

SONY'S BEST YET

We test the 'startlingly accomplished' Sony A7R VI



Amateur Photographer

LOVE YOUR CAMERA

Perfect Puffins

An intimate visual portrait of these photogenic birds

TRIED & TESTED

BARGAIN LEICA!

The Leitzphone is the Leica that fits in your pocket but does it deserve that red dot?

NEW LOOK
AND NOW EVERY FORTNIGHT

WINNING STREET PHOTOS

Amateur Photographer of the Year Round One results

LENS TEST

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Where did your choice come in our reader poll?

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Welcome



When we asked you to vote for the photographers that you consider to be the greatest of all time we did so knowing that there is no such thing. Photography isn't like the Olympics, it's subjective. But the mere act of asking the question provided a great snapshot of who is and

who isn't in favour with our audience at this moment in time. We didn't define what we mean by 'greatest'. Were we looking for those with the most consistently impressive portfolio over a long career? Did they blaze a trail, or create their own visual language that influenced later generations of photographers? Or did their work reach beyond the gallery walls and influence the wider world in some way? We left those questions for you to figure out. More interestingly, how would your aggregated list differ from the one curated by the 20 leading experts and academics to whom we asked exactly the same question – the results of which we published in our Christmas issue? The answer, it turns out, is quite a bit. For a start, the winner of the expert poll, Diane Arbus, barely featured at all in your poll results, and your winner did not feature in their top 10. There were names that appeared on both lists, but what the polls have in common is they include photographers whose work I don't personally like much. I'm sure you'll feel the same, so do write in and let us know which of these photographers you love - and which ones you really don't.

Nigel Atherton

Nigel Atherton
Group Editor



Ansel Adams was more popular with our readers than with our panel of photography experts and academics

”

This issue's contributors...



Jessica Miller

Jessica counted your votes, did the maths and wrote our feature on the 'Greatest Photographers'. She also interviewed our Emerging Talent.



Graeme Green

Natural history and environment writer Graeme interviewed wildlife photographer Drew Buckley about his love of puffins for our cover story.



Peter Dench

Peter has taken on the onerous task of managing Amateur Photographer of the Year and reveals the winners of Round 1: Street Photography.



Andy Westlake

AP's highly respected Technical Editor put the new Sony Alpha A7R VI through its paces for our big test. Find out what he thought of it.



Amy Davies

Our resident phone camera expert compares the stylish (and expensive) new Leica Leitzphone with the Xiaomi 17 Ultra on which it is based.



Kingsley Singleton

Experienced photo kit reviewer Kingsley gets his hands on a unique zoom lens from Tamron that he argues is perfect for portrait photography.



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This issue's cover photo is by Drew Buckley. See more of his great puffin photos on page 32

Contents

8 What's New

Leica SL3-P first look, plus news, opinion, books and more

22 Your Best Photos

More favourite readers' photos

28 Picture Perfect

Three macro photographers discuss their favourite images

32 Puffin Paradise

Drew Buckley shares his love of these photogenic birds

38 Join the Club

Awesome Autistics camera club

42 Favourite Photographers

We asked you to nominate the best ever photographers...

46 APOY Round 1 results

The impressive winners of our street photography contest

54 Sony Alpha A7R VI

Sony's latest model offers both speed and resolution

60 Leica Leitzphone

Leica's first branded phone in the UK versus the Xiaomi 17 Ultra that it's based upon

67 Tamron 35-100mm F/2.8

We put this unique portrait-oriented zoom lens to the test

70 Viltrox Vintage Z2

A compact and affordable flash

72 Smallrig RM 03 LED light

We test a flexible LED light for macro photographers

73 Blast From The Past

John Wade on the Micro 16

74 Emerging Talent

Featuring the work of dog photographer Kieran Morgan

78 Inbox

Our reader's letters

83 Best Buys

Our current favourite cameras, lenses and accessories

98 Final Analysis

Blackpool Railings by Bert Hardy



Amateur Photographer

LOVE YOUR CAMERA

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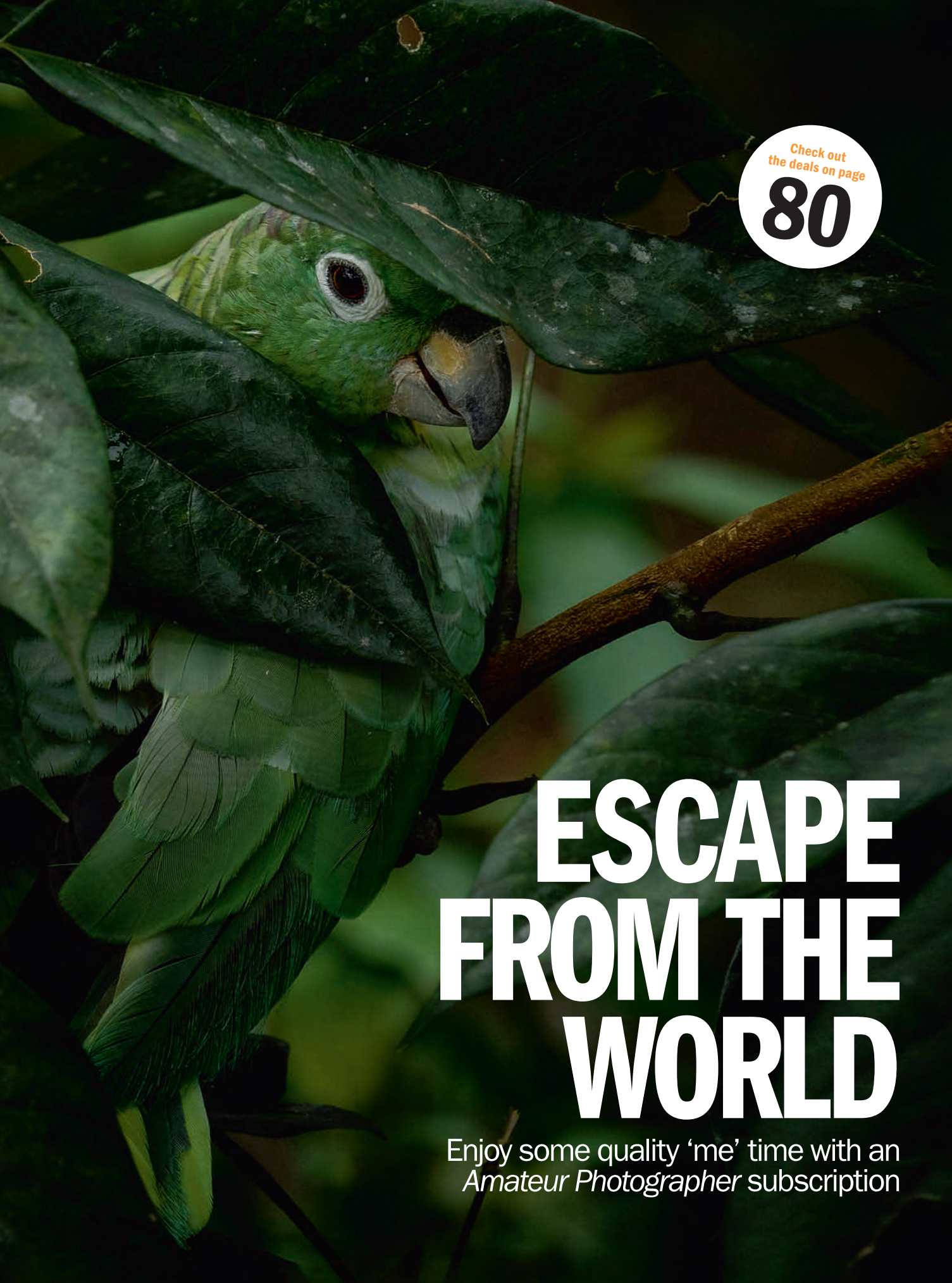
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© DITA ARUCIDISOVÁ

Dita Arucidisová photographed this Green Parrot at the Yanacocha Rescue Center in the Amazon, where animals rescued from illegal wildlife trade are rehabilitated. 'It had been confined in cages for so long it had lost the ability to fly, but it climbed the tree with great determination,' she tells us. Dita is on Instagram as [@nestedinnature_photography](https://www.instagram.com/nestedinnature_photography)
Olympus E-M1 Mk III, 40-150mm 1/250sec f/4, ISO 200



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the deals on page

80

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What's new

Leica SL3-P

Leica's latest camera combines high resolution with impressive speed.
Andy Westlake investigates

At a glance

£5150 body only

- 45.8MP full-frame CMOS sensor
- ISO 50-200,000
- Up to 40 frames per second shooting
- 5.76m-dot, 0.76x viewfinder
- 3.2in, 2.3m-dot tilting touchscreen
- 8K 30p, 4K 120p, Full HD 120p video

Design

The body design is identical to the SL3 and SL3-S, with all the important differences being internal

Speedy

45MP stills can be shot at up to 40 frames per second, complete with continuous autofocus and subject detection

Hybrid

Alongside its stills capabilities, the SL3-P can shoot 8K open gate video at 24fps and 4K at 120fps

Pared back

The SL3-P maintains Leica's core philosophy of paring a camera back to provide a clean, uncluttered interface



Most of the buttons are unlabelled and customisable



The 3.2in rear touchscreen tilts up and down

Leica's latest camera, the SL3-P, is a high-end full-frame mirrorless model designed for professional photographers. It employs the same body design as the firm's existing SL3 and SL3-S models, but with a different sensor. The SL3 is a 60MP stills-oriented camera for such things as portrait and studio photography, while the SL3-S is a 24MP model with a stronger focus on video. The SL3-P sits in between the two with a 45MP sensor, and with a feature set that's designed to allow it to take on almost any task, for both photography and video.

At £5150 body-only, though, the SL3-P is almost twice the price of the Panasonic Lumix S1R II, which shares the same sensor and offers pretty much the same capabilities. It's also more expensive than either the Nikon Z8 or the Canon EOS R5 Mark II, both of which aim to do essentially the same thing. So what is it about the SL3-P that might persuade buyers to justify the price tag?

Let's take a look at the camera's core feature set. That 45MP full-frame sensor is of a conventional design, with no suggestion it uses any kind of stacked architecture, as employed by many recent high-performance cameras. It provides a sensitivity range of ISO 50-200,000, although settings below ISO 100 are clearly 'pulled', at the cost of decreased highlight range.

Using its mechanical shutter, the SL3-P can shoot at up to 7 frames per second, which is the same as its SL3 siblings. But switch to the electronic shutter, and it'll go as fast as 40fps, complete with continuous autofocus. Leica provides a good range of intermediate speed settings too, to match whatever activity you might be photographing.

As for autofocus, this uses a hybrid system that combines phase detection for speed, contrast detection for accuracy, and intelligent subject recognition. It's capable of recognising and tracking people, animals, or cars.



You have to set this in advance of shooting, though, as unlike most recent cameras, the SL3-P can't automatically detect the subject type itself.

Video specs are impressive, too. There's a mind-boggling array of resolutions and frame rates on offer, including 8K at 30fps, 6K at 60fps, 4K at 120fps, and Full HD at 120fps. Open gate output is also available for capturing the full sensor area, allowing greater flexibility in post-processing. Files can be saved directly to an external SSD, while RAW can be output over HDMI to an external recorder. Apple ProRes is onboard too, for resolutions up to 5.8K. Video and photo shooting are treated entirely separately within the user interface, each with their own settings.

One feature included on the SL3-P that isn't yet available on many other cameras is Content Credentials. This allows files to be securely signed in the metadata to verify their authorship, and that they are genuine photos rather than AI-generated. That's not something many enthusiasts will need, but for working photojournalists, it could be invaluable.

Familiar design

Leica has used exactly the same body design as before, although unlike the SL3, the SL3-P has no Leica red dot on the front. Aside from that, though, you get the same chunky, robust body, with dust and splash resistance to the IP54 standard. There's a large and detailed viewfinder, plus an LCD screen that tilts up and down, although sadly it lacks a third hinge for portrait-format shooting.

Two large, chunky dials on the top plate are used for setting exposure settings, complemented by one embedded in the body underneath your thumb. Clicking this dial inwards also allows selection of the exposure mode. A well-placed joystick beneath is used to position the AF area.

Where other pro cameras tend to be covered with buttons for direct access to different functions, the SL3 design makes do with a much smaller number of unlabelled custom function buttons. The idea is that you can set these up to suit your needs, and save multiple User Profiles for different situations. Likewise, the menus are pared right back, with considerably fewer options compared to other high-end models.

First impressions

I got to try out the SL3-P before its launch, and in many respects, it does what it promises. It's super-fast and the autofocus works extremely well. Leica's design approach can certainly take a bit of getting used to in comparison to pro-spec models from the likes of Canon, Nikon and Sony. But if you're prepared to spend time setting up profiles for the kinds of subjects you shoot, I find it works well.

Many readers will, naturally, wonder why you'd spend so much money on a Leica, when you can get cameras from the mainstream Japanese makers that do much the same thing for rather less money. And to be honest, it's probably not a camera for most enthusiasts. But for working professionals, the exceptional build quality, streamlined interface, support for Content Credentials, and indeed the sheer cachet of turning up for a job with a Leica, could make it worth the outlay.



Leica's 100mm f/2.8 Macro and 50mm f/1.4 lenses

Two new SL lenses

Alongside the SL3-P, Leica has revealed two new upcoming L-mount lenses. First up is a brand-new Summilux-SL 50mm f/1.4 ASPH large-aperture standard prime, which will replace the existing lens of the same name. But where the current model is huge and heavy, the new lens is remarkably small, measuring 74mm in diameter and just 75.5mm in length. At 584g, it's also almost half the weight. It accepts much smaller filters too, at 67mm rather than 82mm.

Leica has achieved this feat using a brand-new optical design with 11 elements in 6 groups, including 2 aspherical elements. Eleven aperture blades are employed for smooth bokeh, providing settings down to f/16. The minimum focus distance is 50cm.

Despite the lens's compact dimensions, it doesn't compromise on build quality. It boasts a metal external barrel, along with IP54 dust and splash-protection. There's also an AquaDura coating on the front glass to help keep it clean.

Leica's second new lens is the APO-Macro-Elmarit-SL 100mm f/2.8. This is a true macro lens for close-up shooting, which provides life-size magnification at its minimum focus distance of 30cm. The aperture employs a 9-blade design and closes down to f/22.

Optically, the 100mm macro employs 17 elements in 12 groups, with Leica promising 'outstanding imaging performance right to the edges thanks to apochromatic correction'. As with a number of Leica's recent lenses, inspecting the optical layout reveals that it's very closely related to an existing Sigma design, in this case the superb 105mm F2.8 DG DN Art.

Size-wise, the Leica 100mm f/2.8 Macro measures 137mm in length and 77mm in diameter, while weighing in at 801g. It accepts 67mm filters. Just like the 50mm f/1.4, the front element is protected by a water and oil-repellent coating.

Both the Summilux-SL 50mm f/1.4 ASPH and the APO-Macro-Elmarit-SL 100mm f/2.8 are set to be available from the end of 2026, priced at £3890 and £2110, respectively.

What's new

Compact camera sales continue to rise



Fujifilm's hugely popular X100VI compact continues to be a top seller in Japan

Recent data from the Camera and Imaging Products Association (CIPA) trade body in Japan confirms the renaissance of compact camera sales, with shipments rising 30% year-on-year – a growth rate that surpasses all other camera categories.

The trade body suggests fixed lens cameras are growing in popularity as consumers increasingly value high magnification zooms and video recording, as well as the usual attractions like portability, convenience and image quality. Note that CIPA only bases its reports on data from Japanese makers, so it doesn't include Leica or Kodak. Meanwhile, the DSLR segment continues its drawn-out decline, with shipments down 30% compared to last year.

There was also a more modest slowdown in shipments of mirrorless cameras, with a 2.6% fall expected across the whole of 2026. CIPA is predicting 6.82 million camera bodies will ship in the current year, compared with 7 million units last year. While mirrorless cameras are still outselling fixed lens compacts, the gap between them appears to be narrowing (CIPA expects we'll see 2.77 million fixed lens compact cameras ship this year)

The hardest-hit mirrorless category appears to be high resolution full frame cameras. CIPA reports shipments are down by just over 11% for the first four months of 2026, compared to the same period last year.

See cipa.jp/e/news for more details.



A glass act:
Photoshop's
Reflection
Removal tool in
action.

Major updates to Photoshop and Lightroom

If you use Lightroom or Photoshop to organise and edit your images, check out these updates from Adobe. Assisted Culling is now generally available in Lightroom, with a new feature called Face View enabling users to isolate people within a frame and check eye sharpness (as well as whether someone's eyes are actually open). There is also a stacking feature which groups very

similar images together, so you can decide on the strongest candidate.

In another interesting development, AI Sharpen brings Topaz Labs' Noise-Aware Sharpen model directly into Lightroom, so you can work on softer images without having to export them first. Meanwhile, Photo to Video lets you turn still images into short animated videos, using the AI tools in Adobe Firefly or

Google Veo. Lightroom, Lightroom Classic and Adobe Camera Raw now recognize all raw of the formats from the new Sony A7R VI camera, too.

A key addition for Photoshop users is Reflection Removal, which detects and removes reflections from images shot through glass (reflections are isolated in a separate layer). See more at blog.adobe.com/



© DON MCCULLIN

From the frontline

A new book called Vietnam brings together Don McCullin's work from the conflict that made his name. This image was taken during the Battle of Hue in 1968, which saw McCullin embedded with US marines as they fought off a sustained communist offensive. 'This landmark volume represents the first

time McCullin's legendary Vietnam war photographs have been reproduced in a book dedicated only to this conflict,' said the publishers, GOST Books.

The book features around 100 black and white images and more than 20 colour photographs, nearly half of which have never

been previously published in print or exhibited. McCullin, who turns 91 in October, has also indicated this will be his last book. Vietnam is scheduled for release on October 1st, with a standard edition costing £80 and a signed edition £100.

See gostbooks.com

Major RPS exhibition starts August

The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) has announced the exhibiting photographers for its 167th International Photography Exhibition (IPE). The IPE is the world's longest-running photography exhibition and features 113 prints from 48 photographers, selected from more than 5,200 entries. The selection panel included Irene Lombardo from Magnum Photos, Max Gorbatskyi from the Open Eye Gallery in Liverpool and photography historian and AP contributor, Dr Michael Pritchard. This year's IPE exhibition takes place at the Saatchi Gallery in London from 7th August to 11th September.

The RPS also announced that Marcy Palmer won this year's IPE award for her series Seeds of Strength and Resilience, which explores the history and future of reproductive rights, while Léa Chen won the under 30s award for her project documenting three generations of women living in Taiwan. See rps.org/exhibitions

Abbey Hepner is amongst the exhibited photographers



© ABBEY HEPNER

Interesting new lens duo

Voigtlander has released the Nokton Classic 35mm F1.4 lens for Canon RF and Nikon Z mounts. It aims to revive the charm of classic lenses through the latest optical technology, so it intentionally retains some aberrations. Inside the all-metal body is a 6-group, 8-element configuration, which employs a double-Gauss design with a symmetrical arrangement around the aperture, reproducing the unique rendering of vintage lenses.

The aperture is mechanically controlled via a direct-drive ring, enabling adjustment directly on the lens rather than through the camera's command dial. The aperture itself consists of 10 blades, designed to generate attractive bokeh. Onsale now for £499 from robertwhite.co.uk.

Meanwhile, Brightin Star has unveiled a 14mm f/2.8 lens for full-frame Sony E, Canon RF, Nikon Z and L mounts. The lens features 13 elements arranged in 9 groups, including 2 aspherical elements, 5 high-refractive-index elements, and 3 extra-low-dispersion lenses. It also has a lens hood



that doubles as a filter holder, able to accommodate square ND filters and 82mm circular polariser filters. Available now for \$279.99 (about £212) from brightinstar.com

The new Brightin Star 14mm lens



© Shuchang Dong, Geshuang Chen

Geshuang Chen won last year's contest with The Gorgeous Ring

Big weather photo contest opens

The Royal Meteorological Society is accepting entries to its popular Weather Photographer of the Year 2026 competition. Amateurs and professionals alike from around the world are invited to submit images that capture the power, beauty and impact of the weather, and the contest is free to enter until August 20th.

The overall title winner gets £1,500, while the Mobile Weather Photographer of the Year bags £500, as does the winner of the Climate Award (which recognises photography that connects the weather with wider environmental and climate change). There is also a public favourite, decided by a global public vote. See rmets.org

THE BIG QUESTION

What's the worst photography advice you've been given?



@micro_four_thirds_shooter

You need a full frame camera to get good photos when any size sensor can produce great images



@cath_taylor_23

Leave your camera at home



@outsidewithbec

"ALWAYS shoot in the lowest ISO"



@hannah_outdoor_photography

Stick it on auto then you'll be fine



Andrew Goldstraw

If you're serious about photography you need a mirrorless camera!



Vaughan Matthews

Shoot with the sun behind you



@damiensousa

You can only improve with better gear



MJ Wartog

'You should take up photography!'



Did you know?

Fancy a free Hasselblad? There are 12 500EL cameras lying around on the surface of the moon, left there by astronauts. They returned to earth with just the film backs, so they could use the weight saved to bring back moon rocks. The only problem is getting there to pick one up!

© PHOTO: HASSELBLAD



Back in time **1926** Suzanne Lenglen at Wimbledon

With Wimbledon now under way here's an action photo of Suzanne Lenglen of France, considered by many to be the greatest female tennis player of all time. She won Wimbledon on her debut appearance in 1919 and went on to dominate women's tennis in the 1920's winning two Olympic Gold medals and 26 Grand Slam titles – including Wimbledon 1926 (Photo by Central Press/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)



@maria_jose84

A "teacher" said we should use ISO 100 throughout the course and she never explained why



Alan Tinsley

You need more lenses



Kathryn Cunningham

You're not a real Photographer unless you shoot in manual



Lynne Blount

There are certain rules which **MUST** be followed



Gep Macadaeg

Buy a Leica and you'll easily become a legendary photographer.



David Mark

Always use the rule of thirds



Adrian Wyatt

You can't be serious without a tripod



Paul Way

Learn from watching YouTube videos

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your photos
and comments
with us on social!

See page 6 for how
to contact us



What's new

Instax printer promotion

The Instax Mini Link 3 mini printer has been around for a while, but what's new is a tempting summer promotion – you can now get £25 off this attractive and genuinely useful accessory in white, pink and green. The Instax Mini Link 3 enables you to print any photo from your phone's camera roll. In the app, you can also extract and print individual frames from video files as well as use the printer as a remote shutter release and zoom controller. In addition, the Mini Link 3 can be charged by USB-C. Other Instax printers are discounted, too, with a far-from-shabby £40 off the SQ Link model in white (now also £89.99).

Price: £89.99

Web: instax.co.uk/printers



Kodak Charmera Millennium Keychain

There is a new edition of the tiny but popular keychain camera, this time inspired by the Millennium (remember that?). While the Charmera camera won't give Sony or Canon any sleepless nights, it features a 1/4-inch CMOS sensor that delivers 1440 x 1080 image resolution, along with a fixed 35mm lens with f/2.4 aperture. For the nostalgic, there is also a new suite of millennium-era filters and frames and there's a USB-C cable for image transfer. As a marketing wheeze, the Millennium Edition is being sold in 'a blind box,' so you won't know which of the seven retro designs you've got until you open it: lucky punters might even end up with the 'secret edition' with a liquid-metal finish.

Price: £35

Web: www.kodak.retopro.co



Godox iM30Pro

If you are looking for a fashionably retro-looking mini-flash, check out the new Godox iM30Pro. Targeted specifically at street photographers and film camera enthusiasts, it features an adjustable flash head that tilts at 45°, 60°, 75°, and 90°. The unit delivers a Guide Number of 15 with a 1.5 second recycle time, and there is also a 'Smart Auto' mode. Power is provided by a built-in lithium battery, and you can attach Godox MA01 magnetic colour filters. A colour display on the back enables you to check settings.

Price: £45

Web: godoxstore.co.uk

Lomography Sprocket Rocket camera

Lomography has announced two new duotone Sprocket Rocket panoramic cameras, in fetching Strawberry Fusion and Mint Fusion. The Sprocket Rocket, which launched back in 2011, is able to capture 18 panoramic pictures per roll; with its 1:3 panoramic perspective, the entire width of 35 mm film is exposed, including the sprocket holes for unapologetically analogue stylings (there's an optional frame insert for shooting without exposed sprockets). The camera itself features a fixed 30mm lens with available apertures of f/10.8 and f/16 and a fixed shutter speed of 1/100th sec, along with Bulb mode.

Price: £45

Web: shop.lomography.com



For our in-depth accessory tests, turn to page 70

Twelve South Cable Stay

If your desk is swamped by camera-related USB cables – or you're just very tidy – the CableStay pairs a 5-foot woven USB-C to USB-C cable with a weighted silicone 'stay' that keeps the cable where you left it. A soft touch anchor prevents the cable from dropping, while still allowing smooth movement. 'Cables are often plugged into a socket permanently, usually trailing when not in use. The result looks messy and leaves the cable at risk of being (damaged),' said the company. Available now in Jelly Mint, Electric Fuchsia, Slate, and Dune.

Price: £29.99

Web: twelvesouth.co.uk

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Opinion Gavin Stoker

What impact will the social media ban for under 16s have on camera sales?

While the latter outcome may seem more fanciful, current opinion does suggest that another reason for compact cameras' rising popularity is that teens are actively seeking to disconnect from their phones and seek a hobby that enables them to be more 'present'. Most teens are savvy enough to have wised up to social media's addictive nature and, even without government edicts, some will have been looking to do something to help achieve a better mental-health balance already.

Or, when the government does block social media for under 16s, we could get a mixture of the two happening – whereby any potential drop in sales is made up by new adopters and thereby the status quo prevails. I hope of course, that into the bargain our children are safer online, better in terms of their mental health, and free from the social pressures that they should only have to deal with when adults. Let's not forget too that more than 83% of parents who responded to a recent government consultation said the risks of social media outweighed the benefits. As the knock-on effects of the proposed ban play out, it will be interesting to see what else changes for the camera industry.

Gavin Stoker is a highly experienced photography journalist and photo magazine editor, based in south west London.

“We're told that new interest in compact point-and-shoot cameras is being fuelled by teenagers and other young people, rather than nostalgia from their parents (who are probably using phones now anyway). We're also told the massive growth in sales of compacts is due to social media influencers on sites like TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram.

That's led me to wonder what may happen when the government brings in its blanket ban on social media for everyone under 16, following the pioneering actions of Australian lawmakers (where a ban has been in place since December 2025). The UK ban is planned for early next year, and while a bold move, it's not exactly a surprise: the

government has already leant on tech giants to do more to protect young people from seeing potentially harmful content and adult images. But if those 16 or under are no longer seeing the social media posts of online influencers and their favourite K-Pop stars, promoting compact cameras as lifestyle accessories, might that stop the recent compact resurgence in its tracks?

Beat the ban, or embrace it?

A counter argument could be made to suggest a social media ban might have the opposite effect on the photo trade and actively boost camera sales. As, lured away from their smartphones, our nation's youth might seek out another screen-focused device via which to plug that loss of dopamine hit, via which they'll still be able to amass a load of selfies.

Could the social media ban for under 16s also help with the compact camera revival?



Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send your thoughts in around 500 words and you could win a year's digital subscription to AP.



Left: Raymond Santana, who falsely confessed to a 1989 rape. DNA testing and a confession from the real perpetrator saw him released after five years.

Below: Christopher Ochoa, falsely confessed to a rape and murder in 1988. After 12 years in prison, DNA testing exonerated him.

False confessions and wrongful convictions

What can happen when coercion, isolation and intimidation forces people to confess to crimes they didn't commit

This shocking book takes a bleak look at wrongful convictions due to false confessions in the United States.

Between 1989 and 2024, 13% of documented exonerations included false confessions, with people of colour being much more likely to be disproportionately affected.

In this book, more than 75 black and white photographs, showing portraits, interiors and still life examine how isolation, deception, intimidation and prolonged questioning can lead to a terrible outcome.

The photographs in the book are taken by Robin Dahlberg, whose work is held in some of the biggest and most distinguished collections in the world, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Interestingly however, she also spent twenty years working in the National Legal Department of the American Civil Liberties Union where she designed

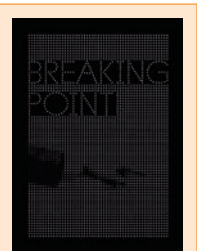
and led campaigns to reform the criminal justice system.

For this book, she has worked in collaboration with exonerees. Alongside the portraits and images featured, there's also transcriptions, screen captures from real-life interrogations that produced false confessions and written summaries of cases from arrest to conviction.

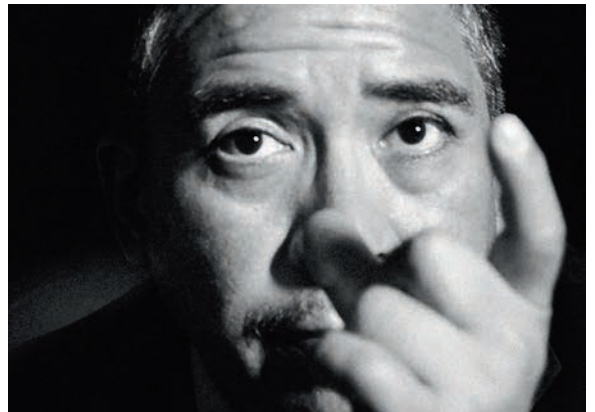
It's an astonishing read, which is disturbing – but also somewhat hopeful in places – and is very much worth taking a look at if you've got an interest in long-term documentary, social justice and the criminal justice system, especially in the US.

The portraits are captured tenderly, while the book itself has clearly been put together with great care, with an interesting binding, paper choice and design throughout also lending to the blunt aesthetic. Highly recommended.

Amy Davies



Breaking Point by Robin Dahlberg
£45, Kehrre Verlag,
Hardcover, 184
pages, ISBN:
9783969002223





Rebalancing history

A landmark exhibition celebrating the pioneering work of 27 Japanese women photographers is an absolute must-see, says **Amy Davies**

Spanning the 1950s all the way to the present day, the newest exhibition at The Photographers' Gallery aims to showcase the perspectives from which Japan is seen, and how the country is seen by other people around the world.

Included in the exhibition are themes of gender and identity, pop culture, nature, fashion and music, motherhood as well as everyday life.

Through 27 different photographers, the exhibition brings together both those who are already internationally recognised and those who are lesser-known. The resulting show aims to redress a balance of history which has often been told through a male-dominated lens with a singular viewpoint.

Pioneering photographers from the post-war

period sit alongside those who are still working today. Unusually for The Photographers' Gallery, the exhibition spans the whole building, with more than 200 photographs, videos, installations and rare photobooks on display.

There's so much work on display, it provides a vivid yet intimate portrait of Japan, telling us so much about how women artists have defied conventions to capture social change and redefine photography across multiple generations. It's a stunning collection of work, and with so much to see across the multiple floors of the gallery, you could easily spend a few hours here to take it all in.

An array of different genres are also represented, so it's likely that there will be something to suit every taste here – it's

certainly an interesting thought experiment to try and spot the commonalities and differences between the works.

Artists included in the exhibition are Mikiko Jara, Miyako Ishiuchi, Rinko Kawauchi, Tamiko Nishimura, Tomoko Sawada, Yuki Tawada, Eiko Yamazawa and many more.

The exhibition has been curated by Lesley A. Martin, Takeuchi Mariko and Pauline Vermare, and is organised in connection with the publication *I'm So Happy You Are Here: Japanese Women Photographers 1950s to Now*, which was published by Aperture in 2024.

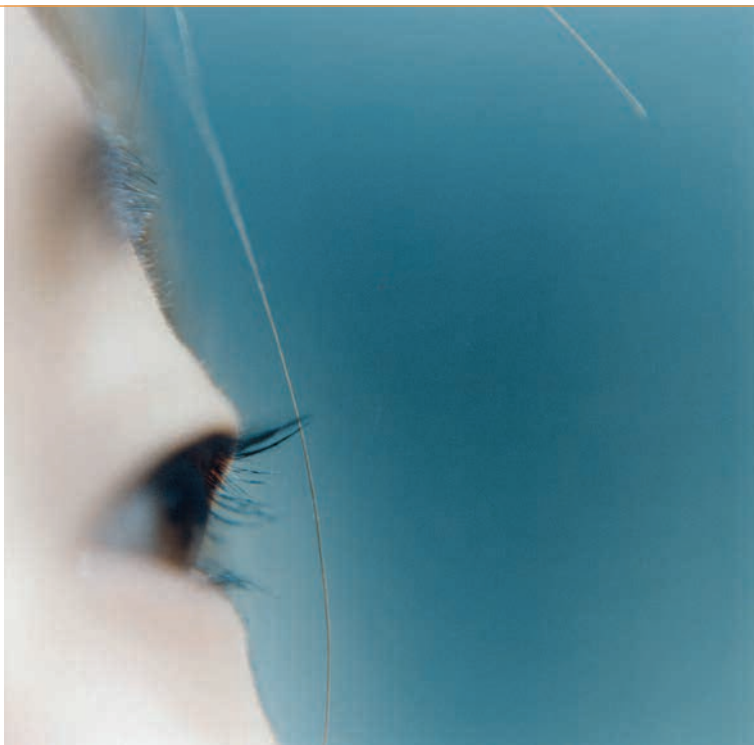
This summer is an exciting time for those with an interest in Japanese photography – you can also see some great work on display at Japan House as part of the Kyotographie festival until October.

**Japanese Women Photographers:
From 1950s to Now**
Until 27 September
£12/£9 concs
The Photographers' Gallery, London
See tpg.org.uk for full opening times

Left: KATAYAMA Mari
bystander #014, 2016

Right: KAWAUCHI Rinko
Untitled, 2004; from the series the eyes, the ears.

Below: YANAGI Miwa
Elevator Girl House 1F, 1997; from the series Elevator Girl



What's On

Some dates for your photographic diary

Until 2 August EXHIBITION

RHS Botanical Art and Photography Show at Saatchi Gallery, London

Until 4 October EXHIBITION

Cecil Beaton: Staging Icons at Harewood House, Leeds

2-18 July EVENT

photollkley Festival at various venues, Ilkley, Yorkshire

7 July TALK

Alfred Buckham: Daredevil Photographer by RPS Historical Group, online talk

Until 12 July EXHIBITION

Wildlife Photographer of the Year at Natural History Museum, London

17 July EVENT

Photowalk: Birmingham organised by Fujifilm School

17-19 July EVENT

Summit Photo 2026, Royal Geographical Society, London

23 July TALK

Curator Tour: Japanese Women Photographers at The Photographers' Gallery, London

25-26 July EVENT

Oxford Photomathon (various locations)

Until 3 August EXHIBITION

Astronomy Photographer of the Year 17 at National Maritime Museum, London

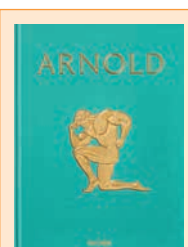
8 August - 1 November

EXHIBITION *Catherine Opie: To Be Seen* at National Galleries Scotland, Edinburgh

24 October EVENT

Photo Book Fair at Ffotogallery, Cardiff

To be included in these listings, please email ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk at least a month in advance



Arnold
£125, Taschen,
Hardcover, 528
pages, ISBN:
9783836599580

Montreal
photographer Jimmy
Caruso covered the
IFBB Mr. Universe
contest in Florida, in
which Arnold placed
second, making him
the first North
American to
photograph the
Austrian Oak.

He'll be back

A closer glimpse at the extraordinary life and career of a Hollywood icon

Seven-time Mr. Olympia, four-time Mr. Universe, former Governor of California and much-loved film star, these are just a few highlights of Arnold Schwarzenegger's glittering and inspirational life to date. His upcoming book aptly named 'Arnold', is an updated version of the original collector's edition released in 2023, which covers all of his monumental achievements and more. Documenting over 70 years of the fitness mogul's remarkable journey from humble beginnings to international fame.

'Arnold' ups the ante on the previous edition with more intimate bodybuilding images, photos from the former politician's personal archive, and behind-the-scenes film stills. Plus, exclusive interviews with important figures who played a significant role in helping him on his way to eventual stardom, including Canadian film director Ivan Reitman and bodybuilding legend Franco Columbu.

The book is wrapped in a luscious turquoise hardcover with the title displayed in a bold and eye-catching metallic gold font, accompanied by a

striking pose from the Austrian. The book features a pleasing selection of images by the likes of Annie Leibovitz, Andy Warhol, Francesco Scavullo, Herb Ritts, Sante D'Orazio and Robert Mapplethorpe.

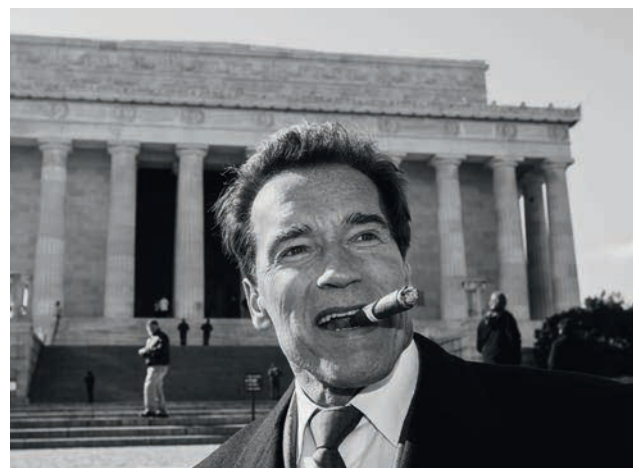
Away from the bodybuilding, the book shows the former Governor of California's fun and carefree side, such as a light-hearted moment on set of comedy western *The Villain* which captures the actor playfully holding two pistols either side of his head.

A perfect mix of both personality traits are flawlessly depicted by Peter Grigsby, whose candid shot smartly frames a deep in thought politician sitting down in his Sacramento office during his time as Governor, while a T-800 endoskeleton replica from the *Terminator* films humorously towers over him on a table behind.

If you're a fan of the actor, bodybuilder, or Governor version of Schwarzenegger, then this latest book, although on the pricey side, will definitely be a worthwhile investment and a shrewd memento to acquire in the long run. **Craig Blackley**



On the set of low-budget comedy western *The Villain*, also marketed as *Cactus Jack* (1979), which starred a 63-year-old Kirk Douglas opposite 38-year-old Ann Margret. Arnold played the largely mute Handsome Stranger.



Governor Schwarzenegger with the Lincoln Memorial, 2009.



Lacock by Martin Parr
Until 27 June 2027
Fox Talbot Museum,
Lacock Abbey
Free
See nationaltrust.org.uk for opening times

Left: Red, white and blue cake at V.E day celebrations, Lacock

Below: Vicar-Si Dunn at Lacock's V.E day celebrations

Parr's final commission, at photography's birthplace

Bringing one of photography's most influential careers full circle, this exhibition highlights English eccentricities

This new exhibition presents work made during the photographer's final year and returning him to a village he first photographed more than four decades ago.

For anyone familiar with Parr's legacy, the setting feels almost impossibly fitting. Long before he became photography's international patron saint of British eccentricity, dodgy buffets and uncomfortable leisure activities, Parr was wandering the streets of Lacock with a camera, honing the documentary style that would eventually make him one of the most recognisable photographers in history.

Now, in what became his final major commission before his death in 2025, Parr returned to the Wiltshire village to photograph its fêtes, flower shows, VE Day celebrations and community gatherings.

The resulting exhibition offers something more than a nostalgic look back. It feels like a photographer taking stock. The same curiosity remains, as does the trademark eye for absurdity, but these pictures also carry the weight of a lifetime spent observing Britain and the British.

Presented at the birthplace of photography, the former home of pioneer Henry Fox Talbot, the exhibition has an added layer of symbolism. As Lacock helped shape Parr's

early photographic vision, it also became the setting for his final substantial body of work.

Parr's widow Susie said, "It is such a bittersweet experience for me to look through these photos of Lacock taken by Martin over the past year. There are so many echoes from his work throughout his long career. It's a credit to Martin that he made this work, so full of the life he loved, when his health was failing so dramatically. What a great way to end such a distinguished career, back in the home of photography."

Alongside the exhibition, visitors will be able to see a film documenting the project and buy an accompanying photo book featuring the images, with a foreword by Susie.

Parr, who died last year aged 73, leaves behind one of the most influential photographic legacies of the past half-century. A member and former president of Magnum Photos, he published more than 150 books and established the Martin Parr Foundation in Bristol in 2017.

If the exhibition proves anything, it is that even at the end of a distinguished career, Parr remained fascinated by the peculiar theatre of everyday British life. Fortunately for the rest of us, he never stopped looking.

Peter Dench



What's new



Your best Photos

Our favourite photos posted by readers on our social media channels. To see your photo here, post it on Instagram or Facebook with the hashtag

#appicoftheweek



WIN! Every issue, Europe's leading photo printing company CEWE will be giving two AP Pic of the Week winners a total of £100 each in vouchers to spend on CEWE's exceptional photo products. Visit cewe.co.uk

Eternal Bond by Kumaran Parameshwaran

Nikon Z8, Nikon AF-S NIKKOR 500mm f/5.6E PF ED VR, 1/1250sec at f/5.6, ISO 1000

A lion cub moving straight toward his mother for comfort, completely unaware of what's waiting beyond her presence. For young cubs, their mother is protection, guidance, warmth, and safety all at once. Before they learn to hunt or fight, they learn trust. The wild can be ruthless. But moments like this remind you what comes before survival. Eternal love of a mother.

Instagram: @underdogkp

Website: www.eyeforwild.com



**PRIZE
WINNER**





Shelter Under Mother's Wings by Dr. Mohd. Asfak Hossain Sweet

Canon EOS R7, Sigma 150-600mm F5-6.3 DG OS HSM |
Contemporary with Canon EF to RF adapter, 1/1250sec at
f/6.3, ISO 2500, 600mm

On a sandy island in the Padma River near Rajshahi, Bangladesh, a Little Tern raised two chicks in a simple nest on the open ground. At sunset, the mother returned to shelter them beneath her wings. One chick looks curiously toward the photographer, while its more restless sibling tumbles over in the sand beside her.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/asfaksweet

 
**Your best
Photos**

The Arsenal by Joel Richardson

Ricoh GRIII X, 26mm, 1/2500sec at f/3.5, ISO 250

From a day of celebration in North London, watching the newly crowned Premier League champions paint their corner of the capital red. As I walked the parade route, my eyes and lens were fixed to the rooftops and balconies - this was the pick of a special bunch.

Instagram: [@joel.s.richardson_](https://www.instagram.com/joel.s.richardson_)

PRIZE
WINNER



**Your best
Photos**

Lambs on the Levels by Ian Harris

Canon R5 Mark II, Canon RF 200-800mm F6.3-9, 1/800sec at f/9, ISO 3200, 707mm

Whilst on a walk around the Somerset Levels, I walked past a field with some sheep and their lambs. I saw a pair of lambs butting heads and liked the composition. It was a nice, sunny day and it felt very heartwarming to see the little lambs playing and interacting.

Instagram: @IHPHOTOGRAPHY58



Raw Emotion in the Rush Hour by Krystian Alabrudzinski

Nikon Zfc, Viltrox 27mm f1.2 Pro, 1/30sec at f/8, ISO 100

Tired eyes, a jaw compressed against the day's weight. What had she been through to feel like that? Her weariness tells the story I wanted... The burden of modern life we often overlook. Others rush past, but I see the moment when real emotion finally surfaces.

Instagram: @krystian.tif

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

SONY

α
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TRAVEL LIGHT AND SHOW THE FULL STORY

THE CHOICE OF **CREATORS**



John Makris | Professional Photographer

John Makris captured this striking scene in Vietnam's incense village using the **FE 70-200mm f/2.8 GM OSS II** and **α7R V**.

Amid vivid red patterns, the lens isolates the subject while preserving a rich sense of place, delivering beautifully controlled depth and signature compression. Fast, reliable, and surprisingly lightweight, it's a versatile travel companion that excels across landscapes, portraits, wildlife, and even handheld video... consistently exceeding expectations.

α7R V



MASTER FE-70-200mm f/2.8 GM II



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LENS OF THE YEAR
Sony FE 50-150mm F2 GM

Picture Perfect

BEST SHOTS: MACRO

One genre. Three photographers. Three standout images. AP invited three photographers working in the macro genre of photography to share one image they consider among their best. Each pro reveals how vision, timing and technique come together in a single frame.

Levon Biss

Levon Biss is a British photographer best known for his extraordinary high-magnification studies of insects and natural history specimens. His acclaimed Microsculpture series combines thousands of microscopic images into astonishingly detailed portraits, exhibited internationally in museums and galleries. Originally working in sports and portrait photography, Biss has become one of the leading contemporary figures in macro photography.

Instagram @levonbiss

Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?

The image shows a Blue Calamintina Bee that was shot for my last project, *Extinct & Endangered: Insects in Peril*. The specimen is from the collections of American Museum of Natural History in New York and it was chosen for the project as populations are in decline and the species is under threat of extinction.

What was happening just before and after this frame?

This is not a single frame shot, the image is created from over 10,000 individual photographs using a photo-stacking technique on a bespoke rig with microscope objectives. The final print size in the touring exhibition is 3x2m.



What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?

One of the key factors in the image was to highlight the pollen attached to the underside of the bee. It is quite rare to find a museum specimen still holding pollen as it is extremely delicate and is easily knocked off. A slow and methodical approach was required to ensure the specimen finished the shoot in the same condition it started.

Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?

As I mentioned, the image is created from over 10,000 shots, with each shot being taken with 7 micron increments. The depth of field whilst shooting with microscope objectives is extremely narrow and so many images are required to produce a final picture with full focus. The



insect is also photographed in multiple sections, with each section requiring 500+ images, this is why the shot count stacks up so dramatically. The final image contains huge amounts of microscopic detail though that can be studied on the large prints. The detail can also be seen online at the project website where the viewer can zoom into the full resolution image: www.extinctandendangered.com

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?

Vibration is the enemy, the tiniest movement can ruin a stack of images. Concrete floors and a solid rig are required to overcome this, plus patience and a slow approach. Handling the specimens is also a challenge, particularly when they are extinct, if you break a leg or antennae you cannot just source a new specimen. There is a certain amount of pressure when handling specimens of this type.

What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?

I'd like readers to appreciate the beauty of these tiny creatures, they are engineering marvels and provide essential services to all ecosystems, both terrestrial and aquatic. Without insects, humans simply could not survive. By allowing the viewer to study insects at a microscopic level, the aim is to generate more appreciation of these tiny creatures we share the planet with and awareness of the harm we are doing to populations across the globe.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?

Be slow, be patient and don't give up when an image goes wrong. Persistence is the key.



Pete Burford

Peter Burford is an award-winning British macro photographer celebrated for his striking close-up studies of insects and spiders. Burford combines focus-stacking techniques with an ethical approach to photographing live subjects in their natural environment. An OM System ambassador, his vivid images have gained a huge following online and helped introduce macro photography to a wider audience. **Instagram @pbmacro**

Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?

This is a portrait of a white legged Damselfly. I decided to choose this image because it was a type of insect that I have been wanting to photograph for a long time but haven't had the fortune of finding one.

What was happening just before and after this frame?

Before this focus stacked image, I was setting up my clamps and a background card. Once I did that I was able to clip the stem that the damselfly was sitting on to allow for extra stability. I was then able to move the background card behind it to create this image. After the shot I carefully unclipped the stem and put the plant back to its normal posting to leave the damselfly to roost overnight.

What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?

Being able to focus stack live insects or locate them is no easy task. I had to figure out exactly where these damselflies would be, constantly looking around ponds and rivers, but also when they are most docile. As insects are cold blooded they need the sun light and warmth to move. So being able to go in the late evening / nighttime, means they can't move or flyaway as much due to the colder temperatures. This gives me the perfect opportunity to focus stack them. Also using my clamps to be able to clip the stem of the plant stops the wind disturbing and moving the plant whilst focus stacking, by adding another layer of stability.

Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?

For this image I had to focus stack the Damselfly due to such thin depth of field and this magnification of 2:1. This means I use the focus bracketing feature on my OM1 MKII to capture an amount of frames from the front to the back of the insect and then merge them all together in post processing to create a fully detailed image. This is all done handheld out in the field with live subjects with a flash and Cygnustech diffuser. Technical details are 1/100 | F8 | ISO 200.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?

The biggest challenge was making sure the stack worked. Because the damselfly would occasionally move to the left or start moving its head or arms, I had to take multiple focus brackets until the damselfly sat still through the full bracket. Also being able to keep myself still for the stacking process by keeping my arms locked to my body and holding my breath to minimise my movement.

What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?

To me this photo shows determination and perseverance. I've been wanting to photograph one of these damselflies for five years now and every year I would go out searching for them, till I was able to find one. I want readers to take from this image that with determination, patience and persistence you'll be able to get the image that you want, it could be tomorrow or it could be in a few years. But keeping at it and not giving up will give you the success.

Was it luck or judgement?

To me it was luck that I found a white legged damselfly at the particular spot as I have never seen one there before. But it was also my judgement to know when to go back to be able to setup and get a detailed, focus stacked image like this. Learning about your subjects in macro photography is one of the most important things when it comes to photographing them. I know a lot more about insects and spiders through macro photography because of this.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?

To approach insects carefully and with respect. Moving slowly around insects gives you more of a chance of photographing them as they won't be as startled, especially if they are already interested in gathering pollen from a flower. For this shot it's great to research the type of subjects that you want to photograph. I knew that these types of damselflies were best found around rivers and more docile at night when the temperatures dropped. This gave me the right environmental knowledge on where to look and find these insects.



David Hamilton

David Hamilton is a Scottish macro photographer and educator best known through his online persona, 'weemadbeasties.' Specialising in extreme close-up photography of insects and tiny creatures, he combines technical precision often with an accessible, humorous style that has attracted a large social media following. His work and his workshops have inspired a new generation of photographers to explore the world of macro photography.

Instagram @weemadbeasties

Tell us about this image. What are we looking at, and why did you choose it?

This is the fantastic looking Pink heather crab spider, *Thomisus onustus*, a crab spider belonging to the genus *Thomisus*. I chose this one because from my extensive collection of macro images its stands out for its unique look and striking colour.

What was happening just before and after this frame?

Before this I had spent hours of very early morning searching on the moors and fields of Dorset to find this amazingly camouflaged spider, which blends perfectly into the heather – a very hard spot.

What were the key creative decisions you made making this photograph?

Lighting, and low positioning were key, also taking a step back to fully get everything in frame. Macro is not just about getting as close as possible, it was key for me to show the full body at an angle which give scale

Can you share the technical details and how they shaped the outcome?

Technically this detail comes from stacking the subject, which involves multiple frames at small focus increments going from front to back, each one capturing a focus point, and then combining those points in helicon software to provide the depth of field you see here in much more detail.

What was the biggest challenge in making this photograph?

Undoubtedly, the positioning and wind. There

was a fair breeze which made this image difficult to pull off. I had to hold my position very uncomfortably and wait till just a second of calm before being able to capture.

What does this photograph mean to you and what would you like readers to take from it?

For me, coming from Scotland and generally shooting there, I do not see many insects which are so bright and dazzling. Getting to travel around different areas of the UK from a macro photographers perspective opens up another world of species, which visually can have an amazing impact.

Was it luck or judgement?

Judgement and patience.

What did this image teach you?

Holding my position, waiting for the right moment in difficult and sometimes painful situations, pays off.

What advice would you give someone trying to make a similar shot?

Be prepared to move back! Don't always focus on getting super close to your subject.

Puffin paradise

For Drew Buckley, a three-decade long obsession with these colourful birds has yielded some fantastic results. He talks to **Graeme Green** about his methods

There doesn't seem an obvious link between four-wheel drive rally cars and puffins. But for Drew Buckley, spending time at frenetic, noisy, muddy races in South Wales as a young man was the perfect training ground for going on to capture the 'clowns of the sea'. "When I started off photography in my mid-teens and early 20s, I was interested in the Wales Rally GB and other car rallies in the forests," Buckley says. "That was the main thing I used to photograph as a hobby. It teaches you a lot about shutter speeds, apertures and panning techniques, and you can then put all that knowledge that you've taught yourself into birds in flight or anything else. I've always been a bit of a speed freak, in terms of trying to capture things that are moving."

Puffins can definitely shift at serious speeds. They're known to be able to fly up 55 miles per hour, their wings beating in a blur of rapid movement at around 400 times a minute (6-7 times per second) as they hurtle through the sky like colourful little missiles. "I've always loved capturing them in flight because they're so fast," Buckley tells me. "Going back to my early days, I was always trying to capture them as they flew past. With a tailwind behind them, they're crazy-fast, and they're so small in the air as well. If they're coming at you, they're just like a circle with two sticks coming out of the side. There's not much area for the camera to grab."

Buckley doesn't only capture puffins in flight. Over the course of around three decades, he has observed and photographed them feeding, nesting, resting, rearing chicks, socialising, swimming and exploring, operating in all kinds of weather conditions and at different stages across their seasonal visits to Skomer Island, off the south-west coast of Wales. The pictures in his new book *Puffins* reflect the time he's invested, from detailed close-up portraits to wide-open habitat scenes to action shots.

Born in 1985 in Middlesex, Buckley moved to Pembroke in Pembrokeshire when he was three, with Skomer, a small puffin-filled island within easy reach. "Being in Pembrokeshire since I was a child, you live and breathe the coastline, the wildlife and the seasons," he tells me. "Everything around here has a puffin on it in some form of logo or picture. The 'Pembrokeshire parrot' is another nickname for them."

Atlantic puffins are found across the colder, northern climes of the North Atlantic Ocean. They breed on remote islands and rocky coastal cliffs, including locations in Iceland, Norway, the Faroe Islands, Ireland, Canada, Greenland and Russia, especially around the fringes of the Arctic. In the UK, they're seen around the islands of Fair Isle and Noss (in Shetland), the Isle of May (Firth of Forth) in the far north of Scotland, in parts of western Scotland, and around Anglesey in north-west Wales, particularly near South Stack, with a major

population at the Farne Islands off Northumberland. The UK's largest puffin colony is on remote St Kilda in the Outer Hebrides.

But Skomer, less than a mile off the Welsh coast, is one of the UK's largest, most popular and accessible hotspots. A record 52,019 puffins were recorded on the island during the spring census this year, breaking last year's record of 43,626. That means Skomer is bucking the general trend, as Atlantic puffin populations are declining globally and red-listed by the IUCN as Vulnerable. In parts of Iceland, some populations have dropped by as much as 70% over the past 30 years. Norway's famous Røst colony has declined by more than 80% since the 1970s. UK puffin populations have fallen by 25%

Wide view of the Wick Puffin colony, with an Atlantic Puffin stood with a mouthful of Sand Eels. Skomer

Environmental view of Atlantic Puffin sat in it's burrow at the Wick. Skomer Island





since 2000. A shortage of sandeels (a staple food source), due to climate change and historical overfishing, has made it harder for puffins to raise their chicks, with severe storms, pollution, invasive predators on nesting islands, disease outbreaks, and, in some places, continued hunting, also part of the decline.

But Skomer's numbers have skyrocketed, from around 15,500 puffins in 2005 to the current high. The Wildlife Trust has credited the boom to abundant food in the area and the island's lack of natural predators. Buckley sees this as a positive example of tourism, including photographic tourism, helping the birds. "Skomer's a bit of an anomaly," he says. "It's a great success story. Due to the





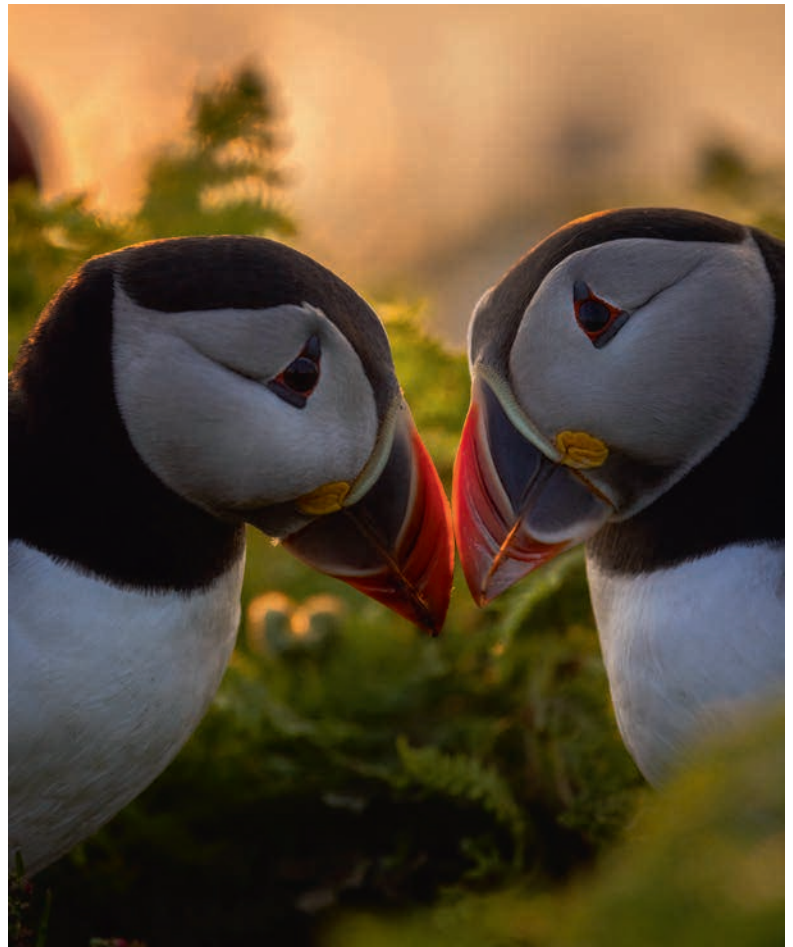
➤ food and predation from gulls, they don't raise as many chicks in other colonies. But around here, sand eels are a mile or less from the island, which means they're not flying so far, not using so much energy, and they're gathering lots of food. The coexistence with people really helps. Gulls normally prey on them, but if there are people around, there are less gulls around, which adds to the puffins' success rate.

Puffins usually arrive on Skomer in March and April, with peak numbers from mid-June to mid-July, when the adults bring fish, usually sand eels, to their chicks in their burrows, before they all fly away usually by the end of July. The island's also home to 350,000 breeding pairs of Manx shearwaters and thousands of guillemots and razorbills.

Buckley first visited Skomer as a teenager. He estimates he's since spent around 500 days there, spending 37 days on the island during one season alone. "The beauty of Skomer is that loads of people go there every day, and have done for 20-30 years, so the birds get used to people," he explains. "You can get close to them or sit and watch them - it's not always about the camera, but also watching their behaviour. In the satellite sites,

Atlantic Puffin coming in to land at colony with a beak full of sand eels

Atlantic Puffins 'billing' in a courtship display, stood among sea campion at sunset. Skomer Island



they're a lot more wary of people. You can't get as close to them as you can here, where they will practically walk past your feet, sit on your camera bag, pull your shoelaces..."

"There was a moment a few years ago, where I had a Selfie with one," he adds. "The burrows on Skomer are either side of the footpath and the birds walk across the footpaths all day long, every day, especially in the evenings. So once you're sat there, they'll happily walk past you. One came along and sat by my side. It pulled my camera bag's straps, starting tugging that and my shoelaces. They're so inquisitive. Everything around them, they'll interact with and play with."

The birds have an obvious appeal: striking visuals and lots of character. "They're very comical," Buckley says. "They crash-land sometimes. They're always going around checking on each other, peering in to what their neighbours are doing in their burrows. They fall over as well. People are drawn to the colours, the painterly and unreal look to them. They're quite exotic looking, and very precise in their colouration and markings. That piques your interest. But the more you delve into them and start spending time with them, you get to know the busy little lives that they live. They're probably characterised in a picture as pretty parrot-type birds. But they're amazing predators - they dive for food and swim. They catch fish deep under water. Each bird lives for 30 or so years, which is incredible when you think of the crazy weather they live through in the winter time, the storms and big waves."

Like many wildlife photographers, Buckley has been obsessed with taking portraits of the birds with a beak-filled with silvery sand eels - the Holy Grail of puffin photography. "That's what everyone goes for - the classic image," he nods. "Even then, they're tricky to do right. It becomes almost as much about the background as it does the subject, making sure the backgrounds are quite clean, using your shooting angle, and looking at different areas behind the birds, the cliffs or the sea, which changes the colour wash that the bird's set against. Every visit, you think "Can I better the last one?" That's the aim. Any photographer thinks that."

Making so many repeat visits, he's enjoyed working in the "sub-seasons" within the season. "In April, you get nest-building behaviour and the island looks quite wintery still," he explains. "Then in May you get all the Spring flowers coming out." As well as focusing in close on the birds, he likes to use wide lenses, making use of the island setting, weather and skies. "I always enjoy habitat shots as it showcases the place more. A lot of people go to a location and just shoot everything at 400mm or 500mm, right on the subject - lovely shots but you don't really showcase where it lives."

Over "many, many visits", he's looked to push his creativity. "Once you get your main portraits and habitat shots, you start looking at other ways you can build on that for a species. You look for gaps in your portfolio. You go down to a smaller level, different kinds of habitat shots through the seasons, with different flora, or sunrises and sunsets... The more you go, the less you shoot. It's those special shots you're looking for, when weather conditions come together, or standout moments. In the last few years, I've played around with light a bit more, with backlighting, silhouettes, or where there are little pockets of light and shade popping up."

Playing with interesting light conditions resulted in one of his favourite images, now on the cover of his book. "That was taken looking down a bank, when the light was going down, so the whole bank was in shade," he says. "When the puffin was walking around, occasionally it'd put its head up just enough that it's into the sun. So you're exposing for the white of the face, and by doing that everything else goes into shade and makes everything around it dark. From a first glance, people might think "Is that Photoshop?" but it's all done in-camera, if you get the right conditions."

Another favourite image of his is an in-flight capture. "I've shot a lot of flight shots, but I've always wanted one where the bird is coming in dead straight of the camera, with symmetrical wings," he says. "That's easier said than done. This picture was shot in evening light. It's one out of a sequence of 20 or so frames. There was a point where it was dead straight, almost looking at the camera, and the wings



Atlantic Puffin stood in a pocket of sunlight against in-shadow background. Skomer Island

are pretty much, almost, almost symmetrical. I was definitely chuffed with that picture."

With such tricky, fast-moving subjects, developments in camera technology help. "With mirrorless, it's definitely become easier, with animal-tracking, eye-tracking, and the snappiness of it all," he says. "Before that, you learned techniques: watching birds, predicting where they're going to go, and focusing on an area where they're coming into, rather than picking anything out of the sky. You really had to cherry pick the ones you're after. Going back 20 years, it was just old school: pre-focus and wait for it to come through."

With speeding puffins, he also likes to experiment. "I've always loved in-flight images and playing around with shutter speeds," he says. "Of course, the success rate is quite low, especially if you're at 1/150, trying to get a blurry puffin panning past you. But they're way more rewarding than just keeping shooting the same picture at really fast shutter speeds. Once you've got your baseline shots, you should push yourself a bit more and try out different things."

Buckley runs workshops to Skomer and other locations in Pembrokeshire. He's been self-employed as a photographer since 2010, having previously worked as a 3D artist on computer games. "Redundancy from that job

➤ spurred me on to give photography a kick-start,” he explains. “But I’d always liked cameras. My brothers had cameras when we were little. I got the bug playing with their film cameras.”

He’s worked in many locations across Wales (Pembrokeshire, Eryri (Snowdonia), Glamorgan, Brecon Beacons, Cardiff...), as well as parts of Scotland and England, shooting everything from night cityscapes to astrophotography to woodland. Like many photographers, he balances up his own interests with commercial work, including collaborations with Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Canon, the RSPB, and two years working with the BBC Natural History Unit on creative timelapse videos for their 2020 series *A Wild Year In Pembrokeshire*.

“Since Day One, landscapes and wildlife have been the genres I’ve loved the most. Growing up around here, you have the Gower, Brecon Beacons, Snowdonia... all on the doorstep. It’s what you grow up visiting and holidaying in, and then you start working in those locations. It definitely has a calming effect.



Once you’ve been outside, it resets you every day.”

Alongside puffins, he photographs other wildlife, from badgers, deer, otters and dolphins to owls, geese and sanderlings. “I was a bit of a birder growing up,” he tells me. “I was always looking out of the window at the bird feeder and thinking ‘What camera can I get, with the biggest Zoom?’” With birds, photos with heartbeats definitely capture an audience more than landscapes do,

An Atlantic Puffin flying back to colony. A slow shutter speed was used to convey blurred wings

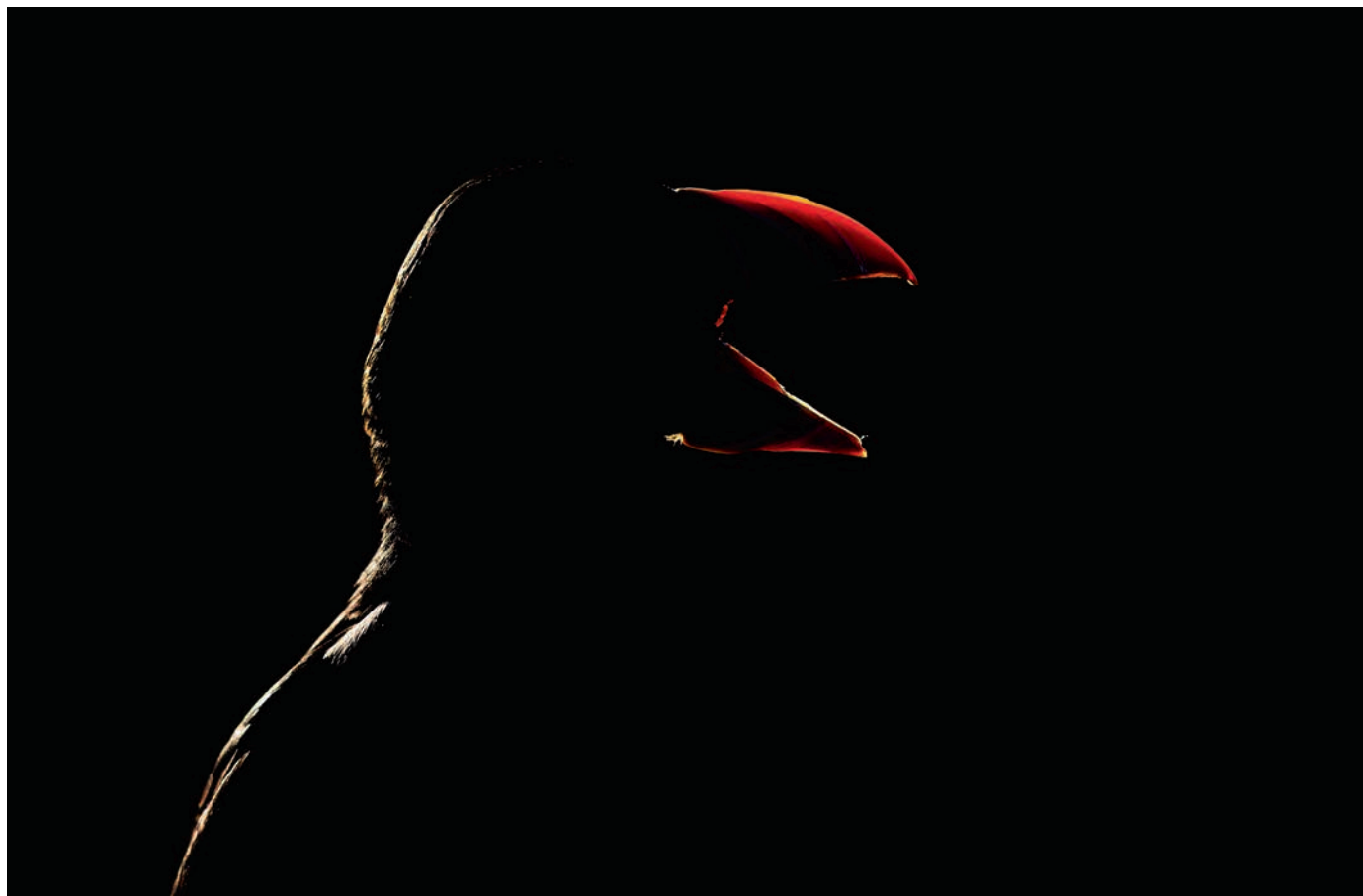
Atlantic Puffin with a backlit beak captured against a dark background in evening sunshine

however pretty it is around here.”

Despite putting out a book, Buckley’s far from finished with puffins. “As long as I live here, they’re always going to be an interest,” he says. “It’s the seasonal highlight. You read the paper and hear that the first puffin is back in March, and you think ‘Great, here we go again...’”



Puffins by Drew Buckley is published by Graffeg (£20); drewbuckleyphotography.com



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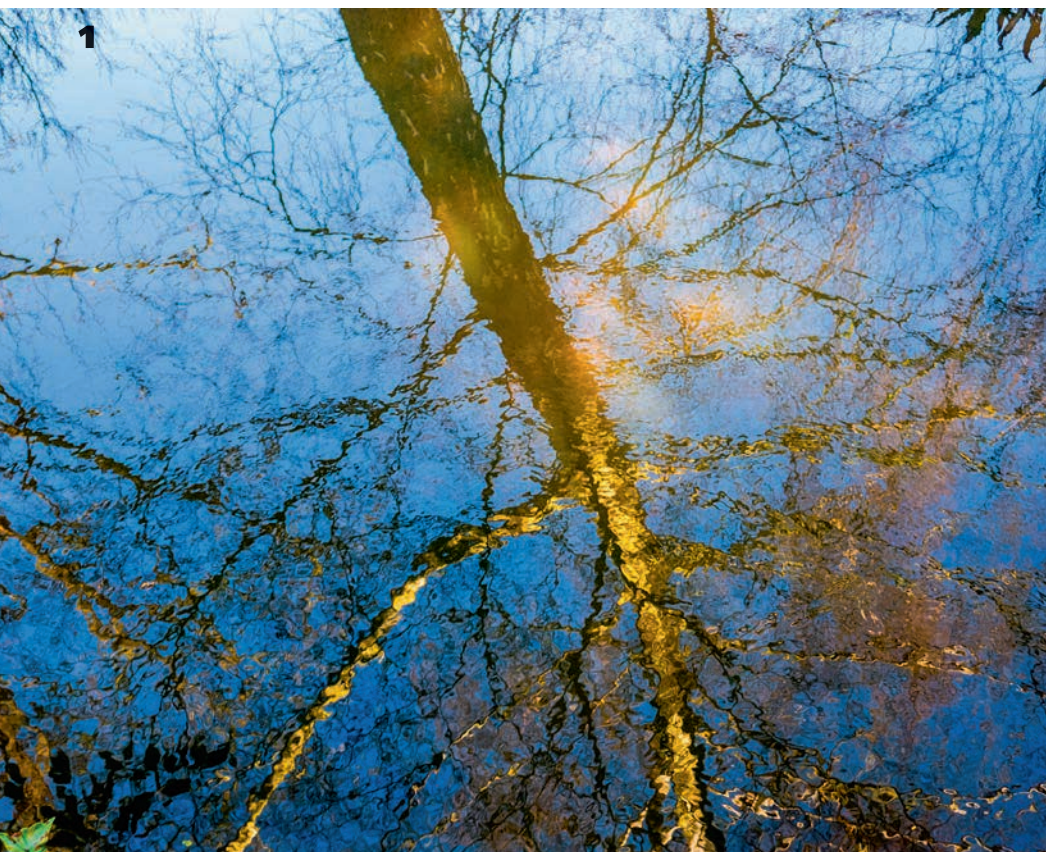
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1 Tree Reflection by Chelsea Lovell

2 Wells Cathedral Pool by Dave Marshall

3 Deep in Thought by Richard Tippett

4 James Harris by John Harris

5 Quiet Monk by Jake Wade

6 Neil Wolstenholme by Myron Efetzis

Club essentials

Awesome Autistics Photography Club

Wells, Somerset

Meets: We meet once a month on a Saturday (See Facebook page for details)

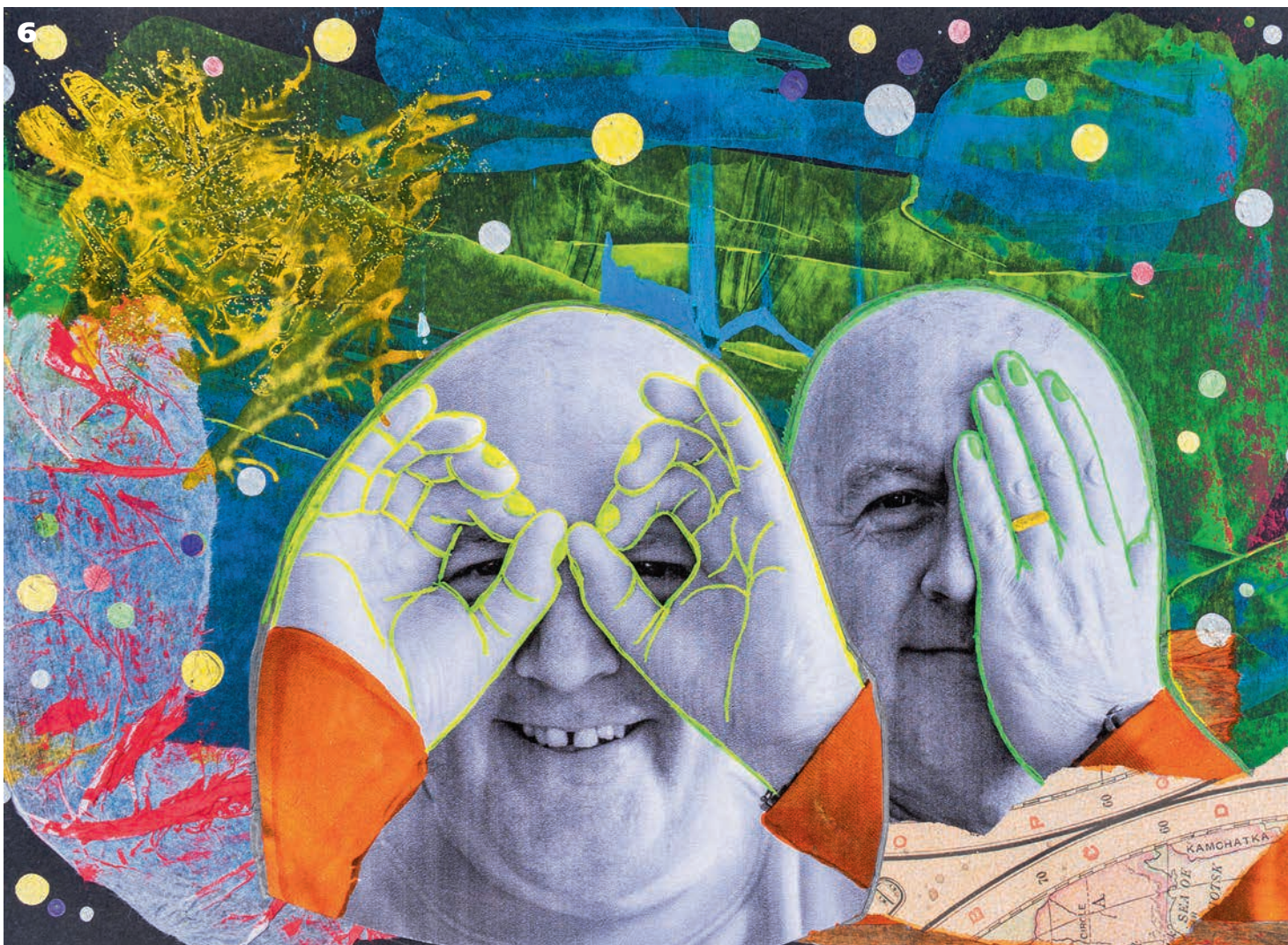
Membership: Open to autistic individuals and neurodivergent creatives of all experience levels and their families and carers.

Contact: awesomeautistics@mail.com

Website: We do not currently have a website, but we will launch one soon.

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/544073571911004/>





Join the Club

This friendly club has regular outings as well as fascinating speakers who give practical tips

When was the club founded?

Awesome Autistics was founded in 2024 as part of photographer Richard Tippet's MA Photography project exploring autism, identity, and photography as a therapeutic and creative tool. What began as an academic project quickly evolved into a dedicated community group.

What does your club offer to new members?

The group offers a welcoming, autism-friendly environment where members can explore photography at their own pace without judgment or pressure. Sessions are designed to be supportive, inclusive, and flexible, helping members build confidence, creativity, social connection, and self-expression. The group welcomes all experience levels, from complete beginners using smartphones to experienced photographers.

We have mirrorless cameras for

members to borrow, or they are welcome to use their own cameras or phones. We are supported by a small team of volunteers who are DBS cleared and have experience supporting autistic individuals.

Describe a typical club meeting

Meetings are relaxed and adapted to members' individual needs. Activities may include photography walks, portrait sessions, editing support, creative projects, and discussions around images.

The group also combines photography with art and assisted portraiture in collaboration with artist Katerina Manousaki. A strong emphasis is placed on well-being, sensory awareness, and enjoying the creative process.

Do you invite guest speakers?

Yes, we have guest speakers to talk about photography and about



➤ autism. The group hopes to continue developing links with photographers, artists, autism advocates, and community organisations to inspire members and create further opportunities for learning and exhibitions.

Do members compete in regional or national competitions?

The focus of the group is less on competition and more on creativity, inclusion, confidence-building, and exhibiting work publicly. Members are encouraged to develop their own style and share their perspectives through exhibitions and collaborative projects.

How many members do you have?

Currently, we have 56 members in our Facebook group, of whom about 20 attend outings and meetings. The group is continuing to grow and includes autistic individuals of different ages, abilities, and photographic experience levels.

Are any residential trips or outings planned?

The group regularly organises photography outings and exhibitions, including visits to heritage sites, railways, landscapes, and local community events and in 2025 we covered the opening of a new barbershop in Wells, Broad Street Barbers. Members have photographed both Wells Cathedral and The Bishop's Palace in Wells, with exhibitions connected to both venues. The group also has an upcoming exhibition at the East Somerset Railway following a photographic trip there.

Our next visit is to Kilver Court Gardens in Shepton Mallet.

Do you have any funny stories about the club?

One of the funniest things about the group is how differently everyone sees the world through a camera. On one outing, several members stood in the same spot at the same time, yet one photographed a tiny detail in tree bark, another focused on reflections in puddles, while someone else became completely fascinated by a drain cover! It perfectly summed up the spirit of Awesome Autistics — there's no "right" way to see creatively.

We've also had moments where members became so focused on getting the perfect shot that the rest of the group disappeared ahead without them noticing, only for them to proudly return five minutes later with an amazing image everyone else had completely missed

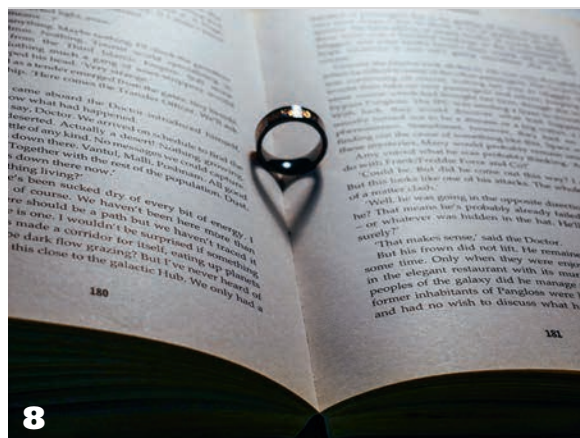
What are the club's future goals?

The group hopes to continue expanding opportunities for autistic photographers through exhibitions, workshops, collaborations, and community projects. A major milestone was the group's first public exhibition at The Bishop's Palace in Wells, helping showcase neurodivergent creativity to a wider audience.

Special thanks go to to Richard Tippett for putting together our club profile, plus Katerina Manousaki, Neil Wolstenholme and Roxy Edwards who give their time and experience for free at every meeting.



7



8



9



10

7 Train of Thought by Sam Maxis

8 Doctor Who by PG

9 Stained Glass Beast by Tomos Wray

10 John Harris by James Harris

30th

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Your Favourite Photographers... EVER!

Who are the greatest photographers of all time? We've previously asked industry experts, but you've now had your say! **Jessica Miller** collates the results from an Amateur Photographer community vote.

At the end of last year, we asked a panel of 20 esteemed photographers, curators and photography professionals to nominate their choices for the greatest photographer of all time.

The results were varied, of course, and some might say surprising. Diane Arbus took the top spot and our "Greatest Photographer Ever" title from this vote, closely followed by William Eggleston, Daido Moriyama, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Martin Parr, Nan Goldin, Gordon Parks, André Kertész, Robert Frank and Lee Miller.

Every photography lover has an opinion on this, so following on from the success of Peter Dench's feature, and the flurry of correspondence we had in response, we asked the Amateur Photographer community who their favourite photographers are.

We asked you to pick up to 10 of your favourite photographers. and over 300 photographers received votes and nominations! So, without further ado, in reverse order, here's who you have voted as your greatest photographers ever...

12th place Steve McCurry

National Geographic legend Steve McCurry has been one of the most popular figures in contemporary photography for more than five decades. His body of work spans conflicts, vanishing cultures, ancient traditions, and contemporary culture alike - yet always retains the human element. His iconic Afghan Girl portrait which graced the cover of National Geographic was named as one of the most recognisable images ever taken.

11th place Richard Avedon

Avedon was a fashion, reportage and portrait photographer, primarily for Harper's Bazaar before the likes of Vogue and The New Yorker - where his fashion and portrait photographs redesigned their aesthetic. He photographed models and fashions on the streets, in nightclubs, at the circus, on the beach and at other uncommon locations which became the hallmark of his work.

10th place Bill Brandt

Brandt was a prominent British photographer known for his distinctive nudes, with artistic influence in the genres of portraiture and landscape through his influential documentation of 20th Century British life.

9th place Elliott Erwitt

Elliott Erwitt was an enigmatic figure who is often fondly remembered for his quirky photographs of dogs, but also a highly accomplished portrait photographer who shot some of the biggest names of the 20th century: Marilyn Monroe and Che Guevara, along with a moving and memorable portrait of Jackie Kennedy at the funeral of John F. Kennedy in 1963.

He was drawn to ordinary moments that transcend time and circumstance - a good example being his iconic image of a couple kissing, captured in a car's rear view mirror - as well as the surreal and humorous.

8th place Joel Meyerowitz

An early advocate of colour photography, Joel Meyerowitz was instrumental in bringing this method to widespread recognition and use and is credited for expanding its global appreciation. His work since the early 1960s has made

Left: Photographer Ansel Adams stands on a bluff above the Pacific Ocean. He adjusts the settings on his camera.

him a leading figure in the history of 20th century photography and an integral part of the American photographic canon.

The subjects of his photographs are wide-ranging, from his iconic depictions of the bustle of city life, to the vast seascapes of Cape Cod, and his pivotal series documenting all the work inside Ground Zero in the aftermath of 9/11.

7th place Martin Parr

Named one of the greatest photographers in our original feature, Martin Parr is the most well-known and talented of contemporary British documentary photographers. His influence and legacy are immense. His work captured life in Britain, through playful, humorous, colourful images that often-sparked debate.

He was Magnum president, a collector extraordinaire, founder of the Martin Parr Foundation and creator of photobooks that reshaped whole genres, and a great supporter of new photographers.

6th place Lee Miller

Surrealist photographer, Vogue model and WWII correspondent, Lee Miller is one of the most fascinating figures of 20th century photography. Her

Surrealist images along with her portraits and extraordinary World War II photographs have earned her a key place in the history of art. You voted for her because you appreciated her eye and visual interpretation of the world across multiple genres.

You said: "At the moment, I would have to say Lee Miller. I discovered her after watching the film Lee."

"Her photographs have a strong voice especially with the WWII images."

"The weight of what she saw can be felt through her photographs."

5th place Vivian Maier

The work of Vivian Maier first came to widespread public attention in 2009, just a few months after her death. She worked as a nanny and care-giver whilst also venturing into street photography taking photos over five decades in Chicago and New York.

You said: "For Vivian Maier, I guess it's the story as much as the photography. To think she took all those photos and never had them developed is something I can't even comprehend. Especially given I like to share photos within days of taking them!"

"Vivian Maier just stands out amongst the rest - raw unedited, snapshots of what she saw every day, and just capturing that decisive moment."

Grand Teton and Snake River, Wyoming, 1941.





4th place **Henri Cartier-Bresson**

Taking fourth place, is master of the 'decisive moment' himself, Cartier-Bresson. From working as a war correspondent during World War II to becoming the pioneer of street photography and photojournalism, his candid images coined the term that describes the fleeting alignment of action, composition and emotional elements that demand a shutter click for a photograph.

You said: "HCB is the grandfather of documentary photography, and created beautiful compositions"

3rd place **Sebastião Salgado**

Always working in black and white, Salgado was known for his large scale and long term projects highlighting the plight of threatened cultures, environments and people. He approached his subjects with a deep humanity that was reflected in images that conveyed a powerful connection with the viewer.

You said: "Master of documentary/"



Left: Lee Miller
Self portrait with
headband, New
York, USA, c1932

storytelling photography.”
“Consistently breath-taking photos.”
“The quality and power of his work is such that it has brought me to tears.”
“Salgado was a great humanitarian, his empathy shines through in all his work.”
“Nobody has done more than Salgado to champion the world’s underdogs.”

Runner-up **Don McCullin**

Over seven decades, McCullin is one of Britain’s most recognised photojournalists, with harrowing images covering war, famine, disasters and urban conflict. His career also spans many other genres including landscapes and portraits.

You love him because of his: “Use of light and high contrast B&W”

“Outstanding and thought-provoking photography over several genres.”
“Consistent, exceptional photographer of the British landscape.”

Winner **Ansel Adams**

Without a doubt the most favoured photographer by our community is Ansel Adams. Even before we put out our survey we had plenty of messages from you asking: “Where’s Ansel?!”. Ansel Adams is celebrated for his black and white landscapes of the American West, especially Yosemite, as well as his technical mastery. His photographic practice was intertwined with his life-long advocacy for environmental conservation, creating striking images with depth and clarity.

Adams was a key figure in photography being recognised as a fine art, with the most famous photographs from his monumental body of work including ‘Monolith, The Face of Half Dome, Yosemite Valley’ and ‘Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico’.

You said: “He is without doubt one of the most influential photographers of the 20th century.”

“Made landscape photography an art.”
“Inspiring, monumental body of work. a great eye for an image”

“He can find the greatest beauty in the simplest of light and settings.”

“Iconic!”



Do you agree with the public vote? Let us know by emailing ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk or commenting on social media.



Left: New York
1965, Joel
Meyerowitz,
framed print at
Photo London
2026

Right: AP Editor
Nigel Atherton
interviews
Sebastiao Salgado

Other honourable mentions include...

Annie Leibovitz, David Bailey, Robert Frank, Saul Leiter, Fan Ho, Daido Moriyama, Joe Cornish, Robert Capa, and Tish Murtha.

You said: “For Tish Murtha, it’s the Documentary Photography which I find captivating. I didn’t live in the era she captured, but I still feel her photography captures what I see as the mood of the period so well.”

“All [Don Mccullin, Jim Mortram, Brian David Stevens] inspire me with their work and have clear, distinct, unique voices.”

“To me they represent many facets of photography. Truth, poignancy, intimacy a peek into the unseen and the beauty of every day life.”

“W Eugene Smith is arguably the best photo essay creator ever.”

“Salgado, Winogrand, Erwit, Haas, Maier. Far too many brilliant photographers with certain images I wish I had taken.”

“So many fantastic image makers over the years.. its hard to choose. Herb Ritts was a huge inspiration for me.”

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Amateur Photographer of the Year

Here are the top ten images uploaded to Photocrowd from Round One, Street, with comments by the AP team and our guest judge.

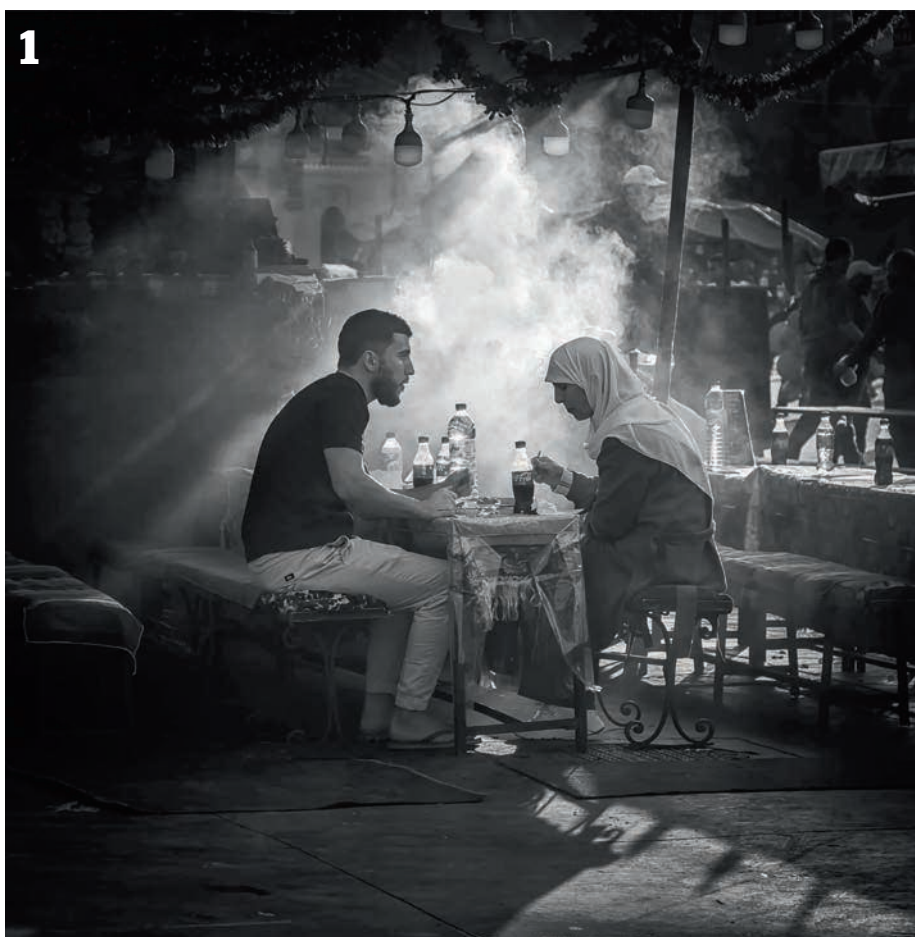
Round One Street

Street photography is one of the most accessible yet challenging genres. Its ingredients can be found everywhere and in the everyday on street corners, in cafés and bars, at bus stops, railway stations and shopping malls. The challenge is to anticipate and capture moments before they disappear. Observation, patience and timing combine to produce successful images of a tender human interaction, witty encounter or striking arrangement of colour and shape. This round's top ten suggests there is no single formula for success, which is what makes it so compelling. They may be very different images but they are united in the photographers' skill to see beyond the ordinary and transform everyday scenes into something memorable and magical.

1 Susan Hall Street Food 100pts

Canon EOS R5, 24-105mm at 88mm, 1/640sec, f/6.3, ISO 100

This image of a couple enjoying a meal in the Jemaa el-Fnaa square and market quarter of Marrakesh, Morocco, succeeds through its atmosphere and intimacy. The judges applauded the connection between the two figures, whose isolation within a pool of swirling smoke creates a distinctly cinematic quality. It is a complex environment, but Susan has maintained her composure and taken control of the composition. The eye settles naturally on the table, the diagonal shadows in the foreground add depth and guidance. The monochrome treatment suits the mood, emphasising contrast and texture without overdoing it. A beautifully observed and richly detailed moment that rewards repeated viewing.





2 David Travis

Let me help you with that 90pts

OLYMPUS E-M5 MarkII, 17mm, 1/125sec, f/4, ISO 200

The clever interplay of scale in David's image captivated the judges. The visual conversation between artwork and reality is effective, encouraging the viewer has to look closer beyond the dominating mural. David's awareness and positioning are excellent on as the two figures align transforming what could be an ok photograph into an exceptional one. The choice of black and white enhances the graphic qualities, shapes and textures that colour may have distracted from. The wry sense of humour emerges gently. Street photography often relies on a split-second gesture or visual joke, but this one has earned impact through careful patience and observation. A well-spotted scene combined with imaginative storytelling.



3 Richard Coulstock

Trunk Call 80pts

Leica M (Typ 240), Summilux-M 1:1.4/35 ASPH, 1/350sec, f/9.5, ISO 2000



Guest judge Dawn Eagleton says:

One of my favourite entries from this year's competition, this clever photograph immediately captures attention through its strong symmetry and the visual illusion of a seemingly headless man. Its precise composition and humorous observation demonstrate a photographer with a keen eye for detail. With closer inspection, the image continues to reward the viewer. A serendipitous colour palette of red, white, blue and black creates a strong sense of visual cohesion. The gentleman's clothing appears remarkably coordinated with his surroundings, even down to the red carrier bag he is holding. Repeated horizontal and vertical lines provide structure and rhythm, naturally guiding the viewer through the frame while reinforcing its sense of order and balance. His patterned shirt echoes these graphic elements, further enhancing the visual unity of the image. This photograph is a standout success, brilliantly combining humour, striking graphic impact, harmonious colour, and exceptional observational skill. It is both technically accomplished and playfully inventive, making it particularly memorable.



4 David Davies

Arms Length 70pts

Panasonic DMC-LX100, 28.2mm, 1/320sec, f/5.6, ISO 200

The playful interaction of mannequin and man tickled the judges. David recognised the potential for a shot and showed admirable patience, waiting for around 30 minutes for the elements to align perfectly. The absence of colour helps simplify the composition, allowing the gesture, body language and form to punch through. The architectural framing, reflections and urban atmosphere strengthen the image. Overall, David's image raises a sophisticated smile. A fine example of how everyday encounters can combine to make a memorable street photo.

5 Yasser Alaa Mobarak Camel Seller 60pts

NIKON Z 5, 24-70mm at 64mm, 1/80sec, f/4, ISO 2000

This image is drenched in atmosphere. The judges were immediately drawn into its evocative world. Layers of activity gradually emerge from the haze. The camel seller in traditional dress provides an anchor within the composition. The passing camel introduces an element of narrative intrigue. The beautifully muted colour reinforces the mood and unifies the frame's elements. It feels contemporary and timeless. The viewer is transported to an unfamiliar environment and encouraged to linger. There's a rich sense of place, yet Yasser's presence remains unobtrusive. A perfect example of how atmosphere can be just as important as action in a compelling street photograph.



6 Justine Gordon Two worlds collide 50pts

LEICA Q3 43, 43mm, 1/1000sec, f/4, ISO 800

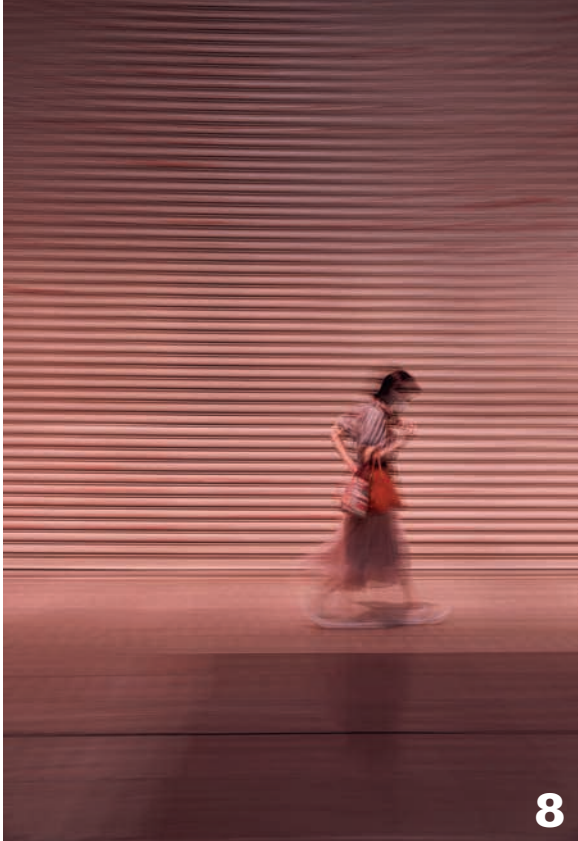
This carefully composed image and subtle storytelling by Justine impressed the judges. The surrounding architecture and street props creates a stage for the two protagonists. The warm tones of the building contrast beautifully with the vivid reds that punctuate the frame. A controlled use of negative space and geometric lines reinforces the feeling of isolation. It's a deceptively simple image that has required considerable thought and organisation. Every element plays a role. The photograph invites questions about what is happening without offering an obvious answer. As Justine suggests, 'The street famous for fine tailoring reveals the stark contrasts stitched into London life.'

7 Pete Baker Alone Together 45pts

Canon EOS 80D, 30mm, 1/15sec, f/8, ISO 400

Pete brings together architecture and human presence in this dramatic black and white photograph. The judges particularly appreciated the symmetry created by the arches. Beneath this strong structural framework, Pete has observed a collection of scattered figures united within the same space yet absorbed in their own activities and thoughts. There is a pleasing rhythm to the composition that conveys a calm sense of urban life. What could have been a simple study of architecture is elevated by careful timing into a photograph with genuine human interest.





8

8 Jon Morris Delicate fast walk of a Japanese Lady 40pts

Not supplied

The embrace of movement and abstraction in Jon's image captivated the judges. The decision not to freeze a decisive moment brings a dreamlike creativity to the street scene. The soft pink tones and blurred figure create an image that prioritises mood over straightforward documentation. The composition demonstrates confidence, reducing the scene to its essential elements. The colour palette becomes almost painterly, helping unify the frame and reinforce the image's gentle quality. An atmospheric and contemporary street photograph that engages on an emotional level while remaining visually striking.

9 Janet Miles An appropriate hat 35pts

OM-1 Mark II, 8-25mm at 16mm, f/4, 1/200sec, ISO 2500

The strong graphic quality of this carefully constructed photograph was appreciated by the judges. Colour, geometry and timing have combined to command attention. Janet has cleverly positioned the figure within the scene, providing both scale and a point of reference. With so many vertical and horizontal lines, the composition could easily have become chaotic. Instead, Janet has successfully balanced order and spontaneity. The primary colours give the eyes a welcome jiggle. It is a striking example how strong design can transform an everyday urban setting.



9

10 Neil Johansson Both 30pts

Canon PowerShot G5 X Mark II, at 12.74mm, 1/160sec, f/5, ISO 500

The judges enjoyed the simplicity and gentle wit of Neil's image. It captures a detail that many would walk past. The elements combine to create an intriguing visual puzzle, encouraging the viewer to take a closer look. Selecting a small section of the street, Neil has distilled the photo to its bare essentials. Shape, texture and timing become the subject. The monochrome treatment enhances the graphic quality of the reflection and unifies the water, paint and tarmac. This is a clever example of how an observant eye can uncover unexpected moments hidden in plain sight.



10

Winning kit from PARK Cameras

What gear did our top ten photographers use?



2nd placed David Travis trusted his Olympus OM-D E-M5 Mark II on the street. Fantastic for shooting creative, high quality photos and sophisticated videos. You can create 40-megapixel images with breathtaking levels of detail. This is helped by the powerful 5-axis image stabilisation technology, which eliminates camera-shake in all five planes of movement, achieving the equivalent of 5 EV steps faster shutter speed. This is built into the camera body itself, so will work when attaching any lens. Used models are available from Park Cameras for around £354.



5th placed Yasser Alaa Mobarak used a Nikon Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S Zoom Lens. Designed for Z Mount Nikon mirrorless, the Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S is a bright aperture standard zoom workhorse lens suitable for a variety of styles with its optical design and two stepping motors. Available from Park Cameras for £1,529.



In 9th place, Janet Miles used an OM-System M.Zuiko Digital ED 8-25mm f/4 PRO Lens. A versatile and compact, lightweight, portable lens extending ultra wide to standard zoom lens for MFT cameras with an equivalent range of 16-50mm (full-frame) available for £949.

To see the full range, visit
www.parkcameras.com

BEST OF THE CLUBS

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



Andrew Knight, Plymouth Camera Club Between Light and Shadows

SONY ILCE-7M5, 17-28mm at 17mm, 1/160sec, f/5, ISO4000

The swirling patterns and carefully placed figures combine to give this monochrome image both intrigue and visual impact.



John Ellacott, Launceston Camera Club No Cars Today

OM Digital Solutions OM-1MarkII, 12-40mm at 13mm, 1/320sec, f/9, ISO100

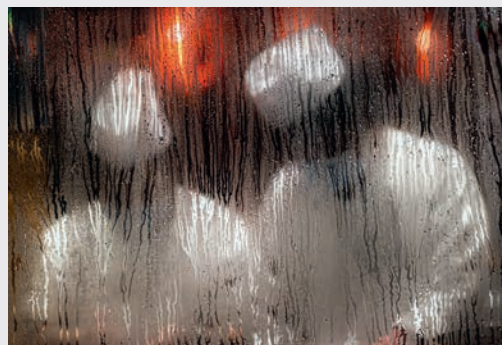
Pictures within pictures create a richly layered composition, with so much going on yet a strong sense of joy and harmony throughout.



Paul Mee, Loughton Camera Club In the Crowd

FUJIFILM X-Pro1, 35mm, 1/125sec, f/2.8, ISO200

Paul has captured the tension of a face emerging from the crowd at York Christmas Market.



Graeme Youngson, Visions Photo Club Chefs in Chinatown

FUJIFILM X-Pro3, 50mm, 1/250sec, f/1, ISO400

The image conveys a palpable sense of heat and exertion. The darkened faces add weight and drama to the scene.



Brian Dicks, Stafford Photographic Society Man's Best Friends

Canon EOS 7D, 18-270mm at 39mm, 1/400sec, f/4.5, ISO100

Great texture and drama are captured by Brian. The brightly coloured dog lead adds a welcome visual lift to the image.

YOUNG APOY WINNERS

1 Henry Salter Lost in thought 100pts

SONY DSC-RX100M7, ISO 400

The judges were drawn to this beautifully observed scene and its cinematic quality. The solitary figure is perfectly framed within a composition of strong lines, patterns and crisp light. The subject's clothing complements the décor, creating a pleasing sense of visual harmony. A strong atmosphere permeates the image, drawing the viewer into the scene. Simple yet thoughtful, the photograph demonstrates an excellent awareness of timing, light and composition.



2 Neel Anil The March and the Mimics 90pts

SONY ILCE-6600, E 18-135mm F3.5-5.6 OSS at 135mm, 1/250sec, f/5.6, ISO 125

Neel was rewarded for recognising this unexpected visual relationship. The judges admired the contrast between the disciplined formation of the marching guards and the relaxed group seated on the bench. The two young children wear matching outfits of their own, mirroring the guards in a playful and amusing way. This is an image that cannot fail to raise a smile, with every element contributing to the story. Careful framing and excellent timing have combined to create a photograph to be proud of.

3 Ankit Ghosh Her 80pts

FUJIFILM X-T30, XF18-55mmF2.8-4 R LM OIS at 18mm, 1/5000sec, f/8, ISO 6400

This dramatic monochrome image caught the judges' attention through its effective use of silhouette, atmosphere and light. Clouds of smoke create a compelling sense of mystery, with just enough detail visible to provide context. The judges admired Ankit's confidence in getting close, shooting from a low angle and fully embracing the contrast. A bold and imaginative photograph that demonstrates a strong understanding of the expressive possibilities of monochrome photography.



BEST OF THE REST

APOY judges choose their favourite images that didn't make the top ten of our Street category

Peter Dench, APOY project manager, chooses **Running girl by Mike Morton, Uckfield**

NIKON D90, 24mm, 1/1600sec, f/7.1, ISO 400

Peter Says: This appears to be a simple scene of four figures occupying a street corner. None acknowledge one another yet they create a visual choreography that works. It reminded me of a Tony Ray-Jones photograph in the way it shares his fascination with the peculiar theatre of the English seaside. There's a tension in the arrangement, an image of near connections - the distracted man on his phone, the woman hauling her FREE BIBLE COURSE trolley, the child mid step and women in the cafe. Brickwork, paving stones, window frames, road markings and street and shop signs set the stage for the human performance. It's an ambiguous image where nothing is happening but it feels poised on the edge of something significant. And what is in that rucksack!



Geoff Harris, deputy editor, chooses **Pecking Order by John Quinn, Motherwell**

LEICA Q3 MONO, 28mm, 1/500sec, f/11, ISO 2000

Geoff says: While every street image is different – which is the beauty of street photography – we do tend to see broadly similar approaches being followed. 'Amusing juxtapositions' for want of a better phrase, are particular popular, a style popularised by celebrated street photographer Nils Jorgensen. 'Pecking Order' is a good example of this. The capture is perfectly timed, reminding us that patience pays off when it comes to street shooting; it also illustrates the importance of finding the right spot. The pedestrian is nicely placed in the frame, as are her hands. I'm not sure where 'Downside Lane' is, but you get a strong sense of vibrant community without it distracting from the subject. Yes, there is clutter in the background but the photographer was right not to crop in too much.

Nigel Atherton, editor, chooses **Face off by Anuj Jain, Chandigarh**

NIKON Z 8, 180-600mm at 400mm, 1/1600sec, f/8, ISO 1800

Nigel says: This is a perfectly timed action shot by Anuj, which he captured on the Streets of Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh, India. He tells us that the monkey was actually the aggressor in this encounter, chasing and biting the dog's hind leg. The dog reacted with such ferocity that in the moment Anuj pressed the shutter his entire body was off the ground, his twisted torso conveying the force of his response. The look of terror on the monkey's face is pretty much what mine would be if I was in his shoes, and the placement of his arms mirrors the dog's hind legs. Anuj's photo superbly conveys the drama of the moment. If I was to make one small criticism it would be that I think it is cropped a little too tightly. It would have been nice to have shown a bit more of the surrounding environment and given the action a little more space to breathe.

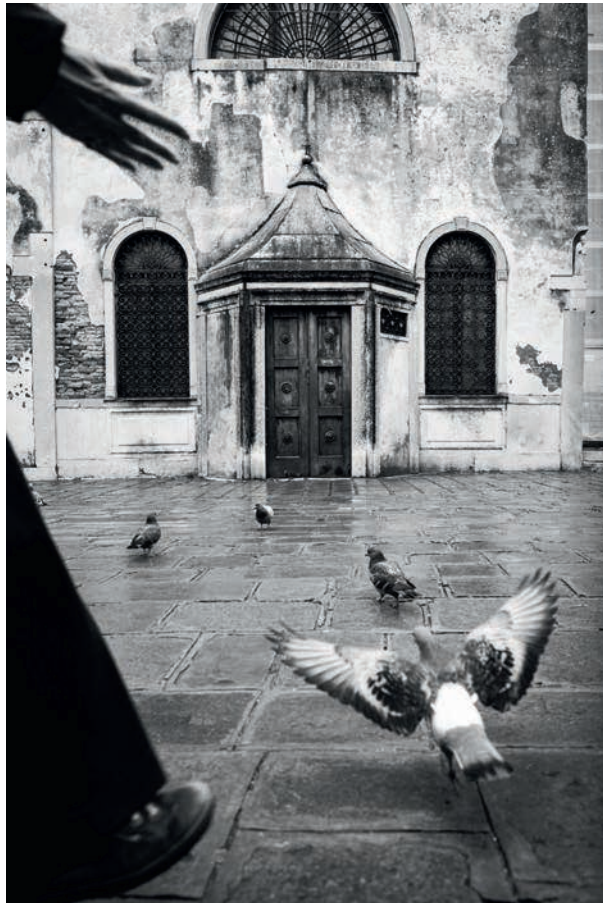


Jessica Miller, deputy online editor, chooses **Old Friends in Corfu Old Town** by George Hawthorn, Hollywood

FUJIFILM X-E3, 35mm, 1/1000sec, f/5, ISO200

Jessica says: Wholesome, heartwarming, fun... just a few of the words I'd use to describe this moment between three friends chatting in the street of old town Corfu.

One of the factors that makes a good photo for me is the emotion it evokes. Does it make you remember something or make you laugh. I picked this photo because it reminds me of a trip out with my two best friends. I'm sure that the three of us have already had moments like this where we paused on the street mid-story. I'm also sure each of us has pulled faces like the lady on the left at some point. Whether it's as one of disbelief, disgust, satisfaction, awe, concentration, that's open to interpretation. I look at this photo and see the three of us in the future, still walking to the shops, going out for lunch, gossiping. It brings a smile to my face. I'd love to know what these ladies are talking about.



Amy Davies, features editor, chooses **Feed the Birds** by Mandy Davies, Goffs Oak

LEICA Q3, 28mm, 1/320sec, f/4, ISO 400

Amy says: I've long had a penchant for pigeons in street photography. They're readily available, pretty tame and are an instant signifier that we're in somewhere urban.

I love the simplicity of this scene, it's an everyday moment, but there's lots going on to take in. From the crumbling façade of the building in the background to the triangle of leg in the foreground. Just a snippet of a person interacting with a blurred pigeon and we can invent all manner of our own stories.

Converting to black and white is a classic choice for street photography, and one which works well here. Without the colours of the clothing might be a distraction, or some details of the building might overtake.

The 2026 leaderboards

After months of planning, preparation and image-making, the first points of APOY 2026 are on the board. It is of course far too early to predict who will be lifting the trophies at the end of the year, but Round One offers the first glimpse of potential contenders. With nine rounds still to come, there is everything to play for, however.

The same applies to Young APOY, where a talented group of emerging photographers have already begun to make their mark.

Meanwhile Leek Photographic Club have made a strong start. Can they keep up the momentum?

APOY

1	Susan Hall	100
2	David Travis	90
3	Richard Coulstock	80
4	David Davies	70
5	Yasser Alaa Mobarak	60
6	Justine Gordon	50
7	Peter Baker	45
8	Jon Morris	40
9	Janet Miles	35
10	Neil Johansson	30

YOUNG APOY

1	Henry Salter	100
2	Neel Anil	90
3	Ankit Ghosh	80
4	Zakaria Yahia	70
5	Mac Motz	60
6	Ghamza Cader	50
7	Charlie Kirby	35

CAMERA CLUBS

1	Leek Photographic Club	90
2	Royston Photographic Society	45
3	Launceston Camera Club	40
4=	Kempsey Camera Club	20
4=	Stafford Photographic Society	20
4=	Visions Photography Club	20

To see more images from APOY Round One and Young APOY, visit amateurphotographer.com/APOY



At a glance

£4500 (body only)

- 66.8MP stacked-CMOS sensor
- ISO 100-32,000 (standard)
- Up to 30fps shooting
- 8K 30p, 4K 120p video
- 9.44m-dot, 0.9x EVF
- 3-in, 2.1m-dot 4-way LCD

Sony Alpha A7R VI

Sony's latest high-resolution full-frame camera gains a serious bump in speed. **Andy Westlake** takes a detailed look at what it has to offer

For and against

- ++ Superb raw image quality
- ++ Highest resolution yet from a full-frame camera
- ++ Super-fast autofocus and continuous shooting
- ++ Class-leading, blackout-free viewfinder and extremely versatile screen articulation
- ++ Much-improved handgrip makes the camera noticeably more comfortable to use
- No plug-in cable release option
- Autofocus seems to be a little less reliable with bright white subjects
- Not compatible with existing batteries, chargers or vertical grips

Data file

Sensor	66.8MP CMOS, 35.9 x 24mm
Output size	9984 x 6656
Focal length mag	1x
Lens mount	Sony E
Shutter speeds	30-1/8000sec
Sensitivity	ISO 100-32,000 (standard), ISO 50-102,400 (extended)
Exposure modes	PASM, Auto, 2x C, Star
Metering	Multi, centre, spot, average, highlight
Exposure comp	+/-5 EV in 0.3EV steps
Continuous shooting	30fps (electronic), 10fps (mechanical)
Screen	3.2in, 2.1m-dot, 4-axis articulated
Viewfinder	9.44m-dot, 0.9x magnification
AF points	759
Video	4K 120p, 8K 30p (1.2x crop)
External mic	3.5mm stereo, MI-shoe
Memory card	2x CFexpress A/UHS-II SD
Power	NP-SA100 Li-ion
Battery life	600 (EVF), 710 (LCD)
Dimensions	132.7 x 96.9 x 82.9 mm
Weight	713g inc battery and card

The A7R VI is Sony's latest high-resolution full-frame mirrorless camera, following on from the A7R V from 2022. Its headline feature is a brand-new 66.8MP stacked-CMOS sensor, which brings faster continuous shooting and generally improved performance. This immediately expands the 'R' line's capabilities from its current niche as a studio and landscape specialist, to being much more of an all-rounder. And there are plenty of other significant updates, too.

At £4500 body-only, the Sony A7R VI goes squarely up against a couple of other high-resolution, high-speed monsters, the Canon EOS R5 Mark II and Nikon Z8. Both these cameras have earned a reputation for being seriously heavy hitters that can handle almost any imaginable shooting

situation. On paper, the A7R VI looks like it should match them in almost all respects, while offering usefully higher resolution.

For existing Sony users, the A7R VI looks like a significant advance over the A7R V. At first glance, it also looks like a cheaper alternative to the pro-spec A1 II, with the same speed but even higher resolution. It all sounds like a dream come true, but are there any drawbacks?

Features

First and foremost, Sony has come up with the highest-resolution fully-stacked full-frame sensor yet. This brings a dramatic increase in continuous shooting speed, at up to 30 frames per second using the electronic shutter. What's more, the camera can now record 14-bit raw files





With its 66.8MP sensor, the A7R VI is capable of resolving huge levels of detail
 Sony A7R VI, Sony 24-70mm F2.8 II at 39mm,
 1/200sec at f/8, ISO 100

during burst shooting, rather than 12-bit. Potentially, this could bring greater scope for tonal manipulation in raw processing, but only if you can keep the ISO low. Pre Capture is available for unpredictable subjects, while Continuous Shooting Speed Boost allows you to temporarily switch up the burst rate at the press of a button.

Sony says the new sensor reads out quicker than before, which should mean reduced subject distortion due to rolling shutter - a real weakness of the A7R V. It also promises snappier autofocus, with the VI now being capable of 60 AF calculations per second. However, that's only half the speed of the A1 II.

In place of the reduced-resolution raw files that were available on the A7R V, you now get Compressed HQ raw, as seen

in last year's A7 V. This promises considerably smaller file sizes with no loss in image quality. The only slight catch is a reduced burst depth compared to using the Compressed raw option (which is still available if you need it). But even in Compressed HQ, Sony is promising a 60-frame buffer at 30fps and 130 frames at 10fps, which should be enough for most purposes.

Sony is also claiming an extra stop of dynamic range at ISO 100, at up to 16 stops. The sensitivity range remains the same, at ISO 100-32,000 as standard, and ISO 50-102,400 (extended).

Sony has used the same Bionz XR2 processor as in the A7 V, which means there's no longer any need for a separate chip for subject recognition. As before, the camera can recognise and

track focus on people, animals and vehicles. But it now gains an 'Auto' option, so you don't always have to specify the subject type in advance.

One major improvement comes with the viewfinder. While it has the same class-leading core spec as before - 9.44m-dot resolution and 0.9x magnification - Sony says it's three times brighter and covers the broader DCI-P3 colour space, rather than sRGB. This extra brightness also enables an HDR display option that activates automatically when needed. You also get blackout-free shooting with the electronic shutter.

Another significant change is the adoption of a new battery, the NP-SA100. Compared to the existing FZ100, it's just a few millimetres thicker, and yet it packs 25% more capacity, at 20.9Wh vs 16.4Wh. As a result,

the CIPA battery-life rating has jumped to 600 frames using the EVF, compared to 440 before. But the flipside is that if you have spare FZ100s and chargers, they won't work with the VI.

In-body image stabilisation (IBIS) is now rated for 8.5 stops of shake reduction at the centre of the image, and 7 stops at the periphery, compared to 8 stops before. The IBIS unit also supports a tripod-based pixel-shift multi-shot mode that offers 4-frame and 16-frame options, with the latter giving 270MP files. However, creating the high-res composite files requires using Sony's Imaging Edge Desktop software - they can't be produced in-camera.

Elsewhere, you get all the same updates and new features that Sony has introduced since the A7R V debuted back in





This shot was taken from a hot air balloon
Sony A7R VI, 24-105mm at 35mm
1/100sec at f/8, ISO 200

➤ 2022. This includes improved AI-based auto white balance, plus two additional “film like” creative looks labelled FL2 and FL3. Additional focus area sizes are available, including three user-definable options.

Video recording is available in 4K resolution at 60fps. You can also record in 8K and 30fps, but this brings a 1.2x crop. Other video updates include 4-channel 32-bit float audio recording, improved microphones, LUT support, and a tally lamp that’s visible from the front and top.

Smartphone connectivity is provided by built-in Bluetooth and Wi-Fi, enabling both file transfer and remote control of the camera. You can also connect the camera to your phone via its USB-C port, which should give a more stable connection.

Sony has, however, replaced the micro-USB ‘multi-connector’ that was on the A7R V with a second USB-C port. This still does the same things with regards to data transfer, battery charging and power supply, but it no longer functions as a cable release port. So if you have anything that plugs in here for such things as astrophotography or timelapse, it won’t work. Sony suggests you can use a Bluetooth remote instead.

Build and handling

While at first sight, the A7R VI looks pretty much the same as Sony’s other cameras, it does bring a few design updates. Most notably, it has a resculpted grip which certainly fits my hand much better, making the camera noticeably more comfortable to carry one-handed than the A7R V. It’s more rounded under your palm, has a more pronounced indentation for your second finger, and it gives just a little bit of extra space between your fingers and the lens. This probably doesn’t sound like much, but it makes holding and using the camera that bit more pleasant.

Despite this, the body dimensions have barely changed, at 132.7 x 96.9 x 82.9 mm and 713g including battery and card. However, with its reshaped body and new battery, the A7R VI requires a new vertical grip. Other accessories that are shaped to match the handgrip will no longer fit, either. Some L-brackets still work though; for example, my Sunwayfoto bracket that was originally designed for the A7R IV fits just fine.

In terms of control layout, the A7R VI retains all the same buttons and dials in all the same places. As a result, existing Sony users should feel immediately at

home. You get no fewer than four electronic dials on the body for changing exposure settings, while many E-mount lenses have aperture rings, too.

A conventional mode dial is placed on top, with a 3-way photo/video/S&Q (slow & quick) switch underneath.

On the back, there’s a large AF ON button and a joystick to operate the autofocus. Various other buttons arranged around the body provide direct access to the most important settings. The rear Fn button brings up an onscreen control panel for the next tier of functions, while swiping onto the screen from either edge brings up a set of onscreen touch buttons. Almost all the physical controls can be customised to suit your preferences, as can the Fn menu.

There’s a noteworthy change on the mode dial, though. In place of the third memory recall position, there’s now one labelled with a star symbol. From here, not only can you recall custom setups, but also access any of the conventional exposure modes via an onscreen touch button.

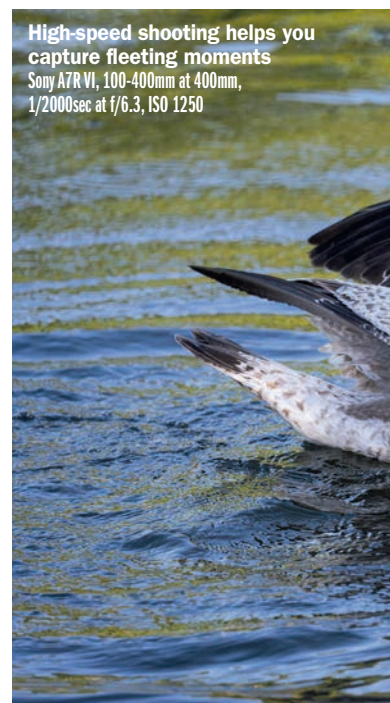
There are now also 10 custom setup memories each for photo, video and S&Q. Helpfully, these can be given meaningful names up to 9 characters long, such as

‘portrait’, ‘sports’ or ‘landscape’. But less helpfully, these names aren’t displayed when you set the mode dial to a custom recall position. Instead, they’re only visible when choosing between memories in the Star mode.

One welcome improvement is that the rear buttons can now be illuminated for working in low light, with a choice of three different brightness levels. But slightly perplexingly, this is activated by pressing a tiny button on top that isn’t itself

High-speed shooting helps you capture fleeting moments

Sony A7R VI, 100-400mm at 400mm,
1/2000sec at f/6.3, ISO 1250



illuminated. As a result, you're trying to light up buttons that you can't see in the dark, by pressing a small button that you can't see in the dark.

As for the menu system, it's essentially the same as other recent Sony cameras. It's vast, sprawling, and packed full of options that nobody is likely to want to change. I'd recommend building a Custom My Menu for anything you want to access quickly. Thankfully this is very easy to do – with a menu item selected, you simply press the Delete key to add it the My Menu.

Viewfinder and screen

Until now, I've always considered the 9.44m-dot, 0.9x viewfinder found on Sony's previous high-end models to be the best in its class. But now, the A7R VI is even better. It can display a wider range of colours, especially in the greens, which I found particularly noticeable with the fresh foliage of spring. And it can also hike up the brightness to be more visible when you're shooting on a sunny day. The biggest advantage here is that you can see what's going on in the darker areas of your image much more clearly than before.

One big improvement over the A7R V comes during continuous shooting. When using the electronic shutter, you now get a blackout-free display. This makes it much easier to keep track of

subjects that are moving.

There are also some welcome improvements to the information displays. As on the A7 V, you can now show the histogram and electronic level at the same time, rather than having to cycle through screens using the DISP button. It's also possible to show a smaller and more discreet, but no less accurate level in the information panel at the bottom of the finder, leaving the display itself uncluttered for composition.

The rear screen uses Sony's now familiar 4-way articulation. This combines an up/down tilting mechanism with side-hinged full articulation. As a result, the screen can be set facing any direction you please, which is really useful for shooting at high or low angles, or when working from a tripod. Overall, I have to say that this is the best viewing experience you'll get on any camera on the market today.

Autofocus

As you'd expect from a modern Sony camera, the A7R VI has a highly sophisticated, and generally extremely capable AF system. Indeed with static subjects, there's very little to say. It'll focus pretty much instantly anywhere within the frame, and perfectly accurately, even with large-aperture lenses.

For moving subjects, you're normally best off using subject recognition.



Focal points

While it looks very much like its predecessor, the A7R VI comes with some significant updates

Battery

The new, higher capacity SA100 battery promises 600 shots per charge, with a USB-C dual charger coming in the box. However, the existing FZ100 is no longer compatible.

Remote

The micro-USB multi-connector has been removed, so plug-in remote releases can't be used. Sony recommends using a Bluetooth remote release instead.

Storage

As before there are two card slots, both of which can accept either UHS-II SD or CFexpress Type A cards.



Connectors

You get 3.5mm stereo microphone and headphone sockets, plus full-size HDMI and PC flash sync ports. There are also two USB-C ports: one USB 3.2 Gen 2 for super-fast data transfer, and one USB 2.0 for power.

MI Shoe

Sony's multi-interface shoe accepts both flash units, and Sony's own on-camera microphones without needing an additional cable.

Third-party lenses

Lenses from Sigma, Tamron, Zeiss should all work with no issues. But those from other makers, including Laowa, Samyang and Viltrox, may well require firmware updates.



➤ Here, the camera can keep track of people, animals, and vehicles. An Auto subject detection option is available, but I find it takes just a little bit longer to find and lock onto subjects. So you're better off specifying your subject type in advance whenever possible.

I tested the A7R VI's autofocus primarily using my trusty Sigma 100-400mm F5-6.3 D DN OS zoom. I photographed wildlife and motorsports, and was generally very impressed with the camera's capabilities. It'll pick up subjects when they are small and distant within the frame, and track focus on them extremely reliably. It certainly feels a bit snappier than the A7R V, which is already very good. But it doesn't quite have the same near-magical subject acquisition speed and tracking as the A1 II and A9 III.

I have noticed one strange quirk, though. In my experience, the camera struggles to acquire and track focus as quickly and effectively on subjects that are bright white. This was particularly noticeable shooting motor races in which all the drivers used the same type of car. While the A7R VI focused perfectly with most of the cars, it usually took a few more shots to acquire focus on white ones, and then it was less good at keeping them sharp.

To be absolutely clear, I'm not saying the A7R VI can't focus on white subjects at all. Just that the hit-rate of in-focus shots drops noticeably.

Performance

In use, the A7R VI is exactly the kind of super-fast, slick performer that you'd expect at this price. Flick the power switch, and it'll be ready to shoot by the time you've lifted the viewfinder to your eye. The mechanical shutter fires with a relatively quiet and unobtrusive snick, and the camera can be completely silent in electronic shutter mode if you disable the fake shutter sound. Personally, though, I find it can provide useful audible feedback when you're shooting.

Battery life is simply huge, thanks to the new NP-SA100. Indeed while Sony provided me with a spare battery for my review, I never once came close to needing it. That included sessions with lots of high-speed bursts; on one day I shot well over 1100 frames, and the battery still indicated it was half-full at the end. Of course, I suspect most users will want to acquire a spare, just to be on the safe side. But even if they're in short supply initially, I wouldn't let that put you off buying the camera.

On the subject of burst shooting, the A7R VI now fits very much into the category of 'more than good enough for almost any conceivable purpose'. At 30fps it's as fast as any of its high-resolution peers, and in my tests it could maintain this speed for 70 frames shooting Compressed HQ raw + JPEG. Switch the speed down to 10fps, and it'll keep going for 110 frames using a CFexpress Type A card.

There's also not that much of a penalty for using a high-speed UHS-II SD card instead. I got 90 frames in a 10fps burst before the camera started to stutter. In my real-world testing, I never came close to needing to shoot for so fast or so long, and I suspect the same will be true of all but the most demanding of users. And they should probably be buying the A1 II or A9 III instead.

It's also worth pointing out that the A7R VI performs superbly for sports and wildlife photography in APS-C crop mode too, giving 28MP images. One big advantage here is that you get smaller files, which means less stress on your card space during burst shooting.

One quirk rears its head when you use the Continuous Shooting Speed Boost function, though. It works fine when you're using the electronic shutter, but if you



start in mechanical shutter mode, it can't change over to the electronic shutter mid-burst. Instead, you have to temporarily lift your finger off the shutter button and restart.

In-body image stabilisation works very effectively in helping to keep your photos sharp when shooting hand-held. This doesn't just mean at slow shutter speeds, either; it helps keep your images sharp at speeds many photographers would probably consider 'safe', but which in reality are prone to pixel-level blur at such high resolution. Using the Sony FE 24-70mm F2.8 GM II, I was able to maintain useably sharp images at shutter speeds down to around a second, which is similar to the A7R V before it. This is a feature that personally I find invaluable.

Sony's metering works pretty reliably when left to its own devices. It can, however, be a little prone to overexposing when there are small, bright highlights in the scene, for example with dappled sunlight and shade. But it's easy enough to see this



Subject detection works extremely well
Sony A7R VI, 100-400mm at 120mm,
1/1000sec at f/5.6, ISO 200



This is a great sports camera in APS-C crop mode
 Sony A7R VI, 100-400mm at 400mm,
 1/8000sec at f/8.0, ISO 2500

in the viewfinder, and dial down the exposure to compensate when necessary.

I've been impressed by the improved auto white balance, though. I've found it gets things right more often than not, which certainly hasn't always been the case from Sony. It's also more likely to give pleasing results in tricky situations such as woodland, which gave me some nice shots of the last of this year's bluebells. It can still sometimes struggle indoors under artificial lighting, though.

Image quality

Examining raw files from the A7R VI reveals that its new 66.8MP stacked-CMOS sensor now takes the crown for the best full-frame image quality available. You get huge amounts of detail and vast dynamic range, particularly at low ISOs. The sensor also gives slightly cleaner results at the edges of its performance envelope. I might even stretch to using ISO 51,200 with AI denoising, whereas I'd generally draw the line at ISO 25,600 on the A7R V.

Likewise, when pulling out detail from the darkest areas of an image file, the A7R VI no longer displays the blotchy, low-frequency colour noise that can occasionally be visible in the A7R V's files. However, you have to delve really deep down into the shadows to see any difference – by which I mean pulling

them up by about five stops at ISO 100.

And this is the thing. While marginal improvements in resolution, dynamic range and high-ISO noise performance are visible if you go hunting for them, they'll have little impact in the vast majority of real-world shooting situations. Personally, as an A7R V owner, they're nowhere near significant enough to justify upgrading. The real value of the new sensor comes from its faster readout speed.

On this note, shooting wildlife and motorsport revealed that the sensor no longer suffers from the obvious rolling shutter distortion that beset the A7R V. That's not to say that you never see hints of distortion, most obviously a little skewing of vertical lines when panning quickly. But it's not a particularly significant problem.

Just like the A7R V, though, it's clear that this is a camera that will mercilessly expose any weaknesses of either your lenses or your technique. If you're shooting landscapes and demand edge-to-edge fine detail right down to the pixel level, for example, you'll probably want to use top-notch optics, from the likes of the Sony GM and Sigma Art line-ups.

Equally, though, it's important to understand that you'll never get worse results from your existing lenses by using a higher-resolution sensor. Just that they may not make full use of the extra pixels.



Verdict



It shouldn't come as any great surprise to learn that the Sony A7R VI is a very impressive camera indeed. You no longer have to choose between getting the highest resolution full-frame camera, or super-fast shooting. Now you can have both.

There are also some real quality-of-life improvements over Sony's existing models. I suspect the brighter, more colourful viewfinder and larger, longer-lasting battery will grab most attention, but I found the much-improved handgrip to be equally important. I was quite happy carrying the camera around one-handed, which isn't something I'd ever say of the A7R V.

It's important to note, though, that the A7R VI isn't quite the same thing for demanding sports and action photography as the A1 II. Most obviously, the autofocus is noticeably less responsive. The A7R VI is still very good for this purpose, though, and I think most users will be more than happy.

I'm not sure there's enough here to tempt portrait or landscape photographers who currently use the A7R V or A7R IV into upgrading, though. There just isn't much meaningful improvement in terms of image quality over the older 60MP sensor, in terms of either detail, noise, or dynamic range. And I think Sony's decision to remove any cable release option will leave some users scratching their heads.

Despite its quirks, though, the A7R VI is yet another startlingly accomplished camera from Sony. It brings some real improvements over its predecessor, and is now much more of an all-rounder. If you want the very best image quality available from full-frame, coupled with a very healthy dose of speed, then just right now, this is it.



FEATURES	9/10
BUILD & HANDLING	9/10
METERING	8/10
AUTOFOCUS	9/10
AWB & COLOUR	8/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	9/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	10/10



At a glance

£1300 (Xiaomi 17 Ultra)

£1700 (Leica Leitzphone)

- 50MP 1-inch sensor, 23mm equiv. f/1.7 lens, dual pixel PDAF, OIS
- 200MP 1/1.4-inch sensor, 75-100mm equiv. f/2.4-3.0 lens, PDAF, OIS
- 50MP 1/2.76-inch sensor, 14mm equiv. f/2.2 lens, PDAF
- 50MP, 21mm equiv. f/2.2 selfie camera, AF
- 8K/30fps, 4K/120fps video
- 6.9-in screen, 2608 x 1200 pixels, 3500 nits peak brightness
- 6000 mAh battery
- Android, security and software updates until 2032
- Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Elite processor

Leica Leitzphone / Xiaomi 17 Ultra

Quite probably the best smartphone in the world for photographers has two variants – one with a famous red dot. **Amy Davies** tells us more.

We've long been fans of the Xiaomi "Ultra" phones. For the last

couple of generations, these have been the phones to beat in terms of photographic prowess. With a one-inch sensor and Leica-backed lenses, they offer a high-end shooting experience.

This year, there's two options. There's the standard Xiaomi 17 Ultra, but there's also the Leica Leitzphone. It's essentially the same but with some Leica twists, which I'll come on to shortly.

Of course we all know how desirable the Leica brand is, and this is one way to get hold of one without forking out many thousands of pounds. Don't get me wrong, it's still not cheap, and the Leica variant of the phone is more expensive than the standard Xiaomi. But to get

hold of one of those much-craved red dots, it's arguably a bargain.

Features

Almost all of the features of the Leitzphone are exactly the same as with the Xiaomi 17 Ultra.

In essence, that means you get a 1-inch main sensor. This is the largest you'll find on a current smartphone. It's the same size as the kind of sensor you'd find in something like a Sony RX100-series premium compact camera, arguably making these smartphones a true replacement for that kind of device.

The one-inch sensor is 50MP, and is fronted by a 23mm f/1.7 lens. It's joined by a 50MP 14mm f/2.2 ultrawide lens, plus an optical zoom lens which gives you 75-100mm equivalent with an f/2.4-3.0 aperture, rather than two telephoto lenses with

different focal lengths.

Unsurprisingly, all of these lenses are Leica lenses, and benefit from the usual high quality, such as multiple coatings.

Other useful photographic specifications include the ability to shoot 8K video (30fps), as well as 4K (up to 120fps), Dolby Vision and the ability to record in Log. If you're a videographer / content creator, there's plenty to like here. There's also a 50MP f/2.2 selfie camera, which benefits from autofocus, too.

Elsewhere, the 6.9-inch screen matches the size of those found in other high-end flagships, such as the iPhone 17 Pro Max and the Samsung Galaxy S26 Ultra. Other relevant specs include a newest generation Snapdragon processor, a 6000 mAh battery, and both fast and wireless charging.



Colours are nicely saturated, plus there's plenty of detail
Leica Leitzphone, 23mm equivalent, 1/200sec at f/1.7, ISO 125

Handling

In terms of overall size, weight and shape, the Leitzphone is almost identical to the Xiaomi 17 Ultra.

Both are nicely slim, with a large round camera unit on the back of the phone housing the three different lenses. Here is where one of the big differences between the 17 Ultra and the Leitzphone can be found – the Leitzphone has a control ring around the camera unit.

With this, you can control certain functions, which can be set within the phone's menu. In the standard Photo mode, the default option is 'Continuous Zoom', but you can also choose 'Switch Lens', 'EV', or 'Filters'.



There's some extra options in the Pro mode of the app too, including ISO and shutter speed.

While the camera ring sounds like a good idea in theory, in practice I found that it was far too easy to accidentally knock and change a setting I didn't want it to – especially given the size of the ring and how much of the back of the phone it takes up. This is particularly a problem when using the case which is supplied in the box with the Leitzphone. The ring seems stiffer when it's caseless, somehow.

The bad news here is that it's very hard to buy a different case for the Leitzphone, being such a niche phone. It is something you

get used to eventually, but it's a shame, as it was something I expected to really like. You can switch the camera ring off if you find it's getting on your nerves, but being the only major physical difference between it and the Xiaomi 17 Ultra, it seems a bit strange to then turn it off. You can also set the ring to turn counter-clockwise instead of clockwise if you prefer, which may help somewhat too.

Physical controls elsewhere are very few, as is common for smartphones. There's a volume up/down button and a button for unlocking/locking the screen. The volume buttons can be used to release the shutter if you like. If I'm being really picky, I would

like one of these buttons to launch the camera app without having to go via the screen.

The frame of the Leitzphone is ridged which adds a classy touch, although you won't see this if you're using a case, of course. It's also a difference from the Xiaomi 17 Ultra, as that has smooth sides only.

Like the Xiaomi 17 Ultra, the Leitzphone has IP68 credentials, meaning it should survive being submerged in water and is dust resistant.

The screen is very large at 6.9-inches, and benefits from Xiaomi Shield 3.0 glass. This is tough and resistant to scratches – I've seen it in action with both the Xiaomi 17 Ultra and the

Leitzphone and both have survived well being in bags, pockets and handled in normal everyday situations. Elsewhere, other tough credentials for this phone come from the aluminium alloy frame and the composite fibreglass back.

Additionally, the screen is flat (which is pretty standard these days, as curved screens seem to have become totally old hat) and has very thin bezels. The selfie camera is housed behind a hole-punch cutout, so you get maximum screen coverage. The screen has 3500 nits brightness, which makes it brighter than some models on the market, notably the Samsung Galaxy S26 Ultra,

Tested



14mm equivalent
ultrawide camera



23mm equivalent
main camera



75mm equivalent



100mm equivalent

This comparison shows the angles of view of the ultrawide and main cameras, plus the two ends of the optical zoom lens

Both phones are great for street photography
Leica Leitzphone, 23mm equivalent, 1/4300 sec at f/1.7, ISO 50



or the iPhone 17 Pro Max. There's no anti-reflective or privacy coatings here, though.

I'd actually prefer the screen to be a bit smaller, as I find 6.9-inch phones can be a little unwieldy to use in ordinary situations. However, it's hard to deny that it makes your photos and videos look great.

There are Photography Kits available which are designed for the Xiaomi 17 Ultra. As the Leitzphone is essentially the same phone in most physical regards, they should also work with that device. With these kits you can add a shutter release button and a chunkier grip to the phone to make it handle a bit more like a 'real' camera. There's also a 67mm filter adapter ring.

Native Camera App

This is where the Leitzphone separates more from the Xiaomi 17 Ultra, as the native camera app has some more clear cut differences.

The default shooting mode is 'Photo', which is pretty much the same as the Xiaomi's standard shooting mode, albeit with different fonts to match the Leica aesthetic.

Here you can quickly tap between the different lenses available, including the zoom lens where you can tap between different focal lengths in the zoom, or pinch to zoom more gradually. You can also do a variety of things such as change the standard resolution from 12.5MP to 50MP.

You can shoot in Leica Vibrant

or Leica Authentic colour modes – again this is the same as the Xiaomi 17 Ultra. There are digital filters available too, but here they are all Leica branded. Similar ones are available on the Xiaomi 17 Ultra, but they're not exactly the same.

Other options include switching HDR on/off, adjusting the aspect ratio, adding a timer and so on. To shoot with macro mode, you can either bring the phone close to a subject, where it will switch to using the ultrawide lens, or bring down the pull-down menu to turn on 'Super Macro', which utilises the zoom lens. With this second option, you need to be at least 30cm away from the subject, so it doesn't necessarily work well in every situation.

In darker lighting conditions,

the phone should automatically switch to Night mode.

Other shooting modes which are similar or the same as the Xiaomi 17 Ultra include a Pro mode, where you can change various settings and shoot in raw format, as well as Portrait mode for photographing people. The Portrait mode differs slightly, in that all of the portrait effects are supposed to represent different Leica lenses, such as Summilux, Summicron, Noctilux, Thambar and Anamorphic lenses.

A FastShot mode is useful for street photography, and is also found on the Xiaomi 17 Ultra. With it, you can see what's happening outside the frame, before it enters into it. This allows you to respond more quickly to fast-changing events.

The most obvious mode which is unique to the Leitzphone is a 'Leica essential' mode, where the phone will attempt to recreate the effect of shooting with either a Leica M9 or a Leica M3. When you have the Leica M3 mode selected, it will shoot with 'Leica Monopan 50 film', aka black and white. With the Leica M9 mode, it shoots with a fixed daylight white balance.

Both produce quite interesting results which are certainly worth experimenting with. But whether you think having this mode is worth the expense of opting for the Leitzphone over the regular Xiaomi 17 Ultra is another matter.

Performance

In terms of image quality, both phones produce pretty



The Super Macro mode is excellent for taking detailed shots
Xiaomi 17 Ultra, 75mm equivalent,
1/100sec at f/2.4, ISO 50



The portrait mode produces pleasing results

Xiaomi 17 Ultra, 23mm equivalent,
1/1150sec at f/1.7, ISO 50

much the same results. With its one-inch sensor, the image quality is fantastic. There's great colour, plenty of detail and I'd say that images are on par with those from high-end compact cameras which are also equipped with a similar sensor.

All of the lenses put in a good performance, with the 1x of course being the best. The ultrawide is very good, while the optical zoom lens performs very well in terms of sharpness – indeed, I think it's better than having two discrete telephoto lenses when the results are this reliably good.

In terms of digital zoom, I'd be happy to use it regularly up to the 17.2x setting. This is pretty impressive, and probably more than you'll ordinarily need for most situations anyway.

Special modes such as portrait mode do a good job, with natural looking results and a pleasing background. Macro shooting is very good, although the Super Macro option is generally better than the automatic option which uses the ultrawide lens.

For low light shooting, as I'd expect, it's the 1x lens which puts in the best results. The ultrawide lens is a bit smudgy, however the

zoom lens puts in a impressively good performance considering telephoto lenses are usually the weakest in dim conditions.

The special filters are good fun to experiment with, as is shooting with the Leica essential mode. It's worth trying them out to see whether you like them.

In this review, I've included pictures taken with both the Leitzphone the Xiaomi 17 Ultra.

Value for Money

There's not really any getting around the fact that both of these phones are expensive propositions.

The Xiaomi 17 Ultra is expensive as it is, but add the desirable red dot for the Leitzphone and the price ramps up even further.

As such, you'll pay £1700 for the Leitzphone, whereas you can pick up a Xiaomi 17 Ultra for £1300. Now, it should be noted that the Leitzphone is only available in a 1TB option, whereas you can get the 17 Ultra in a 512TB version.

If we compare like-for-like storage, the 17 Ultra is £1500, so it's still a £200 uplift for what is essentially the same phone in most ways. You do get the lens

ring, and some notable differences in the shooting experience, so it's possible that you might consider it worth it.

If we compare the Leitzphone against other brands, of course it comes out as more expensive, too. Although again, if you compare like-for-like storage options, it's perhaps not quite so outrageously different. For example, a 1TB Samsung Galaxy S26 Ultra is also £1700, while a 1TB iPhone 17 Pro Max is £1600.

Of course with those other phones, you can opt for less storage to save money, something you simply can't do with a Leitzphone. Let's be honest, this is not a phone for those on a budget.

In terms of resale value, this is a bit of an unknown quantity. We know that Samsung phones and iPhones tend to hold their value well, but Xiaomi models don't tend to fare as well. But whether this would also be true for the Leitzphone is debateable. Arguably the audience for it is niche, but it's also true that it's an audience that is typically willing to pay a premium for a Leica product. So maybe it'll hold its price better.

Verdict

My opinion is that the Xiaomi 17 Ultra is currently the best smartphone on the market for photographers. Given that the Leitzphone is the same hardware, you could arguably extend that praise to this model too.

Indeed, depending on your point of view you could say it was even better. (Is it possible to be better than best? Let's just say yes, it is.)

It's better because you get a lens ring - albeit a bit of a fiddly one - you get the Leica aesthetic for the native camera app, and you also get some fun shooting modes that you don't get with the standard 17 Ultra. You also get to say that you're shooting with a Leica, and that holds an awful lot of cachet.

However, we do have to consider things like cost here. It's a very expensive phone, and having to shell out a significant extra sum of cash to get those things won't be to everybody's liking.

One thing it definitely shows is that a collaboration between a traditional camera company and a smartphone manufacturer can be a thing of greatness. It would be pretty cool to see others following suit, going beyond just a simple lens collaboration or a branding exercise, and actually (at least seemingly) designing things from the ground up.

Overall, both the Leitzphone and the Xiaomi 17 Ultra are superb phones, and there's lots to recommend both of them. If you want to own a Leica, it's a good way to do it, and certainly cheaper than buying a Leica M or Q camera. If you just want the image quality and don't care about a red dot though, stick with the Xiaomi 17 Ultra.



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The zoom range may look unusual, but it's really well suited for photographing people
Nikon Z8, 55mm, 1/1600sec at f/2.8, ISO 200



Tamron 35-100mm F/2.8 Di III VXD



With its unusual focal-length range, is Tamron's zoom a breath of fresh air? **Kingsley Singleton** finds out.

At first glance, the Tamron 35-100mm F/2.8 Di III VXD seems to employ a rather unusual focal range. There is no other current full-frame lens that offers the same, but 'current' is the operative word, because if you cast your mind back 50 years or so, all zooms started around 35mm, a setting

considered wide-angle at the time, and which, technically, still is. Back then 35-105mm zooms weren't uncommon, albeit with smaller apertures.

So why introduce such a lens? And who is it for? In part, there seems to be a desire from manufacturers like Tamron to offer something different. Every big player has a 24-70mm f/2.8,

but we are seeing plenty of f/2.8 variations around that, often lenses that cover more ground, like 24-105mm or 28-105mm models, as well as the likes of Nikon and Tamron's 28-75mm options.

Available for Nikon Z and Sony E mount cameras for £799, can this 35-100mm f/2.8 prove itself a valuable option within a packed

and varied market? I tested a Nikon Z version on Z8 and Zf bodies to find out.

Features

Starting with the focal length, the 35mm gives a mild wide-angle view of 63°. This is suitable for many situations, though it's limited in some ways, too, especially if you 'think' in



Sharpness is very good throughout the zoom range
Nikon Z8, 92mm, 1/160sec at f/9, ISO 400



➤ 24mm as modern zooms and phone lenses have inclined us to do. In comparison, 35mm isn't much good for interiors, night skies, or for the 'biggest' of landscapes, but there is a benefit to this being the widest you can go.

Essentially, the wider the angle, the harder it is to fill the frame, and the more distorted the edges can look. So many novice shooters create weak, unnatural

looking compositions with ultra-wide lenses. Conversely, 35mm is a much more human view than, say, 24mm, so pictures are generally more accessible and the frame is fuller.

At about 3x, the overall zoom ratio is basically the same as a 24-70mm and covers many classic options, obviously becoming more selective as you go. The options at the long end, like 85mm and 100mm, feel

genuinely nice to move into compared to stopping at 70mm, especially when working with people or travel subjects. And this is a clue to the lens's real purpose, with the collection of focal lengths making it feel like an all-in-one portrait or documentary lens.

The lens uses a 15-element, 13-group construction, including one eXtra Low Dispersion (XLD), two Low Dispersion (LD), and three Glass Molded Aspherical (GMA) elements, which should provide sharp images free of aberrations. Meanwhile, Tamron's BBAR-G2 (Broad-Band Anti-Reflection Generation 2) coating is on hand to combat flare.

Along with a fluorine coating on the front element, the lens has a moisture-resistant construction. So it should be reasonably well protected from light rain and dust. However, the barrel does extend on zooming, which isn't ideal when it comes to protection.

Autofocus is provided by Tamron's Voice-coil eXtreme-torque Drive (VXD). While there's no dedicated aperture or control ring as found on many lenses

these days, there is a lens function button, the action of which can be set via Tamron's Lens Utility app.

Common to many other Tamron lenses, the filter thread is 67mm and a petalled lens hood is included, reversing over the barrel when not required.

Build and Handling

Limiting the wide-angle setting to 35mm also means the lens can be comparatively small and light, and the Tamron 35-100mm F/2.8 Di III VXD certainly feels like a portable lens. At 575g and 120mm long, it balanced nicely on my Nikon Z8 though less well on the Zf, until I fitted a grip. And though the lens extends on zooming, it's not enough to unbalance hand-holding.

The zoom ring is large and grippy, sitting easily within reach nearer the body, and you can go from near to far in a quarter turn, so changes to framing are quick. The ring turns smoothly to a hard stop, with good resistance and there's no slip in it.

The focus ring was also easy to find without moving my hand



The large aperture is good for selective focusing
Nikon Z8, 57mm, 1/2500sec at f/2.8, ISO 500

Image quality holds up well at close focus distances

Nikon Z8, 100mm, DX crop mode
1/3200sec at f/2.8, ISO 200



'The collection of focal lengths makes it feel like an all-in-one portrait or documentary lens'

position and its thinner grooves and lighter touch mark it out. The ring is fully electronic, so again its parameters can be set by the user if they want a slower or faster turn.

Focusing

The benefit of the lens's VXD autofocus motor was immediately obvious. Focusing from near to far was almost instantaneous, and only slowed a little in poor light, or on areas of particularly low contrast. It's also virtually silent, so a nice partner in situations where you don't want to disturb the subject.

The performance is also strong when tracking moving subjects. I tried it with walking and running people as well as with dogs, and it didn't struggle with either. In eye-detection modes I couldn't fault it, and I would be confident using it as a general purpose lens.

Out of the box, manual focusing is also a breeze. On my model the ring was set to linear, and completed near-to-far focus in 180°. But as mentioned it's possible to change this via the USB-C port on the barrel.

The close focus at 35mm is 22cm, giving a one-third life-size render. Zoom to 100mm and this extends to 65cm, resulting in one-sixth life-size

magnification. Overall, it's quite a handy closeup option, too.

Image quality

Without the benefit of full lab-testing conditions it's tough to judge sharpness to a minute degree, but on the whole I was very impressed by the Tamron 35-100mm F/2.8 Di III VXD. It can be expected for sharpness to vary throughout a zoom, but it was also quite consistent.

At the short end, centre sharpness was excellent wide open, improving further at f/4 and only tailing off slightly from f/11 onwards, the edges being pretty well matched throughout. In the middle of the lens at 70mm, it was also excellent in the centre, though seemed slightly less sharp beyond f/5.6. The edges didn't hold up quite as well here, but were still very good. At the long end, although still very good, sharpness was slightly less impressive wide open in the centre. But it improved to excellent at f/3.5 onwards, only tailing off a little after f/11. Edges held up well from f/2.8 to f/8.

In normal circumstances, I found chromatic aberration to be well controlled at all focal lengths. It was only when, for instance, shooting out-of-focus branches against a bright sky that any fringing could be seen. Thanks to the lens coatings, it was equally tough to introduce flare, so if you want some you'll need to throw on a cheap filter.

At its modest wide-angle setting, barrel distortion was all but invisible, and I could see no pincushion effects at the long end. There is some vignetting wide open, but nothing alarming.

Finally, though modern ultra-fast lenses can make the bokeh from an f/2.8 lens seem pedestrian, the Tamron 35-100mm F/2.8 Di III VXD produced some very nice, smoothly rendered backgrounds. There was no trace of fussiness in the blur and points of light were pleasingly rounded and flat, only distorting slightly at the frame edges, though this became more pronounced beyond 70mm, I thought. Overall a very impressive performance.



Verdict

With its 35-100mm f/2.8, Tamron has created a brilliant portrait and documentary tool. The lens covers all the most common portrait focal lengths in a single, fast zoom, and does so very well. Whether it's people or other subjects you're working with, this makes for an excellent mix of contextual and selective framing. The f/2.8 maximum means that it's relatively easy to separate subjects from unsuitable backgrounds, or work in low light, while it definitely feels and handles like a premium lens.

The images it produces are nice and sharp, without distortion, and it's also no slouch when it comes to focusing. The speed and silence of the AF was very impressive, especially from a third-party lens, but even writing that today feels somewhat out of date, because it's clear that with lenses like this, manufacturers like Tamron are holding their own against the native lenses of the best camera brands.

At £800, while not cheap, the lens is well priced, so there's not much to put off prospective buyers here. If you did need more range at the long end, Tamron's 35-150mm F/2-2.8 is an obvious place to look, though it's getting on for twice the price and heft. Overall, I'd be very happy on a portrait or documentary project with this lens alone.

Data file

Price £799	Length 121.5mm
Filter Diameter 67mm	Diameter 80.6mm
Lens Elements 15	Weight 565g (Sony E), 575g (Nikon Z)
Groups 13	Lens Mount Sony E, Nikon Z
Diaphragm blades 9	Included accessories Caps, hood
Aperture f/2.8-22	
Min focus 0.22m (wide), 0.65m (tele)	



Amateur Photographer Recommended
★★★★★

Viltrox Vintage Z2

Andy Westlake looks at a super-compact and affordable on-camera flash unit

● £31.99 ● viltrox.com

With very few cameras having a built-in flash these days, a market has opened up for simple on-camera units that can deliver a blip of additional light when you need it. The Viltrox Vintage Z2 is one of the smallest and most affordable I've yet seen, weighing in at a mere 52g. Yet it supports both TTL-auto metering and manual output control. It's available in Canon, Fujifilm, Nikon and Sony variants – I tested the latter.

Unlike the firm's larger Z1 unit, there's no obvious 'vintage' styling here. Instead, the compact, folding design appears to have been inspired by the diminutive Fujifilm EF-X8. The Viltrox Z2 is a bit larger, to accommodate its built-in battery, but it'll still slip easily into a bag or pocket.

With a relatively low guide number of 6m at ISO 100, though, this is anything but a power demon. It does the same kind of job as a small built-in flash would, providing direct illumination in low-light conditions. However, it's not going to provide much in the way of fill-in outdoors on a bright sunny day. Its colour temperature is rated as 6500K, which is a better match to daylight than artificial light.

Operation is pretty straightforward. Holding down the power button on the side for a second turns the unit on, at which point, tapping the same button again fires a test flash. The 'plus' and 'minus' buttons on the back adjust the power level in whole-stop steps down to 1/16 in manual mode; holding down the minus button toggles between TTL-auto and manual operation.

In use, I've found the Viltrox Vintage V2 works pretty much as expected. Most users will, I suspect, leave it set to TTL, so the camera determines the light output, and here it delivers reliable results. In a particularly neat touch, if you take a photo in Auto and then switch to Manual, the unit will automatically retain the metered power setting, so it should still give the correct exposure.

Notably, the folding design lifts the flash high enough above the lens to avoid any shadowing. One quirk to look out for, though, is that it will still fire even when it's folded down, which will inevitably result in missed shots.

Verdict

If you want a small and easy-to-use on-camera flash, the Viltrox Vintage Z2 fits the bill. Sure, you don't get anything fancy like bounce flash or wireless control. But it's one of the cheapest TTL units around, and small enough to keep in your bag all the time.

Folding design

The flash can fold down to save space for carrying, then flip up for use

Quick release

The unit can be removed from the camera simply by pressing a button on the shoe

Amateur Photographer Recommended
★★★★★

Simple operation

Three buttons are used to turn the flash on and off, and set the mode and output power

Built-in battery

An internal, USB-C rechargeable battery should be good for 700 full-power flashes

At a glance

- Mini on-camera flash unit
- Guide no 6 at ISO 100
- 28mm equivalent coverage
- TTL and manual control
- 64.6 x 38.5 x 33.4mm, 52g
- Canon, Fujifilm, Nikon and Sony

DIFFUSER

Viltrox provides a small push-on translucent plastic diffuser in the box. If you're lucky, this might soften the light a little when shooting indoors. But I've found that most of the time, it's unlikely to do much except reduce the power output.

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SmallRig RM 03 Macro Photo LED Light

Angela Nicholson tests a flexible macro light

£49 • smallrig.com

Good lighting is often the difference between an ordinary macro image and one that reveals texture, depth and detail. The SmallRig RM 03 is designed specifically for close-up photography, providing a compact light source that can be positioned precisely where it's needed.

The device combines an aluminium alloy handle housing a rechargeable 2000mAh battery with a flexible 39cm arm and compact LED head. SmallRig claims the internal spring mechanism can withstand more than 1,000 bends without losing its shape and it certainly feels robust enough for regular use. The flexible arm makes it easy to direct light into awkward positions around flowers, fungi, insects, miniatures and other small subjects.

Operation is simple. Two buttons control power, brightness and colour selection. The latter cycles through red, green, blue, cold white and warm white. However this isn't a true RGB light, because there's no colour mixing or hue adjustment.

The biggest challenge is positioning the light accurately. The gooseneck is reasonably stiff, but its weight can cause whatever it's mounted on to move or rotate. The supplied ground spike can twist or tip in softer ground, and I found a tabletop tripod provided more stable support. Using the light on a camera's hot shoe can also be fiddly unless the camera is tripod-mounted. When shooting handheld, I found it easiest to support the lens while hooking a finger around the light to hold it in place.

With a maximum output of 3W, the RM 03 is best suited to close-range work in shade, on overcast days or during the darker months of the year. It won't fill deep shadows in bright sunshine, but used close to the subject it provides subtle, controllable illumination without overwhelming delicate details.

Verdict

The SmallRig RM 03 is a clever lighting tool aimed squarely at macro photographers. Its flexible arm and extensive accessory kit make it possible to create lighting effects that would be difficult with conventional LED panels, while its compact size makes it easy to carry. The modest output and occasional positioning frustrations mean it won't suit every situation, but for photographing fungi, plants, insects, miniatures and collectibles it can be a very useful addition to your kit, particularly when paired with a small tabletop tripod.

Compact Light Source

The small lamp head can be positioned close to tiny subjects

Multiple Mounting Options

Use the clamp, cold shoe adapter or ground stake, or a tripod depending on the location

Weather Resistant

IP54-rated construction helps protect against dust and splashes

Flexible Positioning

The long spring arm bends into almost any shape for easy lighting control



Amateur Photographer
Recommended
★★★★★

At a glance

- 5 light colours
- Flexible 39cm spring arm
- 3W maximum output
- 2000mAh rechargeable battery
- Supplied with diffuser, spotlight, barndoor and projection slides

LIGHT MODIFIERS

A diffuser, four-leaf barndoor, spotlight attachment and ten projection slides (gobos) are supplied. These accessories make it possible to shape and control the light very effectively. The diffuser softens the illumination, while the spotlight and gobos are useful for creating more dramatic effects or directing attention to specific details.



Micro 16

John Wade discovers a favourite among American detectives of the 1940s

LAUNCHED 1947

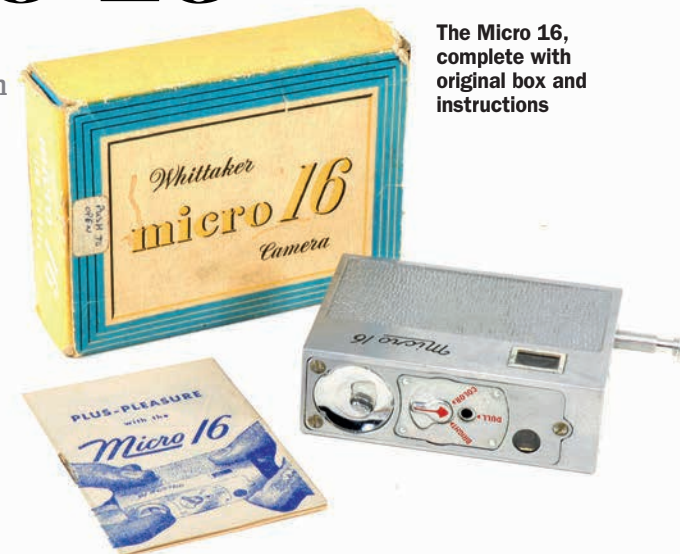
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Although the first 16mm film camera, called the Mini-Fex, was launched in 1932, it wasn't until the 1950s that the idea took off in a big way, and then it lasted into the 1960s with 16mm versions of just about every type of camera. The Micro 16, made by the Whittaker company in Los Angeles, appeared even earlier. Measuring just 70x50x25mm, it was smaller than a packet of cigarettes and the right shape to fit inside one, making it ideal for clandestine photography. Consequently the camera sold remarkably well to American police departments and detective agencies.

The Micro 16 shoots 24 exposures on 16mm film held in its own twin cassettes. It has a single speed shutter, probably of around 1/50sec, and an f/6.3 lens which is stopped down to f/8 and f/11 by means of a small lever beside the lens that indicates apertures as 'bright', 'dull' and 'color'. The shutter is released by lifting a recessed

Inside the camera, showing its twin cassettes and unusual film wind mechanism



The Micro 16, complete with original box and instructions

lever on the front and allowing it to spring back. Pushing a small button inset into and flush with the side of the body causes a plunger to pop out. Pushing it in again advances the film as a claw mechanism inside pulls the film from one cassette and pushes it into the other. Then the plunger springs out ready for the following film wind. When the camera is turned upside down and the plunger pressed in, a gravity-assisted latch locks it in place until it is next needed. A small square viewfinder window on the top of the body reflects an image from a circular lens at the base of the camera's front plate. It's a bit tiny for easy use, but a special

accessory sports finder was originally available to provide easier eye-level viewing.

For users, the Micro 16 is still practical today for those prepared to buy 16mm cine film and preload the cassettes in a darkroom or changing bag. For collectors, there's an appeal in the polished aluminium body that can be found in chrome, black, blue, green and grey colours.

What's good Well-made body, easy to conceal, extremely quiet shutter.

What's bad The lens was reputed to be mediocre, film wind prone to failure.



The Micro with its eye-level sports finder fitted

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ALL IMAGES © KIERAN MORGAN

Bonnie in the stream
at Denton Reservoir

Emerging Talent

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Kieran Morgan captures the character and beauty of pets in stunning outdoor locations across the country. He talks to **Jessica Miller** about his work.

When and why did you start taking photographs?

I would say the first time I started taking photos was in 2013 when I went to Kenya with the Army. I picked up a Canon Powershot digital camera because I wanted to photograph wildlife in my spare time. I never really picked up a DSLR until around 2018.

Which genre do you tend to

work mostly in?

I would say I mainly work within dog photography now but before that I was taking macro/wildlife photos.

What draws you towards your favoured genre?

I will answer this in two parts. Macro/Wildlife – I have always had a deep fascination for the natural world, and I love insects and spiders. I blame my parents and David Attenborough for this love of nature.

Dogs – I get a massive sense of gratification when showing a photo I'm proud of to the owners of the dog and seeing their reactions.

Tell us a little bit more about your photographic training (if any)?

I have had no formal photographic training. I have never attended any classes or seminars etc. The only people I can thank for helping me learn photography are some of my friends and family. Bradley Sarson, James Longden and my brother, Dale. The rest has been countless hours in my garden with my camera.

Tell us more about your recent work?

My recent work is heavily focussed on pet/dog photography. I created Fauna Focus Pet Photography in 2025 which is an outdoor orientated pet photography business. It combines my love for photography, the outdoors and animals.

What has been your biggest photographic obstacle to date?

My biggest obstacle has probably been affordability. I am currently using two prime lenses for all my photography. It's tough but I'm trying to make use out of what I can afford!

Who are your biggest influences?

A big driving influence in photography for me has been the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. Anyone who gets their work displayed at the Natural History Museum is an influence for me. Dani Connor, Paul Browning and Rachel Bigsby.

When it comes to dogs – Carlos A. Miljour, Natalie Richardson and Lena Lewis. All very good photographers with amazing work.





Above: Shetland Sheepdogs among the bluebells at Harlaxton Manor

Far left: Obi's Face Down Portrait at Bradgate Park, Leicestershire

Left: Ozzy the Bocker Pup. Outwoods, Leicestershire



➤ What equipment do you use?

I use a Canon EOS R6 Mark II (with the EF Lens adapter), with the Canon EF 50mm F1.8 and Canon EF 100mm F2.8 Macro lenses.

What would be your dream equipment to work with?

I just want a 70-200mm Canon RF F2.8! The versatility for action shots and even portraits looks amazing.

What has been the highlight of your photography career so far?

I have a lot of photos I'm very proud of. I love some of my nature photos. But I will say, sitting in my car after my first paid shoot for a dog called Bonnie, a Doberman cross (see previous page) and reviewing the photos. I was so proud of what I captured from that session and it couldn't have gone much better. Shout out to Jack and Charlie!

What are your hopes for your photography career in the future?

I would love to become an

established photographer who can not necessarily do it full time but do it to a point where I can save some extra pennies to treat my family to a holiday now and again.

Do you have a dream assignment?

My dream is to visit the Costa Rican jungles and rainforests with a macro lens and a zoom lens. If I can do that at least once, I would be a very, very happy man!

Above: Three Generations of Golden Retriever at Melton Mowbray. Kitty, Mimi and Elsie

Below: Skye posing on a log at Somerby, Rutland

What piece of advice would you give to other aspiring photographers?

Don't limit yourself. Branch out to other types of photography. Night photography, street photography, macro, wildlife, landscape, sports. Find something you are personally interested in and don't put up barriers because of your equipment.

AP

Instagram: @faunafocus.petphotography



Inbox

Write to the Editor at ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk and include your full postal address. Please don't send letters in the post as there is no one in the office to receive them. Replies are from the Editor unless otherwise stated

STAR LETTER

A lifeline

I am now 77 going on 78. I picked up my first camera, my mother's Box Brownie, at the age of eight. My dear wife passed away with cancer in March last year, which I am still grieving over. My brother also passed in the December before. So I feel extremely bereft.

I tried travel to keep my mind busy, visiting cities in Europe and spent January in Southern Africa. Of course I took some of my cameras. Photography has been my lifeline to keep me interested in life. But what really helped me to get from tears to smiles was a small 10x15cm, 36 page photo book that I created, which lifts my spirit and leaves me feeling in a good place.

Importantly I realise that I came to draw on photos taken by others well before my time, of family before my time. Its 100 year plus span includes photos of others long since passed on, and those taken by June, my wife and I in our lifetime.

When I am feeling low, or worse, I

get great pleasure, and a shift in mood from tears, at the front of the album, to a gradual procurement of a smile and relative well being by the time I turn the page to the last photo, the picture of my Grandad, brother and I, taken by my father in Deal, circa 1960. Especially the expression of my dear grandad!

There should be a day in honour of photographers, both amateur and professional, as well as videographers. A National Photographers' Day would commemorate the importance of the captured image.

The photos of today will be admired and discussed in thousands of years to come. Provided of course the medium can be preserved! To that end I am refurbishing my ancient well worn black (showing mostly brass) Nikkormat Ftn. Thank you for giving a voice to our wonderful calling!

Richard Whiteside

It's good to hear that photography is helping you in this way, Richard. Perhaps others will be inspired by your story. I hope you can put a new Samsung memory card to good use.

Win! SAMSUNG

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



Smart eyewear

It's ironic that the Editors' letter called for smart eyewear to be banned, while a pair from Samsung featured in the 'What's New' section. Technology often brings the worst out of some folk before the good uses inform society's eventual acceptance of it. Smart eyewear can be

useful. In industry such tools can give field operators access to data they can overlay on equipment they're looking at, and to provide the first person views of maintenance staff in the field back to engineering teams in the office so remote help can be provided. That vendors are

still trying to get the technology right tells us it's not quite there yet.

It is regrettable that there's a class of eejit who has found an early way of monetising this new technology as it stands. Manufacturers (and platforms hosting these videos) should be looking at how to prevent them



Smart glasses, such as these by Samsung, can be misused

from being used for voyeurism, even though I think that genie is out of the bottle now.

Once a technology exists, even if it is legal, there will be folk who say it should be illegal. Take drones as an example. They can make amazing photos with viewpoints we previously couldn't achieve without renting rides in private aircraft. Yet there are complete dicks out there who insist on using their drones in a poor way, which creates tension with the general public and calls they should not be legal to fly. This in turn drives legislation (and perhaps restriction of freedoms). I fear something similar may eventually happen with "intelligent" eyewear.

We once had to show a TV license before walking out of Currys with a new TV – but no one thought to insist that people buying drones in the UK should have to provide their CAA Flyer ID first. The outcome being many people fly oblivious to the rules.

Sean Goodhart

I concede that there are some practical uses for these glasses. So if not a ban then perhaps a legal requirement should be a prominent red light on the front that can't be covered up or turned off, to alert everyone in the vicinity of the wearer that the glasses are recording.

No longer EVIL

I once agreed with the tongue-in-cheek acronym for Electronic Viewfinder, Interchangeable Lens cameras (EVIL). But not any more. I recently upgraded my EOS 6D to a used EOS R6 with the EF lens adapter. I kept the 6D because the trade in price offered was derisory and anyway it might be a useful second body. That was over a year ago and I haven't used the 6D since. I don't think I ever will, except maybe occasionally for old time's sake. There is simply no contest.

The R6 is smaller, lighter, quieter, gives an accurate preview of exposure through the electronic viewfinder and takes photos that are equally good (except at high ISO when they are better). Admitted, the EF lens adapter adds a little bulk, but this is relatively minor. Each of my EF lenses, Canon and third party, work with both my bodies, so no expensive upgrades needed there.

Mike Gosling

Drawing a blank

In a bid to overcome my addiction to buying new gear, I recently charged up an old Panasonic TZ200. The camera was inherited from my late father and it was surprising how using it connected me to fond memories of him. All was going well on a beautifully



Mike Gosling loves the electronic viewfinder in his Canon R6, having been an EVF sceptic

sunny day until I turned the camera to portrait and found the LCD screen just went black. I panicked and felt sad that my dad's camera was not working any more, but the upside was I now had a good excuse to buy myself a new Panasonic TZ300. That was until I realised I needed to take off my polarised sunglasses to see the LCD screen in portrait! All these years taking photos and I've only just discovered this blackout effect. The next day, my heart momentarily skipped a beat when the same thing happened with my Fujifilm X100IV. Dad would have laughed, and his camera and memories live on. **Dr Jan Penny**

When public is private

I was intrigued to read Chris Porsz's Opinion piece (2nd June). I too have been challenged in railway stations, shopping centres and even walking around the Olympic Park in Stratford. When I point out that you're allowed to take photos in public areas security staff invariably tell me I'm actually standing on privately owned land and it is the landowner's right to ban photography if they choose to do so. I'd be interested to know

what is meant by "public places" in the statement from the Metropolitan Police. Does this mean public-owned spaces or spaces where the public are allowed access?

When I'm told that my camera is a "professional" model and hence I am not allowed to take photos, I have a simple solution: I keep a smaller camera (in my case a Canon G7X) in my backpack and swap over to that. The smaller camera is not deemed to be "professional" so I am generally allowed to carry on taking photographs!

Patrick Hudgell

This is indeed a grey area. Most UK land is privately owned, even where the

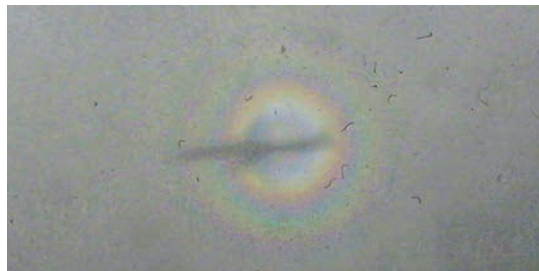
public has a right of access, and the owner is legally entitled to impose these restrictions. Some places, like shopping centres, are obvious but others, such as London's South Bank, are less so.

Round rainbow

Crossing the South African plains at 30000ft I saw the shadow of the aircraft I was in on the cloud below, superimposed on what looks like a circular rainbow. Has this phenomenon ever been recorded before?

David Bevan

Wow! It's a shame your camera focused on the dirty window rather than the shadow, but a great moment well spotted.



David Bevan's rainbow and aircraft shadow photo

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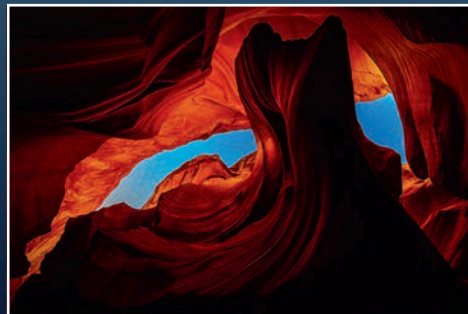


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How Gareth Llewellyn's atmospheric photos have gained him a following

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We asked for your best travel photos and you didn't disappoint. See the winning single and series entries



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear reader,

Welcome to the new and improved **Amateur Photographer**! As you can see, we have a brand-new look (with 100 pages in every single issue), new content and more of the features that you love. From the world's best photographers to the newest kit, plus valuable insights and stories from the masters of the craft, we have everything photography related covered in a new and improved fortnightly package.

Best wishes,

Nigel Atherton

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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

OM System Tough TG-7

• £449 • explore.omsystem.com

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

★★★★★ Reviewed 2 Apr 2024



Canon PowerShot G7X Mark III

• £819 • canon.co.uk

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

★★★★★ Reviewed 28 Sep 2019



Fujifilm X100VI

• £1,599 • fujifilm-x.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
9 Apr 2024



Ricoh GR IV

• £1,199 • ricohgr.eu

A favourite of street photographers, the GR IV combines a 26MP APS-C sensor and a sharp 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens in a slim, pocketable body. It offers sensitivities up to ISO 204,800 and 4fps shooting, with in-body image stabilisation helping to keep images sharp. Viewing is via a fixed 3in rear LCD, while battery life and controls are improved compared to its predecessor.

★★★★★

Reviewed
23 Sep
2025



Sony RX100 VII

• £1,049 • sony.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Oct 2019



Fujifilm GFX100RF

• £4,499 • fujifilm-x.com

It's anything but cheap, but the world's first medium-format compact camera offers an unparalleled combination of image quality and portability. It combines a 100MP sensor with a 28mm equivalent f/4 lens, while viewing is via an electronic viewfinder or a tilting touchscreen. A unique aspect ratio dial encourages a creative approach to composition.

★★★★★

Reviewed
13 May
2025



Canon EOS R50

● £859 with 18-45mm lens ● canon.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
6 Jun 2023



Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

● £749 with 14-42mm ● explore.omsystem.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
26 Sep 2020



Fujifilm X-T5

● £1,599 body only ● fujifilm-x.com

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Jan 2023



Nikon Z50II

● £999 with 16-50mm lens ● nikon.co.uk

Nikon's Z50II is a very capable camera that offers the most advanced feature set in its class. It handles really well too, while giving excellent output in both JPEG and raw. Some users might be put off by its 20MP resolution, but in reality this counts as little practical difference to 24MP or 26MP cameras. With Nikon now offering a decent range of DX lenses, it's a great option as a first serious camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Feb 2025



Fujifilm X-T30 III

● £999 with 13-33mm lens ● fujifilm-x.com

This lovely little camera provides excellent performance, while preserving the charm of the X-series. It's a great all-rounder, and handles exceptionally well thanks to an intuitive interface based around traditional analogue dials. Image quality is superb in both raw and JPEG, with Fujifilm's peerless Film Simulation colour modes accessed via their own dial.

★★★★★

Reviewed
10 Feb 2026



Panasonic Lumix GH7

● £1,699 body only ● panasonic.com/uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Nov 2024



Fujifilm X-S20

● £1,149 body only ● fujifilm-x.com

Styled like a mini DSLR, the X-S20 uses electronic dials for changing exposure settings, as opposed to the X-T series' analogue controls. But you still get Fujifilm's signature fine image quality, along with in-body image stabilisation. It also boasts an array of advanced video features, making it a great choice for vloggers and photographers alike.

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jul 2023



Panasonic Lumix G9 II

● £1,699 body only ● panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's high-end Micro Four Thirds camera provides an impressive set of features. It can shoot 25MP still images at up to 75fps, and 5.7K video at 60fps. You get an excellent control layout, incredibly effective in-body stabilisation, and very capable subject recognition autofocus. A good range of small, excellent Leica-branded lenses is available to match.

★★★★★

Reviewed
31 Oct 2023



OM System OM-1 Mark II

● £2,049 body only ● explore.omsystem.com

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

★★★★★

Review
12 Mar 2024



Nikon Z5II

● £1,379 body only ● nikon.co.uk

Nikon's entry-level full-frame model redefines what we can expect from a camera at this price point. It's packed full of features, including subject-detection autofocus, in-body image stabilisation and a fully articulating screen, while its 24MP sensor delivers excellent image quality. It's an excellent all-rounder at a tempting price.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jun 2025



Nikon Z6III

● £1,959 body only ● nikon.co.uk

This mid-range model is one of the finest all-round cameras for enthusiast users on the market. It marries excellent autofocus and super-fast continuous shooting with solid build quality and a refined control layout. The viewfinder is particularly bright, and joined by a fully articulated touchscreen. It's at least a match for any other camera in its class.

★★★★★

Reviewed
8 Oct 2024



Sony Alpha 7R V

● £3,999 body only ● sony.co.uk

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

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jan 2023



Sony Alpha 7 V

● £2,799 body only ● sony.co.uk

Sony's enthusiast-focused full-frame model employs a new 33MP partially-stacked sensor. Not only does it deliver excellent image quality, but it can also shoot at 30fps. Its subject-detection AF can recognise birds, humans, animals and vehicles. A large, clear viewfinder and fully articulated touchscreen round off the package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Mar 2026



Nikon Z9

● £5,299 body only ● nikon.co.uk

Without doubt Nikon's finest camera yet, the Z9 combines high resolution, breathtaking speed, subject-recognition autofocus and pro-level build. It's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps for 1,000 frames, and 11MP JPEGs at 120fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's probably the most capable camera around.

★★★★★

Reviewed
22 Mar 2022



Leica M11 Monochrom

● £8,300 body only ● uk.leica-camera.com

Within its own specialist niche, this monochrome-only manual-focus rangefinder is almost perfect. Its build quality is stunning, and the pared-back design allows you to immerse yourself completely in the process of taking pictures. Most importantly, the 60.1MP sensor produces fantastic results, reaching a new pinnacle in black & white image quality.

★★★★★
Reviewed
16 May 2023



Nikon D780

● £1,999 body only ● nikon.co.uk

This highly accomplished 24MP full-frame model shows that there's life in the DSLR yet. It's superbly built with extensive weather-sealing, handles brilliantly, and gives excellent results in any conditions. It'll provide top-level service to photographers who want to keep using their F-mount lenses and still prefer an optical viewfinder.

★★★★★

Reviewed
4 Apr 2020



Canon EOS R6 Mark III

● £2,799 body only ● canon.co.uk

Based around a 32.5MP full-frame sensor, this brilliant all-rounder will do almost anything you might ask it to. It combines reliable subject-detection AF, rapid continuous shooting, and effective image stabilisation in a body that handles well and gives great results. It also works well with adapted EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

Reviewed
27 Jan 2026



Fujifilm GFX100 II

● £6,999 body only ● fujifilm-x.com

Fujifilm's super-high resolution medium-format camera places an updated 102MP sensor in a pro-spec modular body. Subject-detection autofocus is on board for animals, birds and vehicles, while in-body image stabilisation helps keep handheld shots sharp. It's the ideal camera for serious photographers who demand the ultimate in image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Nov 2023



Tenba DNA 9 Slim Messenger

● £110 ● uk.tenba.com

If you'd like a small shoulder bag to carry a camera and a couple of lenses, this is among the best you'll find. Measuring 28cm wide by 20cm tall, it's well suited to holding a mirrorless camera or a compact DSLR. The quality of materials and construction is excellent, and there are plenty of handy pockets for organising accessories.

★★★★★ Reviewed 26 Apr 2022



Vanguard Veo Metro B25L

● £185 ● vanguardworld.co.uk

This good-looking backpack will hold a camera and up to 4 lenses, with separate sections for a 16in laptop and personal items. It offers a good level of protection for your kit, while being packed full of useful pockets and clever design details. It's also comfortable to carry when full.

★★★★★

Reviewed
12 Aug 2025



Wandrd Prvke 21 V4

● £281 (photography bundle) ● eu.wandrd.com

Wandrd's compact backpack offers sleek style for everyday use. Durable and comfortable to carry, it provides access from the top, side and back. Different-sized camera cubes can be used for smaller or larger kits, or the bag can be used on its own. Dedicated sleeves hold a tablet and laptop.

★★★★★

Reviewed
23 Sep 2025



NiSi NM-180s Macro Rail

● £105 ● nisiptics.co.uk

One of the best macro focusing rails available right now, the NM-180s combines excellent quality build with super-smooth operation. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame SLR while offering up to 130mm of travel, with a large knob facilitating fine adjustment. It also boasts extensive compatibility with the Arca Swiss quick release system, with a dovetail profile along its base and a rotating clamp on top.

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 Oct 2020



Cullmann Rondo 460M RB8.5

● £80 ● transcontinenta.co.uk

If you want a fully featured tripod kit on a budget, this is a great choice. Four-section aluminium legs provide a max height of 160cm, while packing down to 43.5cm. It's rated to support a 4kg load, weighs 1.46kg, and one leg can be combined with the centre column to form a monopod.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Mar 2020



Heipi W28S Travel Tripod

● £330 ● heipivision.com

This compact tripod employs a space-saving design, with a unique detachable 'three pillar' centre column that can also be used as a standalone table-top tripod. The ball head is impressively large and strong, too. It boasts lots of other neat features, while being well made and unusually stable. It's probably the best example of this kind of travel tripod.

★★★★★

Reviewed 2 Sep 2025



Benro Rhino 24C tripod with VX25 head

● £250 ● uk.benroeu.com

Benro has got pretty much everything right with this sturdy, well-designed tripod and head that'll support a substantial load. This four-section carbon fibre model offers a maximum height of almost 1.7m, while folding down to 49cm and weighing 1.74kg. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame DSLR with a telephoto zoom. Quite simply, it's a fantastic kit for the money.

★★★★★

Reviewed
28 Nov 2020



NiSi True Color ND-Vario 1-5 stops

● £89-£179 ● nisiptics.co.uk

This high-quality variable neutral density filter is ideal for regulating the amount of light entering your lens, without introducing any colour cast. It's optically excellent, boasts an oil and water-repellent coating, and includes a handy and accurate density scale. It's available in sizes from 40.5mm to 95mm.

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 May 2022



Benro SupaDupa Pro MSDPL46C

● £189 ● uk.benroeu.com

It may have a ridiculous name, but this five-section carbon fibre model might just be the best monopod we've ever tested. One clip leg lock provides easy length adjustment, while the lower twist locks are waterproof. On the top there's a clever bowl head with an Arca-compatible clamp. It's a great choice for those who regularly shoot with large telephotos.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 Apr 2021



Godox iFlash iT30Pro

● £67 ● godox.com

This tiny flash unit from Godox is both portable and affordable, while offering a comprehensive feature set. There's a choice of TTL auto or manual power setting, and the built-in Li-ion battery conveniently charges via USB. It can even work as a 2.4GHz wireless trigger for the firm's larger flash units. An optional riser/bounce adapter adds further appeal.

★★★★★

Reviewed
11 Nov 2025



Hollyland Lark M2S

● £149 ● hollyland.com

This excellent wireless mic stands out due to the clever design of the transmitter units. Only the tiny microphone section is visible, with the rest of the electronics hidden away behind the subject's clothing. The kit comes with one transmitter that plugs into the USB-C port of a smartphone or computer, and another that's designed to be used on your camera. Sound quality is really very good.

★★★★★

Reviewed
1 July 2025



Hahnel ProCube 3

● £80 ● hahnel.ie

This USB-C-powered dual battery charger employs interchangeable plates that each accept a pair of batteries. An LCD display shows progress, while a 2A USB-A output allows phones or tablets to be charged once the camera batteries are full. Versions are available for all the main camera brands.

★★★★★

Reviewed
4 Mar 2025



Datacolor SpyderPro

● £249 ● datacolor.com

If you like to post-process your images, you need to be sure that your monitor is showing colours accurately. Datacolor has designed the Spyder to calibrate your display faster than ever before, with the process taking about two minutes. For most photographers, the Pro version makes most sense.

★★★★★

Reviewed 25 Jul
2023



Rotolight NEO 3 Pro

● £389 ● rotolight.com

LED lighting technology has advanced in leaps and bounds over recent years. Rotolight's compact on-camera NEO 3 Pro offers a unique feature set thanks to its full colour RGBWW LEDs, with the ability to provide either continuous light or flash in 16.7 million colours. This firm has also programmed in the characteristics of 2,500 colour filters. Power is provided by an NP-F type Li-ion battery.

★★★★★

Reviewed
15 Nov 2022



Peak Design Form Rope strap

● £45 ● peakdesign.com

This minimalist rope strap is, like all Peak Design's products, expensive compared to similar-looking alternatives. But it's extremely well made from high-quality materials, and it works brilliantly. It comes in a choice of three lengths and three colours, and is perfect for carrying small mirrorless or compact cameras.

★★★★★

Reviewed
13 Jan 2026



Kase Wolverine K9 100mm Entry-Level Kit

● £399 ● kasefilters.com

With this top-quality filter system, Kase has carefully rethought every component. The slimline, low-profile holder benefits from extensive light-sealing, while the 82mm polariser clips into place magnetically; it's also easy to adjust from behind the camera. All of the filters use top-quality glass, and everything fits together into a single case. The result is a top-quality set-up that's easy to use and delivers superb results.

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Dec 2020



Intrepid Compact Enlarger

● £300 ● intrepidcamera.co.uk

For film photography enthusiasts wishing to make prints at home, this compact and affordable unit includes lots of handy features. Based around full-colour LED technology, it supports both mono and colour printing. It's perfect for those who don't have space for a permanent darkroom.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jul 2021



Fujifilm Instax Link WIDE

● £140 ● instax.co.uk

This brilliant portable printer produces great-looking 6x10cm prints on Fujifilm's Instax Wide film. It connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery and available in white or grey, it'll slip easily into a bag.

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jan 2022



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35 F1.4 Art DG box	£499
50 F1.4 Art DG	£499
105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS	£299
150-600 F5.6/3 DG OS sport	£999
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TC1401 1.4x extender	£149

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180 F3.5 SP Di	£249

Used Nikon



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Used Nikon



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Used Nikon



£1699 £1099 £1999

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24 F1.8 S box	£749
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24-200 F4/6.3 VR	£599
28-135 F4 PZ box	£1899
35 F1.8 S box	£599
50 F2.8 S macro box	£439
50-250 F4.5/6.3 DX VR	£239
70-200 F2.8 VR S box	£1499
85 F1.8 S	£599
105 F2.8 macro VR S box	£699
180-600 F5.6/6.3 VR box	£1399
400 F4.5 S VR box	£2199
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D780 body box	£1199
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D7100 body box	£349
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D3200 body	£149
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16-80 F2.8/4 VR DX	£499
18-35 F3.5/4.5 AFS	£299
18-55 F3.5/5.6 DX VR	£99
18-105 F3.5/5.6 VR DX AFS	£199
18-140 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR DX	£199
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX MKII	£299
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX	£149
18-300 F3.5/5.6 VR DX box	£449
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24-120 F4 AFS box	£499
24-120 F4 AFS VR	£499
28-300 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR box	£499
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35 F2.8 AFD	£269

40 F2.8 AFS DX Micro	£199
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50 F1.8 AFS box	£99
50 F1.8 AFD	£69
55-200 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR DX box	£99
55-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS DX VR	£229
58 F1.4 AFS	£799
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70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR	£299
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14-42 F3.5/5.6 HD	£99
14-140 F3.5/5.6	£299
25 F1.4 box	£399
25 F1.7	£149
45 F2.8 DG macro	£399
45-175 F4.5/5.6	£249
45-200 F4.5/5.6 box	£99
100-300 F4/5.6 MKI	£299
Samyang 12 F2 man focus	£179
Sigma 16 F1.4 DC DN	£299

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902609	Sigma 14mm f1.8 DG HSM ART Lens (Sony FE)	£712
911337	Sigma 150-600mm f5-6.3 DG OS HSM CLens (Nikon FX)	£749
910999	Sigma 16mm f1.4 DC DN Contemporary Lens (Canon EF-M)	£252
908140	Sigma 24mm f1.4 DG HSM ART Lens (Nikon FX)	£432
910684	Sigma 50mm f1.4 DG HSM Art Lens (Sony FE)	£450
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Final Analysis

John Wade considers...
Blackpool Railings by Bert Hardy, 1951

For today's digital photographers, let me first explain that this is a contact sheet. In prehistoric times, photographers developed their film, then contact printed the negatives onto a single sheet as an aid to choosing the best from the set. Here, then, are the attempts that led to one of Bert Hardy's most famous pictures. It's the last one on the sheet, bottom right.

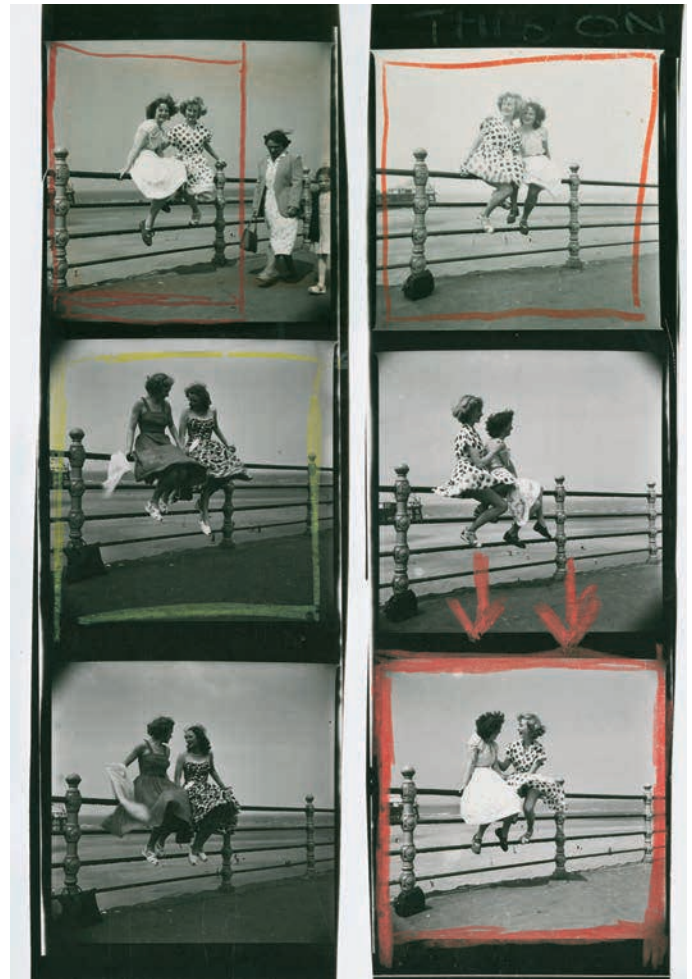
Hardy was born in 1913 to a working-class London family, the first of seven children. He left school at 14, developed an interest in photography and got his big break as a professional photographer in 1940 when he joined Picture Post, the pioneering photojournalism magazine. Among his many diverse photo assignments in times of war and peace, Hardy was well known for pictures that epitomised life in mid-20th century Britain. Which is where this famous picture comes into the story.

While helping to organise a readers' photographic competition at Picture Post, Hardy advised participants that a good picture was not reliant on the camera, but on the person behind it. That prompted the editor to send Hardy to Blackpool with the brief of producing a photo essay using just a box camera. The result was a spread in the magazine called Bert Hardy's Box Camera Blackpool. It showed holidaymakers relaxing, sleeping and playing, and culminated in a full page reproduction of the now iconic two girls laughing and chatting as they sit atop railings on a

gusty seafront.

In his autobiography, *My Life*, published in 1985, Hardy talks about going to Blackpool where the Lord Mayor presented him with a Box Brownie to take the pictures and how an unexpected new assignment meant he had only a short time to briefly walk up and down the seafront to complete his box camera feature. He also mentions that he persuaded a couple of showgirls from the pier theatre to pose for the picture, and we can see from the contact sheet that he had at least six tries before he got what he wanted, even to the extent that at some point the girls changed their dresses. So what looks like a lucky encounter caught at a fortuitous moment was actually professionally planned and perfectly executed. But here's a thing.

In his autobiography Hardy repeatedly refers to the camera as a Box Brownie. Now, the Brownie name was only ever used by Kodak, who made a lot of cameras of that name, many of which were box cameras. They had names like the No.2 Brownie, Popular Brownie, Brownie Junior 620, Brownie Flash B... etc. But no Kodak camera was ever actually named the Box Brownie. Those were words that were often inaccurately applied to any simple, box-shaped camera, irrespective of its maker. Then there's the shape of the pictures. Although the first Brownie in 1900 took square pictures on a film size called 117, from 1901 onwards, Brownie box cameras took 120, 620 or sometimes obscure film sizes like 130 or 124, all of which produced



'What looks like a lucky encounter caught at a fortuitous moment was actually professionally planned'

oblong shaped negatives. The pictures on the contact sheet, you'll notice, are square.

Please don't get me wrong. I don't doubt for a minute that Hardy used a snapshot camera of some kind for the pictures. Look at the motion blur on one girl's dress and hair,

symptomatic of the single slow shutter speed found on a simple camera. And I don't care if the picture was set up. It all goes to prove what Hardy said at the start: it's the photographer not the camera that makes a great picture... whatever the camera is called.

PHOTO BY BERT HARDY/PICTURE POST/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



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