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Asian Photography

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Vol. 38 - No. 7

REVIEW

TAMRON
35-100MM
F/2.8

PRO-PROFILE

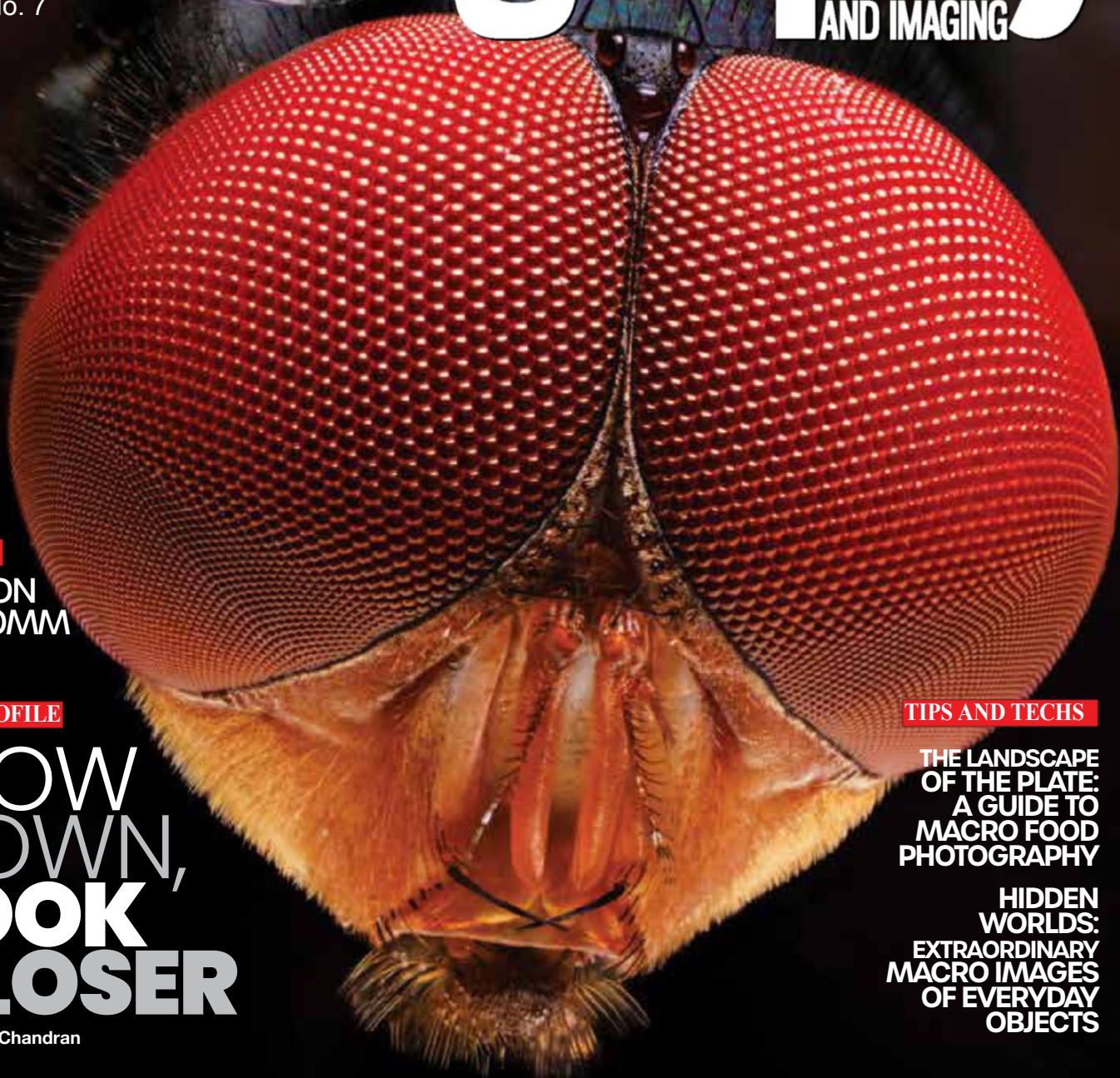
SLOW
DOWN,
**LOOK
CLOSER**

- Prashant Chandran

TIPS AND TECHS

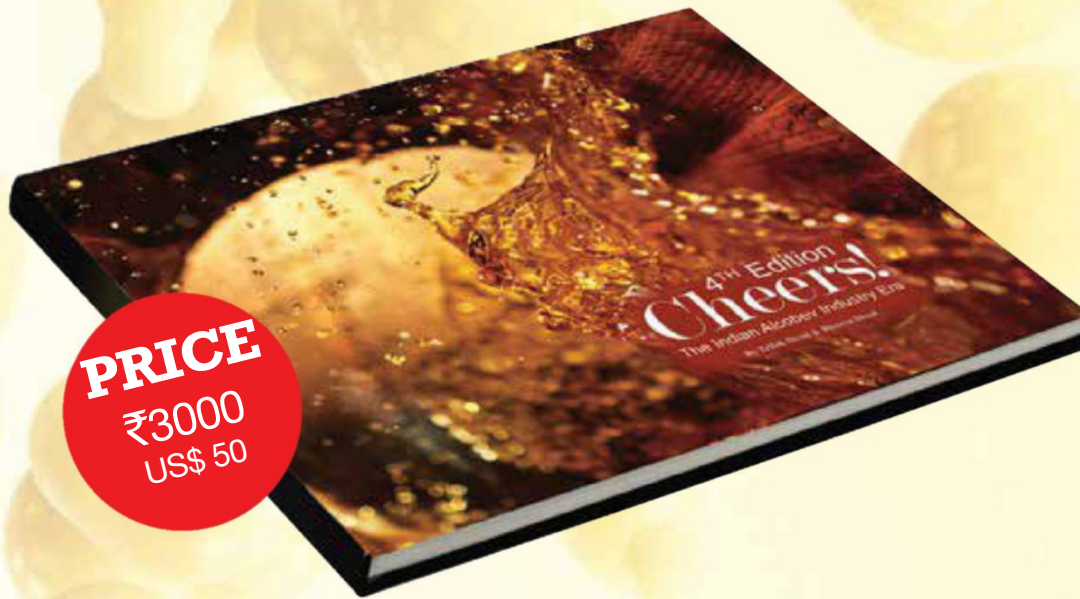
THE LANDSCAPE
OF THE PLATE:
A GUIDE TO
MACRO FOOD
PHOTOGRAPHY

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The Smallest Details

Photography has always been about perspective. Sometimes, all it takes is changing the way we look at the world to discover extraordinary beauty hidden in the ordinary. That is precisely what macro photography encourages us to do. It invites us to slow down, observe carefully, and appreciate details that often go unnoticed in our fast-paced lives.

While flowers, insects and water droplets have long been the hallmark subjects of macro photography, but the genre has evolved significantly. Today's photographers are pushing creative boundaries by exploring unusual subjects that transform everyday objects into fascinating works of art. Even common household items can reveal stunning textures and forms when viewed up close.

One trend that has gained remarkable popularity is macro food photography. From the crystalline texture of sugar and salt to the vibrant layers of fruits, spices, beans and desserts, food offers endless opportunities for creative exploration. Capturing steam rising from a freshly brewed cup of coffee, the delicate bubbles in a fizzy drink, or the intricate structure of chocolate and pastries demonstrates that culinary subjects can be just as captivating as nature. With careful lighting and thoughtful composition, even the simplest ingredients can become compelling visual stories.

In this special issue, we explore techniques, equipment and creative ideas that will help photographers look beyond conventional subjects and embrace the limitless possibilities of close-up photography. Whether you are using a dedicated macro lens or experimenting with extension tubes and close-up filters, the essence of macro photography lies not in expensive equipment but in curiosity and patience.

This issue also features reviews of Tamron's new 35-150mm f/2.8 full-frame lens—the versatile option and the Fujifilm's Instax Mini 13, an instant camera that builds upon the success of its predecessor with user-friendly controls, improved exposure performance and the familiar charm of instant prints.

As always, we hope this issue inspires you to look a little closer, experiment a little more, and discover that some of the most remarkable photographs are waiting to be found in the smallest of details.

Until Next Time...

Happy Reading!

Bhavya Desai

Bhavya Desai

bhavya_desai

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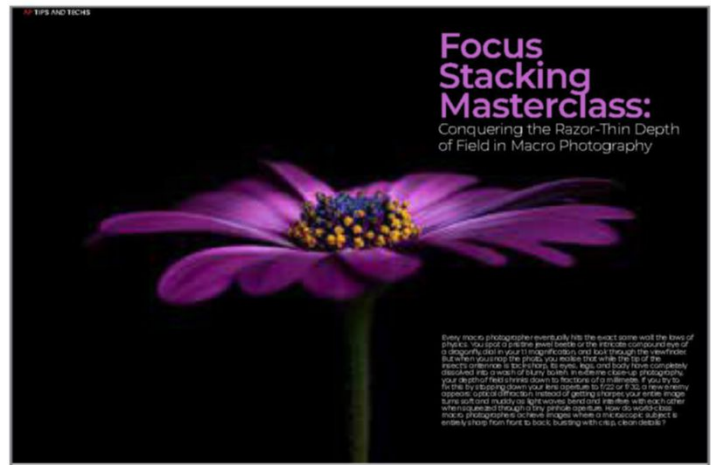
- Prashant Chandran

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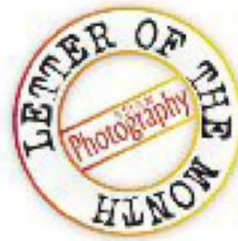
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A red panda is perched on a thick, dark tree branch. The panda is facing the camera, with its head slightly tilted. Its fur is a mix of reddish-brown and white, with a white patch on its chest. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green forest. The number '64' is printed in a large, white, sans-serif font in the bottom-left corner of the image.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Readers' Comments and Suggestions...

Send your letters at apindia.feedback@gmail.com



Dear Editor,

How is the front camera's portrait video quality on the Xiaomi 17T? Does it support 1080p at 60 fps, and how effective is the EIS on the front camera? Also, how is the overall performance of the front camera when it comes to video recording? I feel that phones in the ₹30,000, ₹40,000, and ₹50,000 price ranges often deliver similar front-camera video quality to ₹20,000 phones. I'm currently using a Redmi Note 10 Pro.

**Thanks,
RJ Babu**

Dear RJ,

The phones is good in terms of the portrait video. We have given the samples in the video review on our website and YouTube. You can have a look at that. In terms of the EIS from the front camera —I would say it is decent. Its electronic stabilisation, so I wouldn't expect much from it. But it will do the job.

As for the quality in terms of the output for Video in comparison with the phones which come in the price range of 30k to 50k. It really depends upon what you like as an individual since some people like oversaturated colour in the video while others prefer more of the natural look. But I'd say overall the video is decent in the phone.



LETTERS TO EDITOR

Readers' Comments and Suggestions...

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Dear Sir,

I have a Sony A6400. Will the Sigma 17-40mm F1.8 DC lens work well with this camera?

**Regs,
Salonma**

Dear Salonma,

Yes, the lens will work fine. A 1.5x crop will be there but it should be ok since it will be a 25-60mm lens on the A6400.



Dear Sir,

I'm looking for a Nikon lens and came across your review of the Nikon Z 28-400mm f/4-8 lens. Would it be possible to find this lens second-hand?

**Regs,
Meher Shambhu**

Dear Meher,

Yes, you should be able to find the lens. But if you are getting one then make sure that you do a proper check of the lens.

Few quick points:

- Flare/ghosting performance
- barrel smoothness
- Lens creep and Wobbles
- Dust, smudges, VR, etc





Tamron Launches 17-70mm F/2.8 APSC Lens for Canon RF and Nikon Z

Tamron has announced that its 17-70mm f/2.8 Di III-A VC RXD APS-C zoom lens is coming to Canon RF- and Nikon Z-mount mirrorless cameras, expanding availability beyond its original Sony E-mount and Fujifilm X-mount release.

Designed for APS-C cameras, the lens offers a 25.5-105mm equivalent focal length on Nikon bodies and a 27.2-112mm equivalent range on Canon cameras.

The optical design remains unchanged, featuring 16 elements in 12 groups, a nine-blade diaphragm, Tamron's

Vibration Compensation (VC) image stabilisation, a 67mm filter thread, and a moisture-resistant build with a fluorine-coated front element. The Nikon Z version removes the physical AF/MF and VC switches, with those controls handled through the camera's menu system.

The lens can focus as close as 19cm at the wide end and 39cm at the telephoto end, offering a maximum magnification of up to 1:4.8. The Tamron 17-70mm f/2.8 Di III-A VC RXD will go on sale from July 2 for ₹53,600.

Indian Photographer wins Silver Lion at Cannes

Mumbai-based photographer Jignesh Jhaveri has won a Silver Lion for Photography at the 2026 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity for *Indianis Dentriss*, a campaign for Colgate India created by Ogilvy India that showcased macro images of worn-out toothbrushes into convincing botanical specimens.

Created to encourage people to replace worn toothbrushes, the campaign was inspired by the way frayed bristles resemble flowers in bloom. Jhaveri and his Mumbai studio, The Refinery, photographed ten genuine discarded toothbrushes collected from friends and family, presenting them as a fictional flower species called *Indianis Dentriss*.

Before production, the team validated the concept by showing test images to people outside the project, who consistently mistook the toothbrushes for flowers. The final stills were shot entirely in-camera using multiple camera and macro-lens combinations, including medium-format, probe and ultra-macro optics, while hand-painted backgrounds and carefully controlled lighting reinforced the botanical aesthetic.

The campaign launched as a public exhibition at Mumbai Zoo's botanical gardens, where visitors initially believed they were viewing a newly discovered flower species before scanning a QR code that revealed the toothbrushes and Colgate's oral-health message.



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Adobe Acquires Topaz Labs

Adobe has announced its acquisition of Topaz Labs, the Dallas-based company behind AI-powered photo and video enhancement software. Known for tools like Gigapixel and Topaz Photo AI, Topaz specialises in image upscaling, denoising, and sharpening, helping Adobe strengthen its position against rivals such as Canva and DaVinci Resolve.

Topaz's AI models will be integrated across Adobe Firefly, Firefly Services, and Creative Cloud applications, including Photoshop and Lightroom. Adobe says the acquisition will expand its AI capabilities, enabling creators to enhance footage, restore archival content, remaster images, and seamlessly combine AI-generated and traditionally captured media.

Topaz Labs, which won a Technology & Engineering Emmy Award in 2024 for its AI image and video enhancement technology, will continue to operate as a standalone service through its website. CEO Eric Yang will remain in charge of the Topaz Labs team. The deal is expected to close in the second half of 2026.

"Adobe Firefly, Firefly Services and Creative Cloud offer the industry's best creative tooling and top AI models for



creators and brands," said David Wadhwani, President of Adobe's Creativity & Productivity Business. He added that the acquisition will give creators greater quality and control as they increasingly blend AI-generated and captured content into their workflows.

Apple Hikes Prices of All Mac Products

Apple has increased prices across much of its hardware lineup, citing rising flash memory costs driven by supply constraints. According to *Bloomberg's* Mark Gurman, the company described the move as an "extreme measure", with CEO Tim Cook telling *The Wall Street Journal* that sustained increases in component costs made price hikes unavoidable despite Apple's efforts to absorb them.

The company attributed the higher costs to growing demand for flash memory, including RAM and SSDs, fuelled by the rapid expansion of AI infrastructure.

The price changes affect nearly every major product category. The MacBook Neo now starts at \$699 (₹69,900), up from \$599 (₹59,900). The iPad Pro has increased from \$999 (₹99,900) to \$1,199 (₹1,19,900), while the iPad Air now starts at \$749 (₹74,900), up from \$599 (₹59,900). The MacBook Air now starts at \$1,299 (₹1,29,900), the MacBook Pro at \$1,999 (₹1,99,900), and the iMac at \$1,499 (₹1,49,900).

Desktop systems have also seen notable increases. The Mac Studio with M4 Max now starts at \$2,499 (₹2,49,900), while the M3 Ultra configuration has risen from \$3,999 (₹3,99,900) to \$5,299 (₹5,29,900). Other products, including the HomePod, HomePod mini, Apple TV, and Vision Pro, have



also received price increases, with Vision Pro now starting at \$3,699 (₹3,69,900).

Industry observers remain uncertain about when flash memory supply will stabilise. IEEE Spectrum has suggested market conditions may improve by 2028. Apple's next iPhone lineup, expected to launch in September, could provide further insight into how ongoing memory costs may affect future product pricing.



SIGMA

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VSCO Launches Studio Pro Mobile Photo Editor

VSCO has launched Studio Pro—a new professional photo-editing app for iOS aimed at high-volume photographers, with a macOS version planned for later this year.

The app is designed for photographers working in weddings, portraits, sports, events, school photography, and other large-scale shoots. Studio Pro focuses on speeding up repetitive editing tasks while helping users maintain a consistent editing style across large batches of images.

At launch, the app allows users to edit up to 100 photos simultaneously using more than 200 VSCO presets and a range of manual controls, including exposure, contrast, white balance, sharpening, tone, and film grain adjustments.

A key feature is AI-powered Style Match, which applies the colour, tone, and mood of a reference image to a selected group of photos.

Current features also include batch editing, reference image matching, and gallery sharing. However, RAW file support, memory card imports, advanced export tools, and image organisation features are not yet available.

VSCO said Studio Pro is intended to combine professional-quality editing with faster mobile workflows. The app is free to download, though some features require a VSCO subscription.



Beijing Bans Drones

Beijing has joined a growing list of major cities tightening restrictions on drones, following in the footsteps of New York City, Los Angeles, London, and parts of Tokyo, as governments raise concerns over security, privacy, and airspace management. China's capital has gone further than most by effectively banning the purchase, rental, and recreational use of drones without prior government approval.

Under new rules introduced recently, residents and visitors in Beijing must obtain permission before flying a drone and complete an online training course and regulatory exam. Drones must also be registered before entering or leaving the city.

The restrictions extend beyond flight operations. Drone owners are no longer allowed to repair or replace their devices within Beijing, and any drone left at a repair shop must be collected in person rather than returned by delivery.

Authorities say the measures are intended to strengthen oversight of UAVs and protect the security of the capital city, which contains sensitive military and political sites.

The move is notable because China is the global centre of the consumer drone industry and home to DJI, the world's largest drone manufacturer. According to reports, DJI removed drones from its Beijing retail stores ahead of the new rules taking effect.

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ML-SF3030



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ML-L36



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Attachment
ML-CFL5



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Diffusion Dome
ML-CD15



Collapsible
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Accessory Kit
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Sony Launches RX10 V

Sony Electronics has announced the RX10 V, the latest addition to its RX10 all-in-one camera lineup. The camera retains the series' integrated ZEISS Vario-Sonnar T* 24-600mm (25x) F2.4-4.0 zoom lens and 20.1MP 1.0-type stacked Exmor RS CMOS sensor, while introducing AI-powered Real-time Recognition AF for improved subject detection and tracking.

Powered by the BIONZ XR image processor, the RX10 V supports blackout-free continuous shooting at up to 30fps with up to 60 AF/AE calculations per second. Subject recognition extends to people, animals, birds, insects, vehicles and aircraft. The camera also offers macro focusing as close as 3cm at the wide end.

For video, the RX10 V records up to 4K 120p and includes features such as Active Mode stabilization, S-Cinetone, S-Log3, user LUT support, AI-powered Auto Framing and USB-C live streaming.

The camera features a 3.68-million-dot Quad-VGA OLED electronic viewfinder, a 1.62-million-dot 3.0-inch LCD, an eight-direction multi-selector, and a dust- and moisture-resistant body. Sony has also adopted the NP-FZ100 battery, rated for approximately 630 shots per charge, around 50% more than its predecessor.

Connectivity options include dual-band Wi-Fi, USB Type-C, and compatibility with Sony's Creators' App for remote operation, file transfers and firmware updates.

The Sony RX10 V will be available from August 2026 at a suggested retail price of \$2,299.99 in the US and \$2,899.99 in Canada.



Apple Sues OpenAI

Apple has filed a lawsuit against OpenAI, its recently acquired hardware company io Products, and former Apple employees Tang Tan and Chang Liu, alleging the misappropriation of confidential hardware information related to unreleased products and engineering processes.

Filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, the complaint alleges that the defendants accessed and retained proprietary documents, manufacturing specifications, and project files before or after leaving Apple. Apple claims the information was used to support OpenAI's expanding consumer hardware efforts following its acquisition of io Products in 2025.

The lawsuit also alleges that OpenAI recruiters sought

confidential hardware information from Apple employees during the hiring process and approached Apple suppliers using proprietary manufacturing knowledge. Apple is seeking damages and an injunction to prevent the alleged use of its trade secrets.

OpenAI has denied the allegations. In a statement, the company said it has "no interest in other companies' trade secrets" and remains focused on developing its own technology. Apple reiterated that protecting its intellectual property is a priority.

The allegations have not been proven in court, and the case will proceed through the legal process.



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SLOW DOWN, LOOK CLOSER

Photography has been a constant presence in **Prashant Chandran's** life, and his lifelong interest in photography quietly transformed into a career, while macro photography became the natural extension of an enduring passion. Today, his work is guided by a simple philosophy: slow down, look closer and discover the extraordinary beauty that often exists in the smallest and most overlooked corners of the natural world. **Asian Photography** spoke to him about the process, essential habits, what photographers should focus on & more. Excerpts:



Prashant Chandran



Looking back, Prashant believes there was never one dramatic moment that made him dedicate his career to photographing the unseen details of the world. He was constantly drawn to cameras, images and the way a photograph could preserve emotions while revealing perspectives that often went unnoticed. As years passed, that interest continued to grow alongside him until the transition into a professional career felt less like a conscious decision and more like something that had always been destined to happen.

Macro photography entered his life in much the same way. He became captivated by the intricate patterns, textures and forms that exist all around us but are rarely visible to the naked eye. The more he explored, the more he realised that macro offered endless opportunities for discovery. What continues to inspire him is the way it encourages people to slow down and truly pay attention. It reminds us that

extraordinary beauty often exists in the smallest and most overlooked places. In many ways, his journey into macro photography was never a departure from his lifelong love of photography; it was simply the natural evolution of it, leading him toward a world that had always been there, waiting to be seen more closely.

That same philosophy of observation shapes the way he approaches every location before even lifting the camera. When scouting, the first thing he looks for is greenery. Be it dense vegetation, gardens, wetlands, forest edges and places with a healthy mix of plants are often where he finds the greatest variety of subjects for macro photography. These environments are full of life, providing endless opportunities to discover insects, spiders and other tiny creatures that are so easily overlooked.

Years of spending time in nature have trained his eyes to notice subtle signs, like the type of vegetation, the moisture in the air, the presence of water, the season and even the quality



of light. Based on the terrain alone, Prashant often predicts the kinds of insects he is likely to encounter. However, he believes this ability cannot be learned overnight. It comes through consistent observation and repeated exposure to different environments. The more time one spends in a place, the more patterns begin to emerge. Over the years, he has learned to slow down, walk carefully and pay attention to the smallest movements and textures around him. Every outing becomes a lesson, and every location teaches him something new about the creatures that inhabit it.

This mindset of continual learning naturally extends to the equipment he uses and the techniques he develops. Rather than settling into a fixed setup, he sees his gear as something that is constantly evolving. In fact, he believes this continuous evolution is one of the most exciting aspects of macro photography. He has always enjoyed experimenting with different combinations of cameras, lenses, lighting and accessories to create the image he envisions. Since every subject presents a different challenge, his approach changes accordingly, relying on whichever tools best suit the particular shot.





As his work developed, this willingness to experiment eventually created opportunities beyond his personal projects. One of the highlights of that journey was his association with Fujifilm, where he was involved in testing and providing feedback on one of the company's macro lenses. It proved to be a particularly rewarding experience because it allowed him to contribute from the perspective of someone who spends countless hours working in the field and understands the practical demands of macro photography.

Technically, he believes his process has gradually shifted from simply documenting subjects to carefully crafting an image. He frequently combines different techniques, whether experimenting with lighting, working with specialised macro equipment or refining his shooting methods, to capture details that might otherwise go unnoticed. For him, there is rarely a single formula that works in every situation, and it is precisely this constant problem-solving that keeps the genre endlessly engaging.

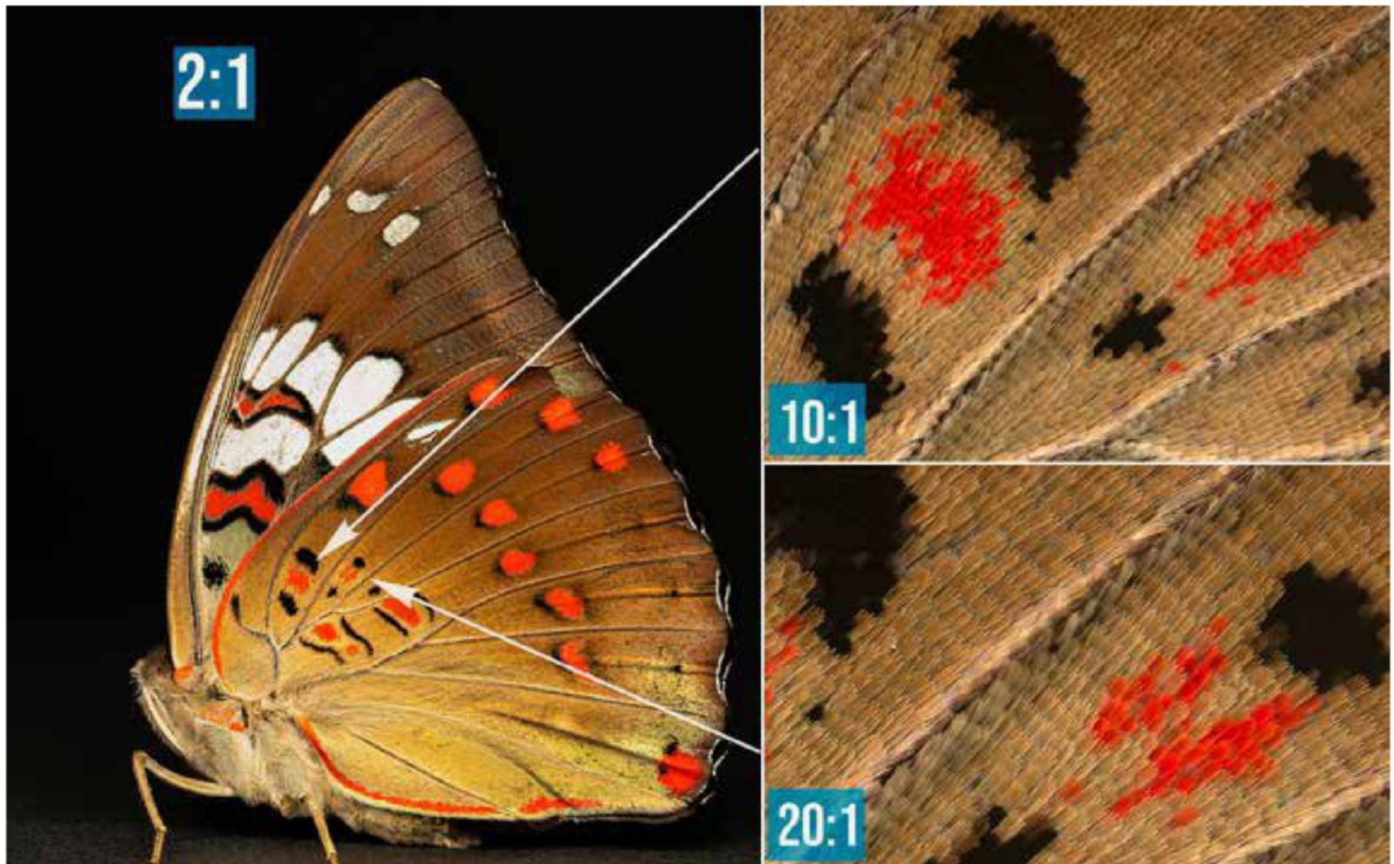
The choice of imaging format is another example of adapting the tool to the subject. For him, using both APS-C and Medium Format systems provides the flexibility to create the kind of image he envisions, with each format offering distinct advantages that become especially meaningful in macro photography.

With APS-C, he appreciates the additional reach it effectively provides. Since many macro subjects are small, fast-moving and easily disturbed, the tighter field of view allows him to fill the frame more easily without having to move uncomfortably close. APS-C systems are also generally lighter and easier to carry, making them particularly useful during long walks through forests, gardens and other green spaces while scouting for insects.

Medium Format offers an entirely different experience. The larger sensor delivers exceptional detail, tonal depth and a remarkable sense of dimensionality. When photographing a subject in a controlled environment, the files retain an incredible amount of texture and subtle colour information, qualities that become especially rewarding when producing large prints. It allows viewers to appreciate the minute details that first drew him to macro photography and experience the hidden world with the same level of clarity that he sees through his lens.

While equipment certainly has its place, he believes one of the biggest mistakes upcoming macro photographers make is becoming too focused on acquiring new gear instead of developing their ability to observe. If there is one habit he wishes he could eliminate, it is the tendency to believe that the next lens, camera or accessory will automatically result





in better photographs. Good equipment undoubtedly helps, but he insists that macro photography is fundamentally about patience, observation and understanding the subject.

Instead of rushing to upgrade their kit, Prashant encourages photographers to spend more time studying the environment around them. Understanding when insects are active, how they behave, the plants they prefer and the way light changes throughout the day often has a much greater impact than any piece of equipment. In macro photography, slowing down is frequently the key to success. Taking a few extra moments to observe a subject, refine the composition and work with the available light can transform an ordinary image into something memorable.

His advice to aspiring macro photographers is therefore simple: train your eyes before upgrading your gear. Cameras and lenses will continue to evolve, just as his own setup continues to change, but the ability to notice small details, anticipate behaviour and patiently wait for the right moment is what ultimately creates compelling macro photographs.

That spirit of curiosity and experimentation also shapes the direction he hopes to take his work in the years ahead. He sees the future as a continuation of the same qualities that have always driven him. He is constantly exploring new methods, experimenting with different combinations of equipment and discovering fresh ways of approaching

a subject. Even after years of photographing the miniature world, he believes the field remains incredibly vast, with countless perspectives still waiting to be discovered.

He is also eager to broaden the range of subjects he photographs, moving beyond familiar territory and challenging himself to observe and interpret the small world in new ways. Travel, he believes, will play a significant role in that journey. Different landscapes and ecosystems tell entirely different stories, and he is excited by the prospect of exploring new terrains while documenting the hidden life that exists within them. Every region offers its own unique textures, colours and species, and he believes these experiences will not only expand his portfolio, but also deepen his understanding of nature itself.

Among the ambitions that excite him most is the idea of presenting a solo exhibition, envisioning it as an experiential exhibition that encourages visitors to slow down and immerse themselves in the miniature world that macro photography reveals—rather than a collection of static photographs. His goal is to make people feel as though they are stepping into a space where the overlooked becomes extraordinary, and where the tiniest details can be experienced with the same sense of wonder that continues to inspire him every time he looks through the viewfinder.

TEXT: ANIRUDH IYER





HOW AI IS **REWRITING** THE RULES OF THE **MICROCOSMOS**

For over a century, macro photography was a discipline governed by an uncompromising, often cruel set of physics equations. To peer into the hidden architecture of a jumping spider's eyes, the crystalline geometry of a snowflake, or the iridescent dust on a butterfly's wing was to wage a constant war against the laws of optics.

The ultimate villain in this war has always been the depth of field—or rather, the lack thereof. In classic macro photography, the plane of sharp focus is so razor-thin that it is measured not in feet or inches, but in millimetres. If an insect's compound eye is crisp, its antenna is an unrecognisable blur. To get more of the subject in focus, traditional photography dictated closing down the lens aperture. But push past $f/16$ on a macro lens, and you run headfirst into another optical wall called diffraction, a physical phenomenon that turns what should be a sharp image into a soft, muddy soup.

For decades, the only workaround was a gruelling, highly surgical technique known as manual focus stacking. A photographer would mount their camera onto a motorised micrometre rail, take dozens, sometimes hundreds, of incremental shots, and stitch the sharp slices together in post-processing software. A single vibration, a passing breeze, or a twitch from a live insect would ruin hours of work.

Today, that wall is crumbling. We are living in the era of computational photography, a revolution where artificial intelligence is bypassing optical limitations. By trading glass for algorithms, the microcosmos is opening up in ways that were previously scientifically impossible.

The Silicon Microscope

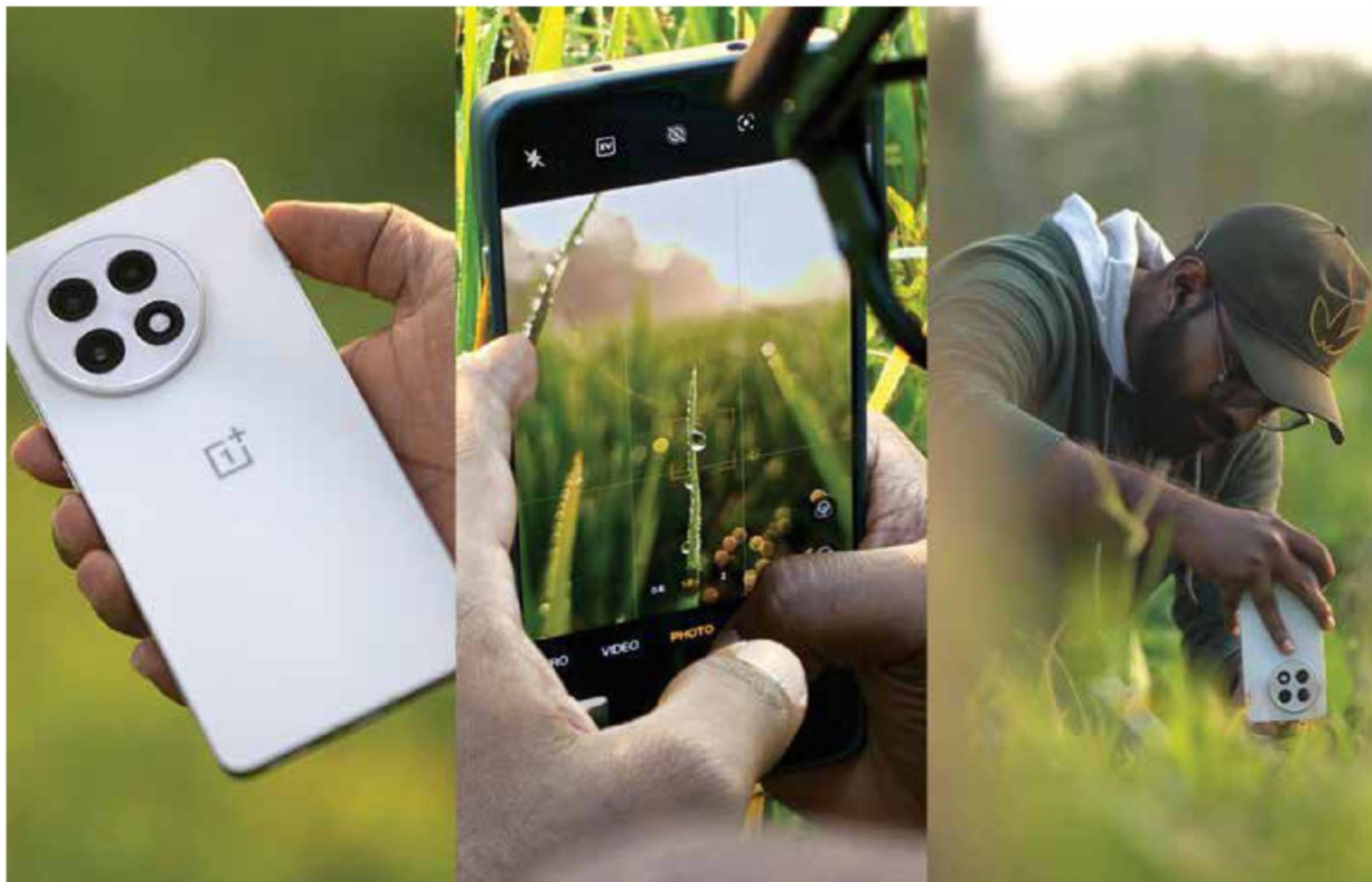
At the heart of this shift is the realisation that hardware has more or less plateaued, but software has not. Camera and lens manufacturers spent decades chasing the perfect glass element mix to minimise aberrations. But the smartphone industry, constrained by the physical impossibility of fitting a telephoto macro lens into a 7mm-thick glass slab, was forced to think differently.

Smartphone cameras don't just capture light; they compute it. When you click the shutter button on a modern flagship device for a close-up shot, the phone doesn't take one picture. It takes a rapid burst of bracketed images, shifting focus and exposure parameters at a rate of dozens of frames per second.

An on-board Neural Processing Unit (NPU) instantly analyses these frames. It maps the image, identifies which micro-regions are perfectly sharp, and fuses them into a single, deep-focus composite. This happens in the blink of an eye, handheld, while walking through a garden. What once required a tripod, an expensive macro rail, specialised desktop software, and an hour of patience is now executed seamlessly by an algorithm while you hold a cup of coffee.

AI and the Liberation from the Tripod

While basic focus stacking has moved into camera bodies and smartphones, true AI-driven macro photography





goes far beyond simple stitching. Artificial intelligence has fundamentally changed how computers interpret micro-detail.

Consider the challenge of sensor noise. Because macro photography requires massive amounts of light, it is often supplemented by specialised flashes or diffusers, because shooting in natural, shaded environments forces photographers to raise their ISO. High ISO introduces noise, obscuring the very details macro enthusiasts crave.

Modern AI-powered denoising algorithms understand the difference between random digital noise and the organic texture of a beetle's carapace. Rather than simply blurring out the noise—which old-school noise reduction did, destroying fine detail—AI reconstructs the underlying texture.

It essentially “knows” what micro-textures look like, cleanly separating the signal from the noise.

Furthermore, generative AI networks are solving the problem of motion artifacts. If an ant moves its leg mid-stack during a computational capture, standard merging algorithms produce ugly ghosting or duplication errors. AI-driven semantic alignment models can recognise the ant's anatomy, track the movement of individual limbs across frames, and intelligently choose the correct frame to mask over the movement, preserving a flawless, artifact-free image.

The Democratisation of the Invisible

The broader cultural impact of computational macro is the profound democratisation of scientific observation.



Historically, extreme macro photography was an elite hobby. To achieve 5x magnification required a specialised lens (like the legendary Canon MP-E 65mm), a rock-solid studio setup, and thousands of dollars in lighting gear. It was a hostile medium for beginners.

Now, a teenager with a mid-range smartphone or an entry-level mirrorless camera utilising built-in computational focus bracketing can capture images that would have graced the covers of National Geographic 20 years ago. Specialised “probe lenses”—long, waterproof barrels with built-in LED rings—are working in tandem with camera-side computational algorithms to allow field biologists to document new species of fungi and insects in real-time, in the wild, with textbook clarity.

This shift transforms macro photography from a slow, deliberate art form into an exploratory tool. When the technical friction of capturing an image drops to near zero, the photographer’s mind is freed to focus purely on composition, narrative, and discovery.

The Philosophical Rift: Document vs. Simulation

As with any paradigm shift driven by AI, the rise of computational macro photography has sparked a fierce debate within the photographic community. Where does documentation end and digital illustration begin?



When a neural network reconstructs the microscopic hairs on a bee's leg because it has been trained on what a bee's leg should look like, is that image still a photograph? Purists argue that computational photography creates a simulation of reality rather than a capture of it. They contend that the imperfections—the soft fall-off of blur, the grain of the film or sensor—are what ground a photograph in truth.

On the other side of the aisle, computational advocates view these algorithms as a natural extension of the medium. A lens, after all, is just a tool that distorts light through curved glass to project it onto a surface; it has never been a perfect translation of reality. If an algorithm can bypass the physical limits of diffraction to show us the true, un-blurred structural colour of a peacock feather, is that not a more accurate representation of the world?

For scientists, educators, and conservationists, the answer is a resounding yes. The priority is clarity and information density. If computational tools allow us to see the world more clearly, the mathematical semantics of how that clarity was achieved matter far less than the visual data provided.

What Lies Beyond the Horizon

We are only scratching the surface of what computational macro can achieve. As machine learning models become more sophisticated and lightweight, we can look forward to even more radical leaps in technology:

- **Real-time Handheld 3D Micro-Mapping:** Future devices won't just output a 2D focus-stacked image; they will use the focus-bracketed data to instantly generate a highly accurate 3D digital twin of a microscopic object, viewable in augmented reality.
- **Predictive Motion Tracking:** AI models will anticipate the movement of living organisms at a micro-scale, micro-adjusting the lens's internal autofocus elements at kilohertz speeds to keep moving targets perfectly sharp.
- **Intelligent Neural Upscaling:** Algorithms tailored specifically for organic structures will allow extreme digital zooms without pixelation, turning a standard close-up into an electron-microscope-style exploration.

The tyranny of the millimetre is over. By liberating macro photography from its optical handcuffs, AI and computational design haven't replaced the photographer; they have granted them a superpower. They have turned every lens into a gateway to an alien world that exists right under our feet—a world that is finally coming into sharp, uncompromised focus.

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THE LANDSCAPE OF THE PLATE:

A GUIDE TO MACRO FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY

Food photography typically invites us to look at a beautifully staged table, a perfectly composed plate, or a rustic overhead spread. But when you step closer—so close that the boundary between the food and the background completely vanishes—you enter the world of macro food photography. Macro photography changes how we interact with what we eat. It transforms a familiar ingredient into an abstract landscape of texture, colour, and form. Instead of capturing a complete dish, macro photography isolates individual elements: the delicate, frosty peach fuzz on a fresh fruit, the molten geode structure of a broken piece of caramel, or the complex geometric cells of a single raspberry.

1. Defining “True” Macro in Food

In general photography, “macro” can be a loosely used term. However, in technical terms, true macro photography requires a lens capable of a 1:1 magnification ratio. This means that the size of the subject being projected onto your camera’s digital sensor is exactly the same size as the subject is in real life.

When you apply a 1:1 magnification ratio to food, ordinary details become spectacular:

- **Textural contrasts:** The flaky, jagged cliffs of a fresh croissant contrasted against smooth, glassy chocolate glaze.
- **Liquid dynamics:** Tiny pockets of oil suspended in a vinaigrette, or condensation pooling perfectly on the skin of an ice-cold citrus fruit.
- **Micro-structures:** The crystalline grains of sea salt resting on a dark chocolate tart.

By focusing purely on these micro-details, you remove the environmental context of the restaurant or kitchen. The viewer is forced to focus entirely on sensory cues—taste, touch, and temperature, relying heavily on their own sensory memory to interpret the image.

2. Essential Gear for Micro-Scale Food Styling

You don’t need an overwhelming amount of expensive gear to begin, but macro photography requires precise control over your focal plane. Because your depth of field is incredibly thin when shooting close up, small gear choices yield big results.

Dedicated Macro Lenses

While many zoom lenses feature a “Macro” mode, these rarely achieve a true 1:1 ratio. A dedicated prime macro lens is the gold standard.

- **Tele Macro Lenses:** These focal lengths are ideal for full-frame cameras. They offer a comfortable working distance (the physical distance between the front of your lens and the food), ensuring that your camera body doesn’t accidentally block your light source.



- **Wide Macro Lenses:** These work exceptionally well on crop-sensor (APS-C) camera bodies, offering a lightweight, highly versatile option for closer overhead details.

Stabilising the Shot

At 1:1 magnification, even the slightest vibration—including the physical press of the shutter button or a subtle gust of wind—can cause severe motion blur.

- **A Heavy-Duty Tripod:** A sturdy tripod with an adjustable center column (ideally one that can swing out horizontally) is non-negotiable.
- **Remote Shutter Release or Exposure Delay:** Use your camera's built-in 2-second self-timer or a remote shutter app to eliminate hand shake entirely.

3. The Technical Balance

Shooting at extreme close-up distances introduces steep optical challenges. The most immediate obstacle is the dramatic loss of depth of field. When your lens is positioned only a few inches from a piece of food, an aperture of f/2.8 might yield a sliver of sharp focus that is less than a millimetre thick.

The Right Aperture

To keep enough of your food subject sharp, you will need to stop down your lens. While standard portraits look beautiful at f/1.4 or f/2.8, macro food photography typically thrives between f/8 and f/16.

Be cautious of pushing your lens all the way to f/22 or f/32. Doing so introduces diffraction.

Focus Stacking

If you want an entire macro scene like a stack of sugar crystals or the complete surface of a strawberry to be entirely sharp from front to back, a single exposure won't cut it. Instead, professionals use a technique called focus stacking.

1.Lock down the camera:

Mount your camera firmly to a tripod and switch your lens to manual focus mode. Set your exposure parameters completely to manual so the lighting stays identical across every frame.

2.Establish your starting point

Manually adjust your focus ring until the very closest edge of your food subject is tack-sharp. Take your first photograph.

3.Incrementally shift the focus plane

Turn the manual focus ring slightly deeper into the scene. Take another shot. Repeat this process, capturing consecutive slices of focus until you reach the furthest back element of the food you want sharp.

4.Merge the images in Post

Import your image sequence into editing software like Adobe Photoshop or dedicated focus-stacking programs. Use the automatic alignment and blending tools to stitch the sharpest slices together into one ultra-crisp image.

4. Lighting for Shape and Texture

Standard food photography often favours large, diffused softboxes to mimic the look of an open window. While soft light looks stunning on wide flat-lays, macro photography requires light that accentuates textures and micro-contours.







Sidelighting and Backlighting

Placing your main light source directly behind or to the absolute side of your subject is essential for macro work.

- Sidelighting casts long, micro-shadows across the uneven surface of your food. This is what makes a crust of artisanal sourdough bread look rugged, rustic, and incredibly tactile.
- Backlighting works miracles on translucent or semi-opaque foods. Passing light through thin slices of citrus fruit, a drizzle of honey, or a splash of clear broth illuminates their internal structures, causing the food to glow from within.

Modifying Light on a Small Scale

Because your canvas is only a few inches wide, large studio modifiers can be clumsy. Instead, lean on small, DIY tools to shape your light:

- **Black foam boards (Flags):** Cut small strips of black cardboard to place near your food. These absorb bouncing light, deepening shadows and adding graphic contrast to the edges of your subject.
- **White cards or silver foil reflectors:** Use tiny pieces of cardstock or kitchen foil held up by small clamps to catch the main light and precisely bounced fill light back into deep, hidden crevices of the dish.

5. Food Styling Secrets for Close-Up Work

At a macro scale, there is no hiding. A speck of dust looks

like a boulder; a tiny wilted edge on a mint leaf looks like a massive blemish. Precision styling is the defining line between an unappealing mess and an appetising work of art.

The Macro Stylist's Toolkit

Ditch the large kitchen tongs and spatulas. For macro work, you need delicate, surgical instruments. To capture the finest details, you need to swap them out for delicate, almost surgical instruments that offer ultimate precision.

First up are fine-tip tweezers, which are essential for placing individual sesame seeds, micro-greens, or sea salt flakes exactly where they need to go. For liquids, syringes and medicine droppers allow you to deposit perfect, uniform droplets of sauce, oil, or water with absolute control.

To maintain that mouth-watering look, artist brushes come in handy for painting thin layers of cooking oil onto meats or pastries, instantly restoring a fresh gloss right before you shoot. Finally, a handheld air blower is the perfect touch-free solution, letting you puff away stray crumbs, dust motes, or fibres without ever physically disrupting your meticulously styled food.

Fake Moisture and Structural Longevity

Real food wilts, melts, and dries out rapidly under studio conditions. To give yourself time to compose your macro frame, you can utilise a few simple industry tricks:

Glycerin: Plain water droplets evaporate within minutes. Mix a simple 50/50 solution of water and vegetable glycerin in a spray bottle. Mist it onto fresh produce or glassware. The

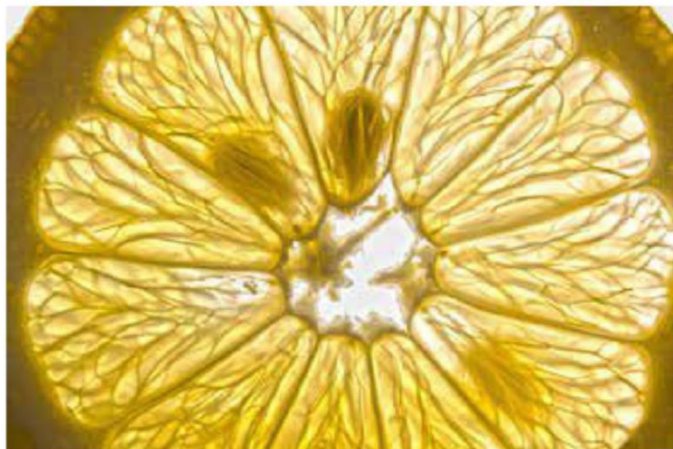


glycerin prevents the droplets from running or evaporating, keeping your subject looking fresh for hours.

Fixing separation: Sauces often break down or separate into oil and water under studio lights. Whisk a tiny pinch of xanthan gum into your sauces to keep them emulsified and smooth for extended periods.

6. Composition: Finding Abstracts in the Familiar

When you remove the plate, the table, and the silverware, traditional composition rules like the “Rule of Thirds” take on a different form. In macro photography, composition is about managing lines, shapes, and tonal flow.



- **Isolate a Hero Element:** Find one specific focal point like the tip of a chili flake, a single perfect bubble in cake batter and place it deliberately along your focal plane. Let the rest of the image fall away into a smooth, buttery blur (bokeh).
- **The Power of Repetition:** Seek out naturally repeating patterns, like the seeds on a strawberry or the stacked layers of a sliced red onion. Filling the entire frame with a repeating pattern creates a highly satisfying, geometric abstract image.
- **Play with Negative Space:** You don’t have to crowd the frame. A single, sharp droplet of dark balsamic vinegar resting on a vast, clean white expanse of porcelain can tell a far more dramatic story than an overly busy plate.

Final Food For Thought

Macro food photography rewards patience above all else. It forces you to slow down, lean in close, and study your ingredients with child-like curiosity. By mastering the balance of narrow apertures, directional lighting, and surgical food styling, you can transform the most mundane kitchen staples into stunning, high-definition art pieces that capture the true, visceral essence of taste.

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Focus Stacking Masterclass:

Conquering the Razor-Thin Depth of Field in Macro Photography



Every macro photographer eventually hits the exact same wall: the laws of physics. You spot a pristine jewel beetle or the intricate compound eye of a dragonfly, dial in your 1:1 magnification, and look through the viewfinder. But when you snap the photo, you realise that while the tip of the insect's antennae is tack-sharp, its eyes, legs, and body have completely dissolved into a wash of blurry bokeh. In extreme close-up photography, your depth of field shrinks down to fractions of a millimetre. If you try to fix this by stopping down your lens aperture to $f/22$ or $f/32$, a new enemy appears: optical diffraction. Instead of getting sharper, your entire image turns soft and muddy as light waves bend and interfere with each other when squeezed through a tiny pinhole aperture. How do world-class macro photographers achieve images where a microscopic subject is entirely sharp from front to back, bursting with crisp, clean details?

Focus Stacking!

Focus stacking is a technique where you capture a sequential series of photographs, each taken at a slightly different focal distance. By slicing your subject into overlapping planes of focus, you ensure that every single part of the subject is captured sharply across the sequence.

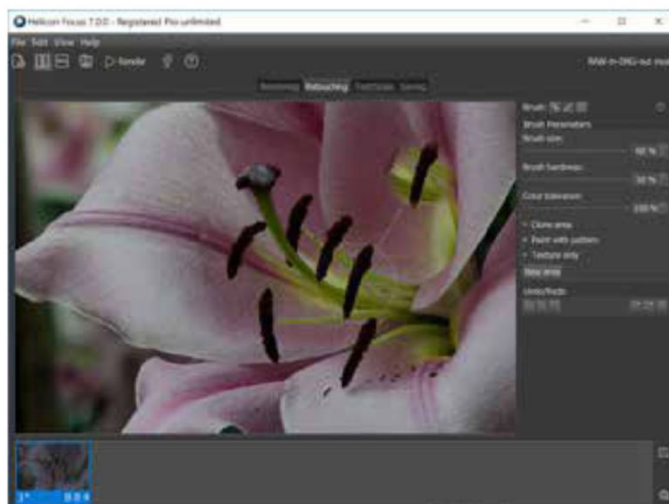
Later, you use post-processing software to analyse the image stack, select only the sharpest parts of each frame, and seamlessly merge them into a single composite image with an extended, physics-defying depth of field.



Essential Gear for the Macro Stack

Before clicking the shutter, you need a stable platform and a reliable method to shift your focus point precisely.

- **A Rock-Solid Tripod:** Because you need to align multiple images down to the pixel level, even microscopic camera movement will ruin your stack. Invest in a heavy-duty tripod with a stable ball head or a precise three-way pan-tilt head.
- **Focusing Rails vs. Internal Focusing Lens Adjustments:**
 - **Focusing Rails:** A mechanical rail mounts between your camera and tripod, allowing you to physically move the entire camera body and lens assembly forward or backward



in tiny, metered increments (fractions of a millimetre).

- **Internal Lens Focusing:** Instead of moving the camera, you leave the camera body static and progressively shift the lens's focus ring. Many modern mirrorless systems now include built-in "focus bracketing" features that automate this process internally.
- **Remote Shutter Release:** Pressing the shutter button with your finger introduces vibration. Use a cable release, a wireless remote, or your camera's internal 2-second exposure delay timer to let vibrations settle before the shutter opens.

Setting Up Your Field or Studio Environment

Focus stacking can be broken down into two main environments: the controlled studio and the unpredictable field. Whichever environment you choose, preparation dictates your success.

1. Managing Ambient Factors

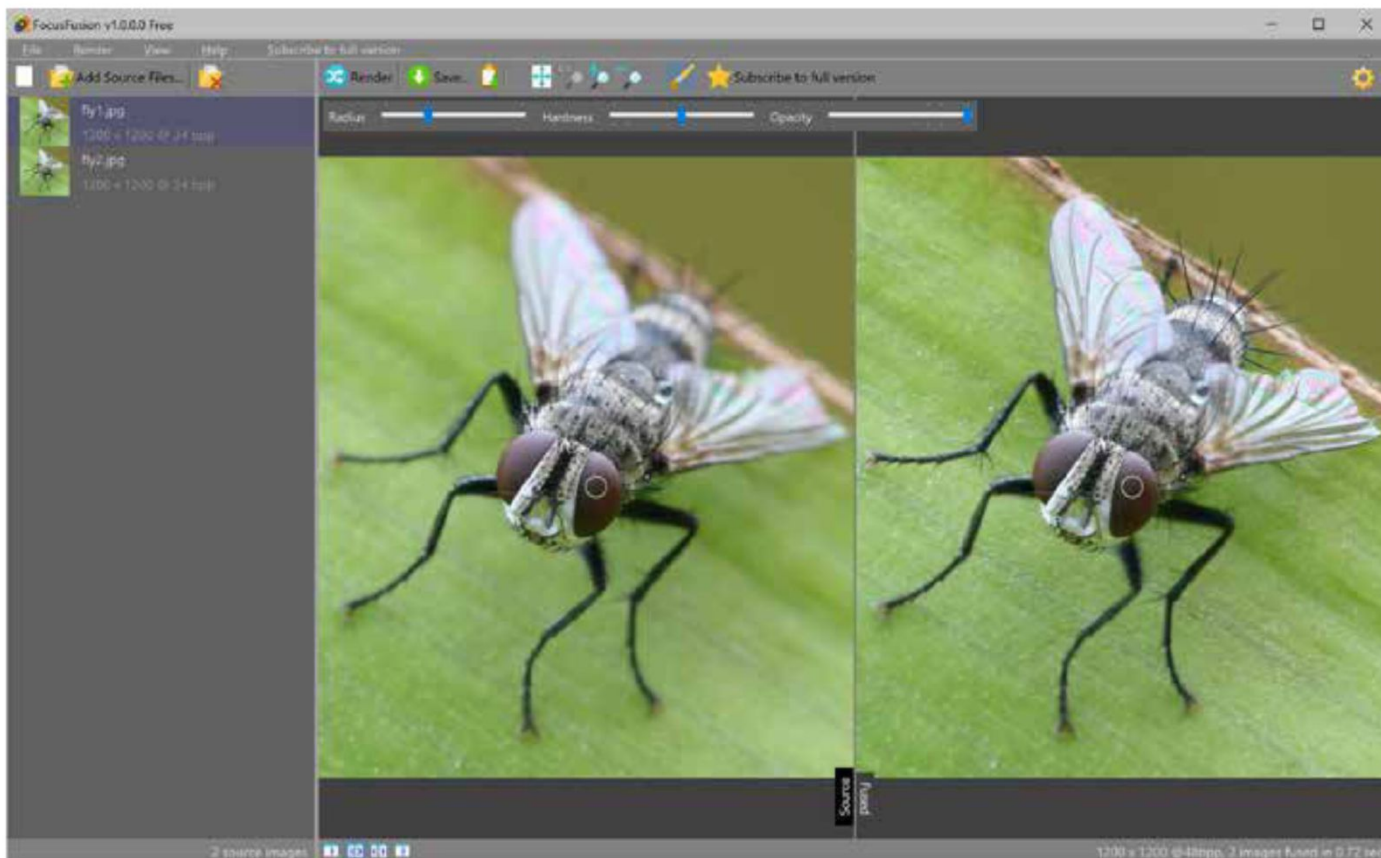
Movement is the primary enemy of focus stacking. If you are shooting outdoors, even a gentle breeze will move a flower petal or a leaf out of alignment between frames. For field macro work, early mornings are best because the wind is usually calm and insects are ectothermic (sluggish and still because of the cool morning air). If necessary, use small clamps (like plamp systems) to secure the stem of a plant to your tripod leg to eliminate sway.

2. Lighting the Scene

Because macro magnification drastically reduces the amount of light reaching your sensor, additional lighting is almost always required. Avoid harsh, direct flash, which creates ugly specular highlights on metallic insect carapaces or wet flora. Use a specialised macro twin-flash or a speedlight equipped with a large, soft diffuser dome. Constant LED panels are also excellent for studio settings because they allow you to see exactly where shadows fall before you press the shutter.

Step-by-Step Guide: Capturing the Perfect Stack

Let's walk through the manual execution of capturing a focus stack. For this walkthrough, we will assume you are using manual camera controls for maximum precision.



1. Dial In Your Base Exposure:

Switch your camera to Manual (M) mode. Set your aperture to its optical sweet spot between f/4 and f/8 where the lens is sharpest and free from diffraction. Set your ISO as low as possible (ISO 100 or 200) to minimise digital noise. Adjust your shutter speed or flash power until your exposure is perfectly balanced.

2. Establish Your Slicing Boundaries:

Switch your lens to Manual Focus. Turn on your camera's Live View screen and enable Focus Peaking. Manually adjust your focusing rail or focus ring until the plane of focus sits slightly in front of the closest point of your subject. This ensures you do not miss the leading edge of your final image.

3. Determine Step Size and Overlap: The 20% Rule

The distance you shift your focus between shots is your step size. To avoid out-of-focus gaps (known as "focus bands") in your final image, your depth-of-field slices must overlap by at least 20%.

4. Execute the Capture Sequence:

Take your first shot. Carefully rotate your focus ring or turn the micrometer dial on your focusing rail to move the focus plane slightly deeper into the subject. Wait 1-2 seconds for any structural vibrations to dissipate completely, then take the next shot. Repeat this process methodically until the focus plane has passed completely through the furthest point of your subject.

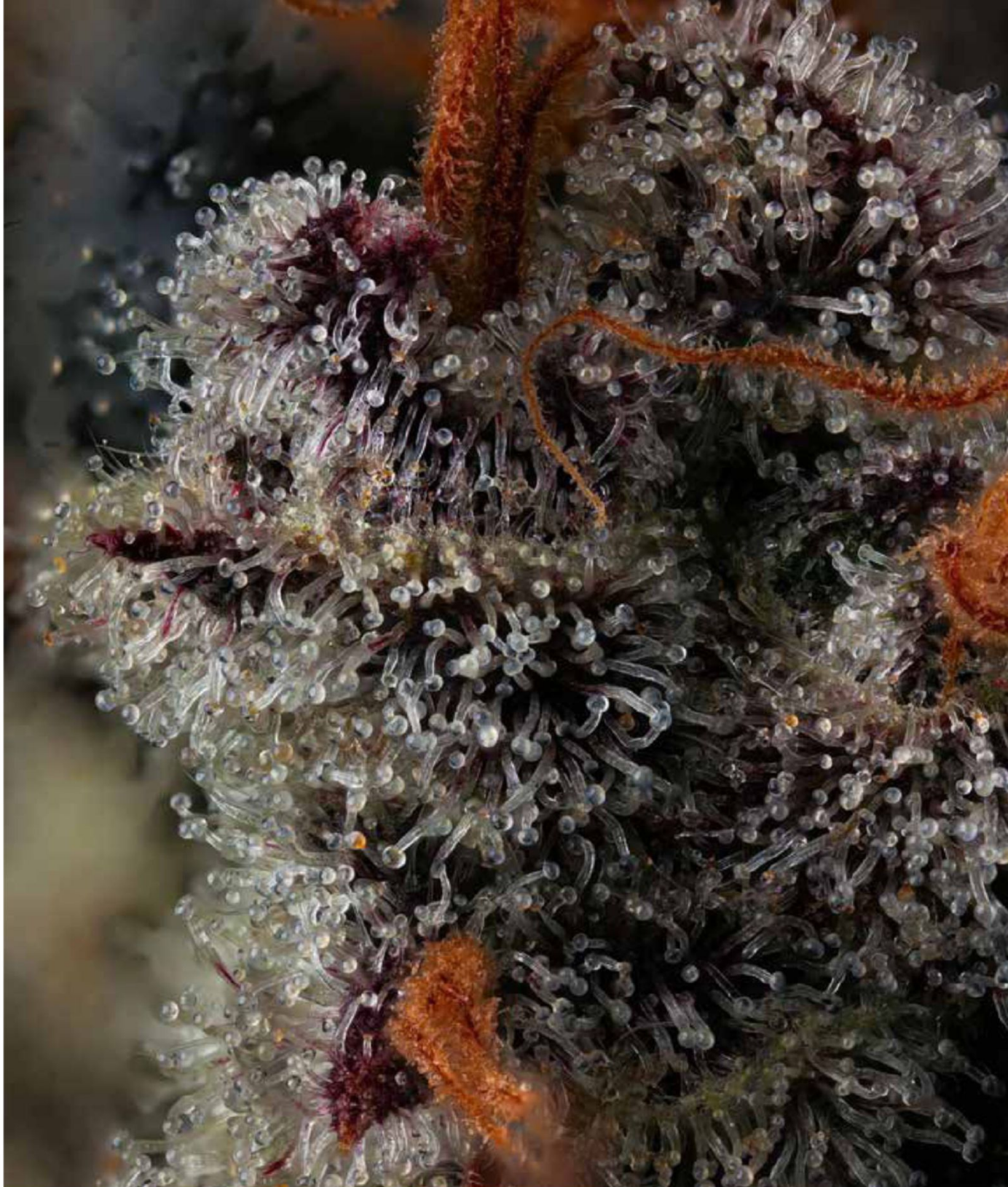
Pro Tip: Always take a "bookend" photo before and after your sequence. Slide your hand in front of the lens and take a blank frame to mark where your focus stack starts and ends. When

you import hundreds of images into your computer later, this will save you hours of sorting confusion.

The Digital Darkroom: Post-Processing Your Stack

Once you have captured your sequence of raw files, it is time to blend them together. You can use standard photo editing suites like Adobe Photoshop, or specialised stacking software like Helicon Focus or Zerene Stacker, which feature advanced algorithms designed specifically to handle complex macro stacking challenges.





Step 1: RAW Processing and Consistency

Import your images into Lightroom or your RAW converter of choice. Select the entire sequence and apply identical global adjustments. Ensure white balance, exposure, and contrast match perfectly across every frame. Export the images as high-quality 16-bit TIFF files to preserve colour depth and detail during blending.

Step 2: Alignment and Registration

As a lens focuses deeper into a scene, it undergoes a

phenomenon called focus breathing, where the field of view changes slightly, causing the subject to subtly scale up or down in size from frame to frame. Good stacking software automatically compensates for this by adjusting the scale, rotation, and alignment of every layer so that they line up perfectly on top of one another.

Step 3: Stack Merging and Methods

Dedicated stacking software usually offers different blending algorithms. Choosing the correct method depends on your subject matter:



The Pyramid Method operates by analysing contrast details across various frequencies, building the final image by isolating and layering these highly detailed structures into a single composite. Because it excels at capturing fine details, this method is best used for highly textured subjects, complex insect hairs, and deep, multi-layered patterns.

Alternatively, the Depth Map Method takes a structural approach by tracing a continuous, topographical map of focus from the front of the subject to the back, stitching the sharpest areas together. This technique is ideal for handling smooth surfaces, glossy textures, plant leaves, and clean backgrounds, resulting in incredibly smooth transitions across the image.

Step 4: Retouching and Fixing Artifacts

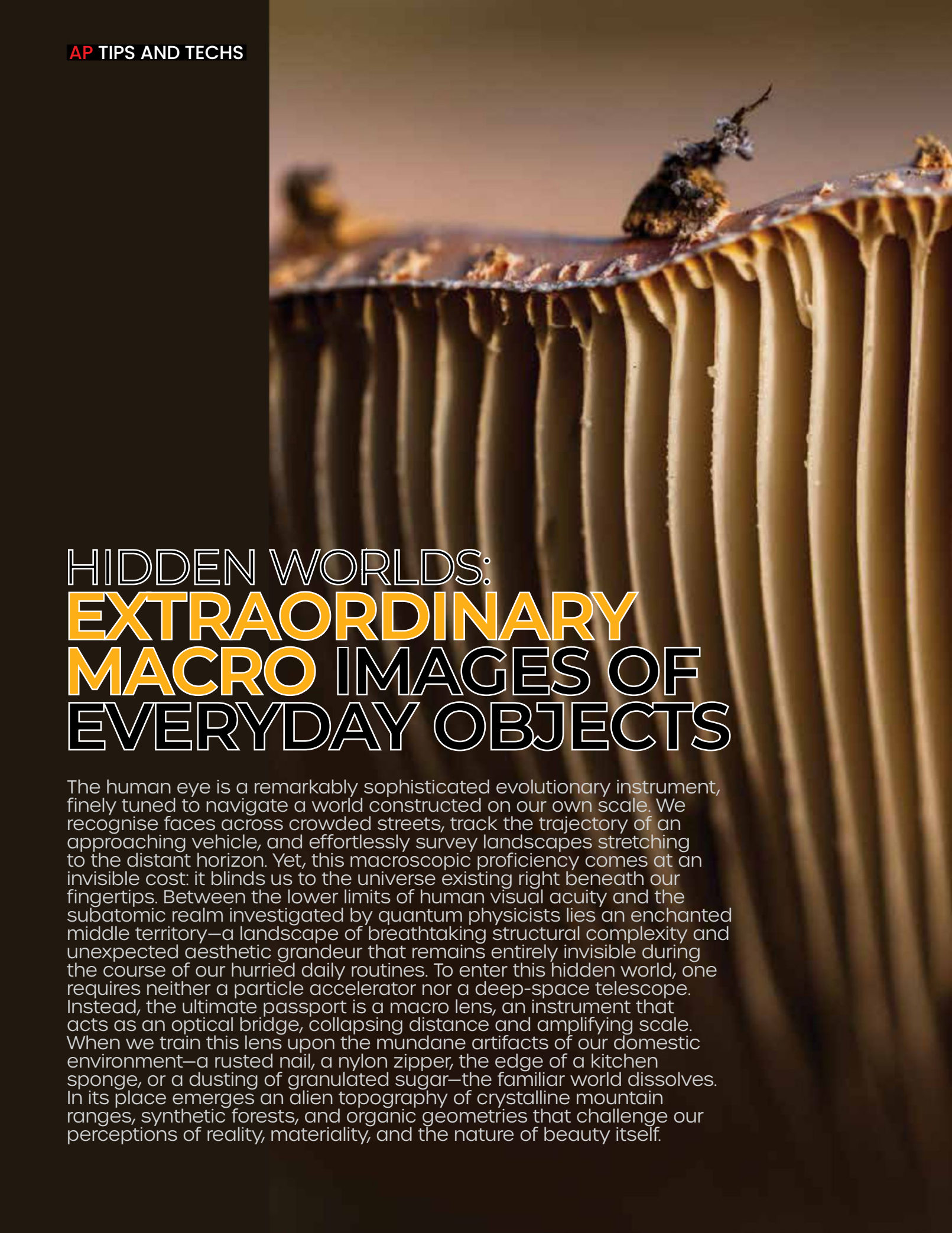
No automated stacking algorithm is flawless. You will often encounter “ghosting” artifacts where a stray dust particle or a moving element creates a blurry halo around fine details. Use the built-in retouching brush tools in Zerene Stacker or Helicon Focus (or layer masks in Photoshop) to manually paint over problematic areas, pulling clean data directly from an individual source frame where that specific zone was perfectly sharp.

Troubleshooting Common Focus Stacking Pitfalls

- **Focus Bands (Banding):** If you see alternating bands of sharp and blurry zones across your final composite, your step size was too large. You must reduce the distance between shots to ensure smooth focus overlap.
- **Halos Around Overlapping Elements:** When a sharp foreground element (like an insect leg) sits directly in front of a distant background element, the software can get confused, blurring the border area. Fix this by manually using a small retouching brush to carefully mask the foreground edge back to sharp clarity.
- **Subject Discomfort or Movement:** If shooting live subjects out in nature, a single twitch can break a stack. If a subject moves midway through your sequence, cut your losses, note where the movement occurred, and start a brand-new sequence immediately.

By masterfully combining stable shooting mechanics in the field with clean algorithmic processing in the studio, focus stacking completely unlocks the microscopic world, allowing you to present textures, patterns, and life with crisp, jaw-dropping clarity that can move beyond traditional optical limitations.

TEXT: ANIRUDH IYER



HIDDEN WORLDS: **EXTRAORDINARY** **MACRO** IMAGES OF EVERYDAY OBJECTS

The human eye is a remarkably sophisticated evolutionary instrument, finely tuned to navigate a world constructed on our own scale. We recognise faces across crowded streets, track the trajectory of an approaching vehicle, and effortlessly survey landscapes stretching to the distant horizon. Yet, this macroscopic proficiency comes at an invisible cost: it blinds us to the universe existing right beneath our fingertips. Between the lower limits of human visual acuity and the subatomic realm investigated by quantum physicists lies an enchanted middle territory—a landscape of breathtaking structural complexity and unexpected aesthetic grandeur that remains entirely invisible during the course of our hurried daily routines. To enter this hidden world, one requires neither a particle accelerator nor a deep-space telescope. Instead, the ultimate passport is a macro lens, an instrument that acts as an optical bridge, collapsing distance and amplifying scale. When we train this lens upon the mundane artifacts of our domestic environment—a rusted nail, a nylon zipper, the edge of a kitchen sponge, or a dusting of granulated sugar—the familiar world dissolves. In its place emerges an alien topography of crystalline mountain ranges, synthetic forests, and organic geometries that challenge our perceptions of reality, materiality, and the nature of beauty itself.





The Optical Alchemy of Scale

Macro photography is fundamentally an act of radical decontextualisation. By isolating an object from its native environment and magnifying it beyond its normal proportions, the photographer strips away its utility and its cultural meaning. A postage stamp ceases to be a token of economic exchange or a marker of postal logistics; under extreme magnification, it transforms into an intricate, interwoven tapestry of raw cotton fibres saturated with pooling reservoirs of iridescent ink. The functional object is effectively obliterated, and in its vacancy, pure form, texture, and colour are allowed to speak.

This shift in perspective forces an intellectual realignment. In our daily lives, we operate under a strict tyranny of utility: we look at a key and see an open door; we look at a matchstick and see fire. We do not actually see the object itself; we see its purpose. Macro imaging shatters this utilitarian shorthand. When the tip of a standard wooden matchstick is brought into high-magnification focus, it reveals itself as a volatile, bubbling volcanic orb—a cratered, porous landscape of sulfur, potassium chlorate, and glass powder that looks more like a high-resolution rendering of a distant moon than a simple tool for lighting a stove. The realisation that this cosmic landscape exists on an object we discard without a second thought produces a profound sense of cognitive dissonance, exposing the limits of our casual observation.

The Topography of the Domestic

Consider the kitchen table, an environment teeming with

undiscovered architectural wonders. A single grain of table salt, invisible as an independent form to the casual glance, reveals its true nature under the macro lens as a collection of perfect, interlocking cubic crystals. These architectural monoliths, sculpted by the unyielding laws of ionic bonding, evoke the brutalist monuments of ancient civilizations or the geometric minimalism of speculative sci-fi citadels. To see a scattering of salt grains magnified is to gaze upon a sprawling metropolis of transparent glass blocks, catching and refracting light in ways that mimic high-end artistic installations.

Moving from the mineral to the organic, the skin of a common strawberry ceases to be a uniform red surface and reveals itself as an elaborate, leathered terrain of deep crimson valleys. Nestled within these valleys are individual achenes—the actual fruits of the plant, which we mistakenly call seeds. Under magnification, each achenial pod resembles an expertly polished amber gemstone, secured to the fleshy body of the strawberry by fibrous, root-like anchors. The golden-green sheen of these pods contrasts dramatically with the deep, cellular architecture of the surrounding red walls, highlighting an intricate biological design that goes entirely unappreciated as we consume the fruit.

Even the industrial items littering our workspaces undergo dramatic metamorphoses. The tip of a ballpoint pen, an item manufactured by the billions, becomes an exquisite engineering marvel. The macro lens reveals a perfectly spherical steel orb cradled within a precisely machined brass housing. Coating this sphere is a thick, viscous river of ink that appears like an oil slick, clinging to the metallic curves as the ball rotates. The tiny abrasions on the metal surface, earned

through miles of friction against paper, look like deep canyons carved into a metallic planet, transforming a disposable piece of stationery into an artifact of monumental engineering.

Synthetic Geometries and Mechanical Landscapes

When macro imaging is applied to synthetic, human-made materials, it reveals a fascinating paradox: the closer we look at our own creations, the more alien and complex they appear. A strip of hook-and-loop fastener (Velcro), when viewed from a distance of a few millimeters, sheds its identity as a mundane fastening mechanism. Under the lens, it reveals a violent, chaotic jungle of rigid nylon monofilaments. On one side stand rows of stiff, elegantly curved shepherd's crooks; on the other, an intertwined, labyrinthine thicket of chaotic loops. The image captures the exact moment of engagement—a plastic choreography where mechanical friction imitates the tangled undergrowth of a briar patch. It is a striking reminder that human ingenuity often progresses by mimicking the structural complexities found in the natural world.

Similarly, the edge of a serrated kitchen knife, polished to what our eyes perceive as a flawless, razor-sharp line, becomes a jagged, terrifying mountain range under macro inspection. The smooth steel reveals striations and deep scars left behind by the grinding wheels of manufacture. The edge itself is not a straight line, but a torn, microscopic precipice of twisted metal filings and uneven teeth. This perspective completely shifts our understanding of “smoothness” and “sharpness,” proving that these concepts are entirely relative to the scale of the observer.

Even our textiles tell an epic story when magnified. A simple denim thread becomes an immense, braided cable





capable of anchoring a metaphorical suspension bridge. The individual fibres of dyed cotton twist and turn around one another like indigo serpents, frayed at the edges by wear, creating a halo of microscopic fuzz that catches the light like morning mist in a pine forest. We begin to understand that the garments we wear are not monolithic sheets of uniform colour, but complex, breathing webs of structural tension and textural variance.

The Physics of Light at the Microscopic Scale

Photographing these hidden worlds requires more than just specialised glass; it requires a radical engagement with the behaviour of light. At extreme magnifications, the physical laws governing photography shift dramatically. The most significant obstacle faced by the macro photographer is the collapse of the depth of field. When focusing on an object merely centimeters away, the zone of acceptable sharpness shrinks to fractions of a millimetre—sometimes thinner than a sheet of paper.

To overcome this limitation, photographers employ a technique known as “focus stacking”. This process involves capturing dozens, sometimes hundreds, of individual images of an object, incrementally shifting the focus bracket by microscopic steps through the depth of the subject. These images are subsequently merged using specialised digital software, which isolates the sharpest portions of each frame to compile a single, comprehensively focused image. This technique is an exercise in immense patience, bridging the gap between



artistic vision and scientific discipline. It requires the subject to remain absolutely motionless, turning the photography of a simple decaying autumn leaf or a resting housefly into a meticulous, hours-long studio operation.

Furthermore, light behaves differently when directed at tiny spaces. Standard, direct flash units result in harsh, obliterating glares and deep shadows that obscure critical detail. Macro photographers must design complex diffusion systems—miniature softboxes made from paper, plastic cups, or delicate fabrics—to wrap the subject in a soft, non-directional illumination. This delicate light reveals the structural nuances of the object, casting subtle shadows that define texture without destroying form. Through this careful manipulation, a soap bubble becomes a swirling nebula of shifting interference patterns, a kinetic canvas of iridescent pinks, greens, and blues that trace the changing thickness of the soap film down to the nanometre.

An Antidote to Visual Desensitisation

In our contemporary cultural landscape, we are inundated with a relentless torrent of grand visual imagery. We are routinely exposed to high-definition drone footage of sweeping mountain ranges, satellite composite images of shifting continents, and deep-field astrophysics photographs capturing the birth of galaxies. While these images expand our understanding of the cosmic scale, they can inadvertently desensitise us to the immediate reality of our physical surroundings. We become accustomed to seeking wonder exclusively in the massive, the distant, and the exotic.

Macro photography serves as a vital antidote to this visual desensitisation. It is a democratic medium that establishes

an accessible frontier of exploration within our immediate reach. It asserts that wonder is not a commodity distributed by distance, but a reward granted to deliberate attention. By demonstrating that an ordinary household lightbulb filament contains a glowing, incandescent labyrinth reminiscent of a futuristic power grid, or that the wing of a common moth is paved with overlapping, iridescent shingles like a mythical dragon's armor, macro imagery democratises awe.

This perspective carries profound philosophical implications. It reminds us that our standard human perception is merely one arbitrary framework among an infinite spectrum of scales. It encourages a mindful engagement with our surroundings, cultivating a sense of radical curiosity about the physical objects we interact with daily. When we realise that every surface we touch—from the skin of an apple to the cold steel of a door handle—is a gateway to an unmapped wilderness of textures and structures, the domestic environment ceases to be mundane. It transforms into a vast, inexhaustible museum of overlooked masterpieces, waiting quietly for us to slow down, lean closer, and finally look.

TEXT: ANIRUDH IYER

THE ART OF CRYSTAL, ICE, AND MINERAL MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY

To the naked eye, a handful of snow is just white powder, a pocket-sized amethyst is a pretty purple rock, and a splash of water on a freezing window is a minor inconvenience. But screw a dedicated macro lens onto a camera, position a couple of precisely angled lights, and an extraordinary transformation occurs. Macro photography opens a portal into a hidden universe. Within these tiny structures lies a world of architectural perfection, chaotic beauty, and mind-bending physics. Capturing crystals, ice, and minerals at life-size magnification (1:1) or higher is a thrilling intersection of artistic patience and scientific precision. Whether you are a seasoned photographer looking for a winter project or a rockhound wanting to immortalise your collection, this guide will take you deep into the gear, techniques, lighting setups, and creative nuances of macro mineralogy and ice photography.

1. The Anatomy of the Miniature: Understanding Your Subjects

Before diving into camera settings, it is essential to understand how these three subjects behave. Each presents a unique set of optical challenges and structural wonders.

Ice: The Ephemeral Sculptor

Ice is dynamic, volatile, and highly sensitive to its environment. Unlike a stable mineral, an ice crystal can melt from the ambient heat of your camera body or even a warm breath.

When water freezes, its molecules arrange themselves into a hexagonal lattice. This geometric blueprint gives rise to stellar dendrites (the classic snowflake shape), hoarfrost, and needle-like structures. The magic of ice photography lies in capturing these transient geometries before they vanish forever.

Crystals: Nature's Orderly Architects

Crystals are highly ordered, repeating microscopic structures.

From the perfect cubes of pyrite to the long, slender needles of natrolite, crystals offer sharp lines, flat planes (facets), and predictable angles. The challenge here is managing highly reflective surfaces without blowing out the highlights, while showcasing the internal depth of the specimen.





Minerals: The Chaotic Masterpieces

Minerals are naturally occurring inorganic solids, often composed of multiple crystalline structures mixed with impurities. This introduces an incredible variety of textures: rough matrices, botryoidal (grape-like) formations, iridescent coatings, and colourful inclusions trapped deep inside a host stone.

Photographing minerals requires an eye for storytelling—you aren't just capturing a shape; you are capturing millions of years of geological pressure and chemical reactions.

2. Essential Gear for the Micro-Realm

You don't need a laboratory to shoot breathtaking macro images, but you do need specialised equipment capable of handling extreme close-ups and razor-thin depth of field.

Camera Bodies

While full-frame sensors offer incredible dynamic range and low-light performance, APS-C and Micro Four Thirds (MFT) cameras are highly favoured in macro photography. Because of their smaller sensor sizes, they provide a deeper depth of field at equivalent focal lengths, which is a massive advantage when trying to keep an entire crystal facet in focus.

Lenses and Magnification Boosters

- **A Dedicated Macro Lens:** A lens with a true 1:1 reproduction ratio (typically 60mm, 90mm, or 105mm)

is the gold standard. For minerals, a longer focal length (90mm–105mm) gives you a comfortable working distance so your lens doesn't block your light source.

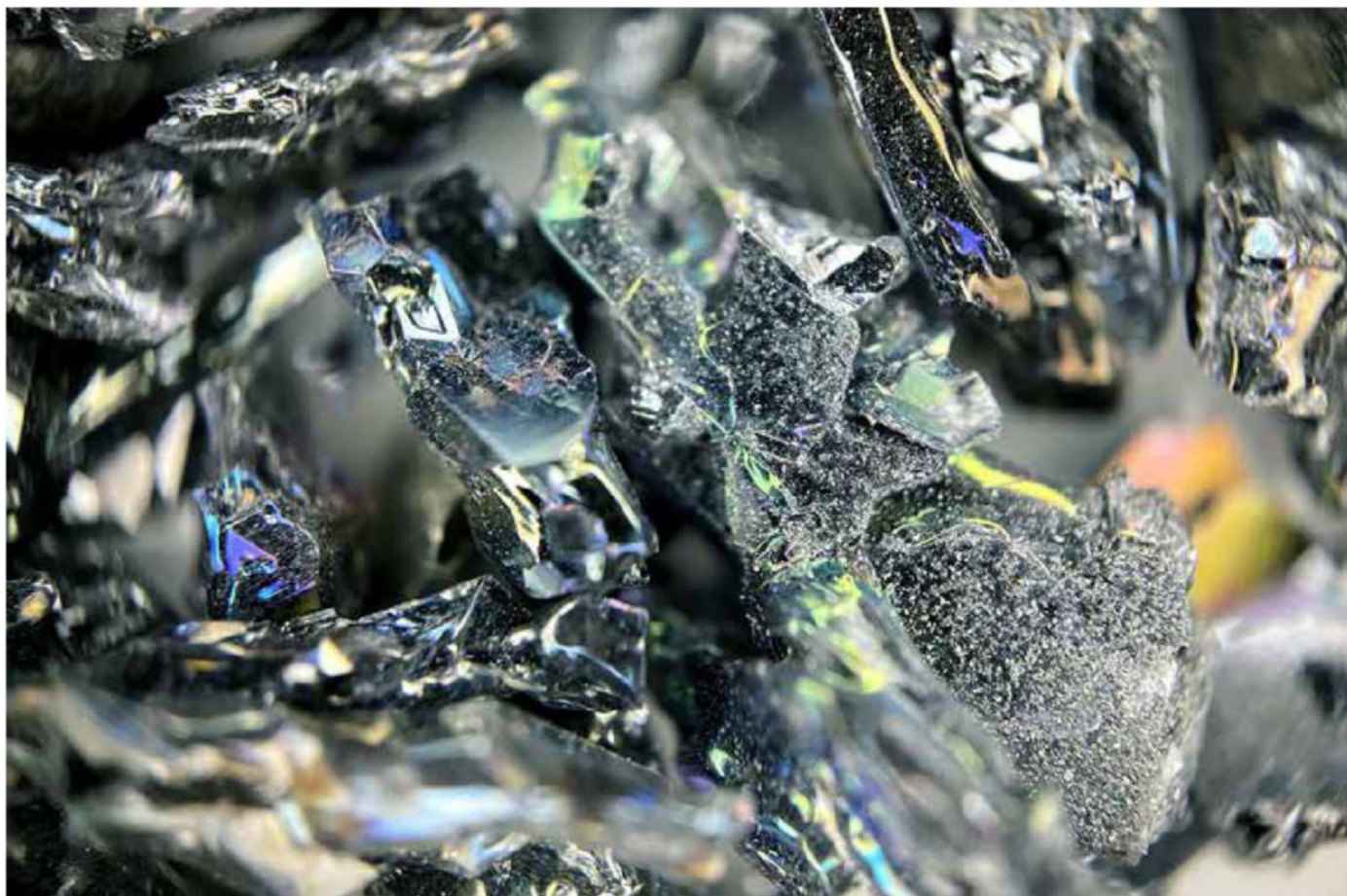
- **Extreme Macro Lenses:** Lenses like the Venus Optics Laowa 25mm f/2.8 or Canon MP-E 65mm allow for magnifications from 2:1 up to 5:1. These are perfect for isolating single sand-grain-sized crystal structures or the core of a snowflake.
- **Extension Tubes:** A budget-friendly way to turn a standard lens into a macro lens. They contain no glass; they simply move your lens further from the sensor, shortening the minimum focus distance.
- **Reversing Rings:** An old-school trick where you mount a prime lens backward onto your camera body using a cheap adapter. This yields surprisingly sharp high-magnification results.

The Ultimate Stabilisers:

At 1:1 magnification, the slightest vibration will introduce devastating motion blur.

- A heavy, stable tripod is non-negotiable.
- A geared focusing rail is highly recommended. Instead of turning the focus ring on your lens (which can subtly alter framing), a focusing rail allows you to physically move the entire camera forward and backward by fractions of a millimetre.





3. Mastering Light: The Secret to Translucency and Texture

Lighting is the absolute make-or-break element in crystal and ice photography. Because these subjects are often transparent, translucent, or highly reflective, standard front-on flash will result in flat, uninspired, and blown-out images.

[Camera Lens]

To reveal their inner secrets, you need to manipulate the direction and quality of light using three core techniques:

Backlighting for Translucency

Many crystals (like quartz, fluorite, and amber) and all ice formations look spectacular when illuminated from behind. Place your subject on a small piece of glass elevated above a light source, or place a diffused LED panel directly behind it. This causes the subject to glow from within, revealing internal fractures, bubbles, and colour gradients that would otherwise remain invisible.

Diffused Side-Lighting for Texture

To emphasise the sharp facets of a mineral or the jagged edges of hoarfrost, angle your light from the side (at roughly 45 to 90 degrees). However, harsh, direct light will create ugly specular highlights (bright white spots).

Always diffuse your light. You can use professional mini-softboxes, white translucent plastic cups placed over the subject, or even simple parchment paper.

Cross-Polarisation: The Secret Colour Explosion

If you want to unlock a psychedelic world of rainbow

colours hidden inside ice and certain crystals, you need to use cross-polarisation.

1. Place a linear polarising sheet over your light source (like a tablet screen or a dedicated light box).
2. Screw a circular polarising filter (CPL) onto your camera lens.
3. Rotate the lens filter until the background turns completely black.

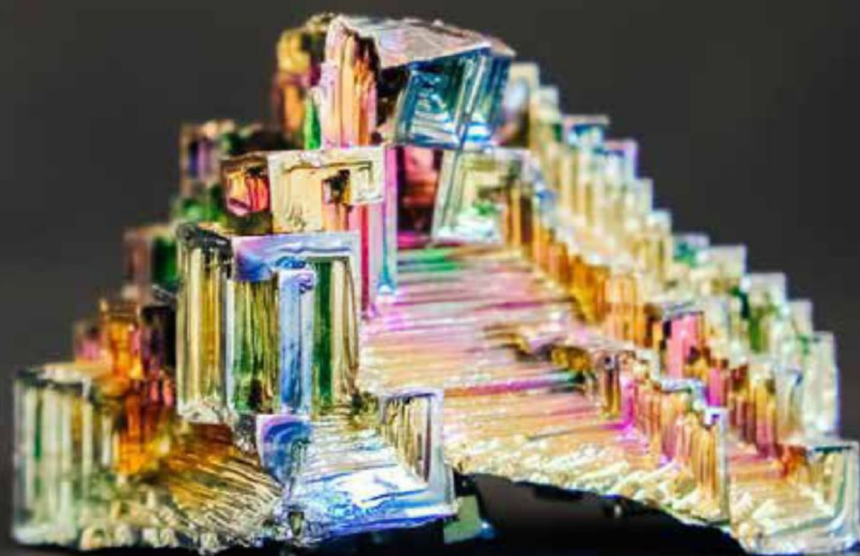
Suddenly, due to a scientific phenomenon called *birefringence*, the internal stresses and crystalline structures of the ice or mineral will explode into vibrant, neon spectrums of pink, blue, yellow, and green.

4. The Technical Challenge: Defeating the Depth of Field

In macro photography, the laws of physics work against you. As you get closer to your subject and increase magnification, your depth of field (the zone of sharp focus) shrinks to the thickness of a piece of paper—sometimes less than a millimeter.

If you stop your aperture down to f/22 or f/32 to get more in focus, you run into diffraction, which causes the entire image to become soft and lose crispness. The sweet spot for most macro lenses is between f/5.6 and f/11.

So, how do you get a complex, three-dimensional mineral specimen completely sharp from front to back?



The Art of Focus Stacking

Focus stacking is a digital technique where you take a series of slices through the subject, shifting the focus slightly with each shot, and then merge the sharpest parts of each image together using software.

1. Set up manually: Put your camera on a sturdy tripod and switch to manual focus and manual exposure.
2. Start at the front: Focus on the very closest point of the crystal.



3. The sequence: Take a shot, move the focus micro-fractionally further back (using a geared rail or your camera's built-in focus stepping feature), and take another shot. Repeat this until you've passed through the entire object. A single final image can be comprised of anywhere from 10 to over 200 individual frames.
4. Post-Processing: Import the images into software like Adobe Photoshop, Helicon Focus, or Zerene Stacker. The software automatically analyses the images, discards the blurry sections, and blends the sharp slices into a single masterpiece of infinite depth.

5. Field Guides

Shooting Snowflakes

Photographing snowflakes requires speed, cold weather, and preparation.

- **Thermal Regulation:** Keep your camera gear outside (in a secure bag) or in an unheated garage for an hour before shooting. If the camera is warm, the snowflake will melt the instant it lands on your setup.
- **The Capture Medium:** Use a piece of dark, textured fabric (like a black wool scarf or mitten) or a sheet of glass chilled to outdoor temperatures to catch falling snow. Wool traps the snowflake on its fibres, keeping it elevated and easy to isolate.
- **Work Fast:** Even in sub-zero temperatures, sublimation



(ice turning directly into vapour) can degrade the sharp edges of a snowflake within minutes.

Shooting Minerals and Mineral Inclusions

Minerals won't melt, giving you all the time in the world to perfect your composition.

- **Cleanliness is Godliness:** At 2:1 magnification, a single speck of dust looks like a boulder, and a fingerprint looks like an oil slick. Clean your specimen using compressed air, a fine microfibre cloth, or an ultrasonic cleaner (if the mineral isn't water-soluble or fragile).
- **Look Inside:** Don't just focus on the outside. Look for inclusions—tiny pockets of gas, liquid, or secondary minerals trapped inside the host crystal. Quartz often contains beautiful needles of rutile (rutilated quartz) or chlorite ghosts that look like underwater landscapes.

6. Composition and Creative Vision

Macro photography is more than just a technical exercise; it is an abstract art form. When looking through the viewfinder, throw away traditional landscape or portrait rules and focus on the fundamentals of abstract art:

- **Leading Lines:** Use the sharp, geometric edges of crystal facets to guide the viewer's eye through the frame.
- **Negative Space:** Leave areas of dark, out-of-focus background around a snowflake or crystal tip to give the

subject breathing room and emphasise its isolation.

- **Patterns and Anomalies:** The human brain loves patterns, but it loves broken patterns even more. Look for areas where a perfect crystal structure has been interrupted by a flaw, a twist, or an inclusion. These "imperfections" are often the most visually compelling parts of an image.

The Reward of Patience

Macro photography of crystals, ice, and minerals requires a unique blend of patience, technical execution, and artistic vision. It forces you to slow down, control your environment perfectly, and look closer at the world than most people ever bother to.

The next time a frost covers your window, or you look at a jagged piece of raw quartz sitting on a shelf, remember that there is an entire mountain range of geometry, light, and colour hidden inside it, just waiting for a macro lens to discover it.

TEXT: ANIRUDH IYER

Tamron 35-100mm F/2.8 Review

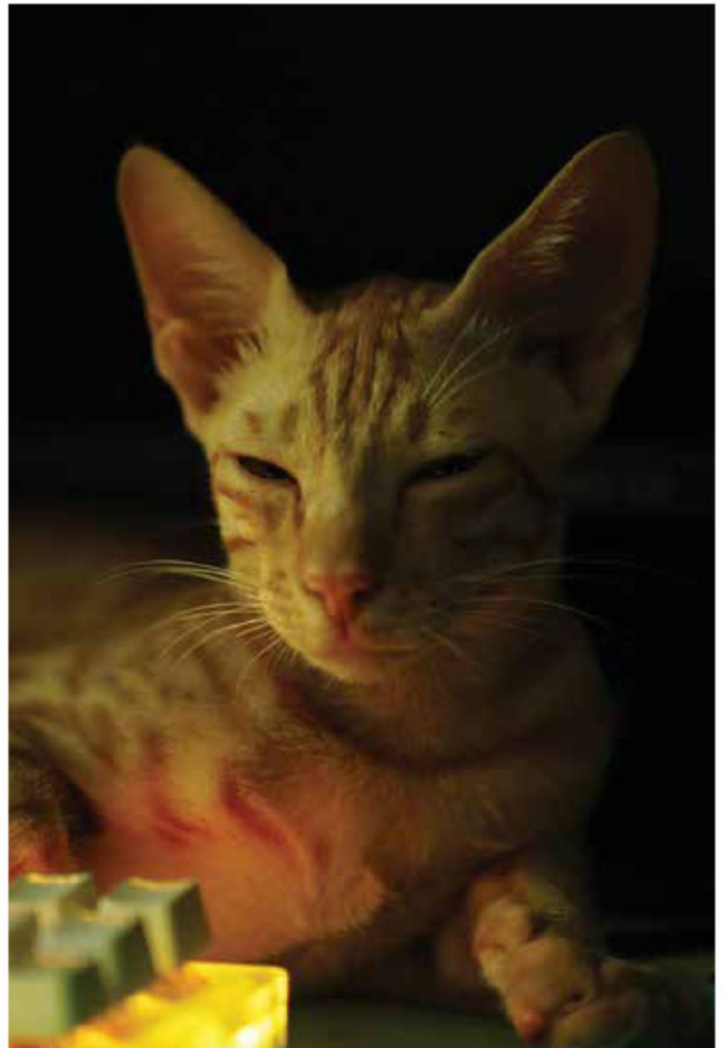
Whenever you buy into a camera system, the first set of lenses you're advised to buy is called "The Holy Trinity"—a wide angle 16-35mm, a standard 24-70mm and a telephoto 70-200mm. But in the last few years, this paradigm has shifted. More photographers are shooting with intent, which means one of two things - a. using prime lenses and zooming using their feet; or b. one zoom lens that does it all. We think Tamron's new 35-100 F/2.8 lens could fit that purpose for a lot of photographers and is more accessibly priced at ₹81K. Let's see how it fares in our tests.



Design & Build

As usual, the lens is built with the quality that you would expect from Tamron—overall, the lens is made out of engineered matte plastic with the metal mount and is weather-sealed. Available for Sony E mount and Nikon Z mount, the lens weighs 565 grams, so combined with a body like A7 IV, it becomes a well-balanced and easy-to-carry setup. You have your zoom ring first and then the focus ring, both of which are nicely damped and according to Tamron, feature deeper grooves for a better grip. This lens does zoom externally, so that might be a point of ingress for dust and water, beware.

To the side, we see a customisable button along with a focus mode select switch, but no AF-MF switch like other lenses. This lens also lacks a zoom-lock switch that's found on other zoom lenses, but it's no big deal. And as usual with Tamron lenses, there's a USB-C port on the side, with which you can directly update the lens firmware as well as customise things like focus throw, direction, focus mode settings and more through Tamron's free app.



Lowlight



Daylight

It also comes with a lens hood, and the front filter thread diameter is as usual with Tamron's lenses, 67mm. The front element comes with coatings that apparently make it resistant to stains and fingerprints, but let's see how it fares.

Image Quality

The optical design features 15 elements in 13 groups including one extra low dispersion (XLD), two low dispersion (LD), and three glass modified aspherical (GM) lens elements. Images from the lens are sharp, but not as tack-sharp as you'd see from a first-party lens. Even wide open the images are sharp from the centre but the sharpness falls off at the corners.

Autofocus

This lens is equipped with Tamron's VXD (Voice-coil eXtreme-torque Drive) linear motors, which is their flagship autofocus motor. In our tests the autofocus was indeed very quiet, smooth and quick—what you'd expect from a flagship.

In videos, there is very light focus breathing, something expected in a photography lens and not a big deal at all and you can see the lens transitioning from one point to another really well.

Bokeh

This lens features nine aperture blades. The bokeh is circular and smooth, but not all the time—occasionally you



Bokeh



Closeup



Flaring & Ghosting

can also see some other shapes as well. The texture of the bokeh is mostly smooth but you can see onion rings in some images, and sometimes the shape isn't defined at all. Overall, not the best bokeh performance from a lens.

Closeup

At the wide end, the MFD is 22cm and on the tele end, it's about 65cm, so this lens achieves its best magnification in the wide end at 1:3.3. Usability-wise, you can get some pretty decent closeup shots, not macros, as is obvious with the magnification ratio— but only on the wide end.

This can definitely come in handy and you can trust this lens to retain focus and detail as you get closer to your subjects to shoot some interesting pictures, but you've to beware of one point.

Chromatic Aberration

Putting the lens through QuickMTF, we got a CA value of 1.43 pixels, which is huge. Through our testing we found some examples of chromatic aberration, however you might if you shoot against some high contrast situations, fringing in closeups and sometimes in the bokeh as well.

Flaring & Ghosting

The lens comes with a short flower-shaped hood. In our tests, the flaring performance was very good, as the images maintained contrast even with light present in the frame directly pointed towards the lens. Flaring & ghosting is very minimal, and you might not even need the hood in a lot of situations as the quality of coatings are good. In some cases you can see the lens flare, but it's well-controlled and pleasing to the eye.

Tamron's Lens Utility App

One more thing that sets Tamron's lenses apart is their Lens Utility app— which can connect to the lenses directly using the USB-C port on the bottom of the lens through a PC or even your phone (even wirelessly). This unlocks additional functionality like updating lens firmware directly via a smartphone, and more importantly—a feature that a lot of video shooters and filmmakers might like—controlling the lens functions like follow focus during filming.

Verdict

Where this lens stands out is the value equation. There are only some lenses that come close to this—for example, Canon's RF 24-105mm F/2.8 which costs ₹2.95 lakh and weighs 1430g, and Sigma's 28-105mm F/2.8 which costs ₹1.45 lakh and weighs 990g, making them both heavier and more expensive. Compared to them, Tamron's offering at ₹81,000, weighing 565g, comes only at the expense of a little bit of focal length. And, the Tamron is also physically smaller than both of them, giving it another point.

You can use this lens for your travel photography, events, street, portraiture, photojournalism and any genre you can think of that benefits from this focal range.

Other lenses we can compare this with are 24-105 F/4s across all systems, but those lenses let in less light. This lens can definitely improve in certain areas, but it still gets a definite thumbs up and a recommendation from us for someone looking for an alternate lens from the boring-old 24-70.

TEXT AND IMAGES: ANIRUDH IYER

Instax Mini 13 Review

When Fujifilm announced the Instax Mini 13, I was genuinely excited. As a Mini Evo user, I've seen first-hand how Fujifilm has single-handedly revived the instant photography category after Polaroid's decline. More importantly, the company has made instant photography accessible again with products that don't feel out of reach. At ₹8,999, the Instax Mini 13 is priced aggressively. Of course, the real cost of ownership comes from the film packs, with a 10-shot pack costing around ₹750. That works out to roughly ₹75 per photo. Yet, for the audience Fujifilm is targeting—Gen Z users, content creators and people who value experiences over specifications—the novelty and fun factor often outweigh the running costs.



What's in the Box

Inside the box, you'll find:

- Instax Mini 13 camera
- Wrist strap
- Strap wedge accessory
- Two AA batteries
- User documentation

Design, Body and Looks

At first glance, the Mini 13 looks very similar to the Mini 12, but there are several subtle refinements. The body now features more pronounced contours, the sides are slightly flatter, and the overall design feels a little more modern. There's also an LED ring around the timer control, making it easier to identify the camera's new self-timer functions.

The camera is fractionally larger than its predecessor, and Fujifilm has redesigned the strap to include a small wedge-shaped accessory. It may look insignificant, but it serves a useful

purpose when using the self-timer for group shots or selfies.

The new colour palette is also softer and more pastel-inspired. I'm using the green variant—which Fujifilm calls Lagoon Green, because apparently “green” wasn't exciting enough.

One thing I genuinely appreciate is that Fujifilm includes the batteries in the box. It sounds simple, but there's nothing more frustrating than unboxing a camera and realising you can't use it immediately.

What's New?

The Mini 13 isn't a radical upgrade

over the Mini 12, and that's probably intentional. Fujifilm has taken an incremental approach, introducing features that improve usability without making previous models feel obsolete.

The three notable additions are:

- Self-timer functionality
- Improved parallax correction in close-up mode
- Wedge accessory integrated into the strap for hands-free shooting

Using the timer is straightforward. Rotate the timer control once for a 2-second delay or hold it slightly longer for a 10-second delay. Once activated,

the LED ring begins blinking, and pressing the shutter button starts the countdown—don't forget to do that—I learnt that the hard way.

It's a simple addition, but one that genuinely makes group photos and selfies much easier.

Parallax Correction: What Does It Actually Do?

One of the features Fujifilm is heavily promoting is parallax correction in close-up mode.

Because the optical viewfinder sits slightly above and to the side of the lens, what you see isn't always exactly what the lens captures. This becomes particularly noticeable when photographing subjects at close range, such as food, toys, pets or selfies.

On older models like the Mini 12, a subject that appeared perfectly centred in the viewfinder could end up slightly off-centre in the final print. The Mini 13 compensates for this by adjusting the framing in close-up mode, ensuring that what you see more closely matches what gets printed.

The result is better-composed close-up photographs with less guesswork involved.

One important thing to remember: close-up mode is not macro mode.

I discovered this the hard way while photographing a Batman figure and ending up with more legs than cape in the final image. You still need to maintain the recommended shooting distance and avoid getting too close to your subject.

Another limitation remains unchanged: the flash is always active. Fujifilm still doesn't give users manual flash control. While this keeps the experience simple, it can sometimes result in overexposed close-up shots. In my experience, close-up photography works best in good daylight conditions where the flash isn't doing all the heavy lifting.

And considering every frame cost around ₹75, you'll probably want to avoid unnecessary experimentation.

Print Quality

The magic of an Instax camera remains the print itself.



Photos begin developing almost immediately and take roughly a minute to fully appear. The colours are vibrant, sometimes slightly oversaturated, but that's part of the Instax aesthetic. These aren't meant to be technically perfect reproductions. They're meant to be fun, nostalgic, and tangible.

In daylight, the results are consistently pleasing. Skin tones look good, colours pop, and there's a certain charm that digital photography still struggles to replicate.

The bigger question is whether a ₹75 print is worth it.

For the audience Fujifilm is targeting, I think the answer is yes. People buying an Instax camera aren't necessarily looking for the most economical way to take photographs. They're looking for an experience, a memory, and something physical they can hold, stick on a wall, or share with friends.

And in that regard, the Mini 13 absolutely delivers.

Mini 13 vs Mini Evo

As someone who owns the Mini Evo, I'd still choose the Evo for myself.

The biggest advantage of the Evo is that it allows you to select which images you actually want to print. You get a screen, more creative controls, and the flexibility to print the same image multiple times without having to

retake the shot.

The downside, of course, is the price. The Mini Evo costs roughly twice as much as the Mini 13.

If you simply want the instant photography experience and don't mind printing every photo you take, the Mini 13 is the better value proposition. If you want more control over your images and prints, the Evo remains the smarter long-term investment.

Verdict

The Instax Mini 13 is exactly what it needs to be: a simple, fun, easy-to-use instant camera that improves on its predecessor without complicating the experience.

At ₹8,999, it's attractively priced, especially for younger buyers looking to add a bit of personality to their photography. The new self-timer is useful, the improved close-up framing helps reduce wasted shots, and the overall experience remains as enjoyable as ever.

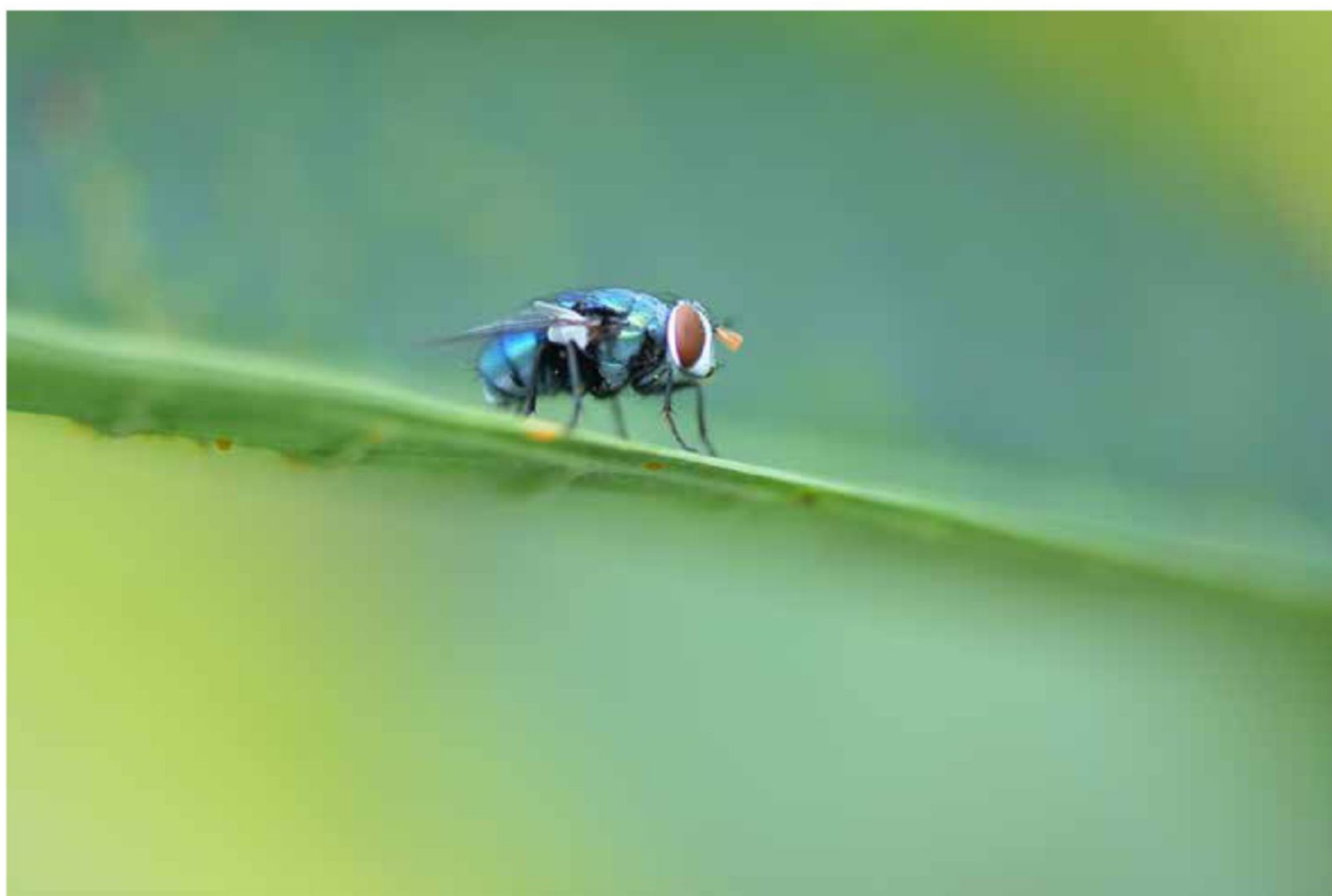
Would I have liked manual flash control and a more ergonomic shutter button? Absolutely.

But those are relatively minor complaints in what is otherwise a well-rounded instant camera. If you're looking to get into instant photography without spending Mini Evo money, the Instax Mini 13 is an easy recommendation.

TEXT AND IMAGES: BHAVYA DESAI

PHOTO SCAPE

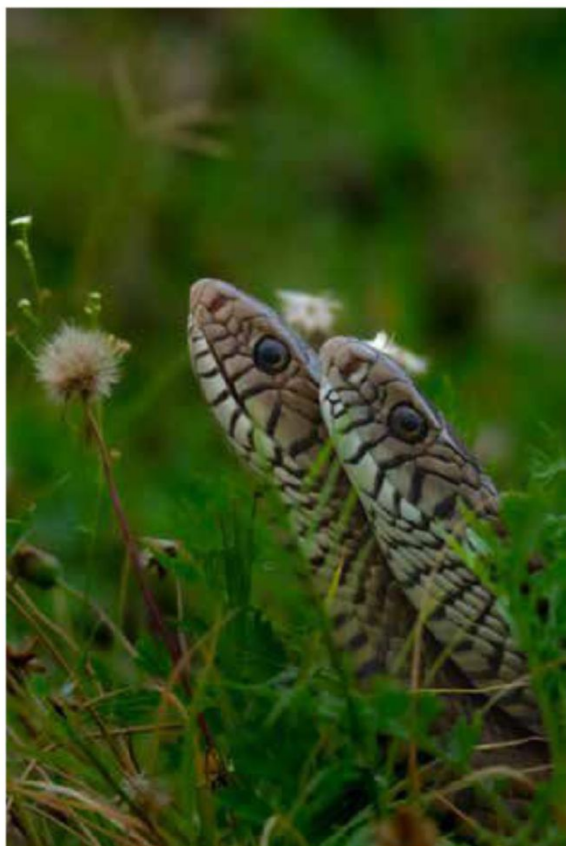
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or
Send in your entries to *asianphotographyindia@gmail.com*



Name: Vijay Richhiya
Camera & lens: NIKON Z50 & MICRO 105MM
Focal Length: 105MM
Shutter Speed: 1/320s
Aperture: F/3.5
ISO: 250
Instagram ID: @Vijayrichhiya__photographer



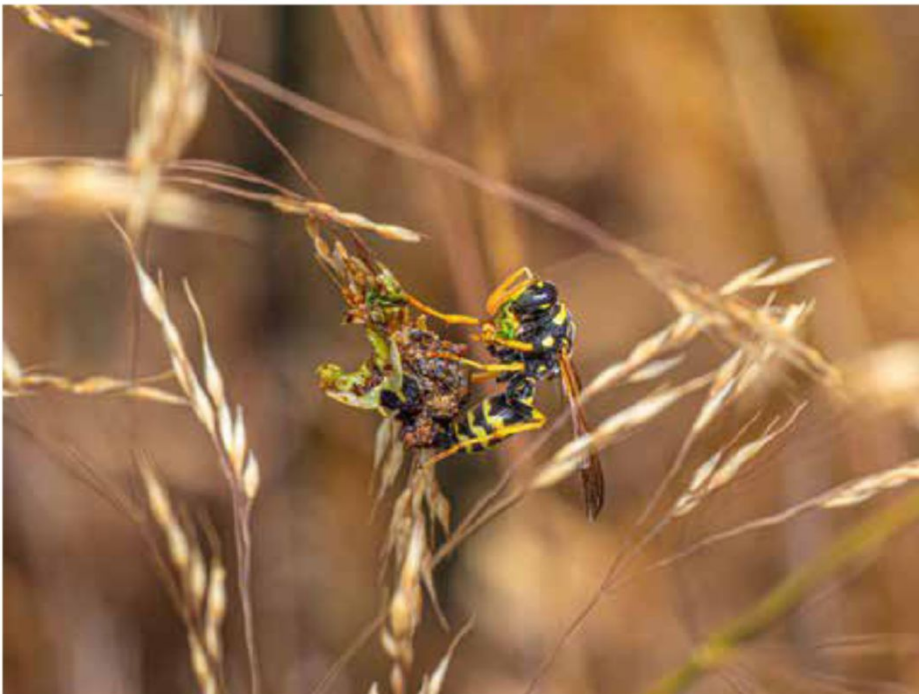
Name: Dr. Deepak Jaybhaye
Camera used: Canon R5 with
 RF100-500 mm lens @420 mm
Shutter Speed: 1/2000 s
Aperture: f/8
ISO: 1250
Instagram ID: @deepak.
 jaybhaye.9



Name: Devashish Gupta
Camera & Lens: Sony A1 Mark 2 & Sony
 FE 400-800MM lens
Focal length: 696 mm
Shutter Speed: 1/2500
Aperture: f9
ISO: 3200
Instagram ID: @eyes_of_devashish



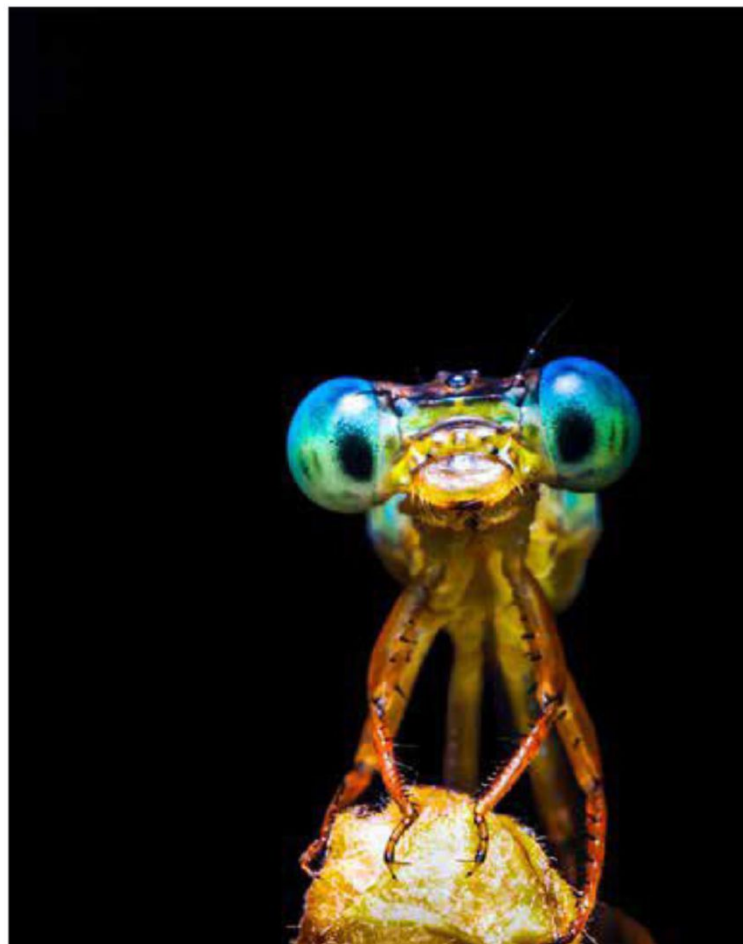
Name: Dhriya H
Camera & lens: Nikon Z7ii and Nikkor
 105mm
Focal length: 105mm with raynox
Shutter speed: 1/200
Aperture: f 13
ISO: 320
Instagram id: dhriya_haridas



Name: Jose Alza
Camera & Lens: Olympus OM-D E-M1 Mark III and M. Zuiko Digital ED 90mm F3.5 Macro IS Pro
Focal length: 90mm
Shutter Speed: 1/250
Aperture: f/13
ISO: 200
Instagram ID: @jose.alza.dsn



Name: Momina Mukherjee
Camera & Lens : Sony A7 IV, Sony FE 90mm F2.8 Macro G OSS
Focal Length: 90mm
Shutter Speed: 1/200
Aperture: F/14.0
ISO: 400
Instagram ID: @mominamukherjee.photography



Name: Supratim Kar
Camera & Lens: Sony A7V & Laowa 90mm macro lens.
Focal Length: 90mm
Shutter Speed: 1/240 sec
Aperture: f/11
ISO: 6400
Flash: Godox V860 Mark3 / AK diffuser.
Instagram ID: @supratim_wildlife



Name: Nipun Raj
Camera: Sony A6600
Lens: 18-135mm
Focal Length: 85mm
Shutter Speed: 1 Second
Aperture: F/14
ISO: 125
Instagram ID : @shotsbynipun



Name: Manoj
Camera: Sony A1
Lens: 200-600mm
Focal Length: 380m
Shutter Speed: 1/640
Aperture: f/6.3
ISO: 125
Instagram Handle: @manojwildlife



Name: Supriya Harindrawar
Camera & Lens: Nikon D780 + Nikkor 200 - 500 mm lens
Focus Length: 500 mm
Shutter Speed: 1/400 sec
Aperture: f/5.6
ISO: 1000
Instagram ID: @supriya_harindrawar

PHOTO MONTAGE

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Wildlife photography found me long before I realised I wanted to pursue it seriously. What started as a chance experience in the jungle gradually became a passion that now takes me back to the wild whenever I can.

Over the years, I've photographed across some of India's incredible forests, including Gir, Dudhwa, Jawai, Kishanpur and several other wildlife destinations. My journey has taken me beyond India to Masai Mara in Kenya, where experiencing wildlife in a completely different landscape further deepened my love for nature and storytelling.

I believe every photograph has a story beyond what we see. Sometimes it's a powerful moment, sometimes it's a quiet interaction, and often it's simply about being patient enough to witness nature on its own terms. That's what I try to capture through my work. Through my page, *Rakhi's Jungle Tales*, I enjoy sharing not just wildlife photographs, but the stories and emotions behind them. My hope is that people don't just admire the animals, but also develop a deeper respect for the wild and the importance of conserving it.

Photography has given me memories, friendships and experiences I could never have imagined. Every safari teaches me something new, and that's what keeps me going back with the same excitement, curiosity and gratitude every single time.

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



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