

Tuesday 12 August 2025

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Sigma 17-40mm F1.8
We test the **largest-aperture zoom**
available for APS-C mirrorless cameras

Garden Safari

How to get great photos of the wildlife on your doorstep



Camera Hunter

Bellamy Hunt on sourcing
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Demarchelier

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© BELLAMY HUNT



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Welcome



One of the great things about photography as a hobby is that you don't necessarily need to leave your home to do it. This week Andrew Fusek Peters shows what can be achieved in your own garden. Meanwhile on the other side of the world we talk to Bellamy Hunt, aka Japan Camera Hunter, about living and running a camera retail business in the Land of the Rising Sun. He makes a living satisfying the huge demand for classic film cameras, which is so strong that even the famous Yashica name has been revived for a faux-analogue digital camera, which we test this week. Finally, don't miss our tribute to one of my favourite fashion and portrait photographers, Patrick Demarchelier, who created many iconic images of the '80s and '90s.

Nigel Atherton, Editor



Our cover image by Andrew Fusek Peters is of a greenfinch with its wings backlit by the sun, creating a rainbow effect

COVER PICTURE: © ANDREW FUSEK PETERS. COVER INSET PICTURE: ABOVE © BELLAMY HUNT. COVER INSET PICTURE, BELOW: © PATRICK DEMARCHELIER

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS



STEVE FAIRCLOUGH

Regular contributor Steve speaks to Patrick Demarchelier's son, Vincent, about a new book of his father's work



ANDREW FUSEK PETERS

How top photographer Andrew's photos of garden wildlife have become a bestselling book



ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

Andy tests the Sigma 17-40mm F1.8 DC Art, the largest-aperture zoom for APS-C mirrorless cameras



JOSHUA WALLER
Online Editor

With its film-camera looks, how does the Yashica FX-D 100 measure up? Joshua reviews it to find out



JOHN WADE

This week in *Final Analysis*, our regular contributor takes a look at Brighton's Daddy Long-Legs – an engineering marvel

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DJI's first 360 action camera lands

DJI, best known for its drones and action cameras, has launched its first 360 camera, the Osmo 360. If you are not familiar with 360 cameras, they incorporate dual wide-angle lenses to record a spherical 360° 'wrap around' view which you can then edit/flatten for the best camera angles or compositions, using dedicated software. As such, 360 cameras appeal to cyclists, motorcyclists, alpine sports fans and other users on the move.

Key features of the Osmo 360 include two 1-inch CMOS sensors which keep the same 360° image field as a traditional 1-inch rectangular sensor, while eliminating the unused area of traditional rectangular sensors. This results in 25% more sensor utilisation, according to DJI, as well as lower power consumption, in a compact and relatively light (183g) body.

Furthermore, the Osmo 360 is the first 360 camera able to shoot 8K 360° video at 50 frames per second, and shoot continuously for 100 minutes in 8K/30fps. This ability to shoot high-resolution 8K 50p footage matches the resolution offered by rival Insta360's flagship X5 camera and beats the 5.6K delivered by the GoPro Max 360.

The Osmo 360's twin lenses also have fast f/1.9 lenses, which will help in low light.

When it comes to stills photography, the Osmo 360 captures imagery at either 12, 20 or 30-megapixels or a panoramic photo with 120MP of resolution. There is the option to shoot in raw too.

Other features include 128GB of built-in storage, a 2in touchscreen, four internal mics, and voice and gesture control.

The DJI Osmo 360 standard combo is available now and costs £409.99; with the Adventure combo, featuring extra accessories, on sale for £539.99.

See store.dji.com for more details, and also check out Matty Graham's detailed review (with sample footage) on our website at bit.ly/osmo360review



The Osmo 360, mounted on two wheels

Lightweight, affordable APS-C wideangle prime from Viltrox

BUDGET lens maker Viltrox has released the AF 15mm F1.7 Air, a tiny and affordable wideangle prime for APS-C cameras (Sony E, Nikon Z and Fujifilm X mounts).

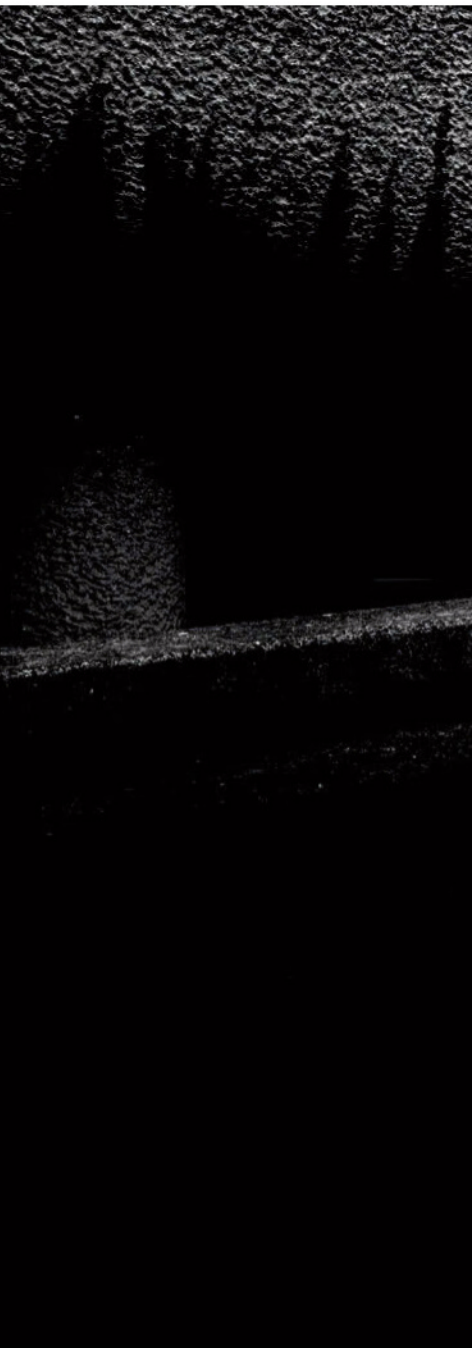
The new lens, which weighs only 180g, features 12 lens elements in 10 groups, with three extra-low dispersion (ED) elements controlling chromatic aberration and three high-refractive index (HR) elements enhancing edge-to-edge sharpness, according to Viltrox.

The AF 15mm F1.7 Air also offers a standard 58mm filter thread, and is available to buy now for £217.50.

More details about the lens can be found at bit.ly/newviltroxair



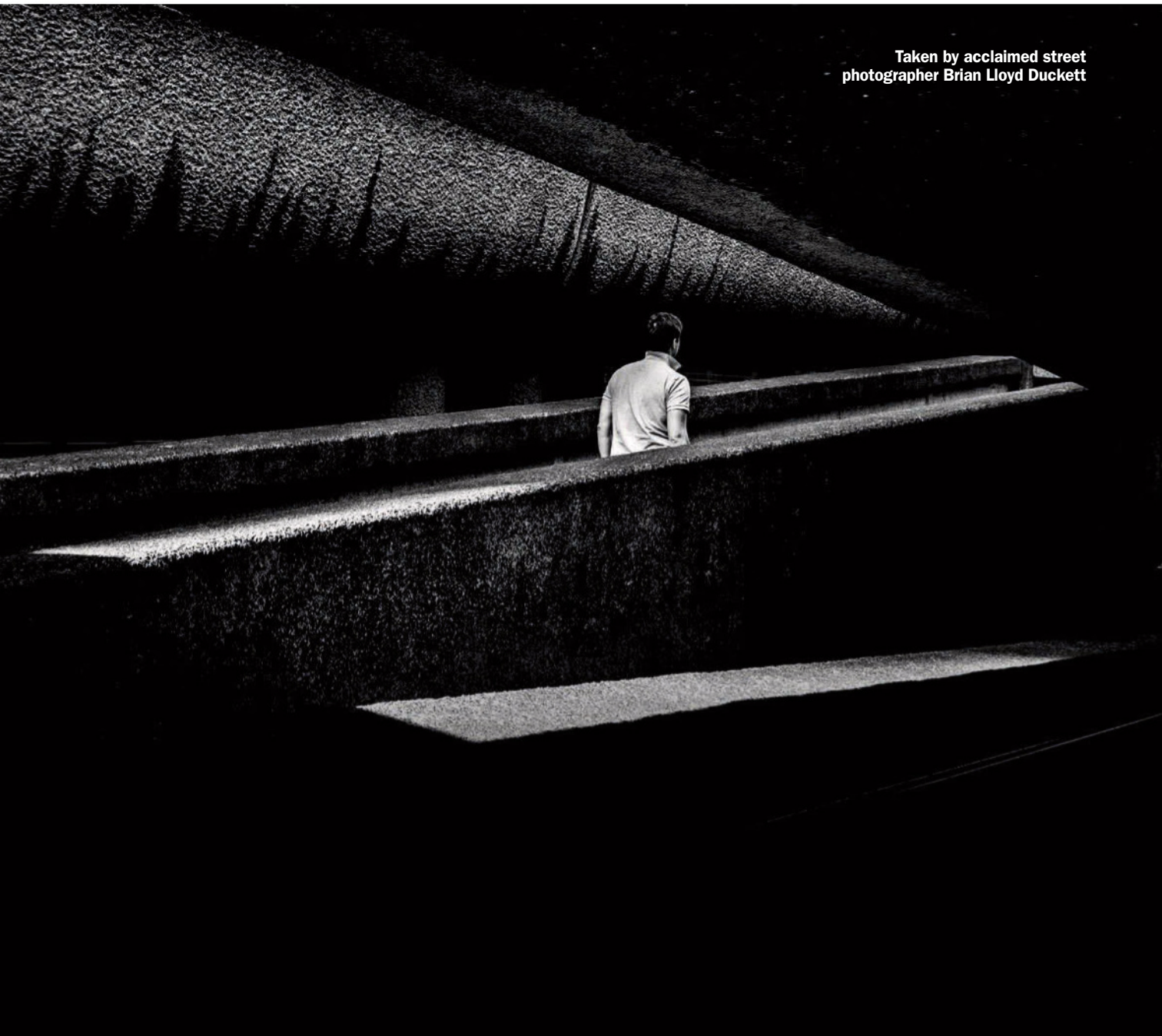
The new Viltrox 15mm F1.7 Air is a fast APS-C prime lens with autofocus




Hit the streets

THIS striking image by celebrated street photographer and AP contributor Brian Lloyd Duckett features in an updated edition of his popular book, *Mastering Street Photography*. It will be available from October for £19.99 and is published by Ammonite Press (which also publishes the *52 Assignments...* series). For more details, visit www.ammonitepress.com

Taken by acclaimed street
photographer Brian Lloyd Duckett




'Film-like' budget compacts from Yashica

 YASHICA has announced three budget digital compacts, styled like 35mm film SLRs, with built-in film simulations for those yearning for the analogue vibe without the faff.

The Yashica FX-D 100 (reviewed on page 29) features a 13MP Sony sensor and 25-75mm f/1.6 lens for £244.99; while the FX-D 300 offers 50MP, a 24mm f/1.8 lens with up to 60mm digital zoom, and image stabilisation, for £349.99. Finally, the FX-D S300 adds an electronic viewfinder and 3-axis in-body stabilisation for £434.99. All three will be available in October.



My holiday photo hell

 NEW research from Samsung reveals that the average UK holidaymaker takes an average of 52 shots a day – but a lot never make it online thanks to common frustrations like crowds and strangers in the background, bad lighting, people looking away and unflattering angles. Samsung is pitching the hands-free mode and AI editing features in its new Galaxy Z Flip7 smartphone as a remedy to some of these woes (or, of course, you could just get up earlier to beat the crowds and get better light...).



**Samsung's new Galaxy Z
Flip7 phone**



Viewpoint Dan Mold

AP contributor Dan thinks we should go back to compact cameras for one key reason

There's been a surge in demand for compact cameras in recent years and many younger Gen Z photographers are picking up older point-and-shoot cameras, so are they on to something?

As smartphones have been around throughout the entire life of teenagers and young adults today it's entirely possible that they could have never even picked up a point-and-shoot compact before, and for good reason – some of the best smartphones like the iPhone 16 can pretty much do everything you could ever need, all from a convenient smart device that slips right in your pocket.

Talking 'bout my generation

While smartphones are incredible and we've seen many films shot on them, such as the recent *28 Years Later* and even Stormzy's documentary, *Big Man*, it would appear that younger content creators have seen the benefits of using a separate dedicated compact camera.

This could be for better features, flash, optical zoom, handling and battery life.

While these alone would be brilliant reasons to go back to a dedicated point-and-shooter, I prefer the idea that youngsters are going back to them for aesthetic reasons with their characterful retro charm and early 2000's lo-fi vintage vibe; in a similar way to how many of my generation are reverting back to tape and vinyl over digital albums.

You could argue that, in the pursuit of image quality and sharpness, many modern cameras and lenses have images that look overly processed and sterile – in fact it's one of the reasons I still love to shoot with my old manual Helios 44-2 vintage film lens – it's not optically perfect by any means but it has buckets of character.

Many youngsters are also looking to reduce their phone screentime – a vintage compact from the 2000s or 2010s probably doesn't even have Wi-Fi,



RICHARD SIBLEY
Canon PowerShot V1

so they can concentrate on their photography and artistic goals without being distracted by constant notifications.

In fact, much of this was the reason behind Canon releasing its latest PowerShot V1 – quite possibly the best point-and-shoot compact on the market packing in impressive video capabilities for content creators looking to travel light.

The content creator space is set to double to a projected \$480 billion by 2027 and it would seem camera makers are trying to home in on younger audiences looking for portable and powerful pocket rockets that have more features than a smartphone but are also more affordable and smaller than conventional professional DSLR and mirrorless cameras.

As somebody who adores street photography, I know all too well the importance of taking a camera with you *everywhere* as you never know when that magical moment is going to strike and the perfect lighting is going to fall.

While the saying 'the best camera is the one you have with you' is very true, I'd prefer to make the camera that I have with me be better quality and have the features I need from a camera. This has made premium compacts like the Ricoh GR III and even the latest Sony RX1R III very appealing.

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



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Transmission



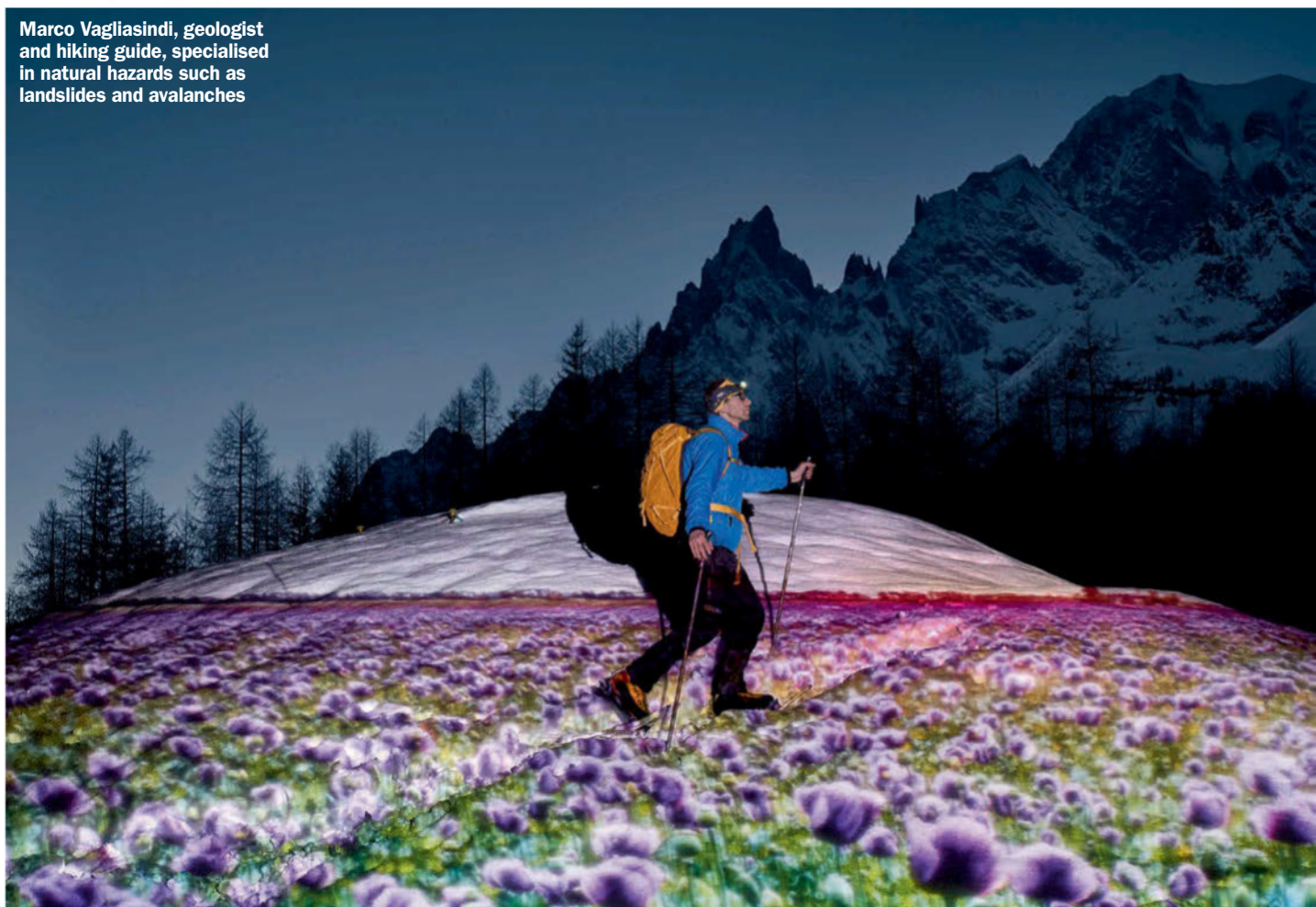
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Marco Vagliasindi, geologist and hiking guide, specialised in natural hazards such as landslides and avalanches



Atlas of the New World

by Giulia Piermartiri & Edoardo Delille

€55, L'Artiere Edizioni, hardback, 160 pages, ISBN: 9791280978189



A haunting glimpse of tomorrow, projected onto the world we still have time to save, says Peter Dench

Photography is often anchored in the now – a faithful recording of what is. But in *Atlas of the New World*, Giulia Piermartiri and Edoardo Delille daringly use the medium to visualise what might be. This arresting new photo book blends science and art to offer a speculative yet deeply grounded look at landscapes, seascapes and cities transformed by climate change.

Their method is analogue and almost cinematic: real locations are momentarily overlaid with projected slides of scientifically

modelled future scenarios – coastal floods, rising temperatures, droughts and submersion. These images are captured in a single exposure, a poetic 'true lie' where the future bleeds into the present. Subjects in the photographs remain unaware of the projections, lending the images a haunting normality.

It's a clever and unsettling device. The vivid colours and striking compositions initially lure the viewer in, but the deeper implications soon take hold. What we're looking at is not

a distant dystopia, but a creeping inevitability – unless change comes. Echoing Amitav Ghosh's notion of climate change as a 'crisis of imagination', the *Atlas* offers a radical visual intervention. It renders the abstract tangible, making data emotional.

Beyond its conceptual rigour, the book is beautifully produced, with thoughtful design by Federico Barbon Studio and texts from writers and scientists that deepen the narrative. It launched at Les Rencontres d'Arles this July, where its mix of urgency and poetry made a strong impact.

Atlas of the New World isn't just a document of potential loss – it's a creative call to reimagine, resist and hope. In blending speculative vision with grounded craft, it becomes a powerful atlas not of where we are, but where we're headed – and where we might still choose to go.



Angelina, 43 years old,
is a soloist at the
Bolshoi Theatre



Ukulhas, Alif Alif Atoll,
Maldives



Polina, 30-year-old
videomaker. She was born in
Siberia, and arrived in
Moscow when she was 12

Books

The latest and best books from
the world of photography



Designer David Hillman. © Martin Argles/The Guardian

Witness in a Time of Turmoil: Inside the Guardian's Global Revolution Vol. 1: 1986-1995 by Ian Mayes

£25, Guardian Books, hardback, 360 pages,
ISBN 9781916204768

If you think photojournalism is having a moment now, *Witness in a Time of Turmoil* reminds us that its modern reawakening at *The Guardian* began in the late 1980s – and not without resistance.

This first volume of Ian Mayes' official history of *The Guardian* charts the paper's transformation between 1986 and 1995. From a single-section black & white broadsheet, it evolved into a bold, visually led publication that redefined British newspaper aesthetics – and photojournalism's role within it.

Key to that shift was the arrival of editor Peter Preston's hire, Eamonn McCabe, who was brought in from *The Observer* not just to improve the pictures, but to weaponise them. The paper was under siege from the launch of *The Independent*, a cleaner, more image-savvy rival. McCabe's approach – cut the words, elevate the pictures – was revolutionary. And not universally popular with reporters.

Mayes documents the behind-the-scenes clashes as photo editing moved from supportive to central. The Hillman redesign of 1988 ushered in radical layouts, and soon came G2 and a full-colour *Weekend* magazine – visual playgrounds for photographers, designers, and risk-takers.

While not a photography book per se, *Witness in a Time of Turmoil* offers an incisive look at how photography reshaped one of the UK's most respected newspapers. With over 100 interviews and Mayes' characteristically dry wit, this is a vivid, people-powered account of a pivotal media moment.

For photographers, editors and readers who remember when pictures started doing the talking, this is essential reading. The revolution was printed – and pictured – daily.

Kyugoro

by MAKIKO

£35, Dewi Lewis, hardback, 124 pages,
ISBN: 9781916915152



There's nothing quite like a book that fits in your palm but punches in the gut. *Kyugoro* by MAKIKO may be small in stature – modelled after a pocket hymnal – but it carries the weight of a century's worth of displacement, discrimination, and dignity.

Inspired by the discovery that her great-great uncle emigrated to the US around 1900, MAKIKO

constructs a quiet but stirring narrative around the Japanese-American experience. At its heart is the chilling aftermath of Pearl Harbour: over 120,000 people of Japanese descent rounded up and interned in camps across America. Through 80 duotone photographs, this palm-sized powerhouse of a book explores themes of identity, community, and belonging – all while whispering, not shouting.

The photographs are subtle, contemplative. They don't demand attention; they invite it. And that's what MAKIKO excels at – luring you into a space that feels private, respectful and resonant. This is not a history lesson. It's a personal pilgrimage – one that unfolds in fragments, shadows, and echoes.

Three exclusive poems by Lawson Inada, former Oregon Poet Laureate and himself a descendant of internees, anchor the book emotionally. They act like lampposts in the fog – gentle but guiding. Together with MAKIKO's images, they build a portrait of resilience and quiet resistance.

The book's small format is more than a gimmick. It mirrors the modesty of the subject matter and the intimate tone of the work. You carry it like a secret. It asks you to slow down and consider what it means to leave everything behind, to find yourself labelled 'other', and to keep going anyway.

MAKIKO, a former Magnum mentee now at the Royal College of Art, is no stranger to socially engaged work. *Kyugoro* follows *Battleship Island* and *Beautifully Different*, but it might be her most affecting yet.

For £35, you're not just buying a photo book – you're buying a pocket-sized protest, a hymn to history, and a deeply human piece of storytelling.

Small book. Big story. Carry it close.





Untitled from *North North South*



Untitled from *North North South*

North North South

by Ayda Gragossian

£45, GOST, hardback, 104 pages, ISBN: 9781915423818



What happens to a city when you strip out the people? If you're Ayda Gragossian, you get *North North South*, a quiet stunner of a book that forces us to slow down, pull over, and take a long, hard look at the bits of Los Angeles you normally cruise past without blinking.

Gragossian, an Iranian American artist with a sharp eye for the overlooked, spent four years wandering the less glamorous seams of LA – the parking lots, peeling shopfronts and suburban sprawl – documenting them in crisp black & white. No Rodeo Drive, no Hollywood sheen. Just hard sun on concrete and the ghosts of lives lived at the city's margins.

Shot entirely without people, the images hum with an eerie stillness. It's LA in a vacuum: cars implied but absent, heat bouncing off surfaces, silence between the traffic. Her subject isn't so much the city itself, but the things it leaves behind – torn signage, suburban sameness,

textures of wear and waiting. It's like a visual echo of Ed Ruscha, if Ruscha swapped the cool detachment for a palpable sense of longing.

The book's title, *North North South*, comes from a broken freeway sign – an apt metaphor. Freeways are LA's arteries, but also its scars, cutting communities apart while promising freedom. Gragossian uses them not to map a route, but to critique a system. There's poetry in the tarmac here, if you know how to read it.

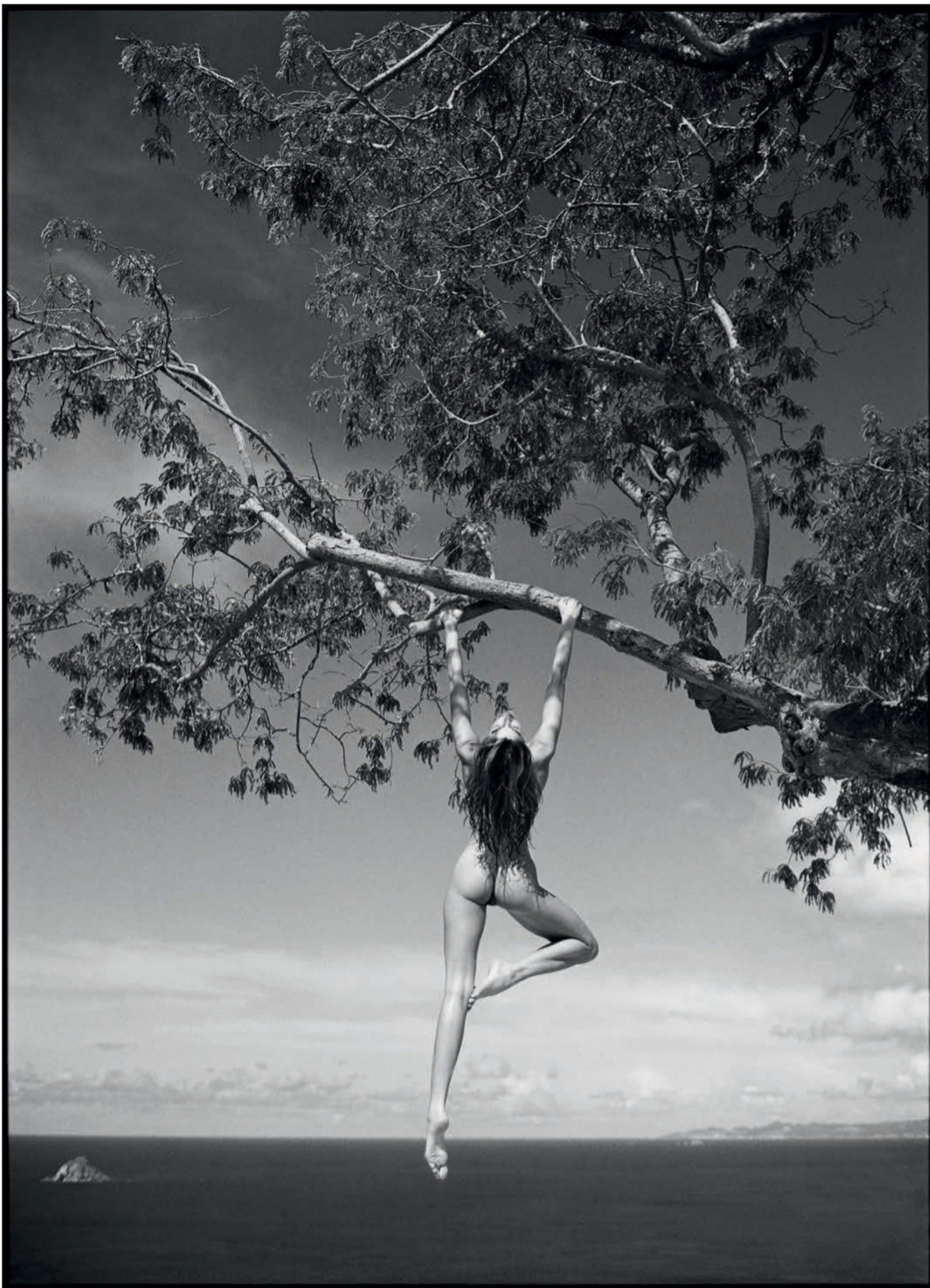
At 52 images across 104 pages, the edit is tight. The book feels deliberate, like each frame has earned its place. There's no filler, no fat – just a strong, singular voice asking you to look again. And again.

Gragossian holds a BA in Photography and Painting and an MFA from Oxford's Ruskin School. She clearly knows her way around a concept – even more, she knows how to feel her way through a landscape.

This is LA unplugged. No soundtrack. Just light, shadow, and the quiet hum of something deeply human. A haunting, beautiful book. Don't speed past it.



Untitled from *North North South*



Beyond fashion

Patrick Demarchelier's incredible fashion and portrait photography career features in a stunning new book. **Steve Fairclough** discovers the story behind it from his son, Victor Demarchelier



Patrick Demarchelier

Patrick Demarchelier (1943-2022) was a world-famous French fashion and portrait photographer. He moved to Paris, aged 20, to further his career and then to New York in 1975. His work for *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* placed him at the very top of the pantheon of fashion photographers. He also shot covers for *Rolling Stone*, *LIFE*, *Elle*, *Newsweek* and *Mademoiselle* and ad campaigns for the likes of Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Versace and L'Oréal. In 2007 he was honoured as an officer of the French Order of Arts and Literature. Demarchelier died, aged 78, at his home on the island of St. Barthélemy in March 2022.



Far left: Nude, St. Barthélemy, 1989

Left: Janet Jackson, *Rolling Stone*, 1993

Patrick Demarchelier was one of only ten photographers to have shot two Pirelli calendars; he reinvented photographic portraiture of the British royal family and was name-dropped by the main character in the movie *The Devil Wears Prada*. The late Frenchman's fame went far beyond his widespread recognition as one of the world's top fashion and portrait photographers... he transcended photography.

Just over three years after his death, the upcoming book *Patrick Demarchelier: Fashion Photographs Seen and Unseen* showcases 50 years of his work, from 1970 through to 2020. It's a substantial tome, that includes an in-depth essay on Demarchelier's life by Brad Gooch, over 200 iconic images, interviews with models, fashion editors, stylists, make-up artists and celebrities who worked with him and galleries that reveal his enduring legacy in pictorial format.

Patrick Demarchelier's photographic journey dated back to 1960 when, on his 17th birthday, he was gifted a Kodak camera by his stepfather. He taught himself photography near to his home in Le Havre and, aged 20, moved to Paris to carve out a career. He rapidly secured a job printing news photographs in a photo lab and offered his burgeoning photographic skills to modelling schools in the French capital.

In 1964, he began assisting the Swiss fashion photographer Hans Feurer (who shot the 1974 Pirelli calendar) and honed his considerable skills at lighting and composing images. Demarchelier would also assist the legendary French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson and soon became part of the so-called 'The French Connection', alongside the likes of fellow lensmen Gilles Bensimon, Alex Chatelein and Arthur Elgort.

Move to New York

By the early 1970s he was being commissioned by French *Elle* and American *Vogue*. He then followed a girlfriend to New York in 1975 and was soon shooting top US models. By the 1980s he was working closely with British *Vogue*, but it was arguably the 1990s that cemented his place as a truly



influential fashion photographer, mainly after he switched allegiance from *Vogue* to *Harper's Bazaar* in 1992. Demarchelier's 1990 shoot with Princess Diana provided an iconic, informal, portrait of the royal in a satin ballgown, while his unforgettable image of ten supermodels, dressed all in white, graced the cover of *Vogue* in 1992.

The charming Frenchman's portfolio soon went way beyond fashion as his beautifully lit portrait shoots captured film stars, musicians and celebrities, such as Tom Cruise, Julia Roberts, Sting, Elton John and Bill and Hillary Clinton. In 2008, over 500,000 people visited a major Demarchelier retrospective at the Petit Palais in Paris. His death in March 2022 brought an end to his lifetime of creativity, but his creative baton had already been passed to one of his three sons, Victor, who is well known for his fashion, portrait and fine-art photography. To find out more, AP spoke to Victor Demarchelier...

Creative skills

Victor Demarchelier recalls, 'I loved working in my father's darkroom. I'd lose track of time and stay all hours of the night. I would practise printing his negatives and, eventually, I wondered how it would feel to print my own photos. When I started working with him on sets he was still shooting film. I think the sound of a shutter and the mechanical winding of film really seduced me. I was hooked.'

Patrick Demarchelier was known for the adroitness and inventive nature of his lighting setups alongside his innate ability to be equally comfortable with shooting in a studio or lighting, composing and photographing models on location. He embraced the use of 35mm, medium- and large-format cameras, easily swapping formats to meet the needs of his clients. Whether it was a Nikon F5, a Pentax 67 II, a Hasselblad 553 ELX or a Linhof 5x4in camera, in Patrick Demarchelier's hands the cameras would purr.

His son, Victor, reveals, 'He didn't talk much about photography so, when he did, people would always hang on to his every word and try to get some insight. The amazing thing about Patrick is that it was all so effortless. I'm not sure what was



going on in his head, but he made everything seem so easy. Everyone always felt so relaxed around him. He liked making people laugh, was a great storyteller and really enjoyed the company of people. He treated everyone the same... he could be on set with the most famous actor and have more interest in a conversation with a local fisherman. He would get most shots done within a few minutes. No matter what was thrown in front of him, he would always get an amazing photo.'

An eye for beauty

Victor Demarchelier's short stint as a child model was to prove a pivotal

moment in his father's career. In 1989, Patrick Demarchelier was shooting the German model Vanessa Duvé on the Caribbean island St. Barthélemy (where Patrick Demarchelier would later commission the build of a villa) when he decided to add his son into the pictures...

Victor Demarchelier explains, 'I was only five or so. We were staying at the Taiwana Hotel in St. Barths. I was running around the hotel playing and lost track of where my father was. I found him on the beach and he asked me to jump on the model's lap. This ended up being the cover of British *Vogue*,

Above: Nadja Auermann, *Harper's Bazaar*, 1994

Right: Princess Diana, *British Vogue*, 1990



➤ August 1989. I've been told this is the first time a man ever appeared on the cover of *Vogue*! These photos were later noticed by Princess Diana, who then asked Patrick to be her photographer.'

Patrick Demarchelier was the first non-British photographer commissioned to photograph a member of the British royal family, with the iconic results heralding a new era of more informal portraits of the royals. Victor Demarchelier notes, 'He had a great eye for beauty. He really knew how to make people look and feel beautiful. His photographs also have an edge to them. You can always recognise one of his photographs by how beautifully they are lit. He had an amazing range; from portraits to high fashion to beauty. He was a wizard with the camera and lighting. Sometimes he would have us run to the hardware store and build improvised lighting setups for him.'

Noting Victor Demarchelier's clear admiration of his late father's work, I ask if there is any single image of his father's that he would have loved to have shot? He replies, 'I think his most amazing image is the one of Stephanie Seymour hanging nude



Above: Linda Evangelista, *Harper's Bazaar*, 1992

Below: Bonnie Berman, *British Vogue*, 1983



from a tamarind tree branch in St. Barths, with the ocean as a backdrop behind her... almost like a beautiful fruit. I love the drama of this photo. It is just a perfect image.'

Book project

With the passing of Patrick Demarchelier in 2022, plans were soon in place to celebrate his career with a book. Victor Demarchelier reveals, 'We started working on the book about two years ago. We hadn't done a book since the 2008 Petit Palais show in Paris. Patrick had created a lot of new work since then, which I wanted to showcase. I also wanted to feature interviews with some of his closest colleagues, and they all graciously agreed to participate. This helps give a little more insight into his work. He didn't like to do interviews. I think, for the first time, people will get a look into his creative process.'

After about a year of gathering materials and conducting interviews, Victor Demarchelier reached out to his father's friend, collaborator and favourite art director, Fabien Baron. Baron was the former creative director of *Harper's Bazaar* magazine and Calvin Klein, who notably designed Madonna's controversial book *Sex*, which was photographed by Steven Meisel.

Victor Demarchelier explains, 'They [Baron and Demarchelier] had worked together on many of Patrick's favourite images

throughout the years, including the book cover image of Christy Turlington with a mouse on her shoulder. He [Baron] immediately accepted the idea. I sent a wide edit to Fabien, including very old work from the 1970s and new work from the 2000s and 2010s. There were too many images to choose from and Fabien did a great job editing it down. Having Fabien on board was a huge blessing as he was very familiar with Patrick's archive.'

Fifty-year journey

Victor Demarchelier didn't rush the book project as he was keen to make sure its quality was up to his father's high standards. He remarks, 'Patrick has had one of the longest careers in the history of fashion photography, over 50 years! Although that gave us many options, retrieving some of these negatives and files proved to be very difficult at times. I didn't want to be biased towards the later part of his career. I wanted the book to reflect on his entire 50-year journey.'

He continues, 'I think Patrick's evolution in fashion photography is unparalleled. Having the photos from five decades of fashion together in one book really shows his evolution and also the evolution of fashion photography. I viewed it as a history book. I think it's the most insightful book ever published on Patrick. Brad Gooch's essay at the opening of the book is the most comprehensive ever done on Patrick.'

When asked about how he views his father's legacy, Victor Demarchelier replies, 'I think he is one of the pillars of fashion photography. One of the last stars from a bygone era. A true fashion icon and legend in the field. He worked during the golden years of advertising and fashion magazines. The field is constantly evolving and I don't think we'd be here today without his contributions and all the other photographers that stood before him.'

AP



The book *Patrick Demarchelier: Fashion Photographs Seen and Unseen* (ISBN: 9780847875801) is published by Rizzoli Books and has an RRP of £120. www.rizzoliusa.com

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ALL PICTURES © ANDREW FUSEK PETERS

Garden variety

Top wildlife photographer
Andrew Fusek Peters' latest best-selling
book is full of images shot in gardens and
parks. **Geoff Harris** finds out more

Formerly a successful children's author, Andrew Fusek Peters has carved out a distinguished career as a nature and wildlife photographer, and his images regularly appear in the national press. Indeed, no other wildlife photographer appears in the papers so often, and Andrew is also a regular in AP – his talk and workshop were one of the highlights of our recent Festival of Outdoor Photography (see amateurphotographer.com/events for details of more forthcoming events). Andrew has published several books, and his latest volume, *Garden Safari*, is full of amazing images taken in gardens, parks and other public spaces.

'Garden Safari came out on 8 May and is my eighth photographic book – it's the follow-up to *Butterfly Safari*,



which did very well,' Andrew explains from his base in rural Shropshire. 'I was talking to my wife, and it struck us that nobody had done a book like *Garden Safari* – in other words, a collection of wildlife shots taken in the back garden. As soon as I mentioned the idea to the publisher, they agreed and commissioned me. I didn't even have to do a detailed pitch. My commissioning editor fell over himself to send me a contract.'

Local beauty

The editor probably didn't need much persuading as over 3,000 copies of *Butterfly Safari* have been sold to date, at £30 a pop – an impressive achievement for any photographer these days. Why does Andrew think a more 'local' approach to wildlife photography hasn't inspired a book before?

'I think there is an idea amongst wildlife photographers that you have to go and photograph the "big five" animals in Africa, or other exotic locations,' he muses. 'In the book, I take "gardens" to include arboretums, farmyards, city parks, allotments and so on, as I wanted to make it as inclusive as possible. Not everyone has access to a traditional garden these days, but that doesn't mean you can't take great wildlife shots.' Andrew travelled to lots of different places to get images for *Garden Safari*. 'I spent time shooting in Bushy Park in London, for



Opposite top: Displaying male firecrest in a neighbour's garden

Top: A swallow photographed in a farmyard

Above: Two fighting greenfinches show the rainbow diffraction effect, which Andrew has mastered

example, and it was really important to have that chapter in the book. My friend, the SheClicks ambassador Sarah Longes, described parks as "the people's gardens", and I think that's a great description.'

Andrew's track record and reputation meant he could contact a wide range of other photographers and interested parties to help with *Garden Safari*. 'A journalist friend told me that foxes were breeding in her garden, for instance, while another friend spotted tawny owls in theirs. People were keen to share the magic in their gardens with me.'

Creature features

The book also contains some older images as it draws on a decade of work. Choosing pictures for the book from ten years of work was a challenge for Andrew,



Go wild in the garden – Andrew's top tips

1 Birds are a particularly good subject for gardens. Winter is a great time for bird photography, but you can keep photographing birds throughout the year as they keep needing food and it's good for conservation.

2 Then get your bird setup right in your garden. If you are going to use bird feeders, find a fallen pretty branch and hang them off that as well as drilling holes to hide seeds. You do this in order to create scenarios where birds are going to land.

3 It's not just about the bird, animal or insect, you need to think about the foreground and background, particularly if you want a nicely blurred background.

4 Think about where you are going to be shooting birds from, so you don't disturb them or deter them from landing. It's really about understanding bird behaviour and being patient, but a good supply of sunflower seeds really helps!

5 You need to invest in kit, and while longer lenses can be expensive, there are some good second-hand deals. A 100-400mm in full frame, APS-C or Micro Four Thirds mount is a great start (though you will struggle with just a 70-200mm...).

6 Make the most of any advanced features for bird photography in your camera. OM System/Olympus has Pro Capture, for example, which is fantastic for images of birds taking off, and many camera makers have implemented something similar.

7 Also make the most of bird and animal subject-detection autofocus, if available on your camera. So long as you have your fieldcraft right, the tracking on all modern camera bodies can deliver extraordinary results.



ANDREW'S GEAR CHOICE

As an OM System Ambassador, Andrew took many of the images in *Garden Safari* with the OM-1 and OM-2 cameras, though some older shots were taken on Canon and Sony equipment. 'My main lenses for birds were the Olympus/OM System 150-400mm f/4.5 and 300mm f/4. For butterflies and insects I favour the 40-150mm f/2.8, and for macro and close-up images, the 90mm f/3.5 macro.'



but it was also a labour of love. 'I have 110,000 images in my Lightroom Catalog, from which I had to choose 250! I really wanted to cover a wide breadth of wildlife, so *Garden Safari* includes rarer species, such as red squirrels or the lesser spotted woodpecker. I got a shot of the latter in a garden in Telford, for example.'

'I realised I wasn't so strong on mammals, so I went out to photograph foxes in Clapham in south London and hares at a friend's garden in the Welsh borders. I even managed to get a picture of an otter in a garden stream using camera trapping. I wanted to choose pictures that really spoke to the reader and represented a broad range of species. In fact, the book contains images of

Left: Urban fox cubs playing in a friend's Clapham garden in south London

Right: Fighting red squirrels on the feeders on the Isle of Wight

Below right: A ruby-tailed wasp



150 species, but I was never going to get a puffin or a long-eared owl for instance... maybe that's an idea for my next project!

While Andrew loves all wildlife, he admits to having a particular affinity with birds, particularly in action. 'I seem to be the bird whisperer,' he says. 'It requires a huge amount of time and patience, however.'

Making the ordinary 'extraordinary'

Garden Safari has only been out for three months, but the response has been very positive. 'The first print run sold out in three weeks,' Andrew notes with delight. 'Meanwhile, a journalist colleague who works for the BBC website told me a feature they did on me attracted over half

a million views, so it got bumped up to the main BBC news page. Several daily newspapers have featured *Garden Safari* too, including the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Express*. I hope to be appearing on the BBC's *The One Show* at Christmas, too. It's very encouraging, as you never know how your photography will be received. Ammonite Press has also recently commissioned me to do a new book on bird photography, too.'

Despite his success, Andrew still admits to feeling insecure about his work, which should encourage all AP readers to feel the fear and do it anyway (to paraphrase a famous self-help book). 'I am always battling insecurity and feeling that my work is not good enough,' he reflects. 'I have realised that all artists are the

same, I know a famous musician who has achieved a lot, and he goes through exactly the same thing.'

While *Garden Safari* includes images of relatively rare species, Andrew is keen to stress that even images of fairly common birds, mammals and insects can stand out with the right approach.

'You can do this with sparrows, blue tits, whatever. As I said before, you don't need to go to Africa or obsess about exotic species.' Indeed, the cover of *Garden Safari* contains a memorable quote by the ornithologist and TV presenter Iolo Williams, who is a good friend of Andrew's. 'Stunning photography... Andrew makes the ordinary look extraordinary.' We on AP couldn't agree more.



Go on safari!

Garden Safari is published by Graffeg and is available now from all good book sellers for £30 or less. Andrew's website is at www.fusekphotos.com and his Instagram is [@andrewfusekpeters](https://www.instagram.com/andrewfusekpeters)



APOY Inspiration

If you're planning to enter our **Celebrating Colour** round, which launches next week, take these tips from three of last year's top ten photographers

Julie Tennant, US

Canon EOS 80D, 18-135mm

Julie came third in 2024's Animal Kingdom round. The judges said: 'The blue of the peacock contrasts beautifully with the yellow wall behind, and the placement of the bird's head and neck in the bottom right corner balances with the blue doorframe, creating a very pleasing result. It's an unusual take on an animal picture, which makes it stand out.'

Julie says: 'I'm from Scotland but moved overseas 21 years ago, travelling extensively before eventually settling in New Jersey, USA. About 30 minutes from my house is a large sculpture park called Grounds for Sculpture. I enjoy visiting, both with and without my camera. On this particular day, I'd gone there with the intention of photographing the sculptures and surrounding landscape.'

'A few peacocks roam freely through the grounds, usually found among the trees and plants. Near the entrance is a cafe which has vivid yellow walls and contrasting blue-painted window and door frames, and I noticed one of the peacocks walking alongside the yellow wall. The colour contrast between the bird's blue feathers and the blue frames alongside the bright yellow backdrop was striking – one of those moments when you just know it's a perfect photo opportunity.'

'I quickly set up my camera, hoping to compose the shot using the vertical lines to



frame the image, with the yellow and blue palette providing contrast and balance. I waited, needing the peacock to move into the right position, and ideally in profile, to make the composition work. After some time... he did it! He moved into place, lifted his head in profile and actually appeared to pose just

long enough for me to capture the photo.

'Photoshop editing included straightening and cropping, plus some adjustments to contrast, colour, texture clarity and sharpness. I also cleaned up the wall a little.'

'Requirements: good timing, a lot of luck, and a perfect colour contrast.'



Ben Evans, Waterlooville

Nikon D600, 24-105mm at 24mm, 1/125sec at f/6.3, ISO 160

Ben was a runner-up in the Action round in last year's APOY with his image 'The Decisive Moment', which fizzes with colour and movement.

Ben says: 'The Holi Festival has become famous in our increasingly Instagrammable world. Vivid clouds of colour cover revellers the world over. Holika Dahan celebrates the slaying of Holika who killed children. But the danger now is to the camera and lenses. I found an elevated viewpoint and borrowed a weather-sealed professional camera from Nikon to shoot this picture. I talked with the organisers beforehand to understand the event and get ready for the decisive moment. Often preconception and planning makes all the difference and is far more important than the gear involved.'



Kelly Beckta, Canada

Sony A7R V, 35mm, 1/500sec at f/8, ISO 100

Kelly's image, 'Reflections of Duality', came runner-up in the Urban Life category of last

year's competition. The contrast between the green, which takes up much of the frame, with the red and blue of the woman's scarf and beret is well seen.

Kelly says: 'I shot this image in East Harlem during a photo walk led by Nina Welch-Kling and Layla Amatullah Barrayn – part of a series of workshops for the 85 women selected by Women Street Photographers for a group exhibition in New York City. It was an incredible experience to be out creating with a community of women that lifts each other up, and shares knowledge generously.'

'Shooting street photography in a group can be a challenge, though, so I let myself drift to the back where things felt quieter. I love colour, so when I spotted a ripple of green across a car hood, catching a reflection just right, I paused and waited. People passed by. Then, a fellow photographer stepped into the frame and paused, and I captured the moment. Later, I shared the photo with Layla. She asked, "Why reflections?" Before I could answer, someone joked, "She must've been a twin in another life." I laughed and said, "Actually, I have a twin brother." Layla looked at me, smiled, and said, "That's it. That's why. You've always seen the world twice."

'That was a moment of clarity. I'd never connected my obsession with reflections to being a twin, but it made perfect sense. I love reflections because they mirror something deeply familiar.'

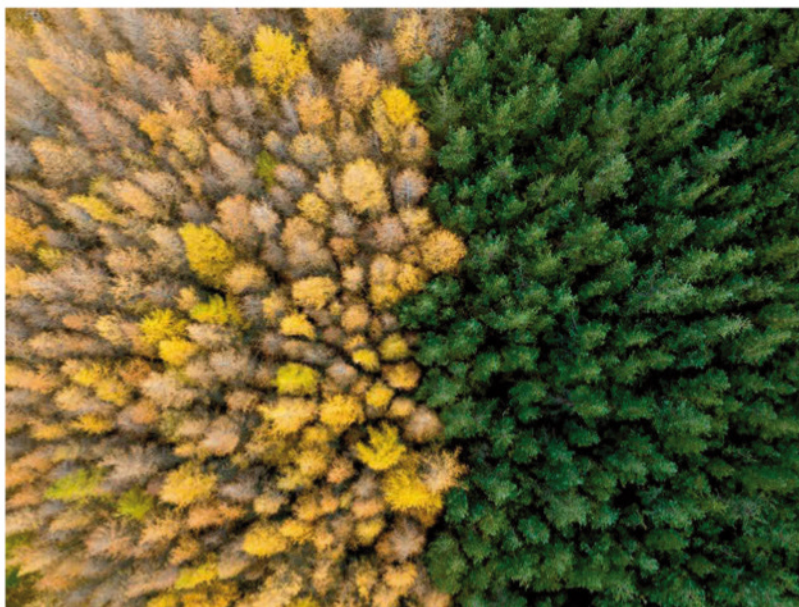
Thomas Andy Branson, Aberdeen

Hasselblad L2D-20c, 24mm f/2.8 at 12.3mm, 1/60sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

Thomas's image, 'Forest near the River Muick', was a runner-up in last year's Landscapes round, catching the judges' attention with the stark division between green and yellow.

Thomas says: 'This was taken in the Scottish Highlands, near the River Muick, in autumn. I was scouting the area by drone, looking for interesting forest patterns, when I stumbled upon this striking boundary between deciduous and evergreen trees. From the ground, the contrast wasn't immediately obvious – but once airborne, the dramatic meeting of colours became unmistakable.'

'I was drawn to the interplay between the golden larches and the deep green pines, which created a natural division almost like a painter's brushstroke. The key was to position the drone directly above the transition zone and align the frame symmetrically to emphasise the contrast. I shot in raw for maximum detail and dynamic range, and adjusted white balance manually to preserve the warmth of the yellows without



oversaturating the greens. Timing was crucial – this was taken shortly after midday, when the sun was high enough to light the scene evenly but still soft enough to avoid harsh shadows. I didn't want intense glare or flat overcast skies; I waited for a softly lit day with just enough

contrast to give the image some structure without flattening the colours. In post, I applied minimal edits: some contrast, gentle sharpening, and subtle vibrance adjustments – just enough to reflect what I saw in that magical moment above the treetops.'

To enter this year's APOY and be in with the chance of winning a share of £26,000 worth of prizes, visit www.amateurphotographer.com/apoy

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At its best, the Sigma 17-40mm F1.8 delivers excellent image quality
Fujifilm X-T5, 36mm, 1/800sec at f/5.6, ISO 125



Sigma 17-40mm F1.8 DC Art



This is the largest-aperture zoom available for APS-C mirrorless cameras, but how does it measure up?

Andy Westlake finds out

Sigma's new 17-40mm F1.8 DC Art is the world's largest-aperture standard zoom lens for APS-C mirrorless cameras. It provides a 26-60mm-equivalent focal-length range, while its f/1.8 maximum aperture should deliver similar background blur and depth-of-field to an f/2.8 zoom on full-frame. It's set to be

available in Canon RF, Fujifilm X, Sony E, and L mounts.

In essence, this lens is the spiritual successor to Sigma's previous 18-35mm F1.8 DC HSM Art for APS-C DSLRs, which appeared in 2013. Yet despite its broader zoom range, it is 30% lighter than its predecessor, and 5mm shorter. It's also considerably smaller and lighter

than the firm's 24-70mm F2.8 DG DN II Art for full-frame cameras, despite the fact that in principle, it'll do much the same job.

That £779 price point is extremely tempting too, given that it's much cheaper than the camera manufacturers' f/2.8 APS-C standard zooms. In comparison, the Fujifilm XF 16-55mm F2.8 R LM WR II

costs £1150, while the Sony E 16-55mm F2.8 G is £1,059. Given that this is part of Sigma's Art-series lineup, we can expect high-quality optics, too. It all sounds too good to be true, but is there a catch?

Features

Optically, Sigma has employed 17 elements in 11 groups. This includes 4 super-low dispersion glass (SLD) and 4 aspherical elements with the aim of rendering finely detailed images, even wide open. Sigma's Super Multi-Layer Coating is





employed to suppress flare and ghosting.

Unusually for this kind of lens, an internal zoom mechanism means that the size and balance remain the same at all focal lengths. The barrel boasts a dust- and splash-resistant construction, including a seal around the mount to protect the camera from dust and water ingress. There's also an oil- and water-repellent coating on the front glass to help keep it clean

of raindrops and fingerprints.

Autofocus employs a High-response Linear Actuator (HLA), promising quiet, fast and accurate operation. Sigma says focus breathing is suppressed optically, which should enable natural-looking focus pulls when recording video. The minimum focus distance is 28cm, giving 0.21x magnification at the 40mm setting (this equates to an image area of 112x75mm).

Sigma includes a fairly chunky

hood, which is equipped with a locking button to prevent it from coming off accidentally. While it reverses for storage, it's quite a lot larger in diameter than the lens itself, requiring a 95mm-wide slot in your bag. The lens accepts relatively affordable 67mm filters.

Build and handling

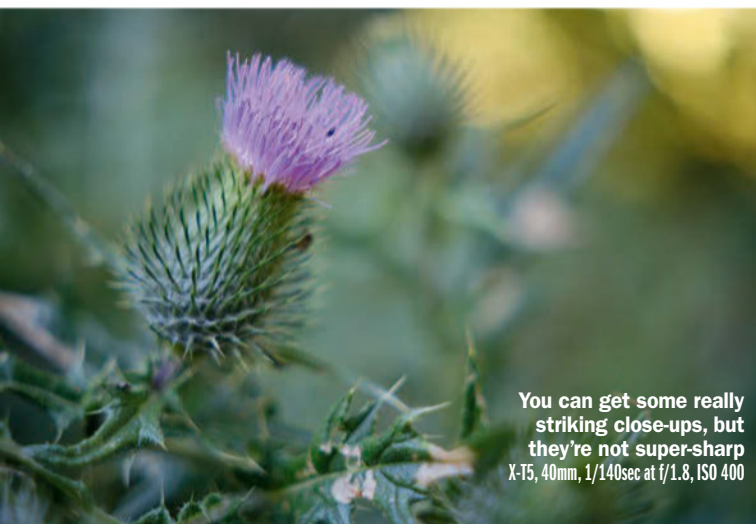
Despite its large aperture, the Sigma 17-40mm F1.8 is perfectly reasonably sized. It measures 115.9mm long by 72.9mm in diameter and weighs in at 535g. I tested it on the Fujifilm X-T5 and the combination felt very nicely balanced. But I suspect it would feel quite front-heavy on small, flat-bodied cameras such as the Sony A6400 or Fujifilm X-E5.

Sigma has included a full set of external controls. Notably, for the first time on an APS-C lens, it's added an additional control dial placed close to the camera body, behind the zoom and focus rings. On the E, X, and L-mount versions, this takes the form of a conventional aperture ring, while the RF-mount model has an unmarked, continuously rotating ring that behaves like those on Canon's own lenses.

The addition of an aperture ring will be particularly appreciated by Fujifilm users, as unlike with Sigma's older lenses, it means you don't have to change to using a dial on the camera to set the aperture. The ring can be set to either clicked or smooth operation via a switch on the barrel, while a second switch locks it either into or out of its A position.

There's also a pair of AFL buttons, one each for portrait and landscape shooting. On Sony, Canon and L-mount cameras, their function can be assigned from the camera menus as usual. On the X-mount version, they can be set to either AF-ON or AF-lock via a switch on the lens. These buttons are a little small, but they work perfectly well, and they are sufficiently recessed that you shouldn't activate them by accident.

The zoom ring falls naturally to hand and rotates extremely smoothly, taking well under a quarter-turn to traverse its full range. Meanwhile, manual focus is operated via a large ring at the front, that again is wonderfully smooth in action.



You can get some really striking close-ups, but they're not super-sharp
X-T5, 40mm, 1/140sec at f/1.8, ISO 400



The lens is weakest at wideangle, but you'll need to print large to see this
X-T5, 20mm, 1/240sec at f/5.6, ISO 125

Autofocus

Turning our attention to autofocus, I found the Sigma 17-40mm F1.8 difficult to fault. It's fast – perhaps surprisingly so, given the large aperture – and pretty much silent. Videographers will be pleased to hear that Sigma's claims of minimal focus breathing stand up to scrutiny in real-world use, too. There's barely any visible change in angle of view on focusing, at any focal length.

Should you need to use manual focus, this works very well too. As with all modern lenses, it's electronic rather than mechanical. The focus ring is very nicely damped and provides extremely precise control. Turning the ring will also engage the camera's usual focusing aids automatically.

Performance

So how about image quality? This is where things get a bit more complicated. I tested the lens on the Fujifilm X-T5, with its demanding 40MP X-Trans sensor. On the whole, I was quite pleased with the results I got from the lens, but this does come with some caveats – as you should probably expect from an f/1.8 zoom at this price.

Firstly, let's look at the good points. Used at its strongest

focal lengths (which means about 24mm or longer), and in its optimum aperture range of f/4 to f/8, the lens produces sharp, clean images with impressive levels of detail across the frame. Thanks to integrated software correction of distortion, straight lines are correctly rendered, too, giving natural-looking geometry.

Unfortunately, though, it's impossible to get away from the fact that at wider angle settings, the lens just isn't particularly sharp towards the edges, regardless of aperture setting. This is in part due to lateral chromatic aberration, which shows up as strong green/magenta fringing towards the edges and corners of the frame. This fringing isn't fully corrected in camera JPEGs, and it can look very intense in vivid colour modes such as Velvia. It can be suppressed effectively in raw processing, but this just ends up compounding the overall impression of softness in these areas.

Unsurprisingly, the lens isn't super-sharp wide open, either. It's reasonably crisp in the centre of the frame, but fine detail fades off noticeably towards the edges and corners. Of course, when you're shooting at f/1.8, much of your image is likely to

be out of focus anyway, which tends to make whatever is in focus look just fine.

Sharpness also drops off quite dramatically at close focus distances, where the unmistakable 'glow' of spherical aberration comes to the fore. At 40mm, f/1.8 and minimum focus, barely any pixel-level detail is rendered at all. But really, that's not unexpected from a large-aperture lens used for close-ups.

From this, it might sound like the lens is highly optically flawed. But do keep in mind that we're talking about examining high-resolution files close-up onscreen here. You'll need to blow up your photos pretty large to be seriously bothered by any of this – if you're viewing them on a smaller screen or in print sizes of A4 or smaller, it probably won't matter.

In other respects, the lens is perfectly well-behaved. For example, I had no real problems with flare when shooting into the light. There's not a lot of vignetting to be seen, either, to the extent I often added a little back in raw processing.

Crucially, out-of-focus backgrounds are, on the whole, rendered very smoothly, so photos taken at large apertures look really nice.



Verdict

IF EVER there was a lens that should be judged on what it can add to your toolkit, rather than on optical tests, it's the Sigma 17-40mm F1.8 DC. It's unlikely to excel when assessed using such things as brick-wall shots or MTF charts. However, judging a lens on sharpness alone risks missing the wood for the trees.

With its short zoom range and slightly weak edges at wideangle, this isn't a lens I'd necessarily recommend for travel photography, or for detail-rich subjects such as landscapes or cityscapes. However, that super-large aperture means it should please photographers shooting such things as weddings or events indoors, and looking to isolate their subjects against blurred backgrounds. The key is to play to its strengths.

Overall, I'd say the Sigma 17-40mm F1.8 is a lens whose optical design and price/performance ratio are well judged for its specific niche. It probably won't replace your existing standard zoom for all your everyday photography needs. But it could do an excellent job of complementing it for use in specific situations.

Data file

Price £779	Length 115.9mm
Filter diameter 67	Diameter 72.9mm
Lens elements 17	Weight 535g
Groups 11	Lens mount Canon RF, Fujifilm X, Sony E, L-mount
Diaphragm blades 11 (rounded)	Included accessories Front and rear caps, hood
Aperture f/1.8-f/16	
Minimum focus 28cm	



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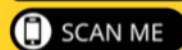
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In good light, the camera can give nice results

Yashica FX-D 100, 52mm equivalent, 1/60sec at f/2.2, ISO 100

Yashica FX-D 100

The Yashica FX-D 100 is the latest camera designed to bring back major film SLR vibes, but does it manage to deliver on the promises? **Joshua Waller** finds out

The Yashica FX-D 100 is the firm's newest compact digital camera. But it comes with retro classic styling – it literally looks like a film SLR – and promises digital film simulations (and happier times). A simpler time when photography was a slower, more gentle activity, where you'd think more carefully about your next shot, as every frame cost money. The FX-D 100 is based on the City 100 pocket point-and-shoot, but lets you shoot either like a normal digital camera, or alternatively like a pseudo film camera. Is it any good, and what's it like to work with?

To begin with, it's worth pointing out that we're not expecting high image quality, as this camera uses a 13MP sensor that's smaller than most smartphone cameras these days. But if it's fun to use, and gives us some interesting film simulations, then maybe it's of value. Especially considering the relatively low price – it was \$239 on Kickstarter early bird (now ended), but will be available in shops priced £245.

Yashica is also launching the FX-D 300 and FX-D S300 versions, which use a different sensor and lens set-up, with a 50MP sensor, and digital/crop zoom available offering 3x

'zoom'. The FX-D S300 is also going to come with an electronic viewfinder with 1.44 million dots. These two models are not yet available, and come with a higher price tag.

Yashica has an interesting history, and it's worth pointing out that this is not the original film-era company, but instead a rebirth with a new company using the Yashica brand name. There have been a number of releases recently, such as the City100 and 200, as well as previous releases that haven't been as well received. This includes the Yashica Y35, perhaps one of the worst digital cameras ever



At a glance

£245

- 13MP 1/3in stacked CMOS sensor
- 25-76mm (equivalent) f/1.6-f/2.8 lens
- 3x optical and 4x digital zoom
- 2.8in LCD flip screen
- 4K 30p, 2.7K 60p, Full HD 120p video recording
- SD card slot
- USB-C charging in camera, lithium-ion rechargeable battery
- JPEG capture only





Vivid mode gives nicely saturated colours

Yashica FX-D 100, 25mm equivalent,
1/640sec at f/1.6, ISO 100

released. Yashica probably prefers it if you don't think about that camera, but rather interestingly, to me anyway, the FX-D 100 review sample came in a Y35 box. Retail versions will come with the correct box.

Realistic expectations are crucial when purchasing products launched on Kickstarter. If you're lucky you'll be able to read reviews like this, and have a look at results

before spending money. But on other occasions you're left guessing what the product will actually be like, and how representative the sample and product photos are. Anyway, back to the camera at hand.

The Yashica FX-D 100 comes with six film simulations: Ruby 60s, Sapphire 70s, Yashica 400, Golden 80s, Mono 400, and B&W 400. It's not entirely clear what all of these film

types are supposed to be. Golden 80s could be similar to Kodak Gold 200 – hence the 'Gold' in the name. You can customise these, as well as set up custom settings in the custom modes (C1, 2, 3, 4) on the mode dial, with your own customised colour and film settings, adjusted from the default setting.

Handling and design

Is it a film camera? Or a digital camera? Or some kind of hybrid film camera?

The camera operates in either a normal digital mode, or a digital 'Film' mode. To enter this you have to pull the 'film wind lever' out slightly; this activates the film mode, then you wind the lever on all the way in order to get the camera ready to take photos – without doing this you can't take a photo. Once you've done this and taken the photo, you then need to wind 'the film' on again before you can take your next shot. A neat graphic will display on the screen showing the 'film' being wound on.

However, if you wind the lever too hard, and you let the spring pull it back, it can easily return to the normal shooting mode, rather than staying in film mode. To take it out of film mode, you just need to make sure the film wind-on lever is back in its normal position.

This lever (made of metal) can get in the way of the mode dial, so you need to turn the mode dial from the front/side slightly. The top-left dial lets you scroll through the different film modes (in film sim mode), or the different colour modes (in normal modes).

In the auto mode, film simulation and colour modes are simply unavailable. So you have to be in one of the other modes in order to use these.

Zoom operation

On the lens ring you'll find an 'A' setting, which lets you control the zoom level from 25-75mm equivalent using the back rocker switch. Alternatively you can set the zoom position using the zoom ring on the camera lens barrel, with the options being 25mm,



In golden hour light colours look pleasing

Yashica FX-D 100, 77mm,
1/200sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

35mm, 50mm and 75mm equivalent. There are no in-between positions when using the zoom ring.

The front ring around the lens looks like it should do something, but it does nothing, and is fixed. There's a 49mm filter thread on the front of the lens, so you can add real filters if you want.

Build quality

The review sample I received was an early production model so wasn't final. However, the build quality is relatively good. The camera, as you'd expect, is almost entirely made of plastic, but there are a number of parts that are made of metal, which is a nice surprise. For example, the top dials are both metal, the wind-on lever is metal, and the flash hot-shoe is also metal. All of the textured grips are made of rubber, even though they look like a hard plastic.

The 2.8in screen is reasonable, but nothing special. Text and images can look pixelated on there. It's not a touchscreen, and while it can be turned to face forwards, there is no ability to angle the screen up or down. There is no viewfinder, despite the looks. For that you'll need to look at the FX-D S300.

The battery is the same as you'll find in some old Casio Exilim cameras, and other brands, meaning it's readily available. The NP-40 is a 3.7V 1250mAh battery and provides a reasonable battery life for a compact camera. Remember, these cameras don't tend to have particularly impressive battery life.

The menus are relatively clear, with options for photo, video, playback settings, as well as the settings menus. In the photo settings there's also a fisheye effect available, almost as though they didn't know where to put the option. You can adjust the ISO speed from ISO 100 to ISO 3200. Digital image stabilisation is an option, cropping into the frame for video.



Frog close-up using full zoom

Yashica FX-D 100, 75mm equivalent,
1/80sec at f/2.8, ISO 200

Performance

The colour reproduction can be quite pleasing at times, and when photographing subjects closer to the camera, you can get some reasonable background blur. There are some clear issues with purple fringing and chromatic aberrations, which are visible even without viewing images at full size.

There are also areas of softness, particularly towards the edges of the frame, and there were times when the focus missed. It's the kind of camera that makes you work for your shots, so be prepared to take a couple if you're aiming for better images.

Film simulations give mixed results; you'll either like them or you won't. I found Yashica 400 similar to the Vivid setting in the normal shooting mode, and I also quite like the Golden 80s look. I wasn't particularly impressed by the other shooting modes, and I found there was little difference between the different grain settings. It would be nice if the grain could be turned up a bit more, particularly for the higher-contrast black & white mode.

When it comes to the colour modes, the Vivid option gives images that look more saturated and colourful. Some of the other colour filters are better than others. However, you could also adjust the white balance to cloudy (for example), to get warmer, more film-like images.

To get the best results from the camera it can take a number

of tries, and the performance of the camera (and image quality) drops dramatically when shooting in poor lighting or low-light conditions. There is no built-in flash or LED, but an accessory can be added. The LED light on the front is used as a focus assist in darker conditions.

One real bonus is that true infrared shooting is possible, and you can even see the camera move the 'hot mirror' infrared filter out of the way when you switch to IR mode. The camera switches to black & white shooting, and your photos are now black & white infrared, without any need for any processing. It's not possible to shoot colour infrared photos.

When using the full zoom, you can get some good close-up photos, using autofocus. Switch to manual focus and you can get incredibly close, focusing on subjects directly in front of the lens. Shoot with the sun in the frame, and you can create shots with lots of lens flare. You don't need digital filters for this effect.

Looking at the photos I've taken with this camera, I'm quite impressed by the look of them. There's a certain charm, and the infrared shooting is a major bonus. However, while I've included some of my best shots here, there are another hundred or so that simply didn't make the cut, and you can forget about shooting in low light (unless you add a flash or extra lighting).



Verdict



FORGET everything about this camera (the amazing

looks, the film wind lever, and the film simulations), and there's one unique feature on this camera that makes this truly magical, and that's the infrared setting. It also magically gets rid of purple fringing, as the photos are in black & white.

This is a fun camera to use, but the film simulations feel lacking. There also seems to be little or no effect when the grain settings are adjusted.

I can almost forgive this, because I still enjoy using it. It's a neat little toy camera that lets you mess around with a tactile device, without worrying about film costs, or trying to get the perfect shot. This camera is not about perfection – it can take some real effort to get some nice looking shots.

The final thing worth noting is that you will get better quality from almost every smartphone, thanks to a larger sensor, computational photography (autoHDR etc) and advanced processing. But if you're bored with taking photos with a smartphone, then the Yashica FX-D 100 may be just the ticket.

For and against

- + Gorgeous retro SLR looks
- + Really looks like a mini film SLR camera
- + Film-wind lever is extremely tactile
- + Infrared mode!
- Mysterious film modes (Yashica isn't famous for making film)
- No 3:2 aspect ratio (the aspect ratio of 35mm film)
- Purple fringing and poor image quality



On the Hunt for film cameras

Bellamy Hunt, aka the Japan Camera Hunter, shares his experience of sourcing and selling film cameras with Geoff Harris - and explains why we won't see a new film model from Japan's big makers

If you are interested in analogue photography, chances are you've heard of Japan Camera Hunter, a specialist retailer of film cameras and lenses sourced in the land of the rising sun. It's also a valuable news and discussion resource for anyone into film. Japan Camera Hunter (JCH) is run by Bellamy Hunt, a 48-year-old Brit who's been living in Japan for many years. We caught up with Bellamy to find out more about JCH's intriguing backstory, and why he's adamant that the big makers won't be releasing a new film camera any time soon (apart from Ricoh/Pentax).

So how did this enterprising 'gaijin' get JCH off the ground? 'I'm definitely something of an outlier!' Bellamy explains from his base in Tokyo. 'I worked for a long-established photographic supplies company here in Tokyo and my job was to deal with companies around the world. It was mainly digital photography equipment, however, which was then just starting to become a big deal (around the time

of the Canon EOS 5D Mark II, in 2008). One of the perks of the job was to play with the latest digital gear. Although I'd been into photography since I was a teenager, I couldn't afford a decent digital camera. One of the guys in my company was into film photography and suggested I started shooting again with an old Minolta film camera. I really loved it! Another part of my job was sourcing film cameras for older clients and I found I was enjoying dealing with film cameras far more than playing with the new digital stuff. Anyway, as a foreigner, I realised I'd got as far as I was ever going to go in this company so I decided to branch out on my own, sourcing cameras for corporate clients.

Japan at the time was fairly inaccessible for foreigners wanting to buy cameras – this was before Google Translate – so my Japanese language skills were very useful. I saw an opportunity, sourcing and selling interesting cameras to overseas customers. JCH was born.'

Ups and downs

Running JCH has been Bellamy's full-time job since 2011. 'There have been some tumultuous years. Within a month and a half of me starting the business, the Fukushima earthquake rocked Japan, which set things back quite a bit. I wasn't even interested in the job at that point, it was all about what could we all do

Opposite page:
A selection of
JCH cameras and
lenses for sale

**Right: Bellamy
Hunt of JCH in his
office/YouTube
studio**

**Below: A Rollei
SL66 SLR.
JCH stocks
a wide range of
interesting and
quirky cameras**



for Japan. The country was only just recovering from the financial crisis, too. The dollar was brutal for us... I remember trying to sell a Fujifilm TX-1 for 120,000 yen [about £615]. People were saying it was a rip-off, but I now sell these for 650,000 yen, about £3,280. Otherwise, the business has stayed fairly steady.'

Bellamy also runs JCH as a general news resource for film enthusiasts. 'I realised I needed a hook to keep people coming back, and camera

sales alone wouldn't do this. I started off with an "In your bag" series, featuring the gear people had in their camera bag. I'd acquired a lot of interesting bags, including prototypes from Domke, Crumpler and ThinkTank, when I was working for the Japanese photographic supplier, so it really exploded. I realised I liked talking about cameras as well as selling them, sharing my job and the things that I do.'

Rather than just rehashing press releases, Bellamy has a wide range of contacts who supply him with interesting stories and articles. 'I've never taken a penny for sponsored content,' he adds. 'At the end of the day the site is the vehicle to my business, so I want to share unbiased reviews and news with people.'

Quality, not quantity

When it comes to finding interesting old film cameras in Japan, Bellamy notes that Tokyo still has lots of bricks and mortar stores, though things have changed since JCH started. 'A lot of the original owners have passed away or gone out of business. Some of Japan's bigger camera stores, such as Lemon Camera and Kitamura, are consolidating, buying smaller businesses and trying to create chains of used dealers. You often see flyers from companies offering to buy your used camera



equipment. This gear then gets sent out to auction, and to bid in these auctions, you need to own a camera shop. People get the gear at wholesale prices and buy it in by the truckload, literally. I am much more specific about what I source, and my focus is on quality rather than quantity. I deal with specific stores, private sellers and distributors, using a network I have built up over 15 years. They know my standards. I also sell on commission for some stores: they don't want to deal with the language barrier with English-speaking customers or the hassle of shipping cameras overseas, so they turn to me. I will only sell on cameras that have been serviced and come with a warranty, though.'

Japan camera-buying tours

With so many tourists now going to Japan, Bellamy also runs bespoke buying tours to help visitors find film cameras. 'In the past I'd give people a list of stores, but they were asking me to come along to translate and make sure they bought the right thing. It's now become a sideline, but I will still give people a list of stores even if they don't want to book a tour with me. Off the top of my head, I can think of at least seven good camera stores around Shinjuku, Tokyo's main station. A lot of stores are now catering for tourists much more, too. You'll even find used camera stores in the Shibuya district of

Right: Bellamy with the Gowlandflex 4x5in Glamour Camerac

Below: One of the earliest Hansa Canon cameras from 1936

Opposite page: A Nikon F3P with MD-4 motor drive



'There is no interest in film cameras from the big makers like Canon and Nikon'

Tokyo, which was much more of an entertainment and fashion centre.'

Running JCH, Bellamy has noticed that as well as the younger 'hipster' crowd, many of his customers are in their forties and older, eager to rediscover film photography. 'They've dusted off their old film camera, found it's still working and ask me to find a lens for it.'

Low yen but higher prices

While the Japanese economy remains flat, and the pound and dollar strong against the yen, it's not the case that buying a film camera from Japan will automatically work out cheaper. 'Around 2016, camera stores here discovered eBay and realised how much more expensive cameras were overseas – so they started to price accordingly. Map Camera and Kitamura Camera are notorious for hiking prices off used gear. Other dealers have followed suit and are pricing for the tourists. In certain cases, I can offer better prices, but I am never trying to beat any prices as that won't work for me... I'm trying to offer the best possible price for that camera or



lens. Much of our gear is serviced, comes with a warranty and I do my best to ensure the customer is happy. This was drilled into me when I worked for the Japanese photo-equipment supplier.'

Bellamy also tried selling his own 35mm film, StreetPan, but it didn't prove sustainable owing to rising prices from suppliers. 'I found a supplier who was keen to keep making film, which mimicked Fujifilm Neopan 1600. I wanted something with that level of contrast, so JCH released StreetPan in 2016. It was a hell of a learning experience. While it didn't work out for me, film suppliers are now blossoming, with companies not only releasing re-rolled film but also new emulsions such as the Harman Phoenix line appearing. I feel like maybe I had a tiny part in helping this along.'

When it comes to buying film in Japan, Bellamy reckons it's one of the most expensive places in the world. 'I actually source my film overseas,' Bellamy notes with amusement. 'Tourists can get 10% off most camera purchases in Japan as it's tax free, but you can't with film, as it's classed as a consumable. Getting film developed here is painful, it's slow and expensive!'

A new film camera? Unlikely

Apart from Pentax, we wondered if Bellamy had heard rumours that any big makers might release a film camera again? 'I wish I could say yes, and I do know people who ask about it in shareholder meetings, but sadly there is no interest from big makers like Nikon and Canon. It's too much of a risk for them, with too little return. These are behemoths of companies that are glacially slow at repositioning.' Bellamy cites a shortage of specialist expertise, too. 'When Nikon re-released the SP series around 2005 they had to bring engineers out of retirement to help after a product recall. Sadly, a lot of these guys are no longer around. Ricoh/Pentax, by way of contrast, is smaller, more agile and has traditionally taken more risks than bigger players with a stronger presence in the professional market.'

Despite the interest in the 'film-inspired' X half, Bellamy reckons we shouldn't expect a conventional film camera from Fujifilm, either. 'It hurts to say this,



but I know for a fact the idea was shot down in the annual general shareholders' meeting. At the end of the day, Fujifilm is a massive corporation, and the photographic side is quite a small part of its overall business. Their medical imaging and chemicals businesses dwarf the consumer camera side... here in Japan you see adverts for Fujifilm diet pills on TV, for example. People say, 'Oh well, Fujifilm is still making film,' but this is not the case – Kodak and Ilford are making film for them under license. Then there are the environmental rules around film manufacture in Japan, which have got a lot stricter.'

Disposable culture

Bellamy signs off by giving some interesting insight into the continued popularity of cheap

compacts, particularly Kodak-branded ones, in Japan – a source of puzzlement to western observers. 'The flat economy is a factor, but lo-fi and disposable cameras ('tsukaisute kamera') have always been popular here, particularly with younger people. You can still buy them in convenience stores. Kodak has done some clever brand marketing in Japan too, so customers are very familiar with the Kodak logo.'

Also – and this isn't limited to Japan – it seems that younger people have come to appreciate the privacy and security you get with pictures shot on a cheap film camera... you can choose where the pictures are and whether you share them online, rather than it being decided for you.'

About Japan Camera Hunter



Described as a site for

'Japanese camera, sales and geekery,' Japan Camera Hunter is now one of the best places on the internet to buy a film camera or lens. A wide range of film cameras are on sale, not just those made by Japanese companies, and the site is a valuable news resource, too. Head to www.japancamerahunter.com for details.



Vanguard VEO Metro B25L

Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★

Andy Westlake tests a stylish and highly functional camera backpack

● £185 ● vanguardworld.co.uk

The Vanguard VEO Metro B25L is a medium-sized camera backpack with smart-looking 'urban' styling. It's essentially a three-section design, with most of the main compartment given over to carrying your kit. There's also a small section for personal items at the top, and a laptop/tablet pocket on the back.

In terms of capacity, this bag will hold a mirrorless camera plus four or five lenses, with the largest lens you're likely to fit being a 70-200mm f/2.8 or 100-400mm telezoom. I filled it up with my Sony Alpha A7R V with 24-105mm f/4 zoom attached, plus 16-35mm f/4, 100-400mm f/5-6.3, 40mm f/2 and 135mm f/2.8 lenses. Note the bag isn't deep enough to hold a camera with a vertical grip.

All your precious kit is well-protected, thanks to an internal metal frame. It's complemented by generous padding all around the camera section and a soft inner lining. Plenty of moveable dividers are included to organise the space for your needs.

You get useful pockets absolutely everywhere, including a concealed passport pocket at the back, a fold-out smartphone pouch on one shoulder strap, and a spectacularly well-hidden AirTag holder. There's even a pocket for holding a powerbank, complete with a cable pass-through to the outside of the bag for charging your devices on-the-go.

Indeed wherever you look, you'll find clever little design details. There's a sturdy loop on one shoulder strap for a camera clip, and an attachment point on the back for an LED light, for extra visibility at night. You can also carry a jacket externally via a supplied pair of straps.

Along with a comfortable carry handle on top, there's one at the base to aid grabbing the bag from a luggage rack or locker. An elasticated strap on the back can be used to slide the bag over the handle of wheeled luggage for easier transport.

Fully laden the bag can get pretty heavy – I measured 13kg on my scales. But it's still surprisingly comfortable to carry, thanks to the generously padded shoulder straps, waist belt, and back panel. The belt can also be tucked away for easier handling on trains and planes.

Verdict

I'm not necessarily a huge fan of backpacks, but this one has won me over. It looks good, it's comfortable, and it'll hold a sensible amount of kit. I can't really think of anything wrong with it.

Colours

The bag is available in a choice of burgundy, beige, black or cream.

Side pockets

Expanding pockets on either side will hold a water bottle or tripod, etc.

Laptop

A separate rear pocket has space for one 13in and one 16in device – laptop, tablet, or portable monitor.

Rain cover

The included rain cover fits snugly to protect all the openings and folds away neatly into its own sewn-in pocket.

At a glance

- Holds a camera and 4 lenses
- Compartment for 16in laptop and 13in tablet
- Top, side, and rear access
- 305x225x465mm (external)
- 1.9kg weight

THE LARGER OPTION

If you would prefer something a bit bigger, take a look at the B30L. It has all the same features as its smaller sibling, but it's 2cm wider and 3.5cm taller. This allows a larger camera compartment for carrying more kit, yet it still fits within many airline carry-on size limits.





Tony Kemplen on the ...

Contaflex 126

A curious SLR from the 1960s that isn't quite what it at first appears

Zeiss Ikon launched its series of Contaflex cameras in 1953. Over the following 20 years or so, 12 versions were made with ever-increasing degrees of sophistication and indeed weight. A wide range of accessories was available, and these precision-made leaf-shuttered SLRs proved very popular. But the Contaflex 126 is a different beast altogether. It may share the name and bear a superficial resemblance to the rest of the family, but it's something of a cuckoo in the nest.

Kodak introduced the 126, or Instamatic cartridge, in 1963. It was intended to provide a simple, foolproof way for less technically savvy users to load film into their cameras. Although the film is 35mm wide, the format is not the same. The film, which has one perforation per frame and sits within a plastic cartridge, is backed by a roll of paper, and gives square negatives measuring 28x28mm. Until very recently Instagram's native format was square, and it may be that the name itself was riffing on the Instamatic brand.



An unusual SLR for 126 cartridge film with interchangeable lenses

While the format was unashamedly aimed at the amateur snapshot market, many of the major manufacturers added a token higher-end SLR 126 model to their range. This is a bit of a puzzle to me. One criticism of the 126 cartridge is that the absence of a pressure plate to keep the film absolutely flat might theoretically impair the image quality. Yet surely any photographer with such technical concerns wouldn't be put off by the easily learnable step of loading a 35mm cassette into a camera. Nonetheless, Rollei, Kodak, Ricoh and of course the prestigious Zeiss Ikon, felt the need to pitch in.

Unlike the 'normal' Contaflexes, which at best have interchangeable front elements, the 126 version has fully interchangeable lenses, although with a mount which is unique to this one model. Optical physics dictate that the longest practical focal length that can be achieved by swapping the front element is 115mm, but the 126 range of

lenses went up to 200mm, though it seems that very few of these lenses were actually made. The other key difference between the 35mm and 126 Contaflexes is that the latter employ a focal-plane shutter, rather than a leaf shutter.

Today, with the only 126 film available being long expired, it's actually quite useful to be able to set the camera manually. The oft-quoted rule of thumb that film loses sensitivity at a rate of one stop per decade means that an ISO 100 film made in the 1970s would need to be exposed at around ISO 3 today. Most Instamatic cameras won't allow this, but by forcing an aperture of f/2.8 via the flash guide number setting, and using a shutter speed of 1/30sec, it's practical to use the Contaflex 126 in reasonable daylight. This photo, taken in Sheffield Botanical Gardens, was shot on Lloyd's Pharmacy branded film, which I found in a charity shop for 50p. The quality is poor, but I've had a lot worse!



This was shot on long-expired film

See more of Tony's photos on [Instagram @tonykemplen](#) or at [flickr.com/tony_kemplen](#)

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Immediate impact

Damien Demolder's *Final Analysis* (AP 22 July) encapsulated the essence of photography and image-making very thoughtfully. The stark, silhouetted image of three traditionally shaped bird cages hanging on a wire did show that 'successful images have an immediate impact', but with deeper meaning emerging when we see that it is barbed wire and the cages are 'mini-prisons' for small birds.

My thoughts went immediately to the print of the painting of a goldfinch (see right) that hangs on the wall of our bedroom. I first saw this painting in the Mauritshuis in The Hague. It is a small painting, just 34x23cm, but it did have 'an immediate impact' on me; it is a very fine painting by Carel Fabritius of a colourful little bird, just sitting on its feeder. When I looked more closely, I saw the 'deeper meaning' – the bird is chained to the



feeder. It has become a very well-known painting. I bought my print from the Mauritshuis; it is a high-quality reproduction printed on canvas and traditionally mounted so that I can try to appreciate it in its original form.

Dr Richard Neale

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/



X-T5 tip

Thank you, Geoff Harris, for your reflections on the Fujifilm X-T5. I've had the camera since the day of its release and would say your comments are spot-on. One thing: may I be the ten-thousandth Fujifilm user to suggest to you that you change the image review button to the button on the front of the camera (Fn2 – below the tally light).

This you can operate



without moving your hand from the shutter position (use your middle finger) – or moving your eye from the viewfinder.

Keep up the good work.
Rob McIntosh

Vive la resolution

I liked Matty Graham's article on your website, 'Why can't Canon make a camera now to match this high-resolution DSLR monster?' about the EOS 5DS R. His question is absolutely relevant.



I've been a proud owner of a Canon EOS 5DS R since 2018. It's my only DSLR and it's been my workhorse for travel, church events and family. Even with some limitations, it has been serving me very well and I'm not compelled to let it go for a modern mirrorless camera.

My recent experience was taking a group photograph of more than 250 people indoors. I had some trouble, but managed to have every face light up with reasonable resolution. The high 50MP resolution allows the flexibility in post-processing crop.

I shoot mostly in manual mode with both Canon and Leica R lenses, and have always enjoyed photography as simple and raw.

Phu Kai ONG

What a waste

I was moved by your article about the young Nigerian photographer living on a waste dump, and by the astonishing photos he took. There is something seriously awry with the way the world is being run for such a situation to be allowed to exist. I'd like to think that pictures like this would inspire change, but I won't hold my breath.

Helen Riley

Autocord discord

I was very disappointed not to see mention of the wonderful Minolta Autocord in John Wade's article. It's a lovely camera with an outstanding lens. I bought mine in the late eighties second-hand and used it for many years, being a great way into larger film photography at a time when the only more expensive alternatives were Bronica or Hasselblad.

Dudley Hubbard

THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

What's always in your kit bag?

You said...

Imagery by Charly
@ImagerybyCharly

A plastic tablecloth that I use to lay on the ground for a low shot and impromptu rain guard. Plus the normal items needed.

Hugh Maxwell Photography
Most important thing is the camera and lenses covering from 20mm to 200mm; followed by a few filters, cable release, spare battery and lens cleaning cloth.

Kevin Henderson

Microfibre cloth, as I realised early on my sleeve wasn't the best tool for cleaning a lens!

Oddy Barber
Inflatable cushion, microfibre towel, first aid kit, pliers, latex gloves and bag (just in case I find any skulls) and hand sanitiser.

The Tyne and Beyond @tyneandbeyond
At this time of year, insect repellent, and lots of it!

Richard Paul
Spare batteries, memory cards, water.

Fergal Maur
Small zip bag with: spare card, spare tripod plate, allen key tool, emergency £20 note, cleaning cloth, tissues, paracetamol and a folded plastic carrier bag.

Tim Willcocks
Apart from the obvious, a multi tool and insulating tape.

Tim Smith
Ear plugs, spare batteries.

Phil Harding
A few Zeiss lens wipes (which, incidentally, are plastic free).

Dinah Beaton @BeatonDinah
Water, lipstick and a second lens.

Rachel Dee
Emergency snacks!

David Schmid @dschmidphoto
Cleaning gear and spare batteries.

Paula Wilks
The lens I don't need.

Mark Buckley
Always have: spare battery, memory card (an old slow one for emergencies only) GorillaPod or clamp, polariser. Tissues.

Share your photos and comments with us on social!

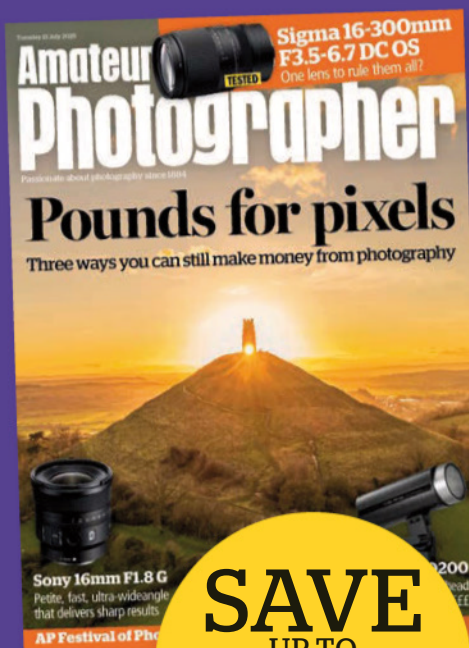
See page 3 for how to contact us

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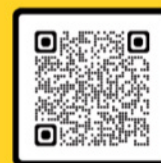


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It's good to share

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

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Flying High by Linda Dunham

Canon EOS R6 Mark II, EF 100-400mm L
(with Canon adapter), 1/4000sec at f/8, ISO 160

'The photo is the Red Arrows flying at this year's Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT), where it was not the best conditions for flying. The grey overcast skies started to brighten up and the idea of this shot popped into my head.'

Instagram: @dunhamlv

Website: www.lindadunhamphotography.co.uk







**It's good
to share**

Between Shadows and Speed by Georgios Charalampidis

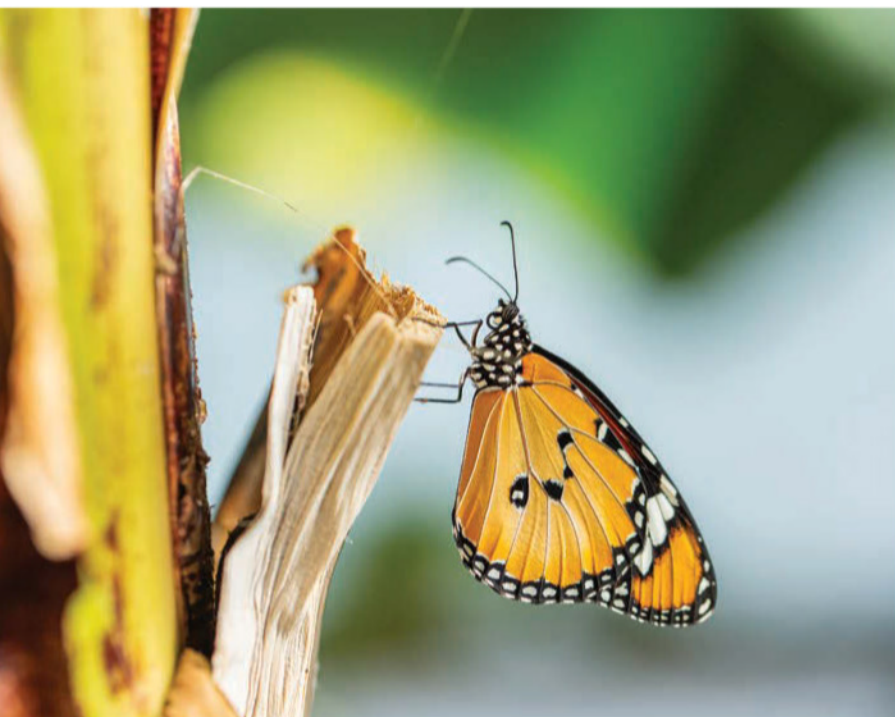
Canon EOS R7, Canon EF 85mm f/1.8 USM,
1/30sec at f/11, ISO 100

'This photo was taken during an afternoon photo walk with The Focus Group, Stokenchurch, at Hughenden Park. I was experimenting with panning, and what truly stood out for me in this shot was the way the shadows danced across the frame and between them, the subject: a dog, caught in motion and light.'

Instagram: @sneak_peek_georgios_ch

Portfolio: sneakpeekgech.myportfolio.com

We also liked...



Fragile Beauty by Giedre Statkeviciute

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, Canon 100mm
f/2.8 L Macro IS USM

'Each encounter with butterflies feels like a quiet gift and a lesson to me. Their presence reminds me to slow down, look closely, and cherish what remains before it slips away. In those rare moments when they stop, I can hold my breath and take the shot.'

Instagram: @gsnaturelens

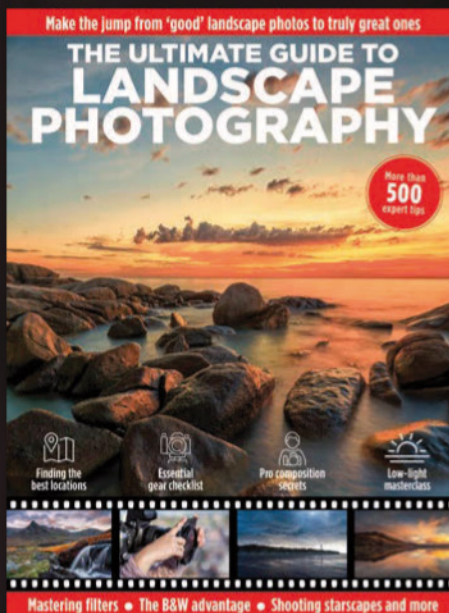
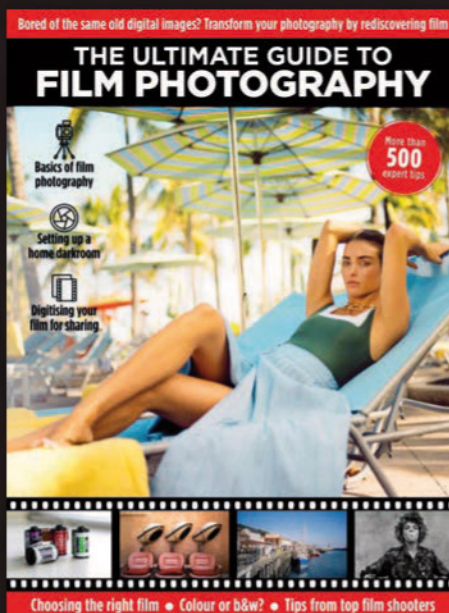
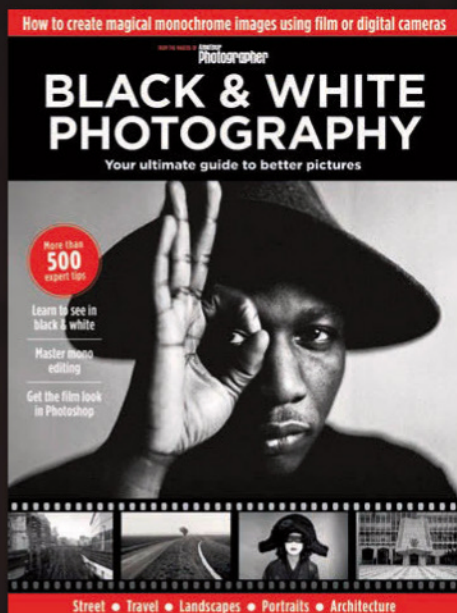
Events:

www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/gsnaturelens-65938066963

Want to see your pictures here? Simply share them with our Instagram or Facebook communities using the hashtag **#appicoftheweek**. Or you can email your best shot to us at ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk. See page 3 for how to find us.

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SCAN ME

Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them



Julie Shakesby, East Yorkshire, UK



About Julie
Retired staff nurse,
member of The People
– a group of seven
photographers that
undertakes projects.

Instagram: julieclickscamera
Facebook: julie shakesby

How did you get into photography?

I remember my father developing his own black & white images and was fascinated at a young age by the strips of photos and projector slides. Being able to capture a moment in time to preserve for the future generations to look back on was one reason that drew me into photography. Initially I had a Kodak Instamatic but then progressed to a Praktica 35mm camera which enabled me to start my journey. I joined a few local clubs and

currently am a member of a group The People, where we work on a different project each year that results in exhibitions, video and book sales.

What do you love about photography?

It offers me the chance to get totally immersed and absorbed in my subjects and allows me to create and put my own personal stamp on a picture. I lost my husband Chris to brain cancer two and a half years ago and photography has been even more crucial for my mental health and well-being, helping me through tough times.

Favourite subjects

I enjoy many genres of photography but would choose landscape, wildlife and macro as my top three to focus on. I love to get creative with intentional camera movement and multiple-exposure techniques along the coast near to where I live, creating

The Resting Hare

1 I was in the car leaving a nature reserve when I spotted a few hares in the field. I quickly grabbed my camera and tried not to startle them. Fortunately, I managed to capture one in good lighting and edited in Lightroom and Photoshop, adjusting highlights, shadows, sharpening etc.
Nikon D7100,
Tamron 70-300mm,
1/320sec at f/7.1,
ISO 250

my own individual interpretation. Wildlife offers me a challenge due to the unpredictability of the subjects and I enjoy the chase, learning about their behaviour to aid in this. Macro photography I find fascinating, especially flowers and fauna, and I like to experiment with creative filters and reflective wands.

How and where do you find inspiration?

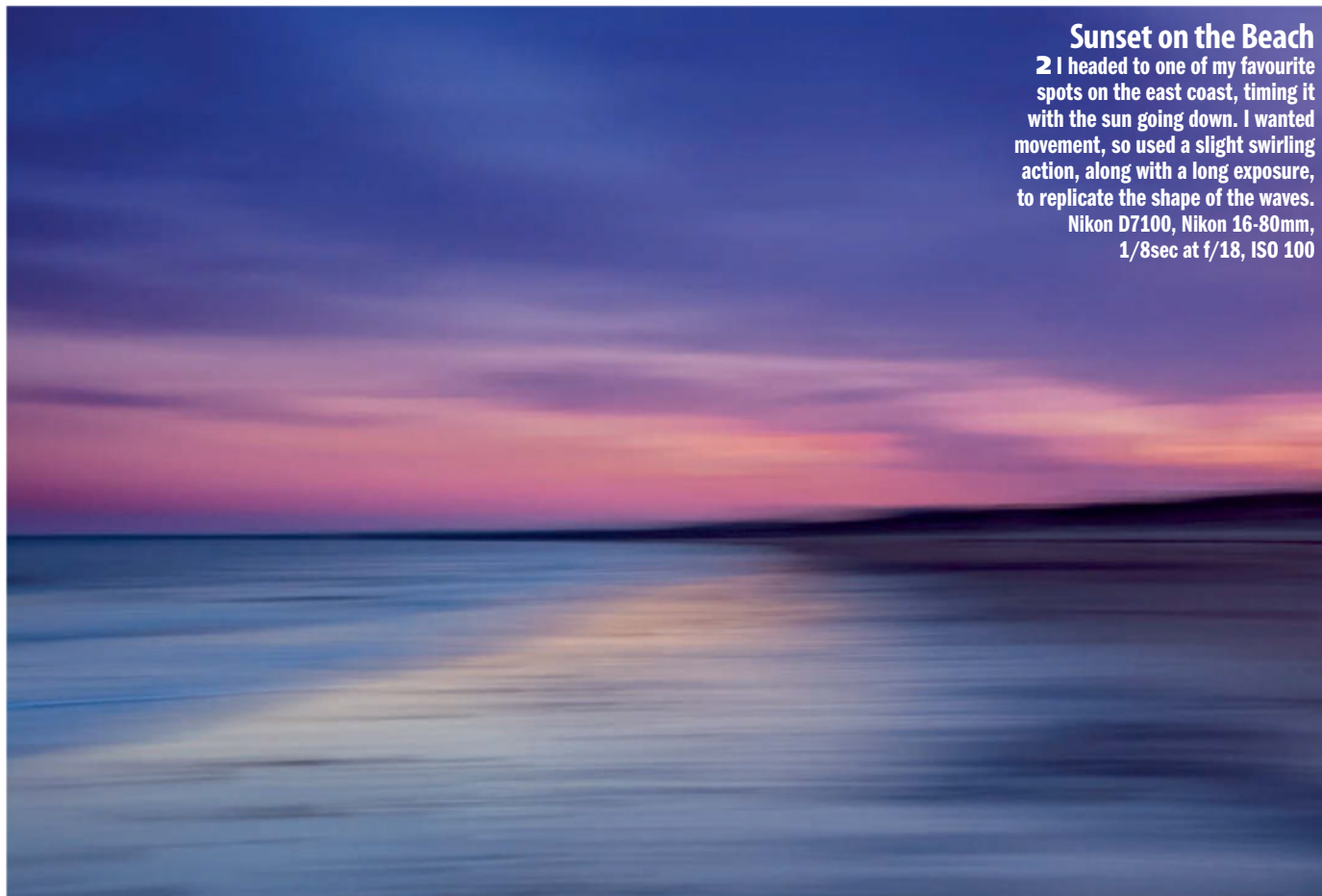
I visit photography exhibitions and galleries regularly, along with reading articles and books to learn and inspire me. I have found photography shows and talks by speakers very informative and love to go on photo walks and short breaks with my peers. I watch documentaries and films and particularly found Lee, the film about Lee Miller, very emotive and thought-provoking. I use social media platforms regularly and post my images on Facebook and

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

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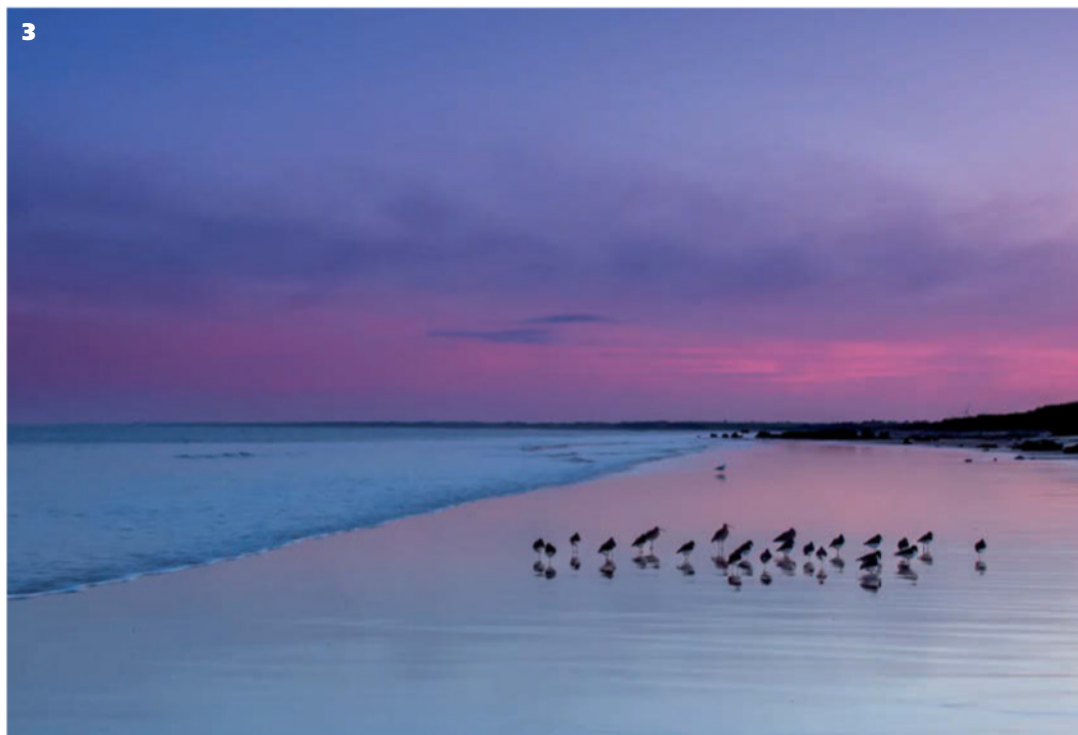
See page 3 for details of how to submit. You could see your photos here in a future issue! Please note: the prize is subject to change.



Sunset on the Beach

2 I headed to one of my favourite spots on the east coast, timing it with the sun going down. I wanted movement, so used a slight swirling action, along with a long exposure, to replicate the shape of the waves.

Nikon D7100, Nikon 16-80mm, 1/8sec at f/18, ISO 100



Oystercatchers at Sunset

3 I had spotted the birds gathering at the sea edge so moved slowly, edging nearer, as I was aware they could fly off at any moment. I framed the shot from a low angle to capture pink shadows on the sand from the sunset. I took many shots at various angles to get the tide at its best to frame the shot.

Nikon D7100, Nikon 16-80mm, 1/50sec at f/7.1, ISO 125



4

Sea Mist on a Winter's Day

4 I was aiming to capture the distant sea haze and spray, and wanted to get movement with the camera to show off the waves coming into the shore. I was aware of how much beach was in the frame along with the cliffs in the background.

Nikon D7100, Nikon 16-80mm, 1/8sec at f/22, ISO 100



5

The Kissing Puffins

5 The puffins at Bempton Cliffs are a firm favourite of mine, as they are very comical and are known as clowns of the sea. I had my telephoto focusing on a group of them waiting for some signs of movement. I was so pleased to capture this shot of two of them in the air with beaks touching.

Nikon D7100, Sigma 150-600mm Contemporary, 1/1250sec at f/7.1, ISO 400

➤ Instagram and now have a large following.

What was your first camera?

Kodak Instamatic.

Current kit

Nikon D7100, Nikon 16-80mm and 35mm lenses, plus a Tokina 10-18mm, Sigma 105mm macro, Tamron 70-300mm and Sigma Contemporary 150-600mm.

Favourite lens

Nikon 16-80mm as it is so versatile and sharp.

Favourite accessory

ND graduated and polarising filters.

Dream purchase

A Nikon full-frame camera.

What software do you use for editing?
Lightroom Classic and Photoshop.

Favourite photographers

I really admire Lee Miller and Don McCullin among many others because of their ability to detach themselves from such raw and emotive subject matter and still produce outstanding results under the circumstances.

Favourite photography books

The Lives of Lee Miller stands out as a great inspirational read, showcasing her talent and bravery.

Favourite tips

Get to know your camera settings along with the exposure triangle. Practise at every opportunity experimenting with different settings. Join a club or society to learn from

others. I find that wandering off on my own allows me the freedom with no constraints to be more focused with my surroundings.

About your pictures

I am fortunate to live near the East Yorkshire coast and head there frequently as it offers many photographic opportunities that allow me to be creative. I love the sea, as the sound and smells are therapeutic and relaxing to me, and inspire me. No two days are the same and with the tides changing it gives a fresh new perspective for creating my images. The weather conditions with dramatic skies and seas add character and drama to my photographs and complement the abstract movement techniques which I employ.

AP



6

The Greeting of Gannets

6 I was constantly observing the gannets at Bempton Cliffs for interesting behavioural patterns. They bond on returning to the nests each time with a greeting ritual involving their heads and necks. As my telephoto lens was new, I had the added challenge of getting used to the weight of it, as well as the focus system.
Nikon D7100,
Sigma 150-600mm Contemporary,
1/800sec at f/8,
ISO 400



The Snowdrop

7 Keeping very low, I used my in-camera multiple exposure, taking two shots of the same snowdrop with a tiny space to overlap the flower. I wanted to have a little movement and create bokeh so that the snowdrop was the feature of the shot.
Nikon D7100, Sigma 105mm macro,
1/500sec at f/3.5, ISO 100



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Buying Guide

177
lenses
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Our comprehensive listing of key specifications for DSLR lenses

DSLR Lenses

Interchangeable lenses come in a huge array of types for shooting different kinds of subjects

IN GENERAL, the easiest way to expand the kinds of pictures you can take is by buying different types of lenses. For example, telephoto lenses let you zoom in on distant subjects, while macro lenses enable close-ups of small objects. Large-aperture lenses allow you to isolate subjects against blurred backgrounds, or shoot in low light without having to raise the ISO too high. Meanwhile, all-in-one superzooms cover a wide range of subjects, but usually with rather lower optical quality.



Lens mounts

Each manufacturer has its own lens mount and most aren't compatible with one another. For example, a Canon DSLR can't use Nikon lenses, although you can use independent brands if you get them with the right mount.

Built-in focus motor

Most lenses now incorporate an internal motor to drive the autofocus, although some are still driven from the camera body. DSLR lenses often use ultrasonic-type motors for fast focusing, but some now have video-friendly stepper motors as widely used in mirrorless systems.

Filter thread

A thread at the front of the camera will have a diameter, in mm, which will allow you to attach a variety of filters or adapters to the lens.

Maximum aperture

Wider apertures mean you can use faster, motion-stopping shutter speeds.

OUR GUIDE TO THE SUFFIXES USED BY LENS MANUFACTURERS

AF Nikon AF lenses driven from camera	DC Sigma's lenses for APS-C digital	ED Extra-low Dispersion elements	LM Fujifilm Linear Motor	SP Tamron's Super Performance range
AF-S Nikon lenses with Silent Wave Motor	DG Sigma's designation for full-frame lenses	EF Canon's lenses for full-frame DSLRs	MP-E Canon's high-magnification macro lens	SSM Sony Supersonic Motor lenses
AF-P Nikon lenses with stepper motors	DI Tamron lenses for full-frame sensors	EF-S Canon's lenses for APS-C DSLRs	OIS Optical Image Stabilisation	STF Sony and Laowa Smooth Trans Focus
AL Pentax lenses with aspheric elements	DI-II Tamron lenses designed for APS-C DSLRs	EF-M Canon's lenses for APS-C mirrorless	OS Sigma's Optically Stabilised lenses	STM Canon lenses with stepper motor
APD Fujifilm lenses with apodisation elements	DI-III Tamron lenses for mirrorless cameras	EX Sigma's 'Excellent' range	PC-E Nikon tilt-and-shift lenses	TS-E Canon Tilt-and-Shift lenses
APO Sigma Apochromatic lenses	DN Sigma's lenses for mirrorless cameras	FA Pentax full-frame lenses	PF Nikon Phase Fresnel optics	UMC Ultra Multi Coated
ASPH Aspherical elements	DO Canon diffractive optical element lenses	FE Sony lenses for full-frame mirrorless	PZD Tamron Piezo Drive focus motor	USM Canon lenses with an Ultrasonic Motor
AW Pentax all-weather lenses	DT Sony lenses for APS-C-sized sensors	G Nikon lenses without an aperture ring	RF Canon full-frame mirrorless lenses	USD Tamron Ultrasonic Drive motor
CS Samyang lenses for APS-C cropped sensors	DX Nikon's lenses for DX-format digital	HSM Sigma's Hypersonic Motor	S Nikon's premium lenses for mirrorless	VC Tamron's Vibration Compensation
D Nikon lenses that communicate distance info	DS Canon's Defocus Smoothing technology	IS Canon's Image-Stabilised lenses	SAM Sony Smooth Autofocus Motor	VR Nikon's Vibration Reduction feature
DA Pentax lenses optimised for APS-C-sized sensors	E Nikon lenses with electronic apertures	L Canon's 'Luxury' range of high-end lenses	SDM Pentax's Sonic Direct Drive Motor	WR Weather Resistant
DC Nikon defocus-control portrait lenses	E Sony lenses for APS-C mirrorless	LD Low-Dispersion glass	SMC Pentax Super Multi Coating	Z Nikon's lenses for mirrorless cameras

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DSLR Lenses										IMAGE STABILISATION	SONY ALPHA	CANON	FOUR THIRDS	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)		
LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY										MOUNT						DIMENSIONS					
CANON DSLR																								
EF-S 10-18mm f/4.5-5.6 IS STM	£299	4★	A superb ultra-wideangle that's a must-have for anyone shooting landscapes and cityscapes										•	•						22	67	74.6	72	240
EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 USM	£990	4★	A good performer, with solid MTF curves and minimal chromatic aberration											•						24	77	83.5	89.8	385
EF-S 17-55mm f/2.8 IS USM	£795	4★	Very capable lens with three-stop image stabilisation, Super Spectra coating and a circular aperture										•	•						35	77	83.5	110.6	645
EF-S 18-55mm f/4-5.6 IS STM	£220		Latest standard zoom for Canon's APS-C EOS DSLRs, with compact design and updated optics										•	•						25	58	66.5	61.8	215
EF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM	£500		Versatile zoom with new Nano USM focus technology and optional power zoom adapter										•	•						39	67	77.4	96	515
EF-S 24mm f/2.8 STM	£165	4★	Bargain price, tiny carry-everywhere size and a highly competent imaging performance											•						16	52	68.2	22.8	125
EF-S 55-250mm f/4-5.6 IS STM	£265		A compact telephoto lens featuring smooth, quiet STM focusing when shooting movies										•	•						110	58	70	111.2	375
EF 8-15mm f/4 L USM	£1499		Impressive-looking fisheye zoom lens from Canon											•					•	15	n/a	78.5	83	540
EF 11-24mm f/4 L USM	£2799	5★	Long-awaited by Canon full-frame users, this is the world's widest-angle rectilinear zoom lens											•					•	28	n/a	108	132	1180
EF 16-35mm f/2.8 L III USM	£2150		Revamped wideangle zoom includes new optics in a weather-sealed lens barrel											•					•	28	82	89.5	127.5	790
EF 16-35mm f/4 L IS USM	£1199	4★	Versatile and with a useful IS system, this is a very good ultra-wideangle zoom for full-frame cameras										•	•					•	28	77	82.6	112.8	615
EF 17-40mm f/4 L USM	£940	4★	Designed to match the needs of demanding professionals – and does so with ease											•					•	28	77	83.5	96.8	500
EF 24mm f/1.4 L II USM	£2010		Subwavelength structure coating, together with UD and aspherical elements											•					•	25	77	83.5	86.9	650
EF 24-70mm f/2.8 L II USM	£2300	5★	Professional-quality standard zoom lens with a fast aperture											•					•	38	82	88.5	113	805
EF 24-105mm f/4 L IS II USM	£1129	4★	Reworked workhorse zoom for full-frame cameras uses an all-new optical design										•	•					•	45	77	83.5	118	795
EF 35mm f/1.4 L II USM	£1799	5★	An outstanding addition to the L-series line-up											•					•	28	72	80.4	104.4	760
EF 50mm f/1.2 L USM	£1910		Very wide maximum aperture and Super Spectra coatings, and a circular aperture											•					•	45	72	85.8	65.5	580
EF 50mm f/1.4 USM	£450	5★	Brilliant performer, with a highly consistent set of MTF curves. AF motor is a tad noisy, though											•					•	45	58	73.8	50.5	290
EF 50mm f/1.8 STM	£130	5★	Lightest EF lens in the range, with wide maximum aperture and a Micro Motor											•					•	35	49	69.2	39.3	130
EF 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS III USM	£2150		Updates Canon's excellent pro workhorse zoom with water-repellent fluorine coatings										•	•					•	120	77	88.8	199	1480
EF 70-200mm f/4L IS II USM	£1300		Upgraded premium telephoto zoom promises five stops of image stabilisation										•	•					•	100	72	80	176	780
EF 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 IS II USM	£499	4.5★	Mid-range telephoto zoom offers really good optics and fast, silent autofocus										•	•					•	120	67	80	145.5	710
EF 75-300mm f/4-5.6 III	£300		Essentially the same lens as the 75-300mm f/4-5.6 III USM but with no USM											•					•	150	58	71	122	480
EF 85mm f/1.4L IS USM	£1570	5★	Sublime, highly desirable portrait lens combines large aperture and optical image stabilisation										•	•					•	85	77	88.6	105.4	950
EF 85mm f/1.8 USM	£470	5★	Non-rotating front ring thanks to rear-focusing system, as well as USM											•					•	85	58	75	71.5	425
EF 100mm f/2.8 L Macro IS USM	£1060	5★	Stunning MTF figures from this pro-grade macro optic										•	•					•	30	67	77.7	123	625
EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 L IS II USM	£1999	4.5★	L-series construction and optics, including fluorite and Super UD elements										•	•					•	98	77	94	193	1640
TS-E 17mm f/4 L	£2920		Ultra-wideangle tilt-and-shift optic with independent rotation of the tilt and shift movements											•					•	25	77	88.9	106.9	820
TS-E 24mm f/3.5 L II	£2550		Tilt-and-shift optic with independent tilt-and-shift rotation and redesigned coatings											•					•	21	82	88.5	106.9	780
TS-E 50mm f/2.8L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1:2 magnification											•					•	27	77	86.9	114.9	945
TS-E 90mm f/2.8L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1:2 magnification											•					•	39	77	86.9	116.5	915
TS-E 135mm f/4L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1:2 magnification											•					•	49	82	88.5	139.1	1110

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DSLR Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
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DSLR Lenses										IMAGE STABILISATION	SONY ALPHA	CANON	FOUR THIRDS	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)			
LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY										MOUNT						DIMENSIONS						
PENTAX DSLR																									
DA 10-17mm f/3.5-4.5 HD Fisheye ED	£499		Updated fisheye zoom lens gains refreshed cosmetic design, new optical coatings and removable hood															•		14	n/a	70	67.5	317	
DA* 11-18mmf2.8 ED DCAW HD	£1399		Premium fast ultra-wideangle zoom, includes all-weather construction and innovative focus clamp															•		30	82	90	100	704	
DA 15mm f/4 smc ED AL Limited	£820		Limited-edition lens with hybrid aspherical and extra-low-dispersion elements															•		18	49	39.5	63	212	
FA 15-30mm f/2.8 ED SM WR HD	£1500		Weather-resistant ultra-wideangle zoom with fast maximum aperture and fixed petal-type hood															•	•	28	n/a	98.5	143.5	1040	
DA* 16-50mm f/2.8 ED PLM AW HD	£1500		All-new premium large-aperture standard zoom with updated optics and electromagnetic aperture control															•		30	77	84	117	712	
DA 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6 ED DC WR	£600		Weather-resistant, this zoom features a round-shaped diaphragm to produce beautiful bokeh															•		35	72	78	94	488	
DA 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 smc AL WR	£229		A weather-resistant construction and an aspherical element, as well as SP coating															•		25	52	68.5	67.5	230	
DA 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 DA ED DC WR	£600	3.5★	A weather-resistant mid-range zoom lens															•		40	62	73	76	405	
DA 20-40mm f/2.8-4 ED Limited DC WR	£829		With state-of-the-art HD coating, a completely round-shaped diaphragm, and weather resistant															•		28	55	68.5	71	283	
HD-FA 21mm f/2.4 ED Limited DC WR	£1499		Ultra-wide addition to the premium Limited line-up, with aluminium barrel and electromagnetic aperture motor															•	•	18	67	74	89	416	
DA 21mm f/3.2 smc AL Limited	£600		This limited-edition optic offers a floating element for extra-close focusing															•		20	49	63	25	140	
FA 24-70mm f/2.8 ED SDM WR	£1149		Full-frame-compatible premium standard zoom - includes a HD coating to minimise flare and ghosting															•	•	38	82	109.5	88.5	787	
FA 28-105mm f/3.5-5.6 ED DC HD	£549		Standard zoom lens for the K-1 full-frame DSLR that's much more affordable than the 24-70mm f/2.8															•	•	50	62	73	86.5	440	
HD-FA 31mm f/1.8 Limited	£1100		Premium aluminium-bodied wideangle prime boasts an aperture ring plus HD and fluorine coatings															•	•	30	58	69	65	341	
FA 35mm f/2 HD	£399		Latest version of venerable Pentax fast prime features a multi-layer HD coating															•	•	30	49	64	44.5	193	
DA 35mm f/2.4 smc DSAL	£180	5★	A budget-priced prime lens for beginners															•		30	49	63	45	124	
DA 35mm f/2.8 smc Macro	£640	4.5★	Despite slight edge softness, this lens performs excellently and is a pleasure to use															•		14	49	46.5	63	215	
DA 40mm f/2.8 smc Limited	£450		Pancake lens with SMC coating and Quick Shift focusing system															•		40	49	63	15	90	
HD-FA 43mm f/1.9 Limited	£650		Classic full-frame fast prime with perfect focal length for everyday use															•	•	45	49	64	27	155	
FA* 50mm f/1.4 SDM AW HD	£1200		Premium fast prime with dustproof, weather-resistant design and electromagnetic aperture															•	•	40	72	80	106	910	
HD-FA 50mm f/1.4	£399		Updated large-aperture prime with HD coatings and refreshed cosmetic design															•	•	45	49	65	40.5	223	
FA 50mm f/1.4 smc Classic	£449		Compact fast prime with film-era optics, aperture ring, and coatings designed to give 'rainbow flare'															•	•	45	49	65	37	216	
DA 50mm f/1.8 smc DA	£249	4★	Affordable short telephoto lens ideal for portraits															•		45	52	38.5	63	122	
D-FA 50mm f/2.8 smc Macro	£550		Macro lens capable of 1:1 reproduction and with a Quick Shift focus mechanism															•	•	19	49	60	67.5	265	
DA* 50-135mm f/2.8 smc ED IF SDM	£1200	4★	Constant f/2.8 aperture; well suited to portraiture and mid-range action subjects															•		100	67	76.5	136	765	
DA 50-200mm f/4-5.6 smc ED WR	£210		Weather-resistant construction, Quick Shift focus system and an SP coating															•		n/a	49	69	79.5	285	
DA* 55mm f/1.4 smc SDM	£800	4.5★	Despite questions about the particular sample tested, this lens scores highly															•	•	45	58	70.5	66	375	
DA 55-300mm f/4.5-6.3 ED PLM WR RE	£400		Compact weather resistant telephoto zoom has video-friendly fast and silent autofocus motor															•		95	58	76.5	89	442	
DA 60-250mm f/4 smc ED IF SDM	£1450	4.5★	With a constant f/4 aperture and an ultrasonic motor for speedy focusing															•		110	67	167.5	82	1040	
DA 70mm f/2.4 smc AL Limited	£600		Medium telephoto lens with an aluminium construction and a Super Protect coating															•		70	49	63	26	130	
D-FA* 70-200mm f/2.8 ED DCAW	£1850		Fast telephoto zoom in Pentax's high-performance Star (*) series developed for best image rendition															•	•	120	77	91.5	203	1755	
D-FA 70-210mm F4 ED SDM WR	£1199		Compact telephoto zoom with constant f/4 maximum aperture and weather-resistant construction															•	•	95	67	78.5	175	819	
HD-FA 77mm f/1.8 Limited	£800		Renewed version of short telephoto portrait prime that features a traditional aperture ring															•	•	70	49	48	64	270	
D FA* 85mm f/1.4 SDM AW	£1999		Upcoming large-aperture short telephoto prime promises premium optics and weather-sealing															•	•	85	82	95	124.5	1255	
HD-FA 100mm f/2.8 ED AW Macro	£699		Updated 1:1 macro lens boasts improved optical formula and all-weather construction															•		30	49	65	80.5	348	
FA 150-450mm f/4.5-5.6 ED DCAW	£2000		Super-telephoto lens with weather resistance, designed to produce extra-sharp, high-contrast images															•	•	200	86	241.5	95	2000	
DA* 200mm f/2.8 smc ED IF SDM	£1000	4.5★	SDM focusing system on the inside, and dirtproof and splashproof on the outside															•		120	77	83	134	825	
DA* 300mm f/4 smc ED IF SDM	£1300		This tele optic promises ultrasonic focus and high image quality thanks to ED glass															•		140	77	83	184	1070	
SAMYANG DSLR																									
8mm f/3.5 UMC Fisheye CS II	£274		Wideangle fisheye lens designed for digital reflex cameras with APS-C sensors												•	•	•	•	•	•	30	n/a	75	77.8	417
10mm f/3.5 XP MF	£950		World's widest-angle rectilinear lens promises 130° field of view with minimal distortion													•	•	•	•	•	26	n/a	95	98.1	731
10mm f/2.8 ED AS NCS CS	£429		Features a nano crystal anti-reflection coating system and embedded lens hood												•	•	•	•	•	•	24	n/a	86	77	580
12mm f/2.8 ED AS NCS Fisheye	£430		Fisheye ultra wideangle prime lens for full-frame DSLRs												•	•	•	•	•	•	20	n/a	77.3	70.2	500
14mm f/2.4 XP MF	£899		High-end ultra-wideangle prime with premium optics and large maximum aperture													•	•	•	•	•	28	n/a	95	109.4	791
AF 14mm f/2.8	£649	4.5★	Samyang's first AF SLR lens features very decent image quality and weather-sealed construction													•	•	•	•	•	20	n/a	90.5	95.6	485
14mm f/2.8 MF Mk II	£439		Ultra-wideangle manual-focus prime with weather-sealing and de-clickable aperture ring													•	•	•	•	•	28	n/a	87	96.3	641
16mm f/2.0 ED AS UMC CS	£389		Fast wideangle lens for digital reflex cameras fitted with APS-C sensors												•	•	•	•	•	•	20	n/a	89.4	83	583
20mm f/1.8 ED AS UMC	£430		Large-aperture manual focus wideangle lens for full-frame DSLRs												•	•	•	•	•	•	20	77	83	113.2	520
24mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£499		Fast ultra-wideangle manual-focus lens comprising 13 elements arranged in 12 groups												•	•	•	•	•	•	25	77	95	116	680
24mm f/3.5 ED AS UMSTS	£949	3★	Tilt-and-shift wideangle lens for a fraction of the price of Canon and Nikon's offerings												•	•	•	•	•	•	20	82	86	110.5	680
35mm f/1.2 XP MF	£719		Ultra-large aperture, manual focus prime with premium optics													•	•	•	•	•	34	86	93	117.4	1106
35mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£369	4.5★	While manual focus only, this prime impressed us in real-world use, making it something of a bargain												•	•	•	•	•	•	30	77	83	111	660
50mm f/1.2 XP MF	£639		Large aperture manual-focus prime promises 50MP resolution													•	•	•	•	•	45	86	93	117.4	1200
50mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£299		Manual-focus fast standard prime for full-frame DSLRs												•	•	•	•	•	•	45	77	74.7	81.6	575
85mm f/1.2 XP MF	£899		High-end manual focus lens sports an impressively fast maximum aperture													•	•	•	•	•	80	86	93	98.4	1050g
AF 85mm f/1.4	£599	3★	Autofocus fast short telephoto portrait lens for use on Canon or Nikon full-frame DSLRs												•	•	•	•	•	•	90	77	88	72	485
85mm f/1.4 MF Mk II	£389		Large-aperture short telephoto manual-focus prime is weather-sealed and the aperture can be de-clicked													•	•	•	•	•	110	72	78	72.2	541
100mm f/2.8 ED UMC Macro	£389		Full-frame compatible, the Samyang 100mm is a true Macro lens offering 1:1 magnification												•	•	•	•	•	•	30	67	72.5	123.1	720
135mm f/2 ED UMC	£399		Manual focus portrait prime has fast aperture for subject isolation and background blur												•	•	•	•	•	•	80	77	82	122	830

DSLR Lenses

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LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY											MOUNT			DIMENSIONS								
SIGMA DSLR																									
12-24mm f/4 DG HSM A	£1649	5★	Premium full-frame wideangle zoom designed to have minimal distortion in its wideangle imagery													•	•	•	•	24	n/a	101	132	1150	
14mm f/1.8 DG HSM A	£1679		World's first f/1.8 ultra-wideangle prime lens for full-frame DSLRs													•	•	•	•	27	n/a	95.4	126	1170	
14-24mm f/2.8 DG HSM A	£1399	5★	Pro-specification fast ultra-wide prime for full-frame DSLRs includes weather-sealed construction													•	•	•	•	26	n/a	96.4	135.1	1150	
18-35mm f/1.8 DC HSM A	£799	5★	Said to be the world's first constant f/1.8 zoom; DoF equivalent of constant f/2.7 on full frame													•	•	•	•	28	72	78	121	810	
20mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	An outstanding wideangle fixed-focal-length lens													•	•	•	•	27.6	n/a	90.7	129.8	950	
24mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	The latest addition to Sigma's 'Art' line of high-quality fast primes													•	•	•	•	25	77	85	90.2	665	
24-70mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM A	£1399	5★	Latest premium fast standard zoom for full frame includes optical image stabilisation											•	•	•	•	•	•	37	82	88	107.6	1020	
24-105mm f/4 DG OS HSM A	£849	4.5★	Serious full-frame alternative to own-brand lenses at a lower price, with no compromises in the build											•	•	•	•	•	•	45	82	89	109	885	
28mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1099	4.5★	High-quality, weathersealed fast wideangle prime for full-frame DSLRs													•	•	•	•	28	77	82.8	107.1	865	
35mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£799	5★	Superb large-aperture prime; first lens in company's 'Art' series													•	•	•	•	•	30	67	77	94	665
40mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1100	5★	Large and heavy prime promising natural-looking perspective and top-quality optics													•	•	•	•	40	82	87.8	131	1200	
50mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£849	5★	This lens has a unique design that pays off in truly excellent image quality													•	•	•	•	40	77	85.4	100	815	
50-100mm f/1.8 DC HSM A	£829	5★	This APS-C-format lens aims to cover the focal lengths of three prime lenses in one													•	•	•	•	37.4	82	93.5	170.7	1490	
60-600mm f/4.5-6.3 DG OS HSM S	£1899		Weathersealed 10x zoom encompasses huge range from standard to super-telephoto											•	•	•	•	•	•	60	105	120.4	268.9	2700	
70mm f/2.8 DG Macro A	£499		The first macro lens in Sigma's Art line-up features an extending-barrel focus-by-wire design													•	•	•	•	26	49	71	106	515	
70-200mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM S	£1349	5★	Superb large-aperture telephoto zoom shows high sharpness and minimal chromatic aberration											•	•	•	•	•	•	120	82	94.2	202.9	1805	
85mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1199	5★	Optically stunning fast short telephoto prime is the ultimate portrait lens for DSLR users													•	•	•	•	85	86	95	126	1130	
100-400mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM C	£799	4.5★	Relatively lightweight telezoom comes with weather-sealing and choice of push-pull or twist zoom											•	•	•	•	•	•	160	67	86.4	182.3	1160	
105mm f/1.4 DG HSM A	£1499	4.5★	Sigma's 'bokeh monster' super-fast portrait lens is weathersealed and comes with a tripod foot													•	•	•	•	100	105	115.9	131.5	1645	
105mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM Macro	£649	4.5★	An optically stabilised macro lens, this super-sharp lens is one of our favourites											•	•	•	•	•	•	31.2	62	78	126.4	725	
120-300mm f/2.8 DG HSM S	£3599		First lens in company's 'Sports' series; switch enables adjustment of both focus speed and focus limiter													•	•	•	•	•	150	105	124	291	3390
135mm f/1.8 DG HSM A	£1399	5★	Super-fast portrait prime designed to provide sufficient resolution for 50MP DSLRs													•	•	•	•	87.5	82	91.4	114.9	1130	
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM C	£1199		Budget 'Contemporary' version of Sigma's long-range telephoto zoom is smaller and lighter											•	•	•	•	•	•	280	95	105	260.1	1930	
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM S	£1599		This portable, high-performance telephoto zoom from Sigma's Sports line is dust and splashproof											•	•	•	•	•	•	260	105	121	290.2	2860	
VOIGTLANDER DSLR																									
28mm f/2.8 Aspherical Color-Skopar SL II-S	£499		Manual-focus wideangle prime for Nikon F-mount SLRs boasts high-quality metal construction															•		•	15	52	66.3	32.8	205
40mm f/2 Ultratron SL II-S	£470		Compact, manual-focus 'pancake' prime designed for use with Nikon full-frame DSLRs															•		•	25	52	66.3	37.5	260
55mm f/1.2 Nokton SL II-S	£549		Manual-focus standard zoom lens for Nikon SLRs with super-large aperture and aperture ring															•		•	45	52	69	48.1	365
58mm f/1.4 Nokton SL II-S	£518		Large-aperture manual focus standard prime for Nikon SLRs, including classic film cameras															•		•	45	52	67.6	45.5	320
90mm f/2.8 APO-Skopar SL II-S	£529		Remarkably small and lightweight manual-focus short telephoto portrait prime															•		•	90	52	66.3	41	260
ZEISS DSLR																									
15mm f/2.8 Milvus	£2329		This super-wideangle lens has an angle of view of 110° and uses an advanced retrofocus design													•	•			•	25	95	102.3	100.2	947
18mm f/2.8 Milvus	£1999		Compact super-wideangle lens with premium optics including a floating focus system for close-ups													•	•			•	25	77	90	93	721
21mm f/2.8 Milvus	£1299		Premium wideangle lens with complex optics designed to be free of distortion													•	•			•	22	82	95.5	95	851
25mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1999	5★	Optically excellent, large-aperture manual focus wideangle lens with weather-sealed construction													•	•			•	25	82	95.2	123	1225
35mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1699		Large aperture, premium-quality manual-focus prime with weather-sealed construction													•	•			•	30	72	84.8	124.8	1174
35mm f/2 Milvus	£829		Compact, moderate wideangle manual focus prime													•	•			•	30	58	77	83	702
50mm f/1.4 Planar T*	£559		Classic double-Gauss design manual focus standard prime for full-frame SLRs													•	•			•	45	58	71	71	380
50mm f/1.4 Milvus	£949	5★	An exceptionally good lens offering sharpness, detail, clean edges and a great user experience													•	•			•	45	67	82.5	94	922
50mm f/2 Milvus Macro	£949		Manual-focus macro lens with half-life-size magnification and stunning optics													•	•			•	24	67	81	75.3	730
85mm f/1.4 Planar T*	£989		Classic portrait prime designed to give smooth, rounded bokeh effects													•	•			•	100	72	78	88	670
85mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1379	5★	Fast 85mm manual-focus prime lens that's perfect for portraiture													•	•			•	80	77	90	113	1280
100mm f/2 Milvus Macro	£1299		A manual-focus macro lens with absolutely superb optics and half-life-size reproduction													•	•			•	88	67	80.5	104	843
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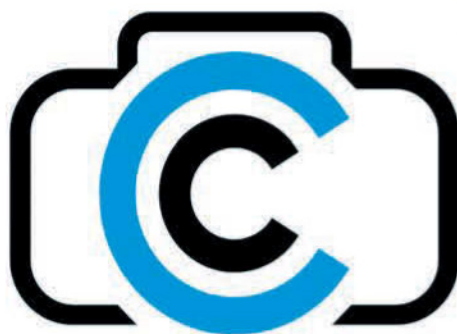
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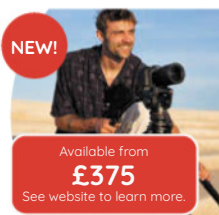
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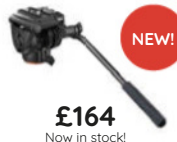
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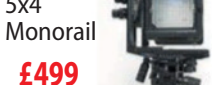
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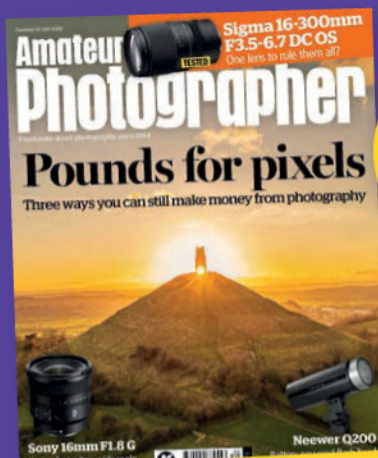
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Final Analysis

John Wade considers...
Daddy Long-Legs, Brighton c.1896

There are two types of picture that I enjoy. First there's the one typified by the Ansel Adams print hanging in my hall. As you'd expect, it is perfectly composed, lit and exposed. It's a work of art, and I never tire of looking at it. The second type is exemplified by the picture I'm looking at this week. This could never be called a work of art. But it is intriguing. What is this fiendish machine? Where is it? What is it doing? Let me explain how I came upon it.

My daughter lives on the south coast, a few miles outside Brighton. One day, in her local fish and chip shop, she overheard a conversation between two people. One said, 'Have you noticed those strange concrete blocks that appear along the shore when the tide goes out? Anyone know what they are?' To which, another customer said, 'It's where the railway tracks were laid for a railway under the sea.'

Knowing my predilection for such oddities, my daughter rang me and said, 'Dad I think there used to be an undersea railway running near where I live. You've got to investigate.' So I did.

If you go to Brighton today, you'll find a small railway running along the seafront. This was originally Britain's first electric railway, built by a man called Magnus Volk in 1883. In 1890 Volk decided to extend the line east to Rottingdean, and soon ran into problems. The new line would have to scale a steep incline to the top of a cliff, or be built into the unstable undercliff, and neither was practical. So Volk came up with a plan to lay railway lines under the sea and run a kind of train carriage on long steel legs 24 feet above the waves. He called it Pioneer. The public took one look at this bizarre contraption and nicknamed it Daddy Long-Legs.

The single carriage was like a tramcar crossed with a yacht on legs, powered by electricity picked up from wires strung on poles along the shore. Although designed as a railway, it was actually classified as a seagoing vessel. As such, maritime law required it to carry a lifeboat and lifebuoys, and the engine driver needed to be a



'Volk came up with a plan to lay railway lines... and run a train carriage on long steel legs 24 feet above the waves'

qualified sea captain. When the tide was out, the rails could be clearly seen. At high tide, they were submerged up to 15 feet below the surface, when Pioneer took about 35 minutes to cover nearly three miles.

Destroyed and rebuilt

Its first journey was made in November 1896. A week after its launch, it was destroyed in a storm. Remarkably, Volk managed to salvage and rebuild his marvellous contraption in time for a summer reopening in July the following year. After that, it ran for another three years, until the local council announced

that sea defence work meant that Pioneer's rails would need to be moved further out to sea. That, for several reasons, proved impractical. Eventually, Pioneer – also known as Daddy Long-Legs – was broken up for scrap.

All that's left today is a series of mysterious concrete blocks along the shoreline in Rottingdean and a bunch of postcards, produced at the time, still to be found on eBay, and from one of which this picture was taken.

Is it a great photograph? Not really. Does it have a fascinating story behind it? Absolutely. That's why I like it.



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