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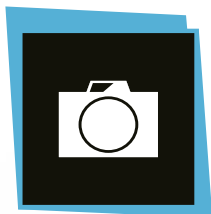
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Our thanks to Stephen Power, our outgoing Associate Editor in Ireland and a vital contributor to the magazine for several years. Stephen is an experienced educator and writer for print and online media, and we hope he will be back when circumstances permit. You can find Stephen at www.adareimages.com or www.stephenpowerphotos.com

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Commercial Cameras



NEW CAMERAS ALL ROUND – NIKON, CANON, FUJIFILM AND OLYMPUS

D6



IT'S AN Olympic year, and that can only mean one thing – a new professional Nikon DSLR. The D6 continues the process of evolution for the full-frame Nikon series, with the headline improvement leveraging the advantages of a separate AF module that doesn't sacrifice pixels or piggyback on the sensor's bandwidth. 105 area AF sensing sets a new benchmark (outside of on-chip phase detection) and incorporates eye-sensing, subject identification and tracking for 14 FPS performance with AE and AF.

You can almost hear the mirror's violent arc just thinking about it – and for more subdued performance, there's a 'silent mode' that offers a calmer 10.5 FPS, and time-lapse with mirror lock as well while still retaining AE. The AF module is operational down to -4 EV; -4.5EV for the centre spot.

All this activity happens ahead of the 20.8Mp image sensor – not an upgrade on the D5's resolution, but new processing ensures better noise reduction and wide dynamic range at low and high ISO alike; it's rated from 100 to 102,000 with the ability to push or pull 50 to 328,000. Video is not the camera's primary function, but UHD 4K up to 30 FPS, HD up to 60 FPS, and the usual HDMI output and microphone connectivity are present.

Connectivity reflects the professional environment, with Gigabit Ethernet, WiFi (optional WT-6 for more demanding WiFi environments), Bluetooth and a Kensington lock slot for physically tethering the body to a platform join the electrical tether of USB-C.

It's also time to say goodbye to the CF slot. The D6's dual CFexpress/xQD slots support the fastest currently available cards, with backup of course. Even with 14-bit lossless raw files, the 20Mp image size should ensure thousands of images on the typical 128GB cards currently available.

As you might expect from a Nikon flagship DSLR, it's relatively expensive, built to withstand extreme use and perhaps reflective of a smaller market. At £6,299, it's a modest increase over the D5, but then it's also a modest increase in performance, too.

We're delighted that the professional DSLR is still here – there's little to compare with the rugged, mechanical feel of a high-speed optical viewfinder, battery performance in the thousands of frames, and the feeling that should that Polar bear you've been tracking for weeks rushes you, you could stand a chance of knocking it out with a good swing of the camera... then keep shooting. But that demanding environment is only for a few people – and 20Mp means you're going to need that massive telephoto, rather than the winning moment being cropped from a 48Mp frame in a lighter, easier to move rig.

It would be nice to see Nikon bring this rugged attitude to a D6X-style high-resolution option.

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

R5



WITH 8K VIDEO and a stabilised full-frame sensor Canon's latest generation of the EOS R continues to advance the fortunes of mirrorless. The EOS R5 features in-body stabilisation for the first time in a Canon body, completing the advantages of the RF. A full announcement is expected at The Photography Show, but confirmed specs include 12 FPS shooting with mechanical shutter, 20 FPS electronic, support for stabilised RF lenses and IBIS, and 8K video – suggesting a sensor size of at least 40Mp, but more likely to be 50.6Mp given Canon's existing sensor line up, the similarity in naming between the EOS 5DsR and claims of a new sensor would imply keeping the same sensels, but optimising the tech for 8K video.

Of course, this is all speculative – it could be wholly new tech. We'll find out in March, but expect the benefits of stabilisation to propagate through the EOS R range rapidly now the gates are open.

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

Nikon's new Z lenses

EXPANDING the range of glass available to Z system mirrorless owners, Nikon has introduced two professional AF models sharing the 77mm filter thread popular in the DSLR range, and an all-round zoom which will appeal to consumer uses and for travel.

The Z 20mm f1.8 S costs £1049, is aimed at low light and astro photography as well as architectural and landscape work. It uses ED glass elements and is weather sealed with effective coating.

The Z 70-200mm f2.8 VR S (right) includes stabilisation and Arneo coating plus an OLED information display. It focuses from 0.5-1m and achieves a 1:5 scale, with an RRP of £2399.

The Z 24-240mm f4-6.3 VR costs £849 and uses 67mm filters. It will be available from April.



BOWENS.CO.UK

LIT

by Bowens

Three-time Portrait of Britain award winner Rory Lewis uses Bowens lighting. Find out why at bowens.co.uk or at this year's Photography Show.

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The Photography Show tickets are available at www.photographyshow.com/buy-tickets. Bowens flash heads and accessories are available to purchase exclusively from Wex Photo Video: wex.co.uk.

Image © Rory Lewis.

bowens



X100V

CAN YOU BELIEVE that it's a decade since the first seeds of Fuji's X revolution were planted? The X100, with innovative hybrid optical/electronic viewfinder, fixed standard/wide lens and manual controls of a digital environment became an instant classic, and in 2020, it enters the fifth generation. This is the biggest upgrade yet to the 35mm-equivalent pocket camera, and there's more than just a new sensor under the hood.

For the X100V, Fuji's introduced the X-Trans IV 26Mp sensor, which has already impressed in the X-T3 and X-Pro3; to ensure the best performance, this is the first time the 23mm f2.0 lens has been changed. A new design delivers improved resolution and less distortion – we'll be interested to see if the character of the X100's images has changed too, as there have been many pretenders to the fixed-focal length APS-C crown that have failed to inspire the same affection the Fuji's images have.

Weather sealing – with optional filter and adaptor ring, PRF-49 and AR-X100 respectively – is a first for the X100, as is a tilting rear touch screen, bringing one of the features of the much-missed X70 to the high-end compact. The hybrid viewfinder has also been upgraded, with 3.69Mp display and X-Pro2-style pop-up digital rangefinder.

Video and film simulations have been upgraded accordingly, and you can expect improved AF performance as well – way down to minus 5 EV. 10-bit 4:2:2 4K video is also supported via the HDMI port, with Eterna film simulation and 120fps HD video rounding out the movie capabilities. Existing X100 lens converters are still compatible for 28mm or 50mm equivalents. This is a significant upgrade for X100 fans – one that brings the compact bang up to date, and hopefully secures the minimalist, innovative and powerful compact's future for another ten years. Maybe by then we'll have the X100X...

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

Fountain Albums launched by Digitalab

WITH OVER 70 YEARS of experience in the field – originally under the name Mobile Photo Service, later well known as MPS – Newcastle's Digitalab is bringing hand-made wedding album skills back into play with the new **Fountain** range.

Serving a growing user base of professional photographers nationwide, Digitalab's Jill Roe explained that the company already had the experience, skills and facilities to produce their own album range, which will be launched at The Photography Show on March 14th.

<https://www.fountainalbums.com>

Fotospeed Academy's new programme

THE 2020 programme for Fotospeed Academy (held in Corsham, Wilts) introduces Tim Jones, Adobe Certified Associate, with new courses on Printing, Adobe *Lightroom*, and Adobe *Photoshop*. Other tutors are Doug Chinnery, Joe Cornish, Jo Bradford and Margaret Salisbury. For full information visit:

<https://www.fotospeed.com/fotospeedacademy>

Fotospeed's Platinum Baryta paper has been improved with d-Max to 2.99 – but no need for a new ICC profile, it's so close that you can mix and match, or have a new profile made as you wish.

EM-1 MkIII



THE REMARKABLE OLYMPUS OM-D E-M1 is now in its third iteration – and the Mk III leverages all of the benefits of the micro four-thirds sensor for even more dramatic performance that many full-frame flagships would struggle to compete with. A revised in-body stabilisation system can work with stabilised lenses for an impressive 7.5-stop effective improvement, though even unsupported lenses can manage 7 stops. This impressive performance allows the compact sensor to whizz around sufficiently quickly to allow 20Mp to become 50Mp with a handheld stacked mode. Stick it on a tripod, and that goes up to 80Mp – though if 20Mp is good enough for the D6...

AF and AE tracking is supported at 18 FPS, using 121 on-chip phase detection points that allow the use of F1.2 lenses without worrying about calibration; the E-M1X's thumb selector has made it to the OM-D E-M1 for easier selection of AF points too.

Crossing the boundary between hobbyist and professional, the Olympus EM-1 introduces astrophotography modes with optimised focus for distant stars, live composites and precapture for moving subjects. These might startle those who have spent years learning the craft, but they also make life a lot easier without limiting the photographers' creative input or flexibility in the way that typical scene modes do.

Olympus 12-45mm f4 Pro

ALONGSIDE the OM-D E-M1 Mk III, Olympus announced a new 12-45mm (24-90mm equivalent) weather-sealed, high-performance compact zoom. 12cm closest focus (at 12mm – 23cm at 45mm) with 0.25x reproduction ratio allows wide-angle close up effects, while the enhanced optical construction provides corner-to-corner sharpness with minimal aberrations and even illumination. The 70mm-long lens weighs just 254g, and costs £599; an ideal wide to portrait creative option for the micro four-thirds system.



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

Colorworld Imaging takes over MTA

COLORWORLD IMAGING have acquired **MTA Photo Albums** following several months of planning, training and integration. MTA products will now be manufactured in North Shields by Colorworld Imaging.

MTA Photo Albums have been based in Haddenham for over 10 years and are known for their repositionable albums.

The MTA Photo Albums brand, email addresses, website and phone numbers will remain as will the existing product range – email at info@mtaphotoalbums.co.uk, telephone 01844 292375, or visit the website

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

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Dates for your diary

MARCH 14th-17th is when you can find the photo trade, and also the Guild of Photographers, at The Photography Show at the NEC, Stand J75.

Show deal discount is Standard membership will be £75 for the year, or £7.50 per month for 12 months. Professional membership £99 for the year or £9.99 per month for 12 months.

Bring along a small selection of images on a tablet/laptop (if you can or your smart phone will be suffice) to gain a free critique of your images with attending panel members whom are internationally recognised experts from a variety of photographic backgrounds.

<https://www.thephotographyshow.com>

MAY 18th-19th sees another Newborn and Portrait Photography Show at Heart of England Conference & Events Centre, Coventry CV7 8DX – meet the Guild there on Stand 59. It's Europe's largest and specialist photography show for all maternity, newborn and child photographers.

The Guild team of panel members and mentors will include two of the UK's leading Newborn and Child specialists; our last qualification day three more members achieved their Master Craftsman in the Newborn and Baby category.

Whether shopping, learning or relaxing at TNPS visit Stand 59 to find out how the Guild can help you to achieve your goals, train in your chosen field, refine your skills and enhance your craft in an association with like-minded creatives. To book check in to:

<https://thenewbornandportraitshow.co.uk/>

MAY 27th-30th will find *Cameracraft* visiting *photokina* in Cologne – we hope the UK trade and photographers will be there for the first ever Springtime show. The Editor first visited *photokina* in 1973, and from 1974 it became biennial, normally in late September. Since then we have missed only three shows, assigning Associate Editor Gary Friedman to cover one. The last one attended was 2016, and much has changed in the industry and also in the relationship of the UK to the European market. Watch out for our report in the July/August *Cameracraft* and follow live photos and updates on Facebook through our page – @CameracraftF2

<https://www.photokina.com>

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Street wise with Mark Seymour

SMALL GROUPS are the key to successful street photography experiences, as the genre's leading guru Mark Seymour shows. He leads street photography courses where a maximum of just seven delegates join him exploring locations at home and abroad.

Mark does not teach photographic technique alone, his skill lies in leading the journey to discover how to photograph the lives of others with sympathy and connection – while remaining an acute observer. He helps his group get close to their subjects, ensuring he also directs attention to every member to help them get their own unique images.

He's well-known for his Shoot The Street immersive workshops in India, Turkey, and Myanmar with locations for 2020 including Vietnam, Italy and Georgia. He is a *National Geographic* photographer and Nikon Ambassador.

You can meet Mark at The Photography Show, on Stand G25 (NEC, March 14th-17th). His first course of 2020 will be held just after, on March 20th in London, covering the Hasidic Jewish Purim festival around Golders Green and Stamford Hill with guidance from community members who know Mark well.

See: <https://www.shootthestreet.co.uk>



Prints and files – the perfect combination

'SHOOT AND BURN' can leave photographers with little margin and less control on portraits, weddings and special occasions. Viewing on uncalibrated screens and printing on home printers won't do the images justice.

A print box, professionally printed by Bedfordshire's leading photo lab Ouse Valley Printing, ensures the customer sees your images at their best. The value of digital file delivery is increased by presenting the USB drive in an attractive box with prints. It's a compact format which appeals to young clients.

Ouse Valley offer 120 6 x 4s in a presentation box with an 8GB USB drive for £58 including UK delivery and VAT. The box can have a selected photograph UV printed on it, or engraved with names, date and the occasion. 16gb and 32gb USB drives are also available.

See: <https://www.ovpprinting.co.uk>

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The M15 is cut from the same cloth as the other industry leading Mitsubishi Electric printers. Print quality and robust design remains at the heart of the unit, but now combined with the lowest price ever for a pro dye sublimation printer!

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You can find much more on the whole Mitsubishi Electric printing range at <https://www.mitsubishielectric-printing.com>, call 07341 808 590 or email VIS.mailings@meuk.mee.com



The Blue Hour – inside out

CITYSCAPES and street scenes often look best at dusk with lights on, 'blue hour' sky and exposures long enough to blur out moving pedestrians.

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There are now four sizes of ULH including the new travel-friendly Go, versatile Original, Mini for smaller compact and mirrorless lenses, and Mobile for phones.

See [YouTube.com/joshsmith93](https://www.ultimatelenshood.com/) campaign videos and <https://www.ultimatelenshood.com/> for more information



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Dealer's Digest

Paul Waller of Commercial Cameras looks at the revival in the fortunes of vintage film cameras and lenses – both for ‘analogue’ enthusiasts and repurposed in the digital age



Are we suffering now from a type of malaise and a general lack of excitement? Yet another iteration of model XYZ from Canon or Nikon, etcetera... but a few more pixels, improved video, a tweak here, a tweak there, another memory card format!

How do you keep selling customers another camera? It just seems to have lost its mojo.

Customers are not ‘upgrading’ fast enough as the cost versus improvement discussion is to a large degree ending with people keeping their existing camera longer, waiting for an even bigger upgrade to justify the outlay, further depressing the sales figures.

The same scenario is being encountered in the mobile phone world, with Samsung recently announcing the S20 with a spec sheet aimed squarely at photographers. Mobile phones have already taken a large proportion of the compact camera market and are now eating into the lower end of the DSLR market.

This is reflected in the latest CIPA figures from Japan which showed a 34% drop in exports of DSLRs in 2019 and even a 10% drop in mirrorless cameras. Things are biting – and biting hard.

I find it no surprise then as in this digital camera world when I am offered the chance to buy a beautiful, tactile, stunning camera such as a Leica M series, Hasselblad, or an any one of the array of other such iconic film cameras I turn into a child on Christmas Eve! They feel right and create a pride of ownership



The Leica M3 rangefinder, a safe investment. Above, a Pentax SMC Takumar 35mm f3.5 adapted to Sony FE. Some lenses made for 24 x 36mm adapt well to Fujifilm's medium format digital GFX bodies.



and are just such a pleasure to use. No menus... no EVFs... just pure simple unadulterated photographic pleasure.

Fujifilm are having great success selling the Instax range of instant print cameras to a younger audience unaccustomed to handling an actual photo instead of just seeing it on screen.

Most of my customers, like me, are of a certain age and nostalgia does play a part. But the business model also makes a lot of sense. The demand for film cameras is high and for certain models it far outstrips what is available. I have customers waiting for large and very large format (5 x 4 to 11 x 14 inch) cameras.

Field cameras such as 5 x 4 Ebony, Linhof and MPP to name a few are always popular and in demand.

In medium format sales, Hasselblad is much sought after as are Pentax 67 and the Fujifilm range of rollfilm rangefinder cameras such as the GW670 and 690. How can we not forget the famous TLRs from the Rollei and Mamiya stables? There is also a strong demand for exotic cameras like the Plaubel Makina, and older models like Ross Ensign,

Voigtlander or Brooks Veriwide.

In 35mm, the Pentax K1000 and its lenses are very popular with students. You can not get enough Pentax K1000s! They keep going for ever – there are two versions, one made in China, and one made in Japan which feels much better. The ubiquitous Nikon F and F2 bodies with their range of associated lenses are in demand alongside other manual focus Nikons like the FM range. The Canon AE-1 and A-1 are also highly regarded.

At the high end, Leica M6 bodies are now selling at approximately £2,000 for a fine example when ten years ago they were around £700. Even the others I mention above have all gone up in value, not lost.

When you are deciding whether to upgrade your DSLR or mirrorless system, bear in mind they may have low residual values after a surprisingly short period of time. The value of digital system cameras four or five years old makes them very affordable, with image sizes and specifications close to the latest models.

Interesting lenses from all makes are having a fantastic comeback, as with so many



Large format workhorses – the Wista 54 DX field camera, top; Linhof's Technikardan 10 x 8 studio monorail.



A classic 1960s Nikon F with interchangeable viewfinders.

adaptors available they are being combined with an amazing array of digital camera bodies such as the Sony range. They create images with a different look.

The irony of all this is that due to the popularity of these classic cameras and lenses, it is getting harder for a dealer to find them.

I love my job, in the week of writing I have spanned nearly 100 years in time, purchasing a Leica O series replica and also a Leica M10 outfit, the latest digital. Between them there's a century of camera evolution. Let's see what next week brings!

So there we have it – a resurgent analogue market in a digital world! Vive la différence!

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TRACING THE SUN'S PATH WITH THE SOLARCAN

It's a pinhole wide-angle camera in a can – with 'film' needing no developer



Sam Cornwell invented a way to record the daily transit of the Sun across the sky using a sheet of photographic printing paper sealed inside an empty drinks can with a precision pinhole in the middle of its side.

This became the Solarcan, a kit you can get by mail order to experiment with yourself. Sam is a near neighbour of our offices, based a little further south on the edge of Scotland where the skies are clear and dark for astro-photography.

The question, receiving one to test in time for a suitable period round the Winter Solstice, was whether or not we'd see the sun on enough days to create tracks.

Solarcan is strapped to a post, railings or more commonly a drainpipe – as I used (left) to get a decent height above walls and trees. I put the can on a south-west facing wall with the pinhole aimed due south, on December 1st. The intention was to take it down mid-January but eventually it ended up left until early February as the weather got worse. On sealing the pinhole again and taking the can down, it was opened (not a

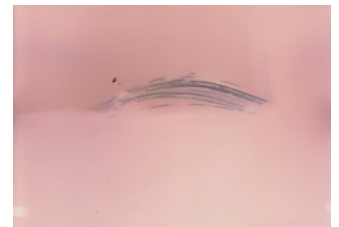


process it enjoys) and the exposed paper very quickly popped into a flatbed scanner. This recorded the negative (right) which was inverted using curves to produce the record below. Well, we do get full days of sunshine in Scotland in midwinter – but we also get high winds, and the can shifted producing a visible double horizon, so the tracks are not an accurate record. It really needs rock solid fixing! But – it works, and would be worth trying in Summer too.

– DK



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



LEARNING TO MAKE PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS THE PORTOBELLO WAY

David Kilpatrick sat in on one of the workshops taught by Alicia Bruce at 'Edinburgh's seaside'

Small group workshops can help photographers learn things they often can't work out alone, and take pictures they might never tackle. Even the most experience can benefit from being asked to think, from talking and from sharing shooting time with others.

In Edinburgh's seaside satellite Portobello there's a great co-working and community resource space called Tribe Porty (what locals shorten the town's name to). It's supported by hundreds of members and one of these is Alicia Bruce, who combines teaching photography with acclaimed portraiture that crosses the art-editorial boundary. With 15 years of teaching experience, she is a photography lecturer at Edinburgh College of Art, a Teaching Fellow at Edinburgh University and has led workshops at both Glasgow's Street Level and Scotland's National Galleries for well over a decade.

Alicia is well known for her coverage of the resistance from residents of Menie to Donald Trump's golf course, and documenting the sites of former dune environment. Her 'Aberdeen Gothic' of Mike and Sheila Forbes was seen on the pages of the national press and also as reproduced in *Cameracraft*. Iconic images get everywhere!

For six photographers attending her course 'The Photographic Portrait', in the programme for her Portobello Photography School, her story of this work helped define one aspect of what a portrait can be. In her own words, 'meaningful portraiture in context', not pictures of people but portraits of people. Her students for the day were all asked to

bring something, a prop or object, which they related to. During the workshop these were used as they made portraits of each other.

Alicia showed the '209 Women' photographic book, published to mark 100 years of female voting emancipation and the project in which 209 woman photographers portrayed 209 woman MPs. Alicia, with a naturally independent spirit, chose Mhairi Black and explained the significance of the plain and honest portrait she took of her in Paisley Abbey. The composition has subtexts and symbolism, like a Renaissance painting. It was good to learn about them in depth.

In addition to purchasing the full set of portraits, printed by Metro, for the archive, The Parliamentary Art Collection bought only five of the photographs presented for permanent display on January 22nd with Alicia attending a Westminster reception just three days after the workshop. Alicia chose to put purchase money for her 20 x 20" print back into the local economy with the additional print made by her regular printer Deadly Digital. She has also recently collaborated with Eastern Photocolour of Musselburgh for permanent installations in the new East Lothian Community Hospital.

We don't really want to reveal Alicia's teaching methods or unique ideas, even those which she shares with others who run workshops. Just let's say that they work, they got the group talking and moving things forward rapidly, so much ground covered between 10am and 4.30pm. This was done without using projected images, taking the more intimate approach of looking at physical



Top: Alicia talks about her 'Trumped' project (with Cameracraft spread and her portrait of Mike and Sheila Forbes). Above, checking out work on-screen; below, Alicia reflects light in a badly-lit interior space.





ALICIA BRUCE

Mhairi Black MP, Paisley Abbey, September 2018, Copyright Alicia Bruce. Collaborative portrait for '209 Women' project. Exhibited at UK Parliament and Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool. UK Parliament collection Further information on the portrait here: <https://aliciabruce.co.uk/blog-1/2019/10/22/uk-parliament-acquisition-of-mhairi-black-portrait>

printed work or considering words written about photography. There were many photographic books relevant to the day on hand to scan through, and a selection of analogue film cameras to remind everyone of how many of the pictures in those books were taken.

Shooting some coverage of the workshop in the natural light of the former vegetable store, my camera was at ISO 12,800 most of the time. Alicia was shooting at ISO settings around 200 to 400 and would have been happy with 64 or 100. Exposure times of a half a second to as much as eight seconds proved that portraits

can be taken with a tripod and a properly instructed sitter under those conditions.

Did I learn anything? Yes, plenty – including some things I already knew but had forgotten. One reminder came from her demonstration of using hand-held reflectors, from Lastolite to Interfit and shop branded. The tunnel-like light in the Tribe Party unit, with its interior lighting turned off, was overcome and enhanced using these. I'd forgotten how much difference a good reflector can make.

This may give the impression the workshop was biased towards

technique. While use of light and camera controls was solidly covered, the emphasis was on what defines a portrait and how photographic portraiture can equal any other art medium. Work by Diane Arbus, Zed Nelson, Martin Parr, August Sander and many others was considered and the books on hand included Jim Mortram's 'Small Town Inertia' and of course the '290 Women' volume. Discussion between the photographers, seeded by Alicia, grew naturally during the day.

The photographers on the course all found different aspects helped them. I'll only use their

first names. Suzanne was impressed by the use of reflectors, 'not using flash, seeing the light'. "It's like looking into a treasure chest of gold", she said when Alicia curved one fitted with its gold cover to concentrate the reflected light.

Sami said he gained most from experimenting, 'seeing how it works'. Seasoned professional Colin was impressed by how using a tripod and natural daylight, however low after filtering in through windows, could be relied on for portraits. "Tiny differences make so much difference", he said about the placing of the sitter



ALICIA BRUCE

Portraiture in the high street in Portobello: above and below, different approaches to subject awareness and response for pictures taken through the misty window of a warm café from outside in the cold. Alicia's phone snapshot shows the situation. Sami took the smiling girl, above left, with direct eye contact. Lynn did get the signalled consent of the girl in the atmospheric portrait below, but wanted her to stay apparently unaware of the camera. The condensation, tungsten interior shop light and reflection of the bright skyline over the road all work together well.



and finding the best backgrounds.

Amanda said she felt more confident using natural light than using flash, and this workshop used only natural light. Agatha found 'guidance on how to interact with the sitter most useful'.

Alicia's own career has seen her working at the famous Beyond Words photographic bookshop

(now gone) in Edinburgh, and at the nearby (still very much there) Stills Gallery. She worked 30 hours a week to support her university studies, including shifts at the Picture This photo lab in the city. A woman of well-chosen words as well as thoughtful pictures, her views on words are refreshing.

"You shouldn't need to write an essay", she said. "Captioning can be important but it shouldn't be necessary to write an accompanying essay via an Instagram caption in order for the viewer to interpret the work. If the photographer does not know what the subject is about, how can they expect to show it. A good portrait

involves engagement and consent, it is thoughtful and meaningful, and tells you something about the sitter".

She emphasised the need for an ethical approach. Some visitors treat Edinburgh's homeless street sleepers as photographic subjects without having a conversation, asking permission, or even

knowing who they are photographing. It was not just the Christmas and New Year season which saw their safe spaces removed, during the Festival in the summer many venues occupy places otherwise available to the homeless.

Portobello was revealed as an important location in the history of photography, a place chosen as home by many recent luminaries. The quality of north and west light bouncing off the Firth of Forth and the beach will have lent itself to Victorian photographers much as it did to Alicia's natural-light, tripod-mounted, carefully posed low ISO demonstrations.

"Through the school I promote and showcase photographers and artists making work in Portobello", Alicia told us. "We also give back to the local community but running competitions and exhibitions with amazing prizes from local businesses. I want the photography school to be as democratic and welcoming as possible but without underestimating any of the students."

Every student went away with many images taken, and a set of printed notes. The day's experience and tuition cost £75 (Alicia's workshop 'The Camera' is a little less at £70.66) and you can find details of future events through Portobello Photography School's social media – @PortyPhoto

See also this web page –

www.aliciabruce.co.uk/portyphoto



Alicia and the students spotted this couple and the way their clothing complemented the tones of the adjacent painted shop fronts. Double portrait above by Colin. Left, woman with dog, as presented to the camera – by Suzanne.



DK

READING A LOST AND FOUND PORTRAIT – WITH MYSTERY CLUES

The Editor can't remember where the antique shop or fair was, but a few years ago acquired a box containing one processed wholeplate negative, a newspaper and three sheets of typed verse.

Thanks to the power of Facebook, some clues but no real answers could be found to the identity of the man in this portrait.

This photograph was one of the reasons I wanted to hear how Alicia Bruce, one of Edinburgh's best-known portrait photographers, thought about the art of the photographic portrait. From the setting to the props, the personal items and almost 'acted' pose for the camera, it has all the hallmarks of a portrait taken to convey the personality of the sitter and perhaps their identity.

That, however, has eluded discovery. The clues in the old Wellington Anti-Screen wholeplate glass negative box are many but nowhere is the name of the subject recorded.

I apologise for publishing what may be verbose ramblings in verse by a man affected by the circumstances of serving somewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean or perhaps North Africa before 1942. The copy of newspaper wrapping the plate is June 13th 1942 and may have had significance. The plate box itself, as Diane Redpath researched, dates from between 1925 when Wellington & Ward Ltd of Elstree uprated their fast isochromatic emulsion to 450 H&D speed, and 1930 when Ilford Limited acquired the company and the brand.

It was also Diane, welcoming the mystery diversion from editorial PA duties, who remembered hearing the term 'Bullshit Baffles Brains' used as the title of one of the four typewritten poems accompanying the plate. She found it was a popular saying the armed forces (notably the Navy) in the early 20th century.

Through Facebook, several friends used the words of the



poems which I posted to suggest what kind of man our subject was. The clues pointed to his likely service in an artillery regiment, in an administrative or clerking role looking after stores, possibly in the Palestine Mandate.

The book he is holding in the portrait looks like a guide or almanac but it's too far out of focus for the cover to be read. He has a pencil in his jacket pocket. The style of the lounge suit he wears is late 1930s and his hairstyle fits that period too. Given the date of the plate box and the shelf life of dry plates, it's unlikely that the photograph itself dates from 1942. It would most likely have been taken in Britain, possibly in Scotland, before he went to serve abroad and might have been kept with his poems after his return – or death?

Certainly the poems are not ones which relatives would keep as treasured memories if they understood his obscure use of language (especially words derived from Greek). It has been suggested he might have had a medical background because of this, but his use of an Arabic quotation or phrase indicates he may have had an interest in language. It seems to be taken from a story retold by William B. Seabrook in 'Adventures in Arabia' first published in 1927. Seabrook was a controversial American travel journalist and early writer on S&M, occultism and other esoteric experiences.

Without the ephemera stored with the plate, it would have been of less interest. They are a kind of proto-metadata. The visual descriptions in the verse could be written by a photographer – he was aware of light. Perhaps his identity will never be known.

– David Kilpatrick



To reproduce the plate, I simply photographed it on my studio light table with my Sony A7RIII and macro lens, and used a B+W negative Adobe Camera Raw preset curve to convert it to a positive print-like scale. The box and typescripts were shot on a copy stand. The plate box is batch no 8483A.

Bullshit Baffles Brains

The creed of the Brass Hat is this:-

"Faith, Hope, and Blanco

And the greatest of these is Blanco".

We have new guns.

Let us polish them till they dazzle;

Let us Blanco our dragropes.

By our smartness we are judged

And blanco is easy to see

While ability is invisible till the testing time.

Self confidence produces self-respect

And self respect breeds smartness.

Let us therefore look smart

And we shall be credited with competence.

Who can find us out before we die?

Dead Sea Fruit

Leave;

The train stinks.

The town stinks

of little ladies with a leaning

For lust with a foreign accent.

Come the four corners of the world in arms

They cannot slake them

Though few are older than seventeen.

I am alone in an empty city

Swarming with uniforms

Bloated with battledresses.

I sicken

My stomach retches;

Let me go out again and sleep in a ditch;

At least I will have someone to talk to,

Though there are rats there too.

I cannot appreciate leave;

I must get back to the boys.

This is the dead city

This is the city of the dead

They know not, neither do they appreciate

Beethoven died before the Crimea

Beethoven is very dead,

Yes, my darling daughter;

Beethoven is dead:

Let us jitterbug.

I saw the sun come up this morning

Flushed and frowzy, peering through the reek

Of soul-stench. And at the zenith

The same unbelievable blue-green of jade

As at sunset.

God must be good

God must be good to give such jade of sunset

Growing above the purulence of public bars.

I must go back to the boys.

Then I will yearn for another quarter

For this misery of asepsis

Amid a polyglot putrescence



Accommodation Stores

One fog-filled moonbeam through the roof

Explores a sooty cobweb, trembling in the haze

Of heat around the stove-pipe.

Lying in the dark I ponder

How much of that soot is the new deposit

From my own fire

Clinging tenaciously to the tendrils

Restless relics of the last unit

Little fat black wriggling caterpillars.

She was blonde; with the moon in her hair

Margaret taking Faust to her cottage

For a charity matinee.

Age has not withered her, and custom –

Has taught her infinite variety

Pejoratively convolutional

Proleptically fecund.

Protect me from childish things - churches and

love

And hostages to fortune.

Polynympholepsy? Too much can be lost

By dispersal of forces: energy is wasted

Which I, old youth with an empty past

Cannot afford.

What think you of fried codfish, oh my

callypagous non-complement?

We signed for huts and tables,

For forms, latrines and so forth:

But the soot and the starlight

The rabbit snares and paper novels

The typhoid water and the measles

And – the blonde –

And not we sign for them, too?

Untitled

(To the author's self of ten years ago - indicated in an erased and rewritten couplet)

No more the hands that sweat, the knees that

tremble,

And breath quick drawn, shallow, caught in the

throat.

In the pub the crowd of hunched shoulders

gloat,

The sidelong glances, swiftly withdrawn,

dissemble

Leaving a snail's trail of impersonal lust;

The panting fear, and shamed expectancy

Of the first solicitation: dust unto dust

No longer calls.

No more

The warmth of the shyly yield breast;

The warmth of sweet short breath, the quivering

lip,

The eloquent dumb tongue, the flesh that

flinches

Velvety soft, the warm secret places

The trusting eyes, the throbbing, rich response

And peaceful, shared repose. No. nevermore!

No more the victim of Fate's filthiest jest

Spared all the self-disgust, the loathsome grip

Of drunken flounderings with sleazy wenches

(Whose fallen breasts, and loose-lipped vicious

faces

Proclaim them cast-off lemans of some ponce)

Endowed through some Priapian necromancy

With fascination, mystery and promise

(Not even honest whores.)

For this much thanks: and yet...

Was I so apolaustic? Where my sins

Not rather nugatory? Barmecidal?

Was not a form of epeolatry

Epithymetic virtue? In my most capricious

moments

Was I just honest beast? Is my punishment

To be that knowledge, now, that nevermore

Can I wipe out that fatal consequence

Of sentimental folly; I have lived, unliving;

I must die, regretting all the sins

I thought, too sentimental to commit.

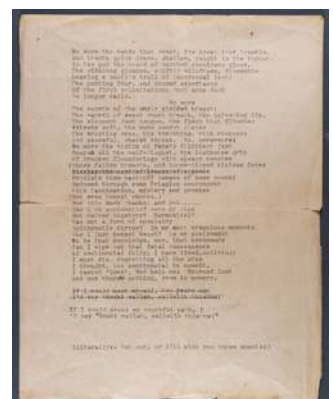
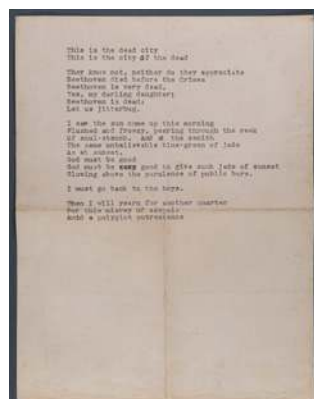
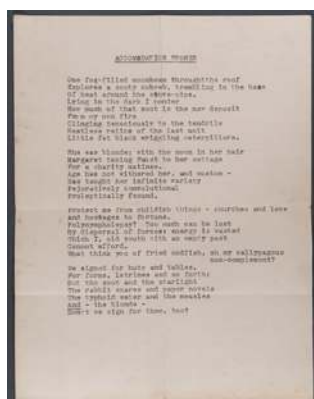
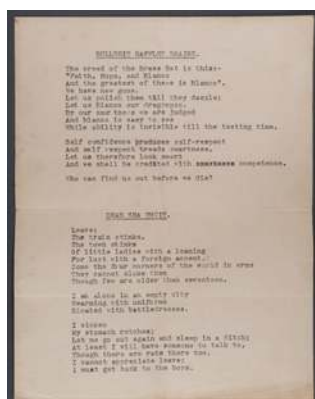
I wanted 'love,' God help me! Scorned lust

And now there's nothing, even in memory.

If I could cross my youthful path, I'd

say "Rouhi wallah, sallalik thlatha!"

(Literally:- Get out, or I'll kick you three kneels!)





Dougie Souness's portfolio includes travel and architectural views. He likes to keep his verticals straight and often works with Nikon PC-E tilt-shift lenses on his D850 body – the 85mm, 24mm and recently introduced 19mm. The shot above in the Gran Teatro de La Habana featuring dancers Yumi García and Elena Maria is architecturally correct but was taken with his regular 24-70mm f2.8, also used for many of his street and historic Havana locations because of its autofocus, which the tilt-shift lenses lack. He shoots raw with manual camera settings, and processes in Adobe Lightroom.

DOUGIE SOUNESS THE DANCE GOES ON

Scotland has a history of crossover skills – ploughmen and shepherds composing poems and political essays, a chemist and an artist inventing modern portrait photography – so it's no surprise when Diane from *Cameracraft*, joining Danny Clifford for the concert shoot she wrote about in our last issue, found a leading name in Britain's music industry making a reputation behind the lens.

Dougie Souness is involved with all areas of the music business including major concert tours and gives back a great deal to the creative sector through education and programmes which develop young talent.

The bands he manages through his Glasgow company No Half Measures include Wet Wet Wet, Hue and Cry, Red Sky July and Anchor Lane. He's been a guest lecturer, panellist and moderator at conferences and festivals worldwide over the past 32 years.

Travelling for business, he's become something of an adventurer with camera too. He's visited



Dougie has visited Cuba five times so far, discovering the dancers of the Cuban National Ballet after joining friends on a trip to Cuba. Already drawn to performance photography Dougie found the Cuban ballerinas adventurous and hardworking models whether in the theatre, street or old-world interiors.



Founder and owner of music management company No Half Measures, Glasgow's Dougie Souness is a photographer in love with life, light, dance, and Cuba. Photo by Harry Sandler.

over fifty countries and his work has been published and exhibited.

An enthusiast at heart, he is a necessary perfectionist and his portfolio displays an unusual level of technical control, learned over years of photography for album covers, band tour programmes, fan magazines, posters, social media and promotion. Here we have decided to concentrate on pictures of dancers taken in Cuba, an island he loves and has done much to promote and support. We could equally well have selected just his architectural records of Havana with perfectly correct shift-lens verticals, or







his photojournalistic capture of human interest.

Performance has fascinated Dougie for years. He has used streets as well as stages and studios to produce dance images ranging from neo-punk colour to classical perfection in flash-frozen monochrome. We caught up with Dougie to ask him about the synthesis of dance and the incredible colours and textures of old Havana.

"A good friend of mine, the late Harry Sandler who was tour manager for The Eagles and Katy Perry, invited me to go to Cuba at the last minute on a photography trip run by his friends Dan and Jill Burkholder", he told us. "They introduced me to the dancers from the Cuban National Ballet. I immediately began to see how I could take this on to the streets and into the studio".

In 2019, Cuba marked the 500th anniversary of the founding of the city of Havana, twinned with Glasgow back in 2002. An exhibition combining Dougie's view

Left, one of Dougie's first dance images featuring ballerina Yanlis Abreu. "This was more of a model shoot than a dance shoot", he admits. Having learned more about ballet technique, in later visits he has made more use of ballet poise and action. Above and below, the dancers Kathy Ochoa and Patricia Torres shot in the photogenic decay of Havana (see story).



of Havana with work by Cuban Roberto Chile, who was Fidel Castro's photographer, showed at Glasgow's Street Level Photoworks recently. It also featured in Havana during British Week, a partnership between the Havana Glasgow Film Festival and the British Embassy in Cuba. What's interesting is the difference between the two exhibitions. The pictures on this spread, with the atmospheric textures and light of abandoned interiors in Havana, are examples of pictures ruled out for the exhibition in Cuba.

"For the joint exhibition in Glasgow we used many of those types of images, but for the exhibition in Havana the curatorial team of the Historian Office there forbade us exhibiting shots showing buildings and places in bad condition or not restored.

"I worked closely with Chile to select the pictures for



our cohesive exhibition and at Street Level Photoworks we had forty-two displayed. It was less for the Havana exhibition though due to the restriction.” Dougie’s studies were printed up to 1.2 metres wide for the Glasgow show, by the Glasgow studio of Deadly Digital – “they really know their stuff”, he said.

As well as the faded splendour, abandoned interiors and wonderful light so loved by visiting photographers, Dougie found the bright colours you would expect in the Caribbean. Our cover shot featuring Kathy Ochoa of the Cuban National Ballet is an example, with pure blue sky and the yellow of the Che Guevara flag flown by the dancer. This was a challenging shot. “She was balancing on the tips of her toes in ballet pointe shoes on the harbour wall”, Dougie said. “If she had fallen it was not water below, she’d have been on jagged rocks”. With wind blowing the flag, he had to take several shots to catch the flag unfurled the right way in the wind, as anyone who has tried to photograph a blowing flag on a flagpole will know.

The photographs featuring another ballerina Yumi García with the Cuban flag and coloured lighting (*above*) and her pose with the statue of the ‘founding mother’ of Cuban National Ballet, Alicia Alonso (*right*) posed no such problems but still demand a great deal from the dancer.

“The statue of Alonso is massive”, Dougie explained. “This symmetrical pose with her hand reaching up worked well but it was more difficult than it looks. I tried it with flash, casting a monster shadow, but in the end natural light and the high ISO quality of the Nikon D850 worked better.”

For Yumi’s grand jeté jump shots on the facing page, many leaps were needed. The top image includes the Capitolio which is modelled on the US Capitol. The bottom image includes one of the countless classic American cars still running and lovingly maintained in Cuba, used as taxis as well as by local owners.

Dougie experimented with many different street crossings looking for pictures with a grand jeté ‘over’ a classic automobile. “There we are, standing watching

Perfect poise by Yumi García on one foot with ballet pointe shoes – a Cuban flag, and the hand of Alicia Alonso’s Cuban National Ballet memorial statue to hold.



the traffic, and the moment the lights change it’s GO!”, he explained. “I run into the middle of the road and lie down to shoot upwards and then I cue the dancer. I usually have to keep doing it again and again until I think I’ve got a shot which works. The grand jeté is one of the most athletic things dancers do. I probably made her run across this road twenty times! We had no problem with the police in Cuba and I’ve

actually done similar shots all over without bother. LA, New York, Paris, London... a combination of dance and travel photography with iconic locations.”

He admits that as soon as you get on to the street other cameras appear. “With a ballerina, especially if they are wearing traditional ballet outfits, everybody surrounds you and of course their phones come out. They want to take their pictures as well, and



Two grand jeté leaps – on a rooftop terrace with the Havana Capitol beyond, and at a street crossing with classic car. See story.





there's nothing you can really do about it – you just have to persevere.”

Some locations like the side street above don't cause that kind of attention. This was one of the locations from Dougie's work in 2016. The side street light, the paint colours, and the kids playing football all make a great shot.

For candid shots in Havana's streets, visiting photographers have more freedom than in many cities. We asked whether including children in shots was a problem, as it can be in Europe and the UK now.

“I have now learned enough Spanish to enjoy basic conversations and ask permission. ninety nine percent of the time people were really cool about having their picture taken”, Dougie replied. “They realise that Cuba depends heavily on tourism and there is money to be made interacting with tourists. It's quite a friendly place and I've been five times now, I'm not fluent in the language but know enough to get around. My people photography is not just street shooting – I enjoy street portraiture. You have

Yumi García performs a grand jeté over Adarys Linares Tellez in a Havana side street with children playing football. Below, two candid street shots from a city where the camera is not seen as a threat, but as the badge of a tourist bringing vital income.

to get talking to people, find the characters.”

Many photographers have switched from larger DSLR systems to mirrorless for travel and street photography, but not Dougie. He currently uses a Nikon D850, and before that a D810

and D800. “I use a 24-70mm lens mostly, and it's not exactly inconspicuous. On the last trip I tried an 85mm which was smaller, but if you are carrying an SLR you are carrying an SLR... I'm big enough and strong enough!”. It is also the familiarity with the Nikon bodies

which appeals. “I am self-taught, and really only use Manual mode. I have learned how to control shutter speed, aperture, ISO and white balance and always shoot raw files.

“I have tried the Fujifilm X system which I enjoyed and it's certainly compact, but I know the Nikon controls so well and I don't like the camera to make any decisions for me. I also take my





Dougie's sub-aqua photographs in the Jardines de la Reina, Cuba – turtle, silky sharks, nudibranch, saltwater crocodile and goby..

perspective control lenses, and my underwater kit including the 16mm Nikon AF fisheye and the 16-35mm zoom.

"Underwater, I use a Nauticam Housing with Inon strobes – the American crocodile and the Cuban silky sharks were taken with the Nikon 16-35mm and D810. The housing is a major feat of engineering, all the buttons on the camera can be operated as well as the zoom. The housing has a 45° angled optical viewfinder that provides a 1:1 image of the camera's finder.

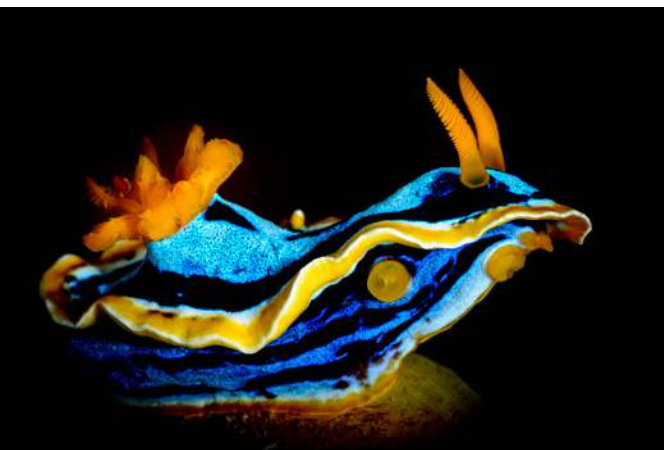
"One of the reasons I wanted to visit Cuba was the diving. Eight hours drive from Havana and a two hour sail to reach them, are the wonderful mangroves and protected reefs of Jardines de la Reina (Gardens of the Queen). Fidel Castro was a keen diver and he closed off this area, with no fishing allowed and special permits needed to dive in the reefs.

"Photography is a big escape for me, clearing my brain of all the rock and roll..."

– DK



For further information see:
Instagram: @DougieSouness
<https://www.nohalfmeasures.photography/>



Sigma fp – try ISO 6...

Paul Monaghan has been shooting exceptional long exposure time landscapes using the unique ISO 6 extended ISO setting of the new full frame L-mount Sigma fp mirrorless camera and its growing lens range. With serious filters too!

A versatile photographer who first came to this magazine's notice for his use of lighting and clever studio setups for product shots, Paul Monaghan is now best known for his landscapes and adoption of Sigma's Foveon sensor based cameras. Although he has hardly been alone in recognising the advantages of true RGB without a Bayer pattern to deconvolve, it's this critical sharpness and fidelity which made him a Foveon user.

So, when Sigma came out late last year with a Bayer sensor camera unlike anything ever seen before, would his preferences change?

The Sigma fp has a 24 megapixel full frame sensor – the first full frame from them, as the largest Foveon is 1.3X in the SA-mount sd-QH body. This has been his workhorse kit – “the Foveon chip inside this camera has no AA or Bayer filter”, he says, “and that lets its 1.3x crop 25.6 megapixels at times resolve as much detail as a full-frame 50mp Canon 5DSR.”

Paul was already working with various high-end filter systems such as Haida and Kase, his regular journeys throughout Scotland and northern England passing some of the best landscape locations around in all seasons. Water is a vital part of that landscape, and it can be captured frozen in motion or turned into a painterly wash by a long exposure.

“If there is one thing I have grown to love about photography”, Paul says, “it is the ability to capture, control, and manipulate time. Photography is giving us the option to see things in ways that are impossible to achieve



The Sigma fp fitted with a Haida filter holder and stack of polarising, ND and graduated filters. Loch Lomond ISO 10 500s exposure, below.



with our naked eyes. This opens up a whole new world of creative options.”

As a Sigma hero, Paul was one of the first to try the new fp. It has no EVF, only a rear screen, with a dedicated accessory eyepiece hood converting this one of the largest eye-level finders around. Feeding this rear screen is a unique Bayer sensor. It is entirely electronic in shutter operation for stills (from 30s to 1/8000s and up to 18 frames a second raw capture for burst of 12 frames) and movies (up to 2 hours continuous recording in 4K UHD, and with frame rates up to 120fps in 2K FHD). Manual exposures can be much longer and the extended ISO range of this back-illuminated CMOS sensor is unique – not only the high settings of ISO 51,200 and 102,400 but the low range of ISO 50, 25, 12 and even 6.

By combining ISO 6 (facing page) or 10 (left) with neutral density, polarising and graduated sky filters on the new Sigma 14-24mm SD DG Art zoom with a magnetic Haida wide zoom holder (upper left), Paul was able to make exposures of 500 seconds.

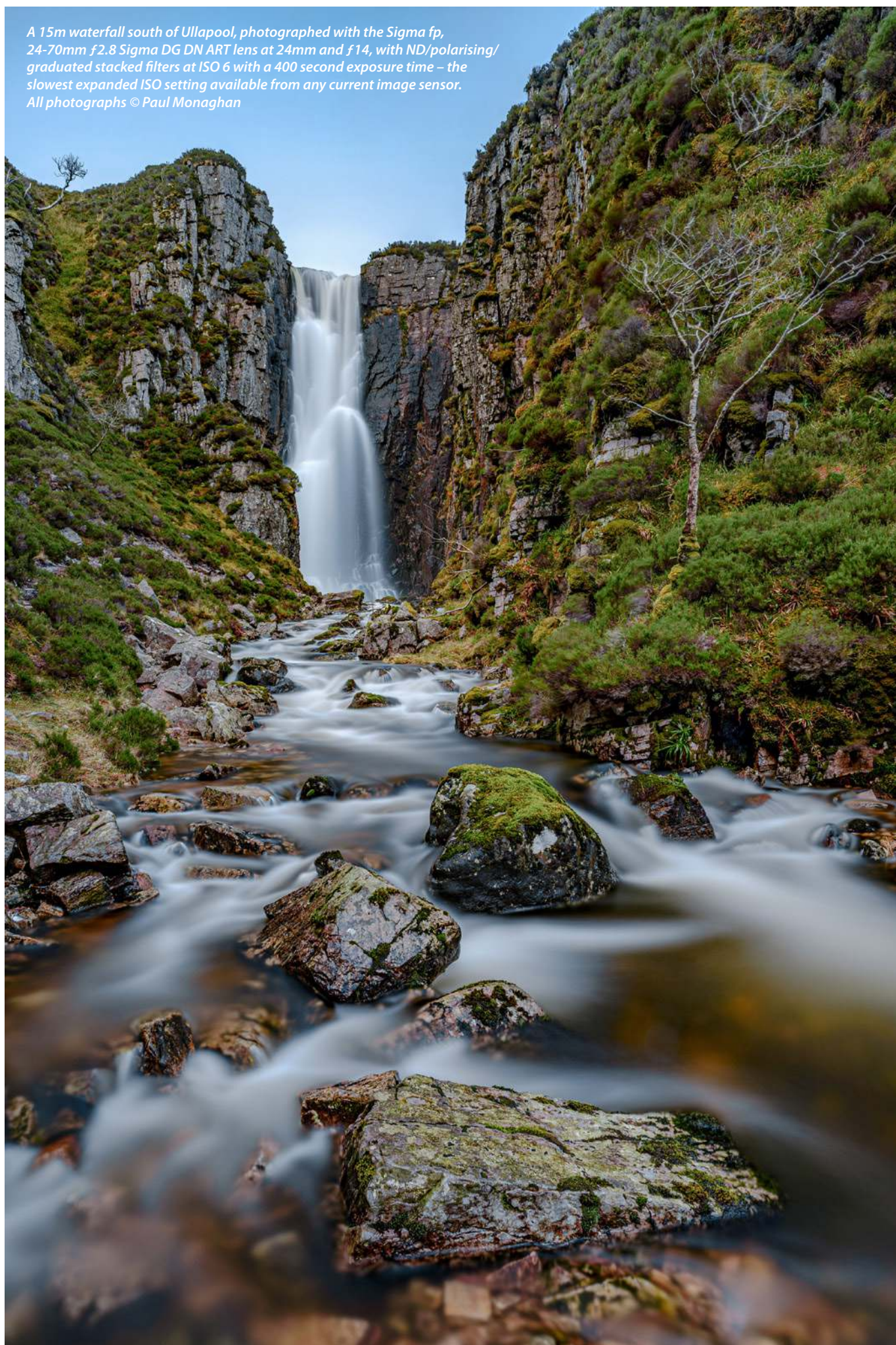
With a promise of no rolling shutter, no banding issues and many special movie-friendly functions the £1,700 fp is the smallest and lightest full frame body made and the L-mount promises the best Leica, Sigma and Panasonic glass.

It's worth following Paul's posts on SLRLounge and DIYphotography as well as Facebook @pmonaghanphoto and Instagram (similar – pmonaghanphoto) for updates on his use of the fp.



<https://www.sigma-global.com>

A 15m waterfall south of Ullapool, photographed with the Sigma fp, 24-70mm f2.8 Sigma DG DN ART lens at 24mm and f14, with ND/polarising/graduated stacked filters at ISO 6 with a 400 second exposure time – the slowest expanded ISO setting available from any current image sensor. All photographs © Paul Monaghan



COLORWORLD IMAGING'S CHROMALUXE – VIVID HIGH GLOSS DISPLAY PRINTS ON METAL

ChromaLuxe is a high quality print product that promises image reproduction with unrivalled clarity and vibrancy. The dye-sublimation printing process, developed by EPSON, can be used on a selection of specially coated rigid panels. It produces products that offer brilliant colours, and excellent durability with resistance to surface abrasion, high humidity, atmospheric ozone, and contact with water. The investment needed means it is a photo lab process, not one you can do yourself.

Most images that my studio creates rely heavily upon strong, vibrant colour schemes which often incorporate gradients across both the main subject and the backgrounds. This style of image is perfect for showcasing the wide gamut capabilities of the ChromaLuxe product range.

The three review images were chosen for their bright colours and gradients and printed on to Aluminium panels by Colorworld Imaging. The files provided were high quality JPEGs using sRGB colour space and had no further

We asked studio still life specialist Ian Knaggs to evaluate prints with a hi-tech finish and wide gamut



adjustment before printing. The results show beautifully deep, rich, vibrant colours – with very good contrast, deep blacks and crisp, bright highlights. The panels have a real three-dimensional depth to them that can only be really appreciated when viewing and handling.

The lack of any obvious banding in the subtle gradients is a huge plus point and something that is often very difficult to achieve with other print media. On very close inspection there are some very small areas when very slight banding is present. However, this can also be seen when the file is viewed on a wide gamut monitor and it is most likely due to the combined effects of the limitations of the limited sRGB gamut and JPEG compression rather than the printing method. The vibrant quality of these panels can be best appreciated with images that already feature high contrast and bright colours and they really have to be seen to be believed.



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

<https://www.ianknaggs.com>

Top: Ian examining the ChromaLuxe display prints made by Colorworld Imaging. Centre: the rounded corner finish of the metal-base print. Bottom: the prints rephotographed in Ian's signature manner.

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CAMERACRAFT PORTFOLIO

NIAL BENVIE

FIELD STUDIO STUDIES



Like the copperplate engravers of two centuries ago, Scottish photographer Niall Benvie understands where scientific recording ends and artistic interpretation begins. His recent composites, grouping flowers recorded using a field studio rig, have many of qualities



of great historic nature painting and printmaking.

"In 2009 I started working with my colleague in the USA, Clay Bolt, on the 'Meet Your Neighbours' project. This involved fifty contracted photographers, shooting for the Nature Picture Library, using a consistent field studio setup for plants and creatures.

"The thing which has really marked our these pictures is the use of trans-illumination, working with a white perspex background and translucent flyweight envelope stiffener as a front light diffuser. I started using two manual flashguns, moved on to a portable Elinchrom Ranger Quadra kit with softbox behind the subject, but have returned to using the perspex and wirelessly triggered Cactus flashguns. The results are more agreeable and the kit is lightweight, easy to carry, and affordable."

There's no doubt that shooting tiny subjects in the field, the cable-free use of small wireless flashguns makes sense. It is the transillumination of the subjects from one gun placed behind opal perspex which gives the 'Meet Your Neighbours' images consistency across the group of contributing photographers. The technique has now been used for 'bio-blitz' surveys, where photographers work with research biologists and taxonomists to survey a small area intensively. National Geographic has supported two













of these, and Clay Bolt used the method last year in an expedition to Indonesia to document the rediscovery of the world's largest bee, Wallace's bee, thought extinct since 2008. He found Wallace's Bee and photographed it.

With rare live specimens on location, the photographers adhere to strict rules, limiting the time spent and returning creatures to their environment safely. Plants are not picked but photographed on site, often at the edge of a colony to avoid damaging others, despite the need to find the most perfect examples.

"I'm looking for the charismatic specimen", Niall told us – "the one which has a perfect stem or leaves in very good condition. One where there's just something about the balance of it, so it looks good. Anything that has a slender stem is more likely to work well.

"Given the choice, I will always

photograph even an abundant plant like ragwort or rose-bay willow herb where it is growing. You need to be pretty hot on your botany to know that a cut plant is positioned the right way up and that it is not starting to droop."

Niall started putting the very clinical field studio photographs into a retro-look framing with his project called 'Nostalgia for Snow' which looked at cultural activities reliant on snow and ice, seabirds, and alpine plants on the edge of their range. With a look of antique paper and engraving script for the taxonomic and familiar names of the plants, the first impression from these records is that you are looking at an 18th century book.

In 2013 he produced an e-book covering all the essentials for shooting using his field studio method, which overcomes existing daylight and solves many of the problems of close-up and



macro photography thanks to the flash power and short exposure duration. A revised version is scheduled for later this year.

One key to the technique is the distance between the backlit perspex background and the subject. Studio shooting tables often need the subject to be sitting on the illuminated surface, which he says simply increases the tendency for flare. "I photographed 500 pebbles from a beach near Abroath for a project, and that placed the white background two and a half feet behind the glass IKEA table surface rigged up under a copy stand. Studio still life tables are fundamentally flawed – having the white background at a distance behind the subject makes all the difference for light wrap-around without flare."

The composites we print here with the cream backgrounds were produced in December

2019 – Niall made twelve, calendar-ready. However, these are not seasonal or area-specific records. They are artwork and nothing more, as he explains.

"These are illustrations, not scientific documents so I size the elements in consideration of the composition rather than presenting them at scale. Seasons can be mixed. Flower field guide illustrations do not keep everything to scale either! I produce the compositions using *Photoshop*, and thanks to an insight from one of our photo retreat guests I've moved on to using the Darker Colour blending mode. It opens up the possibility of overlapping elements which could not be done as easily before."

The results look ideal to sell as well art, and because they look more like classic natural history painting, might succeed where even the best photography fails at



home. “I’m deeply sceptical about the demand for photographs from galleries in Britain”, he says, “but these have the advantage that they do not look like photos”.

The UK may not be their only potential gallery market in future. This Spring, Niall and his wife Charlotte move to France, near her family in Burgundy. She’s well known for her cooking skills, which he says bring the repeat bookings for their photo Retreats just as much as the photography does. There, they will create a teaching and eating space in their house, surrounded by a little-changed countryside where drinking ponds, feeding spaces and insect-friendly vegetation will be created or encouraged. The area is a “landscape of small fields and hedgerows – we’ve got

NIAL BENVIE FIELD STUDIO



Niall's field studio setups have included tanks for amphibians – above, how the common toad below posed for a portrait in water through the glass.

even sent an advance against sales of the selection of transparencies they filed from him. Now he says he’s lucky to get three figures from a year’s sales on Alamy.

As for the equipment used, it’s high resolution and simple. He works with a Nikon D810 and most of the time with a Sigma 150mm f2.8 Macro bought nine years ago. It replaced a Nikon 200mm macro which had much slower autofocus – and he does use AF when shooting his small insect subjects. “Even a 105mm macro is a bit short for working distance, clearance for lighting and reflectors”, he says, “and a 50mm macro is pretty useless on full frame. The Sigma 150mm is ideal.” He also uses 50mm, 85mm f1.8 and 500mm lenses.



great neighbours, nightingales and golden orioles and hoopoes. And lots of insect life as there’s not a lot of spraying.

“When we had a fruit farm 30 years ago, we planted lots of trees but not for photography – just because it’s a good thing to do. In France we will develop the bit of field we have as a venue. We’ll continue to run photo Retreats in the south of Scotland, Slovenia, France, Austria and Spain.”

The Retreats are always are always based in a great house, where Charlotte serves great food, and where we can create the ideal learning environment. They take a 55 inch OLED screen and a ‘stack of books’, and their guests receive full notes in PDF form.

Like so many photographers this work has taken over from the stock photography and he sympathises with all photographic colleagues – saying his greatest achievement since going professional in 1993 has been to survive. Back then, when the Corbis agency was started up, he was

The photography Retreats are known for their culinary excellence thanks to Niall's wife Charlotte – and the food provides another subject for his photography too. No surprise their email newsletter is called 'Menu'!



Over the last quarter-century Niall has written hundreds or articles and seven books, and he’s been a regular columnist in *Outdoor Photography* magazine. He was one of the founders of the International League of Conservation Photographers. Niall and Charlotte also create a unique newsletter, free by email, called MENU. Needless to say it covers food, photography and nature.

– David Kilpatrick

See: www.niallbenvie.com



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Elinchrom ELC 500 & 125

A new generation from the Swiss masters of studio flash brings multi-platform TTL, super-fast recycling and flash durations, brilliant LED modelling and many design innovations. David Kilpatrick has been trying out the twin head kit.

The second wave of any innovation in technology is often safer to invest in than the pioneering first generation. Studio flash offering IGBT duration and power control, allowing much the same TTL and high speed functions found in camera speedlights, has been in development for over a decade but whole generations have been orphaned by advances in wireless trigger and camera firmware.

Finally bringing this to their new mid-range ELC TTL heads – one rung below the ELC Pro and one above the BRX – Elinchrom has worked for maturity in the whole technology. So, when the ELC 125 and 500 TTL arrived they worked much like any head with the EL Skyport Pro. Days later new firmware for the triggers enabled TTL operation, across a range of camera platforms already proven with the portable ELB 500 TTL.

Canon, Nikon, Olympus/Panasonic, Sony, Fujifilm and Pentax have all been enabled to integrate into Elinchrom studio setups though the differences between the shoe fittings do mean you need a trigger for each different system you use. For medium format and anything else, the transmitters can be paired with a universal receiver.

To use functions of the transmitter such as Hi-Sync (up



The 125/500 kit as tested comes in a semi-rigid fabric kit case.

to 1/8000s shutter speed) specific flash heads have been needed – the ELB 400 and 1200 portables with HS heads, or the D-Lite RX4, are needed to use HS. With the new ELC TTL heads HSS rather than Hi-Sync is used with a high speed shutter setting, enabling the ELC 125 to achieve this despite

having a standard maximum power flash duration of 1/625s ($t=0.1$) which would be too short for Hi-Sync.

The ELC heads can achieve either Standard or Action durations for any given power setting, toggled at the press of a button. The 125 can give 1/7750s and the 500 1/9430s at minimum power which is an identical 7 Ws in both cases. It's a close enough

match to mix the heads, you're not going to see ghosting on super-fast subjects with the difference in durations involved. Since the LED modelling light in these heads is fully variable both manually and with a proportional link to flash power, it is possible to use the 500 within its 7 to 125 Ws range alongside a 125, and match the modelling to the flash exposure easily. There is no function similar to the D-Lite or BRX heads to apply a two-stop differential to modelling power.

To give an idea how good the new modelling LED is, it's a very bright CRI 91 source suitable for most daylight fill-in and video though the intelligent fan cooling of the heads works against movie lighting. It is sixteen times as bright as the LED fitted to competing battery-powered Chinese heads introduced a few



The LED is centred on the flashtube.



The ELC 125 TTL is a little larger than a D-Lite.



The logo on the side changes colour to show the Group set.



The ELC 500 TTL is substantial – as expected.

years ago and still unchanged in this respect. It's a 20W LED, which would be perfectly battery-friendly for brief use but can run all day at full output in a mains-powered head.

The head never heats up the way tungsten modelling lamp designs always have, even those with 50W peanut bulbs. This meant my 44cm rigid small soft box, conical snoot, optical spot and reflectors fitted with front diffuser or deep honeycomb could be left with full power modelling, for hours if necessary. For many photographers, the quality and brightness and proportional control of the modelling without any heat penalty will be reason enough to choose the ELC heads.

While the TTL function tests out well, I'm still using a flash meter partly to check the relative brightness of each head especially when one is used for a side/back positioned accent light and one for a main light, as I did with the 125 and 500. I generally add a small amount of rim lighting to avoid dark subjects blending into the typically dark background. The tenth-stop control of these heads, individually or globally from either their very well designed and illuminated rear controls or the Skyport, allows fine tuning to traditional reversal film standards though digital shooting doesn't need that. Just get the ratio right

Two heads in use set to different Groups – blue and amber lighting shows this clearly.



The umbrella tube is within the reflector area, as with previous Elinchrom heads, but it's able to fit 8mm (very common) as well as 7mm (Elinchrom native, and less easily found) shafts.



The stand fitting is simple and appears to be very strong. The centre of gravity and pivot point is optimal on the 500.

The new heads come with a 16cm dark grey finished reflector.

and don't overexpose, at low ISO settings (anything under 800 these days) the shadows and exposure can be fine tuned from raw.

To test the 125/500 kit I did a shoot with Diane's chihuahua puppy Alfie who was up for an extended playtime jumping in the air after toys and running around the fabric backdrop. The modelling was set at full power to

let the Sony A7RIII with 85mm f1.8 FE lens track continuous focus at 8fps (Hi) and AF-C with Animal Eye AF enabled. Short bursts or single frames only were needed, and it was pretty amazing how precise the focus was working out at f2.8. What may look like static poses were not!

We did a shoot using tomatoes dropped into a long glass of

water, just for fun, using the fastest duration on both heads with closer positioning and ISO 640 to allow f5.6, with manual focus and exposure by metering and test frames. The Hi+ setting (10fps) does reduce the dynamic range to 12-bit from 14-bit, so bright water in these is burned out, but that doesn't really matter. The Tamron 28-75mm FE zoom used at 75mm had no chromatic aberration (always a risk with bright water reflections), and later on in the portrait below showed its sharpness, aided by the total absence of any exposure duration related shake. That's a benefit which not all studio flash brings as durations can indeed be in the 1/200-1/500s range – the ELC 500 runs at 1/250s in standard mode at full power (t=0.1).

The longest sequence bursts were only two seconds at 10fps, and the ELCs had no problem keeping up and never lost a frame. Recycling with both 125 and 500 set to 7Ws is just 0.06s working from 230V mains, so capable of better than 16fps. I didn't try running the camera at full speed until it or the flash hit a barrier – trying not to use my 500,000 shot shutter life all in one day!

One great benefit of the heads is the 'mains always on' function with a standby red glow on the rear power switch. The settings last used are remembered, as with most Elinchrom units even when switched off and on again at the mains – common practice with boom or track mounted heads positioned out of reach. The ELC ProHD models turn off completely if you do this and need to be switched on at the head (a service modification can change this). With ELC TTL heads, just switch off and on again at the plug and the heads come alive.

Ergonomically, the new heads are much improved. The bayonet lock is similar to the D-Lite latch but made stronger, and easier to use than a rotating rim. The tilting stand mount is very

Songwriter Natalie Bays photographed using a 100cm deep octa softbox on ELC 500 close to the camera, with 44cm honeycomb rigid softbox on ELC 125 as a hair accent light behind to her right.





robust, the reflector centred umbrella shaft is increased to 8mm from 7mm and there's no external one in the mount. The big grab handle on the top is needed as the barrel of the body is large to hold otherwise. The new standard reflector and other accessories are finished in very dark grey, a switch from the traditional light colour of Elinchrom. Some third party EL bayonet accessories didn't fit the heads, as the body is tailored exactly to the profile of the genuine products. The new protective cap is compact, reducing overall storage size, but won't fit heads with conventional modelling bulbs.

The flashtube is covered by a ventilated pyrex dome. There may be a frosted one available in future to iron out any discrepancy in the modelling light and flash illumination, as previews and as shot. I found the LED gave odd effects with just a few light

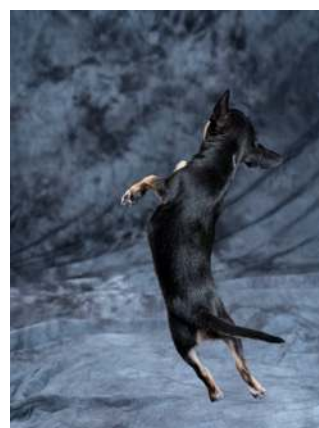
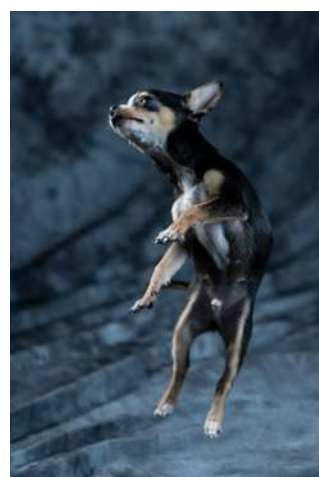
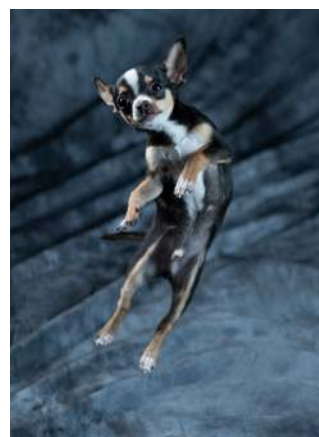
shapers, notably the conical snoot. Surprisingly, the optical mini spot was very faithful between modelling and flash effect – and naturally any reflected or soft sources worked just as normal. All small modelling sources produce different effects, and Elinchrom's original Super Leuci large bulbs preview flash tube light better.

With the new LED modelling there will be no bulbs to replace, so that's a cost of ownership reduced. The flash tube and dome are user replaceable, the modelling LED is a service replacement. Does an LED have a longer life than a flash tube? From experience of LEDs so far, I'd suggest not. Time will tell. We have seen great advances in LEDs over the last few years. Elinchrom must be convinced that the unit they have chosen is a mature design and will have a long production life. It is, after all, the first time they have put LED modelling into

an AC mains head and they have waited to be able to get this right.

As for video, each head still has an intelligently controlled cooling fan – even the 125. So they have limited use with sound recording. With any flash able to fire at a 16fps burst rate cooling is needed. For events, school portraiture, fashion or sports action shoots at typical power settings around 30 Ws per head the rate of firing may be slower but photographers don't want thermal cut-out half way through a day of hundreds or thousands of shots. This is the big difference between the existing D-Lites, BRX, and ELC ProHD models – recommended duty cycle. At entry level you can shoot sessions with hundreds of shots, at the top level with thousands. The new ELC TTL heads have a medium-duty rating similar to BRX.

The standard duration mode, toggled to Action by pressing



Alfie's photo shoot involved much running and jumping with AF-C and single frame or Hi drive setting. The two heads were set at low powers showing very fast durations, needing f2.8 at ISO 100 with Sony's 85mm f1.8 lens.

Photoshop composite warning! See caption... Alfie dancing with himself, high speed poses with Animal Eye AF on the camera, 85mm f1.8 lens at f2.8, and Action duration set on the two heads. Main 90cm square softbox on ELC 500 to the right of the camera, 44cm honeycomb rigid softbox on ELC 125 to the left, skimming in from side and behind, near the edge of the background. Dog handling by Diane Redpath; lighting, camerawork and post-production by David Kilpatrick.



a button on the back panel marked with a star, offers 5600K colour temperature with a $\pm 150\text{K}$ stability on the 125 head and ± 200 on the 500. The LED is 5700K. Unlike flash heads with bright

tungsten modelling, you won't get a warmed-up result by using strong modelling and low flash power with a shutter speed like 1/30s or 1/60s. Photographers today often forget that some of the classic fashion,

beauty, figure and portrait work of the 1960s to 90s was taken using studio flash with 650W halogen modelling turned down to minimum flash power to enable wider apertures, on medium

format cameras like Pentax 67 or Hasselblad 2000F which synced at speeds like this. With leaf shutters capable of X-sync at 1/500s, speeds like 1/60s were used to allow the modelling to add

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The LED modelling light in the ELC heads outputs 3000 lumens from a small circular source located dead centre of the ring-shaped flash tube. With the Conical Snoot, top, there's a significant difference between visual modelling (top left) and flash exposure (top right). This also applies to some reflectors and also honeycomb grids, but not to softboxes with fabric panels, or umbrellas. Lower pair, the preview using the Elinchrom Mini Spot optical spot – which does not overheat with the LED – closely matches the final flash result.

warmth and enrich the colours on transparency or negative colour film. What you get from the ELC TTL heads and any mix of LED and flash, even with dragged shutter effects to combine movement flow with frozen detail,

is a constant daylight colour temperature. The 3000 lumens output is enough to shoot at $f1.4$ or $f2$ hand-held for subjects like newborns, using no flash.

In the ELC TTL heads, Elinchrom has combined most of

the key features of mains studio flash with the functions of the ELB 500 TTL portable kit. The ELC ProHD models remain best for very heavy duty work, high power to 1000 Ws, and advanced programmable functions. For most

users a set of ELC TTL heads will be all the studio flash needed for many years to come. The ELC 125, not much bigger than a D-Lite One, is ideal for social studios shooting portraits, groups, babies and small products.

The reliability of the brand, its 30-year history of British-Swiss synergy, and the solid service provided by The Flash Centre in the UK outweigh the cost advantages of buying one of the lesser competitors in the new field of TTL studio flash – makes which might be considered equal cost more. If your existing light shapers and accessories are EL fit, the decision is easy. If you're moving from the Bowens S reflector fit adaptors are easy to find.

The ELC TTL heads are sold individually and also as kits – 125/125, 125/500 and 500/500. Prices start at under £500 for the single 125 to around £1200 for two 500s in a well-designed bag, all heads coming with the new 16cm reflector and all warranted for three years.



See: www.theflashcentre.com
When enquiring please mention *Cameracraft's review!*



Water splash at faster than 1/7000s flash duration on both heads, shot using the Tamron 28-75mm f2.8 FE at f5.6, manually focused, ISO 400. From 10fps Hi+ sequence shots with nearly symmetrical flash to rear and sides. Facing page, variations on the theme – the bottom right hand shot is a composite of two frames, made possible by working on a tripod. Set-up design and tomato dropping by Diane Redpath, lighting and camerawork by David Kilpatrick.



Tamron 20mm f2.8 FE

Part of the Japanese lens-maker's lightweight, affordable *f2.8* series for full frame mirrorless use, the Tamron ultra close focusing primes in Sony mount live up to the reputation already established by their 28-75mm and 17-28mm zooms.

Tamron is aiming to create a complete set of lenses for mirrorless full frame bodies with reduced size and weight to match models like the Sony A7 series. Right now, the lenses are only made in Sony FE mount but their specifications are a potential ideal match to Canon R, Nikon Z and the Sigma-Panasonic-Leica L mount.

Until any future launch of further mounts, Tamron has updated the firmware for many Nikon and Canon SLR mount lenses to give the best compatibility with AF adaptors for the new mirrorless bodies. There have been rumours about other mounts ever since the 2018 launch of the 28-75mm *f2.8* Di III FE mount model – perhaps photokina 2020, in May, will confirm these.

The Di III series shares a single carefully chosen filter thread, 67mm. It is just enough, we believe, for the rumoured 70-180mm *f2.8* to share it. In the past, many 80-200mm zooms had 72mm filter threads and it's only with the growth of 'pro-looking bloat' that 77mm filters became standard despite the relative difficulty in handling them.

The 67mm size is easy to hold single-handed and even to shuffle two filters in one hand. The lens barrel diameter which goes with it is also a comfortable fit in the hand. By keeping the size and weight of the Di III lenses down, Tamron has created a series which just works much better in the field (or indeed the studio) than bulky alternatives.

All of the Di III lenses are also *f2.8* – no slower, no faster. This is an ideal aperture for sensor-based AF whether phase or contrast detect. To keep size down in a midrange zoom, the focal range is restricted to 28-75mm instead of the usual 24-70mm, and in the



*The 20mm is compact, though it's fair to say some Leica M mount and even Nikon manual focus lenses of the same focal length (usually *f4* or *f3.5*) are no bigger with an adaptor. The front is absolutely plain inside, no lettering to reflect (right) and the focusing extends inside the rim.*



wide zoom, 17-28mm rather than 16-35mm.

For the wide-angle prime series, *f2.8* allows one consistent size and weight for 20mm, 24mm and 35mm lenses. Only the close focus changes, from 11cm with the 20mm to 15cm on the 35mm. All three focus to half life size, an impressive and officially macro specification indicated by M1:2 on the barrel. The other writing includes the focal length and aperture, Di III, and 'OSD' for Optimized Silent Drive, the AF motor used. This was introduced with the 35-150mm *f2.8-4* Di portrait zoom for Canon and Nikon DSLRs in April 2019.

The front of the lenses has no writing at all, just a plain matt black with a deeply recessed optical assembly and in all three cases a fairly small front element. This is fluorine treated to resist water and dirt. The plain front means that neutral density, polarising or plain filters when fitted will not create a reflection of bright lettering, which so often happens with wide-angles engraved inside the filter thread.

This is about the best most 20mm lenses can achieve – one fifth life size (the Tamron 17-28mm zoom achieves around one sixth at 20mm)





With lens profile correction enabled in Adobe Camera Raw, ISO 1250 at f2.8 and 17mm captures plenty of detail in a music venue.

The Tamron 20mm f2.8 M1:2 focuses down to half life size. The difference changes what you can shoot, and how. At f9 the depth of field still gives a strongly defocused background scene.



Since the Di III primes have no MF/AF switch, no custom or hold button, and just a broad focusing ring controlling 'by wire' electronically the weather and dirt sealing is good. They can be used in rain with less worry than most Sony native lenses. They also have no stabilisation, being made mainly for use with new sensor-stabilised bodies. This simplicity results in a highly affordable £399 price including VAT regardless of focal length. Manufacture in Vietnam no doubt helps, and there's certainly no loss of quality for these Japanese-designed models, as the two zooms have proved.

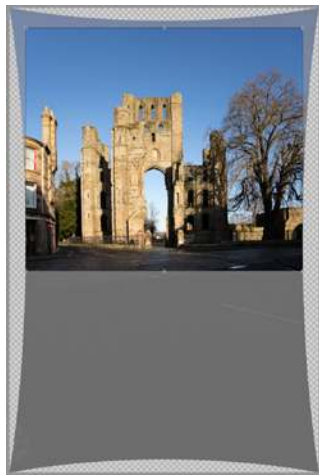
While the understated slightly matt finished build is light at 210-221g in the 73 x 63.5mm matching barrels, the lens mount is metal and on the 20mm I tested, a really snug fit. The plastic petal bayonet lens good supplied is also a good firm simple fit unlike many.

The 20mm performance

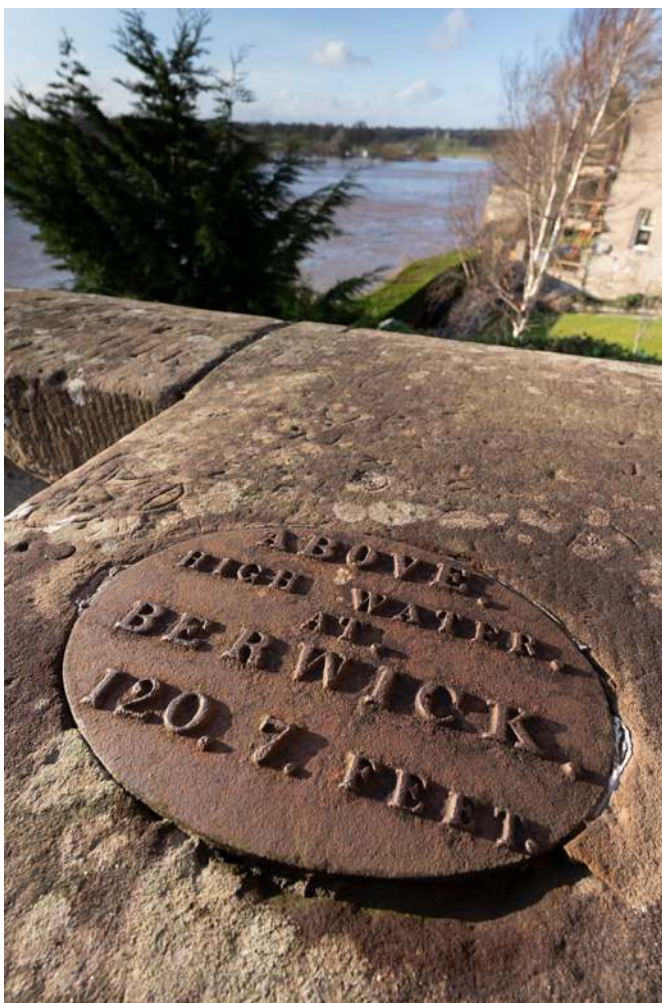
It's tempting to say that the performance of these lenses is guaranteed. Advances in design and quality control in the last few years mean that very few new lenses fall short of exceptional resolution, enough for 50 megapixels full frame or more. Most have superb flare resistance and surprisingly simple optical design. The 20mm is just 10 elements in 9 groups as the most complex of the three.

How is this possible? First of all, the 18mm mount register allows total freedom in lens design, very different from the inconvenient retrofocus demands of SLR mounts. The concave large rear element sits at a distance from the focal plane well within the mirror action of an SLR. Second and a vital factor is that this is not a rectilinear wide-angle. It relies on a firmware embedded lens profile to produce straight lines and even illumination in JPEG images processed by the Sony A7, A6000 and earlier NEX series bodies (just enable Lens Correction for Geometry and Vignetting in the setup menu).

The raw focal length of the 20mm is around 18mm, and



Using manual correction and no profile, the degree of distortion is seen above. A crop from 42MP makes 20mm as useful as a shift lens, right.



With lens profile correction applied, the geometry is good for a 20mm. Close focus helps at f10 and the near corners are not too soft.

diagonal corner to corner coverage without the lens profile applied is very similar to a vintage Pentax 18mm semi-fisheye wide angle. Adobe has now enabled the built-in profile for *Camera Raw* and *Lightroom* and also a menu listed *.lcp* profile. A manual distortion correction of +39, which is around -12% (barrel) distortion, yields a geometry

not as perfect as this but very acceptable. The in-camera JPEG correction is as good as the Adobe or built-in raw profile, and removes a slight hint of wave in the straight lines parallel and close to the long side of the frame.

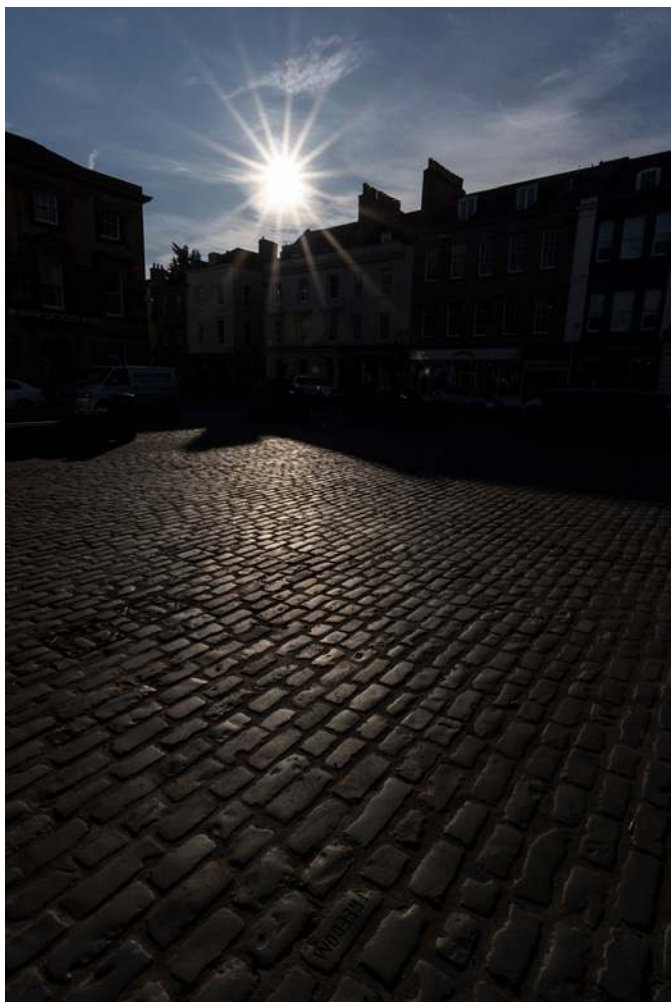
Through the EVF of the Sony body, the profile is applied, so you see the adjusted coverage which is significantly less than

the raw view. Turn lens profiling off, and you have an 18mm lens with visible barrel distortion. In this form, the raw file reveals exceptional corner to corner performance even wide open on subjects at normal distances – and it's maintained well, with some field curvature, right to the macro 1:2 close focus. Claims in early on-line tests that the 20mm is really a 22mm because of the profile correction should be disregarded.

However, other reports claiming the 20mm is near-perfect would make you think it competes with lenses like the 18mm Batis Distagon. Due to the need for profiled correction, and the corners are magnified enough to lose the sharpness of the uncorrected image. This is more obvious wide open, and less by f5.6. In-camera JPEGs seem to preserve sharpness well into the corners, even wide open, and the Adobe profile comes a close second. There's some magic happening in the built-in, in-camera approach.

Vignetting is also corrected. Left alone it's strong wide open, and improves to f5.6 with minor gains at f8 and then f11. In the past, 20mm lenses were often used routinely at f11 to get good coverage. This lens, like most modern designs, can be used with confidence at all apertures.

It's hard to induce flare directly into the sun, but with a little effort placing lights right at the frame edge can produce a touch. The iris creates a neat sun star. Contrast and colour are both very clean.



All this is good. What is less so is the performance of the Sony-protocol autofocus and the AE stepper control which adjusts the aperture. The 20mm works well at $f/2.8$ and $f/4$, but as you stop down, the clunky Sony aperture control and hunt-re-hunt AF slows down AF-S considerably. AF-C is generally better, and video capture (which locks the aperture at $f/3.5$) has smooth AF despite slight noises which demand the use of an external microphone. The RXD focus of the FE zoom duo is much quieter and works better. Firmware updates may improve things but a lot has to do with the camera system itself.

At apertures from $f/8$ to $f/22$ AF on the 20mm can be slow but the Sony A7RIII has trouble with many native lenses. The behaviour of this prime is not identical to the 17-28mm zoom set to 20mm. If you want faster AF and auto exposure control, and much the same image quality, the zoom at over twice the price offers it. You don't get the small, light lens for travel but you get exactly the same convenient

filter size, $f/2.8$ aperture and the benefit of the zoom range.

This leaves one big bonus from the 20mm (and the other prime wides) – the macro focusing. With the lens hood removed, the optical unit moves well forward and the closest subject almost touches the lens hood. Lighting direction matters! If you can avoid shadows cast on the subject, the close focus with wide aperture differential bokeh is fun to use. You can't get this with the 17-28mm, the best it achieves is between 1:5.2 and 1:6 scale.

As an alternative to the 17-28mm for use with the 28-75mm, the 20mm is ideal. I'd like to see a 14mm or 15mm perhaps with $f/4$ or $f/3.5$ as its maximum aperture in this series – no doubt Tamron would want an $f/2.8$ prime shorter than 17mm. And hopefully they will want to bring this groundbreaking, affordable full frame mirrorless series to mounts other than Sony FE.

– David Kilpatrick

<https://www.tamron.eu>



Two views in a cobbled square – the 20mm when used directly into the sun shows hardly any trace of flare or ghosting. Moving the sun just out of the top left corner did produce a flare arc in the bottom right. The sun star here is at $f/22$. At this aperture, the lens is not very sharp because of diffraction and also has trouble focusing because of the Sony AF limitations. Below, at $f/14$ the 20mm is very sharp and depth of field covers from the engraved giant granite sett (shoulder high) to the town hall. Correction of verticals using Adobe Camera Raw perspective controls.



The truth will out

Once upon a time there was a saying: “The photograph doesn’t lie”. While mostly true, you could still lie in the old days by attaching false captions or using a forced perspective.

Lying by manipulation came much later – it was used heavily by the Soviets during the time of Stalin, and then by the advertising industry (which is synonymous with lying, really) with the invention of the Scitex imaging workstation in the 1970s. But the ability to really lie via manipulation didn’t reach the masses until *Photoshop* came along.

People (journalists and academia, mostly) started to sound the alarm in the 1970s about how you can’t rely on the photograph for evidentiary purposes anymore. And I started to collect examples of famous photo manipulations in history which made a difference (good and bad). Linking to these on-line is possible, but the editor says reproducing them here in print is often not affordable as they are copyright, so I’ve made my own photographic lie – that’s me in Star Trek...

Gary Friedman patented a camera whose output could be trusted. Nikon and Canon stole the idea. “What happened next will shock you” – to steal a clickbait line...



more information than they think, including all the usual EXIF information (date, time, shutter speed, f-stop, white balance, and sometimes focus point), and GPS coordinates, making it trivially easy for Big Brother to track you while you’re on vacation happily posting pics to social media.

Space age problem

Back in my NASA days I identified this as a problem that needed solving – in my view, society was relying too heavily on the image whose sanctity was eroding, and I made it my mission to restore it.

The vast majority of photographers who care about this stuff rely on the camera embedding the following variables into the metadata (usually called the EXIF fields) of the image by the camera:

- Copyright and author info
- Camera body serial number
- Lens info
- Date/time
- GPS info

Not one of these is effective because they can all be edited without leaving a trace. Download a copy of EXIFtool:

<https://bit.ly/32bsNaz>

for example. Not only does this software show you ALL of the embedded variables written by the camera (more than *Photoshop* will show you, to be sure), it also lets you manipulate the EXIF fields via command line. For example, to change the camera model to “DSC-RX100M5” in all RAW files in a directory, just type in `exiftool -SonyModelID="DSC-RX100M5" *.ARW`

at a command prompt and it is done! This is a way in which raw files from brand new digital cameras can sometimes be processed before the official update to raw processing software, by changing the EXIF data in every file to a previous camera model which uses a nearly identical sensor.

On the flip side, non-photographers are often unaware that pictures they shoot with their smartphone contain much

My solution

The solution I came up with was much more bullet proof, and yet imposed no restrictions on image use and required no special or restrictive formats. Taking a picture with my special digital camera would produce two files: The first is an industry-standard image file like a .jpg or RAW file, which can be used as you would any other image file (you can even manipulate it if you wish). The second file is a smaller encrypted “hash” file called a digital signature which is kept alongside the first file to enable validation later on.

If the image hasn’t been manipulated, you’ll be able to prove it in court by feeding the image in question, the encrypted hash file, and the camera’s serial number into freely available verification software. If even a single bit has been altered, validation will fail.

Wait, there’s more! My invention also sought to thwart the classic, non-manipulation methods of lying as well, such as attaching false captions or taking a picture of a manipulated image. To combat these time-honored methods, my camera would add a colorful border around each image which contained bitmapped text describing when and where the camera was: it would note all the usual data covered in EXIF fields (shutter speed, f-stop, ISO, white balance), the time and date, a compass showing what direction the camera was pointed to, the distance the lens was focused to (to catch copying a manipulated image), and even the GPS coordinates of where the camera was using a built-in GPS receiver. Clearly



this was an optimistic prediction, because back in the 1990s when this invention was proposed, GPS receivers were so big they took up a goodly portion of a B2 bomber's electronics space.

How the camera works would take too long to describe in this short magazine article; however if you'd like to learn the details, I refer you to read the full technical paper, published in the November 1993 edition of IEEE Proceedings of Consumer Electronics:

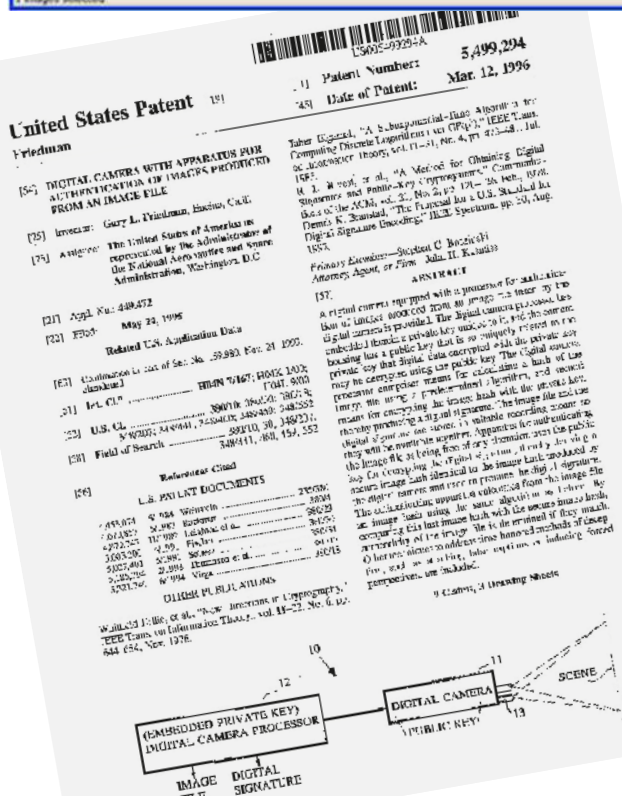
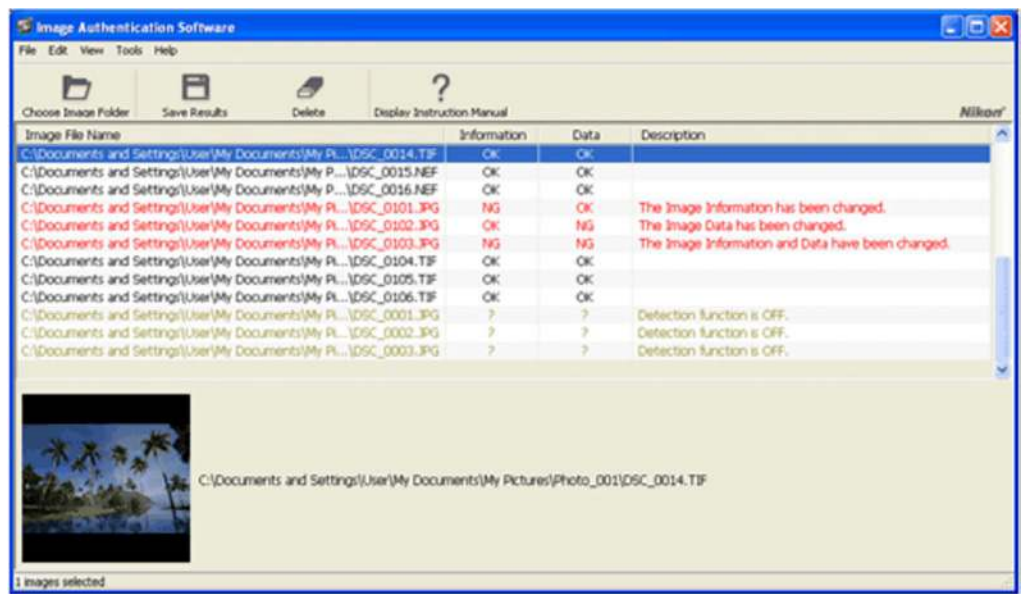
<https://bit.ly/2V3H4EW>

As a NASA employee, whenever you invent something, NASA owns it whether it was work related or not. They unleash their army of patent lawyers to file a patent and pursue it until it's granted. And they give me a \$500 award, which NASA thinks is a great deal because most patents never make any money and the engineer doesn't have to spend tens of thousands of US Dollars getting the patent on their own. NASA also has the means to advertise the patent to large US-based companies for licensing, again something individual engineers can not do. Fair enough.

There was interest. Polaroid Corporation, who had been searching for a solution to this very problem for over a decade, flew a cadre of executives to California to hear me give a talk on the subject, with the intent of possibly licensing the idea. But Polaroid collapsed before it could be acted upon.

Then something interesting happened. In 2003, Canon stole my idea. With the introduction of the EOS-1Ds, Canon also introduced the Data Verification Kit DVK-E1 which works only with this high-end camera. Three years later, Nikon did the same thing with the introduction of the Nikon Image Authentication Software, which worked only with their high-end D2Xs DSLR, and later the D2HS, D2X, and D200 cameras.

Frustrated, I appealed to the NASA patent office, pointing out the blatant theft of intellectual property, but they did nothing. As it turns out, the patent was only filed for and granted in the USA (Canon and Nikon are both Japanese companies), and



Just as I was just starting to learn to let go of the outcome (a valuable lesson for inventors and non-inventors alike), the whole thing collapsed. A Russian research firm called Elcomsoft identified a flaw in Canon's implementation, exposing the private encryption key and rendering all of the cameras using this product inert. Nikon's scheme was similarly broken six months later. In both cases, the secret encryption key had been extracted from the camera, a sign that the hardware system was designed by engineers unfamiliar with data security techniques. Had either of those companies hired me to be their product manager, those breaches never would have happened – it was a poor implementation.

I was even more disheartened that neither company made any attempt to fix their product or come out with a new, stronger version. While Canon made a tiny announcement that the system had been compromised and invited customers to contact them, Nikon was completely silent. The products just died, just like Kodak's PhotoCD standard. And the world either hadn't noticed or doesn't seem to miss it.

Like all young inventors, I thought my solution was going to save the world, especially when the photo was being used as courtroom or insurance evidence. Shortly after the patent was granted I approached a lawyer friend of mine and excitedly told him about my invention. He shrugged it off.

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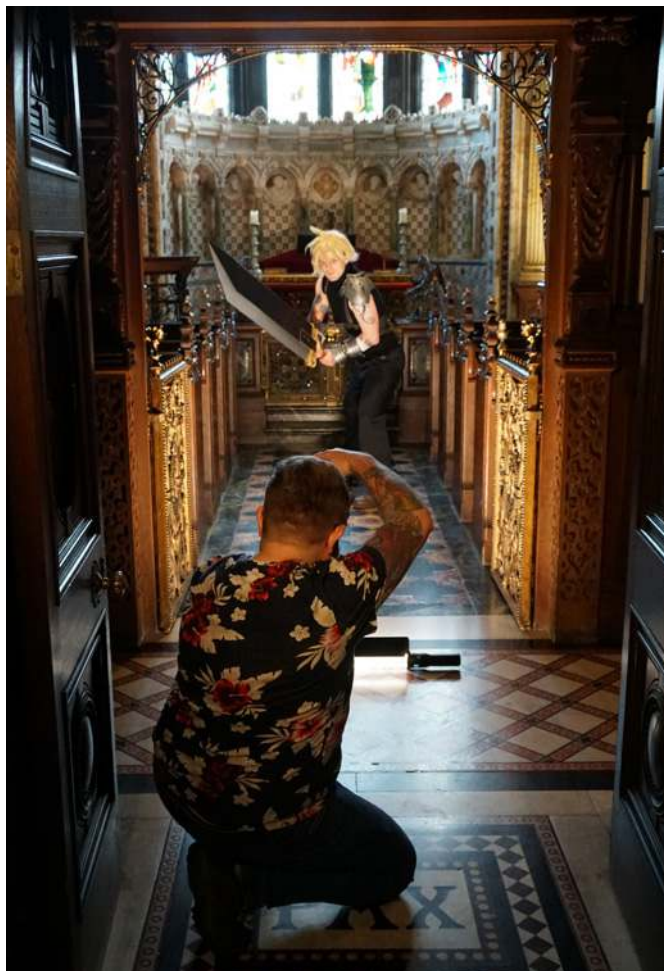
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PhotoHubs

From a great training day on Saturday February 1st at Crewe Hall – top, Iain Poole's cosplay workshop (photo – Diane Redpath); centre, Sarah Wilkes lighting male portraiture with Elinchrom's new egg-crate grids; bottom, Henry Ransby on Wildlife (photos – David Kilpatrick).



Creative Light

Issue 35
magazine



FLOWER ART - GAILLE GRAY
WEDDINGS - CHRIS CHAMBERS

FAMILY - LUCI SCHOFIELD
PROJECT BATHTIME - LEE GLASGOW

SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY - JOHN BOLLOTEN
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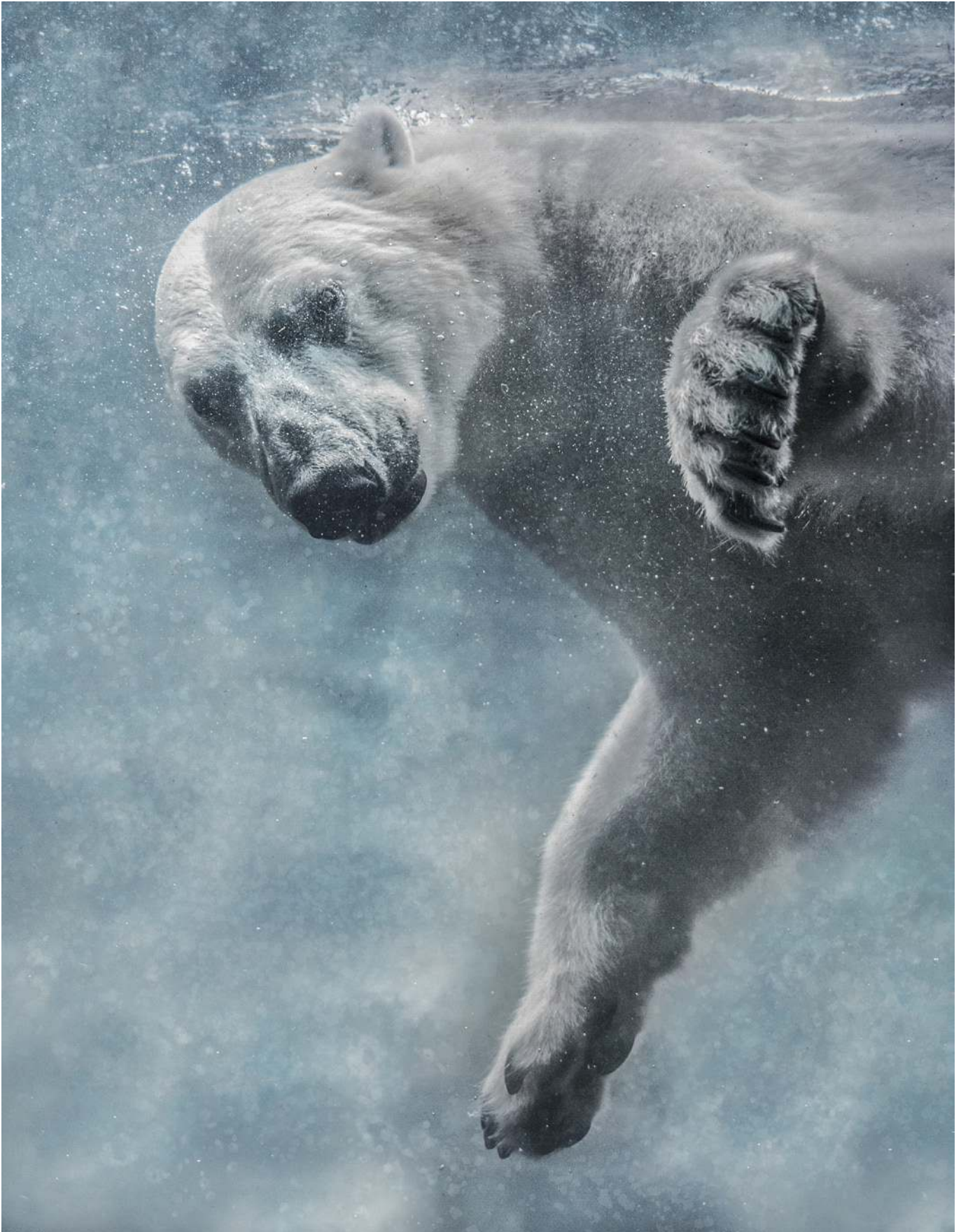
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GUILD OF PHOTOGRAPHERS ANNUAL AWARDS

THE BIG WINNERS





Attending the Guild's annual awards night last month, the single aspect which struck most was the fair and wide distribution of accolades judged by very fair processes such as the accumulation of monthly competition successes, and votes by all members as well as by judges. The Guild judges' Image of the Year was awarded to the architectural study by Nick Brown, above left. Nick used a Sony A7III with 16-35mm f4 Vario-Tessar T* at 26mm, exposing for 1/200s at f13, ISO 100. Nick also won the Urban Photographer of the Year – and with the three b&ws including those above, won the Founders' Cup (in memory of Ian Gee and Roy Doorbar, founders of the Guild in 1988, who both passed away in late 2016). The Image of the Year Members' Choice was Claire Norman's underwater swimming polar bear, left. Sarah Wilkes won Guild Photographer of the Year with the highest overall score (example, bottom left) and the Guild All-Round Photographer is Lynne Harper for the highest total in two categories only (example, below right).



Even inanimate objects have a story – and when you photograph them, there's even more to tell. Photographers are not always aware of what they put into interpreting the brief for a shot, or solving problems. Then, when you get talking about individual images, you find out what challenges have been faced or ideas put into practice.

It's something I would like to see more of in this magazine, so here is a challenge for everyone – send me a single image which has a story behind it, whether in the subject or the techniques used to capture it, along with a few paragraphs about the picture.

In the US *Rangefinder* magazine of Wedding and Portrait Photographers International, individual images or commissions have always been shown and explained, with lighting diagrams for studio work. Once this involved getting sketches from photographers and having an artist create the diagrams. Now it is easy to make your own and some of the on-line tools available do far more, enabling you to create virtual lighting set-ups ahead of tackling a job. There are many other ways to 'diagram' a shot in or out of the studio (*Illustrator* or other graphics software included) and even a sketch can be translated to something.

This is a direction I'd like to take for *Cameracraft* in future – more practical examples of work discussed and explained by the photographers.

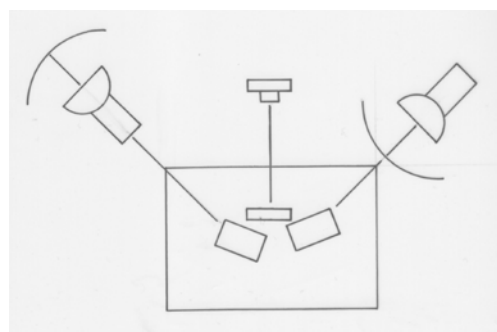
Words not pictures

For many pictures words are enough to explain the background to the image and how it was taken. A single picture of good size on the page allows around 300 words (that's what Ian Knaggs' review of ChromaLuxe on page 30 comes to).

Let's say you have taken a portrait which features an unusual subject, or setting, or had a special reason for being commissioned. Any of those aspects can be the 'intro' – the first paragraph or two needs to tell the story in brief and the rest can fill in the details. Portraiture should mean

CAMERACRAFT

Behind every picture there's a story to be told



Above, Elixier software lets you show lighting set-ups clearly. Left, a diagram from 30 years ago produced for a Prolinca lighting guide. Either way works. Even a sketch on a post-it note!

some connection with the subject, listening to what they have to say. Sometimes that is purely personal but often it's connected with their business, with a charity or a cause, with sport or a hobby and they will be happy to see something published.

Products also have their story, sometimes linked to an entrepreneur or inventor. In the past I photographed many products before they came to market because I worked in a city where engineering was a major sector. If I was to return to commercial practice where I am now, I'd probably be photographing new packaging and presentation as it's an agricultural area supplying food and drink. These are very different fields and although I also food I never specialised in it – tips from photographers who did it

day in day out were more than useful.

What kind of images could you show and write about without giving away all your trade secrets? Have a think about it and send me an email:

editor@iconpublications.com

I'm always willing to look at work online or consider a Dropbox (to that email) of suitably sized work to assess.

Lighting diagrams

One of the best virtual 3D studio programs is Elixier **set.a.light 3D** (it's not free but a trial version can be downloaded for either Mac or PC). You can get this from:

www.elixier.com

But there are many options including some from flash manufacturers and some suitable for

showing outdoor situations with reflectors. It's not all about lighting and the way these programs and on-line services show subjects and the camera position varies.

The Online Lighting Diagram Creator (ODLC) can be found at **www.lightingdiagrams.com**

There is a new 'Lite' version and also iPad support in a recent beta release. This site flagged up 'not secure' on Chrome but seems to be completely genuine just without https.

A very similar URL misses out the plural diagrams but is secure:

www.lightingdiagram.com

This was supported by Lastolite from 2012 onwards so features graphic representations of their products. It's UK software and accepts Paypal for credits which allow commercial use of the resulting diagrams in books, magazines or on websites.

Elinchrom's *SkyPort* software at one time included lighting diagram creation as well as control of complete setups via a USB dongle, which is still available. However, times have moved on and control directly from camera transmitters and mobile devices has taken over. You can't download the software now but my last version still works.

Although *Cameracraft* is supported by the Guild of Photographers, and supports the Guild in return, this is open to any photographer reading here. If we are able to print a one-page tutorial, you will be able to share a JPEG of the page on social media and you'll be listed in as a contributor. If your photography and writing impresses... well, it can be a path to greater things. There are brand ambassadors and international leaders in photo tuition who got their first break through Icon Publications. We helped start the careers of more than one future editor of 'rival' titles and several photo book authors.

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– David Kilpatrick

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