped him to develop his photography skills. Worthington became a close friend of Hendrix and travelled with him on a 1969 tour. Having shot the cover of the *Fleetwood Mac* album, Worthington was perhaps the obvious choice to tackle the *Rumours* shoot.

### All about balls

The *Rumours* album shoot took place in California in 1976. Some of it was shot during band rehearsals. Worthington took numerous shots of the five members of the band together, but these were reserved for the back cover of the album. In a clear echo of the *Fleetwood Mac* album cover, Worthington decided to focus on just two members of the band for the front cover of *Rumours* – in this case Mick





One of the outtakes from the *Rumours* cover shoot shows Mick Fleetwood and Stevie Nicks in a different pose

➤ Fleetwood and Stevie Nicks. A crystal ball, like that juggled by John McVie on the cover of *Fleetwood Mac*, again appeared, alongside the famous dangling balls of Mick Fleetwood. They were a lucky charm for the drummer, who had originally appropriated them from a lavatory chain in a bar during the band's early days, and always had them hanging from his drumkit at every Fleetwood Mac gig.

In 2009 Mick Fleetwood told *Maui Time Weekly*, 'I must admit I had a couple of glasses of English ale – and came out of the toilet with these. I was very destructive – I ripped them off the toilet and had them hanging down between my legs. I started off as a blues player. The whole ethic of a lot of blues music is slightly suggestive. And suitably, I walked out on stage with these two lavatory chains with these wooden balls hanging down, and after that it just stuck.' Fleetwood's original set of

balls were lost on the road, but he now uses a replica. 'I won't say they're as old as me, but – it starts getting into X-rated commentary here – my balls are quite old.'

### Spontaneous hugs

In the *Classic Albums* documentary Herbert Worthington explained the significance of the images on the back cover of the *Rumours* album. 'On the back we have the group shot, which you need, but the magic about the back, and one of the high points of all the images on the inner sleeve and the entire package for me, is this top series of photos that we did at a rehearsal. When John [McVie] walked across to hug Lindsey [Buckingham]. At this particular time nobody was getting along a lot – with the divorces – and, if you notice, you see that Lindsey is a little bit put off because he doesn't know [what was happening].'

Worthington added, 'This wasn't



staged – John just spontaneously walked across and hugged him. When John walked across I just kept clicking and talking and, when he hugged him, Christine [McVie] took a hold of Stevie [Nicks] and poor Mick [Fleetwood] was out in the cold. Everybody was hugging everybody and poor Mick got left out in the rain. This [the main back cover image], to me, is just a shot; it's not a big deal to me. This [the

Another outtake from the *Rumours* cover shoot shows Mick Fleetwood and Stevie Nicks looking straight at the camera

## THE PANEL ON RUMOURS



### Christie Goodwin

The cover features a minimalist, b&w photo of Mick Fleetwood and Stevie Nicks in elegant, theatrical poses. Its simplicity contrasts with the music's emotional depth, evoking a sense of mystique and timelessness while highlighting the band's dramatic, almost mythic personas.



### David Montgomery

I love Fleetwood Mac. I've met Mick and he was charming. I love the joke of the hanging balls between his legs and Stevie doing her little dance of the black witch. The concept, using b&w photography in a very simple style on a white background, creates a somewhat defiant rock and roll image.



### Denis O'Regan

There's an organic spontaneity to this photo, though it's a studio session. Fleetwood's bold pose and dangling orbs are amusing, whilst a cherubic Nicks embodies the persona of Rhiannon, gazing into a crystal ball. The two aspects of this image reflect the nature of the album.



series of hugging shots] is a big deal because it's an expression of love as this [the front cover] is.'

On the cover of *Rumours* Stevie Nicks is said to be in character as the Welsh witch Rhiannon from the 1975 song of the same name, which she penned. Nicks took the inspiration for the Rhiannon character from Mary Bartlet Leader's novel *Triad*, but didn't know that

**Below: Before *Rumours*, the 1975 album Fleetwood Mac only featured two of the band's members – drummer Mick Fleetwood and bassist John McVie – and was shot by Herbert Worthington**



Rhiannon originated from a Welsh goddess until 1978. In other words, whilst she may have been in the character of Rhiannon, she didn't know the full background of that character at the time of the *Rumours* shoot.

A small footstool upon which Fleetwood placed one of his feet was brought to the shoot by Worthington, but it's unclear as to why he did so. It does, however, bring a clear dynamic to the pose of the cover and allowed Nicks to wrap one of her legs around one of Fleetwood's. Given that Fleetwood is 6 feet 6 inches tall, it was a very useful prop.

### Reissues and artwork

*Rumours* has been reissued in various formats and with various variants of the original artwork and photography. A Deluxe six-disc reissue of *Rumours* came out on 28 January 2013 – it included a remastered version of the original album with the track *Silver Springs* added, a dozen live recordings and 16 unreleased tracks from the album sessions. On 8 September 2023 a live album of the *Rumours* tour, *Rumours Live*, was released. The cover of the live album used one of the images of

the group from Herbert Worthington's *Rumours* album shoot.

Herbert Worthington went on to work closely with Stevie Nicks and shot the covers of her first two solo albums – 1981's *Bella Donna* and 1982's *The Wild Heart*. His other cover photography work included that for his friend Buddy Miles, Neil Diamond, rock trio Paris, pop band 20/20 and the legendary ex-Runaways female guitarist Lita Ford. He died, aged 69, of heart disease in November 2013.

Of *Rumours*, Mick Fleetwood said, 'It was the most important album that Fleetwood Mac ever made because it allowed this band to continue for years and years and years after it. I really feel that if we hadn't made that album, we may have hit the ultimate brick wall and literally stopped.'

With the death of Christine McVie, aged 79, in November 2022 any chance of the classic Fleetwood Mac line-up ever appearing live or on record again was gone. However, both their incredible music and the iconic album cover imagery shot by Herbert W Worthington III continue to live on in the hearts and minds of tens of millions of people around the world.

AP



This rare silver gelatin print from the *Rumours* shoot, hand-tinted by Herbert Worthington, sold at a Christie's auction in December 2014 for \$7,825



The cover of the 1973 album *Buckingham Nicks* also featured two band members in black & white – it was shot and designed by Jimmy Wachtel

© JIMMY WACHTEL/POLYDOR





ALL IMAGES © DAVID HOFFMAN

# A life in protest

Cuffed, kicked, and camera in hand – David Hoffman's new book *Protest!* is the result of 40 years documenting the fight for rights and the force against it. **Peter Dench** finds out more





**Above: Criminal Justice And Public Order Bill Protests London, 24 July 1994.**

**The fountains in Trafalgar Square. People had come to dance and party in protest at the proposed law, not to confront police**

**Left: March For Social Justice, Trafalgar Square, London, 12 April 1997.**

**Protesters confront police lines in front of St Martin-in-the-Fields church on Trafalgar Square**

**T**erraced house in a gentrified part of east London. Red front door, blue window frames. Inside, it's cool – in temperature and temperament – and packed with decades of lived history. On every shelf, and clustered across the table, a porcelain police force stares back: teapot coppers, teacup coppers, jars of Plod and a wind-up PC Tossler doing what no law officer should be seen doing. A surreal shrine to the institution that has shaped – and challenged – much of David Hoffman's working life.

David, 79, is dressed in dark shorts, socks, moccasin-style slippers, checked shirt completely unbuttoned. He looks gentle and resolute, a man who has long known his purpose. He bought the house in 1979 after years of

evictions and squatting, moving in full-time in 1984. The aim was simple: somewhere he couldn't be kicked out of again. Stability, so he could continue his life's work – documenting protest and photographing power with tenacity and an unwavering lens.

Hoffman has been at the heart of some of the UK's most turbulent demonstrations, often risking arrest and assault to document moments others might turn away from. His images aren't just a record; they're a resource, a challenge, sometimes even evidence. He doesn't consider himself an activist, but his photographs have become vital fuel for social awareness and legal scrutiny.

We sat down to talk about the dangers and disciplines of protest photography, the value of bearing witness, and how to survive – creatively and physically – amid chaos.

**AP: From rag-week arrests to headline-making coverage: you mentioned being arrested aged 17 – how did that initial spark of activism shape your photographic voice?**

DH: I've always felt constrained by authority – even if I wasn't consciously aware of it, I resented it and tried to avoid or subvert it. Rag week was an opportunity, but the photography was just a hobby and incidental. As I say in the book, it didn't shape me. I missed the pointing finger of fate and went on to live in marginal jobs and places. But yes, it added to my mistrust of authority.

**AP: Your new book spans four decades of protest images — what patterns across time surprised you most?**

DH: It took me a while to realise, but the biggest shift is in how our democratic rights have been eroded. In the 70's you could decide to form a group and walk where you wanted in protest. Now, even the T-shirt you wear can put you in jail.

**Gear and Technique**

**AP: You've spoken about carrying a compact, amateur-looking camera in tense moments.**

**What models or specs would you recommend for beginners shooting protests today?**

DH: I'm too out of touch to name specific models – I bought my last cameras nine years ago. But I think there are two different questions here. For tense moments, something like a mobile phone is compact and inconspicuous. For beginners photographing protests, a small mirrorless camera is probably the way to go. Look at what experienced photographers are using.

**AP: What are your essentials in the kitbag**





➤ **– that every amateur should have on a protest shoot?**

DH: Helmet. Boots. Minimal first-aid – something to stop bleeding and to patch minor wounds. There are usually plenty of pro medics around. Shin pads. Workable gloves, with over gloves for downtime. String. Gaffer tape. Snack bars or food. Water – obviously. Spare cards and batteries. A bust card. ID with next of kin info. A chamois cloth (and silica gel at home). Spare filters, perhaps. Notebook and pencil or pen. And a book to read in the cell.

**Framing and Storytelling**

**AP: How do you train your eye in the heat of the moment to frame a photo that resonates beyond the chaos?**

DH: No idea! The process of seeing, framing and shooting is often faster than thinking. It's like smash and grab. Well below consciousness. Maybe I'm seeking a coherent arrangement of elements that expresses resistance, determination, vision, desperation – but that's analysis after the fact. Don't forget, almost every photo I take is no good. Only a handful from hundreds will survive.

**AP: For amateurs: how do you spot that iconic moment – the banner wave, the clash, the quiet defiance – amongst so much visual noise?**

DH: Shoot a hell of a lot of photographs. And look at a hell of a lot of photographs. Rinse and repeat.

**Risks and Safety**

**AP: You've been kicked, detained, had kit grabbed... did those experiences change how you approached a live event?**

DH: In obvious ways. I now use a Bodycam or audio recorder. I try to understand the law. I carry more robust kit – back in the day, my Nikon F3 and Metz 45 flash were ideal. In the '80s, I had a slippy nylon car coat that let me slide through crowds like magic! I wear padded or protective clothing – gloves, boots – and make sure all kit is well-attached, with zip pockets and nothing to snag. I stay aware, try to spot aggression early and keep myself out of reach. Always keep in sight of a mate – and have at least one exit. Don't just look through the viewfinder. Be invisible. When you need to interact, be light, supportive, cooperative – and sneaky. Cops don't change their minds. If they say no, smile sweetly and find another way.

**AP: What's your advice on staying neutral, avoiding entanglement with protesters or police – yet still getting close enough to shoot impact?**

DH: Staying neutral is about holding on to a Zen attitude. Just observe. A bemused smile and a quiet move-on is a great way to deflect engagement. Drop the judgement and see what's happening. A peaceful, observational mindset is best.

**Context and Ethics**

**AP: What role do you think protest photography must play now – historical record, moral witness, legal tool? And how can today's hobbyists contribute responsibly?**

DH: All of the above. But for photography to play those roles, the images must be seen – with proper metadata. Dumping your whole shoot on Pinterest is no good. Edit. Twice. Caption everything. Then researchers, lawyers –



**Bishopsgate, London, 1 And 2 April 2009.**  
**A bloodied and frightened victim of the policing is surrounded by TSG officers**



**Above: Student Protests Against The Cuts, London, 24 November 2010.**  
**A protester on top of a van left as a set-up by police Forward Intelligence Teams placed to film the protesters attacking the abandoned police van in Whitehall**



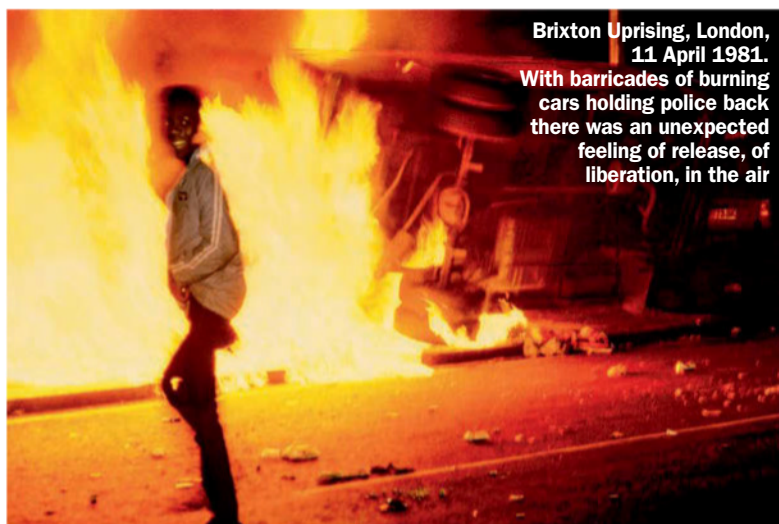
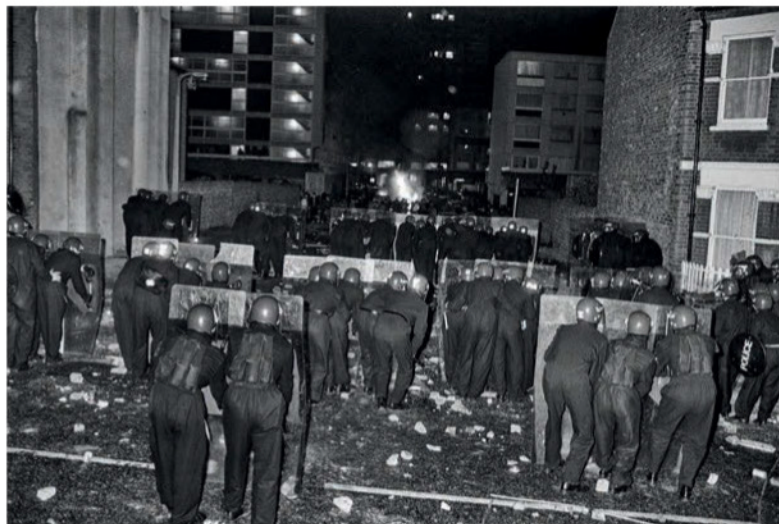
**Left: Outrage! Kiss-In, Westminster, London, 16 April 1992.**  
**Outside a police station in Westminster, at a Kiss-In demo organised by Outrage! calling for the homosexual age of consent to be the same as that for heterosexuals, a protester dressed as a nun confesses to having had underage sex**



**Right: Hackney, London, 8 February 1988. Mrs PJ stands steadfast and determined for a photograph after being attacked by local racists who threw white paint in her face as she left her council flat**

**Below: Broadwater Farm Estate, Tottenham, London, 6 October 1985.**

**A mass of police in full riot gear are unable to make their way into the estate against a blizzard of missiles and petrol bombs hurled at them**



**Brixton Uprising, London, 11 April 1981. With barricades of burning cars holding police back there was an unexpected feeling of release, of liberation, in the air**

even the security services – can access what they need. Edit again if needed.

As for hobbyists: this might not be the *Amateur Photographer* answer, but I don't think you can contribute meaningfully unless you put serious work in. A hobbyist who produces a good, honest, informative, complete, visually well-made record of a complex event isn't really a hobbyist – they're a pro. Yes, there are rare one-offs, like the US banker who filmed the Met killing Ian Tomlinson during the G20. But they are exceptions.

**AP: One tip for photographing protests safely and effectively?**

DH: Always have an exit. And use it before you have to.

**AP: Is there a protest photograph you wish you'd never taken – or one that still haunts you?**

DH: I don't do haunted. I can't think of one I wish I hadn't taken. If I had time to think, I probably wouldn't have taken it. If not, it wasn't a choice. There are some I've chosen not to keep – but that's always a personal, circumstantial decision.

**AP: What's your advice on choosing between colour and black & white in a charged moment?**

DH: Other than for hobbyists or artists, it's all colour now, surely? For journalism or documentary, converting a digital image to black & white feels fake to me. I've done it occasionally, but my photographs are made to illustrate other people's work. If they need colour or black & white, I'm fine with that.

**AP: How do you process difficult emotions after witnessing violence through the lens?**

DH: I've never struggled with that. I don't suppress my emotions – mostly, the camera dampens them. But when I weep, I weep. When I'm scared, I'm scared. I feel it, then I let it go.

**AP: Having lived a life in protest — anything you want to mention?**

DH: When I started, I was squatting – that made it possible to survive. Getting started now is much harder. You won't get good until you've done a lot of work. You won't earn a living until you're good – not just at taking pictures, but at the business, human relations, research, editing, desk work. And if you have to earn money elsewhere, you won't get enough practice to improve. You'll need to be really serious to get through that. Plus, you'll be competing with tens of thousands of phone and amateur images flooding the market with cheap or free content.

The recent proscription of Palestine Action — under the pretext of spray-painting — marks another step in Britain's drift toward repression. It gives police the ability to define any trace of sympathy with Palestine Action, or any direct action, as 'connected to terrorism'. That's dangerous ground.

AP



*Protest!* by David Hoffman is published by Image & Reality. To purchase, visit: [www.imageandreality.co.uk](http://www.imageandreality.co.uk)



# Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them

1



## Carolyn Collins, Christchurch, New Zealand



### About Carolyn

Carolyn is an ex-teacher and member of Nature Photography Society NZ.

Instagram @carolyncollins7056

### How did you get into photography?

Around 20 years ago, one of my friends belonged to a camera club and I went on a few field trips with them; and ended up joining my local camera club. I progressed up the grades, and then left that club to join the Nature Photography Society of New Zealand as they have great national field trips but without competitions.

### What do you love about photography?

It has helped me to cope with the grief

of losing my mother, my son, a partner, and the destruction of my city and home in a deadly earthquake. Sadness and problems fade into the background when on a photo walk or enjoying a shoot in a garden.

### Favourite subjects

My first love was landscape because New Zealand and my local areas have incredible locations, but these days I'm more into intimate landscapes, ICM (Intentional Camera Movement), flowers etc. I've made books of my flower, ICM and field trip images and have eight images on my walls.

### How and where do you find inspiration?

My guilty secret is spending countless hours online, watching YouTube videos

### After the Storm

1 I was travelling home from an ICM workshop with a US tutor when a rainstorm blew through. This is very typical of this area close to NZ's highest mountain. The light was very bright but Lightroom came to the rescue.

Panasonic Lumix FZ1000

of my favourite photographers or drooling over their websites or Instagram/Facebook images.

### What was your first camera?

As I'm nearly 80, it was probably an Instamatic.

### Current kit

A bridge camera which is now eight years old, the Panasonic Lumix FZ1000. And these days I mostly use my Samsung phone because editing is so fast with Snapseed. I was surprised by how amazing these photos look on a big screen.

### Favourite lens

My bridge camera has a 25-400mm lens which I mostly use at around 200-400. If the subject is closer, I nearly always use my phone





## Reader Portfolio winners receive a one-year subscription to a **Gold Portfolio Series website** worth £300. UK domain name included.

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### Submit your images

See page 3 for details of how to submit. You could see your photos here in a future issue! Please note: the prize is subject to change.



### Rapaki Jetty

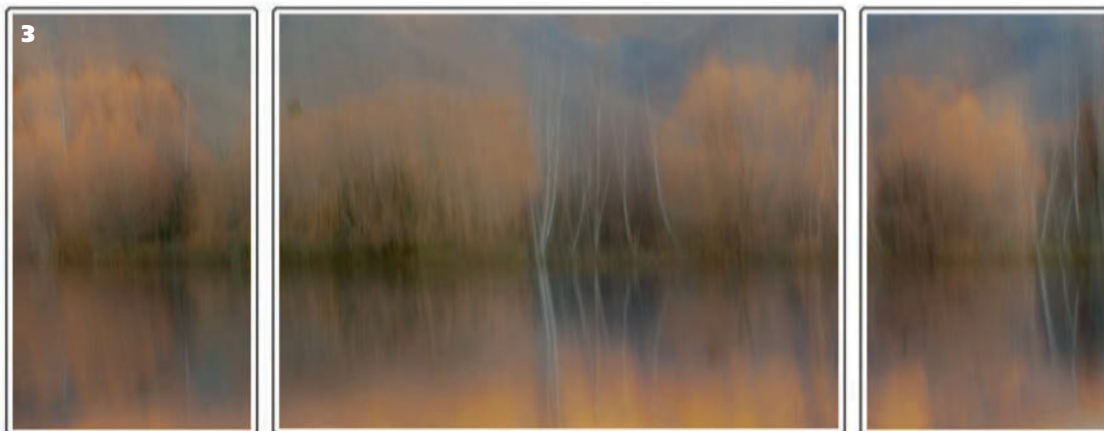
**2** I had stopped on the road overlooking Lyttelton harbour near my city and noticed two people on the jetty, so I waited till they moved apart for a better composition.

Panasonic Lumix FZ1000

### Autumn

**3** A friend showed me how to make a triptych from one of my panoramas. NZ forests are evergreen so we don't have a lot of autumn colour in the countryside but these ponds have silver birch and larch trees.

Panasonic Lumix FZ1000



### Beach Walk

**4** Fine weather, no wind and low tide = perfect conditions for a beach walk and some photography. The tide here doesn't go out very far at all compared with photos I've seen of beaches in the UK, so I make the most of actually having a decent amount of beach to walk on.

Samsung Galaxy A52 phone





➤ because I can get really close with it.

#### Favourite accessory

My walking boots and a parka – a necessity as NZ weather can deliver four seasons in one day.

#### Dream purchase

As I'm not into gear, this would be a trip to Tasmania.

#### What software do you use for editing?

I used to use Lightroom, but now I use Affinity and Snapseed on my phone.

#### Favourite photographers

Kim Grant, Franka Gabler, Morag Paterson, Manon Paardenkooper, Debi Shapiro, Margaret Soraya, Nigel Danson, Mark Littlejohn, Alister Benn, Trevor Cole, Michael McKenna, Mali Davies, Tom Lowe, Bill Ward; and two English, now NZ-resident women who've become close friends, Noelle Bennett and Mary Livingston.

#### Favourite photography books

Sebastião Salgado's *Africa*, which

I recently reread at the library after hearing of his passing. Such an emotive, shocking, thought-provoking collection of images which stay with you for many days. I've never been so moved by any other images.

#### Favourite tips

Join a club to learn camera basics and how to compose a good photo. Find a photographer whose images you love and work out what the appeal is, then imitate that style. It will probably not remain your favourite style or genre – but remember that all the great photographers were beginners at some point. No one started out knowing what they now know.

AP

#### In the City

**5** As nearly the whole city centre was destroyed in the earthquake, new buildings have a height restriction. This one is very photogenic.

Samsung Galaxy A52

#### Walking Through Walls

**6** This art work is beside a second level walkway which is a shame as not many know of its existence. There are often coins in the outstretched hand.

Samsung Galaxy A52

#### Dried Kelp

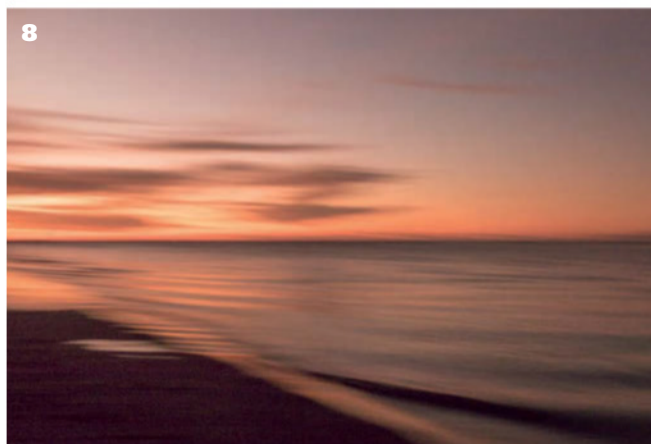
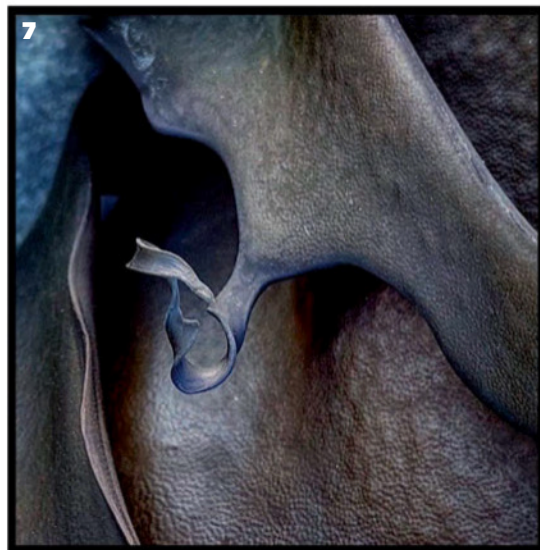
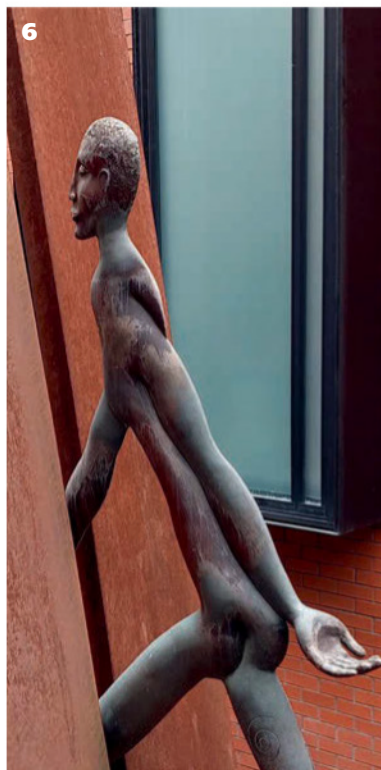
**7** This is the kind of Intimate Landscapes I really enjoy. I can spend hours lost in finding compositions among the kelp. My local beach rarely has any and if it does, it's usually covered with sand. On other beaches, freshly washed, it can look like leather or metal.

Samsung A52

#### Estuary Mist

**9** My city and surrounding areas don't get a lot of mist or fog so we photographers get very excited when it happens. Two rivers flow into the estuary not far from my home so as soon as I got up and saw the conditions, I headed there.

Panasonic Lumix FZ1000



#### River Sunrise ICM

**8** I went to the mouth of the nearest big river when sunrise coincided with a low tide to get the reflections on the wet sand. That morning I concentrated on ICM.

Panasonic Lumix FZ1000





### Mountains in the Mist

**10** The contrast between the East coast, where I live and the West, couldn't be more striking. The West is very wet and covered with native forest except where there are farms or towns. Hidden behind these clouds are NZ's highest peaks and numerous glaciers. We took a helicopter trip and landed on the nevé.

Panasonic Lumix FZ1000

### Native Forest

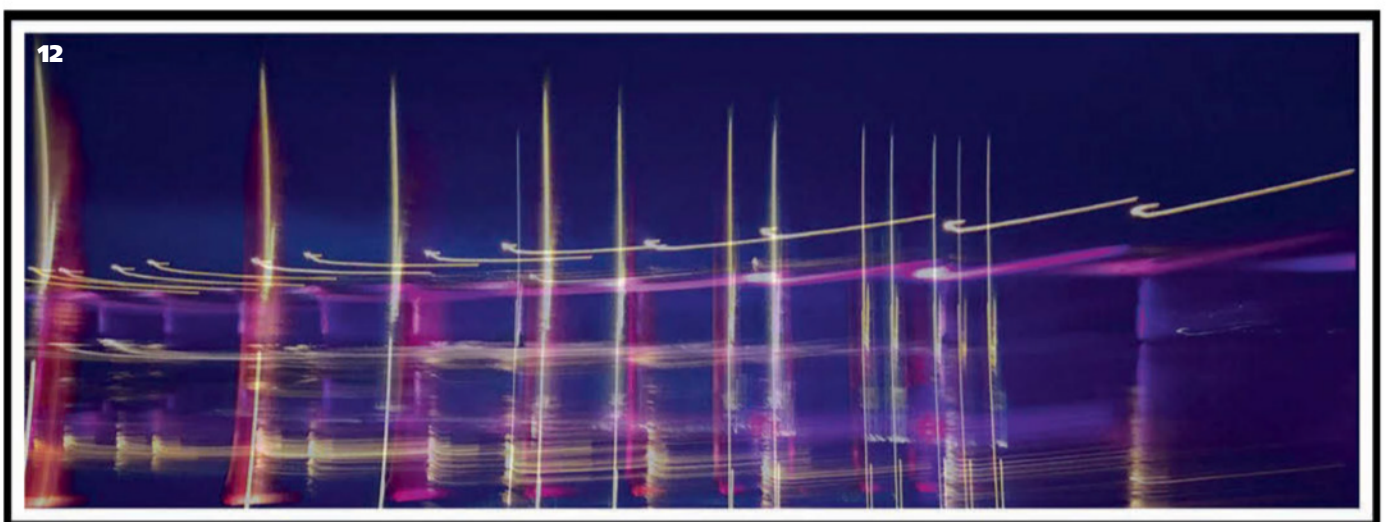
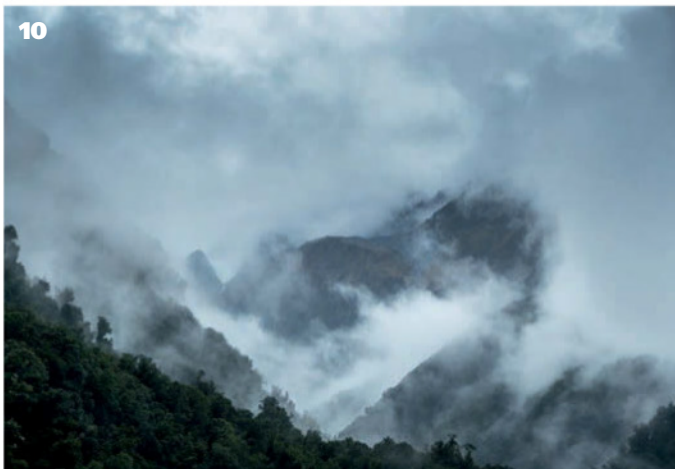
**11** Twelve members of my club had spent five nights on a small ship in Fiordland National Park. This was the view as we awaited the helicopter, no roads in this area. NZ native forest is evergreen.

Panasonic Lumix FZ1000

### Pier Lights

**12** This is a double exposure of the pier lights, one vertical and one horizontal swipe. I was thrilled when I realised I could do ICM on my phone when the light was low.

Samsung Galaxy A52





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## LETTER OF THE WEEK

### Elizabeth and Mary

Imagine my surprise to find on the cover of the 5 August issue that the Cunard Photographic Archive was being featured, for it was the first AP through my door since my return home from a cruise on the *Queen Mary 2*! I had never thought of cruising before, but my mother had sailed from Southampton to New York on the *Queen Mary* in 1952 aged 20 and did not return to Scotland for 50 years. My trip was an homage and I sprinkled her ashes from the rear deck just outside Southampton docks. I shot a roll of b&w film in an old Leica while on my week's cruise, again as something of an homage to her. But, most amazingly, you managed to get her on the cover of your magazine! Sadly, you have mistakenly captioned the image as one of 'Elizabeth Taylor', whoever she might have been. To make amends, perhaps you would like to print this image (above) of Mary Walker at the Port Authority bus station in New York ready to continue her onward journey



Ross's mum, Mary Walker

to marry my father, James Samson, in Hollywood, California, where years later I would be born. **Ross Samson**

What a lovely story, Ross.

## Win! SAMSUNG

A Samsung 256GB PRO Plus MicroSDXC memory card with SD Adapter offers up to 180MB/s read and 130MB/s write speeds, ideal for high-res photos and 4K video. 6-proof protection (water, temperature, X-ray, magnet, drop, wearout) and a 10-year limited warranty. Visit [www.samsung.com/uk/memory-storage-devices/](http://www.samsung.com/uk/memory-storage-devices/)



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Russell Dickens took this with the D850

### Hefty machine

I totally agree with John Heywood's opinion of the Nikon D850. Though not as old as he (a mere 72 years), it's a hefty machine with the added grip, but extremely well balanced.

I traded my mirrorless X-T4 and assorted lenses in to return to full frame some 18 months ago, and

never regretted it. Though not in pristine condition, the camera itself performs exceptionally well in all weathers! This pic (bottom left) was taken two weeks ago. **Russell Dickens**

### Lose the video

There's been much discussion about the new Sony RX1R III, mostly around the price. What most commentators are missing is that Sony is trying to compete directly with Leica's Q3. In that sense the comparison is whether it is better than the Q3. However, both manufacturers and others seem to have missed a trick. If you want to sell cameras that appeal to the kind of photographers who use the Sony/Leica, then ditch video. I think there is a big enough market for a solely full-frame photo-centric camera. This would make smaller, less-complicated cameras optimised for photographers. I wonder what others think.

**Andy Bennett**

Many people seem to think adding video to a camera makes the camera bigger, when in fact it's mostly about software and processing power. The exclusion of video would make little to no difference to a camera's size – though it may reduce the cost a bit as they could get away with less-powerful processors. But excluding video would cripple a camera's sales potential because the global 'creator' market is vastly larger and more important than the dwindling stills photography market. The more niche a product, the more it will have to cost to be viable, so that would probably wipe out any cost saving made by removing the video capability.

LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG 256GB PRO PLUS MICROSDXC CARD. NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK AND EU RESIDENTS ONLY

IMAGE COURTESY OF ROSS SAMSON



# THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

*Do you shoot with a compact camera, DSLR, mirrorless camera or smartphone?*



**Chris Saywood**

Tried DX mirrorless for a couple of years, but went back to FX DSLR because I missed the 'character' of the results.



**Chris Landon Photography @PhotosLandon**

After eight years, when I first started, still using my Nikon D3500. (I have been fortunate to have several of my photos nationally published.) Would maybe like to upgrade but the costs are prohibitive, i.e. I'd like a new D850 with new lenses.



**Pony Moore**

DSLR and compact. Never with a phone, that's not photography in my eyes.



**Jo Everton**

Mirrorless Micro Four Thirds. Though my bridge camera returns better results.



**Cara Riley**

Until recently, a DSLT (Sony A77 Mk I) And if I could get a new battery for her, I still would be. But they stopped making them for her five years ago, and even third-party batteries don't exist here any more. So now I shoot with hubby's Sony A7R V.



**Gary Hicks**

DSLR, bridge and phone. Many years ago I would never have bothered using my phone for photography, but after a couple of lectures at a local photography society by someone who was a pro photographer, he made a few of us change our minds with some very interesting and useful advice!



**Michael White**

I pursued photography for 60 years; I considered myself a serious amateur. I went through many cameras, darkroom setups and film types. Now in my dotage I've realised that it was the cameras I really liked, and the photography was just something I did to justify buying them.



**Richard Mclellan**

Mirrorless Fuji for candid street photography as it's more discreet, Nikon DSLR for events because it tends to point out that you are an official photographer... and iPhone for day to day.



**Steve Benway @SteveBenway**

DSLR. Canon EOS 250D, recently bought, upgrading a bit from 1300D. Small, cheap, takes pics that are entirely good enough for my needs, and I have a ton of lenses for it. I occasionally take pics with my phone, and always wish I had an actual camera with me when I do.

**Share your photos and comments with us on social!**

See page 3 for how to contact us

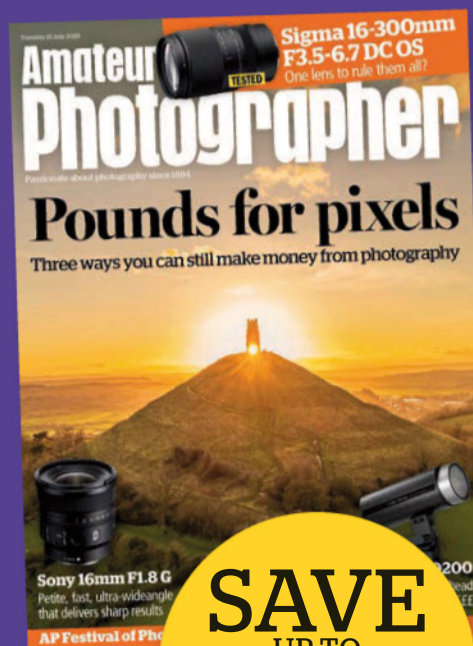
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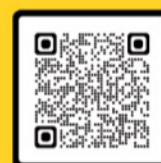


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**Amateur  
Photographer**



## **WILD INDIA with Ben Hall**

*(12-21 April, 2026)*

Join AP and Ben Hall on this readers' photo trip as we visit three of India's best national parks to see and photograph the Bengal tiger

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for  
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# APOY 2025

IN ASSOCIATION WITH...



# Amateur Photographer of the Year

Here are the top ten images uploaded to Photocrowd from Round Three, Close-ups and Details, with comments by the AP team and our guest judge

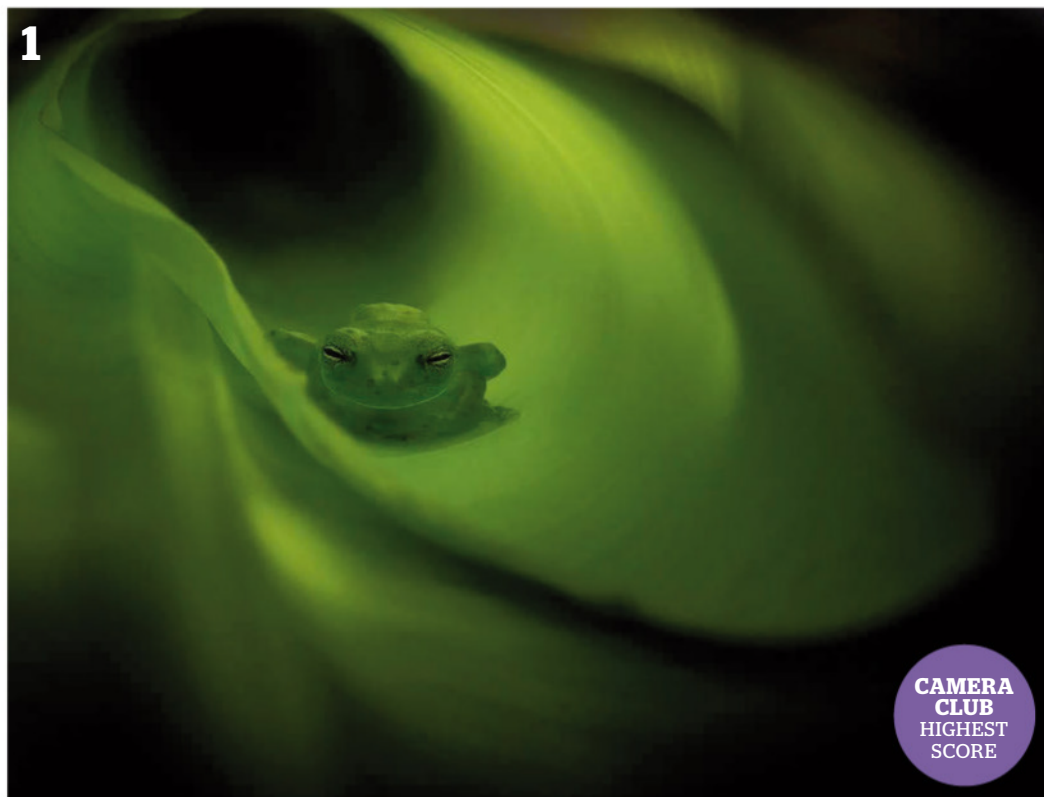
## Round Three Close-ups and Details

The beauty of macro and close-up photography is its ability to reveal detail to us that would otherwise be hidden, and give us an insight into nature that wouldn't be possible either with the naked eye or, often, without a macro lens of some sort. It's a highly contemplative practice, too, requiring patience and time as well as knowledge of the subject and its environment. Of course, macro doesn't only have to be close-ups of insects on a leaf – it can be a constructed still-life or an inanimate abstract, too. However tiny the subject, it has a story to tell, and we are always full of admiration for the entrants to this category who are skilled in revealing those tales to us.

### 1 Erika Howard, UK Costa Rican glass frog 100pts

Canon EOS R5, 100mm macro, 1/160sec at f/13, ISO 400

This tiny frog is only 2-3cm in length, and Erika's image is exactly what a macro shot should be – an insight into a minuscule world. She has managed the green-on-green of the composition beautifully, allowing the edges of the leaf on which the frog is resting to fall away into black, while using its curves to frame the little amphibian. She has also placed it on the thirds when composing, which is exactly right for the subject. We even have what appears to be eye contact, and we can't ask for much more than that. A picture that demonstrates that even encounters with creatures as small as this can be memorable. Erika also wins 100 points for her camera club, Hampstead Photographic Society.







2

**2 Michele Marini, Italy**  
**Stemonitis sp 90pts**

Olympus E-M1 Mark II, 90mm, 1/10sec at f/6.3, ISO 200

It's all too easy at times to anthropomorphise a subject, but this slime mould – only a few millimetres tall – looks for all the world like a huddle of people about to scuttle out of frame. The rich gold of the background really makes the red cluster stand out, while the droplets of water add depth and dimension. Thanks to skilful focus stacking, both log and slime mould are perfectly sharp.



3

**3 Kamilla Szava-Oberndorfer, Austria**  
**Slime moulds and reflections 80pts**

Olympus OM-1, 90mm macro, 1/50sec at f/7.1, ISO 250

The water droplet in this stunning study gives a wonderful sense of scale. The reflection is immaculately captured and the overall scene is like something out of a *Dr Seuss* book.



4

**4 Henrik Spranz, Austria**  
**Icy world 70pts**

Canon EOS R5, 135mm, 1/125sec at f/1.8, ISO 100



**Guest judge Tracy Calder says:**

'It's hard to capture an atmospheric shot of snowdrops without blowing the highlights or losing the point of interest. Here, however, Henrik has worked hard to avoid these pitfalls. It's well composed, expertly focused, and the bokeh delivers just the right amount of dreamy magic. Playing with the white balance has worked wonders, adding a cool, blue tone that suits the mood of the picture perfectly. While most of us are happy to experiment with saturation, contrast etc at the editing stage, few of us bother to play around with white balance, which is a shame. A change in temperature can alter the feel of a picture dramatically. I also like the off-centre position of the flowers – it might have been tempting to shoot in portrait orientation, but the extra space afforded by landscape works well. It's a great shot that has been well planned and excellently executed.'



# Best of the clubs

Each round, we shine a spotlight on a selection of excellent entries from the many camera clubs that enter APOY



**Linda Wride, Oxford Photographic Society**  
**Redhead**

Nikon D750, 24-120mm, 1/320sec at f/20, ISO 3200

A beautifully textural study of a Highland cattle. Including part of its horn in the frame is a clever touch.



**Marriam Hughes, Littlehampton Camera Club**  
**Portrait of a tulip**

Canon EOS 750D, 90mm macro, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 100

The delicate pattern on this tulip's petals has been beautifully realised here.

## CAMERA CLUBS LEADERS

1	Plymouth Camera Club	150
2	London: Hampstead Photographic Society	145
3	Mid-Somerset Camera Club	90
4=	Bristol Photographic Society	70
4=	Kempsey Camera Club	70
4=	Launceston Camera Club	70
4=	Stafford Photographic Society	70



**Rachel Domleo, Bristol Photographic Society**  
**Abstract rain**

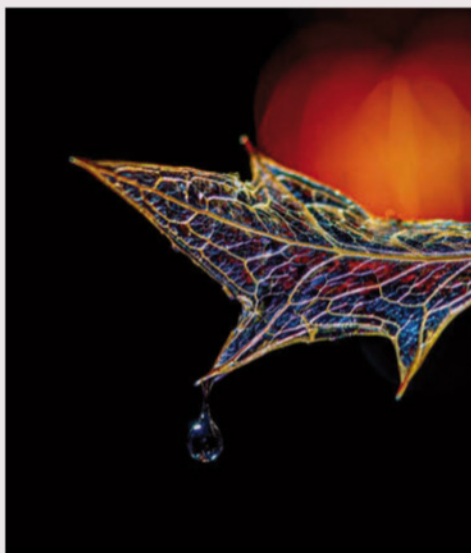
Canon PowerShot G3 X, 40mm, 1/636sec at f/6.3, ISO 125

A stunning abstract that raises more questions than it answers, which shows the power of an original photograph.

**Colleen Jackson, South Manchester Camera Club**  
**Face in abstract**

Canon EOS R5 Mark II, 100mm macro, 1/160sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

This blend of two shots of a rusty surface has resulted in an image that almost looks as if it had been taken from space. The contrast of the golds and blues is sumptuous.



**David Muir, Milngavie and Bearsden Camera Club**  
**A drop off holly**

Nikon D750, 105mm macro, 1/60sec at f/5, ISO 100

A pin-sharp droplet hanging off the edge of a translucent leaf, with an added dose of depth, thanks to the orange orb in the background, results in an image where technical ability and creativity combine to great effect.





5

### 5 Fabio Sartori, Italy Fly 60pts

Olympus E-M1 Mark II, 45mm, 1/160sec at f/2.8, ISO 1250

Fabio has set up an almost fairy-tale-like scene here, with the placement of the ladybird in the top third giving it the appearance of flying for freedom. The surrounding grasses bring depth to the composition, with their mixture of in and out-of-focus areas, while the soft green, yellow and beige tones are gentle and pleasing.

### 6 Lynn Fraser, UK Leafing through 50pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, 50mm, 1/2000sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

There's more to macro than close-ups of insects and flowers, and Lynn has demonstrated this extremely well with her still-life of book pages. We loved the high-contrast treatment she has given the semi-abstract image, which is served well by the black & white conversion and square crop.



6

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## Winning kit from Camera Centre UK

### What gear did our top ten photographers use?

In second place, Michele Marini used an OM SYSTEM 90mm f3.5 M.Zuiko Digital ED IS PRO Macro for his shot. This lens offers an equivalent focal length of 180mm, with 1x or 2x macro magnification, inside a lightweight package. It has seven diaphragm blades, and 18 lens elements in 13 groups. It also has six stops of image stabilisation. This lens received five stars when reviewed in AP and can be purchased at Camera Centre UK for £1,199.

Taking seventh place, Angi Wallace shot her flower still-life using a Sony A7 Mark III. This camera features a 24.2MP BSI-CMOS full-frame sensor, an ISO range of 100-204,800 (extended), 10fps shooting, 4K video recording and 5-axis in-body stabilisation. Its phase-detection autofocus uses 693 points arranged across 90% of the image area. This excellent camera can be found at Camera Centre UK for £1,499.

In eighth place, David Lain used a Nikon D810 for his excellent snail image. This camera features a 36.3MP FX-format CMOS sensor, ISO 64-12,800 (expandable to ISO 32-51,200), a shooting speed of 5fps and a live view split-screen zoom, which allows users to magnify two separate parts of an image, positioned laterally across the frame. An second-hand example of this excellent workhorse can be purchased at Camera Centre UK for £699.

**To see the full range, visit  
[www.cameracentreuk.com](http://www.cameracentreuk.com)**



**7 Angi Wallace, UK**  
**Rainforest mantis**  
**on dwarf iris 45pts**

Sony A7 Mark III, 90mm macro, 1sec at f/16, ISO 50

Angi has combined skill, precision and originality in her intentional camera movement (ICM) image. Flash has captured the mantis, then moving the camera during the one-second exposure has created the smoke-like blur. Her persistence has paid off with a memorable result that stands out not only for the deep purple against the dark background, but also the unexpected appearance of the insect. Her ability to push her creativity within the field of macro photography, and not just settle for a classic shot, is to be applauded.

7



**9 Andreas Ioannis Karsisiotis, UK**  
**Handstand 35pts**

Nikon D7100, 100mm, 1/800sec at f/3, ISO 100

A successful wildlife shot – whether macro or not – often relies on getting down to the same level as the creature being photographed, and that's what Andreas has stayed conscious of here, and to great effect. By keeping his lens parallel with the athletic dragonfly, as it does a handstand on the leaf, he has ensured an impactful image. It would never have succeeded if he had placed himself above the insect. In addition, placing himself so that the insect's body is against the green backdrop means the vibrant red stands out in the best possible way, making the image appear almost three-dimensional.

9



**8 David Lain, UK**  
**Snail 40pts**

Nikon D810, 50mm, 1/320sec at f/16, ISO 64

Although this isn't a 'natural' shot of a snail in its environment, David has set it up beautifully, placing the snail at the tip of the flower bud and waiting until it is outstretched before taking the picture. The lighting has allowed David to pick out an extraordinary level of detail in the creature's shell and body, allowing the viewer to marvel at the tones and textures. Spraying the flower with water droplets is a pleasing finishing touch.

8







## 10 Annemarie Rulos-van den Berg, Netherlands Fire ant 30pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 150mm,  
1/125sec at f/11, ISO 250

The timing of Annemarie's photograph of this ant, as it delicately transports a larva, is spot on. Its antennae are fully outstretched, as are its legs, with the separation between them serving to demonstrate its apparent fragility (despite its bite being pretty substantial). Composing on the diagonal, so that the twig bisects the frame and anchors the composition at the same time means that our eye follows the ant's direction of travel, almost as if we are joining it on its journey.

## ROUND THREE WINNER, YOUNG APOY

### Ben Hancock-Smith, UK Preening puffin 100pts

Nikon Z8, 200-500mm at 500mm, 1/500sec at f/9, ISO 1400

Ben has captured an unusual composition of this lovable bird, which is often portrayed as something of a clown. Here, however, he has provided us with the opportunity to really study the soft texture of the bird's feathers, the contrast between the black, white and oranges, and appreciate its wonderfully recognisable profile. Focus is spot on, with the puffin's eye being pin-sharp, and featuring just enough of a highlight that it isn't lost and rendered flat and featureless. An original treatment of a much-photographed subject is always going to stand out from the crowd, and that's definitely the case here.



## The 2025 leaderboards

Erika Howard didn't even feature in the top ten at the end of the previous round, but now she has leapfrogged everyone to the top of the leaderboard, thanks to her stunning frog portrait. The same goes for this round's Young APOY winner, Ben Hancock-Smith.

The leaderboard in both contests is always quite congested at this relatively early point in the competition, so we look forward to seeing how they both spread out over the coming rounds, as well as who stays in the top ten, and who is yet to make an appearance.

### APOY

1	Erika Howard	145
2=	Azim Khan Ronnie	110
2=	Lynn Fraser	110
4=	Maung Htet	100
4=	Michael Woodward	100
4=	Philip Tomlinson	100
7=	Michele Marini	90
7=	Peter Saphier	90
9=	David Travis	80
9=	Kamilla Szava-Oberndorfer	80
11=	Alaa Nour	70
11=	Andy Holloway	70
11=	Henrik Spranz	70

### YOUNG APOY

1	Ben Hancock-Smith	135
2=	Jack Cavanagh	100
2=	Jake Randazzo	100
2=	Valentin	100
2=	Youssef Ahmed	100
6=	Alec Stein	90
6=	Jasmine Kirk	90
6=	Lucy Monckton	90
9=	Dylan Fantone	80
9=	Giovanni De Luca	80
9=	Matteo Botta	80
9=	Sofie Goorts	80

To see more images from APOY Round Three and Young APOY, visit [amateurphotographer.com/APOY](http://amateurphotographer.com/APOY)



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Nigel Atherton, *Editor*

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# Best smartphones for macro

You don't always need specialist equipment for close-ups; the best camera phones are very capable when it comes to macro photography

For those who would like to give macro photography a go but prefer not to buy new kit, there's always the option of using your phone. Smartphones have obvious advantages of convenience and cost over cameras, which generally require a dedicated lens with macro capability, either for magnification, close-focusing, or both.

Not long ago, clip-on macro lenses for smartphones were available to buy. These tended to be low in quality and fiddly to use, and since they were usually specific to a phone model, they became obsolete as soon as you upgraded your device. In recent years, flagships and even mid-range phones have come equipped with macro functionality directly in camera. It's even become a key selling point.

If macro photography is of interest to you, and you're thinking of upgrading your smartphone, consider some of those listed here. These are all high-end smartphones with a price-tag to match, but cheaper phone deals can be found by skipping back a generation or more – just check that the older versions offer macro first.

## How does smartphone macro work?

Generally speaking, most smartphones utilise the ultra-wideangle camera for macro. The phone will detect when you're attempting to take a close-up picture and automatically switch to macro mode. With the iPhone 16 Pro, for example, this gives you the ability to focus as close as 2cm from the subject. The phone will then crop in to give the same angle of view as the standard 1x lens, for a more natural appearance. Since you're switching to a different sensor and lens, image quality may suffer in some situations, such as in low light.

Most phones have the option to switch off the macro focusing for each shot if you prefer to use the standard lens. But you will probably need to move further from the subject to achieve focus.

There are exceptions to using the ultra-wide lens, such as the Xiaomi 15 Ultra and Vivo X200 Pro that use the telephoto lens for macro. Some budget smartphones have dedicated macro cameras, but in practice, we've usually found these to be poor performers, particularly when they're low resolution – some are just 2 megapixels.



## iPhone 16 Pro

- From £999
- [apple.com/uk](https://apple.com/uk)



The iPhone 16 Pro employs a triple-lens camera setup, with a wideangle, 0.5x ultrawide, and 5x telephoto lens. This is the same as the larger, more expensive iPhone 16 Pro Max. It's also similar to the iPhone 15 Pro Max before it, although the ultrawide sensor has been upgraded to 48MP, compared to 12MP. However, the lens remains 13mm equivalent and f/2.2. The main sensor is also 48MP, with a 24mm f/1.78 lens, while the 5x telephoto is 120mm f/2.8 equivalent. Despite those two high-resolution sensors, the standard output remains at 12MP.

Apple is now in its fourth generation of smartphones with macro capability. As on previous models, this mode enables you to get super-close to the subject by automatically switching to the ultra-wideangle camera. You can record both video and still images with the iPhone's macro mode, and you can also shoot in Apple's ProRAW format.

If you're finding image quality to be low, such as if light levels are poor, you can switch off the

macro focusing and revert to using the main camera. You can still get fairly close, so if the subject isn't particularly small, this can work well.

Another option is to switch to Portrait mode to create a shallow-depth-of-field effect. Again, this uses the main camera, so it will work best with subjects which aren't super-

small. Note there's no macro focusing capability in this mode, nor can you shoot in raw format.

The iPhone 16 Pro also gains a new Camera Control button, which aims to make using the phone a little more like a real camera. You can press it once to open the camera, then again to take a photo. Sliding your finger along it zooms in and out, too.



**Like other iPhones, the 16 Pro uses its ultra-wideangle lens for macro**

## Vivo X200 Pro

- £1099
- [vivo.com](https://vivo.com)



We found the Vivo X200 Pro to be an excellent performer overall that delivers fantastic results. The only downside is its limited availability; Vivo announced a 'Global Release', but it never really appeared very widely on the UK market. However, if you're prepared to hunt one down, it comes highly recommended for macro. Its telephoto lens is one of the best on the market, too, and the camera app is really well featured.

It features three Zeiss lenses with a 50MP main camera that is backed by a larger than average 1/1.3in sensor. There is also a 50MP ultrawide and a 200MP telephoto camera, which has six special 'telephoto capabilities' including HyperZoom, Macro, Portrait, Nightscapes and Sunset.

Moving onto the macro mode, there are two options for close-ups. You can move really close to your subject and wait for the automatic macro mode to kick in, which uses the ultra-wide camera cropped-in. Or you can switch on the Super Macro mode manually.

The latter produces the best results, as it utilises the 3.7x 200MP telephoto camera.

At 85mm equivalent, this camera has an ideal focal length for macro photography. Also, by moving further away, you avoid disturbing or casting shadows on skittish subjects like butterflies or bugs. This mode delivers sharper and more detailed macro shots

than some dedicated macro lenses on other phones.

Overall, image quality from the X200 Pro is excellent, across a wide variety of conditions. Detail is great, and the colours are nicely bright and punchy without being unrealistic. Working with Zeiss has also clearly worked well to produce high-quality overall images.

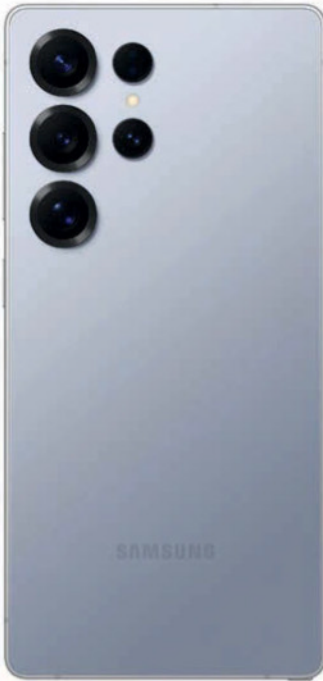


**The Vivo X200 Pro is one of the best phone cameras for close-ups**



## Samsung Galaxy S25 Ultra

- From £1249
- [samsung.com/uk](https://samsung.com/uk)



The Galaxy S25 Ultra is Samsung's flagship phone camera, with a vast array of AI photography features inherited from the previous S24 Ultra. Overall it's one of the best smartphone cameras around, with four cameras on the rear. Of these, three are now high resolution, because the ultrawide camera received a generous 50MP upgrade from 12MP before.

The AI technology is utilised during image capture and is said to improve night photography, noise performance, zoom quality, and HDR imaging, among others. The S25 Ultra also has one of the best screens on any phone, thanks to an excellent anti-reflective coating.

For macro shooting, the good news is that three of the cameras have pretty good close-up capabilities. The bad news, though, is that you're never quite in control of which one the phone is using. By default, if you point the camera at a close-up object, the phone will switch from the main camera to the ultra-wide-

angle camera and give you a cropped (and distorted looking) photo, as well as lower-quality results in low light. Switch to the 3x setting, and the phone will now crop from the 1x camera – giving a pixelated, but relatively pleasing-looking, image. Switch to the 5x option, and the phone will again crop, this time from the 3x camera, giving a pixelated image.

This is all quite frustrating, and the device doesn't tell you what's going on until you look at the EXIF data after you've taken the shot. However, the 5x option (which crops from the 3x camera) looks to give the best results.

Other smartphones, though, have really impressive telephoto macro capabilities that use the periscope camera.



The S25 Ultra can give some nice close-ups, but it's frustrating to use

## Google Pixel 9 Pro

- £999
- [store.google.com](https://store.google.com)



Macro functionality was introduced to the Google Pixel range for the first time with the 7 Pro. The Pixel 9 Pro maintains a similar triple-lens array, with standard, ultra-wide and 5x telephoto options. The main sensor is 50MP, with the standard output being 12.5MP. However for our purposes, the significant improvement is that the ultra-wide camera is f/1.7, with a 48MP sensor and macro AF.

As with most macro-capable smartphones, the Pixel 9 Pro will automatically detect when attempting to focus close to a subject and switch to macro mode using the ultra-wide camera. With it enabled, you can focus as close as 3cm. This can be overridden when not wanted for certain conditions, but again, you won't be able to focus as closely.

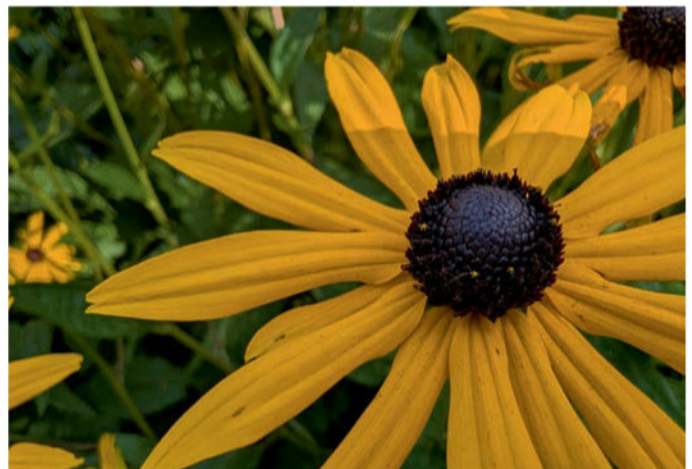
You can shoot both video and stills when close-focusing, and as a bonus, you can record in Raw format when using macro mode, since this is accessible in the standard Photo setting. There is

also a Pro mode to control exposure, shutter speed, and white balance.

Using the ultrawide lens for macro is pretty common, but we generally find it doesn't yield the very best results – and the same is true for the Pixel 9 Pro. While the macro results are perfectly adequate, shooting in this way requires you to step into the available light which doesn't help

matters. Better results can be seen from other high-end Android models that offer telephoto macro, such as the Xiaomi 15 Ultra and the Vivo X200 Pro.

Portrait mode is also available and, again, can be useful for creating shallow-depth-of-field images of macro-type subjects in certain conditions. But this will work best with subjects that aren't particularly small.



With the ultra-wide lens, it's easy to get in the way of your own light



## OnePlus 13

- From £899
- [oneplus.com](https://oneplus.com)



Historically OnePlus phones have boasted high-end specs for less money, and things are no different with its latest OnePlus 13. Improvements have been made to both hardware and software, with its upgraded triple-camera setup a product of an ongoing collaboration with Hasselblad, combined with OnePlus' most advanced imaging software. Yet the OnePlus 13 goes for a significantly lower price than equivalent models from the likes of Apple and Samsung.

There are three cameras onboard, with the main wideangle camera combining a 50MP sensor with an optically stabilised 23mm f/1.6 equivalent lens. The other two cameras comprise a 50MP ultra-wideangle with a 15mm f/2 lens, plus a 50MP 73mm f/2.6 equivalent 3x telephoto with OIS.

In the default 'Photo' mode you can shoot with the three lenses and digital zoom options, as well as adjust aspect ratio, exposure compensation, flash and the self-timer. Further control can be taken in Master mode, with the

option to change ISO, shutter speed and white balance.

Of most interest to us here, though, is the 'Macro shot' feature, which allows you to take close-up photos. This will turn on automatically when you get very close to a subject. You can also turn it on manually via the menu, which then activates the telephoto lens for macro.

You can either leave it on autofocus, or change to manual focus to adjust focusing yourself, which works well.

In use, the OnePlus 13 delivers great results in a range of environments, and from all the lenses. Colours are vibrant and pleasing without becoming over-saturated, with plenty of detail shown, too.



**The OnePlus 13 provides telephoto macro in an affordable device**

## Xiaomi 15 Ultra

- £1299
- [mi.com](https://mi.com)



Xiaomi's latest flagship, the 15 Ultra, is the best smartphone you can buy for photography. It has four cameras, including a 23mm equivalent f/1.63 main camera, 14mm f/2.2 ultra-wide, 70mm f/1.8 telephoto, and 100mm f/2.6 periscopic telephoto. Three of these have 50MP sensors, while the 100mm has a super-high resolution 200MP sensor for improved digital zoom. All are fronted by Leica Summilux lenses, a fine marker of quality.

Not only that, but the main sensor is of the one-inch type, which is much larger than sensors found in almost every other smartphone out there – and certainly bigger than from the mainstream brands of Samsung, Apple and Google.

Macro shooting is an area where this phone really excels. The telephoto macro option leads to highly detailed results – we'd love to see a similar approach from the bigger names, too. The 15 Ultra produces macro shots which are much better than the Samsung Galaxy S25 Ultra, the

iPhone 16 Pro Max or the Google Pixel 9 Pro, although it's pretty similar to the Vivo X200 Pro.

One real bonus treat for photographers is the optional Photography Kit. With this, you get a detachable grip that provides real physical controls, including shutter and video buttons, a zoom rocker, and a

command dial. It also gives extra battery life, while a special phone case allows the use of 67mm filters. You even get an add-on thumb grip that provides a much more secure hold.

All these high-level specs don't come cheap though. The Xiaomi 15 Ultra costs £1,299, with the Photography Kit adding £179.



**The 15 Ultra's 70mm telephoto camera delivers great close-up photos**



## 8 tips for shooting macro with your smartphone

To get the most from your smartphone when shooting macro, give these tips a try to boost your shots

### 1 Know when to switch it off

Sometimes, the dedicated macro mode can do a worse job than leaving the standard lens to it. If you don't need to get super-close, switch it off and see how the main sensor copes first.

### 2 Shoot in raw if you can

For maximum flexibility, shooting in raw (plus JPEG or HEIF simultaneously, usually) gives you scope to edit your smartphone macro shots after the fact, or by using apps such as Snapseed. Not all smartphones offer the ability to shoot raw and macro at the same time, though.

### 3 Experiment with digital filters

Most smartphones include some inbuilt digital filters. Try experimenting with black & white and macro, for example.

### 4 Adjust the exposure

Even smartphones without full manual control give you some degree of tweaking. Using the onscreen slider to add some positive exposure compensation can brighten up close-up subjects to good effect.

### 5 Turn your phone upside down

To get super-close to some

subjects, a rotation of the smartphone – so the screen is upside down and the lenses at the bottom – can provide a better angle. It's a simple tip, but it's easy to fail to realise the difference it makes.

### 6 Use a smartphone tripod

To remove the risk of shake, you could use a phone tripod, or a smartphone adapter for your existing tripod. You could also utilise the smartphone's self-timer (usually 3 seconds or 10 seconds) so that you're not touching the phone at the point of capture.

### 7 Try out portable LED lights

Another potential accessory you might want to use is portable LED lights to illuminate the scene, especially for very close-up scenes. This will help to produce clearer, sharper details, especially in situations where light is low in the first place.

### 8 Use the telephoto lens

If your smartphone doesn't have a dedicated macro lens or close-up capability, but it does have a zoom lens, try using that to recreate the appearance of close-ups.

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SCAN ME



# Taking a closer look

We reveal the best macro lenses currently available new for close-up shooting

While you don't absolutely need a dedicated lens for macro photography, there's no doubt that they are the best solution. They let you get right up-close to your subject, while producing super-sharp images. Most mirrorless systems now have a good choice of macro lenses to choose from, and you'll find our top recommendations over the next few pages. On the other hand, many macro lenses for DSLRs have disappeared from the market, so we've rooted out the best of those you can still buy new. Of course, plenty are available second-hand, too.

## Macro lenses for mirrorless

### Canon RF 85mm F2 Macro IS STM

£669 • [canon.co.uk](http://canon.co.uk)

Canon EOS R system owners have an unusually large number of lenses labelled 'Macro' to choose from, with prices ranging from the £529 RF 35mm F1.8 Macro IS STM to the £1,479 RF 100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM. However, we suspect the latter's high price will push many users towards its 85mm f/2 stablemate. This isn't what many photographers consider a 'true' macro lens, offering only half life-size magnification at its 35cm minimum focus distance. Indeed it could equally be considered to be an affordable portrait lens that's unusually good at close-up shooting. But it offers 5 stops of optical stabilisation on cameras that lack in-body stabilisation, and up to 8 stops on those with IBIS.



### Canon RF 100mm F2.8L Macro IS USM

£1,479 • [canon.co.uk](http://canon.co.uk)

You could be forgiven for thinking that there's nothing special about Canon's pro-spec macro lens for full-frame mirrorless, given that it's named almost identically to its DSLR predecessor. However, Canon has added some exciting extra features. Firstly, it offers 1.5x magnification, which means you can photograph a subject measuring just 24mm x 16mm. Secondly an 'SA Control' ring allows users to adjust background blur either in front of, or behind the subject. In addition you get all the hallmarks of Canon's L range, including robust build quality, rapid autofocus, highly effective optical stabilisation and needless to say, superb optics.



### Fujifilm XF 30mm F2.8 R LM WR

£599 • [fujifilm.com/uk/en](http://fujifilm.com/uk/en)

With its focal length equivalent to 45mm, this lens not only offers life-size magnification, but can also double up as an everyday standard lens. You get Fujifilm's familiar goodies, including an aperture ring and weather-resistant construction, in a design that's less than 7cm long and weighs under 200g. It's worth noting, though, that at minimum focus, the front of the lens ends up very close to the subject. If you'd prefer a longer focal length on a similar budget there's also the £569 XF 60mm F2.4 R Macro, but it's an old and relatively unrefined design that only offers 0.5x magnification.



### Fujifilm XF 80mm F2.8 R LM OIS WR Macro

£999 • [fujifilm.com/uk/en](http://fujifilm.com/uk/en)

X-system users interested in close-up photography are well served by this fully featured, if pricey, macro lens. Its slightly longer-than-usual 120mm equivalent view allows a good working distance, with life-size reproduction offered at the 25cm minimum focus. The lens employs linear motors for quiet autofocus and has a distance limiter switch to reduce hunting. Optical stabilisation is built in, promising up to five stops of shake reduction, and weather-resistant construction allows you to keep shooting in less-than-perfect conditions. As the icing on the cake, the lens works with Fujifilm's 1.4x and 2.0x teleconverters.







### Laowa 65mm f/2.8 2x Ultra Macro

● £429 ● [www.venuslens.net](http://www.venuslens.net)

Laowa is arguably the most innovative lens maker when it comes to close-up photography. This 65mm f/2.8 optic offers twice life-size magnification for users of APS-C mirrorless cameras at a very tempting price. Its robust metal barrel is impressively compact, at 100mm long and 335g in weight, and both focusing and aperture control are fully manual. Crucially it offers great image quality, combining impressive sharpness and beautiful background blur. It's available in Canon RF, Fujifilm X, Nikon Z and Sony E mounts. For Micro Four Thirds users, there's a scaled-down 50mm f/2.8 version.



### Laowa 85mm F2.6 2x Ultra Macro APO

● £499 ● [www.venuslens.net](http://www.venuslens.net)

This unique lens is remarkably small for a full-frame macro, at just 53mm in diameter, 78mm in length, and 291g. It achieves this thanks to its modest maximum aperture and relatively short focal length. Remarkably, though, it's still capable of twice life-size magnification, meaning it can focus on an area measuring just 18mm x 12mm. Even then, you get a fairly comfortable working distance of 6cm from the front of the lens to the subject. It delivers impressive image quality too, especially when stopped down to f/8 or f/11. It's available in Canon RF, Nikon Z, Sony E, and L mounts.



### Nikon Nikkor Z MC 50mm f/2.8

● £679 ● [nikon.co.uk](http://nikon.co.uk)

Nikon offers two macro lenses for its Z system mirrorless cameras, with the 50mm f/2.8 being the more affordable. Unlike its 105mm sibling, this lens lacks either weather-sealing or optical stabilisation, which might make it look like the less desirable choice. But it makes up for this with its optical quality, which quite simply is superb. Thanks to its relatively compact size and light weight, it's a particularly good match to Nikon's smaller Z-series bodies, including APS-C format cameras like the Zfc and Z50II. Meanwhile on full-frame cameras, it can double up as an everyday standard prime.



### Nikon Nikkor Z MC 105mm f/2.8 S VR

● £1,049 ● [nikon.co.uk](http://nikon.co.uk)

As the more pro-focused of Nikon's pair of Z-system macro lenses, this packs in pretty much every feature you could wish for. It's optically stabilised, weather-sealed, and employs an internal-focus design. This means that it focuses quickly and silently and its length stays constant. Along with a large manual focus ring, there's a control dial on the barrel for changing exposure settings. A small display panel on top can show the focus distance and depth of field. It almost goes without saying that the lens is also supremely sharp, even when used wide open at f/2.8.



### OM System M.Zuiko Digital ED 60mm f/2.8 Macro

● £449 ● [explore.omsystem.com](http://explore.omsystem.com)

This brilliant little lens is one of the jewels of the Micro Four Thirds system. Its dust- and splash-proof barrel is extremely small and light, at 82mm long and just 186g in weight, while its slimline 56mm diameter minimises the risk of shadowing your subject. Yet it still finds space for both a focus distance indicator and a focus limiter switch that has a dedicated 1:1 setting. Autofocus is fast and silent, and there's absolutely nothing to complain about with regards to image quality. Set to its 19cm minimum focus distance, the image area of 17.4mm x 13mm is equivalent to 2x magnification in 35mm terms.



### OM System M.Zuiko Digital ED 90mm F3.5 Macro IS PRO

● £1,299 ● [explore.omsystem.com](http://explore.omsystem.com)

This remarkable optic can stake a serious claim to being the most versatile macro lens available. In its standard focusing mode, it offers life-size magnification at 0.25m, but when you switch to its special S Macro mode, this increases to twice-life size at a distance of 0.224m. This is equivalent to 4x on full-frame, and in practice that means you can fill the frame with a subject as small as 9.7 x 6.5mm. What's more, the lens is compatible with 1.4x and 2x teleconverters for even tighter close-ups. Built-in optical stabilisation is rated for 6 stops of shake suppression, and the barrel is IP53 weather-sealed.





## Panasonic Leica DG Macro-Elmarit 45mm F2.8 OIS Asph

● £599 ● [panasonic.com/uk](http://panasonic.com/uk)

While the more affordable Olympus 60mm f/2.8 may look like the best choice of macro lens for Micro Four Thirds shooters, Panasonic's Leica-badged 45mm f/2.8 has its own charms. Thanks to its shorter, 90mm equivalent focal length, it's even smaller, at just 63mm in length. Yet it's still capable of life-size reproduction. It also includes optical image stabilisation, which is particularly handy for those using Lumix bodies that lack in-body stabilisation, although it's of limited use at macro distances. Optically it delivers the goods, with impressive sharpness used wide open and minimal aberrations.



## Panasonic Lumix S 100mm F2.8 Macro

● £999 ● [panasonic.com/uk](http://panasonic.com/uk)

At first glance, you probably wouldn't even think this was a macro lens, given its remarkably small size that matches Panasonic's range of Lumix S f/1.8 primes. At just 8.2cm long and less than 300g, it's about half the weight of similar full-frame lenses. Yet it's still capable of life-size magnification, with about the only drawback being a slightly short working distance of about 10cm at 1:1. But in return, you get autofocus that's unusually rapid for a macro lens. The lens also benefits from dust-and splashproof construction and should continue to work at temperatures as low as -10°C.



## Pergear 100mm F2.8 2x Macro

● \$319 (approx. £240) ● [pergear.com](http://pergear.com)

This lens delivers extraordinary value for money. It's a fraction of the price of the camera makers' own macro lenses, yet provides 2:1 magnification. In part, this is down to its simplicity: both focusing and aperture operation are fully manual, with the latter employing a 13-blade diaphragm for attractive bokeh. There are no electronics onboard either, for communicating aperture or focal length to the camera. Optically, though, it performs extremely well, delivering beautiful image quality and overall good sharpness. It's available direct from the firm's website in Nikon Z, Canon RF, Sony E and L-mounts.



## Sigma 105mm F2.8 DG DN Macro Art

● £729 ● [sigmauk.com](http://sigmauk.com)

Designed from the ground up for full-frame mirrorless cameras, this lens is available in Sony E and L mounts. In design terms, it employs a barrel that extends dramatically on focusing to its 29.5cm minimum focus position, rather than using an internal focus mechanism like most contemporary macro lenses. This approach delivers superb image quality, with both high sharpness and effective suppression of colour fringing. But the flipside is relatively slow autofocus. There's no optical image stabilisation onboard, but most of the cameras it will be used on feature in-body stabilisation anyway.



## Sony FE 90mm F2.8 Macro G OSS

● £819 ● [sony.co.uk](http://sony.co.uk)

While this lens now has stiff competition from more affordable rivals from Tamron and Sigma, it's still a truly excellent choice for users of Sony E-mount cameras. It includes both optical stabilisation and internal focusing, in a dust- and moisture-resistant design. Other highlights include a focus ring that can be pulled back towards the camera to engage manual mode, a Focus Hold button, and a focus limiter switch on the side of the barrel. But unlike more recent Sony lenses, there's no aperture ring. Optically it's absolutely superb, giving super-sharp images with smooth, attractive bokeh.



## Tamron 90mm F2.8 Di III Macro VXD

● £549 ● [tamron.eu/en-GB](http://tamron.eu/en-GB)

Available in Sony E and Nikon Z mounts, Tamron's first macro lens designed specifically for full-frame mirrorless cameras comes in at a remarkably tempting price. Yet despite this, it doesn't skimp on features. Naturally you get 1:1 magnification, when the lens is set to its minimum focus distance of 23cm. But Tamron says it's equally suitable for shooting portraits as well as close-ups, thanks to its soft bokeh. Other features include moisture-resistant construction, plus a Focus Set button and Focus limiter switch. It's also compatible with Tamron's Lens Utility software for tweaking its operation.



## Macro lenses for DSLRs



### Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM

● £1,249 ● [canon.co.uk](http://canon.co.uk)

Canon's third-generation 100mm macro for its full-frame DSLRs is an absolutely stellar optic, as we'd expect from the professional L range. It delivers superb image quality, with exceptional sharpness, minimal chromatic aberration and essentially no distortion. A ring-type ultrasonic motor delivers rapid, silent autofocus, while life-size magnification is achieved at the minimum focus distance of 30cm. Optical stabilisation is built-in, with Canon's hybrid system promising 4 stops stabilisation with distant subjects, or 2 stops at half life-size magnification. The barrel boasts robust weather-sealed construction.



### Laowa 100mm f/2.8 2x Ultra Macro APO

● £569 ● [venuslens.net](http://venuslens.net)

This fine 100mm f/2.8 optic is designed for full-frame DSLR cameras. It's available in Nikon F, Pentax K and Canon EF mounts, with the latter coming in two versions with a choice of manual or electronic aperture setting. The lens has also been adapted for full-frame mirrorless, in Canon RF, Nikon Z, Sony E and L-mount versions. The minimum focus distance is just 24.7cm, which provides 2x magnification. Meanwhile colour fringing is suppressed thanks to the apochromatic design. Despite the enhanced close focus, the size and weight are similar to conventional 100mm macro lenses.



### Laowa 25mm f/2.8 2.5x-5x Ultra Macro

● £429 ● [venuslens.net](http://venuslens.net)

For serious devotees of close-up photography, this lens provides ultra-high magnification at a remarkably low price. Unusually, it doesn't focus to infinity, but instead provides between 2.5x and 5x magnification across a focus distance range of 17.3cm to 23.4cm. It requires both manual focus and aperture operation, and is generally best used on a tripod with a macro rail. The slimline, tapered barrel is specially designed to minimise shadowing of your subject. The lens comes in Canon EF, Nikon F and Pentax K DSLR mounts, along with Canon RF, Nikon Z, Sony E and L-mount mirrorless options.



### Nikon AF-S DX 85mm f/3.5G ED VR Micro

● £459 ● [nikon.co.uk](http://nikon.co.uk)

Designed specifically for DX format (APS-C) DSLRs, this lens offers an unusually long 128mm-equivalent focal length. It's packed full of attractive features, including a silent wave motor that promises quiet, precise autofocus, and optical image stabilisation with 3 stops of shake reduction. At its minimum focus distance of 28.6cm it can focus on subjects measuring 24x16mm, which is equivalent to 1.5x magnification in full-frame terms. The 9-blade aperture promises attractive bokeh and stops down to f/32 for extended depth of field. The lens is relatively lightweight too, at 355g.



### HD Pentax-D FA Macro 100mm f/2.8 ED AW

● £594 ● [pentax.eu](http://pentax.eu)

This macro lens works on both full-frame and APS-C Pentax DSLRs. While it looks very similar to the firm's previous model, it gains updated optics with an additional lens element, making 10 in total, arranged in 8 groups. It's unusually compact for its class, at just 8.1cm long and 340g, thanks to the use of an extending focus mechanism. The working distance between the lens and the subject at 1:1 magnification is 13cm, and a Quick Shift focus system allows autofocus to be overridden manually at any time. It also benefits from all-weather construction for outdoor use.



### Zeiss Milvus 100mm f/2 Makro Planar

● £1,695 ● [www.zeiss.co.uk](http://www.zeiss.co.uk)

There's no denying that £1,695 is a lot to pay for a macro lens that doesn't even autofocus. But premium optics and build quality always cost extra, and that's exactly what Zeiss provides. Available in Canon EF and Nikon F mounts, this lens provides 0.5x magnification at its minimum focus distance of 44cm. Its f/2 maximum aperture gathers an extra stop of light and provides greater background blur compared to f/2.8 lenses, which makes it an attractive option for shooting portraits, too. The robust metal barrel is sealed for protection against dust and water, and the Nikon version even boasts an aperture ring.



# Life on the road



**How photographer Chris Fregly turned two years of his camper van adventures in the USA into a beautiful photo book**

**W**hen software engineer and photographer Chris Fregly set off on a nomadic journey

across North America in his self-converted camper van, he captured more than just landscapes – he collected memories. After two years of van life and countless images, he decided to create *Two Years in a Van*, a beautifully produced photo book that charts his adventures. Here, Chris shares how he brought the project to life using Bob Books, what he learned along the way, and why the final result means so much.

## **Tell us about the photography project that features in your new book**

*Two Years in a Van* is a compilation of photos and ramblings from two years of travelling around North America in my self-converted camper van. After completing my trip, I wanted to create something physical to remember all my adventures by – as well as something that I hope will inspire others to get out and explore the world for themselves.

## **Why did you decide you wanted to publish the work as a book? Was that the idea from the outset?**

As an avid photographer, I'd taken hundreds of thousands of photos throughout my travels. At first I considered just creating prints of my work but eventually landed on creating a photo book. I chose to create a book as it provided the opportunity to tell a more complete story and seemed like a more

natural way to share some of my favourite moments from living life on the road.

## **Why did you choose Bob Books as the provider?**

I did a lot of research when choosing a photo book company. Bob Books was highly recommended for its quality. I also wanted to have full control of the book design process via InDesign and they provided an easy method for doing so.

## **What size, cover and paper options did you consider and what made you choose the formats that you did?**

*Two Years in a Van* is a 21x28cm hardcover book printed on lustre photographic paper. I wanted to create something that would both last and could lay completely flat to better showcase the photos that stretched across both pages. This format helped me to achieve both of these goals.

## **How did you design the pages? What were the considerations in deciding the layout?**

When designing the book, the main focus was ensuring that the photography was front and centre. Minimal text was used and photos in each spread were chosen to complement each other. I also wanted to include some sense of story so I incorporated a small excerpt about each region I visited along with an illustration. This helped to both break up the book into sections as well as to tie it all together. Also a huge shoutout to Grace Harkin for creating the

Chris is very happy with the quality of the finished product from Bob Books

ILLUSTRATION FEATURED © GRACE HARKIN. IMAGE FEATURED © CHRIS FREGLY

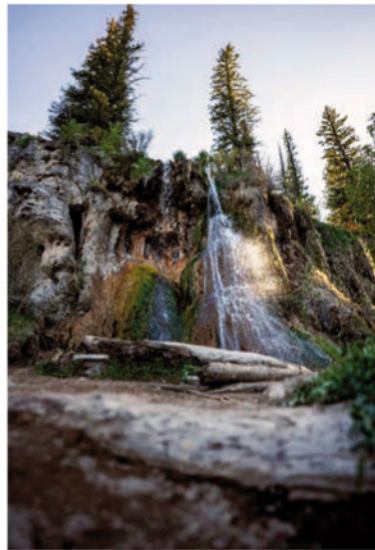


Photography was front and centre, in the book design

IMAGE FEATURED © CHRIS FREGLY







**Bluff Springs, New Mexico**  
amazing illustrations that are included in this book.



**Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming**

**How easy did you find the process of creating the book?**

The process was very smooth, albeit time-consuming. Using tools such as InDesign provided a lot of creative control but required me to think about every little detail. On the other hand, bringing the book from design software to Bob Books for printing was very smooth and required little work on my part.

**How could the process have been improved; what features would you like to see added?**

Had I not had graphic design experience and knowledge of tools such as InDesign, I likely would have used a pre-existing template provided by Bob Books. This would have greatly simplified the process and is what I would recommend to others just starting out and looking to make their own book.

**What did you think of the book when you received it? Did it live up to expectations?**

The book turned out great! I'm very happy with the quality, and excited to share it with others.

**What are your plans for it?**

I plan to give copies to friends and family, who supported me. And it's for sale on the Bob Books Bookshop at: [bobbooks.co.uk/bookshop/two-years-in-a-van-v2-2](http://bobbooks.co.uk/bookshop/two-years-in-a-van-v2-2)

AP



IMAGE COVER © CHRIS FREGLY

You can see more about Chris Fregly by visiting:

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Illustrator's Instagram:

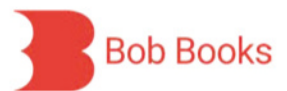
[www.instagram.com/graceharkinart](https://www.instagram.com/graceharkinart)

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# NiSi Wizard Camera Bracket

**Andy Westlake** tries out a handy device for fixing a camera onto a tripod

● £74.90 ● [nisioptics.co.uk](http://nisioptics.co.uk)

The NiSi Wizard Camera Bracket is a device for attaching your camera onto a tripod. By means of a rotating collar around the lens, it allows rapid switching between portrait and landscape format shooting, while keeping the camera directly above the head where it's most stable. Compared to using an L-bracket, this approach potentially offers some real advantages.

Firstly, the design won't interfere with articulated rear screens, which is crucial when shooting at awkward angles. Secondly, it's unlikely to block access to your camera's cable release port. Thirdly, it allows you to hang your camera from an inverted tripod centre column for low-angle shooting, but turn it back the right way up again, rather than struggle with operating it upside-down. It also lets you rotate the camera freely around the lens axis to tweak the composition.

Naturally, there are some caveats too. For the bracket to fit and work properly, the camera's tripod socket needs to be in line with the lens. On many smaller bodies, you may need an additional spacer to centre it vertically, for example an Arca-Swiss grip or baseplate. It won't fit onto cameras with large viewfinder overhangs, such as the Panasonic S5II. It will definitely get in the way of hand-held shooting.

The bracket is also likely to restrict access to the camera's lens release button, along with any controls on its front plate. In the worst-case scenario, you may need to use the flat face of a key or screwdriver to release the lens. It will also obstruct lens controls within about 15mm of the camera body, such as switches and aperture rings.

If you can live with all this, though, the NiSi Wizard works pretty well. It's very nicely made and fits securely onto both your camera and tripod. Crucially, the ring rotates really smoothly and locks down tightly at whatever angle you need.

## Verdict

If you can persuade the NiSi Wizard to fit your camera properly, it can be a useful option for tripod shooting. Personally, I can easily recommend the W-63 for Sony full-frame users; I tried it on both the A7R V and the older A7 II, and it worked with every lens I could find (which is a lot). For Micro Four Thirds, Fujifilm X and Nikon Z cameras, the W-72 does a pretty good job too, although it's more likely to block camera and lens controls.



### Hex key

A 4mm hex key for tightening the camera screw attaches magnetically beneath the camera plate.

### Anti-scratch

A rubber ring inside the collar protects your lenses from scratching.



### Locking

The bracket will lock firmly at any angle, with click stops at 90-degree intervals.

### Adjustment

The camera plate can be moved up and down by about 1cm for centring the ring on different cameras.

## At a glance

- Rotating tripod bracket
- Arca Swiss compatible
- 1/4in tripod socket
- Clicks at 90° intervals
- Comes in four sizes

## WHICH SIZE?

NiSi offers four versions, with the number in each name indicating the inside diameter of the ring in millimetres. The W-63 is recommended for Sony E and Canon EOS M systems; the W-72 for Fujifilm X, Nikon Z and L-mount cameras; and the W-82M for Canon EOS R (right). The W-82D has a longer camera plate to fit DSLRs.





**Professor Newman on...**

# In the lab

On how the CIELAB colour space attempts to describe human colour perception

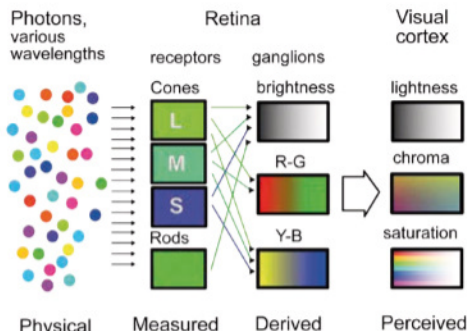
In my previous article I talked about the creation of the CIE XYZ colour space, and its position as one of the reference points for all other colour spaces. This article is all about the other one, the CIE Lab colour space, which was released in 1976, 35 years after XYZ. As we learned, XYZ was based on the assumption that human colour perception could be described using the mathematics of linear geometry. At that time little was known about the physiology of the human visual cortex, or indeed the working of neurons, the building blocks of the brain. In that regard it's astounding that XYZ works as well as it does. But by 1976 much more research had been done, and the CIELAB space took advantage of its results to provide a more accurate model of colour perception.

The 'L' in 'LAB' stands for 'lightness', how light or dark an object looks to a human observer, on a scale from 0 (black) to 100 (white), with intermediate values representing what is sometimes known as 'percentage grey'. There is much confusion about lightness. Many photographers incorrectly call it 'exposure' (which is in fact light energy density at the plane of focus). Sometimes it is wrongly termed 'luminance'. Luminance is a physical measure of luminous power density, so is clearly inappropriate for a perceptual concept. Some colour spaces prior to CIELAB (particularly those developed for colour TV) used 'L' to denote relative (as opposed to absolute) luminance, in which the

values are given relative to whatever is the maximum, to be perceived as 'white'. This depends on the assumption that how light or dark an image looks is linearly related to how much light power emanates from it. By the time CIELAB was developed this was known to be incorrect. Thus lightness has a non-linear relationship to relative luminance.

The other two components, A and B, encode the perceived hue of an object. To explain how they work, it's necessary to discuss the development of colour theory. In the late 19th century two different theories of colour vision had been developed. One was the more familiar trichromatic or 'red-green-blue' theory, that held that colours are composed of mixes of three different primaries. The other was 'opponent theory', which postulated four 'unique hues', red, green, blue and yellow, which could not be produced by mixing other hues. Rather, other hues were determined by where they fitted in a scale from green to red (A) and blue to yellow (B). These provide the A and B (strictly  $a^*$  and  $b^*$ ) components of CIELAB.

It might be asked, how can both theories be true? The answer lies in the realisation that



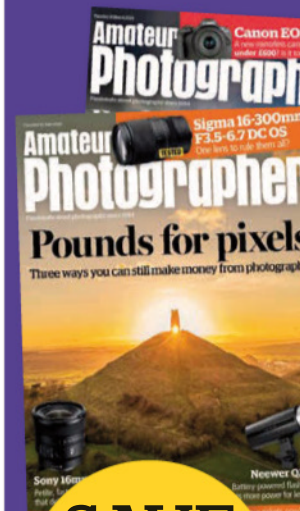
**The physical stimulation is photons of various wavelengths. In the retina the rods and cones measure the number of photons in different wavebands, and the ganglions (retinal neurons) derive value for brightness and opponent colours. These are passed via the optic nerves to the visual cortex, which produces the perceptual results, lightness, chroma and saturation.**

what we are talking about is not a physical thing, but rather a perceptual artefact which is the result of the workings of the visual cortex. That they could coexist mathematically, along with the formulae relating them, was worked out by the physicist Erwin Schrödinger (of cat fame) in 1925. It was much later that the physiological workings that effected this seeming impossibility were identified, which are shown in the diagram.

All three channels of CIELAB are non-linear, governed by more complex mathematical formulae. Nonetheless it is still only a convenient mathematical approximation to human colour vision, which does not have to follow mathematical rules at all. However, it is still substantially more accurate than CIE XYZ, and is therefore nowadays the preferred reference point for translation to and from device-dependent colour spaces.

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

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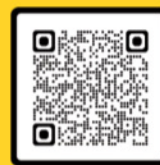


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# Small world, big impact

When David Joseph began exploring the world of close-up photography, he was using a mobile phone and cheap clip-on lens. Here he talks to **Tracy Calder** about how his life has changed thanks to snakes, spiders, frogs and a wonderful act of kindness

For most of his childhood and early adulthood David Joseph was afraid of insects, reptiles and arachnids.

'I wouldn't go near or touch so much as a grasshopper,' he laughs. Living in Nigeria there were plenty of animals to be afraid of: carpet adders, brown recluse spiders and puff adders can all issue a nasty bite if threatened or trapped. But getting into close-up photography a few years ago changed David's attitude to the creatures that he shares his home with.

'When I started photographing spiders, I realised they are similar to humans in that they're just trying to secure a meal, find a mate or look for shelter,' he explains. Using his mobile phone with a clip-on wideangle macro lens, David began following the daily struggles of

spiders, frogs and snakes and soon found himself 'falling in love' with them.

## Price of entry

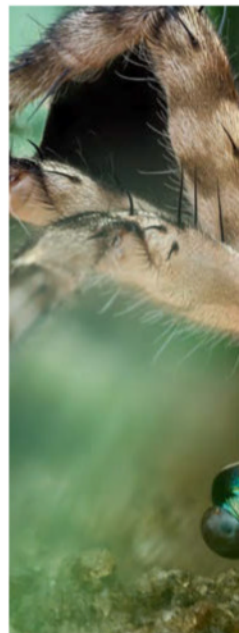
To begin with, David felt awkward hanging around fields and bushes looking for subjects to photograph. 'People would approach me and ask what I was doing,' he recalls. But in time, he saw it as an opportunity to share his newfound knowledge. 'Once I explained what I was doing and showed people my pictures, it became a gateway for them to appreciate these creatures too,' he explains. Days in the field felt like a gift, offering David the chance to quieten his mind, connect with nature and immerse himself in his surroundings. 'Getting deeper into macro made me feel closer to animals than I felt to a lot of

humans,' he admits. In those days, he was just 'playing around' with the camera on his mobile, learning what he could from photographers on YouTube, Instagram and, occasionally, in-person. 'You don't need lots of knowledge, or equipment or experience to get into macro,' he assures. 'The price of entry is passion.'

## Creative kinship

It took a lot of encouragement before David was willing to share his pictures and set up an Instagram account, but @abcdee\_david now has more than 6k followers. What's more, the support he's received from the online community has been a real confidence booster. 'The macro community is the best I know,' he smiles. 'People don't care where you're from, what you shoot or what

ALL IMAGES © DAVID JOSEPH





equipment you use, they truly care for one another; I wish humanity as a whole was more like that.' In fact, some of the members of the macro community were so impressed by David and his work that they clubbed together to help him buy an Olympus OM-D E-M5 II, Olympus 60mm macro lens and Godox V350-0 flash. 'I think miracles are rare, but that was definitely one of them,' he beams. 'It was such a beautiful gesture.'

### Stripping back

While David is now fully equipped (he uses an Olympus OM System OM-1 with Olympus 60mm lens, Godox V350-0 flash and Cygnustech diffuser), he still applies the lessons he learnt from using a mobile phone to his new work. 'Early on, I learnt to concentrate less on magnification and more on lighting and composition,' he explains. 'When you use a mobile phone, you're unlikely to achieve two- or three-times magnification, so you need to show the beauty of your subject using light and an awareness of what is (or isn't) in the frame.'

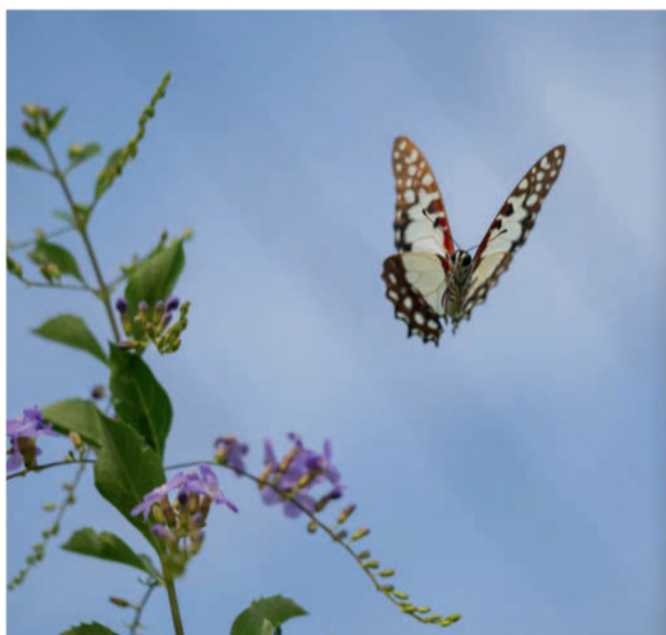
He also learnt to keep things simple, stripping everything away until the message of the picture becomes clear. 'As a beginner, especially in 2025, it's tempting to believe you have to get really close and use a colourful background, but that's not the case,' he confirms. 'When you think like this, you run the risk of forgetting about



**Above: A white crab spider with the perfect pose is a perfect petal replacement**

**Left: A wolf spider mother carrying her babies captures one of the fastest land insects, a tiger beetle**

**Right: An Angola White Lady butterfly photographed mid-flight**







composition and what attracted you to the subject in the first place.' David also learnt not to compare himself to photographers using superior kit. 'When you're using a mobile phone, you can't compete with people using high-end gear so it's best to just enjoy yourself and be grateful that you don't have

**Above: A curled-up *Dasypeltis scabra* snake spotted in the bush**

to lug any heavy equipment around with you.'

#### Bucket list

For David, frogs, spiders and snakes are a big part of the attraction. 'I never say no to spiders with prey, babies or eggs,' he laughs. 'But I really love frogs – they just seem to

have such a welcoming personality!' While he's happy to respond to whatever he finds, he does have a few pictures on his bucket list. 'I want to shoot a snake preying on a frog, but I don't know if this will ever be possible,' he sighs. 'I see some people getting great shots of slime moulds, plants and other things, but these subjects don't really interest me. Give me a frog or a spider and I'm happy – add a snake, and it's a party!' David sometimes uses an app on his phone to identify an animal he wants to photograph. 'It's okay to learn as you go,' he suggests. 'Just be respectful and approach each animal with care and kindness.'

#### Time to heal

David's gentle, inquisitive approach to photographing wildlife has won him many admirers, both online and in-person, and it's something he's found personally beneficial. 'A while ago I was struggling with





depression and I would go out every night and take photographs,' he confides. 'It was a form of therapy. To be honest, without macro photography I don't think I'd be alive today. It's hard to say, but it's the truth.' Unfortunately, David's confidence took a serious knock when he was assaulted, more than once, while out shooting. Shaken and feeling vulnerable, he stepped away from macro photography for a while. Thankfully, it wasn't long before his need to spend time out in nature outweighed his nervousness. 'The worry never entirely goes away, but I know that most of the time I will be safe,' he says.

### Bad habits

In 2023 David was made a moderator for the Nuts About Macro (@nuts\_about\_macro) Instagram hub, which has nearly 60k followers. Spending so much time looking at images online, he has noticed a few undesirable trends on the rise. First,

**Right: My favourite phone macro shot from 2022. A warm light placed behind the leaf created this silhouette and 'flame' effect**



**Below: Frog amplexus (exact species ID uncertain) with a ladybug that clearly isn't a fan of privacy**



a tendency to over-stack images. 'Sometimes people will stack a picture to the point where it loses depth,' he says. Pictures like these can feel unnatural to the human eye, causing us to do a double take for all the wrong reasons. Second, there's been a steep rise in the use of AI, which David is not happy about. 'If you create an image using AI, you should label it as such. Some people want to go from point one to point 90 without putting in any effort in the field. It's a real problem.'

### Bright future

David and his contemporaries work hard to create pictures that celebrate the natural world in all its raw beauty – a fact that doesn't go unnoticed. In 2024, just 12 months after he had swapped his mobile phone for a mirrorless camera, he won third place in the Animals category of Close-up Photographer of the Year (CUPOTY), an achievement that seems to have taken him by complete surprise. 'It was like a fairy-tale,' he recalls.

When you consider what David has achieved in the past five years, with minimum equipment and numerous setbacks, it's clear that he has a bright future ahead of him. 'I really love macro,' he smiles. 'It started with a love of bugs, but it's much more than that now.'





# Macro mastery

From Lensbaby optics to binoculars and sandals, 27 photographers talk to CUPOTY co-founder **Tracy Calder** about their go-to gear for prize-winning close-up pictures



## Tracy Calder

Tracy Calder is a photographer, writer and former magazine editor. In 2018 she co-founded Close-up Photographer of the Year (CUPOTY) – a competition celebrating close-up, macro and micro photography. To find out more visit [www.tracycalder.com](http://www.tracycalder.com) and [www.cupoty.com](http://www.cupoty.com).



© ANDREW FUSEK PETERS

## OM System OM-1 with Olympus 60mm macro lens

'I like to team my OM System OM-1 with a 60mm macro lens. This camera has incredible in-body image stabilisation and excellent in-built focus stacking. The lens is super-sharp and works brilliantly for close-up pictures.'



**Tip:** Go to your favourite butterfly location in the rain. Chances are you'll have the place to yourself, and you might find a roosting butterfly, providing a great opportunity for a focus stack.

**Andrew Fusek Peters, Insta:** [@andrewfusekpeters](https://www.instagram.com/andrewfusekpeters), [www.fusekphotos.com](http://www.fusekphotos.com)

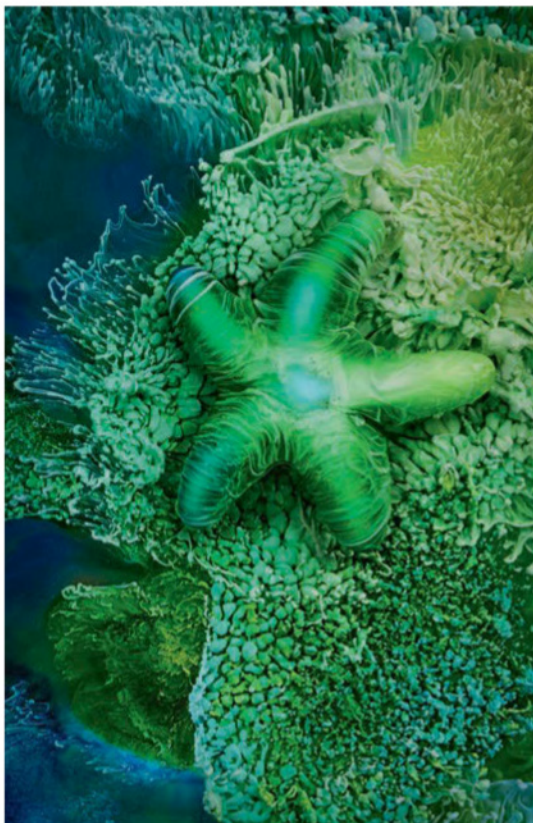


## Apple iPhone 15 Pro

'My favourite go-to piece of kit for close-up photography is my iPhone 15 Pro. It has a very capable macro mode, as well as the ability to produce high-resolution images using the standard lens. I find it ideal for the type of images I like to create and then print for exhibitions.'



**Tip:** Experiment with all the camera features on your iPhone – you might be surprised by how flexible it is!  
**Jane Simmonds, Insta:** [@jane\\_simmonds\\_art](https://www.instagram.com/jane_simmonds_art), [www.janesimmonds.co.uk](http://www.janesimmonds.co.uk)



## WeMacro automated focus rail

'My most valued tool for close-ups is my WeMacro automated focus-stacking rail. It allows me to take bracketed pictures by placing my camera on top of it while it's secured to a mini tripod. I add my focus stacking settings on my phone, such as time interval and distance between shots.'

**Tip:** The rail requires time to move between shots, so it's not great for moving subjects. But it's perfect for the home studio.

**Angi Wallace, Insta:** [@angiwallacephotography](https://www.instagram.com/angiwallacephotography), [www.angiwallacephotography.com](http://www.angiwallacephotography.com)



© ANGI WALLACE



## Portable diffuser/reflector

'My most-used piece of kit for flower close-ups is a handheld diffuser, which blocks sunlight from the flower I'm photographing. On sunny days it's an absolute must, or your flower will have harsh shadows or blown highlights. They are inexpensive, but you can also make your own with some greaseproof paper.'

**Tip:** Look at these two photos: without the diffuser the flower lacks detail in the bright sections and the colours are distorted. There are many blocky, shadowy patches on the petals which distract from the natural shape of the flower.

**Molly Hollman, Insta:**  
@mollyhollmanphotography,  
mollyhollman.myportfolio.com



## Canon RF 100-500mm lens

'My most used piece of kit for close-up photography is the Canon RF 100-500mm lens. The close focusing distance is great for a range of subjects, from small butterflies to dragonflies, whether perched or in flight. The lens is also light to handhold and super-sharp.'

**Tip:** Even if your subject is flighty, with this lens you've got the zoom range you need to give it space and not disturb it.

**Jo Angell, Insta:** @jo\_angell\_wildlife\_photography

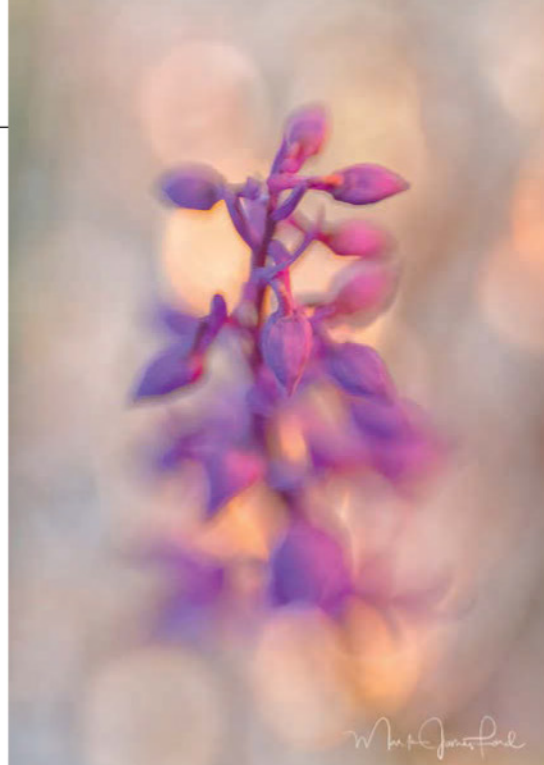


## OM System 90mm macro lens

'The OM System 90mm macro lens has become an indispensable addition to my ultra-macro photography kit. It has 2x magnification and can be used with a 1.4 or 2x teleconverter. This means I no longer have to use extension tubes or an additional magnifying lens, both of which can compromise image quality.'

**Tip:** For the best results I always use a tripod with my 90mm macro lens at 2x magnification.

**Barry Webb, Insta:** @barrywebbimages,  
www.barrywebbimages.co.uk



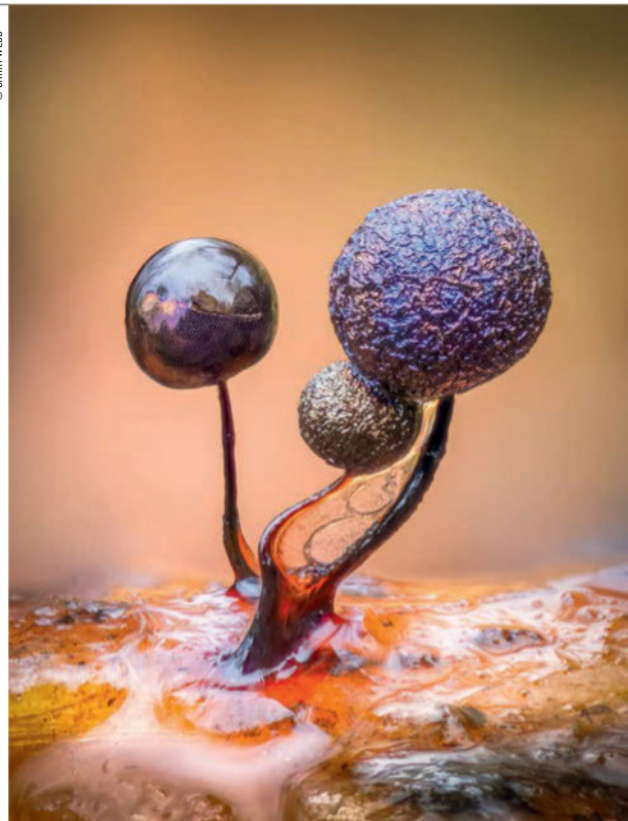
## Lensbaby Sweet 35 Optic

'I'm always looking to use light and atmosphere to capture the essence of a subject. The Lensbaby Sweet 35 Optic allows me to do this by almost mixing the light with the colours and forms of flowers.'



**Tip:** When using a lens like this you need to make sure that the subject, not the effect, remains the star.

**Mark James Ford, www.astrophotography.art**







© ANN MARSON

## White foam boards

'I love using white foam boards for close-up photography. They provide a clean background and help direct light naturally. I shot this wildflower bouquet with diffused window light – no studio equipment required.'



**Tip:** I place one board beneath, another angled above – simple, effective, and it keeps my creative flow going rather than fussing with lighting gear.

**Ann Marson, Insta: @annstracts, www.annstracts.com**

## KEEN water sandals

'During the summer months I spend hours exploring the shoreline at low tide. It's essential I have footwear that can withstand salt water, provide good grip on slippery seaweed and protect my feet. My KEEN water sandals are indispensable for these conditions.'

**Tip:** Rinse the sandals in fresh water after they've been in the sea, and they'll last years.

**David Southern, Insta: @dsouthern18**



© DAVID SOUTHERN

## OM System OM-1 with 90mm macro lens

'Until May I used a Nikon D500 for macro and I had to do my focus bracketing manually. The in-camera focus bracketing on my new OM-1 is much faster and easier, so I can capture relatively active insects, whereas before they had to be very still.'

**Tip:** Focus bracketing on the OM-1 works in manual focus, so you can start the bracket just in front of the subject; this ensures you capture the closest point to the camera. In AF it can



© TONY NORTH

be hard to catch that often very tiny spot.

**Tony North, Insta: @tnorth67, www.artofmacro.com**

## OM System OM-1 with OM System 60mm macro lens

'I prefer to shoot my Bottlescape images handheld – the OM System OM-1 paired with the Olympus 60mm macro lens is perfect in that it's compact and extremely lightweight. This is essential when I'm photographing in very close proximity to the glass bottles and wanting to have the freedom to move around to find the best composition.'



**Tip:** Master the Focus Limiter switch on the side of the lens. Not only does this give you three different focal ranges to choose from, but it also allows you to switch your magnification to 1:1 ratio.

**Rachel McNulty, Insta: @rachelmcnultybottlescapes**

## Nikon MC-30A Remote Trigger Release

'For close-up work in the studio, I use my Nikon Remote Trigger Release on my camera. The ability to take a shot without touching the camera eliminates camera shake during the shutter release, thus improving image sharpness. A must for complex, multiple exposures, like this one.'

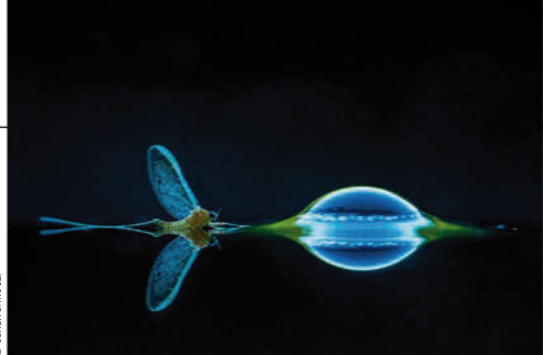
**Tip:** I use the remote trigger release with my camera's mirror-up mode to capture the sharpest images.

**Elizabeth Kazda, www.elizabethkazda.myportfolio.com**



© ELIZABETH KAZDA





## Sigma 180mm macro lens

'My favourite close-up photography tool is the Sigma 180mm f/2.8 macro lens. I've been using it since 2016, and it's probably the highest-quality lens I've ever held in my hands. In addition to its perfect sharpness, it has virtually no lens aberrations. What I really love about it is how beautifully it blurs the background and foreground.'



**Tip:** Make good use of the image stabiliser on this lens. Relatively long shutter speeds are more than possible thanks to this technology.

**Csaba Daróczy, Insta: @daroczics**

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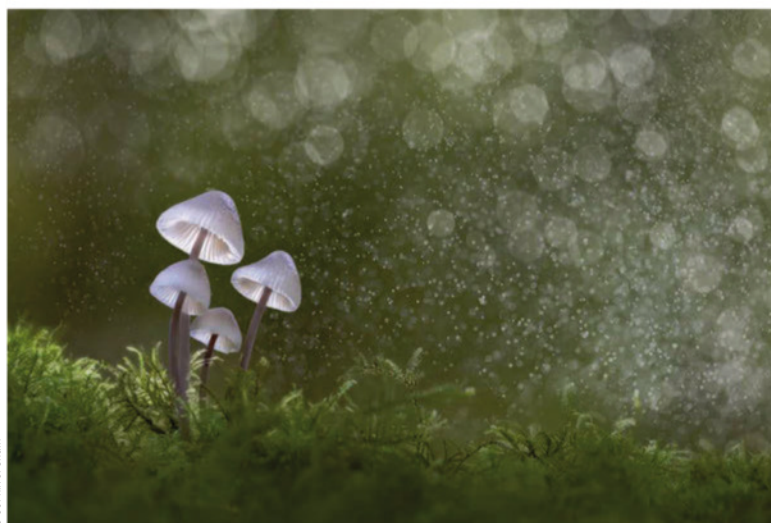


## Pentax Papilio II 6.5x21 Macro Binoculars

'Macro binoculars are designed for close-up viewing, allowing users to observe objects at short distances. They allow you to scout and examine textures, colours and forms without straining your eyes or relying entirely on a viewfinder or a screen.'

**Tip:** Macro binoculars are an invaluable companion for macro photographers – especially those with poor eyesight, like me!

**Henri Koskinen, www.mushroomimage.com**



## Spray bottle

'I often use a spray bottle for macro photography. I use the spray to make a mist of water which I up light with flash – this creates bokeh, as seen here. I use a constant light source to create the effect of rain. I also use a spray bottle to add water droplets to flowers to simulate dew.'

**Tip:** Try squeezing the trigger using different levels of force to get different-sized droplets.

**Sophia Spurgin, Insta: @daughteruptree**

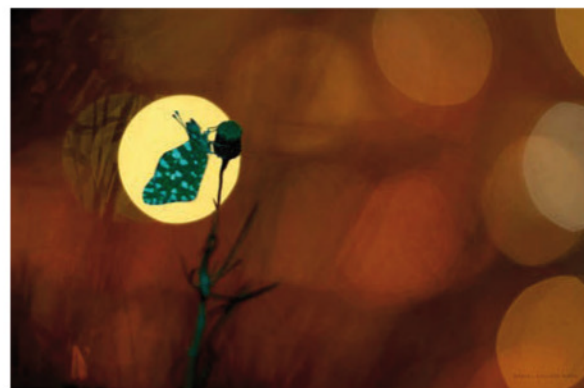


## Raynox DCR-250 macro lens

'I use all sorts of lenses, from macro to telephoto. As for accessories, I like to carry a Raynox DCR-250 macro lens – it doesn't take up space in my camera bag and performs just as well as a dedicated macro lens. I use it for mushrooms, moss, swamp plants and micro insects.'

**Tip:** As well as taking up less space in a kit bag, the Raynox DCR-250 macro lens is significantly cheaper than a dedicated macro lens!

**Svetlana Ivanenko, Insta: @svetlana\_ivanenko70**



© DANIEL CALLEJO ROSSI

## Sony RMT-P1BT Remote Commander

'I use a Sony RMT-P1BT Remote Commander for night-time butterfly photography. It's very accurate when it focuses and I don't need to touch the camera, which is handy because I often use a very slow shutter speed.'

**Tip:** Using a remote commander allows you to shoot from a distance while illuminating your subject.

**Daniel Callejo Rossi, Insta: @danielcallejorossi, www.flickr.com/photos/callross/**







© ROB BLANKEN

## Nikon right-angle finder

'My favourite piece of kit for close-up photography is an angle-finder. Using this tool, I can take pictures from a low angle without damaging my 69-year-old neck! It's great for photographing spiders, my favourite subject. Of course, you can also use the flip-up screen on modern system cameras, but that doesn't reveal the fine details quite as well. Angle-finders aren't compatible with those cameras, unfortunately, but luckily, I still have my "old" SLR.'



**Tip:** Don't sell your SLR! Pair it with an angle-finder instead.

**Rob Blanken, [www.robblankenphotography.com/spiders](http://www.robblankenphotography.com/spiders)**



## Olympus OM-D E-M1 III with Olympus 60mm macro lens

'A macro lens should be small and light, so it doesn't kill your shoulders or stop you from walking long distances; that's one reason why I love my Olympus 60mm lens for close-up photography. The lens measures just 3in and weighs 185g.'

**Tip:** Practise using the magnification window which displays the ratios from 1:1 to 1:4 and the focus distance indications. I tend to get in close to fill the frame and the 1:1 magnification is ideal in this little lens.

**Melanie Collie, Insta: @melaniecollie, [www.melcollie.co.uk](http://www.melcollie.co.uk)**



© TINA CLAFFEY

## Pop-up reflector/diffuser

'I specialise in macro photography of flora and fauna in natural light, so my most essential piece of kit is a pop-up diffuser. Harsh sunlight doesn't work well for me to record all the wonderful details. Using the diffuser softens the natural light and allows me to capture my subject at any time of the day.'



**Tip:** Most of the flora and fauna I photograph is situated at ground level. I use my camera bag to weigh down the diffuser, then get in under it to capture my subject. The diffuser also doubles up as a reflector. It also works well as a wind breaker on breezy days!

**Tina Claffey, Insta: @tinacclaffeyphotography, [www.tinacclaffey.com](http://www.tinacclaffey.com)**

## OM System 300mm lens fitted with MC-14 1.4x converter

'I love to use the OM System 300mm f/4 IS Pro lens fitted with an MC-14 1.4x converter for insect photography. This combination gives an effective focal length of 840mm and focuses down to just over one metre, allowing frame-filling larger insects from a good working distance. It also works with focus stacking/bracketing.'

**Tip:** The image stabiliser on this lens easily allows handheld shooting, offering more flexibility in framing and following the subject.

**Andy Sands, Insta: @andysandsphotography, [www.andysands.co.uk](http://www.andysands.co.uk)**



© ANDY SANDS



© SIMON CAPLAN

## Zeiss Touit 50mm Macro lens

'I like to use a Zeiss Touit 50mm macro lens on my Sony A6500 camera. Why? Because it's a simple, practical macro lens that, at 50mm focal length, allows me to get close to the subject and use lower shutter speeds when working handheld. This lens has great optics delivering a high-quality image every time.'

**Tip:** Because my photography is mostly about seeing and capturing obscure details that aren't always obvious to others, I tend to think that my most useful pieces of kit are my brain and my eyes (to badly paraphrase Ansel Adams).

**Simon Caplan, [simoncaplanphotography.co.uk](http://simoncaplanphotography.co.uk)**

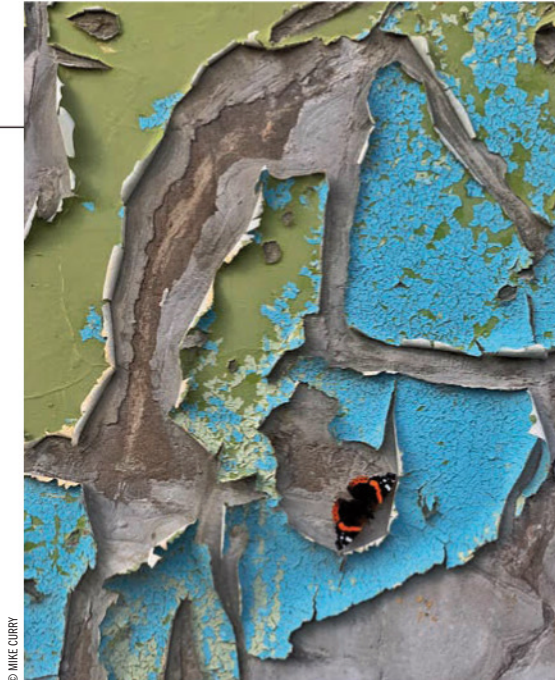




## Apple iPhone XS

'My favourite close-up kit is always the camera that I have on me. The day I took this picture it was an iPhone XS – a quiet witness to a red admiral pausing amongst flakes of paint. Sometimes, it's not about the sharpest lens, it's about being ready when the ordinary turns into something beautiful.'

**Tip:** With the iPhone I'd recommend taking the first couple of shots on



© MIKE CURRY

the default settings and then as soon as possible swapping to raw. That way you will get the shot in JPEG at least, before the

light or the subject disappears.

**Mike Curry, Insta:** @mikecurryphotography, mikecurryphotography.com



© SANDRA STALKER

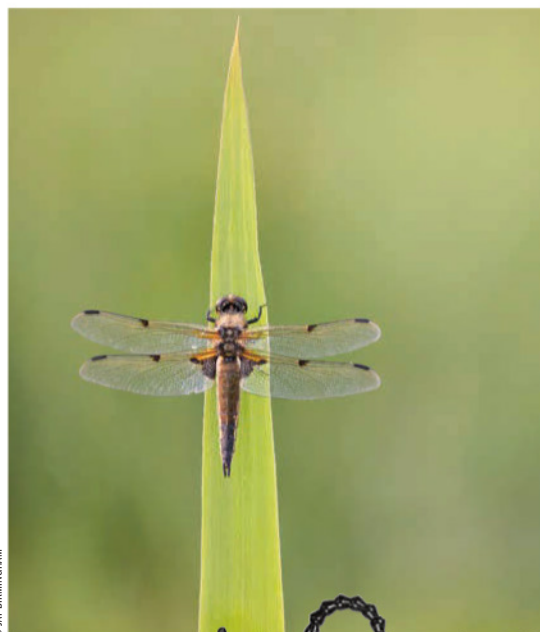
## Backscatter Mini Flash 2 underwater strobe and snoot

'For my close-up photography I couldn't be without my Backscatter Mini Flash 2 underwater strobe and snoot. I think of close-up photography as creating a mini stage set, and this is my secret weapon for spotlighting my teeny-tiny underwater supermodels.'



**Tip:** Pair this lighting gear with a long exposure or additional coloured strobe for the background to introduce added interest.

**Sandra Stalker, Insta:** @teenytinyunderwaterphotos, www.temperatewaters.co.uk



© JAY BIRMINGHAM

## Wimberley Plamp

'The Wimberley Plamp is an underrated macro tool in my view. It can be used to hold stems steady, prop up backgrounds or position reflectors, freeing up hands and reducing motion blur. It's especially useful in breezy conditions or for precise compositions featuring delicate subjects.'

**Tip:** Focus bracket whenever possible. This avoids the frustration of discovering that a critical detail just missed the focus plane once you're home.

**Jay Birmingham, Insta:** @jaybirminghamphotography, www.jaybirmingham.com

## Rubber boots

'I'm totally dependent on my knee-high rubber boots when I photograph sand patterns and other motifs on the shores of the islands outside my hometown. I also use them in the garden and in the forest when I'm taking regular macro photos because the grass and vegetation are often damp or wet. They also help protect against ticks!'

**Tip:** If you're out in the winter and



have problems keeping your feet warm, buy a pair of boots a few sizes bigger than your

usual fit and put on thick wool socks to help fill them up!

**Nora Kirkbak, Insta:** @nora.kirkbak



© NORA KIRKBAK



© PETAR SABOL

## Sony A1 II with 70-200mm Macro lens

'For close-up or macro photography, I pair my

Sony A1 or Sony A1 II body with the compact but powerful 70-200mm Macro lens and a 2x teleconverter. This gives



me an increase of 1: 1 Macro and 400mm of focal length, which is fantastic for photographing insects.'

**Tip:** Get up early and photograph insects while they're cold and therefore less active.

**Petar Sabol, Insta:** @petarsharpeyesabol





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*Professional Imagemaker Magazine June-July 2024*



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# Best Buys

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



A round-up of the AP testing team's favourite and most highly rated kit, including both cameras and all kinds of accessories, across a wide range of price points

## OM System Tough TG-7

● £499 ● [explore.omsystem.com](http://explore.omsystem.com)

This latest model in a long line of class-leading rugged cameras is waterproof to 15m, shockproof against a 2.1m drop, crushproof and freezeproof. The 25-100mm equivalent lens is paired with a 12MP sensor, with in-body stabilisation to combat shake. Viewing is via a 3in LCD. The TG-7 is also one of the few cameras of its type that can record raw files.

★★★★★ Reviewed 2 Apr 2024



## Canon PowerShot G7X Mark III

● £699 ● [www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk)

This lovely little pocket camera provides a good range of features for both photography and video. You get a 20MP 1in sensor, 24-100mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 zoom lens, 4K 30p video recording, and a tilting rear screen. It's ideal for those who'd like more advanced controls than on a smartphone.

★★★★★ Reviewed 28 Sep 2019



## Fujifilm X100VI

● £1,599 ● [www.fujifilm.eu/uk](http://www.fujifilm.eu/uk)

The sixth version of Fujifilm's charismatic rangefinder-styled compact boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor in front of its fixed 23mm f/2 lens. It also gains in-body stabilisation while barely increasing in size. Traditional analogue control dials are joined by a unique hybrid optical / electronic viewfinder and a tilting touchscreen on the back. It's a truly fabulous camera.

★★★★★

Review  
9 Apr 2024



## Ricoh GR III

● £949 ● [ricohgr.eu/en-gb](http://ricohgr.eu/en-gb)

A favourite of street photographers, the GR III combines a 24MP APS-C sensor and a sharp 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens in a slim, pocketable body. It offers sensitivities up to ISO 102,400 and 4fps shooting, while in-body image stabilisation helps keeps image sharp. Viewing is via a fixed 3in rear LCD or an optional optical viewfinder that slots onto the hot shoe.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
3 Aug  
2019



## Sony RX100 VII

● £1,049 ● [www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)

Sony has somehow crammed a 24-200mm equivalent zoom, pop-up electronic viewfinder, tilting screen, 20fps shooting and 4K video recording into a body that you can slip into a jacket pocket. With the firm's latest AF technology also on board, it's without doubt the most accomplished pocket camera on the market.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
5 Oct 2019



## Sony RX10 IV

● £1,499 ● [www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)

This sets a new standard for superzoom cameras, with a 24-600mm equivalent lens, 20MP 1in sensor, and 24fps continuous shooting. Its SLR-shaped body hosts a large electronic viewfinder and a decent set of physical controls. It's the best all-in-one camera for wildlife or travel photography that you can buy right now.

★★★★★

Reviewed  
2 Dec 2017





## Canon EOS 250D

• £769 with 18-55mm IS lens • [www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk)

One of the smallest DSLRs around, the EOS 250D strikes a great balance between portability and usability. It's equipped with a novice-friendly Guided Mode, while Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS sensor provides excellent autofocus in live view. Image quality is very good, delivering vibrant colours and plenty of fine detail.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
7 Sep 2019



## Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

• £749 with 14-42mm lens • [www.olympus.co.uk](http://www.olympus.co.uk)

With a charismatic retro design, fine handling, highly effective in-body stabilisation and attractive JPEG output, Olympus has made a camera that's more pleasant to use than its entry-level competitors. Its 20MP sensor delivers good results up to ISO 3200 at least, and its tilting screen can be set to face forwards beneath the camera.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
26 Sep  
2020



## Fujifilm X-T5

• £1,699 body only • [www.fujifilm.eu/uk](http://www.fujifilm.eu/uk)

Fujifilm's latest X-T model is a great choice for serious enthusiast photographers. It boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor housed in a retro-styled body covered with traditional analogue control dials. Subject-detection autofocus, in-body stabilisation and Fujifilm's lovely colour modes round off an extremely desirable package.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
3 Jan 2023



## Canon EOS R50

• £899 with 15-45mm lens • [www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk)

With the EOS R50, Canon has fitted some impressive technology into a compact and lightweight body. It boasts highly capable subject recognition autofocus coupled with rapid continuous shooting. Image quality is very pleasing too, with attractive files direct from the camera. It also works well with EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
6 Jun 2023



## Fujifilm X-T50

• £1,299 body only • [www.fujifilm.eu/uk](http://www.fujifilm.eu/uk)

Fujifilm's mid-range line takes a major step up, with a 40MP sensor and in-body image stabilisation. Traditional analogue dials control exposure settings, while the firm's peerless Film Simulation colour modes get their own selection dial for the first time. The compact body is ideal for travel.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
30 Jul 2024



## Panasonic Lumix GH7

• £1,999 body only • [www.panasonic.com/uk](http://www.panasonic.com/uk)

Panasonic's flagship Micro Four Thirds camera is aimed at videographers, but holds its own when capturing stills as well. Its 25MP sensor delivers plenty of detail, while enabling 5.7K recording at 60fps, or 4K at 120fps. Autofocus is much improved over the firm's older models, too. Pro-spec video functionality and effective in-body stabilisation round off a fine package.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
5 Nov 2024



## Fujifilm X-S10

• £999 with 15-45mm lens • [www.fujifilm.eu/uk](http://www.fujifilm.eu/uk)

Fujifilm's X-S10 brings a distinct change in design. It looks much like a conventional DSLR, with electronic dials for changing exposure settings. But you still get Fujifilm's signature fine image quality, along with in-body image stabilisation. The result is a camera that's perfect for APS-C DSLR users looking to upgrade to mirrorless.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
23 Jan 2021



## OM System OM-5

• £1,199 body only • [explore.omsystem.com](http://explore.omsystem.com)

This small, fully featured and weather-sealed mirrorless camera is both a pleasure to use, and capable of great results. Its petite body finds space for an extensive complement of controls, along with class-leading 5-axis in-body image stabilisation, yet weighs in at just 414g. On-chip phase detection enables fast, decisive autofocus.

★★★★★

**Reviewed**  
13 Dec 2022



## OM System OM-1 Mark II

• £2,199 body only • [explore.omsystem.com](http://explore.omsystem.com)

Updated version of this high-speed powerhouse gains some handy new features. It's capable of shooting at 120fps with focus fixed, or 50fps with AF, but now with double the buffer for extended bursts. AI subject detection recognises vehicles, animals and birds. It also boasts IP53-rated weather-sealing and includes class-leading stabilisation.

★★★★★

**Review**  
12 Mar 2024



## Nikon Z f

● £2,149 body only ● [www.nikon.co.uk](http://www.nikon.co.uk)

This lovely-looking full-frame mirrorless model combines plenty of substance with its classic retro styling. It boasts tactile top-plate dials for shutter speed, ISO and exposure compensation while delivering lovely image quality in both JPEG and raw. There's some cutting-edge technology on board too, including impressive subject detection autofocus.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
9 Jan 2024



## Nikon Z 7II

● £2,899 body only ● [www.nikon.co.uk](http://www.nikon.co.uk)

Nikon has delivered a sensible update to its flagship high-res model, with an additional SD card slot and slightly faster shooting. As before, its 45.7MP sensor gives stunning image quality, backed up by 5-axis in-body image stabilisation and fast, accurate autofocus. The viewfinder is superb, and F-mount SLR lenses can be used via the FTZ adapter.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
6 Feb 2021



## Sony Alpha 7R V

● £3,699 body only ● [www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)

With its 61MP full-frame sensor, the A7R V provides class-leading image quality while adding a whole array of improvements over its predecessor. These include subject-detection AF, a larger, more detailed viewfinder, and a more flexible rear LCD design. For those whose needs are more about image quality than speed, it's probably the best full-frame camera you can buy.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
17 Jan 2023



## Sony Alpha 7 IV

● £2,179 body only ● [www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)

Sony's enthusiast-focused full-frame mirrorless model sets a new standard in its class. Its 33MP full-frame sensor delivers excellent image quality, and it can shoot at up to 10fps. Its practically foolproof subject-detection AF can now recognise birds as well as humans and animals. A large, clear viewfinder and fully articulated touchscreen round off the package.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
11 Dec 2021



## Nikon Z 8

● £3,789 body only ● [www.nikon.co.uk](http://www.nikon.co.uk)

This stunning camera takes all the best bits of Nikon's flagship Z 9 and places them in a smaller, less-expensive body. Combining high resolution, rapid speed, cutting-edge autofocus and pro-level build, it's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's a stunningly capable camera.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
11 Jul 2023



## Leica M11

● £7,299 body only ● [uk.leica-camera.com](http://uk.leica-camera.com)

Leica's 60MP full-frame rangefinder is a beautiful anachronism – a camera type that has been obsolete for decades, yet which still remains an object of desire for many photographers. This elegant mix of the old and the modern offers triple-resolution raw recording, including 36MP and 18MP options, and vastly improved battery life. It's a really lovely camera that can deliver stunning results.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
8 Mar 2022



## Nikon D850

● £2,699 body only ● [www.nikon.co.uk](http://www.nikon.co.uk)

This brilliant professional all-rounder provides a winning combination of high resolution and speed. Its 45.7MP sensor produces fine results at high ISOs, and the autofocus is incredibly responsive and accurate. Build quality and handling should satisfy the most demanding of users. It's an absolutely sensational camera capable of tackling any type of subject.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
21 Oct 2017



## Canon EOS R6 Mark II

● £2,779 body only ● [www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk)

Based around a 24MP full-frame sensor, this brilliant all-rounder will do almost anything you might ask it to. It combines reliable subject-detection AF, rapid continuous shooting, and effective image stabilisation in a body that handles well and gives great results. It also works well with adapted EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
21 Mar 2023



## Fujifilm GFX100S

● £5,499 body only ● [www.fujifilm.eu/uk](http://www.fujifilm.eu/uk)

Fujifilm's second-generation super-high resolution camera places a 102MP medium-format sensor in a body the size of a full-frame DSLR. On-chip phase detection provides rapid autofocus while in-body stabilisation allows the camera to be used handheld easily. It's perfect if you need to shoot in the field with compromising image quality.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
8 May 2021



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## Billingham Hadley Pro 2020

● £293 ● [www.billingham.co.uk](http://www.billingham.co.uk)

The latest model in this iconic line of British-made satchel-style bags includes some well-considered updates, such as a detachable shoulder strap. It's impeccably constructed from premium materials to keep your kit protected, including Billingham's signature triple-layer canvas that's impermeable to water. It's pricey, but will last for decades.

★★★★★ Reviewed 5 Oct 2019



## Vanguard Veo Active 42M

● £160 ● [www.vanguardworld.co.uk](http://www.vanguardworld.co.uk)

Vanguards's VEO Active backpacks are designed for hiking. This model is small enough to carry on a plane, but still has space for a camera and three lenses, plus a 13in laptop and personal items. It offers excellent protection thanks to its metal frame and padded insert.

★★★★★

Reviewed 19 Jul 2022



## Gitzo Adventure 30L

● £239 ● [www.gitzo.com/uk-en](http://www.gitzo.com/uk-en)

This sizeable backpack will hold a pro-spec DSLR with a 70-200mm lens attached and a second body plus up to 4 lenses. An expandable roll top provides plenty of space for personal items, and the bag also boasts tablet and laptop compartments. It's comfortable to carry fully loaded and offers first-class protection.

★★★★★

Reviewed 8 Sep 2018



## Essential Film Holder Kit

● £90 ● [www.clifforth.co.uk](http://www.clifforth.co.uk)

Many photographers either still enjoy shooting film, or have old negatives and slides that they'd like to digitise. Probably the best way to do this is to copy them using a DSLR or mirrorless camera. This easy-to-use device holds film flat over a lightbox for copying. It gives excellent results and is much quicker than using a scanner.

★★★★★

Reviewed 29 Aug 2020



## NiSi Bluetooth Remote Control

● £29.90 ● [nisiptics.co.uk](http://nisiptics.co.uk)

If you use strong neutral density filters, this device makes it much easier to work with the long exposures required. It connects to your smartphone by Bluetooth and is controlled by NiSi's free ND Calculator app. Camera connection cables cost £5.90 each.

★★★★★ Reviewed 11 Jan 2022



## Novo Mantis T3 Mini Travel Tripod

● £70 ● [www.ukdigital.co.uk](http://www.ukdigital.co.uk)

This neat 27cm-tall mini tripod has two-section carbon-fibre legs that can be set to three different angles, and chunky rubber feet that unscrew to reveal ground spikes. The matched MBH-25 ball head (£60) provides impressive strength, and an optional centre column is available for £30.

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Feb 2021



## Manfrotto 190 Go! MT190GOC4

● £299 ● [www.manfrotto.com/uk-en](http://www.manfrotto.com/uk-en)

With 4-section carbon fibre legs that can each be set to four angles, this sturdy, versatile tripod achieves a maximum height of 147cm while folding down to 45cm, and weighs 1.35kg. But its party trick is a centre column that can be set horizontally for overhead or low-level shooting.

★★★★★

Reviewed 1 Jun 2019



## Benro GD3WH

● £169 ● [www.benroeu.com](http://www.benroeu.com)

This relatively lightweight and portable geared head employs an Arca Swiss type quick release. Three large control knobs, one for each axis of movement, drive the camera directly in the corresponding direction, allowing highly accurate setting of composition. With its sturdy magnesium alloy construction, it's rated to support a 6kg load.

★★★★★ Reviewed 26 May 2018



## Vanguard VEO 2S AM-264TR

● £99 ● [www.vanguardworld.co.uk](http://www.vanguardworld.co.uk)

This unusual monopod boasts an extended height of 1630mm, a folded height of 565mm and a maximum load capacity of 6kg. Three foldable legs at the base provide a tri-stand platform, and are linked to the four-section carbon fibre leg via a ball joint that allows smooth panning and tilting motions.

★★★★★

Reviewed 30 May 2015



## Adaptalux Studio Nature LED Macro Combo Pack

● £372 ● [www.adaptalux.com](http://www.adaptalux.com)

This clever modular LED system is perfect for lighting small subjects creatively. The pack includes a control pod with a built-in rechargeable battery, four flexible lighting arms (two white, one blue and one green), plus three diffusers and two colour filters. Always-on LED lighting makes it easy to visualise the results in real time.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
20 Sep 2022

## RØDE VideoMicro II

● £82 ● [en.rodemicro.com](http://en.rodemicro.com)

RØDE's updated compact on-camera video microphone brings a number of welcome improvements. Along with a much-improved Helix shock-mount, it comes with cables for use with both cameras and smartphones, plus a choice of foam or furry windshields. Audio quality is a dramatic improvement over most cameras' built-in mics, too.

★★★★★ Reviewed 20 Jun 2023



## Tenba Tools Cable Duo 4

● £20 ● [uk.tenba.com](http://uk.tenba.com)

Not all handy accessories have to cost a fortune. This well-designed tech organiser pouch features a dual-compartment layout, with a shallow space on one side for cables, and a deeper one on the other for such things as battery chargers or computer mice. The simple rectangular design fits easily into a bag and the tough transparent covers make it easy to see what's inside.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
20 Sep 2022



## Formatt Hitech Onyx 85mm Seascape Kit

● £345 ● [www.formatt-hitech.com](http://www.formatt-hitech.com)

This 85mm filter kit is ideal for APS-C or Micro Four Thirds users. It includes a polariser, 6-stop neutral density, and 3-stop soft-edge and hard-edge ND grads. It'll fit filter threads up to 77mm, with step rings for 72mm, 67mm and 58mm supplied in the box.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
6 Feb 2021



## Calibrite ColorChecker Studio

● £500 ● [www.colourconfidence.com](http://www.colourconfidence.com)

Previously known as X-Rite i1 Studio, this kit enables users to adopt a completely colour-managed workflow, from capture through display to print. It allows profiling of cameras, scanners, monitors, projectors and printers, and works with both Mac and Windows computers. It's a great tool for any photographer who likes to print at home.

★★★★★ Reviewed 19 Jan 2019



## Kase Revolution Magnetic Circular Entry Level Kit

● £230-£285 ● [www.kasefilters.com](http://www.kasefilters.com)

These clever kits include circular polarising, 3-stop and 6-stop neutral density filters that snap magnetically onto adapters that screw into your lens. This considerably speeds up the process of using filters and encourages you to use them creatively.

Kits are available in 77mm, 82mm, and 95mm sizes, with adapter rings from 49mm up.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
21 Feb 2023



## Epson Expression Photo XP970

● £219 ● [www.epson.co.uk](http://www.epson.co.uk)

An update to the XP960, which won our coveted gold award, this impressive multifunctional unit provides A3 printing ability while retaining a compact footprint. Along with a conventional USB connection, it can print over Wi-Fi, or directly from an SD card or USB stick, controlled using the excellent colour LCD touchscreen. Other useful features include an A4 scanner and double-sided document printing.

★★★★★



## Biolite Charge 80 PD

● £70 ● [uk.bioliteenergy.com](http://uk.bioliteenergy.com)

Powerbanks can be invaluable when you want to keep shooting for longer. This device houses a 20,000mAh Li-ion battery, which is capable of replenishing the average camera battery up to ten times. It can also be used to power certain cameras directly.

★★★★★ Reviewed 10 Jul 2021



## Fujifilm Instax Mini Link 2

● £115 ● [www.instax.co.uk](http://www.instax.co.uk)

Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery, this smart little printer connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. It's small enough to slip into a coat pocket or bag, and delivers gorgeous little prints with fine detail and vivid colour.

★★★★★  
Reviewed  
30 Aug 2022



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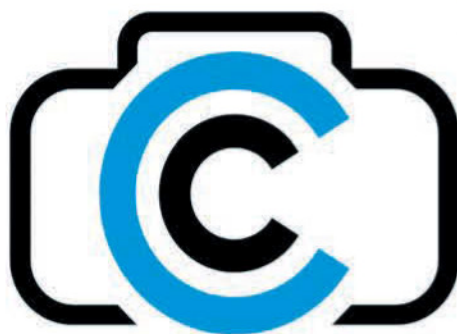
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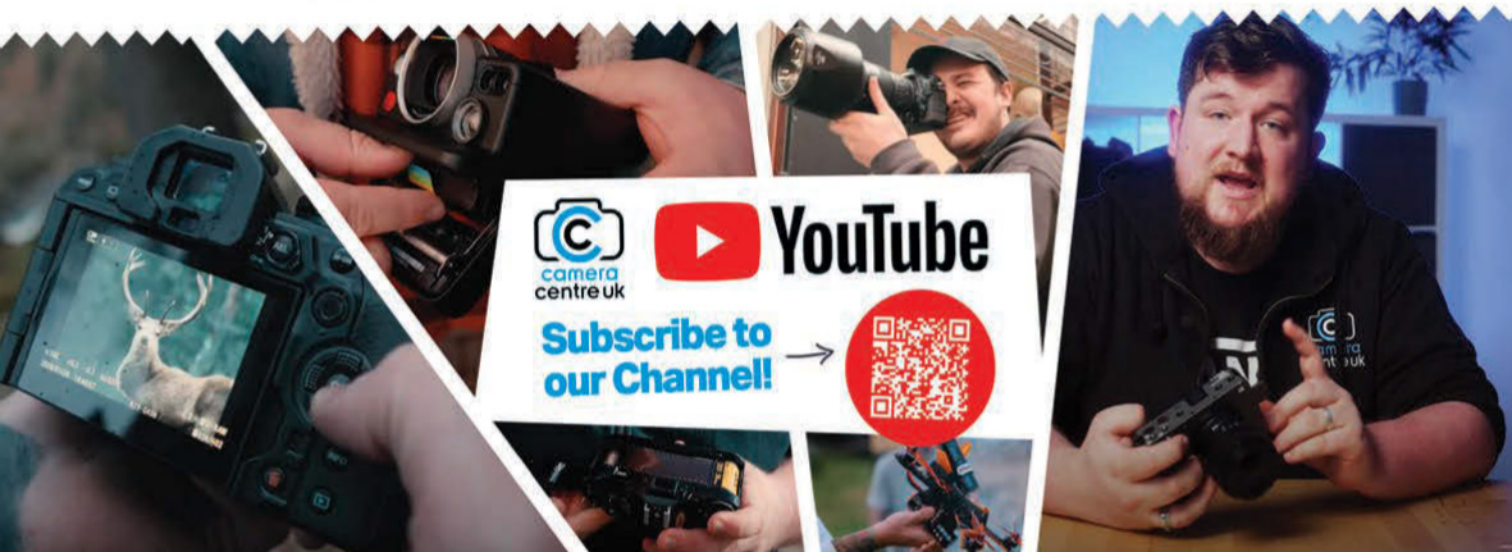
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907635	Canon EOS 4000D DSLR & 18-55mm Lens	£249
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907534	Canon EOS 6D Mark II DSLR Body	£649
906899	Canon EOS 850D DSLR & 18-55mm IS Lens	£799
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906076	Canon EOS R5 Mirrorless Body	£1999
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907537	Canon RF 24-105mm f4 L IS STM Lens	£319
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907042	Canon RF 28-70mm f2L USM Lens	£2199
907165	Canon RF 28mm f2.8 STM Lens	£249
904393	Canon RF 50mm f1.2 L USM Lens	£1599
906675	Canon RF 70-200mm f2.8L IS USM Lens	£1999
907555	Canon RF 70-200mm f4L IS USM Lens	£1199
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906946	Fujifilm 35mm f1.4 R XF Lens	£349
907546	Fujifilm 50mm f2 R WR XF Lens	£259
902808	Fujifilm 70-300mm f4-5.6 R LM OIS WR XF Lens	£599
907617	Fujifilm X-E1 Mirrorless Body	£299
906012	Fujifilm X-T3 Mirrorless Body	£749
903422	Fujifilm X-T4 Mirrorless Body	£899
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907330	Nikon 17-55mm f2.8G ED AF-S DX Lens	£249
904412	Nikon 18-300mm f3.5-5.6G ED DX AFS VR Lens	£399
907572	Nikon 24-120mm f4G ED VR AF-S Lens	£299
907549	Nikon 24mm f1.8G ED AF-S Lens	£349
907566	Nikon 28-300mm f3.5-5.6G ED AFS VR Lens	£449
906967	Nikon 300mm f4E PF AF-S ED VR Lens	£849
907283	Nikon 35mm f1.8G AF-S DX Lens	£119
907159	Nikon 40mm f2.8G AF-S DX Micro Lens	£179
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907406	Nikon 50mm f1.8G AF-S Lens	£99
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905358	Nikon 85mm f1.8G AF-S Lens	£229
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906861	Nikon D5600 DSLR & 18-55mm Lens	£499
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907200	Nikon Z 28mm f2.8 Lens	£159
906417	Nikon Z 35mm f1.8 S Lens	£649
900412	Nikon Z 85mm f1.8 S Lens	£649
905986	Nikon Z50 Mirrorless Body	£449
906854	Nikon Z6 II Mirrorless Body	£999
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902714	Panasonic 16-35mm f4 Lumix S Pro Lens	£826
905836	Panasonic 20-60mm f3.5-5.6 Lumix S Lens	£180
907554	Panasonic 24-105mm f4 OIS Lumix S Lens	£759
907650	Panasonic 35-100mm f2.8 X VARIO OIS II Lens	£739
907305	Panasonic 45mm f2.8 LEICA Macro OIS Lens	£299
905927	Panasonic 50mm f1.8 Lumix S Lens	£270
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906719	Panasonic Lumix G7 Mirrorless Body	£299
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906363	Panasonic Lumix GH5 II & 12-60mm Leica Lens	£1199
905309	Panasonic Lumix S1R Mirrorless Body	£1199
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907028	Panasonic Lumix S5 Mirrorless Body	£599
902963	Panasonic Lumix S9 & 20-60mm Lens (Blue)	£1499

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907442	Sigma 10-20mm f3.5 DC HSM lens (Canon EF-S)	£119
907230	Sigma 10-20mm f3.5 EX DC HSM Lens (Nikon DX)	£129
902609	Sigma 14mm f1.8 DG HSM ART Lens (Sony FE)	£749
907543	Sigma 150-600mm f5-6.3 DG OS HSM C Lens (Nikon FX)	£749
903342	Sigma 18-35mm f1.8 DC HSM Art Lens (Nikon DX)	£360
907377	Sigma 20mm f2 DG DN C Lens (Sony FE)	£449
907485	Sigma 35mm f1.4 DG HSM Art Lens (Canon EF)	£419
906994	Sigma 35mm f1.4 DG HSM Art Lens (Nikon FX)	£349
901476	Sigma 50-100mm f1.8 DC HSM Art Lens (Nikon DX)	£449
906420	Sigma 70-200mm f2.8 DG OS HSM S Lens (Canon EF)	£899
906612	Sigma 85mm f1.4 DG HSM ART Lens (Nikon FX)	£539

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905010	Sony 20mm f1.8 G FE Lens	£649
905843	Sony 24-105mm f4G OSS FE Lens	£549
905775	Sony 24mm f1.4 FE GM Lens	£949
907625	Sony 28-70mm f3.5-5.6 FE OSS Lens	£149
904109	Sony 28mm f2 FE Lens	£234
902933	Sony 35mm f1.4 GM FE Lens	£1099
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905699	Sony 50mm f2.5 G Lens	£387
907578	Sony 70-200mm f4G OSS II FE Lens	£1449
903432	Sony 85mm f1.4 GM FE Lens	£899
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907624	Sony A7 III Mirrorless Body	£999
905729	Sony A7C Mirrorless Body	£999
907618	Sony A7R II Mirrorless Body	£669
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900558	Tamron 10-24mm f3.5-4.5 Di II LD Lens (Nikon DX)	£153
907234	Tamron 17-28mm f2.8 Di III RXD Lens (Sony FE)	£579
906249	Tamron 24-70mm f2.8 SP VC USD Lens (Nikon FX)	£306
904344	Tamron 60mm f2 LD SP Di Macro (Nikon DX)	£180
907233	Tamron 70-180mm f2.8 Di III VXD Lens (Sony FE)	£599
907568	Tamron 70-200mm f2.8 Di LD (IF) Macro AF (Nikon FX)	£349
906860	Tamron 70-200mm f2.8 Di VC USD Lens (Canon EF)	£399
907428	Tamron 90mm f2.8 SP Di Macro Lens (Nikon FX)	£179



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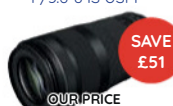
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Ready for the trail, no matter the weather

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## NIKON Z5 II

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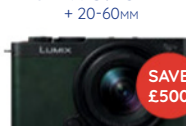
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## SIGMA 12MM F/1.4 DC | A

Designed for APS-C mirrorless cameras

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## TAMRON 18-300MM

f/3.5-6.3 Di III-A VC VXD

With the 16.6x zoom range, this lens lets you enjoy taking photos from wide-angle to ultra-telephoto without having to change lenses. With its 18mm wide to 300mm ultra-telephoto reach, it is ideal for a wide range of scenes, including landscapes, snapshots, portraits, animals, and birds.



### SIGMA BF

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F/2.8 DI III VXD G2  
SONY E / NIKON Z



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### TAMRON 28-75MM

F/2.8 DI III VXD G2  
SONY E



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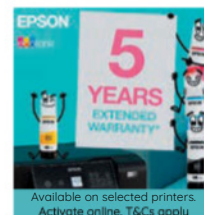
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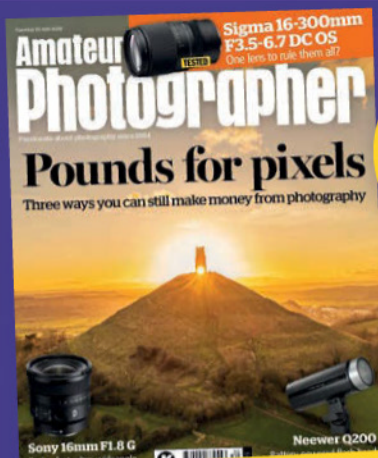
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# Final Analysis

**Paul Hill considers...**

**Moving Softly, 1950, by Edith Tudor Hart**

**W**ith the current parliamentary debates, and acres of news coverage about child welfare benefits, I was attracted to a new book *Poverty for Sale* (MuseumsEtc) on the documentary work of Edith Tudor Hart (1908-1973), edited by Shirley Read.

I met Edith's brother, Wolfgang Suschitzky, the renowned photographer and film cameraman, in the 1970s who showed me some photographs, mostly of children, by Edith. I do not think I had ever heard of her, and I must admit that I was more determined to find out about his role as director of photography on the film *Get Carter* (1971) than his sister's images.

## Children's health

Coincidentally, I recently came across *Moving and Growing* (1952), a government publication on primary school education wonderfully illustrated by Tudor Hart. In the 1950s, Britain was grappling with the health and fitness of our population following World War II by establishing the Welfare State. *Poverty for Sale* contains several of these photographs of children, but most importantly it is the most comprehensive overview to date of Edith's work, focusing on her four decades living and working in Britain.

Born in Vienna, she was trained at the Bauhaus in Germany, before coming to the UK in 1933 following her marriage to English communist and GP Alex Tudor Hart. Also a communist, she was an anti-fascist activist who saw photography as a tool for social justice and disseminating her political ideas.

However, she is probably better known as a Russian agent who recruited spies Kim Philby and Antony Blunt. Her undercover work damaged British intelligence from World War II through to their discovery in the late 1960s. Understandably, this overshadowed her wonderful documentary work, but this has been rectified through this outstanding new publication.

This image appears in both books, and



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reflects her deep concern for the welfare of children growing up in Britain, with particular emphasis on movement and the body. As someone who was a similar age to these slim youngsters in those days of food rationing, I can remember the shortages. Physical activities were a large part of the school curriculum and therefore, unlike today, obesity did not exist.

Edith's approach was never exploitative, but collaborative and inclusive. She respected the young subjects in her photographs. In 1956 she wrote an article about this work in *Amateur Photographer*.

'When I arrived, I would have a short talk with the children, explaining what I was trying to do and letting them have a good look at lights and camera. (I tried to let

every child have a look through the viewfinder). Then I proceeded to shoot, and by that time the enthusiasm of the dance had made them forget the camera.'

Her thoughts on the medium are best summed up by this quote: 'Photography can be an instrument for recording events and becomes a means of stimulating and influencing events. It becomes a living art embracing the people.'

Shirley Read has pulled together many insightful and revealing essays that refreshingly revisit Edith's pre-war and post-war work, giving it a context and analysis that place her amongst the most talented social documentarians of that era.

See [museumsetc.com/collections/books-on-photography](http://museumsetc.com/collections/books-on-photography)



Among many achievements, Paul Hill has written two books on photography, was director of the Creative Photography course at Trent Polytechnic and has been exhibited numerous times. He was the first photographer to receive an MBE for services to photography and the first professor of photographic practice in a British university. [hillonphotography.co.uk](http://hillonphotography.co.uk).

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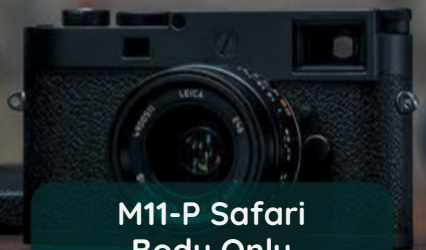
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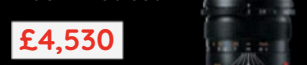
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