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**ISSUE 121
SPRING 2025**

Better Photography

A FISHERMAN'S TALE **Photographer – Urs Buhlman**



CAMBERWELL CAMERA CLUB'S PROJECT • BE ENCAUSTIC WITH JACKIE RANKEN

UNDERSTANDING COLOUR SPACES • MIKE LANGFORD CHANGES HIS MIND





KEEPERS

PHOTOGRAPHER: Peter Eastway

LOCATION: Gold Harbour, South Georgia

CAMERA: Fujifilm GFX100S II, 500mm f/5.6

EXPOSURE: 1/1000 second @ f5.6, ISO 3200

SITUATION: This head and shoulders of a King Penguin was photographed on a misty, almost rainy afternoon. Many photographers might lament the flat light, but when it comes to photographing black feathers (okay, so nothing in nature is actually black, but they're pretty dark), this type of soft light was absolutely perfect. And what I love about this capture (compared to the other 1000 or so I shot that afternoon) is the blurred penguin creating a double behind and the water droplets sitting up on top of the King's head.





KEEPERS

PHOTOGRAPHER: Philip Holloway

LOCATION: Bangkok, Thailand

CAMERA: Nikon D300s, 18-200mm zoom at 60mm.

EXPOSURE: 1/100 second @ f6.3, ISO 200

SITUATION: "I loved using my Nikon D300s with the 18-200 lens as a travel companion because of its versatility and relatively light weight. This image was captured during a trip to Bangkok where I ventured off the usual tourist tracks by catching a train into the outer suburbs. Not being totally fearless, I did have a local accompany me who could speak both English and Thai. As we walked from the train station, we noticed this elderly man shading himself from the heat of the morning in front of what I presumed was his 'lean to'. Via my interpreter, I learned that the old man now had very little sight and spent much of his day here, sheltering from sun and rain. He was very happy that we had stopped to speak with him and he had an infectious laugh that made us smile. He was very comfortable for me to take a few photos during our conversation.



Cover photo by Urs Buhlman.
See article on page 14.

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Photo by Michael Coyne. Full story page 76.



Photo by David Bignell. Full story page 24.

Beautifully designed to hand around, the Storybook will have your audience enthralled with its leather wrap and Amalfi paper. And you can order your own.

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When the World Press Photo Exhibition opened in Sydney this year, Michael Coyne was invited to give a keynote presentation. This is an edit of his speech.

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Where does photography stop and art begin – and does it matter? Jackie Ranken doesn't think so, explaining her love of the encaustic process.

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Unlike politicians, photographers are expected to change their mind – at least from time to time. Mike Langford explains.

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Is minimalism everything it is cracked up to be, or is there an alternative that works better for photographers? Murray White investigates.

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Len Metcalf discusses walking with the camera as an art making process. A two part series, this first article gives the background arguments as to why walking and photographing are incredibly important, not only as a technique, but as a practice.



Photo by Mike Langford. Full story page 84.

MASTERPIECES

Urs Buhlman: Unloaded 14

When advertising photographer Urs Buhlman moved to the NSW South Coast, he immersed himself in the local community and their commercial fishing.

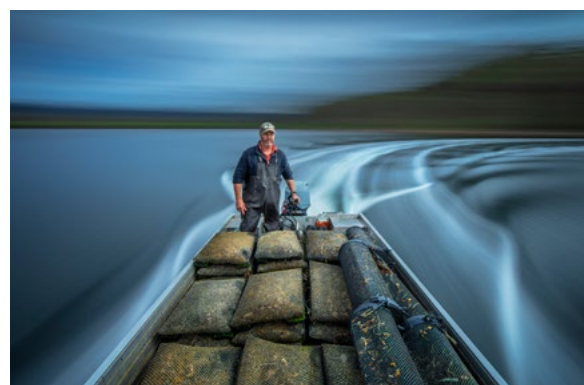


Photo by Urs Buhlman. Full story page 14.

Fujifilm X-E5

I'm not one for style over function when it comes to cameras, but then again, I do appreciate a beautifully designed piece of equipment and enjoy using it!

The new Fujifilm X-E5 is certainly stylish! It is lightweight and compact, weighing approximately 445 g, equipped with a back-illuminated 40.2-megapixel X-Trans CMOS 5 HR sensor and the X Processor 5 high-speed image processing engine. The X-E5 is also the first in the X camera series to feature a powerful five-axis in-body stabilisation (IBIS) mechanism, offering up to 7.0 stops in the centre of the image and 6.0 stops at the periphery of the frame – so as long as your subject isn't moving, you've a good chance of freezing the action!

The X-E5 features a top plate crafted from a single piece of machined aluminium. By combining sharp, flat edges with carefully curved surfaces, the top plate delivers both a smooth metallic texture and plenty of rigidity, offering a premium feel when holding the camera. And inside, a new "Classic Display" mode provides a clean viewfinder image with key information at the bottom of the frame.

Other features include a Film Simulation dial with three customisable recipes for working straight out of camera and videographers can capture 6.2K/30p, 4K/60p, 1080/240p movies and 4:2:2 10-bit internal recording. RRP: \$2,699.

Released with the Fujifilm X-E5, the new XF 23mm F2.8 R WR is an ultra-compact and lightweight lens with an equivalent 35mm focal length in 35mm format). It's the classic 'street photography' focal length and, in keeping with a street photographer's desire to be inconspicuous, the lens is very short with an overall length of only 23 mm and a weight of approximately 90 g. It is smaller and a stop slower than the 23mm f2.0 model, but intentionally so!



Wacom Movink

The Wacom Movink is a pen and tablet, except the tablet is a high resolution monitor so you can use your pen directly on your image. At around 4 mm thick and roughly A4 in size, it weighs just 420 grams and slips into a laptop case with a computer. No, it's not a computer like the old Wacom MobileStudio Pro (the new Macbook M-chip far outperforms it), but it is a touch screen which gives you the ability to draw with the pen or use it as a touch screen.

And while the Samsung-manufactured OLEG screen doesn't match an Eizo either, it's remarkably good with a 100,000:1 contrast ratio and up to 2K resolution. There's a tough anti-glare covering and near-zero latency, meaning that as you draw or move the mouse, there's no discernible lag.

If the monitor you are using is 4K, the Movink will display a 4K image as well, but only at 2K resolution. This shouldn't be seen as a negative as the natural hand motion when drawing on your images remains.



Being both touch screen and pen-enabled, you let your fingers zoom and rotate the screen image, plus use the customisable touch keys in the corners of the screen for a variety of purposes. They are really useful for the times you don't want to use the keyboard, instead using the pen to initiate keystroke features via an on-screen menu.

So, how do you use the Movink? You attach it via a USB cable, which explains the zero-latency, but the cable means you do need to be relatively close to your laptop (or computer) to use it. A super-fast Bluetooth connection would be even better – maybe that's the next model!

In the meantime, take a look at the current Wacom Movink 13. It has a RRP of \$1299.



“DEFINING MOMENTS”

Tony Harrington

A gob smacking 1,350 page coffee table book loaded with photos & stories from Tony Harrington's 40+ years chasing surf and snow: Australia, NZ, Indonesia, Tahiti, Hawaii, Mexico, USA, Europe, Alaska and Greenland.

“Harro captures the essence and culture of these sports, honouring the lifestyle and the characters as much as the action.”

- Reggae Elliss Publisher/Editor.

“The missions he embarks upon, the people he associates with – it's groundbreaking and is inspired by a desire to capture those moments of nature's most raw power and energy.”

- Barton Lynch, surfing legend.

“Few have documented as many ‘defining moments’ as Harro, none have done it with his level of stoke and excitement!”

- Jeremy Jones, founder of Jones Snowboards.

This mammoth book measures 345mm x 244mm and opens out to 690mm giving the stunning images ample room to breathe.

This beautiful hard-cover tome has a classic black Sakura cloth fabric cover with silver embossed title and an Oxford Hollow reinforced binding and comes wrapped and carefully protected in a custom cardboard shell.

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Wacom Intuos Pro M

Wacom has been making pen and tablets for more years than we can remember. In fact, we remember Wacom boasting that its pen had over 2000 pressure levels, but that's a long time ago – it has had 8,192 pen pressure levels for many versions now. So what's the latest?

When we opened the Wacom Intuos Pro M (it comes in three sizes, Small, Medium and Large), we were impressed with the thoughtfulness of the new package, especially the pen. Not everyone adapts to a pen easily, but with the new model, it comes with two different pen sleeves (depending on how you like to hold your pen), an adjustable weight unit which will balance the pen when it sits in your hand and you can adjust the button configuration on the pen as well. And still no power is needed for the pen itself!

So, we like the new pen, what about the tablet? The medium size includes 10 ExpressKeys and two dials, but you may end up using just half of them (depending on whether you're left- or right-handed). With the dials, you can use them to enlarge the image or enlarge the brush size (as examples); with the ExpressKeys, you have a number of ways of allocating functions to them and the functions change depending on the application you're using. Once set up, these really streamline the use of the tablet and limit the need to interact with your keyboard. The ExpressKeys can be especially useful in conjunction with actions found in Photoshop.

The Medium tablet is slightly smaller than an A4 sheet of paper and almost as thin – well, not quite, but at 4 to 7 millimetres, it's very portable and light. To connect to your computer, you have a choice of USB and Bluetooth, with the thoughtful addition of offering two separate Bluetooth channels, one for your studio computer and the other for your laptop. A nice touch.

The Wacom Intuos Pro M retails for \$599.



International Aerial Photographer of the Year

Professional and amateur photographers were invited to enter the first International Aerial Photographer of the Year competition. From over 1500 entries from around the world, exceeding first-year expectations, the winner of the Inaugural International Aerial Photographer of the Year (based on a folio submission of at least four images) is Joanna Steidle of the United States.

Joanna is a professional drone pilot and artist based in the Hamptons on Long Island, New York. Joanna says, "Aerial photography offers so many possibilities not yet explored. Every day is exciting as I look for unique subjects and moments. I try to stay away from the ordinary. I live in a very flat landscape, so top-down imagery has become quite a theme in my photos which happens to work well with my love for marine life."

The winner of the International Aerial Photograph of the Year (awarded for a single image) is Ignacio Palacios from Australia.

To view all the winners' photos plus see the top 101 entrants, click through to the International Aerial Photographer of the Year website: <https://www.internationalaerialphotographer.com/>

PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR:

First Place: Joanna Steidle, United States

Second Place: Daniel Viñé Garcia, Spain

Third Place: David Swindler, United States

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE YEAR:

First Place: Ignacio Palacios, Australia

Second Place: Talor Stone, United States

Third Place: Thomas Vijayan, Canada

SPECIAL AWARD WINNERS:

Barbara Brown, Australia (Black and White)

Pål Hermansen, Norway (Drone)

Colin Leonhardt, Australia (Abstract)

Fabien Guittard, France (Chairman's Choice)



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Epson's EP-101 Digital Electronic Printer

As a company, Epson traces its roots back to 1942 and the watchmaking industry. For more than eight decades, the company has continued to advance the efficient, compact and precise technologies that they first developed for watches and that have become a part of the DNA that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Epson's network of manufacturing sites and service and support organisations has also expanded globally. Working closely with their sites around the world, the company has expanded its customer base from consumers to business and into the commercial and industrial fields.

Epson launched its first information equipment product, the compact EP-101 digital electronic printer, in 1968. It served as the impetus for the creation of the Epson brand, in 1975. The brand name reflects the company's hopes of preserving the value of the electronic printer ("EP") while continuing to create many valuable derivatives ("SON") – thus EP + SON = EPSON.

In 1975, Epson launched the MP-80, a compact and lightweight computer printer. The MP-80 was the first printer to come standard-equipped with ESC/P, a printer control language created by Epson that would later become the industry's de facto standard.

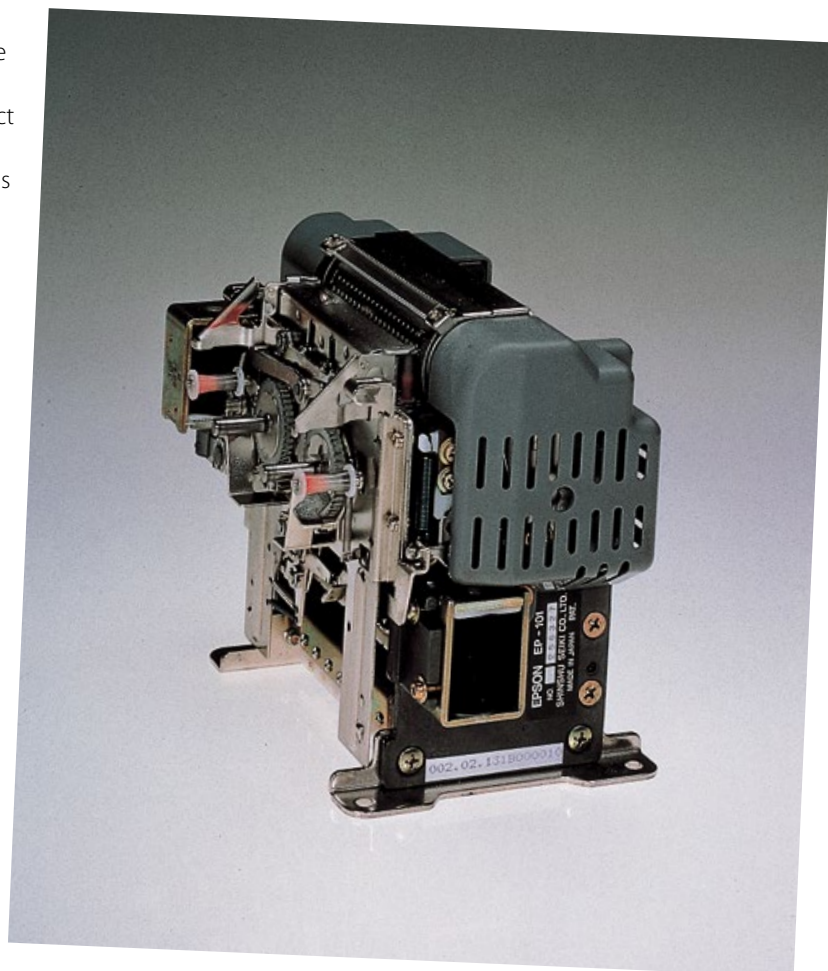
Epson's first projector was the VPJ-700, a compact full-colour LCD video projector released in 1989. This was followed, in 1994, by the ELP-3000, which delivered triple the brightness of conventional models despite its portable, compact and lightweight design. These projectors, coupled with a PC, became widely used in business.

Since its founding, the company has worked to enhance production efficiency by streamlining design and promoting automation. In response to the emergence of high-mix, low-volume production in the early 1980s, it independently developed and designed industrial SCARA robots that serve as the core of a flexible production system.

In 1993 Epson released the MJ-500, an inkjet printer equipped with Epson's proprietary Micro Piezo ink ejection technology. The following year, Epson launched the MJ-700V2C, the world's first printer to deliver high-resolution (720 dpi) at an affordable price.

Epson entered the large-format printer market for professional graphic applications in 2000. The Monna Lisa 160B, a digital textile printing machine was launched in 2003 and earned high praise from designers and the textile industry for its ability to produce a wide variety of products in small quantities, its low waste and small environmental footprint and its ability to render photographic details on fabrics.

In 2010, as production shifted toward short-run print jobs and product life cycles shortened in industries such as food, beverages and cosmetics, Epson launched the SurePress series of digital label presses to meet the diverse printing needs of the commercial and industrial sectors.



Epson's compact and lightweight EP-101 digital electronic printer – released in 1968!

Also in 2010, Epson developed and launched the EcoTank series, printers equipped with high-capacity ink tanks. These high-capacity ink tank printers are currently sold in 170 countries and regions around the world and cumulative sales have surpassed 100 million units.

Micro Piezo technology has continued to evolve, with Epson developing next generation printhead technology called "PrecisionCore." PrecisionCore has made it possible to develop a wide range of products, not only for the home and office but also for commercial and industrial applications.

In 2016, with further miniaturisation of the optical engine and improved cooling performance, Epson launched a high-lumen laser projector, the EB-L25000U. This projector boasted 25,000 lumens of brightness, making it the world's brightest 3LCD system with a laser light source.

Today, the company and the Epson brand are recognised around the world for home printers, business printers, large format printers, projectors and a wide range of other products. Happy birthday, Epson (and yes, Peter Eastway is an Epson Ambassador).

Creative Photography Workshops

Travel Photography Tours

Small Travel groups

Guides/Tutors

Mike Langford & Jackie Ranken

2025 Japan (2 spaces left)
November 21-3 Dec Autumn

2026 Japan (2 Spaces left)
January 12 - 25 Winter

2026 China Landscapes
October 28 - 11 November

2026 Morocco
November 14 - 1 December



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May 2 - 8 Karamea
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June 21 - 26 Canterbury Lakes
July 23 - 28 Mt Cook/Mackenzie
Sept 24 - 29 South Westland

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UNLOADED



URS BUHLMAN



When advertising photographer Urs

Buhlman moved to the NSW South Coast,

he immersed himself in the local

community and their commercial fishing.

A quick survey of the photos on these pages shows that Urs Buhlman is a highly talented photographer. There is a distinct style and point-of-view, but perhaps even more interesting is that he is one of Australia's leading advertising photographers where everything he shoots is locked down. How did a photographer like Urs find himself on the deck of a pitching fishing trawler off Eden on the NSW Far South Coast, where absolutely nothing is under the photographer's control?

Insight

"I was at Eden Wharf looking for photos for another project called Brutal Coast, when a trawler started unloading a haul of Orange Roughy in the rain. I thought to myself, this is serious 'he man' stuff, so I snuck onto the wharf, took a reasonable photo, processed it and thought, this is interesting!

"I decided to drop down to the wharf a second time and the same thing happened, so now I had two images. I admit that as these were photographs taken by a 'photographer', they were perhaps slightly romantic, but nevertheless they were real. In fact, I thought they should look a little hyper-real to reflect the rather jaded history of commercial fishing and the misunderstood 'kill anything that swims' perception of this industry by the public."

But was this true? Was there another side to the story? One of the advantages Urs had was an instant rapport with his subjects – he could talk and work with fishermen without them feeling awkward or under the spotlight. "In my very young years, I was a deckhand and even enrolled in the Australian Maritime College. While I left because a life at sea wasn't for me, I've always retained a strong interest in commercial and recreational fishing.

"You can't just turn up at a wharf with a camera and say, 'Hi'. I had to be upfront about what I wanted to do, but also show them respect for what they were doing. I needed to have an open mind about what they wanted to say, rather than reflect what a publisher wants to hear or print. In fact, I've written quite a few words in *Unloaded* which explain the situation from the fishermen's perspective."

And this is how Urs's *Unloaded* project began, not as something carefully planned and thought about, rather an opportunity that arose by being out there with his camera.

A Local Project

Urs was born in Zurich, Switzerland and was influenced by art, design and photography as his father was a graphic designer. The family moved to Sydney in the 1970s and, living on the harbour, Urs was consumed by fishing, the ocean and all its goings on.

Left: Loaded punt with oyster bags returning to the ramp, Merimbula Lake.



Southern Blue Fin Tuna winched from cold rooms below deck, Eden.



Blue Mussel farmers working the de-clumper, Twofold Bay, Eden.

After a short stint as a professional fisherman, he changed direction completely, working with several professional photographers for a number of years before opening his own studio. "The next 25 years was all commissioned photography, working in various countries with all types of briefs, eventually being categorised as an automotive photographer."

Then the world changed again and Urs adapted by setting up a stock image library, specialising in backplates and 360° domes aimed at the advertising, automotive and transportation market. He still shoots commissioned briefs, but now having moved himself to the NSW Far South Coast, he has more time for personal projects. Like *Unloaded*.

"I discovered that commercial fishing isn't like it used to be and, as I became more confident with the fishermen, they became more relaxed and the whole project opened up. At one stage someone said, 'You've got 100 photos here, why not produce a book?' So I did.

"The book was aimed mainly at the local community and originally I was going to ask Momento to print it. However, as things worked out, I ended up using a local printer.

"Now, if you want to make money out of a project, don't listen to how I did it! For me, the priority was to break-even at best. It was more important for me to produce a meaningful document for the Far South Coast community. In some ways, compared to Sydney I was in a cultural desert. That's one of the things that happens with a sea-change – you can find yourself isolated. Sure, once a year I'll still enter an award to see where I'm at, but then I wonder is it just an ego trip?

"One of the reasons I live in Tura Beach is that there's an airport and in 50 minutes I can be in Sydney. I believe one day



Construction of a trawl net.



Trapping the inner reefs, off Green Cape.

Eden will become the eco capital of Australia – it's so untouched, but it will explode... one day!"

The printing was done on a Fujifilm Xerox machine and Urs said the quality was incredible. "It's as good as an inkjet printer. The only downside is that the book becomes very heavy because the toner is made of clay, so if you're creating a project which will be posted overseas, this could be an issue!"

The book was printed ready for the December market and Urs says 80 per cent of the books sold very quickly. "The Merimbula printer was not used to jobs like this, but it was good for them to give it a go. We produced the book so it wasn't too expensive to buy, but still there was enough margin so the local stores and museums could make money out of it. I was trying to keep everything local which I think people appreciated.

"I got a dozen local sponsors on board which basically paid for the printing and paper, from car yards to a finance company. I made a dummy book, bound it myself and went to see potential sponsors. I never sent an email. I always went cold calling and this is tricky because it puts people on the spot, but it also gave me an advantage. The people I approached could instantly feel my passion and the respect for what I wanted to do for the area.

"In fact, I think it was my enthusiasm that was vital. I only had one rejection and that was from Tuna Australia – that's funny!"

Urs agrees that most photographers wouldn't succeed with his project without fishing experience and knowing how to talk to the fishermen. When you take on a project, personal insight

is invaluable. "We were talking about how many fins a Ling has and why it is that shape. They could see I was into fishing and so I wasn't a danger to them. Importantly, I wasn't taking sides and I was open to what they were telling me. Ninety per cent of the guys were very welcoming, allowed me on board and even made me a cup of tea, but of course there were also one or two bad eggs and I just avoided them."

Hand-Held

"I'm not a camera buff and I don't sleep with them under my pillow. They're a tool that brings my vision to fruition, end of story! I also use very basic cameras with no frills and I don't even use autofocus. I don't trust it and while I know I'm wrong, it's what you're comfortable with. Even so, this project took me out of my comfort zone because I wasn't using a tripod.

"In my commercial days, you stuck your camera on a tripod and worked around from there. You can't work around a subject if the camera is in your hand because as soon as you move two centimetres to the right, everything changes – light, reflections, angles, everything.

"I used one camera and one lens. The camera bag looked like an amateur's, so nothing professional or scary for the fishermen I was photographing. It was all low key. In the beginning, some of the fishermen thought I was the authority from Canberra, so for the first couple of meetings I mightn't have even taken a camera.



Above: Unloading is all about timing and teamwork, Eden Wharf. Below: Boarding the beach haul net, Snug Cove, Eden.





Unloading a diver's haul of Purple Sea Urchin, Snug Cove, Eden.

"My hit rate for this project was very low. It was like a recipe where I needed the right light, weather and fishermen. I didn't want blue skies, but I realised if I was too stringent, the project would take years. On the other hand, we got to a point where the fishermen would turn the boat around so the light was better for me. It's great to get your subjects involved in what you're doing. Some of the fishermen even shot portraits of me so I could show my wife!"

Urs was using a Fujifilm GFX50S with a 32-64mm zoom. "The mid-range zoom allowed me to be close to my subject, so they knew I was there. I think this created an upfront and honest viewpoint."

Urs, despite what he might say, is very much a consummate technician. For instance, for every lens he uses, he knows which aperture setting is the sharpest. "If it's f11, then the lens is stuck at f11! With the Fujifilm GFX, I found two things. First, I like the 4:3 format over the 35mm 3:2 format. There's something not right about 3:2 for me – maybe it comes from shooting 4x5" film. And second, the GFX is a great workhorse. The sensor is good enough to shoot at ISO 1600, so I don't need to touch my aperture to keep the exposure right. On commercial jobs, the aperture might have to change, but for a personal project it can be one of the constants that ties a portfolio of images together.

"Photography is like fishing, there are no guarantees. It's not called 'catching', it's called fishing. And one of the reasons I love fishing is that it's the total opposite of commercial photography where everything is locked off and set up.

"For this project, I'd average one good shot for every three trips. That was my average. Each trip might take three to four hours and I could come back with nothing. Sometimes I was a little despondent. Josie, my wife, would ask if I got one and I'd say, 'Nup'. But you have to believe in yourself here. It's a matter of self-discipline and as soon as you waiver, the project falls apart."

Creating Your Style

"Inspiration for projects like this is completely different to a commercial brief. For a paid job, someone else is providing the initial ideas, but for a personal project, the inspiration comes from within."

So where do Urs' ideas come from? What is his inspiration? "I am definitely driven by music. In the early years, I looked around at my competitors, to see who they were and what their work looked like. In music terms, I found a lot of them were like the Top 40, all much the same, rather than something more distinctive, like heavy metal. But I was into really heavy music and I saw myself as the Black Sabbath of the advertising photography world. And still to this day, nothing has changed!

"It is so important to have a style. It comes out of your veins. I can look at some images and know exactly who took the photograph. I can feel it. That style comes from within you. Sure, there's excellent technique, but great photography has to have both."



Above: Fish trapper with a Maori Octopus, Snug Cove, Eden.

"Of course, I can't always pick who took a photograph, often because the photographer is thinking about the money rather than the art. Some photographers can take a brief and produce it exactly as designed, whereas I battled with my art directors. Why get me to shoot stuff I don't do? Art directors and clients pick me for my style, not for what I charge. Whether professional or amateur, I think you need to create a style that comes from your personality.

"I don't have many photographers as influences, but I've always loved the work of New York based still-life photographer Phil Marco. He was brilliant and stood above the competition by a country mile. I also love the work by English photographer Graham Westmoreland, as well as Nadav Kander. Nadav's commercial work is great, but his personal work, well it's a little disappointing. I thought there must be a mistake! There's also Harry de Zitter, Duncan Sims and Craig Cutler.

"I prefer Albert Watson over Herb Ritts and Helmut Newton. Newton had no technique, but his photography worked because it was all about his ideas and erotic sexual fantasies.

"However, I am more influenced by what I read and one reason I prefer this approach is that I don't want to copy anyone. This might sound high and mighty, but it is an issue in advertising photography. For instance, I used to use a lot of ND grads and suddenly, all my competitors started using them as well. Often the ND grads didn't really suit what they were shooting, but it was seen to be the latest thing."



Hagfish are translocated into aerated fish bins, Eden.



Boxes of Frost Fish are winched from the trawlers cold room, Eden Wharf.

"I felt vindicated one day at a social get-together when an art director walked in and said, 'If I want an Urs Buhlman photo, I hire Urs Buhlman, not someone who is trying to be him.'"

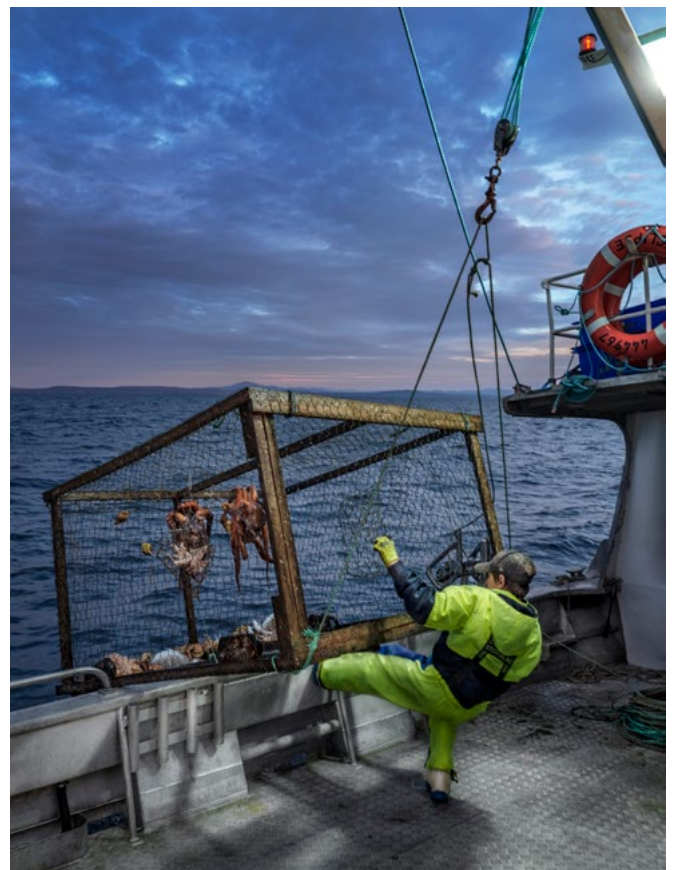
"This all comes back to your style and signature. If you're not different as a photographer, how will you stand out? There are so many of us these days, you need to specialise in some way.

"At a convention, I was asked why my images are so angry? I guess it's because I don't talk about things that are right, rather about things that are wrong. Once people understood this, they looked at my photography in a different way.

"My sentiment and style comes from global dissatisfaction that people are driven by greed. That's an interesting take for an advertising photographer! However, my job is to put bums on seats. Finish. But personally, I am very interested in the pollution of our oceans. It's these issues that are driving me to do projects like this book. I am genuinely interested in commercial fishing and the sustainability of the oceanic world as we are all accountable.

"Style comes from your within and who you are. I'm a glass half full kinda person and my photography tends to reflect that, but it's not meant to be arty-farty, it is what it is. I'm not an artist, I'm a commercial artist. Don't try to be someone else, reflect yourself through your photography. That is vital these days.

"And if you turn professional, never chase the money! Out of the eight photographers I worked for as an assistant only one still takes photos. All the rest are burnt out because money became their focus. Try not to prioritise the money as it's a continually evolving profession."

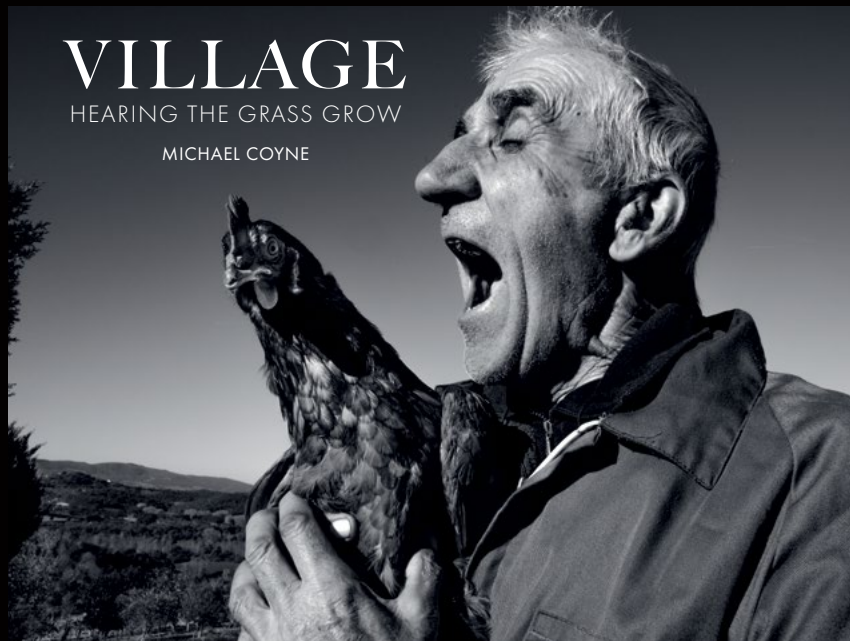


First trap of the day comes in, off Green Cape.

VILLAGE

HEARING THE GRASS GROW

BY MICHAEL COYNE



Around the world traditions are disappearing, languages are being forgotten and cultures washed away.

The main culprit is urbanisation resulting in the wholesale disappearance of villages and village life. It is this that Michael Coyne has made his mission to capture through his probing lens.

This stunning collection guides us through a disappearing way of life at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries.

"MICHAEL COYNE'S MOST RECENT BOOK IS A MASTERPIECE OF DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY."

-PETER EASTWAY, BETTER PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE

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LEFT: Chinese Restaurant owner Ken and customers usher in the Year of the Dragon with a traditional lion dance. PHOTO: BYRON TAN

MIDDLE: The historic village of Maling Road, Canterbury is a beguiling mix of heritage architecture and modern street art. PHOTO: MARK LOURENSZ

RIGHT: Cintia Gonzalez is a pharmacist at Dartnells Compounding Pharmacy in Surrey Hills. PHOTO: KEN SPENCE

A Great PROJECT



Always-busy Camberwell Junction is the six-way intersection of Camberwell, Burke and Riversdale Roads. PHOTO: PAM MORRIS



LEFT: Fordham's Milk Bar in Hartwell is one of many cafés found in the quiet suburban streets of Boroondara. PHOTO: PETER HUGGAN

MIDDLE: Colour and movement at the Hartwell Primary School Great Fete in Camberwell. PHOTO: BARRIE JACKETT

RIGHT: The Boroondara Symphonic Band performs against the backdrop of "Early Settlers", a mural by Simon White. PHOTO: RICHARD HUGGINS

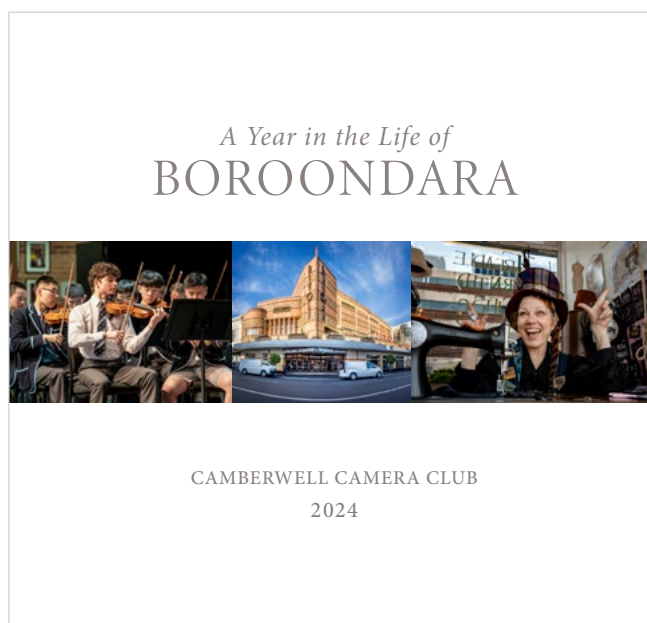
Is this something you and your club could try? Camberwell Camera Club undertook a community project with the outcome a book and exhibition. It's a great role model for camera clubs around the country.

One of the most useful tools a photographer can have is a purpose. Most successful photographers have a number of projects on the go at any one time, so they always find something to photograph, no matter where they are or when they go.

Camera clubs offer monthly photography competitions with set subjects as one way of creating purpose. And for many members, another purpose that drives them is to do better in the annual awards process.

However, what if you could combine a sense of community spirit with an exciting and engaging photography project? And what if that project resulted in a book and an exhibition which involved a majority of the members?

Camberwell Camera Club has just completed a project photographing its local community for a year. On the following pages, project manager and camera club member Pam Morris provides a detailed review of what was involved and how it all worked – essentially it's a template for you and your club to run your own project. And Bill Bachman chimes in, representing the mentor role that the club endorses, gaining the experience of professionals to guide them.



The cover of the Camberwell Camera Club's book, *A Year in the Life of Boroondara* – 2024.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF BOROONDARA – 2024

BY PAM MORRIS



The Itchy Feet Pep Band gets into the swing of the Glenferrie Festival, an annual Hawthorn tradition on the first Sunday in March.

PHOTO: DAVID BIGNELL

Early 2022, recovering from 18 months of COVID lockdowns and isolation, the Camberwell Camera Club identified a need for a project that would keep our members focused and working together, so we initiated our 'Series Project' where over 30 of our members developed a portfolio of photographs around a theme. Our photographers were mentored, one-on-one, by professional photographers for 12 months, giving them ongoing feedback and encouragement to select their best 12 to 16 photographs. In 2023, we exhibited our work both locally and as part of the Ballarat Biennale in celebration of our club's 70th Anniversary.

Our club members were so inspired by the opportunity to work together to create an amazing outcome, combined with strengthening their photographic skills and relationships with others in the club, that they begged us to run another project along similar lines.

The Idea

A committee member had seen a project where the Rockhampton Camera Club collaborated to photograph their

local community and publish a book called *A Rocky Love Song*. He wondered if we could do something similar?

We immediately recognised that this was the ideal project because it would stretch our members' photographic skills and challenge them to explore genres outside their usual comfort zone. At the same time, it would strengthen their ties to the community, to our club and to each other. And if we limited the scope to photographing within the boundary of our local government precinct of Boroondara for a 12-month period, then it made the project achievable for all members, giving them the flexibility to shoot around other commitments. Early research showed that 2024 was the 30th anniversary of Boroondara being designated a government area, so this gave us extra impetus to pursue the project.

Managing the Project

We had a total of 40 photographers sign up for the project. We soon recognised that this would result in potentially thousands of photographs being shot across multiple organisations and events. At the very start of the project, to avoid overwhelming



“Dedicated to the art of making music for over 50 years”: Parmi Snorrason in front of his “guitar wall” at Camberwell’s Music Junction. Started as a music school in the early 1960s, it later became a major retailer attracting customers from all over Australia.

PHOTO: FIONA ANDERSON

chaos and duplication of effort, we formally established a Project Manager and a Project Team with one to five members in each of the following functional areas:

Financial Management – to establish and manage the budget, apply for a Boroondara Community Strengthening Grant, manage book purchases;

Resource Management – to organise relevant training and workshops to skill up our photographers, to create personalised lanyards for the photographers with QR Codes for our www site, explaining the project. Monogrammed Hi-Vis vests with the club logo meant our teams were easily recognised at events;

Publishing Team – to source and evaluate quotes from printing houses, book designers, book launch venues, for input into our budget and review layout and proof read book drafts;

File Management Team – to establish protocols for image submission, i.e. size, colour space, quality, meta data to ensure configuration control of the thousands of images and that only valid, high-quality images were considered for inclusion in the book;

Event Management Team – to source details of local events, liaise with event organisers, determine security



A rare Gull Wing Mercedes captures the attention of onlookers at the Maling Road Auto Classico.

PHOTO: IAN SPENCE



Stall holder Helen Lee practices the subtle art of camouflage at the Glenferrie Antique and Collectables Fair, Hawthorn Arts Centre.

PHOTO: DAVID BIGNELL



Jane Badger, 84, enjoys the autumn sunshine with her cat, Winsome Darling, on the veranda of the Croydon Rd, Surrey Hills, house she has lived in since 1971.

PHOTO: SWATI HULSURE



A student chases her shadow in pursuit of higher education at Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn.

PHOTO: LINLIN ZHAO

arrangements and gain official approval for inclusion of photographs in our book;

Image Curation Team – an independent, external group of three professional photographers who reviewed submissions quarterly, selected 'candidate' images and provided feedback and training to the members on what they were doing right and what needed to be improved;

Sales and Marketing Team – enlist financial sponsors, organise the book launch, invite guest speakers (Boroondara Mayor Sophie Torney), establish purchasing procedures and book distribution process.

The Process

Our book was called *A Year in the Life of Boroondara* and while we encouraged our members to shoot anything within the boundary of Boroondara, we did emphasise that we wanted to capture the essence of 'life and living' within our diverse, leafy, heritage suburb. This meant that along with photographing heritage buildings, parklands and nature, they had to photograph our people in all types of scenarios.

Our members were generally inexperienced as street photographers, event photographers and portrait photographers. They were hesitant about how to approach this challenge and where they stood legally photographing strangers, privately and publicly, with or without their subject's permission.

To meet this hesitancy, we redesigned our annual workshop program and invited experienced photographers to train our members on how to shoot in these situations. For instance,



Boroondara is an Aboriginal word of the Woiwurrung language meaning “a place of shade” and was given to the area by surveyor Robert Hoddle in 1837. Trees are a major part of the Boroondara landscape, providing shade and privacy, helping to increase property values and contributing to biodiversity. PHOTO: IAN PICKEN



A young Indian woman performs to a gallery of tough critics at a Diwali “Festival of Light” celebration at Ashburton Seniors Centre. PHOTO: GEOFFREY INCE



Some of the crew at Hawthorn Fire Rescue Victoria, Station 18: Leading Firefighter Tony Goring, Station Officer Edward Henderson, Firefighter Hannah Whittaker and Leading Firefighter Tom Howell. PHOTO: WOLF MARX

we invited Michael Coyne on how to photograph people, Dave Callow on photographing sport and Bill Bachman on documentary and event photography.

Our club had almost doubled in size from 80 to 160 members since the start of COVID and we needed a way of proactively integrating our new members into our photographic community. So we worked with our local Boroondara Council Community Events team to schedule team shoots at their events

at local aged care and community centres. At these events, our photographers wore our monogrammed Hi-Vis vests and personalised lanyards to inform the public that they were official, thus reducing potential pushback and harassment.

Our club portrait group trained members in lighting and posing techniques so they were confident to shoot at public events and within private organisations. Our members were always encouraged to share their photographs with the organisations involved, which has resulted in building strong relationships between our club and the wider community. As a result, we have been asked back to be the photographers for their subsequent events, further strengthening these community ties.

The club has recently implemented the concept of 'Master Photographers' whose role is to mentor and assist our less experienced members. We organised shoots where a Master Photographer proactively assisted and mentored lesser skilled members to ensure they were happy with their shots. This skill sharing and collaboration have really improved members' technical skills and encouraged our newer members to be confident in asking for help.

Each quarter, our 40 club photographers were asked to submit their 10 best photographs for consideration for the book. Their submissions were reviewed and scored independently by three professional photographers – Bill Bachman, Dave Callow and Arsineh Houspian. They sorted the submissions into three categories: unlikely to be included, potentially could be considered and high potential to be included.



Hamish Westcott leads the Camberwell Grammar School Symphony Orchestra in the school's Performing Arts Centre.

PHOTO: MAGGIE TAN



Elisa works at Selfie Studio, Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, which provides onsite and rental backdrops, equipment and technical advice for DIY photobooth sessions and self-portraits. PHOTO: LYNNE MCKAY

After the curation process, each quarter, Bill Bachman provided an information and feedback session where he discussed example images from all three categories, providing feedback to the photographers as to what they were doing well, what needed improving, what we needed more of and what we had an abundance of. These Q&A sessions motivated the photographers to go back out and really concentrate on the technical, aesthetic and narrative aspects of each of their photographs, to ensure we told the 'story' of Boroondara comprehensively.

Some of the early feedback from the curators was that Boroondara looked like a retirement village and that all the people photographed were elderly. This encouraged us to explore shooting in the local schools, playgrounds and sporting facilities and to ensure that we captured the full range of age and ethnicity demographics in Boroondara.

At the completion of the four quarters, we had over 500 'potential' photographs to be included. This cohort was whittled down to the final selection of 250, displayed over 150 pages.

Funding the Project

At the outset of the project, we quickly realised that we needed substantial upfront funding to optimise the outcome and deliver a great book. Boroondara Council suggested we apply for one of their \$10,000 Community Strengthening Grants as what we were proposing in terms of skilling up the local community, strengthening relationships within and outside our club and giving back to the Boroondara community, was exactly what the grant was planned to support.



The U3A Hawthorn Eastern Mahjong group meets once a week for social play in groups of three or four. PHOTO: JANETTE KING

The grant application required us to provide accurate estimates for professional book design, text editing and printing, as well as launch and distribution costs. We also planned to have a gallery exhibition in a public venue which would incur printing, mounting and publicity costs.

The grant application required a detailed project plan with timelines, resourcing and associated costs. Our projected costs were \$5000 more than the potential \$10,000 grant which meant we needed to raise money externally. We did this by approaching local businesses for sponsorship, our club members volunteering to do paid photographic work privately and at local



Rainbow lorikeets, Maranoa Gardens, Balwyn.

PHOTO: JULIE MITCHELL

council events, the remainder being funded by book sales and a small donation from the club. Whilst our gallery exhibition is still in the process of delivery, we have kept within our budget and are on time with our project plan.

The Outcome

Reviewing the finished product, our book *A Year in the Life of Boroondara – 2024*, it was all worth it. But the real benefits were to see the growth in the skills and confidence of our members, the sharing and strengthening of their relationships with each other and the wider community and their palpable joy at seeing the product of all their effort in print. The book has captured the essence of what it is to live in Boroondara today and the club



A young magpies keeping its parent busy. PHOTO: GAYNOR ROBSON

has donated copies to the reference libraries within Boroondara and to all the historical societies as a thank you to all those who contributed.

Our gallery exhibition of the photographs from our 40 photographers will be launched on 3 October 2025 at the Balwyn Community Centre and will run all of October 2025.

More information about the book and how it can be purchased from our club can be seen on our www site: <https://www.camberwellcameraclub.org.au/> or by emailing: YLBinfo@camberwellcameraclub.org.au

An MP4 walkthrough of the book is available at: <https://www.camberwellcameraclub.org.au/yearinthelifeofboroondara>

One of Camberwell Camera Club's initiatives was to involve three professional photographers to mentor their members. Club Patron Bill Bachman was one of those photographers and provides his own observations:

BY BILL BACHMAN

I was keen to be involved in an advisory and editorial capacity because I could see the project had purpose and meaning, firstly to all those who took part in it as a sustained creative challenge over the course of an entire year, but perhaps more importantly, as a lasting contribution to the community.

As with the earlier *Series Project*, it started slowly and with modest ambitions, but as the year progressed, it evolved into something much more complex and significant than expected.

Our editorial team met four times during the year to assess the photographs submitted in the previous quarter, after which I conducted live and Zoomed feedback sessions when I commented on the sort of pictures we were seeing and offered suggestions as to what could be improved or added into the mix. The first quarter yielded a few really good images and the second quarter a few more, but it wasn't really until about halfway through the year that both the quantity and quality of images started to lift.

The images in this book do not say 'amateur' or 'camera club' to me. Any professional would be proud to have his or her name on these pictures and to have created the story they tell. There is real energy flowing through these pages, due to both the images themselves and the strong, simple layout produced by our designer Kathie Eastway.

One of the first things you will notice about this book is that the overwhelming majority of the 250 or so images include or involve people, which is probably the hardest subject matter of all for non-professional photographers to come to terms with. Overcoming the hesitancy to approach people, especially strangers, takes time and experience, but everyone on the editorial team was quite honestly thrilled with the efforts so many of the contributing photographers made to take on this challenge.

Finally, this book is a great example of The Power of Many – a group effort involving around 40 pairs of eyes, each individual bringing fresh ideas and perspectives to the mix. Thanks and congratulations to everyone who was involved.



Ken Spence, Pam Morris and Bill Bachman, the project management team.



A Year in the Life of **BOROONDARA**

CAMBERWELL CAMERA CLUB – 2024



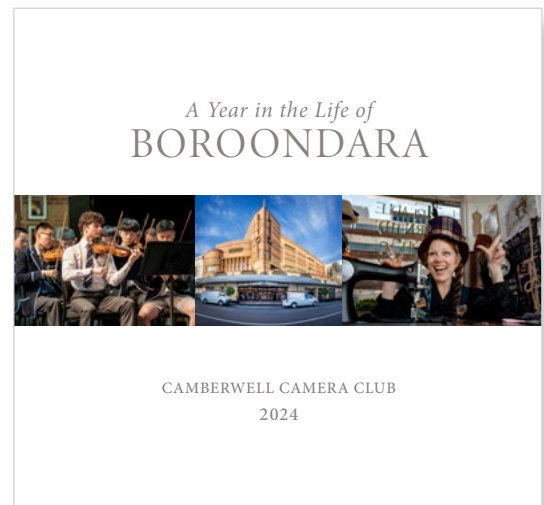
The “Year in the Life of Boroondara” project was carried out in 2024 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the city of Boroondara as a Local Government Area within Victoria.

After COVID lockdowns the club wanted to focus on getting members back into the community, participating in events and building relationships with neighbours, retail operators, community workers and the Boroondara public.

At the commencement of the project, our club had around 150 members, of whom forty submitted images taken within the 13 suburbs of Boroondara during 2024. Every three months participants submitted their ten best images to a selection panel of three external professional photographers. At the end of the year over twelve hundred images were whittled down to the best 250 images representing all aspects of Boroondara.

The results are now available as a handsome 164 page hardcover book showcasing the faces, infrastructure, community life and natural beauty of one of Melbourne’s most interesting and attractive local government areas.

This project was sponsored by the Boroondara Community Strengthening Grants initiative.



More information about the book and how it can be purchased from our club can be seen at:
<https://www.camberwellcameraclub.org.au/> or by emailing: YLBinfo@camberwellcameraclub.org.au

An MP4 walkthrough of the book is available at:
<https://www.camberwellcameraclub.org.au/yearinthelifeofboroondara>



PATAGONIA,
CHILE
ATACAMA, RAPA NUI



The famous Torres del Paine Mountains, photographed from the beach at Lago Grey.

Long and thin, Chile holds some of the world's most distinctive landscapes: Patagonia's Torres del Paine and its famous mountains, the Atacama's eroded deserts and geysers and the enigmatic statues of Rapa Nui – better known as Easter Island. If you get a chance to visit one or all of these destinations, they come highly recommended.

Patagonia

The tour I led with Tony Hewitt visited Patagonia in early May. It's autumn and if you time it correctly (there are no guarantees when it comes to Nature), the trees should be shedding their gold and copper leaves. Even the reeds in the shallow alpine tarns are turning colourful and, if there's no wind, reflections are magical.

However, being so far south and sitting in the path of the Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties, Patagonia is much maligned for its uncomfortable climate and gale force winds. There are even signs on some of the tracks with a wind indicator,

explaining why some locations are closed for visitation. Heading towards winter, we certainly had our share of cold weather, but at this time of the year if you're lucky, the winds abate and the weather can be simply magical. It doesn't happen often, but fortunately for us, on several days there was so little wind, all the lakes sitting in the foothills of Torres del Paine were mirror smooth, reflecting the magnificent landscape all around.

To reach Patagonia, we flew from Santiago to Punta Arenas and then our hotel bus drove us the five hours up to Torres del Paine and the national park. There are just two hotels inside the bottom of the park itself, plus a camping ground, but the advantage of staying here is that you are literally in exactly the right spot to take the hero photos you've undoubtedly seen before. There are a number of hotels just outside the park, also with views, but they are much more distant. I've stayed at both locations and inside the park is the place to be if your budget extends to it.



One of the three towers, shrouded in low cloud.

Patagonia is also known for its walking trails, both here in Chile and a little further east in Argentinian El Chalten. The trails are very easy to quite demanding – and obviously you can climb the mountains as well if you're so inclined. On this trip we stuck mainly to the roads which still provide great views and photo opportunities – we were only there for four nights, but for longer visits, one or two trails and even overnighing is very worthwhile.



Above: Bushfires from many years ago have left white skeletons instead of trees.

Right: The reeds in the alpine tarns were also changing colour and without much wind, we had some wonderful reflections.

Along the edges of the national park are several locations where puma can be tracked and photographed. We had reports of a guanaco being chewed upon by a small pride of puma, but we didn't make it in time with our cameras (although we did find an injured young puma by the side of the road, but not quite the same thing!). With group dynamics, we possibly tried to find the pumas once too often, but I take a positive view of these trips because you never know what else you might find. As it turned out, after not seeing the pumas, a few kilometres later we were treated to an amazing light show as early morning clouds over



A small herd of vicuna on the run. These animals are now protected and we found no shortage of them for our cameras.





Known for its strong winds, Patagonia can be surprisingly calm during autumn.



One of the above-ground vents on the Taito Geyser Field. Not as much steam as the others, but more interesting than a hole in the ground!

the Torres del Paine massif evaporated, leaving the remarkable stone towers bathed in bright sunshine. With photography, you simply don't know unless you go!

The Torres del Paine National Park has had a number of bushfires in the past 20 years or so and there are large areas of dead trees which, today, create a marvellous opportunity for pattern shots. We spent a marvellous afternoon working the shapes and patterns before finishing the evening with the classic Torres del Paine horizon line in front of a mirror-smooth lake. It's a wonderful location for landscape photographers.

The Atacama

A couple of hours north of Santiago lies San Pedro de Atacama. Well, it's a couple of hours in a plane to Calama and then a 90-minute van ride to the hotel. The change in the landscape from Patagonia is dramatic, but the mountains remain key to many of the landscapes. In the Atacama I was told there are over 150 volcanoes, none currently active – although the authorities had closed roads within a 50-kilometre radius of one cone that had been rumbling away!

One of the key reasons San Pedro has become so popular is that it's the closest town to the Taito Geysers. The Taito geothermal field sits at 4300 metres above sea level and if you want to see lots of steam, the idea is to get there when the surrounding air is cold and the steam best performs its magic. If you're there during warm weather or in summer, you might not see much in the way of steam, but in the cooler months, it's a matter of rugging up with an extra layer or two to keep yourself



At Chaxa, we didn't have thousands of flamingoes, but the ones we had worked really well within the landscape.

warm, but the light show is worth it.

The main problem with getting there early as we did, is that so does everyone else. It really is a tourist stop, but by driving to the far side of the geyser field and being prepared to use the AI Delete or Content-Aware Fill tools in post-production to remove unwanted cars, buses and tourists, it's still a lot of fun. Wide-angles can be useful for getting up close and personal to the above-ground vents, while a telephoto lets you place the billowing clouds of steam against a powerful mountain backdrop.

It seems that most of Chile is subject to strong winds. Very often in the Atacama, as the afternoons heat up a strong westerly wind starts blowing, often to gale force. I've been on cliff edges photographing the amazing view, but not prepared to change lenses for fear of letting too much sand and grit inside the camera! Our first afternoon was a little like this, but rather than the usual cloudless blue sky, we had low clouds streaming across the Andes behind the desert.

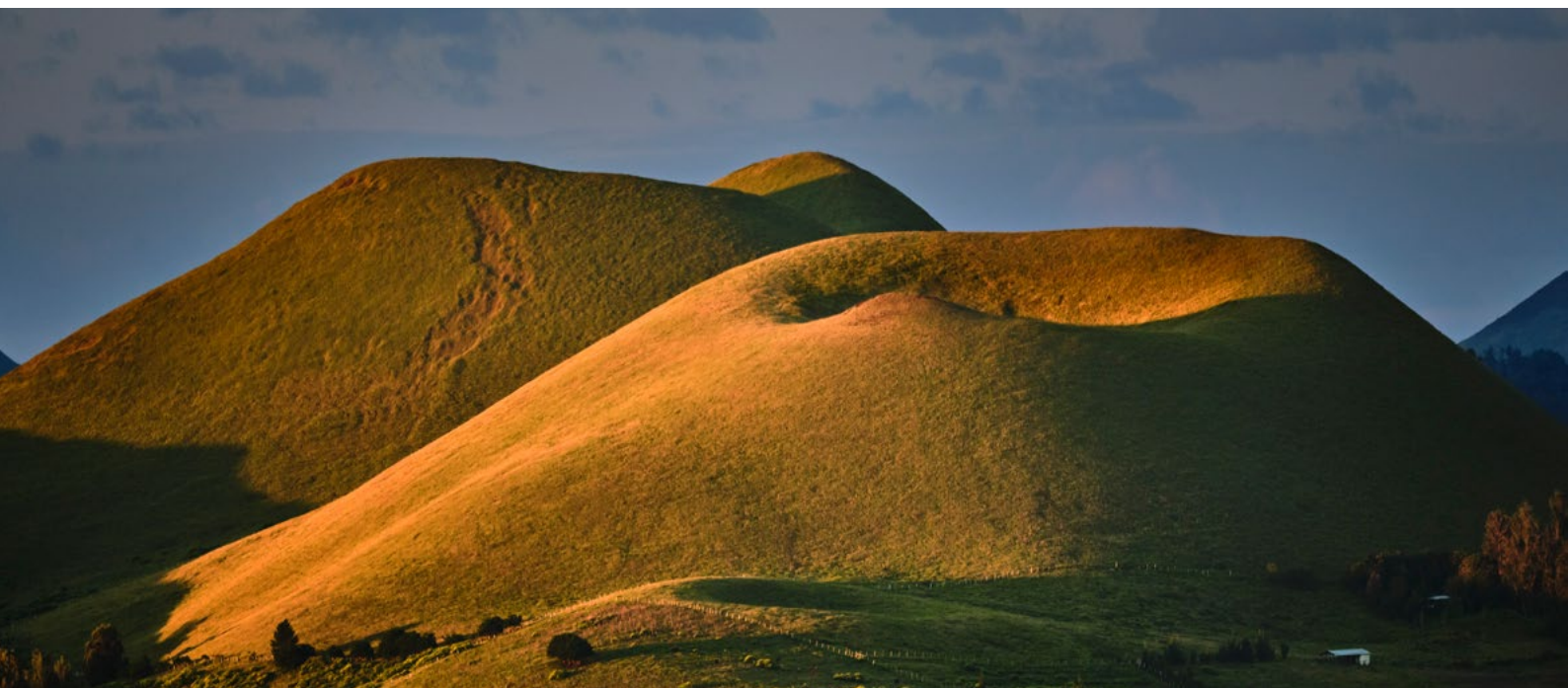
Fortunately, the next couple of evenings were very calm – on one, completely calm. We were visiting a shallow salt pan which had a carefully maintained track around the outside to keep the tourists under control. However, in the shallow waters were a few flamingoes searching for a feed. Now, sometimes you can find lakes almost brimming with pink flamingoes, but this wasn't like that. Rather than contrasting thousands of pink birds against a blue sky, we concentrated on single birds with some magic reflections surrounding them.

One of the biggest challenges for landscape photographers is the opening hours of the national park – and a lot of the better places to photograph are inside it! When we were there, access was closed until 9:30 a.m., by which time the sun was well and truly high in the sky and the best light gone for the morning. While we managed to find some great morning locations, there are others that we shot in the afternoons that, I feel, would have been even better early in the morning. And while we love national parks for looking after our natural resources, we keenly felt the employees' work hours having an impact as they ushered



Above: The 15 moai (heads) at Tongariki on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) are iconic for both *National Geographic* readers and Tik-Tok fans alike!

Below: Easter Island is essentially lots of volcanoes stacked one on top of the other – and it makes a wonderful landscape.





us out of the national park at sunset – and just before the best twilight!

Not far from the Atacama is the Bolivian border and access to its Altiplano region. Time restrictions are not such a problem, but there are so few places to stay that getting into location at the right time still remains a logistic challenge. A camping trip might be the only option!

Rapa Nui

Most people want to go to Easter Island because we've all seen photos of the stone statues (called moai) and heard how remote the island is. Well, it's a good five-hour flight from Santiago to Rapa Nui – almost halfway back to Australia. For many on our trip, reaching Easter Island ticked a couple of boxes and it's almost necessary to have the long flight there to embed in the experience just how far away from everything you really are.

This was my third visit to Easter Island, the first some 40 years ago with my wife Kathie. Back then, there were no national park restrictions, very few if any trees and only one hotel. Today, over 60 per cent of the island is a national park and so photographers have the same restrictions as the mainland when it comes to access (with one exception), but there are lots of trees (which is a good thing) and tourism seems to be their number one source of income.

When you're standing on the coast at Tongariki in front of 15 giant stone statues, it really sinks in where you are. On our first afternoon, light rain did its best to dampen our enthusiasm, but



The famous Rano Raraku quarry from where most of the moai were carved – and then moved. Long exposure to blur the clouds.



Late evening light on the rim of Rano Kau, the largest crater on the small island.

we were all well equipped with raincoats and even umbrellas. Eventually the weather relented and we were gifted some wonderful light to play with. Even a rainbow!

And the one good thing about Tongariki is that it is open from before sunrise for photography. Tik-Tok or Instagram have made these statues so famous that on some mornings there will be a couple of hundred people standing on the grassy lawns, waiting for the sun to rise behind the statues. Of course, most mornings it doesn't rise in the right place – that famous photo can only be taken on one or two days a year!

I confess I felt quite restricted when it came to taking photographs, but as I'm only one of tens of thousands of tourists who are not worried about the quality of the light, Easter Island is doing a good job maintaining the monuments for future generations. One of our guides told me that during COVID, the

locals, together with the national park administration, introduced a number of newly restricted areas and these (such as the walk around the edge of the western crater) are still closed. Maybe it's staff, maybe it's the locals being sick of tourists, or maybe it's a jaded photo magazine editor remembering the old days.

So, would I go there again? Yes! Restrictions for photographers and photography aren't new. They are found all around the world. We just have to find ways around the problems to get good shots. They mightn't be the shots we imagined, but there are still many great photographs to be captured on Easter Island.

Chile is a wonderful country. Latam's domestic flights are usually like travelling on a crowded bus, but all is forgotten and forgiven once you reach your destination and pull out your camera.



Peter Eastway's

PHOTO PROCESS

CREATIVE & TECHNICAL ATELIER

Photo Process is a series of video tutorials that shares a wide range of techniques, concepts and processes that I use every time I take a photograph. These processes have evolved over 40 years of photography.

When teaching photography, I find many students have great ideas, but don't know how to implement them. Or they have great technical skills, but nothing to use them on! While I can help solve their immediate problems, the solution is relying on my skills, not theirs. And unfortunately it's not possible to transfer all of my knowledge and experience in a few hours or even days.

I'm also asked, how do I seem to immediately know what to do when I'm faced with a subject? Why do I always seem to have a solution? The answer is my 'database' of skills and influences collected throughout my career. It's my professional experience.

So how do I share this experience? The aim of **Photo Process** is to collect these skills, influences and experiences into a single location so they can be easily shared with photographers searching for their own answers.

It's a knowledge bank of what I use when I create my photographs, so if you like how I work, the answers are in **Photo Process!**

When you join **Photo Process**, you receive:

- Access to the **Photo Process** section of the website with over 80 video tutorials in categories – Capture, Composition, Post-Production, Influences and Output. is a lifetime subscription, so there's no hurry to view all the content.
- A comprehensive portfolio review by Peter – you can submit up to 10 images for critique, feedback and appraisal. The written report will be presented as a PDF.
- A personally printed, signed and embossed A2 print by Peter on Canson stock using archival pigment inks from Epson – and you can select the photograph you'd like printed from his website (www.petereastway.com). The print is unframed and postage is included.

For full details, visit the Better Photography Education website and follow the menu to Photo Process

www.betterphotographyeducation.com

In this image, an adjustment layer has been used to add a little extra warmth to the central iceberg. Is this in keeping with a 'natural landscape' or has the selective addition of colour changed its authenticity? Of course, it all depends on the rules, what the rules mean and who is interpreting those rules!



Why Do Photo Competitions Have Rules?



A personalised view of why some photography competitions have rules

– and some do not! By Peter Eastway.

It seems to be human nature for us to have rules. And don't we have a love/hate relationship with bureaucracy. Perhaps we love rules to keep others in line, but hate them when they affect us!

Most photo competitions seem to have lots of rules, some which make immediate sense, some which don't. And just like judging a photograph, there is a wide range of opinions and ideas surrounding these rules. However, I think at the heart of any set of rules is a desire for entrants to have an even playing field. Here's an example.

Wedding Photos

Many years ago, the AIPP (Australian Institute of Professional Photography, recently resurrected) introduced strict rules around the wedding photography category. Generally speaking, when judges scored the entries on display, they were making an assumption the photographs had been taken at a wedding. If your bride was particularly pretty (or the groom particularly handsome), you'd probably get a few extra marks. If the wedding was in an exotic location, a few more marks could be anticipated. Most of the judges were also wedding photographers, so if you



In a nature competition, the authenticity of the capture is very important, so how far can you push the saturation slider before you've lost that authenticity?

could make the photograph interesting for them, you were more likely to get a good score. And that's the same today – we are aiming to attract the judges' interest!

Understanding the process, some astute photographers pushed the boundaries. My hazy memory is that an entrant hired a red Ferrari, two glamorous models and visited an exotic location. These photographs were definitely the product of professional photographers working in the wedding industry, so they were legitimately 'wedding' photographs, under the existing rules. These photographs were also used by these photographers to advertise their business, so within the understanding of working professionally, there was no problem.

However, the judges didn't know the models were hired and the photos specially set up. They wrongly assumed the photographer had snagged the wedding of the century and marvelled at how amazing the photos were, which annoyed most of the other entrants who were stuck with Muriel and Kevin at the local bowling club for the reception! It was perceived that these 'advertising' photographs had an unfair advantage and so a rule was introduced: entries into the wedding category must have been taken at an actual wedding and, if necessary, entrants would be asked to prove that they had been commissioned and paid to shoot it.

Note, future Ferrari photos would not be disqualified, but they needed to be entered into the advertising category (or another category where the rules would not be broken).

Remembering that these were awards for professional photographers and that the general public would be viewing

the winning images and hoping the photographer could do the same for them if engaged to shoot their wedding, the rule made a lot of sense, although I'm sure the photographers who hired the red Ferrari would see it differently. (And interestingly enough, a number of successful Australian wedding photographers bought their own red Ferraris and hired them out to their wedding couples for the day, so the rule certainly didn't mean the end of bright red vehicles in the wedding category.)

So, in the interests of keeping a level playing field, a rule was introduced, but it was only one of many. In every category of the AIPP APP Awards (and you can see a similar approach in the current APP and NZIPP Awards even now), there is a litany of rules and regulations designed to create a more even playing field. The rules have the right intention, but their effect can be challenging, especially for the organisers.

Portrait Ruling

Again at the AIPP Awards, when I was the chairman, we had come to the end of the judging process for the portrait category. The winning Gold and Silver Awards were out on display and one of the entrants was in a very strong position for taking out the category – until another photographer questioned whether one of the winning entries complied with the rules.

At that stage, there was a rule that said entries in the portrait category had to be single exposure. You couldn't use composites or multiple exposures, but this particular entry appeared to have



Even single captures can have dozens of adjustment layers controlling the tonal mapping of an image. While this is just good old-fashioned dodging and burning in, it can remove the final edit a long way from the original capture.

two or three exposures which made up an elaborate border and background. When queried, the photographer admitted the image was a composite and complained it was a silly rule. I agreed with him and disqualified him! What else could I do. Rules are rules.

But he was right. It was a silly rule. Why would we limit professional portrait photography to single capture images, when for years before digital came around, we'd been doing head swaps for group portraits. It's not like it was a new thing, but a group of photographers who were not yet expert at digital editing, complained that if you didn't use composites, you couldn't compete fairly. They managed to convince the committee to introduce a rule that made it a fairer playing ground for them, because (in my opinion) they hadn't taken the time to learn the new technology. (And from memory, this entry had been made in the darkroom anyway!)

One of the things you learn when working on a competition committee is that life is about compromises. This was one of them – and fortunately overruled a year or so later. But it is interesting how people who consider themselves disaffected have such loud voices!

Landscape Competition

Most readers will know that David Evans and I run the International Landscape Photographer of the Year Award. When we began back in 2014, a well-known photographer criticised our new awards loudly and publicly as being 'The Photoshop Awards', because we would allow landscapes to be either single capture or composites. We had no rules restricting editing – we just wanted to see the best 101 landscape photographs.

Interestingly, after we published the top 101 photos that year, the vast majority were single capture – and still are to this day!

My view of fears and concerns like this is that very often the photographers appear to be protecting themselves. Don't get me wrong, I'll be the first to defend a photographer's choice to only shoot single captures or pursue a 'natural landscape' genre. What I won't do is restrict other photographers' rights just to placate a special interest group.

When it comes to single capture, the terminology gets very confusing. Many photographers used the terms 'digital' and 'composite' as being much the same thing. Very often they were complaining about photographers editing their images with a strong curve or a large saturation percentage, but they called them composites simply because they didn't understand the technology. I think those days are past, but still there is a lot of confusion and uncertainty over the amount of editing allowed, at least in my experience.

Tim Parkin's Natural Landscape Photography Awards are a case in point. Tim judges our International Landscape Photographer of the Year Award, so he's across all genres and I enjoy entering his awards, although I usually have to undo some of my editing! Tim is offering a product for single-capture photographers who love exploring and finding great landscapes, rather than creating them through imagination and editing. Both are valid approaches, the Natural Landscape Photography Awards chooses to celebrate just one of those approaches.

Where I find these awards challenging, certainly for my own entries, is how much post-production is allowed. I'm not using

composites, I'm not squishing the image, but how far can I push the saturation or exposure sliders before I'm changing my image from 'natural' to 'interpretative'? Again, in my experience there is no single answer which must make administering the awards very challenging! Tim's group basically says the decision is up to them – and that's fine. If you don't like the rules, don't enter! I'm not for a minute suggesting their rules need changing and I applaud how they have tried to explain 'how much' editing is allowed.

So, while rules are great for creating an even playing ground or controlling the genre of entries, they can also be the bane of an organiser's workload if they are open to too much interpretation. And over the years, I have seen how a very clear set of guidelines can be interpreted multiple ways by photographers with more imagination than me, presenting a counter argument that is hard to refute. In the end, I like to suggest that it's our judges who make the final deliberations and in this way, I can limit the number of rules.

Necessary Rules

There are, of course, some rules that are important. For instance, the entrant should also be the photographer. The entry should not be a copy of someone else's work. The entry should also be a photograph – so captured with a camera, but then again, in the history of photography we've always allowed photograms (which don't use a camera). Okay, easy solution: no photograms either.

Sometimes we restrict entry by date. This is a straightforward rule and very simple to administer – or is it? With the date recorded by the camera in the EXIF data, we can see exactly when the camera said the photo was taken, but this assumes the photographer set the date in the camera correctly (often photographers don't) and that the EXIF data hasn't been fiddled with (who would do such a thing?). The good news is that with social media these days, entrants who are ignoring date rules are often caught out and exposed!

Perhaps the most interesting rule of the moment is the exclusion of AI. While there are already a few AI photo competitions in existence, most competitions exclude generative AI. For clarity, we've all been using Photoshop's Healing Brush for years and this is a basic form of AI, but we're not going to suddenly disallow it. And the new deletion tools while using AI, can be set to replace objects with similar material to what is already in the background – I don't have a problem with this. However, if you use AI to delete an area of the image and instead of using rocks and grass, it adds in a polished tile floor with floating flamingoes, you've gone too far.

The challenge we all have is using terminology we agree on with which to describe what AI can and cannot do. I suggest that if AI is creating something new in the image, it is not allowed. (If composites are allowed, you can add in that same newness if you wish, but not by using AI.) So, that means you can use AI to generate a new idea for your photo, delete it and then manually create a similar result and be within the rules. True, there are ways to get around most rules.

The good news is that in the 40 odd years I've been a photography judge, 99.9% of entrants are honest and want to do the right thing. If there's a breach of the rules, it is usually an unintentional mistake. For the remaining 0.1% of entrants, it must be great sport trying to fool the rest of us!



In the NZIPP Awards, there are two categories for landscape entries: an open category which allows composites and a single-capture category, which does not. This photograph is not a composite, but it had so much post-production and squishing applied, I felt it should go into the open category – it wasn't really authentic to the landscape which I felt was the underlying intention of the rules. However, listening to the judges' comments, I wonder if I confused them even more because it can look like a composite!

WHY COLOUR SPACES MATTER

**Even if you have no interest in colour management, understanding how
colour spaces work is unbelievably helpful – and easy to understand!**

By Kathleen Baxter.

Why do we need to understand colour spaces and colour profiles? Or printer profiles and monitor profiles for that matter? What follows is a non-scientific explanation with some great visuals (courtesy of ColorThink software) which, hopefully, will make things crystal clear!

On the next page at the top, is a graph of a photograph – trees in Chile as it happens. The photo comprises mostly reds and oranges – and they are quite saturated (intentionally). The graph comprises the exact same colours and produces a ‘cloud-like’ shape with the white tones at the top and the dark tones hidden underneath.

Let’s say we want to make a print of this photograph. At a most fundamental level, the printer, paper and ink combination we choose has to be capable of reproducing all the colours in the photograph.

However, all printers have limitations. In fact, the number of colours they can reproduce is significantly fewer than the colours captured by our cameras. Look at the bottom illustration on the next page. The profile shape represents all the colours that my printer and paper can reproduce. The dots of colour in the white circle represent the colours in my photograph that cannot be reproduced accurately by my printer. There’s nothing

to worry about because the printer will put something there, but it won’t be accurate.

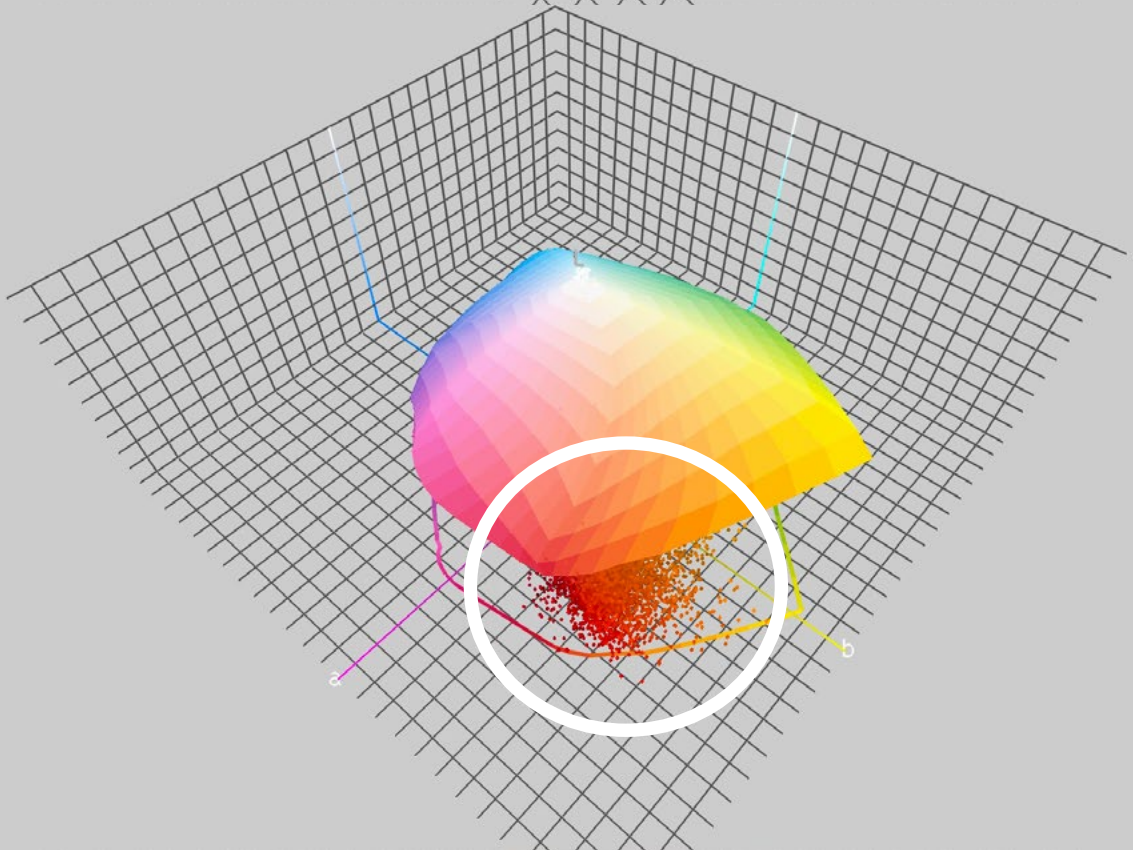
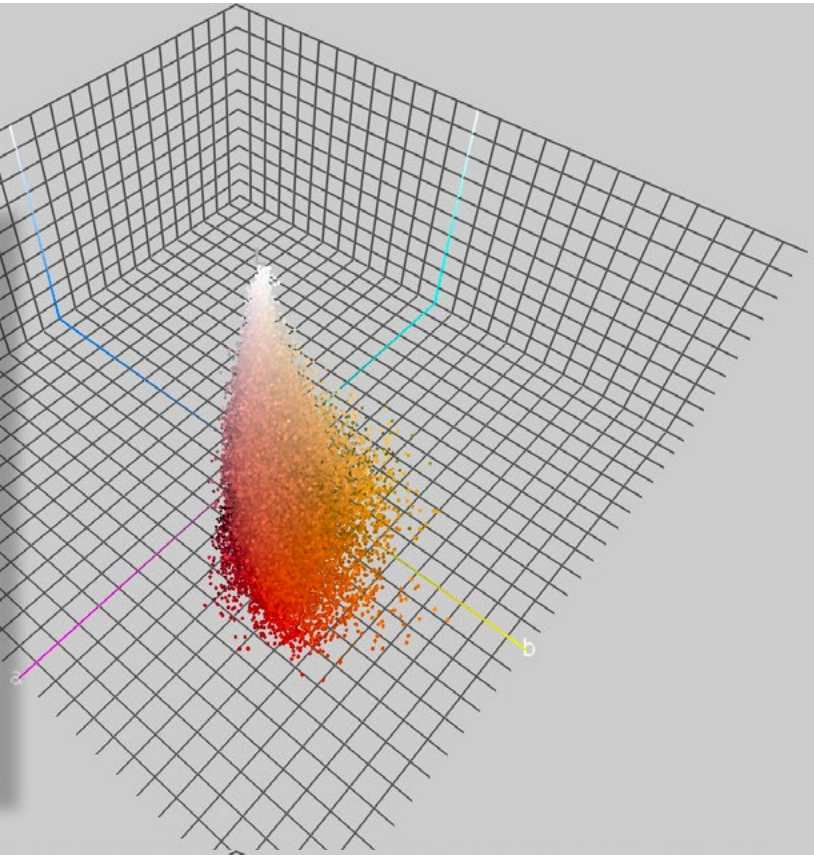
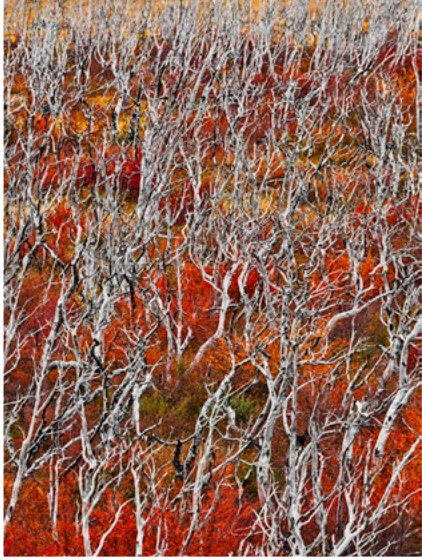
Generally speaking, we think a printer (or a monitor, etc.) is capable of reproducing all the colours that we can see. The human mind is very adept at adapting to the colours it is presented with, so that when we look at a photograph, we generally think it is complete. It’s only when we compare the photo on the screen with the same photo on another screen or in a print that we can see huge differences!

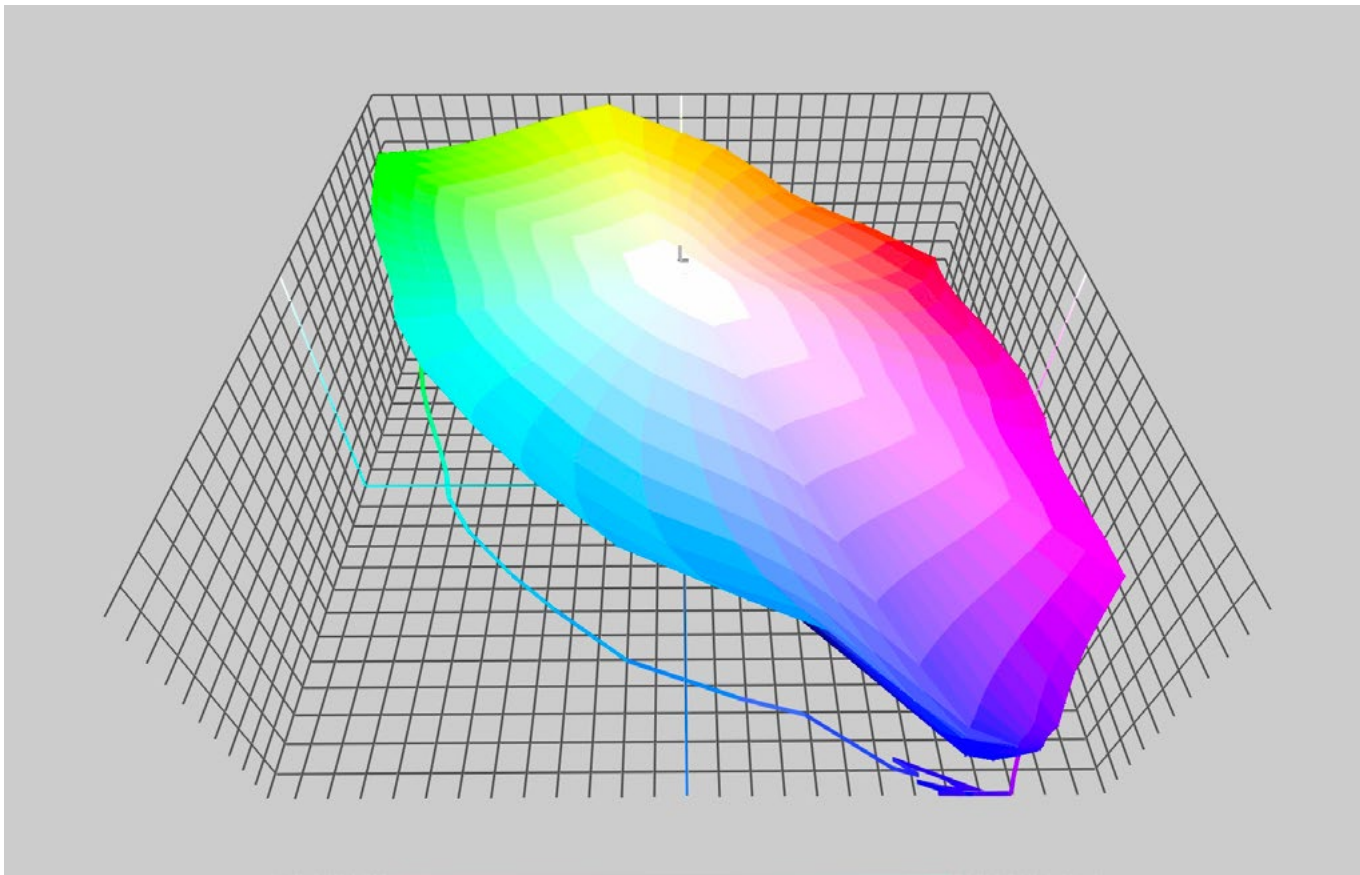
The reality is that sometimes the colours in our photographs are not reproduced accurately. Some colours are substituted with a close match. Most people who view our photographs will never know because the system works remarkably well.

But photographers know. We know what our colours should look like, what our subject looked like – and if our photograph isn’t a good match, we are disappointed.

Colour and colour management are wonderfully good, but they’re not perfect.

There are limitations. This article won’t explain how to overcome the limitations (sometimes they can’t be overcome), but hopefully it will explain what’s happening and why our colour photography might have shortcomings from time to time.





This graph represents the colour profile (or colour space) of a Fujifilm GFX100S II. It's not as large as the visible spectrum, but as you will see, it's a lot larger than the colour profiles of our monitors and printers. It represents all the colours we have to work with.

VISIBLE LIGHT – ALL THE COLOURS

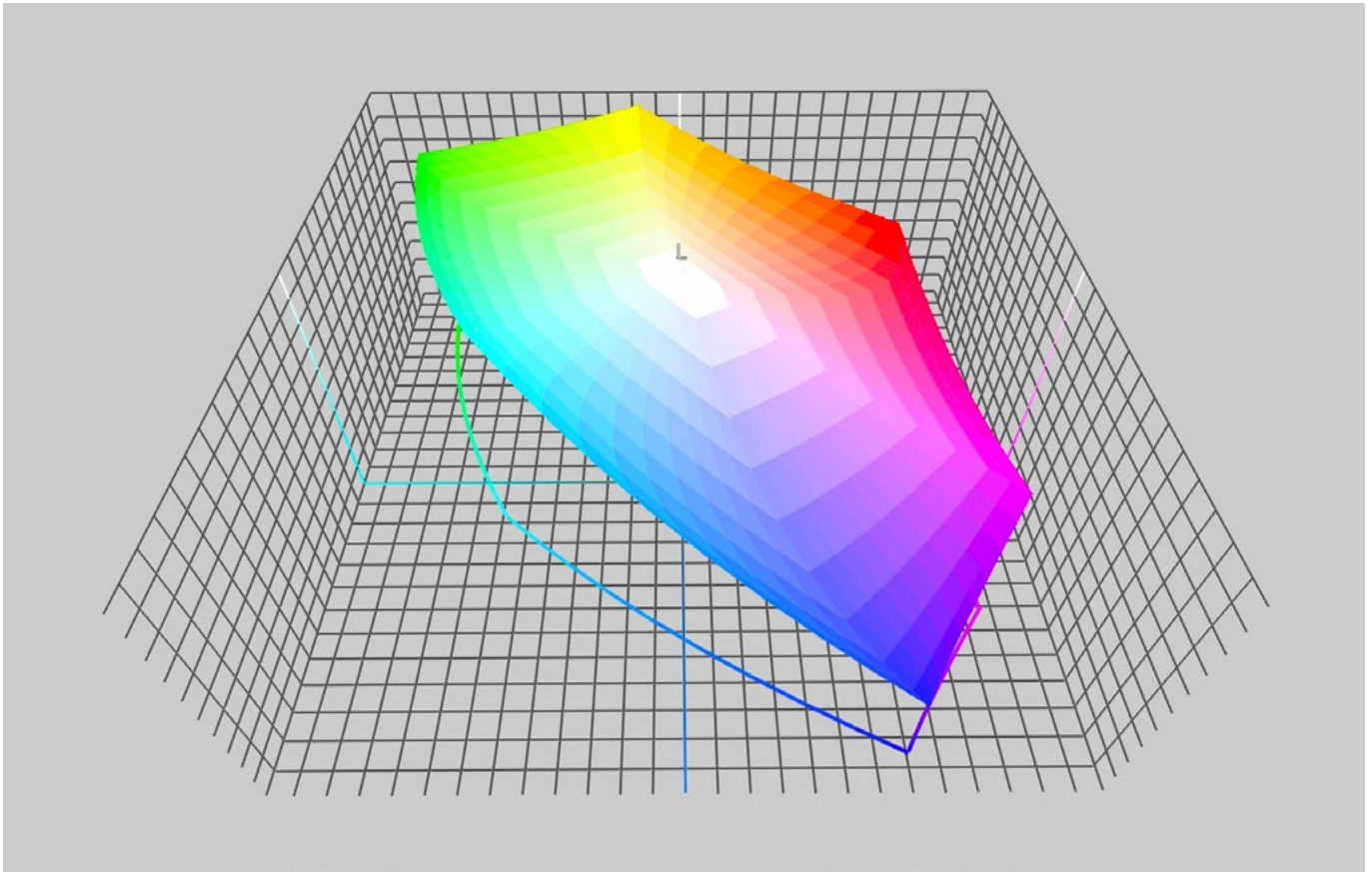
The above diagram isn't all the colours of the rainbow, but it's as close as photographers are going to get.

The visible spectrum represents all the colours of light that the human eye can see. Although a very small section of the electromagnetic spectrum, it's a lot larger than any device (camera, monitor, printer) can display, so rather than worrying about the limitations of what photography works with, let's focus on the best results we can achieve - all the colours our cameras can capture.

Cameras are, in fact, quite remarkable. While there are colours that they can't capture, what's more important for us is that cameras capture all the colours that can be shown on a colour monitor or a colour print. If we can't see the colours that are captured, it doesn't really matter, does it! (Okay, so this is an arguable point, but let's just leave it there.)

Of course, when we look at a photograph, on a screen or as a print, we get the impression that all the colours of the rainbow are indeed present. This is mainly because our brains are very good at adapting to the information in front of us.

For instance, think of a white fence in late sunset light. The real colour of that fence is yellow or orange, because it is reflecting the sunlight pushing through the atmosphere, but our brains will still see it as white. The human brain helps us deal with lots of colour shortcomings in a very effective manner.



In this graph, you can see the theoretical Display P3 colour space that Apple is using. It's very similar in size to AdobeRGB (which we talk about on the next page), but tweaked to Apple's specifications.

WHAT YOUR MONITOR SHOWS

While we can discuss the merits of high quality monitors (such as EIZO) for photography and video editing, because of their accuracy and quality, the fact remains that no monitor can match the size or volume of what our cameras capture.

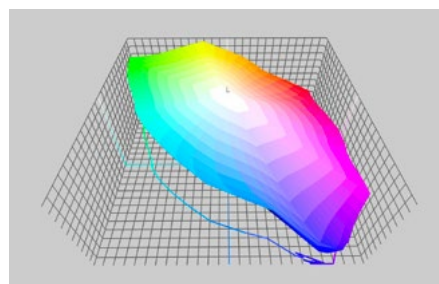
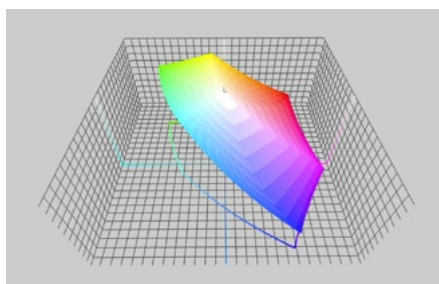
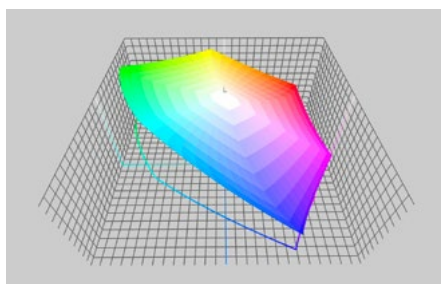
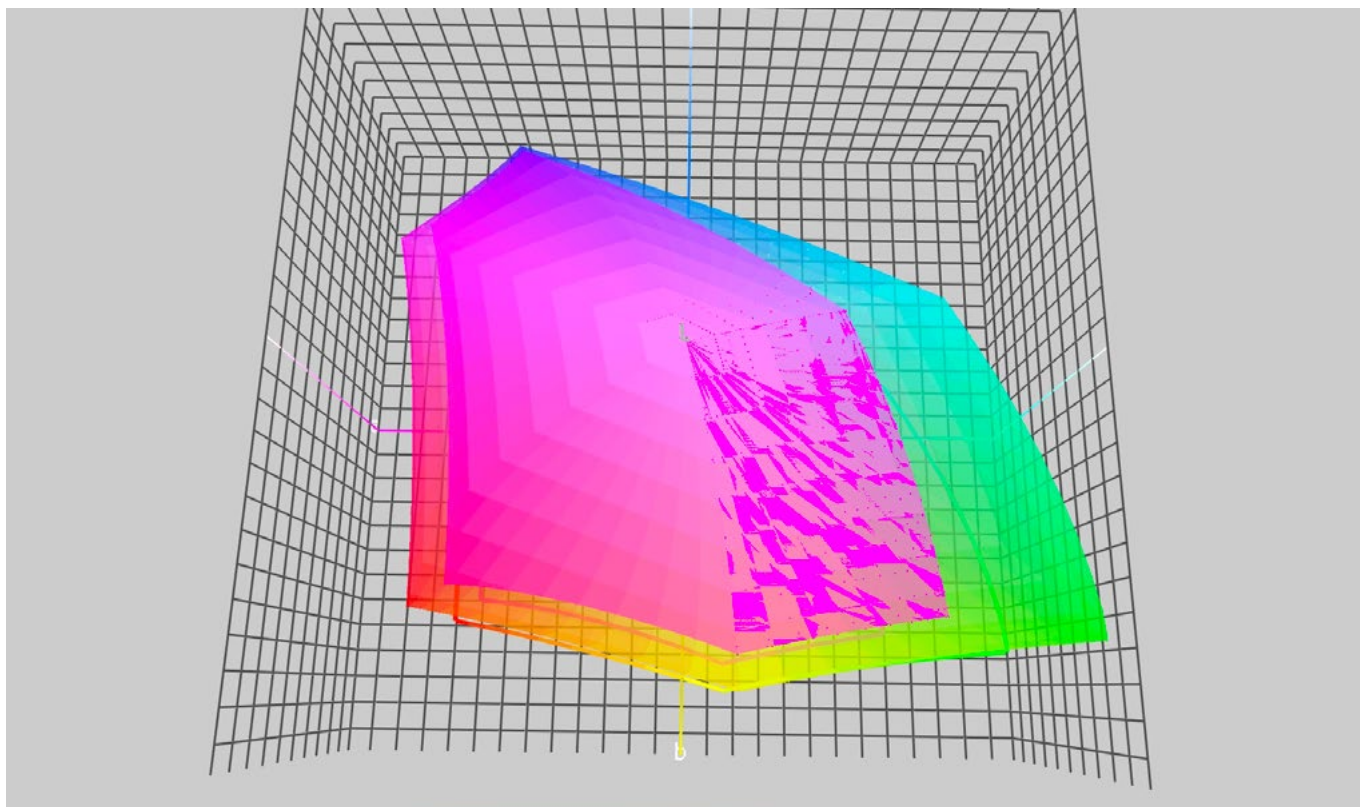
Above is Apple's Display P3 colour space. Compare it to the camera profile of the Fujifilm GFX100S II on the previous page (most cameras are similar in the size of their profiles, so this applies whether you're using a Canon, Nikon, Sony or Olympus too). The monitor cannot show all the colours potentially present in the photo file.

Through the wonders of colour management, gamma curves, reproduction curves and colour spaces, we can produce images on our monitors that look fantastic. Many photographers use Apple laptops for their photography and they will tell you how marvellous the photos look with their heightened contrast and saturation. Certainly, our senses are very happy with what they see. And they should be.

So, what's the takeaway? When choosing a monitor (or a laptop with its inbuilt monitor), you should choose one with the largest colour space. - either Display P3 or AdobeRGB.

What is a colour space? The above is a graph of the Display P3 colour space. On the previous page, the graph shows the colour space of a digital camera and on the following pages we show some different colour spaces. Colour spaces are all the colours that a device can show (also called a camera profile or a monitor profile). Colour spaces are perhaps better described as a 'theoretical' collection of colours, some larger than others.

For instance, the Display P3 colour space is what Apple says its monitors can display in theory, but what your Apple monitor can actually display might be slightly smaller or different in shape (or the colours it can display).



ADOBE RGB VS SRGB

There are two ‘theoretical’ colour spaces you’ve probably heard of: AdobeRGB and sRGB. The takeaway is that AdobeRGB is better than sRGB because it’s bigger! So, what does this mean?

Look at all the colours your camera is capturing (above, right). Compare this with AdobeRGB (left) and sRGB (middle) - the theoretical colour spaces are much smaller, meaning they are less capable of retaining colours, especially the more saturated colours. The large graph at the top shows how AdobeRGB engulfs the smaller sRGB colour space.

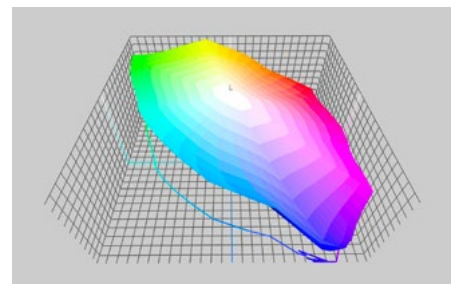
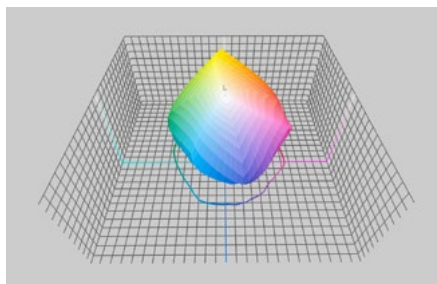
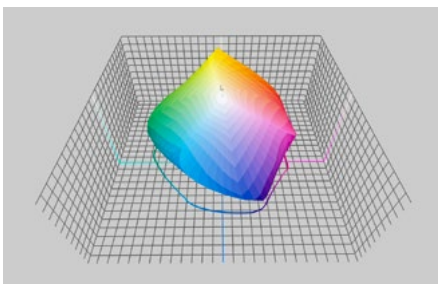
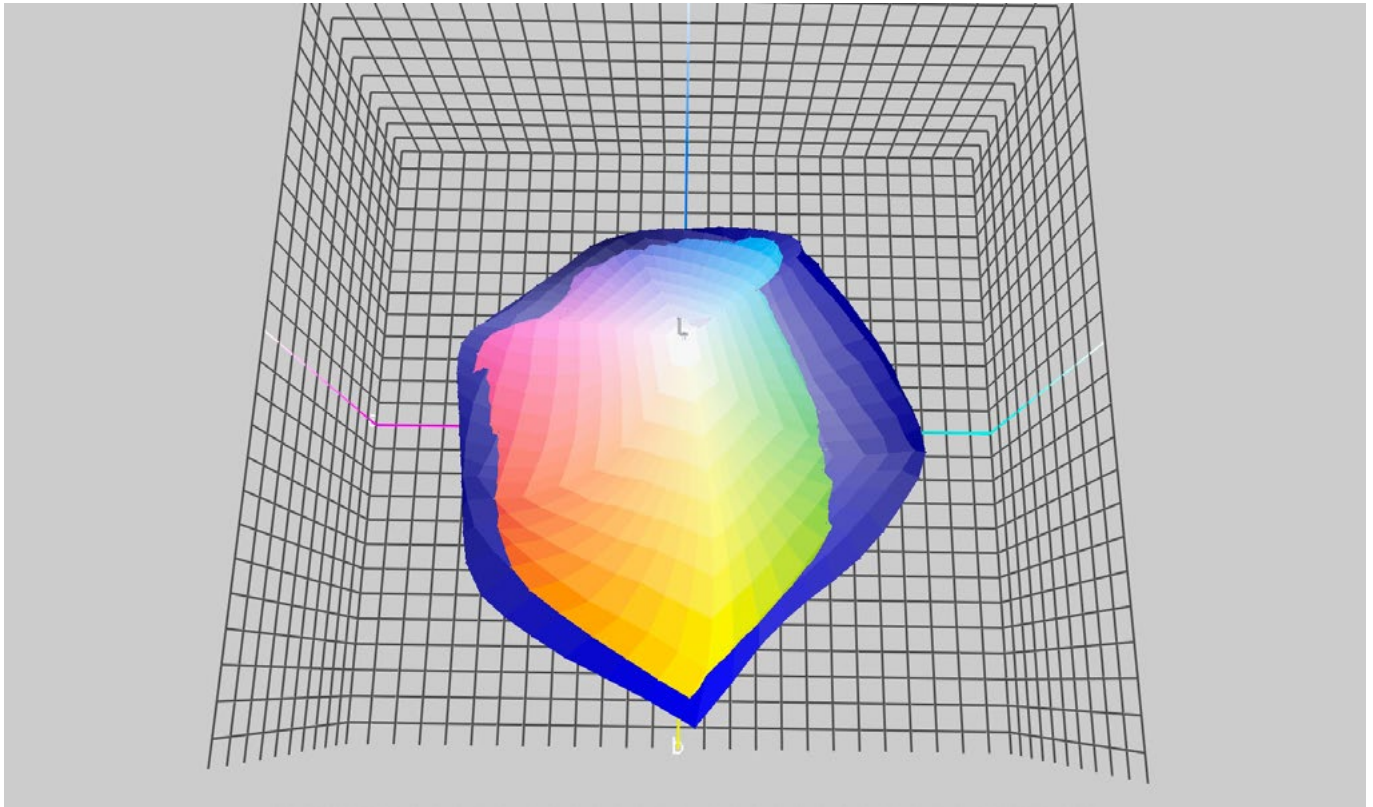
So, if you save your photo with the AdobeRGB or sRGB profile, you are throwing away all the colours that are outside the colour space. A colour space shows you the limits of what it can retain, so if a colour is outside of this, it is not ignored, but at best it can only be given an approximate value of what it really is.

When you use your camera to capture JPEGs, you usually get to choose between AdobeRGB and sRGB colour spaces. If you choose AdobeRGB, you’re throwing away fewer colours than if you chose sRGB. But you’re still throwing away a lot of colours.

When you capture a raw file, the camera profile with all its colours is retained. A raw file potentially has far more colours than AdobeRGB and sRGB, so why lose all those colours by saving your files as JPEGs? Much better to stay in the raw file workflow as long as possible (and you do automatically when working in Lightroom or Capture One).

Furthermore, when you process your raw files into a JPEG, TIFF or PSD, you can then convert it into AdobeRGB. You will usually get a much better result if you delay your conversion into a smaller colour space as late as possible in the editing process.

And you’ll understand how important this is when you look at printer profiles!



GLOSS VS MATTE

When you look at how small printer profiles are, you might wonder why so many photographers love printing?

We call the colour spaces for printers 'printer profiles'. A printer profile describes or measures the colours (the colour space) that a printer can reproduce. Of course, it's not just the printer, but the ink (especially the photo black ink for gloss paper versus the matte black ink for matte paper) and the paper itself that affect the size of the colour profile.

Generally speaking, a gloss print has a larger colour space (above left) than a matte print (above middle), but both are smaller than our camera profile. You can see the matte profile inside the larger gloss profile in the larger graph above.

Of course, our prints still look magnificent. They still seem to have a full range of colours, courtesy of the human brain and its ability to adapt to the colours it's presented with.

Without going into the reasons, to get the best quality print, to hold onto the most saturated and realistic colours, you want to convert from your large camera profile to the smaller printer profile as late as possible. How do you do this?

If you process your photos in Lightroom, you need to output a JPEG or TIFF file for printing. And when you output the file, you need to assign a colour space. The three main choices are AdobeRGB, sRGB and ProPhotoRGB. As a starting point, output in ProPhotoRGB because it is a very large colour space and similar in size to your camera profile. Then sit back and let the colour management system do its job. (There are also arguments for outputting into AdobeRGB, so if you've been taught this, continue as instructed!)

This will work most of the time, but there will be files where you simply lose the colours you want. They are not there. And this is when you need to take a step further into the murky world of colour management. Stay tuned!

DEFINING MOMENTS

Tony 'Harro' Harrington has spent a lifetime at the beach and on the snow

– with a camera in hand. His spectacular book chronicling his 40 years of photography is a massive 1352 pages. Why?

Let's face it, getting people to look at more than a few of our photographs at a time is a huge challenge. People are so used to scrolling mindlessly through a social media feed, that the concept of sitting down and spending even a few minutes to look through a book is becoming almost foreign to us!

Yet, as photographers, we know how important it is to produce a body of work, to curate and collect our best images and put them into a portfolio of some kind. And generally speaking, if you want people to look at all the work in that portfolio, it needs to be short, concise and pithy.

So, what happens when you're producing a book? How many photographs do you put within its pages? And how many pages can you include and still keep the reader interested? Most experts will suggest fewer pages with just the best photographs is the best approach, but many photographers find it hard to follow this advice. Often, they have spent years on a project and so the book is as much for them as it is for their readers. Still, there's a balance that needs to be set.

And for Tony Harrington, that balance meant a huge book 1352 pages in length. We asked Tony to explain why his self-published book *Defining Moments* is so BIG!

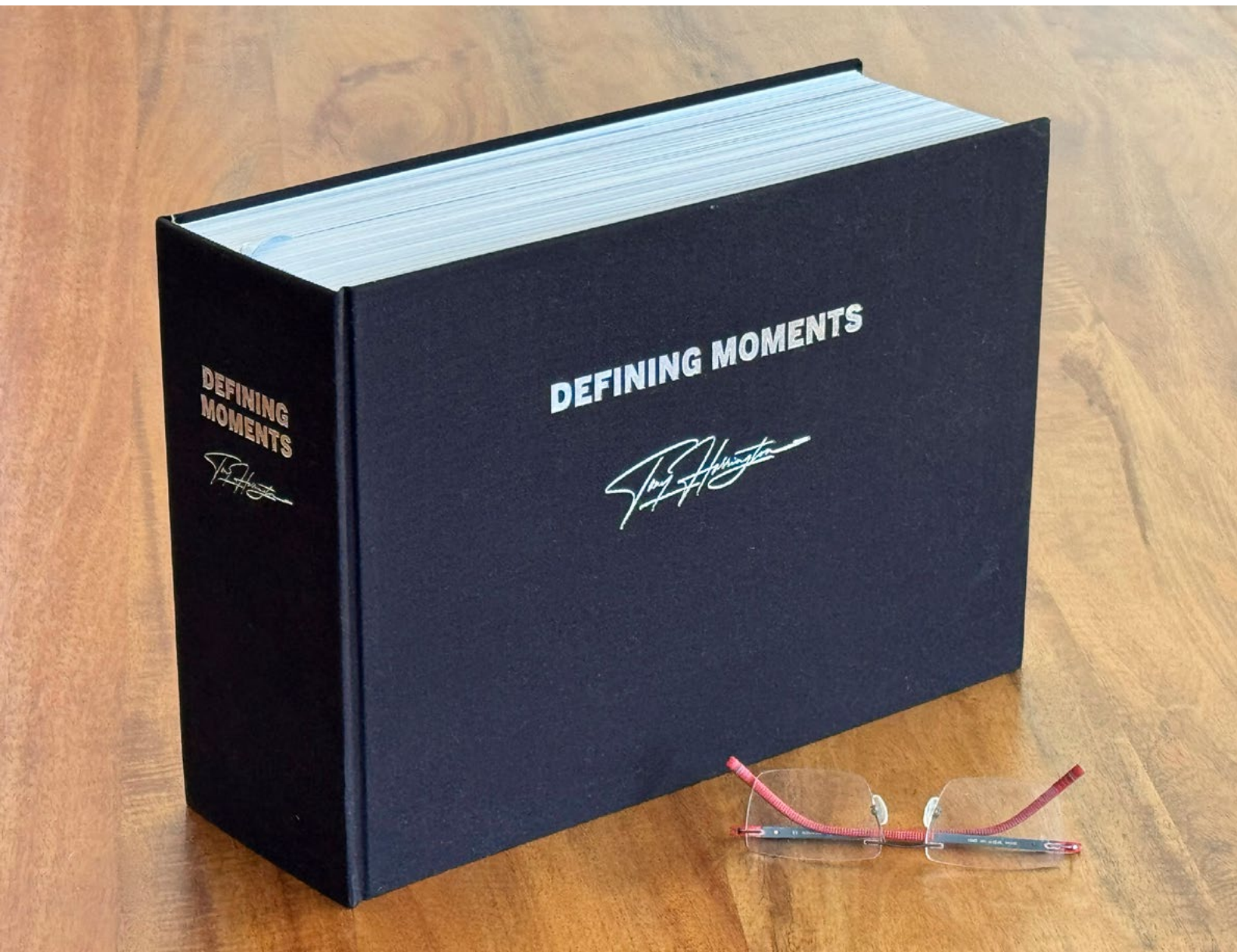
As a teenager I was inspired to travel by watching surf and snow movies, listening to the stories of our elders down at our local beach talking about their adventures in exotic, far-away places and reading the monthly surf magazines. For some reason, I picked up a camera as a 15-year-old; I have no idea why. I'd always be the first out in the surf before the sun came up, get my fair share of waves, then when the surf got crowded, I'd swim out with my camera into the line-up to photograph my

friends and share the stoke of the moment by looking over the prints when they came back from the local photo shop.

At the time, I had no idea you could make money or chase a lifestyle, simply from following your passion. My first surfboard, wetsuit, camera, film and processing were funded by trawling through sewer-filled canals and lakes at my local golf course finding golf balls, taking them home, cleaning them up, then doing my best to sell them back to the golfers who lost them. I made it work. This fuelled the dream where I knew I could attain a goal by doing whatever it would take to accomplish it. It's never plain sailing, there have been amazing highs, horrendous lows – both in business and personally – and if I had the chance to do it again, I wouldn't change anything. It's never been easy, but nothing worth conquering ever should be.

Since those early days, I've been on a never-ending journey shooting surf and snow. And for the past 40+ years, I've visited places all around Australia, Indonesia, the Pacific, North America, Hawaiian Islands, Europe, Alaska and Greenland.

I've documented many defining moments of both sports by being at the pointy end of the evolution of big wave surfing and big mountain skiing and snowboarding. On top of the photography, I'd create projects for Red Bull, Rip Curl and other major corporate brands. I'd dream up and execute major events like the World Heli Challenge, using five helicopters to shuttle athletes and film crews into the mountains of New Zealand, trucking 60 loads of snow into Wanaka for an in-town big air event; complete bands like Grinspoon, Spiderbait and Celibate Rifles playing on stage in front of the action. As when I started in photography, I had no previous event or production experience, no idea of how sponsorships worked – just a desire to make cool



***Defining Moments* by Tony Harrington is not an ordinary book of surf and ski photography. Take a second look at the product photo above and notice the reading glasses included for scale. 'Harro' has made a huge statement in more ways than one!**



Beautifully designed, *Defining Moments* is more than just a photo book, with extensive captions and background stories outlining Harro's many adventures.

stuff happen and surround myself with like-minded people. I've never been one to rest on laurels and at the end of every project, there's always a need to take on another one and make it better. And it started from selling golf balls.

I've always been asked, "Harro! When are you going to produce a book?" The answer was always, "When I stop travelling long enough to think about it." *Outside* magazine in the USA produced a feature on my work. The editor exclaimed, "Harro, did you know that you are the only surf and snow photographer who's documented these two genres at that level?" And that's when I got the idea of producing a combined surf and snow book. There are so many amazing photographers out there with incredible books on surf or snow, but no one with the depth of historical content of both sports. That's the point of difference of *Defining Moments*, a book that showcases the accomplishments of athletes from the transition of the 'old school' to 'new school'.

As it turns out, I've become one of the most established snow sports photographers in the world, with 75 back-to-back

southern and northern winter snow seasons and shooting surf in-between. You could only imagine what content has been captured over 30 years of visiting Alaska, living on the North Shore of Hawaii in-between seasons, winters in Australia, New Zealand and beyond.

COVID gave me that chance to stop travelling and begin work on the book. I was locked up in a Brisbane Hotel for two weeks in forced quarantine. You should have seen the look on the faces of the two police officers as I dragged six big boxes of slides, a Mac monitor, computer and hard drive up the elevator and into the room. The door was closed tight behind me and not opened except for the meals left outside on the corridor floor. Those 14 days of isolation were put to good use, allowing me to go through hundreds of thousands of slides, culling them down to 2000 and scanning them all, then whittling down over half a million digital images to just 10,000, followed by a big import into Lightroom.

It took another four years to write 25 chapters based on the adventures and moments that I captured. Each chapter was



refined over and over and then refined some more. At the end of this process, I opened an InDesign file and started laying out pages. I'd never had anything to do with InDesign before, I simply taught myself through the school of YouTube. For many years, I'd been working with some of the best action sports and adventure magazines in the world. I had a couple of hundred front covers and numerous global awards for my work, so I had the creative eye and I knew what I wanted the pages to look like. I couldn't quite fathom what the book would look like, but I wasn't about to limit its size. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to produce something special. It's all fact based on moments that had passed the front of my lens and recorded interviews with the athletes responsible for pushing the extreme limits of surf and snow.

Initially, I was thinking of a book around 300 pages. I got a quote from my print agent, but a couple of months later, I realised the book was going to be around 700 pages, so I got another quote; and then 900 pages and another quote. After that I said to my print agent, "Let's just hold off on the quotes

right now. I'm going to finish the project and then I'll let you know what the final page number is."

I ended up designing 1800 pages and I knew that this was way too much. I did my best to get it down to 1200. I almost got there. I settled on a book with 1,352 pages, full of gobsmacking stories, photos, quotes and input from dozens of the world's leading big mountain and big wave athletes and underdogs.

In May this year, I turned 60 and there's absolutely no thoughts of slowing down any time soon. I've just made the switch from shooting action sport with a DSLR to medium format mirrorless cameras, pushing the envelope further by using the latest technology in extreme environments.

Having said that, to be honest there's f@#! all money to be made in action sports, but living in and photographing the moments is priceless.

If you have an interest in surfing and skiing, then we know Tony would appreciate a fellow photographer investing AU\$300 for a massive book. You can purchase the book and see more of Harro's photography at harroart.com.



CLOTHING FOR **Outdoor Photography**



Some people will suggest you don't need waterproof overpants for the Atacama Desert in Chile, but if you're there in winter or it's cold, the overpants add as another layer to keep you warm.

**Clothes are definitely an advantage,
depending on where you are of course,
but what clothes should you always pack,
no matter where you're going?
Peter Eastway has some suggestions.**

I guess if you're photographing at a nudist beach, clothes are unnecessary. Mind you, if you're photographing at a nudist beach... let's not go there.

In my camera bag, I keep a lightweight, waterproof (water resistant) jacket. It serves several purposes, depending on the occasion and the location. If I walk out to a landscape mid-afternoon with a lightweight shirt and, getting caught up in the sunset and early evening light I find the temperature dropping, this is an extra layer that can keep away the chills. In fact, as all

outdoor enthusiasts will tell you, layers are the key to satisfactory clothing.

The lightweight jacket also comes in handy if it rains. Sometimes you can start the day without a cloud in the sky, only to have a cool change pass through with attendant precipitation! This jacket is not the best solution, but it's better than nothing and the jacket includes a hood. So while the bottom half of me could be getting drenched, at least the top half feels moderately dry.

These two obvious benefits are, however, secondary. The main reason I keep the jacket in my backpack is for flights. The jacket has 27 pockets all around it (okay, I'm exaggerating a little, but lots of pockets), so if I get pinged for weight, I can discreetly retire and fill my pockets with a couple of lenses, thus lightening my camera bag to satisfy the weighing machine. While to date I have been relatively unaffected by weight limits (I usually travel within the weight restrictions anyway), there are times when our carry-on luggage gets weighed and I am at the limits of the magic seven kilograms for many international flights. (On a series of recent flights



When travelling to the poles, the shipping company will usually provide a warm jacket and rubber boots, but you need to supply your own waterproof overpants.

through Chile, Latam allowed 12 kg carry-on bags, Qantas domestic allows 10 kg on many of its flights – so it's variable.) In short, the jacket is a utility device for dealing with air travel.

Rainwear

While many photographers retire to the café or pub when it's raining, travel and landscape photographers may not have that luxury and so they need rainwear. And probably both tops and bottoms.

I can remember on a job on Easter Island a decade ago, walking up the hill through the orchards to the edge of a huge crater. As I walked, it started to rain a little, so I put my rain jacket on. I thought I was smart because I'd brought the jacket. However, as the jacket shed the water onto my trousers, gradually saturating the material, I felt my feet becoming a little damp. By the time I reached the top, my shoes were full of water and was well and truly drenched from the thighs down.

The most embarrassing thing about this story is that I had a pair of waterproof overpants back in the hotel and I didn't bring them.

These days, no matter where I'm travelling, I include both a rain jacket and waterproof overpants. Now, you might gently suggest to me that the waterproof pants are unnecessary for a location like the Atacama Desert, to which I'd reply they worked admirably well as an extra warming layer when I visited the Taito Geyser Field at 4300 metres! Rainwear is also windproof and while you might look like a plastic mannequin, it can certainly keep you warm.

And while not strictly speaking clothing, I also take a small collapsible umbrella with me. I have quite a collection at home because every time it rains when I'm travelling, I seem to buy a new one. However, I am trying to be better and find the

umbrella that slots in next to my tripod legs without taking up too much space in my suitcase.

Cold Weather Gear

If you take a voyage to one of the Poles with a company like Aurora Expeditions, they provide you with a large cold weather jacket. The designs vary, but usually include a water-resistant outer shell and a warm 'puffer' style inner. Many people are probably as warm as toast with one of these, but if you feel the cold, there's plenty of room underneath to layer up.

The downside of these jackets is the advertising they invariably carry and so not everyone uses them when they return home. However, the key design points are important. First, you want the jacket to go well over your hips. Not down to your knees, but you want the jacket covering the small of your back and not letting in too much cold air when you lean over. There are quite a few jacket designs which are 'longer' in the body that work well.

Next, what outside material do you want? There are jackets made with thick canvas material that even barbed wire struggles to push through, but the material is so tough it is not really suitable for social use. On the other hand, some of the stylish jackets are made with material that will easily rip and tear as you walk through low scrub to get to the best camera angle. I find that somewhere in-between you'll find a material that is probably water shedding, windproof and tough enough to handle some minor bush-bashing.

So, how warm does this jacket need to be? I have a very warm Arc'teryx jacket that would be too warm for Sydney in winter, but is ideal for New Zealand. In fact, I can just wear a shirt under the jacket and be toasty warm, even when there is snow on the ground. I also have a lightweight puffer jacket for when it's not too cold. It doesn't have very robust outer material, but it's much smaller and lighter to wear. You probably need to have both.

You'll note I'm not referring to specific measurement for temperature, waterproofness and strength. Different manufacturers approach things differently and I've found that while shopping online is convenient, dropping down to an outdoor shop where you can see and feel the physical product is definitely worthwhile. You might spend a little more in the shop, but that can be considered the price for getting good advice.

Layers are the Key

So, with the outer layers under control, what else do you need underneath? More layers!

This is personal, I know, but it depends on how much you feel (or don't feel) the cold. And the solution is as many layers as you need.

In Antarctica, I wear a thermal T-shirt/singlet next to my skin, I have a shirt or a skivvy on top and, if it's really cold, maybe an extra pullover or jumper. And then I put on my jacket. So for cold days I have five layers (remembering the jacket has both an inner and outer layer); on warmer days, I might remove the pullover and/or the thermal. And as I don't know how cold it is, I always take all the layers.

I'm sure you will get lots of sales advice when buying your thermals, but given the Middlehurst workshops I do every year, I buy Icebreaker gear. Middlehurst provides some of the wool they use and I'm also told wool is better than cotton and it



A jacket that goes down to your thighs and has sufficient length to keep you warm, even when bending over, is essential for cold weather conditions. Photo by Brett Fordyce.

doesn't smell. Perhaps I should say it doesn't smell as much! I do know that the woollen socks from Icebreaker are fantastic and the first set I bought lasted me 10 years and didn't smell. I've just acquired a new set of four pairs and they are going strong. However, I'm sure there will be readers with different viewpoints on what works best and that's fine. Just remember layers!

Gloves and Hats

I reckon I have around 20 pairs of gloves. I've tried many different designs, some more successful than others. However, I think after being in cold climates quite a bit over the years, my hands are somewhat conditioned to the cold and I generally only wear a pair of lightweight gloves or even inner gloves.

When handling my camera, think gloves are problematic to start with.

There are designs where your fingers sit in a mitten which can be folded back, so you have control over your camera, but for me, a thin pair of gloves is all I need. Some readers will say I haven't been out in cold enough weather and this is true – I'm rarely in temperatures below -5°C, maybe -10°C with wind chill. Lower than this, then a thicker pair of gloves is essential. And when I travel, I always take both pairs, the thin and the thick, just in case.

For headgear, in cold weather I need a beanie as there's not much hair on my noggin to keep my head warm! In sunny weather I need a peaked cap or a brimmed hat. And if it's both cold and sunny, I need a beanie over my peaked cap! You'll work out what you need, but for every trip I go on, I include both

gloves and headgear, just in case. (Okay, if I am going to the tropics, gloves and beanies will be left behind!)

Footwear

I don't have any special recommendations for footwear, except to have an extra pair tucked away somewhere, just in case you're caught out tramping through mud, making your shoes unacceptable for the dining room.

And if you're flying, some countries will ask you to take off over-ankle height boots, but not shoes. A small inconvenience if the shoes are comfortable.

For the Poles, most ships provide you with rubber Wellington or Muck boots, which are ideal when you're sitting in a Zodiac or jumping ashore through the water. I also find them comfortable enough when walking ashore, although I know some people prefer to take their own shoes. The problem is carrying the shoes you're not wearing on the walk!

Accessories

In my camera bag, I also carry a small cloth, useful for cleaning and drying cameras. And in the absence of a rain cover, the cloth can sit on top of the camera and absorb much of the rain if necessary – but I also always take a small plastic rain cover for my camera, just in case. Usually our camera can handle an hour or so of light rain without a problem, so the camera cover is only for extended sessions.

Don't forget a pair of sunglasses, sunscreen and lip balm. Oh and your camera!

Travel Storybook

Design and order your own Graphistudio Storybook

Beautifully designed to hand around, the Storybook will have your audience

enthralled with its leather wrap and Amalfi paper.



How do we encourage people to value our best photographs the way we do? One answer is how we treat and present the photos ourselves.

Take a look at the Storybook from Graphistudio. Isn't it elegant? Doesn't it make a statement? Imagine your photos sitting within its soft leather covers.

But let's start with the paper it's printed on, handmade in Amalfi (Italy) according to a medieval heritage kept by a small number of tiny, family-driven paper mills. The deckled edges, unique to each sheet, have a rich texture and an organic look that is timeless. Plus the paper itself is lightly textured, turning each page into an object of desire. The advertising rhetoric sounds good, doesn't it?

The cover is a wrap design which comes in a range of materials and colours to suit your subject, from premium leathers to eco-friendly leatherettes. Complete the wrap with a traditional tie, to be rolled and laced like Renaissance Age artists used to do with their scrapbooks.

And your cover wrap material can be customised with a line or two of text – such as your name or your subject.

The vertical Storybook measures 20x30 cm (8x12") and can hold 16 to 48 pages, while the horizontal version measures 33x25 cm (13x10") and holds 16 to 60 pages.

The finished Storybook is delivered in an elegant, eco-friendly cardboard box, finished inside with a vellum wrap.

Is This For You?

The reason we're writing about this product is that, after seeing and holding the Shark Bay example shown on the next page, a number of photographers on our workshops have expressed an interest in producing their own Storybook with Graphistudio. However, as it stands today, Graphistudio operates business-to-

business, so unless you are a professional photographer with an ABN or equivalent, you may not be able to order.

The solution is to order through us. We're not expecting dozens of orders, but we're happy to test the system with a view to eventually gaining direct access for readers to the Graphistudio system. How that will happen we're currently discussing, so in the meantime, we will put your order through on our account and ship it directly back to you.

Pricing

A Storybook is not cheap. On the other hand, it is handmade and it will be unique.

A 16-page Storybook is around AUS \$300, up to \$500-odd for a 60-page book. But if we want to make a short but powerful impact when we show our work to friends and family, a 16-page art piece should be sufficient.

Ordering

We're not going to prepare a special order form – we will do our correspondence by email. If you're interested, we suggest you prepare your photographs first and then send an email to Kim Valenti (kim@betterphotography.com) who will price your Storybook (depending on the number of pages, the cover material and other embellishments).

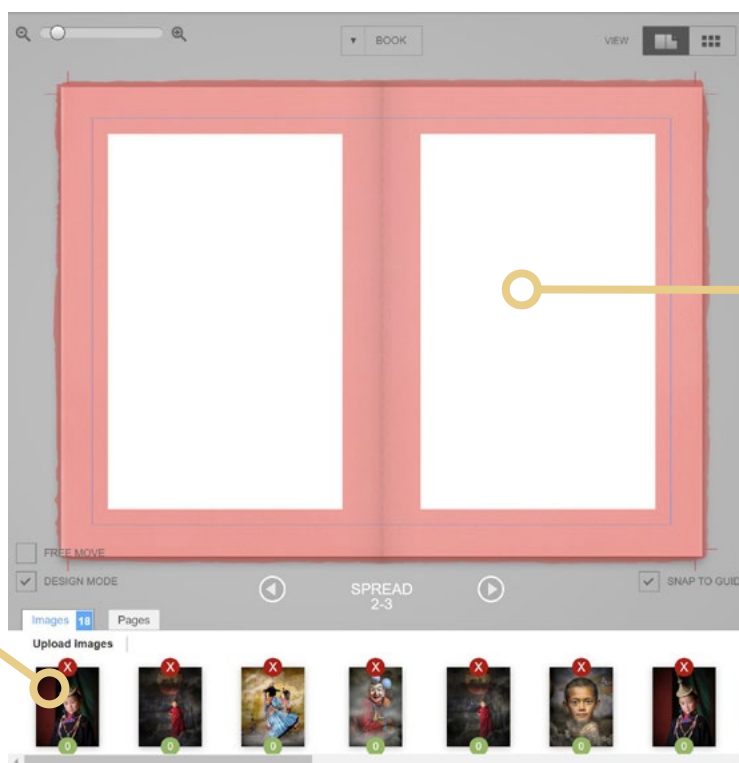
If you're happy to proceed with the quoted price, you will upload your pre-formatted photo files to us and we will prepare the order for you. There is a \$50 (approximate) handling fee, so this isn't a profit venture for us – we just want to share the opportunity around.

On the following pages, hopefully there is all you need to know to make your order – and enjoy your own special Storybook from Graphistudio.



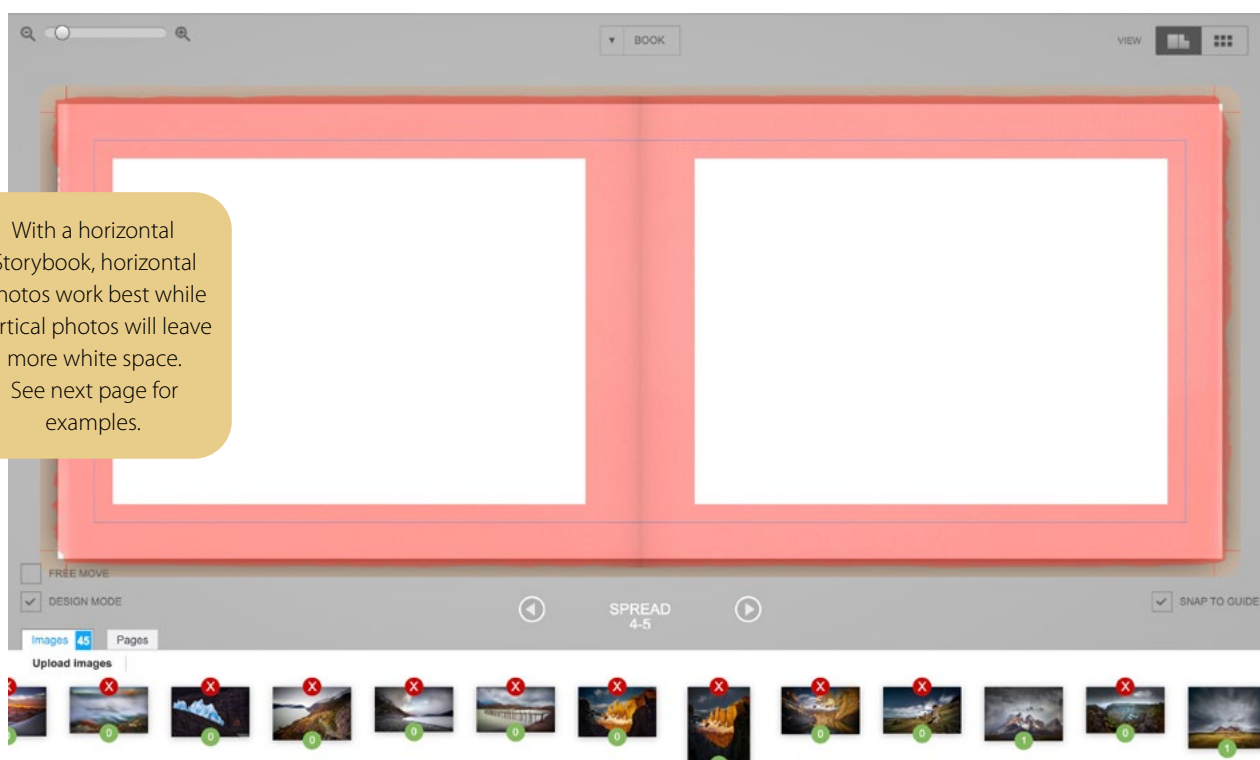
Storybook - Vertical or Horizontal?

After uploading your photos, designing the Storybook is as simple as dragging and dropping the photos into position. If you are sending your photos to *Better Photography*, we will do this for you – you just need to provide the files, numbered in the order you want them placed.



Note in the diagrams, the white area is the printable area – where your photo will be printed. The red area will not be printed – it will be left as white paper. So if your photo is square or horizontal, it will be reduced in size to fit within the print area. See examples next page.

With a horizontal Storybook, horizontal photos work best while vertical photos will leave more white space. See next page for examples.



Our suggestion for a Storybook is to use one photo per page, in which case you need to decide whether a vertical or horizontal Storybook will work best for your photos. If all your photos are horizontal (or vertical), the answer is obvious, but most of us have a variety of picture formats, in which case we recommend the horizontal Storybook.

If you wish to have multiple photos on a page, you will need to produce a single JPEG file with the photos laid out – but this will require you to use Photoshop or Affinity Photo. Keep it simple with one photo per page!



Horizontal photos work best on the horizontal format Storybook. With the vertical format, there is too much white space if you are going to use one photo per page.



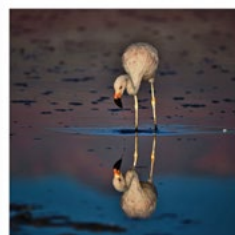
Vertical photos work best on the vertical format Storybook. With the horizontal format, there is a lot more white space – although this can look quite arty!



With panorama format photos, you're going to have white space on both formats, but they certainly work better with the horizontal format Storybook.



Square photos will have white space on both format Storybooks. Both work well with the generous white surrounds.



Sizing Your Photos

There are two things to consider when sizing your photos – the number of pixels (sufficient to print a high quality photo) and the shape or aspect ratio of the photo, so it fits within the printable area on the page.

We have provided the number of pixels you need here, with the longest height and longest width. However, when it comes to the shape/aspect ratio of your photo, it doesn't have to match the printable area - we just position the photo inside the printable area. The result will leave more white space around the photo, but it will still look great as you have seen on the previous page.

So, it's not a problem to use different format photos in the one book, you just have more white space - and it's arty!

For readers who have Photoshop skills, it's also possible to have more than one photo on a page, but you have to design the pages yourself in Photoshop, flatten the file and provide a single JPEG file for printing. Create a file with a canvas the exact size of the printable area (shown below) and place the photos you want within the canvas. You can have as many photos as you like, as long as you provide a single file with the same measurement (or smaller) as the printable area.



MEASUREMENTS

VERTICAL STORYBOOK

Page measures 20x30 cm (8x12 inches)

Printable area measures

15x24 cm

Pixels Required

1772x2835 pixels at (300 dpi)

MEASUREMENTS

HORIZONTAL STORYBOOK

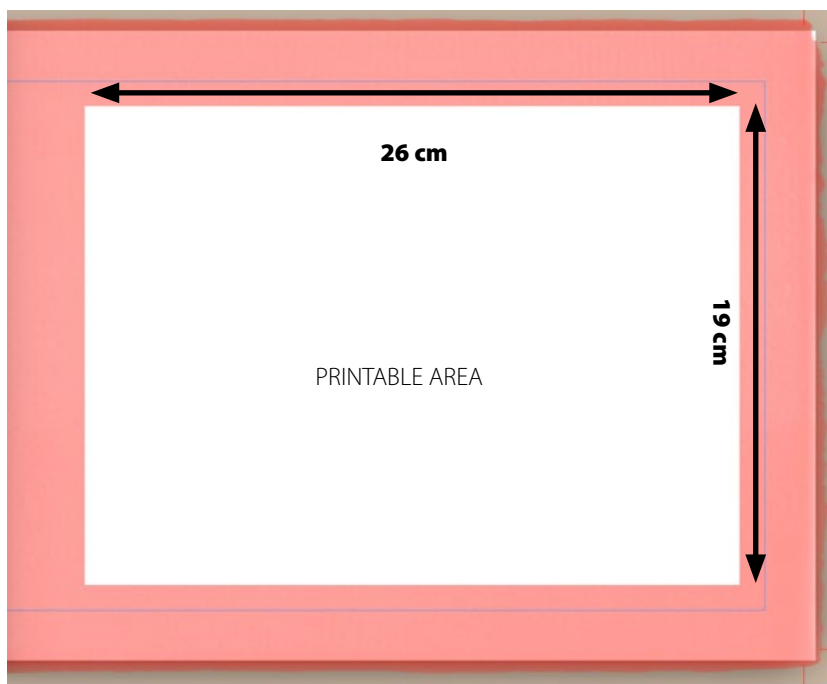
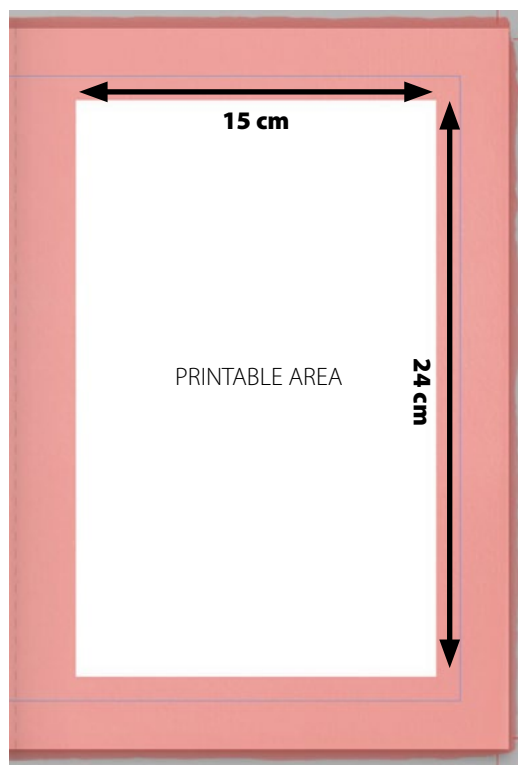
Page measures 33x25 cm (13x10 inches)

Printable area measures

26x19 cm

Pixels Required

3071x2244 pixels at (300 dpi)



Number of Pages

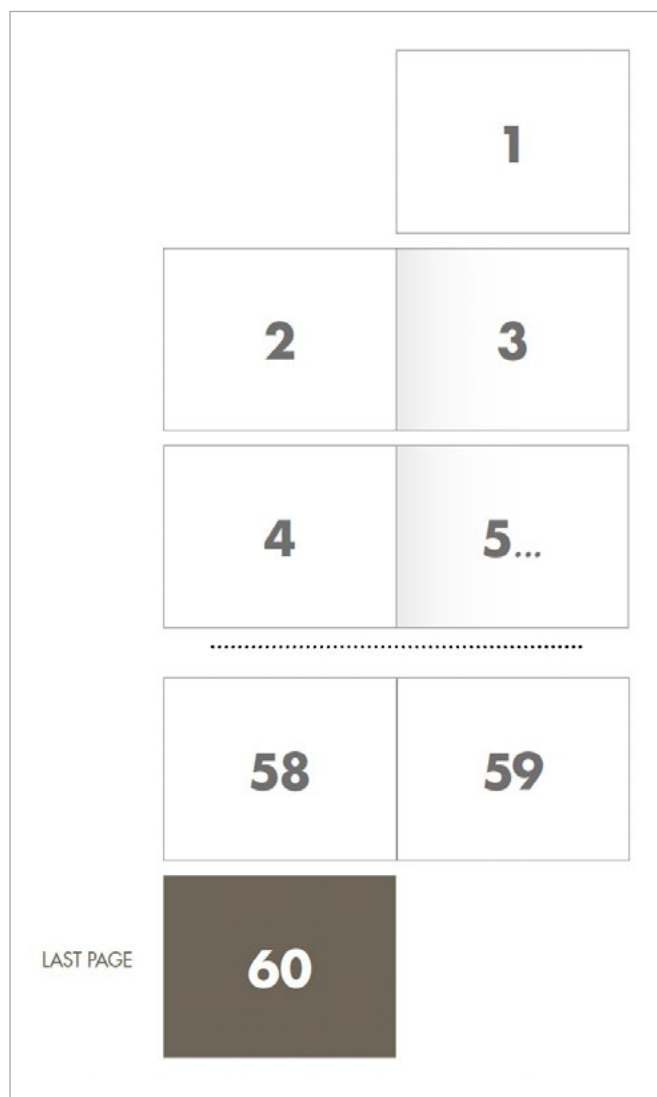
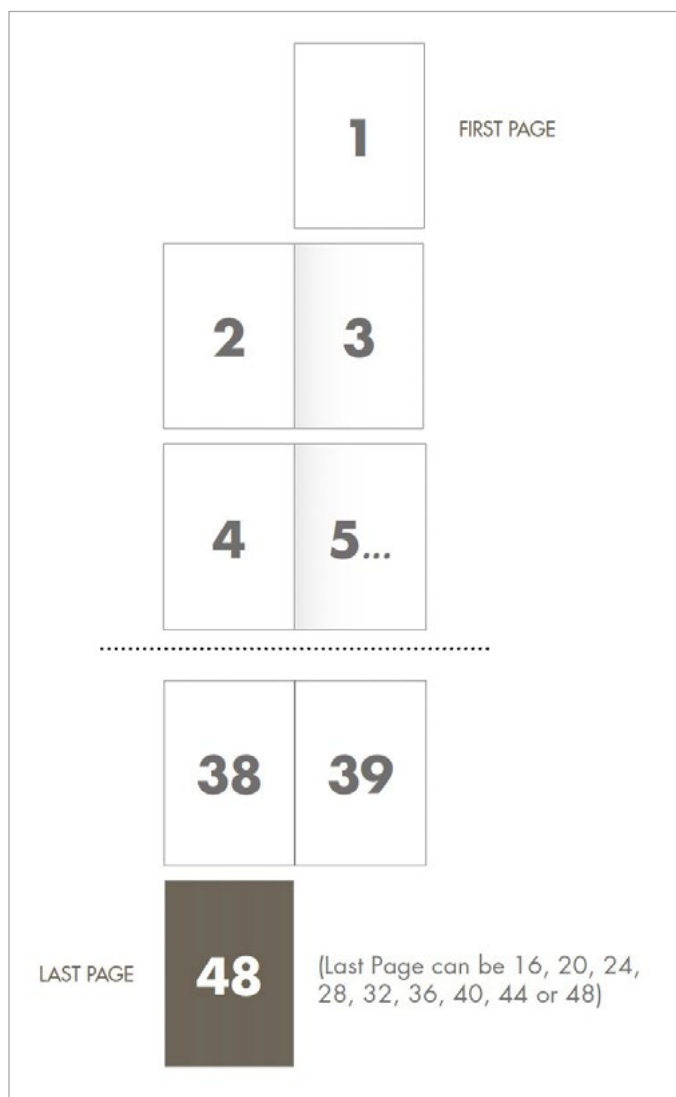
How big do you want your Storybook? What should be its 'extent'? You can have from 16 pages up to 48 pages (for the vertical book) or 60 pages (for the horizontal format). Should you go for more pages or fewer?

There's no right or wrong answer.

If you believe your readers will have short attention spans (and unfortunately most people will), then perhaps you only need a 16-page Storybook. Spend a little time choosing just the very best photos in your project and impress your readers with quality, not quantity.

On the other hand, of course every one of your photos is of exemplary quality and your readers deserve to see them all. Go for broke and choose 60 pages because the project deserves it!

The only restriction you have is that your page count is a multiple of four, as this is how the Storybook is designed. You can have blank pages, of course, but if you want an 18-page Storybook, you will be given 20 pages and the last two pages will be blank! So go for a multiple of four and design accordingly.



Cover Materials and Colours

Class Leatherette

FC881

FC884

Cloud Leatherette

FN966

FN476

FN4916

FN412

FN808

FN919

FN998

FN286

FN419

FN482

FN4655

FN279

FN966

Leather Distressed

D01

D02

D12

D07

D08

D09

D11

D05

D13

D15

Sequoia

SE4004

SE4002

SE4003

SE4001

SE4007

Leather

P06

P16

P04

There are over thirty colours and five materials to choose from. Our suggestion is to pick a colour you like and will suit your project, as all the materials look and feel great.

All the materials are leather or leather-like.

Class Leatherette is enriched with a velvety satin finishing. It offers high resistance to wear and tear, together with a lightness that ensures it perfectly adheres to the base it is applied on.

Cloud Leatherette is available in a wide range of colours and enriched with a shaded effect. It has an extremely smooth surface and very soft touch. The innovative fabric, coated in a polymeric material, offers high resistance to wear and tear.

Sequoia is an extremely high quality, aniline-treated Italian nubuck cow leather that has a distinct vintage effect obtained through a special hand-finishing process.

Italian half grain bovine **leather** features a durable matte finish that ages beautifully. It's the classic leather material.

Distressed Leather is a full grain Italian bovine leather, treated with aniline to ensure resistance to wear and enhance the character and craftsmanship of the distressed finish.

However, there are some things you need to know.

First, the Class Leatherette and Cloud Leatherette materials are included in the price of a basic Storybook. If you choose Leather Distressed, Sequoia or Leather, there's an extra \$36 cost.

Second, if you want to order a leather tie for your Storybook, you first have to choose one of the more expensive cover materials - so you will be spending \$36 for the cover and another \$27 for the tie itself - so it's an extra \$63 for the tie around the middle.

Leather Tie

To give your Storybook a romantic or olde worlde character, a leather tie to secure the wrap cover is a great touch, but it's not necessary.

If you're making a single Storybook to share with friends and families, perhaps a family album for example, then a leather tie looks very special. It adds to the experience of unwrapping the Storybook to access the valuable images inside.

On the other hand, if you're going to produce a set of Storybooks, for example, one for each photography trip or project you do, then having five or ten of these Storybooks together on a shelf might actually sit better without a leather tie. Having a leather tie on each may restrict access to a set of portfolio pieces.

There's no right or wrong, but if you want a Leather tie, you have to order a leather, distressed leather or sequoia cover material with an extra cost of \$36, plus the leather tie itself is a further \$27.

The leather tie is in the same material as your cover choice.



Cover Personalisation and Box

Shark Bay

Photos by Peter Eastway

Graphistudio provides a number of ways you can personalise your Storybook cover, but we will use a single option that is smart and clean. Using laser engraving, you can place two lines of elegant black type in the centre of the cover, using Helvetica 58 point for the title and Edwardian Script 42 point for the subtitle or photographer name. See the example above.

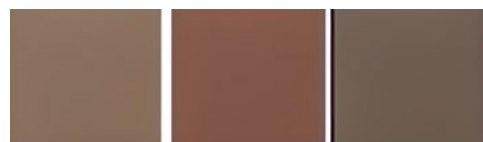
For this to work, you can't have a long title, or if you do, the size of the type will need to be reduced to fit into a single line. Similarly, we hope your name isn't too long for the second line, either!

Finally, you can choose a colour for your custom box. Presentation is everything, so your Storybook comes in an eco-friendly cardboard box in one of four colours and, inside, the Storybook itself is encased in a sheet of translucent vellum. It looks very smart!

If you don't specify a different colour, your Storybook is delivered in Natural Havana, but you can opt instead for Moka, Chocolate or Cinnamon.



Custom box
finishing: Moka,
Chocolate or
Cinnamon.



Preparing Your Files For Printing

Preparing Your Photos In Lightroom

To prepare your Storybook, we need your files to be a particular size (or slightly smaller). Use Lightroom to export your photos as JPEG files using these settings:

Export Location

Export your photos to a folder you can find:

- ☐ Export to Desktop
- ☐ Put in Subfolder – StorybookOrder

File Naming

Name your files with your name and a number indicating the sequence you want them in the book:

- ☐ Rename to Custom Name – Sequence
- ☐ Custom Text – use your name
- ☐ Start Number at 1
- ☐ Remember you need a multiple of four pages

The Size and Format - VERTICAL/PORTRAIT

Output your photos with the following settings:

- ☐ Resize to Fit – Width 1772 px, height 2835 px
- ☐ AdobeRGB
- ☐ Save as JPG setting 80% or 8

These settings will produce a file with a height of 2835 px or less, which will fit the book correctly.

The Size and Format - HORIZONTAL/LANDSCAPE

Output your photos with the following settings:

- ☐ Resize to Fit – Width 3071 px, height 2244 px
- ☐ AdobeRGB
- ☐ Save as JPEG setting 80% or 8

These settings will produce a file with a width of 3071 px or less, which will fit the book correctly.

Check Your Output

Look at the photos you have produced with fresh eyes – is the exposure good, the colour correct, are you sure there are no dust spots? If all is good, you're ready to order your book.

Preparing Your Photos In Photoshop

To prepare your Storybook, we need your files to be a particular size (or slightly smaller). If you're using Photoshop, we assume you have some skills in sizing your photos, so these instructions are general in nature.

Export Location

Export your photos to a folder you can find:

- ☐ Export to Desktop
- ☐ Put in Subfolder – StorybookOrder

File Naming

Name your files with your name and a number indicating the sequence you want them in the book:

- ☐ Rename to Custom Name – Sequence
- ☐ Custom Text – use your name
- ☐ Start Number at 1
- ☐ Remember you need a multiple of four pages

The Size and Format – VERTICAL/PORTRAIT

- ☐ Go to Image > Image Size.

Resize your photo to a maximum width of 1772 px or a maximum height of 2835 px. Unless your photo is exactly this ratio, it will be one or the other.

- ☐ Next, go to Image > Canvas Size.
Resize the canvas to exactly 1772x2835 pixels, with White set as the background colour

The Size and Format – HORIZONTAL/LANDSCAPE

- ☐ Go to Image > Image Size.

Resize your photo to a maximum width of 3071 px or a maximum height of 2244 px. Unless your photo is exactly this ratio, it will be one or the other.

- ☐ Next, go to Image > Canvas Size.
Resize the canvas to exactly 3071x2244 pixels, with White set as the background colour

Save Your Files

- ☐ Go to Image > Convert to Profile and set the colour space to AdobeRGB
- ☐ Save as JPEG setting 80% or 8

Check Your Output

Look at the photos you have produced with fresh eyes – is the exposure good, the colour correct, are you sure there are no dust spots? If all is good, you're ready to order your book.



Storybooks come in both horizontal and vertical orientations. The horizontal may work better for landscapes, but it also depends on how you design your pages. White space is a beautiful balance for your photographs.



A set of Storybooks is a great way to present and cherish your travels, whether family holidays or exploratory investigations.

Ordering Process

Step 1 – Horizontal or Vertical Format?

Your decision will probably be based on the orientation of your photos. If most of your photos are landscape format, you probably want a horizontal format book. You can include portrait format photos in a horizontal book and landscape format photos in a vertical book, but it means you have a lot of white space on the page.

Step 2 – Number of pages?

A horizontal format book can take from 16 to 60 pages. A vertical book can take from 16 to 48 pages. However, you must order pages in multiples of 4 – so 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 44, 48, 52, 56 or 60 pages. The more pages you order, the higher the cost of the book. A basic 16-page book starts at around \$300 while a 60-page book starts at \$511.

Step 3 – Cover Material and colour?

There is a range of cover materials and colours. Cloud Leatherette and Class Leatherette are included in the basic price. For an extra \$36, you can upgrade the material to Leather, Sequoia or Distressed Leather. The colours available depend on the material chosen - not all colours are available in all materials.

Step 4 – Leather Tie

If you want a leather tie for the book, you must order the more expensive Leather, Sequoia or Distressed Leather, then you add another \$27 for the tie. Ties look great as a package.

Step 5 – Cover Title

We suggest laser engraving. You have two lines of text – the name of your book and then either a subtitle or your name underneath, E.g;

Shark Bay
Photos by Peter Eastway

Step 6 – Presentation Box

You can just do nothing and your Storybook will be delivered in a smart cardboard, Havana coloured presentation box, or you can select a slightly different colour if you wish.

Step 7 – Pricing Quote

Send us an email with the details and we'll give you a price. We suggest a 16 page book is a great start at a price of around \$300.

Kim Valenti will be handling the initial ordering process for us. Her email is kim@betterphotography.com

**NB All prices were correct as at July 2025, but obviously are subject to change. We will notify you, of course.*

MIDDLEHURST

An Annual Creative Photography Workshop

- Charter flight direct to Middlehurst Station
- Helicopter flights around the property
- Helicopter flights for aerial photography
- Exclusive access to remote locations
- Personal chef for all meals
- Learn from two Grand Masters of Photography
- **Your photos printed in a lavish book – for you to keep!**
- Plus lots, lots more!

Isn't it time you came to Middlehurst?

Full details can be found at:

www.betterphotography.com under Photo Tours





THE WORLD PRESS PRESENTATION

When the World Press Photo Exhibition opened in Sydney this year, Michael Coyne was invited to give a keynote presentation. This is an edit of his speech.

Great photojournalism captures the truth of a moment with clarity, emotional impact and narrative depth. Photojournalism is also about planning and a willingness to throw out all the planning so you can capture 'the decisive moment'.

Iranian Revolution

I spent nine years of my life as a photojournalist travelling back and forth to Iran. On one occasion, I was in Tehran for the anniversary of the Islamic revolution for *National Geographic* magazine. I planned to photograph it from the footpath, but



A Kurdish shepherd with his son who was injured by standing on a landmine. Tehran, Iran.

suddenly I changed my mind and lay down in the middle of the road and the soldiers marched over the top of me.

The Iranian government had previously thrown all journalists out of the country, so my assignment in Iran was to document the revolution and cover the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq. Graphic posters and blood fountains had been built all around the country to commemorate the martyrs of the revolution and to encourage the people to continue the Islamic revolution and fight the war against Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

It was also important to photograph Iranian culture and daily life under the revolutionary government. I photographed pot makers at the bazaar in Shiraz. To make these photographs work I relied on three things: content, composition and lighting.

When you see or hear about a war or revolution, it's often the negative aspect that you come away with because that's what the media tends to concentrate on; the grittier side of life. So, I wanted to show that daily life goes on at these times. Not every woman is wearing a black chador. Unexpectedly, the groom threw me out of a wedding I attended near the Caspian Sea, because he thought I was taking too many pictures of his new bride and not enough photographs of him.

Noise of War

I was once on assignment for *Newsweek* magazine to photograph the Iran/Iraq war and show it from the Iranian side. I flew down to the warfront where we climbed onto boats and travelled through the marshes. We spent all day in the boats going through reeds which sometimes were so tall that it made it hard to see anything. But the noise of the war was all around us.

Finally, we got to a small island which was surrounded by mines. There were bodies strewn all over the island; Iraqi soldiers



Rehabilitation centre for war victims Tehran, Iran.

who had just been killed by the Iranians. To get a better angle, I climbed onto a wall and started taking pictures.

Shortly afterwards, I became aware of something bouncing around my feet and I thought some idiot was throwing stones at me. I looked over the wall and saw that everybody was lying on the ground.

Then I realised that these were not stones dancing around my feet, they were machine-gun bullets. "Oh, goodness gracious me," I said. Or words to that effect.

I leapt onto the ground and lay there amongst the dead bodies with everyone else. Robert Capa, the famous war photographer once said, "If the picture's not good enough, it means you're not close enough." But this was just a little bit too close for me.

Everything was coming at us – machine-gun bullets, rockets, mortars. You name it. What the Iranians hadn't told us was that our little convoy of boats coming down the waterway carrying mullahs and security personnel with accompanying marching music was considered an invasion. We had crossed into Iraq and were now surrounded. We lay there for ages under gunfire until the Iraqis eventually stopped shooting at us and then there was an eerie silence; nothing, not a birdcall, not a sound. At that point we ran for the boats and leapt onto the closest one.

Minefields

The young men steering the boats were Basij. These are the holy warriors who run across the minefields and are only on the warfront so they can die and go to paradise. We managed to get the boats started and we got away.

Of course, when running across minefields, the Basij either lose or damage their limbs. I visited and photographed a rehabilitation centre where Basij were given callipers or prosthetics to replace or support their legs.

Minefields can also create innocent victims. I photographed a Kurdish shepherd boy who stepped on a mine and lost his legs, an arm and part of his face. The father wanted to donate one of his own eyes, but the boy had lost too much of his face, so the surgeons couldn't use the father's eye. When this picture was published in *National Geographic* magazine, people donated large sums of money to the boy and his family.

Networking and contacts are important. It doesn't matter how talented you are, if you don't have the right contacts, know the right people, then you can't get to the right places and you can't take the great pictures.

Because of my access and images from the Middle East, I was interviewed by the CIA, questioned by the White House and once approached by a Russian spy named Boris who offered to pay me money to spy for Russia. Unfortunately, he only offered



The Nenets Reindeer people at their camp in the Yamal Peninsula, Siberia, Russia.

me roubles and they didn't have much value at the time. So I said no to his offer.

Global Village

For a number of years, I've been documenting stories about people living in rural areas in different countries around the world. Global warming, changing agricultural practices and globalisation are transforming these towns. Soon, many of the villages will no longer exist.

I went to photograph a farmer in Italy and before I could raise my camera, he asked if I could include his chicken. "Sure, no problem," I said. The farmer picked up his chicken and began singing. He did a great impersonation of the opera singer Pavarotti, which the chicken seemed to enjoy.

To get pictures of a rice farmer planting seedlings in the Philippines, I had to lie in the mud and wait until the villager walked past me. Photography is often about how far out of your comfort zone you're prepared to go.

Because of global warming and the melting of the Himalayas, part of Bangladesh is now under water. Sea levels are rising, so five per cent of Bangladesh's land is useless because of the salt water. To illustrate this situation, I photographed a farmer who is now a boatman because what was once his farmland is now a lake.

A severe drought made it necessary for farmers to kill many of their sheep in the central Victorian region of Australia. The best way for me to illustrate this situation was to climb into the pit amongst the dead and dying sheep.

Villagers in Prek Toal, a floating village on Lake Tonlé Sap, Cambodia struggle to survive because of overfishing and

environmental issues. To get an image, I had to wait for a passing boat to be in the right spot; for the hands of the fishermen to be in the right place; and for there to be enough fish up in the air so you could see them. To capture good pictures you need patience, perseverance and persistence.

As the temperatures get warmer in the Arctic, the snows are melting earlier which is a problem for the reindeer and creates many challenges for the Nenets, the indigenous people in Siberia. One of the conditions of being allowed to visit and photograph these indigenous people was that I didn't interfere, alter, change or set up photographs of them. And that's what photojournalism is all about. It's an attempt by a photographer to document and communicate events as they happen, truthfully and objectively.

All Around the World

I worked in Fukushima, Japan documenting the effects of the 2011 tsunami and subsequent nuclear disaster on rural life. With the help of contacts, I managed to get into the seriously affected nuclear zones. In some areas, there were very few buildings and no people. While photographing irradiated television sets and black bags filled with nuclear debris, I noticed the geiger counter was clicking faster and faster. I was starting to get nervous and worried, so I said to my guide, "Are we safe, is this okay, is it dangerous?" She said, "Yes, it is dangerous, but don't worry dear, you're so old it doesn't matter." Thanks very much!

A Bedouin tribal chief with his animals in Palestine became the subject of one of my photographs. He was being spied on by the Israelis in a spotter plane. For military reasons, the Israelis



Female members of the Yi tribe mourn the death of an elderly man who has been prepared for his burial in Zhaojue, Sichuan, China.

wanted to force him and other Bedouin off their ancestral grazing lands and into villages.

And, on the other side of this Middle East conflict, I photographed a man working in the fields of a kibbutz, an Israeli collective community. The kibbutz is very close to the Gaza Strip and was one of the places that Hamas attacked two years ago.

When photographing contentious issues, it's important to try and be politically balanced, otherwise you're just proselytising and giving a biased point of view. My job as a photographer is to show and reflect events as they are happening.

With the help of contacts, I managed to photograph coal miners in China. The Chinese Government was displeased when they found out that I had managed to get into a coal mining village and document the appalling conditions miners were working under. Later the Chinese Government banned my *Village* book which included the coal mining pictures. They claimed it was not a true reflection of rural life in China.

I documented a villager getting high on opium at his home in Northern Laos. While I was taking pictures, this man smoked about six pipes and I was very close to him with my wide-angle lens, so I was shrouded in smoke. But, I didn't inhale! I have to admit though, it was one of the happiest working moments in my career and I don't remember being driven back to my hotel.

Just What You Need

When taking pictures, always remember to step forward and get closer to your subject. Amateurs step back so they can get everything in the picture. Professionals step forward so they can capture just what they need.

Dealing with mental health can be a problem in developing countries, especially in the rural areas. The villagers have few options and sometimes people with mental health issues are kept in stocks or locked up and chained within their rooms to prevent them from self-harming or attacking their families and local villagers. It's important to be careful how you photograph people in challenging situations because respect is important. Respect people and they will respect you.

I was privileged to be able to photograph female family members of the Yi tribe as they mourned the death of an elderly man in Sichuan, China. Yes, a good lens and a well designed camera body are helpful. But the most important things you need for capturing great images are the eye, the heart and the gut feeling.

While visiting a rural Filipino jail I heard the sound of an Elvis Presley impersonator booming through every speaker into all the cells. I went into the prison yard and saw a prison guard with a gun under his arm performing karaoke for the prisoners. Whether they liked it or not!

I took a lot of good pictures of Catholic penitents celebrating Easter in a village in southern Spain. But good is not good enough. So I kept trying and finally managed to capture the image I wanted...at 11 p.m. on the night the ceremony was coming to an end.

A photojournalist must possess a keen eye for detail, a deep sense of empathy and a strong commitment to truth. Powerful images often require time, trust and careful observation. For anyone wanting to pursue journalistic photography, my advice is: never give up, never give in.

THE MAKING OF PHOTO ENCAUSTIC ARTWORKS

Where does photography stop and art begin – and does it matter?

Jackie Ranken doesn't think so, explaining her love of the encaustic process.

For many years, my photography has explored texture, line and shape. Much of my work leans towards abstraction as there's something deeply instinctive in me that's drawn to this way of seeing. In my early twenties before I was a full-time photographer, I studied

ceramics. I loved the tactile process of shaping clay, the feeling of being lost in the physical feeling of 'making'. That sense of touch and immersion has stayed with me and now flows through my photographic practice.

About 15 years ago, I began experimenting with adding texture and depth directly onto my photographic prints. Back then, I was sealing my matte prints with various types of varnish that let me build surface texture and add blackness to my black tones. I could control the surface sheen, moving between glossy and matte finishes and this opened up a new tactile dimension in my work.

These days, I've taken that idea much further by using photo encaustic techniques and turning my flat prints into three-dimensional artworks. At the heart of this process is a blend of beeswax and dammar resin. The resin is a natural hardener that makes the wax clearer and stronger than ordinary candle wax, but still with a beautiful, warm tone.

Working with encaustic wax is a layered and physical process. The thicker the wax application, the cloudier the surface becomes, so I'm always looking for the right balance between depth and clarity and the right photographs to apply the process to. Colour pigments can also be mixed into the wax, adding richness and painterly qualities.

Melted wax is applied at 80 degrees Celsius and is brushed or poured onto the surface of the artwork. Each new layer must then be fused to the one beneath, using a heat gun or torch. It's this multi-layering and fusing process that I love: adding wax, scraping back, embedding materials, revealing and concealing details below the surface of the wax.

In my early photo encaustic experiments, I repurposed old board. These were cut-down floor panels and offcuts from our home renovation. It was a good way to keep costs low while I explored and learned. What mattered most to me then and still does now, was the process of discovery: making mistakes,



Covid Conversation

CANON EOS R5, PHOTO COMPOSITE.

The trees and the sheep were in a paddock covered in snow. In Photoshop, I flipped some of the sheep to go the other way and made the transparent look by making that layer 50% visible. A simple encaustic technique with two smooth layers of clear wax with the addition of a brush stroke of white wax – to add interest to the snow. Handmade frame made from some old fence posts.



Catlins Beach ICM

CANON EOS R5 MK2 F16, 1.3 SECONDS, ISO 400

Shooting at 1.3 seconds has created quite a lot of movement. The idea was to express a kind of timeless feeling of being there. Lost in a dream. Wondering if I was going to make an exposure that worked. I had time to make twelve different compositions and exposures until my subjects moved too far away. The Photo Encaustic technique has two layers of wax. Black ink was smeared across the surface which I then rubbed and scrapped back. This technique added extra marks and interest to the surface. A handmade pine frame (20x45 mm) with a layer of black encaustic wax was used to strengthen the dark tones that were in the image.



Daffodile Abstract

CANON EOSR5, F18, 0.8 SECOND, ISO 200

This is an edited, two-image in-camera multiple exposure using the 'light' mode. Blending two files, one with a camera up and down movement and the second moving the camera side to side. The Photo Encaustic technique is two layers of wax that add a creaminess to the soft pastel look of the image. I hand made a pine frame (20x45 mm) and applied four layers of white encaustic wax to build up the texture.



Cabbage Tree

CANON EOS R5, DOUBLE EXPOSURE USING THE AVERAGE MODE

The photo encaustic technique shows two layers of clear wax over an image transfer where the ink of the print is rubbed into the surface of a smoothly coated panel and then the paper is rubbed away (see detail images). Where the wax is thicker you can see how it gets cloudier.



pushing the materials too far, pulling them back and gradually learning what I liked and what I didn't.

Today, my approach is more refined. I mostly use simple, restrained techniques and avoid building the wax too thickly. After all, the photographic image is the heart of the work and I want it to shine through. Recently, I was invited to exhibit four pieces in a group show. To bring something extra to the presentation, I created custom frames from simple pine sticks purchased from the local hardware store. I applied multiple layers of encaustic wax to build up a textured surface that was beautifully tactile to touch. Each layer was carefully fused to the one below until I reached a depth and texture that felt right. I also added white and black pigment to the wax to make the frames artworks in themselves.

Below are the tools, materials and techniques I use in my photo encaustic practice. I hope it encourages you to

experiment, make mistakes and discover your own creative voice within this tactile and rewarding medium.

Of course, if you'd like to learn from me in person, I run small one and two person workshops from Twizel, New Zealand.

You can see more details on my website below:

- <https://www.qccp.co.nz/photography-workshops/encaustic-photography-jackie-ranken>

Opposite page: Pavarti (Driftwood)

This example shows a variety of techniques. The image was coated with two clear layers of clear wax and then partly painted with a layer of thin white wax. The two layers are heated with a heat gun to fuse them and at this stage, the wax can be pushed around as it is quite fluid. When the wax is still soft, it can also be manipulated. In this case, I have used a sgraffito technique of cutting through one layer to another with a ceramic sculpting tool. I have also inlaid string and added white wax to the frame. The orange texture was made by burning French Polish (Shellac) and then scraping it back.

Basic Tools

- Electric frying pan with lid – ideal for controlled heating of the wax.
- Metal tins with flat bottoms – these are laid out inside the frying pan and allow the wax to melt quickly and uniformly.
- Hog hair or hake brushes – longer bristles hold more wax and help with smooth, expressive application.
- Heat gun – essential for heating substrates and fusing wax layers. It offers good control when creating textures.
- Propane torch – delivers a stronger, more widespread heat. Best used for levelling wax surfaces and ensuring strong fusing between layers. Both the torch and heat gun are crucial for avoiding delamination between wax layers and the substrate.
- Ceramic tools, burnishers, brayers, scrapers – for manipulating the wax, polishing, embossing or removing layers. Even the back of a spoon or a polished stone can work as a burnishing tool.

Substrates

Your choice of substrate is important. It needs to be rigid and absorbent enough to hold the wax securely over time.

Suitable substrates include:

- Timber or composite boards
- Heavyweight paper or card
- Stone and other experimental surfaces

Before committing to a surface, do a simple test: apply wax, cool it (a quick freezer test works well), then give it a tap against a hard surface. If the wax pops off easily, it's not suitable.

To improve absorbency, prime the substrate with encaustic gesso, traditional plaster gesso, or gip sealer.

For photo-based work, matte photographic prints can also be glued to a substrate to act as your working surface.

It's helpful to gently warm your substrates before applying wax to aid adhesion.

The Wax Medium

- Purchase encaustic wax medium from an art store.
- The typical mix is beeswax combined with dammar resin, with ratios ranging from 1:20 to 1:8 dammar to beeswax.

- More dammar makes the wax harder, glossier and more durable, but also less flexible and more difficult to scrape back or incise.
- The working melt point for encaustic wax is around 80°C, but always heat carefully to avoid excessive fumes. I set my frying pan to 'medium' and mark the dial as a reminder.

Techniques

Glued Print

- Print your photo using archival inks onto heavyweight cotton rag paper.
- Coat the back with encaustic gesso, let it dry, then glue the print onto your prepared substrate. Allow this to dry fully before applying wax layers.

Inlaid Print

- Print onto lightweight paper using archival inks.
- Prepare your board with at least two fused layers of wax.
- The surface should be smooth, bubble-free and level.
- While the wax is still warm (but firm), lay the print onto the surface.
- Place baking paper over it and burnish thoroughly with a spoon or burnisher.
- Wet the back of the print, wait 2–5 minutes, then carefully rub away the paper fibres, leaving the ink image behind.
- Burnish again using baking paper.
- Gently fuse with a heat gun until the paper layer turns translucent.
- Finish with a light layer of wax and a final fuse.

Other Creative Techniques

- Scraping back to reveal lower layers or reduce cloudiness.
- Brush texturing and mark-making while wax is warm.
- Inlaying mixed media elements such as fabric, thread, or fine collage elements.
- Embossing designs into warm wax and filling with ink, then rubbing back the surface.
- Photo collage, cutting and repositioning sections of prints on the waxed surface.
- Filling incised or scraped areas with coloured, black, or white melted wax, then scraping back smooth.
- Oil sticks, oil paint and wax pastels can be applied to the surface (keeping oil content low to maintain wax strength).



Health and Safety (OH&S)

Melting wax of any kind, whether for candles, batik or encaustic, releases fine particulates and gases such as acrolein and aldehydes. At proper working temperatures (below 104°C), the emissions remain within generally safe limits, but prolonged exposure or poor ventilation can cause headaches, irritation or nausea.

Safety Guidelines:

- Never leave hot wax unattended or uncovered.
- Avoid eating or drinking in your work area.
- Always follow product safety instructions from manufacturers.
- Beeswax combusts at 250°C—take care with all heat sources.
- Be extra cautious with oil-based additives, which can raise flammability risks.

Ventilation

- Work with windows open or use an extractor fan if indoors.
- Stand where airflow draws fumes away from you.
- Keep your wax temperature as low as possible while still liquid (ideally below 90°C).
- Beeswax with dammar melts at approximately 68°C.
- Heat wax slowly and avoid letting spills build up on your hotplate or palette.
- Use a thermometer to monitor temperatures.

Heating Tools

- Heat guns and propane torches can be dangerous. Keep all combustible materials well away.
- Never aim hot air or flame towards people.
- Maintain a clear, uncluttered workspace.
- Use latex or heat-resistant gloves for protection.
- Work on a heatproof surface.

- Torch tips stay dangerously hot long after use – allow plenty of cooling time.
- Keep a bucket of water handy in case of burns (flush burns with cool running water for at least 20 minutes).
- Know the location of your fire extinguisher and fire blanket.

Cutting Tools

- Never run your fingers across the sharp edges of tools.
- Use a cloth to wipe melted wax from blades.
- For cutting paper or prints, score lightly first, then apply more pressure on a second pass.

Pigments

- Dry pigments are often toxic, especially when airborne.
- Always wear a mask and work in a well-ventilated area when mixing pigments with wax.
- Introduce pigments in small quantities to avoid dust build-up.

Mixed Media Considerations

- Be aware that varnishes and sealers may contain solvents – take extra care if using these near heat.
- Colours can be added to wax, but only those compatible with oil-based media.
- If using oil paints, reduce excess oil content by letting the paint sit on paper towel before mixing into wax.

Clean Up

- Wear a mask when cleaning dusty materials.
- Vacuum fine debris where possible.
- Use gloves and good ventilation when handling solvents like turps.

If you're curious, I encourage you to dive in and experiment. Like photography itself, working with encaustic is all about light, layers and personal interpretation.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Unlike politicians, photographers are expected to change their mind

– at least from time to time. Mike Langford explains.

I usually start a photograph with an idea in mind. This helps guide me through a series of possibilities that in turn move me towards an end goal; but occasionally, when I get to the end of developing that idea, I completely change my mind.

Here is one such instance that I thought was worth sharing, explaining several things that I always do when photographing, regardless of my initial thoughts. I hope it helps you feel free to change your mind later in post-production, if the situation warrants it!



Cook house looking away from the mountains.

F11, 1/100 SECOND, ISO 100, CANON EOS R5, CANON EF24-105 @ 45MM

The wider-angle lens has created a feeling of isolation and emptiness.



Textured cookhouse exterior.

F11, 1/100 SECOND, ISO 100, CANON EOS R5, CANON EF24-105 @ 35MM

The oblique angle of the light has highlighted the building's texture while the scene through the window gives a sense of place.

Hawkdun Spectacular

Just recently I was photographing a cookhouse we are given access to by the local farmer while on our Creative Photography Otago workshop. Both Jackie and I love this location that is known more for its exterior which, when photographed against the unique shapes of the Hawkdun Range, is just spectacular. The exterior is an often-photographed scene that regularly appears in magazines and in photographic competitions.

On this occasion, we also had access to the cookhouse interior, which was a real treat as this doesn't always happen. On entering the dining-room, I noticed this wonderful scene



Cookhouse with Hawkdun Range in the background.

F11, 1/5 SECOND, ISO 100, CANON EOS R5, CANON EF100-400 @240MM

This is the classic angle from which to photograph this building with the Hawkdun Mountain range in the background.



Exterior view of the cookhouse dining room.

F11, 1/250 SECOND, ISO 100, CANON EOS R5, CANON EF24-105 @ 50MM

The late afternoon's warm light links the interior shot.

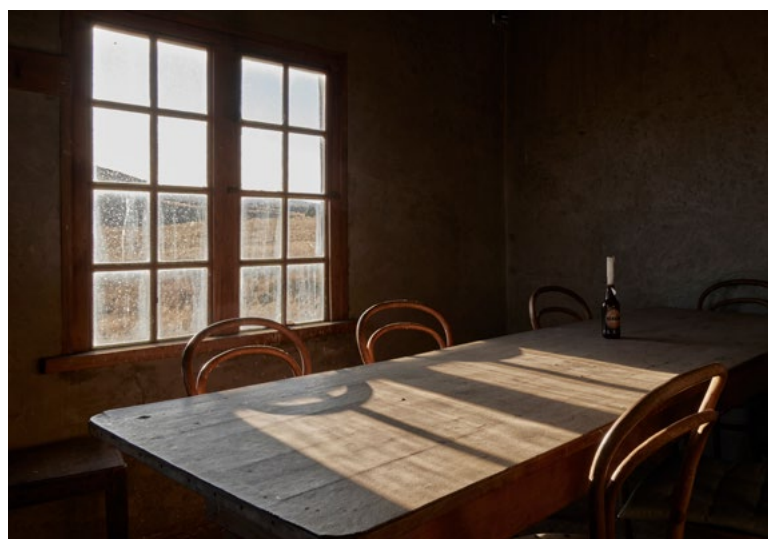
with a shadow from an old chair on the wall. It added something quite special and gave the scene real personality – perhaps an Andrew Wyeth or Vermeer painterly feel to it.

I immediately thought black and white for this one (as I usually do these days), but because I always shoot both a JPEG and a raw file, I could change my mind later in post-production, which is what I eventually did.

Even though I was thinking black and white at the start of this study, I still made sure that my white balance was true to the colours that I saw in front of me, as I know that by getting the white balance correct at the time of shooting, means that the use of the colour channels later when converting them to

black and white will have a greater effect. I also like to know that the colour that was there is recorded accurately so my reproduction is true to the scene. (This is also a bit of a throw-back to my commercial photography days when the colour of the wallpaper etc., needed to be accurate to the designer's intent.)

I also saw this shot more as a square than a 35mm format, so I framed up a little wider knowing that I would most likely crop later. Shooting a tight crop doesn't give you much of a choice when it comes to the post-production stage.



Dining room interior.

F11, 1/25 SECOND, ISO 100, CANON EOS R5, CANON EF24-105 @ 24MM

The warm afternoon light has created wonderful shadows over the table top.



Dining room interior with chair as photographed in the raw file.

F11, 1/60 SECOND, ISO 320, CANON EOS R5, CANON EF24-105 @ 24MM

Notice the loose crop compared to the black and white image, allowing for a tighter crop later.

Different Directions

Being able to change your mind should always be a consideration, especially, for example, if you aren't sure about the crop at the time of shooting.

On this occasion, a landscape format didn't work at all, but most times, I will shoot both a landscape and a portrait shape of a scene so I have choice later.

Always keep in mind that crops shouldn't be dictated by the format of the camera but by the shapes in the scene.

Even though the dining room shot looks very simple, it took me quite some time to work out all the angles and to get the perspective square on the subjects, so the verticals remained square. This is another throwback to my commercial days when everything needed to be architecturally square and correct.

All these things are part of how I photograph now, even though I'm no longer shooting commercially. It's a part of my style.

As my contemplation of the scene was nearing zen proportions, the angle of the light kept moving and so to counter that, I had to keep moving the chair to stop its shadow merging with the other shapes on the wall. Everything else in the shot remained as I found it, with the crowning piece being the candle sitting in the old beer bottle which also stayed where I had found it.



Black and White processed file.

F11, 1/60 SECOND, ISO 320, CANON EOS R5, CANON EF24-105 @ 24MM

Notice how much stronger the shapes and textures appear in black and white version.

Even though I was seeing the image in the camera as a black and white at the time of shooting, I shot it with no contrast and no filters, as the light was naturally contrasty and I knew that the raw file would have even more detail in the shadows and highlights than what I could see in the camera. The black and white mode I use to see in-camera allowed me to see the graphics of the scene much more clearly than a colour image would have, as I find we are often seduced by the colour and fail to see the distracting details in a scene.

Several months after photographing the cookhouse dining room with the chair and its shadow, I revisited the raw file and fell in love with the colour, which really did have a soft pastel Andrew Wyeth painterly character to it that was well worth celebrating in a printed form.

The crop also didn't end up as a square, but more a 6x7 ratio which seemed to suit the shapes in the room better.

Over the years of visiting this location, each time I have tried to photograph everything there in a different way and from a different viewpoint – looking at details, or shooting the opposite way. It's almost like I have unwittingly photographed a photo essay of it, including the owners of the property with the cookhouse as a background.

The only thing I haven't photographed yet is possibly the most obvious thing – which is the cookhouse kitchen. Maybe I'll do that next time.



Final colour file.

F11, 1/60 SECOND, ISO 320, CANON EOS R5, CANON EF24-105 @ 24MM

Notice how the colour adds mood and emotion to the image, giving it a more painterly feel, even though the colours are quite muted.

THE NOT QUITE MINIMALIST VIEW

Is minimalism everything it is cracked up to be, or is there an alternative that works better for photographers? Murray White investigates.

I think for many photographers the idea that we might adopt a minimalist vision in our work from time to time is a common desire. And what's not to like about that? After all, photography is typically viewed as a process of visual reduction, where part of its charm lies in how we manage

to reduce our composition to a core concept, the minimum needed to convey our message. I know in my case, the instinct to explore a subject and expose something of its most basic purpose often drives a simplicity in landscape that I find quite compelling.

Truly Minimalist

However, while the concept and product of minimalism in landscape photography remains exceedingly attractive to me in a visual context, I struggle to conform entirely to its ethos. It's not that I have difficulty in reducing the complexity of a scene, or even in refraining from a purely abstract composition. What I find problematic as a photographer is being willing to disengage from the subject in an interpretative sense.

For although a truly minimalist photograph presents a distilled form of reality in an unquestionably profound way, its clinical presentation should suggest an 'arm's length' exchange, a sense that the authenticity of the capture has in no way been tainted by the photographer's presence. As the author of this work, we are expected to step back from the subject, not in our artistic expression, but in our inclination to impose something of a personal connotation to its capture. The subject should be permitted to remain the subject and be understood by every viewer in their uniquely impartial way or, as is often quoted of a minimalist composition, "What you see is what you see."

For me this fundamentalist and respectful approach to landscape is instinctive, indeed precious, but so too is my tendency to look for alternative meaning among the visual authenticity. In the subtractive art of photography, true minimalism strips away much content, but as viewers, we should never be left in any doubt of the subject's identity and its broader function.



INVERSION

Sympathetic backgrounds, together with a two-dimensional depiction and limited shapes can drive a feeling of simplicity in an image. While this particular capture is probably a little 'tight' to categorise as minimalist, graphic compositions of easily recognised elements often fit this brief. In some cases this concentration of strong visual building blocks remain compelling and memorable, not despite their simplicity, but probably because of it.



ACROSS THE LINE

Simplicity does not have to be synonymous with simple when visual restriction amplifies a more sophisticated reality. This localised kiss of light exposes an authentic view of the world, but without its focused attention we may not assign relevance to that entity responsible for the shadow, nor to that slight kink in the sandhill crest. Each of these observations may only find significance if we are sufficiently isolated from a more typically global perception and choose to see complexity or at least intrigue within the most basic of entities.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Minimalism need not be defined by solitary elements showcased on a broad backdrop. In fact, repetition and even minor variation of a particular form can serve to emphasise the primary subject as a dynamic entity. This image, although tonally more complex than would be ideal for true minimalism, serves to illustrate the basic meaning of simplicity with a fundamentally white on black depiction.



Apparent Dichotomy

However, photographic reality is almost always an illusory depiction of the truth; as photographers we respond to authenticity, but what we actually capture will be our version of it. Our lenses may look impartially at the landscape, but our images are often more reflective of us. For many years I have held the view that authenticity of the natural world should not be compromised by my photography, at least not deliberately, but in recent times my happy space has been found on the edges of this apparent dichotomy.

One of the traditional features of a minimalist image is perhaps its reliance on obvious isolation in a pictorial sense. Visual detachment is a powerful tool when used with sensitivity and keen observational skills (and many of Michael Kenna's

SHADOW OF DOUBT

With just four basic elements to consider, this image is almost minimalist, but I believe my intrusion as the photographer may have overstepped the mark. By deliberately cropping the foreground tree to question its relationship with the shadow, these elements are now expressing a projected concept, not innocently captured in a more agnostic manner. A minimalist image of this rock with just the shadow (or the tree) would be simple and honest in its representation, but perhaps at the expense of intrigue.



CLOUD MIXER

With a number of discrete entities to interrogate, viewers may well consider this image as something other than minimalist. And I think they would be right. However, simplicity has been emphasised conceptually as a key feature of this composition by allowing the shadows to drop out to basic black and depicting the clouds as pure white – these features now convey little more than two-dimensional shapes. In this case, a monochromatic capture has helped distil an inherently complex scene into an arrangement of just its essential elements.

exquisite snowscapes come to mind here). However, negative space, as it is commonly referred to, is not in itself minimalist; rather it is a frequent consequence of and therefore a product created by, effective minimalist strategies.

In my opinion, the concept of minimalism relates more to qualitative decisions rather than quantitative formulas. Relatively large areas of negative space are unlikely by themselves to create a minimalist image if the remaining elements are meaningless in content or visually unrelated. Conversely, minimalism can co-exist with less 'open space' if the content is strategically strong and simple in narrative.

I have found visual tactics like incorporating areas of homogeneous tone, structure or pattern will introduce a similar neutral 'buffer', while complementing the main subject in some way that can introduce the photographer as a mediating force. Thematically simple and unifying juxtapositions often help us to emphasise a particular aspect of the landscape that may otherwise escape scrutiny.

Abstract Dimension

Subtle changes in tonality, for example, can express volumetric

or emotional values that fly under the radar of a more graphic minimalist view. Ambiguous backgrounds chosen or framed specifically to influence our understanding of the scene can be employed to suggest a contradiction between the subject and its setting. In many cases, the fundamentals of a photograph are more readily appreciated if the primary subject is simple. However, as viewers we may be inclined to explore more fully the image, if the surrounding content or its unexpected juxtaposition introduces intrigue.

In some ways it is simplicity rather than minimalism that can speak a more nuanced language. Minimalism by definition can lock us into specifics, while simplicity is free to express a broader concept. I guess the analogy would be that explanatory text is arranged to inform and explain, but poetry may convey an entirely different understanding. Without doubt, both forms of the written word are valid ways to express a concept, but the possibility of a more abstract dimension is more likely to be found in the latter.

Simplicity without true minimalism allows for ambiguous relationships to form. We can photograph a tree in a specific way that deliberately allows our representation to imply something else. We could defy reality with images that suggest



THE SENTINEL

There is probably more tonal gradient in this image than would typically fit the criteria for minimalism, but this complexity may more effectively reveal the primitive sense of form inherent to this tree. Given that photography is the art of subtraction, this is a good example of what I see as an effective 'mix'. In my viewfinder I cropped the base of this tree to literally remove its roots and isolate it from other background elements nearby. I then cropped its trunk just above a prominent burl to limit the scope of viewer understanding. Is the resulting image minimalist by definition or just simplicity by choice?

THE WARRIOR

A muted background sky and a fire blackened tree trunk should epitomise minimalism in a definitional sense, but this image brings with it a particular expression that may disqualify its inclusion. While the subject is simple and hopefully not quite abstract, I have chosen to find a specific viewpoint that may promote a particular interpretation – it is not an ambiguity born of an inherent subject reality, but mystification brought about through purposeful intent.

consciousness in the behaviour of landscape, or animation in an otherwise static rock. I routinely look for mystery in the way our natural world manifests and would find it very difficult not to at least try to pursue an opinionated or even metaphorical response to what I observe.

Of course, minimalist images are not without symbolism too, it's just that those visual or indeed emotional interpretations rest entirely with the viewer. The photographer must cleverly set the scene by presenting an image that outwardly appears almost naive; so simple in fact that it seems to express nothing other than an everyday reality. As viewers we are invited on a seemingly humble journey where the surprise is often how unfamiliar the familiar actually becomes.

To an engaged audience, a minimalist photograph allows for an immediate visual response; an understanding that remarkably may remain seared on our minds long after the initial viewing. For me, this durability of interaction is a characteristic of the genre that holds considerable appeal. Again, simplicity of design (no clutter, basic lighting and primitive shapes etc.,) drives at least part of this



SPINAL

Minimalist photography is often still viable when the natural lighting may prove less than suitable for other landscape genres. With strong sunlight and a high contrast setting, this image exposes an otherwise complex subject in a way that reveals its most basal form. Simplicity is found in the contradiction of light and shade, of line and form and in the consistent repetition of shape and dimensions of these broken branches.





THE SKY DID FALL

The mutually inclusive nature of minimalism and negative space seems to be a universally accepted reality, but just how much 'space' is necessary and just how 'negative' its tone or texture should be, is entirely another matter. This image may suggest that simplicity and the essence of minimalism can still reside in quite complex settings. Negative space can be fluid in definition providing that the visual buffer is consistent in form and tone and sufficiently polarised in visual identity to that of the main subject.

compelling recognition. We can avoid complex foregrounds, hide distracting backgrounds, or use atmospheric conditions like fog, rain or snow as filters or physical halos to emphasise the subject. The use of long exposures can meld moving water, clouds or even wind-blown vegetation, creating sometimes ethereal settings to showcase other elements as the dominating subject.

More at Play

However, I think there is more at play with minimalism than just outward simplicity. Perhaps in the process of distilling a composition to its elementary core, we actually expose something of its inner complexity. A leafless tree is not just a pictorial statement to be expressed as a skeletal jumble of intersecting lines; its photograph is a poignant reminder of the cycle of life, or the constant progression of seasons. A solitary patch of light or shadow dominating a print may initially be seen as 'the subject', until as viewers we come to realise that its existence is entirely attributable to the influence of less visible players on the landscape.

I find the natural landscape to be a sophisticated entity in both its manifestation and its perceived purpose. For me the process of photography, especially a process viewed through the haze of a minimalist slant and not subject to that far crisper doctrine of impartial observation, encourages a creative connection between what I see and what I come to understand. In many cases I am not necessarily saying, "Here is the world, make of it what you will," I am more likely to be saying, "Here is the world, as I believe it can be."

In some ways simplicity is not just a simple response to what is clearly visible in the landscape, but a tightly focused expression of those interactions we as humans habitually choose to ignore. Strict definitions aside, minimalism in all forms is a very effective way of channelling our creativity and observational encounters through to the broader world. Perhaps it is by pursuing this partly introspective process of visual investigation that we all impose something of ourselves in our capture, no matter how simple to others that exchange may initially seem.

WALKING

Len Metcalf discusses walking with the camera as an art making process.

A two-part series, this first article gives the background arguments as to why walking and photographing are incredibly important, not only as a technique, but as a practice. In the second article, Len will explore longer bushwalks with his cameras.

Humans have been walking this earth for 300,000 years. It is no wonder that when we walk, we gain so much benefit from it.

The Artists Way by Julia Cameron is a seminal book on creativity, which I suggest you should all take the time to read. Exercises from this book I have quoted in previous articles and, thirty plus years later, Cameron comes to us with *Walking in the World*. She argues that walking is an active form of meditation. For those of us who can't meditate in the traditional sense, walking is an easy way to achieve a 'moving mindfulness'.

You see, repetitive movements are self-soothing. We use them to calm our mind – from the disturbed child rocking in the corner, to knitting and crocheting, to drawing and writing, carving and making things. Even painting a wall. Some of us have learnt that repetitive movements calm us. Some of us haven't. Walking changes us quickly and brings us closer to the present moment. The more we connect with the present moment, the easier creative insights flow from us.

As Julia puts it, 'Each step is a signal to the universe that I am willing to move forward.'

As we walk with our quietened mind, it is so much easier to listen to the quieter voice that only whispers to us gently. It is when we walk alone we discover clarity, particularly about creative problems.

I use walking to solve difficult and overwhelming life problems. On many a day, I take off with Mom, my gorgeous little white fluff ball of a dog and walk my way to a solution. For some difficult problems, I might hit twenty thousand steps, though I usually find my answers before I hit ten thousand.

Walking Gives Me Clarity

Walking connects me to Mother Nature. I go out of my way to walk in natural environments. I am blessed to be able to bushwalk along Sydney's harbour foreshore, just a few city blocks from home. I always choose to walk in nature over city, for it is here I reconnect with a sense of wonder and place. I get my rhythm going and my mind calms. Slowly I start to notice Mother Nature more and more. I slowly connect with her. She stimulates my connection with her. I find peace. She contrasts the overstimulated and artificial world of modern life that I inhabit.

Julia goes on to suggest that by physically moving forward with each step, we are symbolically moving forward through creative blocks, fear and paralysis. Each step forward moves us.







How to Walk as a Creative Practice

- Walk alone – solitude allows you to hear yourself think.
- Slow down – slower than you think... then slower again.
- Breathe deeply – let your breath settle your nervous system (learn to breathe properly).
- Leave your headphones at home – let the sound of nature in, birdsongs, ocean waves, the wind, bubbling brooks and silence... beautiful peaceful silence.
- Aim for relaxation. It isn't about fitness, speed or exercise, it's about creativity and self-care.
- Wander – let your curiosity take you down unexpected paths. It's here you will undoubtedly find magic.
- Walk without a destination – we don't need to arrive anywhere.
- Notice how your body feels – listen to your body, your mind and your feelings.
- Pay attention to the ground and feel the earth through your feet. Be a hippy and even try feeling the earth through your bare feet. Look up into the trees, the sky and the never-ending changes above. Look down at the textures, leaves and shadows.
- Let your thoughts come and go. We don't need to chase them or force them. We are walking to let our minds wander, as well as our physical bodies.
- Walk regularly – make a ritual, not a one-off event. Weekly, daily... return a little changed.



It helps us move away from doubt, particularly when we are stuck and overthinking a problem. We literally walk our way out of our creative blocks.

Julia recommends walking alone. This is because for her it is a space for solitude and communion, a time to be alone with nature and one's self. To be with our creative force. It is a time for our original thought to surface and for uncensored emotional truths to emerge.

Lastly, she recommends it as a weekly practice. Personally, I find it more effective as a daily practice. Having Mom forces my hand on this one.

Recently, I walked for eight days with my son along the Great Ocean Walk. One hundred and nine kilometres. They were easy days. Some people I met were doing the walk in shorter time frames. They would arrive late at night knackered, complain and then leave before sunup the next morning. We walked slowly.

Gentle mornings, long lunches and relaxing afternoons in beautiful places. Lots of time to photograph. Time to stop. I photographed as I walked.

My camera was always at the ready. I am not sure if I have many brilliant images from that trip, but the day after the walk, I started teaching a photography workshop with our esteemed editor Peter Eastway. On our first shoot, the shoot that I usually tell everyone is our warm-up shoot, I pulled my camera out and was immediately into creating meaningful, connected and relevant art.

That wasn't by chance. It was simply because I walked there and prepared. I had done all the 'work' before arriving and starting.

That work was simple. It was walking, connecting with place and landscape, relaxing and exploring creativity. Simply walking slows us down. It shifts our focus into the present.



Notice Things Differently

We notice things differently when we walk. The rhythm and repetitive movement help us notice and most importantly 'see'.

Walking with the camera becomes a way of listening, not just with the eyes, but with our feelings, our higher selves and with our whole bodies. Creativity flows more freely when we have a quiet mind. Walking quietens the mind.

The camera gives us a sense of purpose, it gives us focus, or perhaps out-of-focus. Walking with the camera invites us to be playful and spontaneous. To ask that beautiful question, 'I wonder what that would look like as a photograph?'

We definitely aren't walking to get somewhere, we are walking to feel, to see and to connect.

The land speaks to us when we walk gently upon it. Consider the difference to this approach from those who seek to conquer

it or who believe we have dominion over it. Walk gently and leave no trace. Take only photographs, beautiful ones.

Light becomes a constant companion, one to explore, to watch and to witness. Magic happens when we notice how it dances and plays before us as we move through it.

Photography becomes a dialogue with place, with land, with landscape, with earth. It is not an act of taking, but one of receiving, exploring and experimenting. Perhaps creativity flows from her.

Let go of making beautiful and successful images, walking is reward enough. If beautiful artworks surface, that makes the walk even more magical. We often pressure ourselves into having to make exceptional art. Relax, enjoy and the beautiful art will follow.

Walking with a camera is a sacred practice. An artist's ritual. Walk slowly, with intent, intuitively, gently and you will find it deeply nourishing.

How to Walk With a Camera

- Carry light gear. Leave that heavy camera bag at home and travel light. We don't want the camera to dominate the experience.
- Set the camera up before you leave – have it ready to shoot, out and at hand. Simplify your process – take one lens for example.
- Walk first, photograph later. Photograph when you can't bare not taking photographs anymore, but allow yourself to get into a rhythm before being creative.
- Let the photographs come to you, chasing them is counterproductive. Pause often, stillness invites seeing and feeling.
- Walk until you forget you are holding the camera – let the camera become an extension of you.
- Look for the light, not just photographic subjects. Magical photographs come from noticing unusual contrast and light.
- Explore textures and tones.
- Use the viewfinder to isolate. Compose through exclusion. A great photograph comes not only from what is included, but what is excluded.
- Shoot intuitively – not everything, but following your emotions. Not everything needs to be explained or perfect. Let go of perfection. Perfection is for AI, Instagram and the masses. Imperfection is for humans, artists and real photographers.
- Allow yourself time to just 'be', without photographing. Some moments are better in our memories than in pixels.
- Review your images later, not while walking. Use the time walking to 'be' and don't be focused on the shoot or the image. Stay in the moment and leave the critique till later.
- Let your camera become your link between you and the world. It is okay to use it as a tool, as a love, as a lover. It is our love, use it with that intense emotion.
- Lastly, be gentle with nature. We need to champion her beauty, her preservation. We need to leave no trace, to walk on hard surfaces and think of those who will come after us. Nature isn't there to use, rape and destroy. It is there to work with us, to appreciate and celebrate. Nurture the connection and nature will nurture your creativity and your precious artworks of her.

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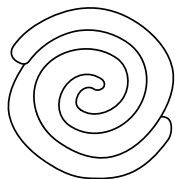
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