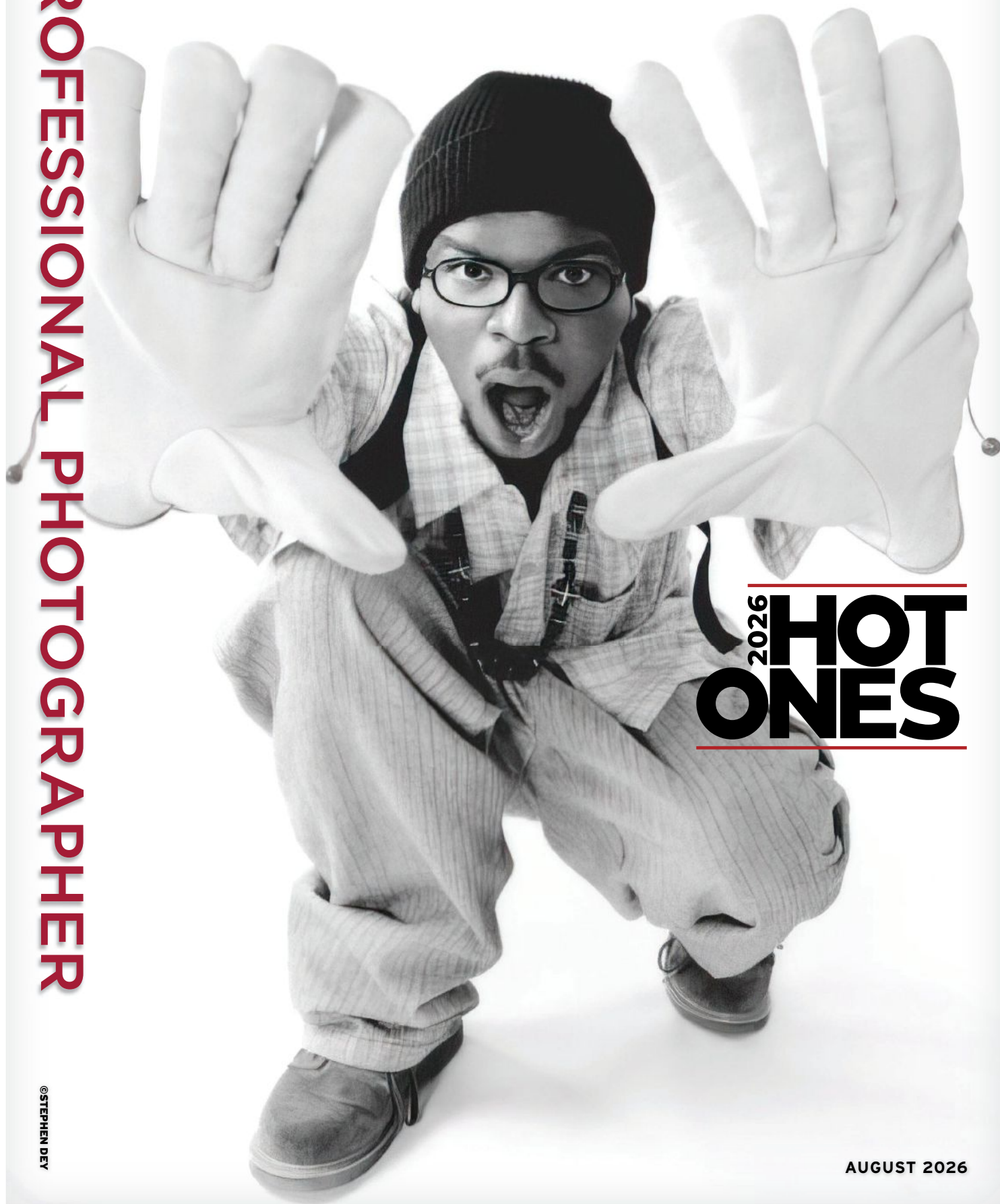


PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

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Unseen Species

P.30 INNOVATION
Our Great Gear Guide

P.54 TEEN TRUTH
Authentic Senior Portraits



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2026 HOT ONES
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Photography Can Keep You Young

CELEBRATING A 100-YEAR-OLD LIFE MEMBER

One of my favorite parts of this job is interacting with members and hearing their feedback about the magazine. Whether it's being recognized at Imaging USA (thank you for reading!), sorting through hundreds of comments in our reader surveys, reading emails, or talking on the phone, these experiences remind me who these pages are truly for: *you!*

In February, PPA Life Member Florence Bendell called PPA with a question about the magazine, so Member Care transferred her to my extension. As soon as we started talking, I knew Florence deserved more than a quick answer. I knew that this sharp, feisty 100-year-old award-winning wedding and portrait artist from Long Island deserved to have her story told (Life Member Spotlight, page 74).

Lucky for us, Florence had moved about eight years ago to Atlanta to be closer to family. She was also about to have a spectacular birthday celebration not far from PPA headquarters. Family and friends flew in from all over the country, including Angela Lamia, Florence's photography assistant for more than 40 years. Two of our dedicated staff members attended the party, interviewed Florence on camera, and took beautiful video of her celebrating with her guests. Watch her story on PhotoVision at ppa.com.

It was an honor to visit Florence in the home she shares with her daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter a couple of months after her initial phone call. When I arrived, she had some of her stunning work spread out in her bedroom, including portraits, wedding albums, and Certificates of Merit she had collected from PPA from as far back as the early 1970s. Florence shared that she discovered her intuitive skills in portraiture and her love of photography in the early 1960s, when she started capturing images of summer campers in New York's Hudson Valley. It was also during that decade that Florence joined the Long Island PPA guild. The active group held seminars and photography competitions, which she won frequently. She also became a lecturer for PPA, and had her own Long Island studio, Portraits by Florence, in three successive locations from 1971 until 1993. After closing her last studio due to health concerns, Florence has continued her portrait business to this day. She is full of fascinating stories, and her eyes light up when she talks about photography and her career.

"What I love is I see everything through photographic eyes. I see a face when I meet somebody, and I think, *She needs a little this. She needs a little that*, how I'd photograph her. That's always what comes to my mind first," Florence told me. "I am steeped, *steeped* in my love for photography."

Photography has kept Florence vivacious, joyful, and energized at 100 years of age. She is a true portrait—no pun intended—of the saying, "Do what you love, and you will never work a day in your life." •

Melanie Lasoff Levs

Melanie Lasoff Levs
Director of Publications

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FOREGROUND

By Amanda Arnold

Piquing Curiosity

A CROP THAT INCREASES INTRIGUE



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"I find that sometimes the images can get redundant [when you're] capturing the same images shoulder to shoulder with others," says fine art nature and wildlife photographer Scott Joshua Dere, who photographed this bonnethead shark in the clutches of an osprey in Sebastian Inlet State Park in Florida alongside a group of photographers. Searching the scene for something different from what the others were capturing, his eyes locked on a larger-than-usual fish in the distance in an osprey's clutches. He began making photos as the osprey soared past. The striking photo, "Air Superiority," recently scored him a Gold Award in the nature category of Exposure One's One Shot Photo Contest.

Camera and lens: Canon EOS 1DX Mark II, Canon EF 600mm f/4L IS III USM lens

Exposure: 1/4,000 second at f/4.5, ISO 400

Post-production: He cropped the image to

remove the bird, only leaving its claw. "This way viewers are forced to use their imagination to understand what they are seeing," he says. He also removed the blue color of the sky for a stark white backdrop as well as any drops of water.

Photographer's note: "For me, this image is powerful," he says. "The crop gives the image so much more interest, perspective, and wonder compared to the full frame shot that shows the whole bird with the shark. ... The claw looks to be tremendous as it clamps down on the small shark's face. The bird's rough legs and sharp claws are rugged in contrast to the slick-looking skin of the fish. The sharp fins mimic the edgy look of the talons. ... Incredible to think the osprey dove into the ocean at a considerable speed and submerged completely to grab this fish and had the strength and the stamina to pull it up from the ocean's grip and fly away with it." •

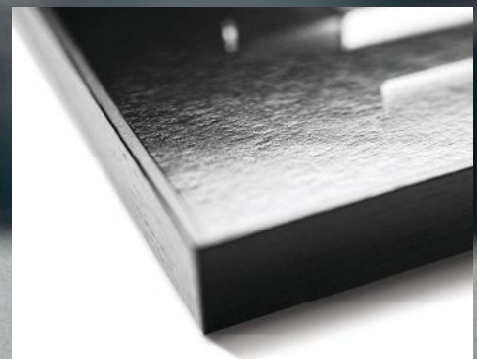


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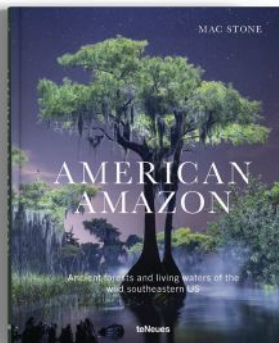
 **WHITE WALL**

Underwater Realms

DOCUMENTING THE UNSEEN SPECIES OF THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES



IMAGES © MAC STONE / macstonephoto.com



The Southeastern United States harbors more species of freshwater turtles, fish, and salamanders than most other places on the planet, according to National Geographic Explorer, and conservation photographer and filmmaker Mac Stone. Unfortunately, the area is rarely considered the biodiversity hotspot it is, which is what inspired Stone to spend the last two decades documenting what he dubs the “American Amazon.” His photos have been collected into a book, “American Amazon: Ancient Forests and Living Waters of the Wild Southeastern United States” (teNeues), a companion piece to an upcoming IMAX film and PBS series.

Says Stone of his photo of the mangroves and seagrass in Florida Bay inside Everglades National Park (above): “Mangroves provide structure for myriad



animals, and seagrass is one of the building blocks of the fishery that has made the Everglades so famous because it fuels the prey base for thousands of wading birds, crocodiles, dolphins, and sharks. Snorkeling in these habitats is otherworldly because you encounter so much diversity of species.

"I hired a boat captain for a week to explore the underwater realms of the Everglades. The mangrove islands are where I found the most life. Sharks would cruise by and, if I wasn't careful, disturbing the sediment would send up plumes of nematocysts, stinging cells of small jellyfish. When the sun got high enough, rays would pierce through the floating mats of

seagrass and complement the scene. I was using a mirrorless camera in an underwater housing with two strobes to balance the light." •



Learn more about
nature photography
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Something to Hold On To

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SEEN



IMAGES ©CRYSTAL BYRD UQDAH / lovebyrdphoto.com, crystalbrand.com

"SITTING WITH THOSE SEVEN YEARS
OF IMAGES, I REALIZED [MY MOTHER]
STARTED ALL OF THIS WITHOUT EITHER
OF US KNOWING IT."

Her intent was to put together an Instagram post of black-and-white portraits. But as she gathered photos, she realized this wasn't a post; this was a series seven years in the making, explains Atlanta-based portrait photographer Crystal Byrd Uqdah of her series and book, "An Ode to Black Women in Black & White."

Grieving the death of her mother, "It also hit me that my mother was the one who put a camera in my hands 20 years ago," Uqdah says. "She handed it to me after I got laid off from my first job and told me to go outside and take some pictures. Sitting with those seven years of images, I realized she started all of this without either of us knowing it."

When Uqdah was growing up, she and her grandmother would flip through the mounds of family photo albums her grandmother had curated to provide her family with what she didn't have: images of herself as a child and images of her parents. "She would tell me that most Black people didn't have access to photography, especially if they were poor," says Uqdah.

Her grandmother's experience led Uqdah to New Orleans-based photographer Florestine Perrault Collins, a female Black photographer who documented Black women and families from 1920 to 1949. Collins' work inspired Uqdah to focus her business on portraiture for Black women. "When I started out, you didn't see many portrait photographers offering this style of photogra-



phy within the Black community specifically,” says Uqdah. “That gap was part of what drove me. I wanted my community to have access to that, and I wanted to make sure they were documented beautifully and with intention, so that generations from now their families have something to hold on to.”

In January, Uqdah got to work sorting seven years of her black-and-white portraits of Black women into a series. By February she had a final version of a limited-edition photo book, and in April she hosted a gallery opening of the series at her studio, inviting her portrait subjects as well as area artists, photographers, and the public. “The timeline was a major challenge,” she says, especially since she was grieving her mother, but the work propelled her. “Once I started pulling the images together, I couldn’t stop.”

Two things tie the photos in the series together, says Uqdah. “Visually, they are all black and white. Thematically, they are all Black women photographed at various stages of life—mothers, grandmothers, sisters, women in transition, women rebuilding. The subject is always the same: Black women being seen on their own terms.” •



Learn more about
portrait photography
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It's OK to Hand Things Over

YOU CAN'T BE EVERYTHING

By Makayla Harris, Cr.Photog., CPP

©PHANEENDRA GUDAPATI



There was a night, maybe two years into our business, when I sat on the floor of our home office at 1 a.m. surrounded by three open laptops, a sleeping toddler on my chest, and a list of tasks I knew I wouldn't finish before morning. I had a wedding to edit from three weeks ago, a client album to design, two inquiries I hadn't responded to, an invoice I forgot to send, a blog post I'd been "about to write" for a month, and a consultation the next afternoon that I still hadn't prepped for because I'd spent the entire day answering emails, placing print orders, and reconciling our books.

I was the photographer, the editor, the album designer, the salesperson, the bookkeeper, the marketing department, the customer service team, and, somehow, also a mom. I wore all those titles like a badge of honor for a long time. I think a lot of us do. We tell ourselves that nobody can do it like we can, that if we just push a little harder, stay up a little later, sacrifice a little more, we'll get ahead. And for a while, it works. Or at least it looks like it does.

But what was actually happening was quieter and harder to admit.

My editing was getting slower because I was exhausted. My response time was slipping because I was buried. My consultations felt rushed because I was thinking about the 12 other things I hadn't done yet. And the thing I loved most about this work, the creative part, the part that made me feel alive, was the first thing I kept pushing to "later."

I wasn't growing. I was surviving.

That night on the floor, with my baby asleep and my to-do list staring back at me,

I finally said it out loud: *I can't keep doing this alone.* It wasn't a proud moment. It felt like failure. But looking back, it was the most important turning point I've ever had. Because what I learned, slowly and painfully, is that doing everything yourself isn't a sign of

strength. It's a ceiling. And you will hit it. Maybe not today. Maybe not this season. But eventually, the weight of wearing every hat will cost you something you can't get back: Your health, your creativity, your relationships, even your love for this work.

The first time I handed something off, I was terrified. I was convinced nobody would care as much as I did, that the quality would drop, that clients would notice. And honestly, it wasn't perfect at first. But what surprised me was how much better I got at the things I kept. When I wasn't drowning, I could actually show up fully for the parts of my business that needed

me most. Letting go didn't make my business weaker. It made me stronger.

So, if you're reading this at midnight, juggling 15 open tabs on your computer, and telling yourself you just need to work harder, I want you to hear something: You don't need to do more. You need to release what's holding you back from doing your best work. The goal was never to do everything. The goal was to build something that doesn't require you to be everything.

Start there. •

Bonita Springs, Florida-based Makayla Harris is co-founder of The Harris Company, and founder/CEO of ASET: Album & Art Sales and the Printographers Society.



See more from Makayla Harris, Cr.Photog., CPP, on **PhotoVision** at **ppa.com**.

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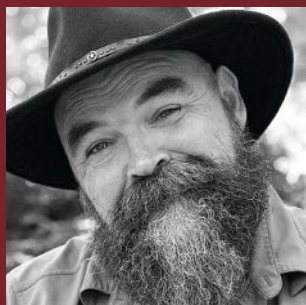
ART THAT SHOWS UP

WITH Parker Pfister

Parker Pfister is a photographer, artist, and mentor who uses the camera to explore curiosity, emotion, and the stories people carry. From personal projects to community response after Hurricane Helene, his work reminds us that photography can be both deeply personal and powerfully generous.

As Western North Carolina reeled from the destruction of Hurricane Helene, Parker Pfister found clarity in a simple conviction:

"At first, in my mind, I had to choose between being an artist or being a volunteer. Um, I choose both."



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1. Show up when your community needs you.

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2. Let art be your response to hard things.

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3. Build photographs through trust and collaboration.

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4. Choose feeling over perfection.

Stop chasing flawless and start making photographs that feel true.

5. Use photography to better understand yourself—and others.

Let your work become a way to grow in empathy, connection, and self-awareness.

Discover more of Parker's process, philosophy, and art in his Along for the Ride video episodes on PhotoVision.

PPA.com/ParkerPfisterTips



Bam

Stephen B. Dey, M.Photog.Cr.

Charlotte Image Photography

Charlotte, North Carolina

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE:

"This young man came to me many moons ago looking for a marketing image as he began his journey as a budding rap artist," says Stephen B. Dey. "This portrait was captured on film in my studio back in 1994. ... After last year's competition I was made aware we could enter images from years' past. So I went back and pulled images I never used in competition."

CAMERA & LENS: Dey doesn't recall exactly which camera and lens he used but suspects it was his Mamiya 645 Pro TL with interchangeable backs with a wide-angle lens on B&W Kodak Plus-X film ISO 160.

EXPOSURE: 1/125 second at f/9, ISO 160

LIGHTING: A Larson 4x6 soft box was on the main light to the left of the subject, starting with a split lighting pattern. Then Dey added a Photogenic flash in a large umbrella for fill light.

POST-CAPTURE: The film was processed by Miller's Professional Imaging and printed as black-and-white 8x10s for the client. Dey also had slide views produced for a slideshow presentation. "Back in those days we got it right in the camera," he says. "I would sometimes use some dye retouching on images with a brush and lacquer coating, but this was shot straight up with no retouching."



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OUR COVERS: *Professional Photographer* staff chooses each month's cover image from the top 32 images across each category in the International Photographic Competition. Learn more about the International Photographic Competition on **PhotoVision** at **ppa.com**.



©MELISSA DIGUE PORTRAIT / melissadigue.com

Grounded at a Glance

Melissa Digue, M.Photog., CPP

Melissa Digue Portrait

Mineral Wells, Texas

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: The image was made at the Fort Worth Zoo in Fort Worth, Texas, where Melissa Digue spent several hours observing her subjects. "Over time they became less aware of my presence," she says. "This particular moment unfolded quietly—one juvenile, curious and expressive, leaned into a gesture that felt almost contemplative, while the adult beside it remained grounded, observant, and steady. ... Sometimes the most powerful images are not created through action but through stillness, when we take time to truly see."

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS R6 Mark II, Canon RF200-800mm F6.3-9 IS USM lens

EXPOSURE: 1/160 second at f/9, ISO 640

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: Using Adobe Photoshop, Topaz Labs, and Nik Collection by DXO, she adjusted the color balance for natural but rich tones, and adjusted the contrast to add depth and dimension. Selective sharpening was applied to enhance detail in the facial features and fur, and the background was softened to direct attention to the subjects.



ABOUT THE IMAGING EXCELLENCE COLLECTION: The Imaging Excellence Collection comprises photographs chosen by trained jurors as being the best of the best in PPA's Merit Image Review. The Imaging Excellence distinction is awarded to compositions that successfully address the 12 elements of a merit image. **NOTE:** Lighting diagrams shown here are not to scale. ppa.com/mir
Watch "Inside the Image" Merit Image Reviews on **PhotoVision** at ppa.com.

Shadow Whisperer

Lisa Amsden, CPP

Amsden Portrait Co.

Murphy, Texas



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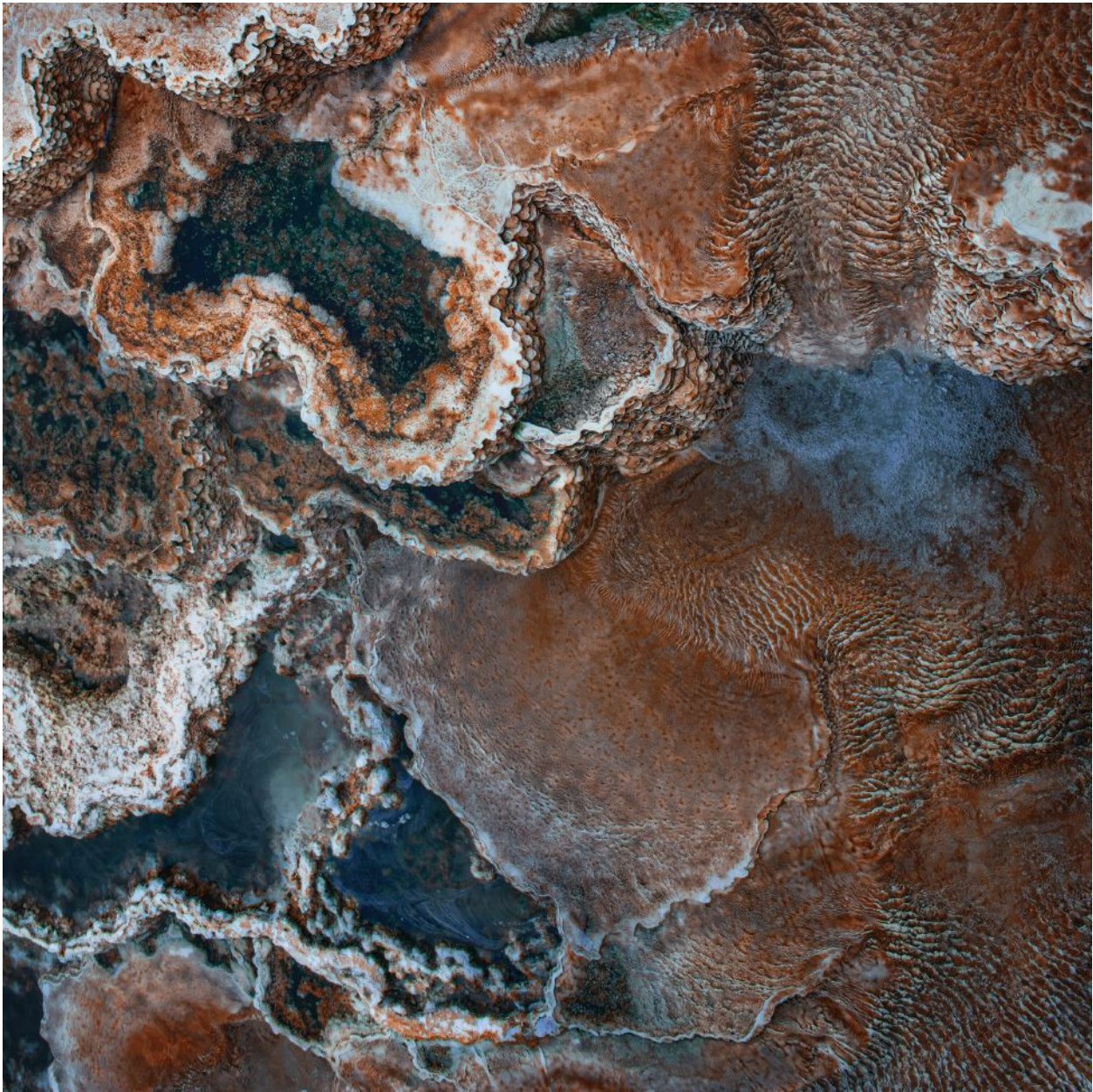
PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "I had just bought a Wescott L60-B constant light," says Lisa Amsden of this photo, which was made on her kitchen table. "It was easy to set up a small prop behind my vase and play with the direction and effects of the light. I loved the shadow it created. ... It looks like friends whispering secrets to each other."

CAMERA & LENS: Nikon Z 7II, Sigma 24-70mm F2.8 DG OS HSM Art lens

EXPOSURE: 1/100 second at f/9, ISO 800

LIGHTING: A Westcott L60-B LED light

POST-CAPTURE: She painted the image using Adobe Photoshop, adjusted the color balance using Adobe Camera Raw and Photoshop, and sharpened it using Topaz Labs.



©KRISTINA CARLSON PHOTOGRAPHY / kristinacarlsonphotography.com

The Earth Exhales

Kristina Carlson
Kristina Carlson Photography
Olathe, Kansas

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "This close-up image of a tiered hot spring formation in Yellowstone transforms a vast landscape into something intimate and abstract," says Kristina Carlson. "I created this image to focus on the often-overlooked details that quietly sustain something much larger."

CAMERA & LENS: Nikon D3, AF-S Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8G ED lens

EXPOSURE: 1/320 second at f/5.6, ISO 250

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: In Adobe Lightroom she cropped the image and adjusted the basic color, exposure, and contrast. In Photoshop, she enhanced the details, did some selective dodging and burning, and refined the image through color grading to create a harmonious look.

Eight Free or Low-Cost Marketing Ideas

You don't need to spend a ton to raise awareness for your photography business. Try one or more of these inexpensive or no-cost ideas.

1

Create content. Use your business website to create blog posts or behind-the-scenes videos of photo sessions. Post widely on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.

2

Introduce a customer referral program. Boost your word-of-mouth marketing by offering, for example, a studio credit to current clients as an incentive to bring in new ones.

3

Reach out to podcasters or photography content creators to be a guest on their established platforms. These influencers who already have followers can help elevate you and your work.

4

Create profiles on business review websites, and manage them frequently. Google, Yelp, and the Better Business Bureau, among others, offer free business profiles. Once you register, post your location, hours, website, and other information. Encourage clients to rate and review you, which will draw potential clients. Make sure you visit the sites regularly to reply to any reviews or questions.

5

Engage one-on-one. Send handwritten notes or postcards to customers you haven't heard from in a while. Write personal thank-you notes to customers who purchase your fine art or landscape images online.

6

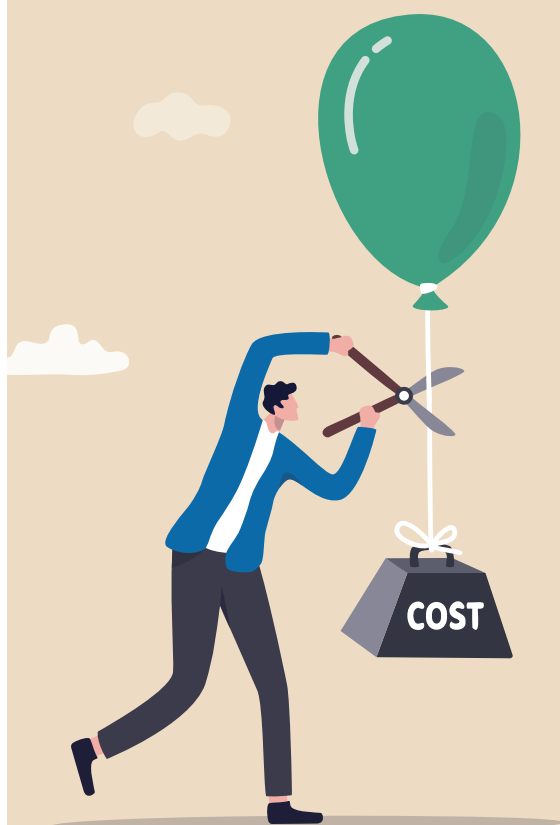
Establish a partnership. Reach out to a business that complements yours, for example a baby clothing boutique if you're a maternity/newborn photographer, or local frame store if you're a fine art photographer. Consider how you can team up to generate a larger customer base.

7

Volunteer at a local event. Offer a pet portrait package for the local animal shelter's fundraising auction. Photograph a local nonprofit's 5K for the community website or newspaper. Make sure your name and copyright are on all the images so people learn who you are.

8

Consider vehicle branding. If you are driving to multiple events as a photographer, your vehicle can serve as a marketing tool with a large logo sticker or magnet.



Source: NerdWallet

Take a Creative Adventure

PERSONAL PROJECTS CAN IGNITE NEW IDEAS AND SHARPEN SKILLS

By *Melanie Lasoff Levs*



IMAGES ©LARRY LOURCEY

A class on self-portraiture inspired Dallas, Texas-based portrait photographer Larry Lourcey, M.Photos.M.Artist.Cr., CPP, to take on his first personal project. When he turned 40, he decided to take a self-portrait every week (left and page 28) for 40 weeks and post it on social media every Monday. “It ended up being incredibly hard, not at all what I was expecting, but it was a great experience,” he tells “Professional Photographer” podcast host Pat Miller on the episode, “Why Personal Projects Make You a Better Photographer.”

“For me, it’s been a recurring theme that sometimes the difficult things are the good things, the growth things.” The “amazing creative adventure” solidified his interest in personal projects, a body of work not produced for a client but for a photographer’s own creative expression and satisfaction.

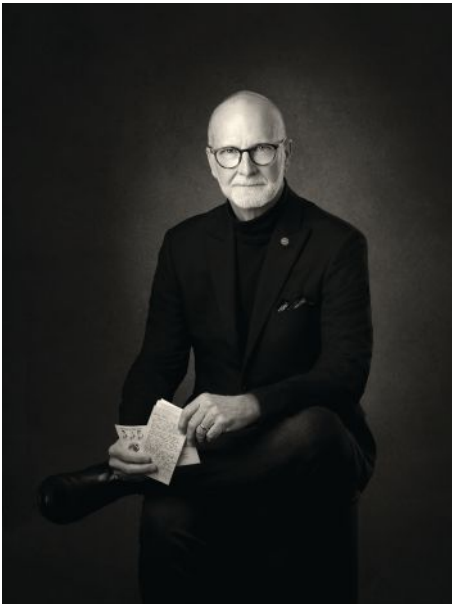
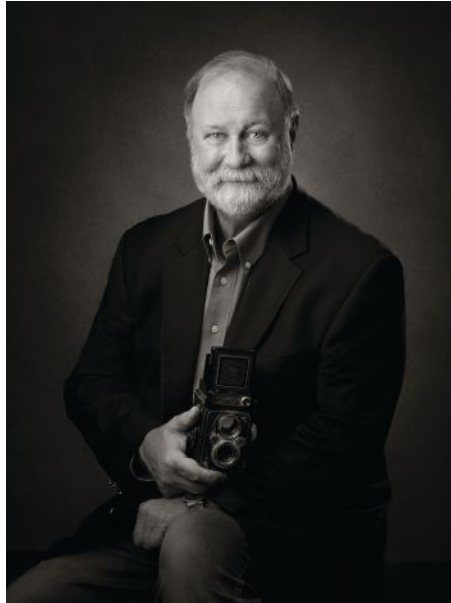
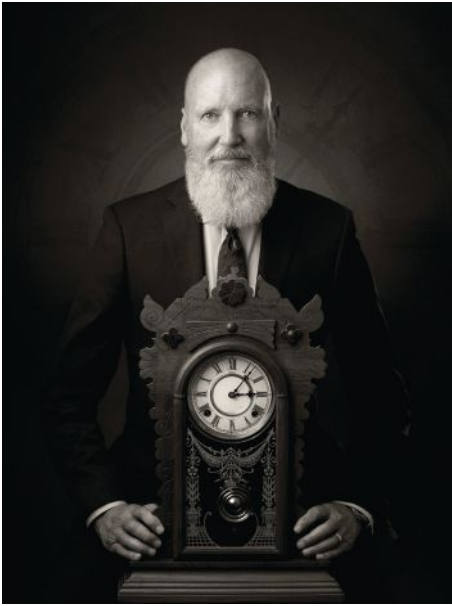
Personal projects are powerful because they ignite ideas and inspiration, he says. “When you can step out and just do something for fun, you kind of get that spark again. I think it’s really important,” Lourcey tells Miller.

How do you find time to generate and execute a personal project? Lourcey, who has done several (including one that led to an Emmy Award-winning local news segment), shares his insights and advice on the podcast.

Keep yourself accountable. Before starting his projects, Lourcey always announces them on social media. For example, with “40 at 40,” he shared his plan with friends, “so it was pressure,



See Larry Lourcey’s content on **PhotoVision**.





Get more insights from the
"Professional Photographer"
podcast at:
ppa.com/podcast

"WHEN YOU CAN STEP OUT AND JUST DO
SOMETHING FOR FUN, YOU KIND OF GET THAT
SPARK AGAIN. I THINK IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT."

like, 'Oh yeah, I've got to do it because I don't want Monday to roll by and then people are texting me going, 'Hey, what happened?'" he says. "So that was kind of a way to force me to do it." Lourcey does not typically work on weekends but since this was not true work, he often made his portraits on Sundays.

Create structure around your work.

"It feels like less structure is more freedom," he explains to Miller, "but [less structure] actually makes things more difficult." For example, you don't want to announce you're doing a project about dogs, as that is too broad. Putting descriptions around what you are photographing—an adult male doing manual labor wearing red versus "a person"—gives you a theme and a lane to stay in.

One of Lourcey's favorite and most compelling projects was "One Thing" (page 27). The concept was, if your house is on fire and all pets and people were safe and you could save just one object, what would it be? He invited participants to bring their object to a photo session and, using the same setup for each, created portraits of the person with their object. Then each person wrote the story about their object, which he posted along with the portraits. "It really showed you the power of storytelling and images," he recalls.

The power was magnified when a local TV news crew brought Lourcey a subject: a woman named Marsha who had lost her 20-year-old daughter, Neah, in a house fire. In her portrait, Marsha clutches her daughter's beloved fiddle (page 27, bottom right). "I had been doing this whole project about what's the one thing you would save in the event of a fire, and hers was, what's the one thing you have *left* after a fire?" Lourcey says. The story of his and Marsha's moving photo session won the news crew



an Emmy, and a producer gave one to Lourcey, which he has in his studio.

Without this specific project, he explains, "I would have never met her. I would have never been a part of that. It's one of the most memorable sessions I've ever done in my life. And it's not like she's a celebrity or some powerful business owner or politician or something. It's just a person. And it just shows how just any person could have some sort of an amazing story, and finding it is the fun part."

Know when to move on. After photographing Marsha, Lourcey made his own "One Thing" portrait and then recognized the project's natural end. "It could have become a lifetime project, but I decided that was it after hers," he says. "Everything else kind of seemed silly." While you can recognize the end for some projects, some might not even take off, and that is OK too. For example, Lourcey started a project photographing local artists in their studios. He had one artist sign up and realized after a month that it was not meant to be.

Use your project to improve your skills.

Personal projects help you tackle creative and/or technical challenges. His self-portrait project was a creative challenge because he had to come up with ideas. His "Off the Record" project, where he recreated iconic album covers with regular people, was technical. For this concept, photo subjects picked their favorite iconic album covers and came dressed appropriately, and a local hair and makeup artist at the session would complete the look. Lourcey, then, had to determine how the original image was created. "The challenge for me was looking at it, the lighting: Is it hard light, is it soft light, what direction is it coming from, are there kickers or no? So many things like that," he says. "It was way harder than I thought it would be, but also a great learning experience to look at an image."

Personal projects are meant to elevate you as a professional, particularly if you choose one in which you can practice skills, he adds. "When I do stuff like that, I don't do it with a financial gain in mind. I'm doing it just to make myself better," Lourcey says. "The financial gain is the better I get, I think I will do better with my business, and I will create better images, and I will sell more images."

Be prepared, and be prepared to pivot. Before Lourcey announced his self-portrait project, he mapped out about 20 concepts he wanted to photograph. "The minute I started [photographing], they just all started falling apart," he recalls, so he would start with one idea, go back and forth on capture multiple times, and finally land on a variation of a different idea. His first self portrait was supposed to be a side-by-side version of the well-known Apple "Get a Mac" commercial campaign,

with one image of him as “I’m a PC” and the other as “I’m a Mac.” He couldn’t quite get it right so he instead created one photo of himself wearing a Mac T-shirt and holding open a suit jacket like Superman. “It turned out great,” Lourcey says, and became his speaker portrait for years.

Be open to learning ... from everything.

Lourcey recalls a workshop he took by prestigious Finnish American photographer Arno Minkinen, who at the end critiqued student work. Lourcey had brought images that did well in PPA critiques, yet “mine just got panned, and it was really deflating,” he recalls. “But I left there a different person. I went in thinking, ‘Man, there’s not really much for me to learn.’ And I walked out of it going, ‘Oh, my gosh, there’s so much more that I didn’t even know that I didn’t know.’ What I got out of it was not what I was expecting to get out of it at all, but it redirected me.”

When your lecture or workshop or personal project changes your perspective, it is worth it for your art and your business, he says. “I want to be a different person when I come out of it, or what’s the point of doing it?”

It can feel overwhelming to think you must come up with a perfect, bold idea, but that adds unnecessary pressure. “It’s easy to not start. The biggest thing is just jump in and start,” Lourcey says. “It doesn’t have to be complicated.” In fact, his “40 at 40” was based on a 52-year-old musician who had written a song every week for 52 weeks, he explains, so give yourself permission to use others’ ideas. “You never know when one is going to be a life-changing, this-is-the-thing-people-are-going-to-know-me-about type of a project, or if it’s just going to be kind of an exercise,” Lourcey says. “And there’s nothing wrong with it just being an exercise. But my advice would be pick something and go with it.” •



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With the knowledge I gained from PPA, along with hard work and dedication, I eventually had the opportunity to teach the art of photography at the Masters in Beijing, China, and share my expertise in different parts of the world. I went from being a young assistant to owning one of the most highly awarded studios in the state of New Jersey.

I became a photographer because I always felt I could visualize a better world from behind the lens. One of my proudest moments was receiving the PPA National Award in 2024 and receiving the International PPA Award at Imaging USA 2026 in Nashville.

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FACES OF PPA

2026 HOT ONES

A YEAR OF ENDURANCE

This past year tested the mettle of many of the photography industry's finest, from corporations to small businesses. This Hot Ones buyers guide celebrates the people and products that keep professional photographers equipped for the job. And for our hard-working professional photographer readers, please enjoy this collection of high-tech, precision-made instruments of the trade, gorgeous, eye-catching client products, and innovative and supportive tools that make the grade.

BY JOAN SHERWOOD



Hasselblad X2D II 100C

Living up to Hasselblad's tradition of excellence, the X2D II 100C delivers the industry's first 100-megapixel medium-format images with end-to-end high dynamic range. Its refined performance includes 5-axis, 10-stop in-body image stabilization, AF-C continuous autofocus, and the Phocus Mobile 2 app, which allows users to connect to and remote control X and V system cameras. \$7,399 hasselblad.com



Canon EOS R6 Mark III

This affordable hybrid builds on the Canon 5-series and 1-series cameras, adding advanced video capabilities. With a 32.5-megapixel full-frame sensor, shoot up to 40fps with electronic shutter with 20 frames of pre-continuous captures. Video capabilities include 7K 59.94p Raw Light recording and oversampled 4K 60p/30p recording. Features CFexpress type B + SD card slots. \$2,799 usa.canon.com



Fujifilm X-E5

This rangefinder style mirrorless makes for a fun creative carry. Twenty film simulations are available via dial, and users get three dial positions for their own savable and sharable film recipes. The electronic viewfinder offers a Surround View mode that shows you what's outside of frame. It has a back-illuminated 40.2-megapixel X-Trans CMOS 5 HR sensor and can capture 6.2K/30p resolution. \$1,699.95 fujifilm-x.com



COURTESY DJI



DJI Osmo Action 6

This is DJI's first camera with a variable aperture of f/2.0-4.0 and it has a new 1/1.1-inch CMOS sensor, in-camera 4K HorizonSteady for more smooth and stable video, and 50GB of internal storage. The square sensor allows for a 4K Custom mode that lets you choose your aspect ratio after you've got your footage, and a Portrait mode. \$436 djiusa.com



Nikon ZR

The first in the Z Cinema Series, this ultra-lightweight camera was developed with RED and can record up to 6K/60p (59.94p). It uses the new 12-bit R3D NE RAW codec, which supports a 15+ stop dynamic range. The Cinematic video mode gives users the RED cinematic look with a faster workflow in less data-intensive non-raw formats. \$2,199.95 nikonusa.com



Sony Alpha 7 V

A strong upgrade to the a7 IV, the a7 V is a great all-around camera for still photographers, filmmakers, and content creators at an affordable price. It has improved rolling shutter performance, Real-time Recognition autofocus, Real-time Tracking, improved pre-capture mode, blackout-free continuous capture up to 30 fps, and is capable of 7K over-sampled 4K/60p recording. \$2,899 electronics.sony.com



COURTESY CANON



Lensbaby Twist 28

The wide-angle Petzval-inspired lens builds on the vintage character of the original Twist 60 with the advantage of mirrorless camera design. Focus concentrates on the center and falls off into swirling bokeh. The 28mm focal length lets you include a generous background around the subject, which provides context to the story of the image. \$189.96

lensbaby.com



Sigma 35mm F1.4 DG II Art

This lens can do it all, from landscape to close-ups, nature to cityscapes. It's the third 35mm F1.4 lens Sigma has created for its superlative Art line, embodying years of advancements in a new refined, lightweight, compact design. Its high-speed AF is driven by Dual HLA, the minimum focusing distance is 11.1 inches, and it's available in Sony E-mount and L-Mount. \$1,059

sigmaphoto.com



Canon RF14mm F1.4 L VCM Hybrid Lens

Canon's brightest ultra-wide angle interchangeable lens is designed for landscape, astro, and starscape photography, and will serve in the architecture and real estate realms as well. It features a rear filter holder for attaching sheet-type gelatin filters closer to the image plane, which lets you capture point light sources around the edge of the frame without distortion. \$2,599

usa.canon.com



Canon RF85mm F1.4 L VCM Hybrid Lens

Along with the gorgeous bokeh and compression you want in a portrait lens, you get sharp, fast autofocus in a lighter, more compact design. The VCM operates in near silence, and the iris control ring lets you adjust exposure on the fly. All the lenses in the VCM series are F1.4, and have the same exterior dimensions and the same 67mm filter size. \$1,649

usa.canon.com



Sony FE 100mm F2.8 Macro GM OSS

Photograph detailed close-up subjects with a magnification up to 1.4x, and amplify it up to 2.8x with optional 1.4X and 2.0X teleconverters. Focus-dedicated features enable instant MF by rotating the focus ring, instant AF/MF switching with a focus mode switch, or full MF mode with the sliding focus ring. The optics deliver a beautiful balance of resolution and background blur. \$1,499.99

electronics.sony.com



Sigma 135mm F1.4 DG Art

Ideal for portraits, this 135mm offers a natural perspective and moderate shooting distance elevated by the brightness and large, circular, rich bokeh that an f/1.4 aperture from a 13-blade diaphragm makes possible. Subjects stand out and render at an astounding level. The optical design suppresses axial chromatic aberration that tends to appear in large-aperture telephoto lenses. \$1,899

sigmaphoto.com



Nikkor Z DX 16-50mm f/2.8 VR

With a zoom ratio of 3.1x and a minimum aperture down to f/22, this 16-50mm f/2.8 gives users impressive flexibility when it comes to nighttime photography, closeups, interiors, and portraits. It's designed for APS-C cameras with a focal-length equivalent to 24-75mm. Built-in optical vibration reduction provides up to 5 stops of stabilization. \$899.95
[nikonusa.com](https://www.nikonusa.com)



Tamron 25-200mm F/2.8-5.6 Di III VXD G2

If you're looking for an all-in-one, this second-generation (G2) 8X zoom designed for Sony E full-frame mirrorless cameras is adept and ready to go. Tamron's voice-coil extreme torque drive linear motor focus makes autofocus fast and precise. The maximum magnification ratio is 1:1.9 at the 25mm wide end, and the lens supports half-macro captures. \$899
[tamron-america.com](https://www.tamron-america.com)



Hasselblad XCD 2,8-4/35-100E

Designed for Hasselblad X-System medium-format cameras, this f/2.8-4 35-100mm lens is a versatile standard zoom that excels in photography genres from landscapes to intimate portraits. With approximately 3x optical zoom, the lens's equivalent focal length is 28-76mm with X System cameras with a 100-megapixel sensor. The E Series is Hasselblad's flagship of optical performance. \$4,599
[hasselblad.com](https://www.hasselblad.com)



COURTESY NIKON



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Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S II

The S Line represents Nikon lenses with superior performance and resolution, and this bright, fast 24-70mm is the kind of workhorse that will never let you down. The stepping motor keeps autofocus smooth and quiet for both stills and video. There's minimal focus breathing and you can control aperture, focus, or exposure with the control ring. \$2,549.95
nikonusa.com



Tamron 70-180mm F/2.8 Di III VXD G2

Now available in Nikon Z-mount, this fast-aperture telephoto zoom offers outstanding image quality with reliable autofocus and AI-assisted image stabilization that chooses the appropriate compensation characteristics for videography at focal lengths of 100mm or less. This second-generation lens offers accurate, fast autofocus and precision tracking with a quiet linear focus motor. \$1,149
tamron-americas.com



Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S II

Even with its outstanding S-Line optics, this lens is lighter than others in its class at just 2.2 pounds. It has the same multi-focus system as Nikon's professional sports telephoto lenses and a new optical encoder. With a non-extending internal zoom, the unchanging length and center of gravity make it ideal for use with gimbal. \$3,199.95
nikonusa.com



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Offer clients a dynamic wall display with these reversible 16x24 prints on metal that feature a unique image on each side. A faux-wooden edge gives the display a depth of 1.5 inches and it's easy to hang and adjust on an included 5x5-inch magnetic wall sticker. \$125 for single-sided and \$155 for double-sided
millerlab.com



H+H Color Lab Aura Albums

Present clients with a refined, modern album design they'll love to show off. Choose from fabric or photographic covers and lustre, pearl, or deep matte color-accurate professional papers for the interior. Linen end sheets add a subtle, refined finish. Optional slip cases elevate your presentation even more. Available in six sizes starting at \$117.69 for 5.5x7 with 10 spreads
hhcolorlab.com



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Analog is hot this year, and your clients will appreciate these easy custom cards, or use them to send a note of appreciation to your favorite people. These artistic 5x7 cards feature built-in slots to hold a 3.3x4 mini snapshot (order separately) on photo or fine art paper. WHCC has hundreds of free templates or upload your own design. From \$23 for 25

whcc.com



Canson Infinity Rag Photographique II

This new version is the same high-quality 100% cotton fine art inkjet paper but with a new coating that improves image color gamut and dMax. Prints show excellent black density and exceptional detail on a smooth matte surface. It has no OBAs and is ideal for photographers who want to make museum-grade prints. Available in sizes from 8.5x11 to 44-inch rolls. Starts at \$51.03 for a box of 25 8.5x11 sheets

canson-infinity.com



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whitewall.com



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Harman Switch Azure

Made in the longtime Ilford Imaging facilities, this new ISO 125 creative film “switches” two of the three color couplers around to create a different contrast response to the individual channels, rendering blues as orange, yellows as azure, and reds as purple/blue hues. Switch Azure 125 is available in 35mm and 120 and can be purchased through film retailers like B&H. \$12.99 for 35mm; \$10.99 for 120 harmanphoto.co.uk



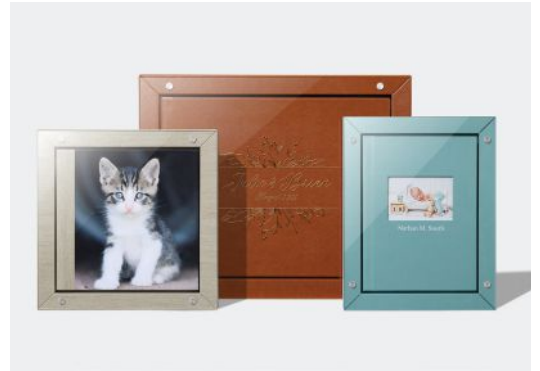
Red River Paper Trinity River Velvet 315

Perfect for images that work well on a highly textured surface, this cold press art paper has a matte inkjet coating that ensures deep blacks and rich colors. Available in sizes from 4x6 to a 44-inch 50-foot roll. Starts at \$23.55 for a 50-count box of 4x6 redrivercatalog.com



QT Albums Hahnemühle Baryta Bamboo ArtBook

Sustainable Bamboo Gloss Baryta fine art paper is made from 90% bamboo fibers and 10% cotton. High-gloss baryta inkjet coating creates depth and vibrancy, and the paper's natural white tone is free from optical brighteners. With acid- and lignin-free paper, these museum-quality albums will last for generations. Available in hard cover or a leather wrap journal style. \$350 for a 10x10 album with 10 spreads qtalbums.com



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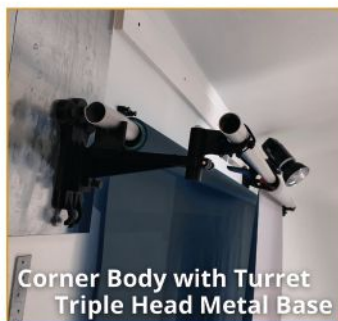


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This rugged printed backdrop (CP-8801) of a distressed plaster wall with layered neutrals works for glam as well as casual portraits. It's available in poly paper, freedom cloth, canvas, twist-flex, or velvet. Sizes range from 4x5 to 20x10 depending on the material. Prices start at \$150.80

dennymfg.com

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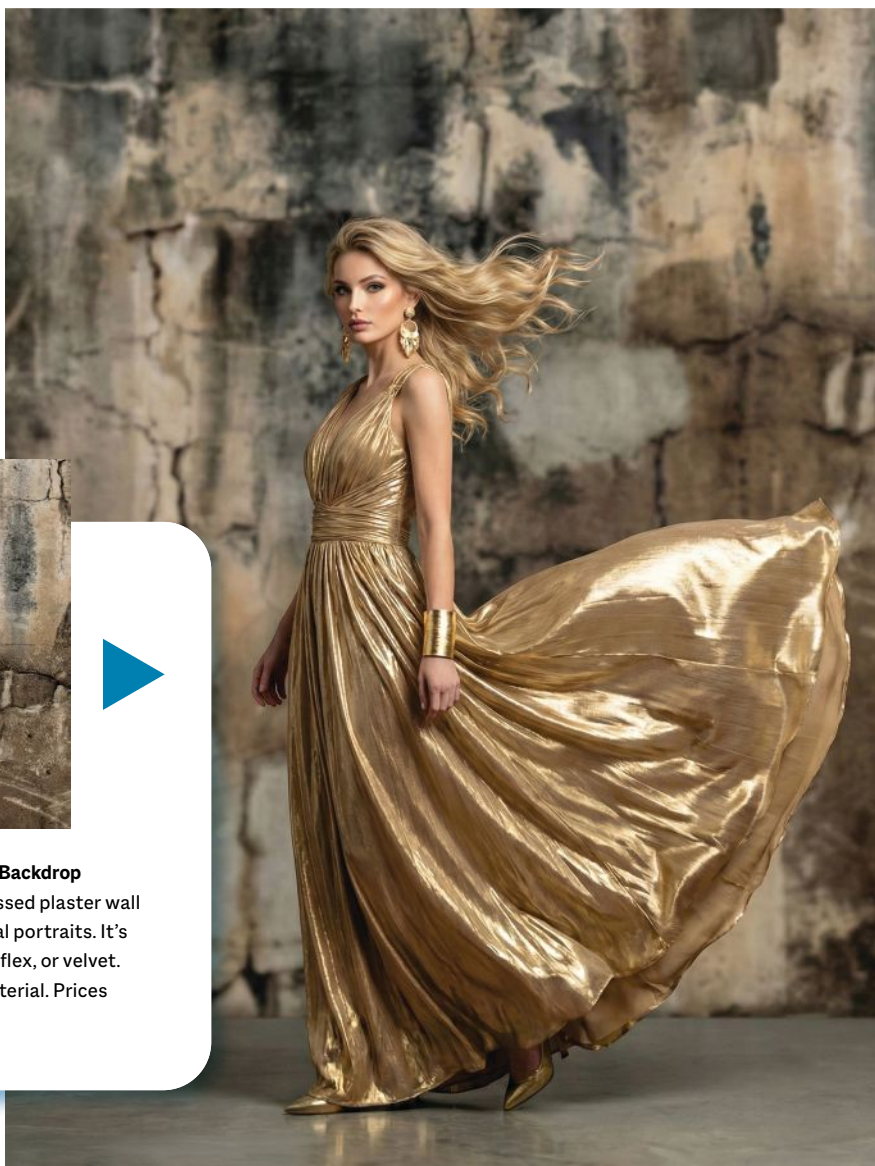


No. 2 Willow Lane Newborn Little Bear

This costume and prop set includes the cutest imaginable bear romper, hat, and Bear Lovie stuffed toy. Handcrafted in the U.S. and made with nubby stretch fleece, Newborn sizing fits most newborns up to 10 pounds and is designed to fit naked

newborns in the first 2-3 weeks. Sitter sizing fits most sitting babies from 6-12 months old. Pre-orders and made-to-orders require 3-5 weeks. \$59.99

no2willowlane.com



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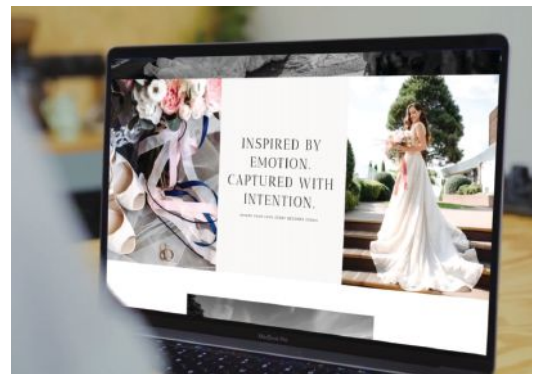
Datacolor SpyderExpress

This color calibrator works for you, whether you're doing all-digital work to create content or producing for print products like albums and photo books. It's designed to be as simple as possible for the user, and it only takes 90 seconds. You can calibrate up to three connected displays per workstation. Prevent color issues before they become color problems. \$119
datacolor.com



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saramonicusa.com



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photobiz.com

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No. 2 Willow Lane Newborn Cowboy Hat

This high-quality felt hat with a leather band earns the sweetest of yee-haws. Available in tan, camel, brown, black, pink (with white lace band), and red, these do not stay in stock and may take 1-2 weeks in addition to shipping time. They're handcrafted in the U.S. and come in sizes for newborns up to 10 pounds at 2-3 weeks and sitting babies 6-12 months old. Horse Lovie sold separately. \$39.99
no2willowlane.com



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Store your paper rolls efficiently in this wall-mounted system (SP-Hold) that protects them from dents, crushing, and deformation. The vertical design allows for easy access and expansion. It's made from high-density anti-sag foam that mounts with a strong peel-and-stick adhesive. It holds six seamless paper rolls. \$69.95
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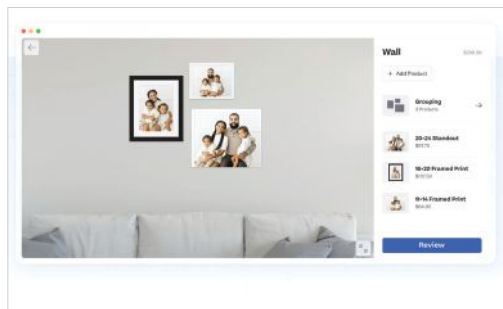
Blackmagic Design DaVinci Resolve 21

This version introduces the Photo page, allowing still photographers to use the full DaVinci color grading toolset plus Resolve FX and Fusion FX. It lets you reframe and crop non-destructively at the original source resolution. Supports tethered shooting and collaborative work via Blackmagic Cloud. DaVinci Resolve's professional video capabilities are cinematic level and vast. Free blackmagicdesign.com



Denny Mfg. Stand-Alone Number Photography Props

Great for grads at any stage, milestone birthdays, or any numeric occasion, these stand-alone numbers are crafted from high-density, hard-coated foam. They're lightweight but built to endure studio and location use. The dimensions are 11.75x20.5x7.25, and you can order by single digit, 2- and 4-digit year sets, or a set of 0-9. From \$129 dennymfg.com



WHCC Gallery Wall Designer

Built into the online ordering system, this new feature lets you take a photo of your client's wall (or provided staged examples) and calibrate it using an object with known dimensions in the photo and then design a wall art arrangement at the correct scale. Change the arrangement, sizes, and products until it's just right. Free whcc.com



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Think Tank BackLight Long Lens Backpack

For sports and wildlife photographers, this backpack is designed to carry a 600mm f/4 or 800mm f/5.6 lens attached to a gripped camera body with an adaptor, tripod foot, and L-bracket. You can access your camera and lens through the rear panel when the case is lying down or standing up. It features a top grab handle, tablet sleeve, and includes a camouflage rain cover. \$275.75

thinktankphoto.com



Think Tank FocusPoint Rolltop

Stylish and available in four color options—asphalt black, greenway, golden hour, and urban rust—this rolltop backpack features rear panel and side access, a removable waist belt, handle pass-through, and tripod straps. It has 10 interior and exterior pockets, camera clip-compatible shoulder straps, interior laptop sleeve, and is made with sustainable and recycled materials. \$269.75

thinktankphoto.com



COURTESY SPIDER HOLSTER



Spider Holster SpiderPro Leather Sling Pouch

In response to requests for more formal styles, Spider Holster stepped up and delivered, including this refined premium leather pouch that works seamlessly with their leather belt system or converts into a cross-body bag with an included strap. Measuring 12x7x3, it's large enough to hold an extra lens and has four dedicated SD card pockets. \$169
spiderholster.com



Shimoda Sidecountry 28 Starter Kit

Side-only access helps keep this backpack lightweight. The included Top Loader insert has room to protect a camera and two lenses. The pack features hidden front straps, removeable belt, 16-inch laptop sleeve, removeable onsen bag, and a rain cover. The water-repellent shell is made with Cordura re/con reclaimed pre-consumer waste material. Available with a harness designed for women. \$379.90
shimodadesigns.com



Tenba Roadie V2 Spinner 21 Air Case

This is the rolling air case that has everything you want. Silky smooth, user-replaceable Widetrak wheels roll steady without tipping, even with another bag on top. It meets international carry-on regs, but inserting the rigid laptop pocket board makes it totally checkable and practically uncrushable. TSA and cable locks are available to secure the generous, well-padded storage space. \$549.95
tenba.com



Manfrotto Pro Light Tripod Bags

These cases protect your tripod, with extra padding around the tripod head, and serve as a work basket; the top flaps fold back and the canoe-shaped case stands open, providing you with a safe spot to set things down. The base faces outward when carried so that any dirt accumulated won't spoil your clothes. It comes in 69-, 80-, and 88-inch interior lengths. \$129.99 to \$229.95
manfrotto.com

COURTESY NANLITE

**broncolor Stelos**

Stelos offers variable flash color temperature, a first for monolights. It can tilt a full 90 degrees up and down on a stand, unlocking more creative options for its 800 joules of flash energy. Its 1 to 11 control range spans 10 f/stops, and it has an intuitive interface with two buttons and a rotating push dial, plus a customizable menu. Swiss-built to last with premium components. \$3,799.95
broncolor.us

**Godox iT32 and X5**

The X5 TTL wireless flash trigger acts as hot shoe and trigger, and comes in versions for all major camera makes. The iT32 iFlash camera flash easily detaches from its magnetic seat, rotates 270 degrees horizontally and 90 degrees up, and includes diffusion and catchlight panels. The X5 acts as a sender and receiver to wirelessly control additional iT32s or other Godox X System flashes. \$103
godox.com

**Elinchrom Transmitter Pro X series**

Take charge of a complex lighting setup with this on-camera control center. It has a modern interface and a connected platform designed to evolve with the Elinchrom system with upgradable firmware. It gives you real-time control over flash power and modeling lamps, 20 channels, and four groups, and can contend with HSS and Hi-Sync up to 1/8,000 second. \$295.95
us.elinchrom.com



Westcott FJ-T1 Touchscreen Wireless Trigger

Control the FJ Wireless System lights from your camera with this sleek, compact trigger. The bright OLED touchscreen interface is intuitive with swipe and tap navigation. Control up to 31 channels and 16 groups with reliable performance up to 262 feet. It's forward and backward

compatible with the entire FJ Wireless System, and comes in a multi-brand version and a dedicated Sony model. \$109.90

fjwestcott.com



Nanlite Full-Color Wand LED Light

Weighing less than a pound, this full-color RGBW wand LED light can produce 36,000 colors and a CCT range of 2,700K-7,500K plus 14 effects. It's flanked by adjustable barn doors to control light spill, includes a removable diffuser, and can mount on a light stand or tripod. Control it via the wand or wirelessly with the Nanlink mobile app. \$119

nanliteus.com



Godox AD800Pro

Light up on location with this 800Ws battery-powered all-in-one monolight. You can overpower the sun, even at midday, and get up to 300 full-power flashes per charge. Recycle times are 0.01-1.5 seconds. Adjust power across a 10-stop range on 0.1-stop increments and enjoy reliable long-range 2.4 GHz X wireless control. Its native Bowens mount makes it compatible with a large field of modifiers. \$999

godox.com



Profoto B20 and B30

The design of the B20 and B30 builds on the successful B10 line, but makes them faster performers with shorter flash duration and with a powerful bi-color LED. The B20 power range covers 250Ws to 0.25Ws while the B30 range is 500-0.5Ws. Form follows function in every detail from the ease of attaching modifiers to intuitive controls. See full review in the July 2026 issue. \$1,995 and \$2,395

profoto.com



Westcott Quick-Mount S-Bracket 2

This innovative bracket provides the easiest way to attach Bowens S-Type modifiers to speedlights, compact flashes, or LEDs. Simply place the bracket around the end of your light and cinch it down with a pinch of your fingers and click the modifier into the bracket. There are three cold shoe mounts around the perimeter. It supports up to 20 pounds and requires no assembly or mounting plates. \$37.90

fjwestcott.com

COURTESY SONY



Manfrotto Xchange QR System

This innovative quick-release system makes switching tripod heads and gear fast, easy, and secure. With plates installed on your heads, sliders, and other tripod-mount accessories you can simply click the plate onto the base that's mounted on your tripod and slide one lever to lock it. \$54.99 (sold separately, the base is \$44.99 and the plate is \$21.99) manfrotto.com



DJI Mic 3

You can get creative with your BTS clips with this versatile kit that includes two mic transmitters, a receiver, charging case, and pouch. Lightweight and compact, they attach via magnet or clip-on and store neatly in the charging case. There are three voice tone presets: regular, rich, and bright. Two noise canceling levels are geared for quiet indoor or noisy environments. \$329 djiusa.com



Sony GP-VPT3 Multi-function Shooting Grip

Sony combined a grip with a mini-tripod and added a detachable RMT-VP2 wireless remote commander. The grip locks at any angle in its rotation, and a button unlocks the head to quickly shift between outward-facing and self-facing camera positions. Control the camera from up to 32 feet away and take still and video in situations where it would be hard to reach the shutter button. \$159.99 electronics.sony.com



Spider Holster SpiderPro Dual Shoulder Harness

The QD (quick disconnect) swivels on this sleek, stylish harness can be used with the built-in sockets on the Spider v3 holster, plate, or screw-in pin. With these you can attach cameras in suspender mode with the QDs connected to the suspension system, direct-mount to a v3 Camera Plate or Pin attached to the camera, or in a hybrid mode. \$169
spiderholster.com



Manfrotto MVH500XAH Fluid Video Head

Providing precision, versatility, and seamless control, this elegantly designed fluid head is made for mirrorless cameras and has a payload up to 11 pounds. The hinged plate transitions from landscape to portrait easily. The Fluid Drag System makes panning and tilting buttery smooth, and if more control is needed, it offers a built-in counterbalance. The 60mm base is compatible with Manfrotto's Xchange quick-release system. \$219.99
manfrotto.com



Tether Tools AeroTrac Workstation System

Go anywhere with this versatile, light-weight, foldable workstation. Modular components like tech clamps to secure a laptop, Workstation Legs, and cord hooks can be moved anywhere in the tracks on either surface. It's made of anodized aluminum, folds down to 8.5x11x0.75, connects to any 1/4"-20 or 3/8"-16 support, and weighs just 3.3 pounds. Available in three kits starting at \$479.99
tethertools.com



Find the complete
2026 Hot Ones online at
ppa.com/2026-hot-ones



Spider Holster SpiderPro Dual Camera System v3

This latest Spider Holster dual camera system brings up the style factor to a more formal design that will fit in at any high-end event. It's made with a premium leather and memory foam interior. The suspension system comfortably takes the stress of carrying two cameras off your body. Available in black and brown; fits waist sizes from 24 inches to 54 inches. \$389
spiderholster.com

Your Community Has a Story to Tell

Every workshop, meetup, class, and conversation shows what makes PPA's Community Networks so powerful: photographers learning together, supporting one another, and building connections that last.

Now, we want to help share those moments.



Florida Community Network Book Club Meetup



WPPA Connection Annual Convention in Casper, Wyoming

Member Voices is a new way for Community Networks and Community Network Schools to submit photos and stories from their local events, workshops, and gatherings. Submissions may be featured across PPA channels to celebrate the people, places, and experiences that bring our community to life.

Show us the education.

Show us the collaboration.

Show us the connections happening in your network.

Because when you share your story, you help inspire the next member to show up, get involved, and feel like they belong.

Submit Your Community Network Photos and Stories
[PPA.com/Voices](https://ppa.com/Voices)





IT'S A BRIEF WINDOW and one Olathe, Kansas-based Kristina Carlson has fallen in love with capturing: that fleeting but transformative chapter between childhood and adulthood of senior year and high school graduation. After raising her own teenaged son, she realized she felt a connection with the young people in that phase of life. "They are definitely at the crossroads of being in two different places at the same time," she

says. "They're still kids. They're living at home, relying on their parents, their daily life is pretty much set out for them." But one foot is out the door, ready to take charge of their future and shoulder adult responsibilities. "I think that tension of being somewhere in between those two worlds is a really great place artistically to try to capture that person, because that person is only going to exist for a very short time."



IMAGES ©KRISTINA CARLSON / kristinacarlsonphotography.com

KRISTINA
CARLSON
CAPTURES
TEENS'
TRUE
SELVES

Just As They Are

BY AMANDA ARNOLD

IN REAL LIFE

In 2004, Carlson was planning her wedding while finishing her art education degree. When she realized a digital wedding photographer was too expensive, she invested in a digital camera, and her father-in-law documented the nuptials. After that, she put her new camera to work by experimenting with various niches of photography, including photographing weddings with her husband. “Eventually I got way better than he did, and I fired him,” she laughs. She also learned she preferred photography to art



©EMMALEE RATHSAM

KRISTINA CARLSON

education. Today she focuses on two types of portraiture: high school seniors and families with older or adult children.

Carlson describes her portrait style as clean, crisp, and true-to-life, and notes that the parents who seek her out for senior portraits are looking for photos that capture their child just as they are. Everything about





“I JUST WANT THEM TO FEEL REALLY GOOD AND COMFORTABLE IN WHO THEY ARE.”

Carlson’s senior session experience speaks to that desire for authenticity.

The first thing she discusses with senior portrait clients is session location. When Carlson first began photographing seniors, she followed the trends, searching out the “coolest spots,” she says. “Wherever the graffiti walls were, that’s where we went, even though these kids maybe had never seen that part of town in their entire life.” These days she’s mindful about selecting a location that reflects that teen’s personality and day-to-day

life rather than industry trends. “I try to be a little more intentional with asking them why they want to shoot in a spot and what they’re trying to get out of it,” she says.

As for wardrobe, she asks for three or four looks, but leaves those selections up to her subjects. “I don’t really consult over wardrobe,” she says, “and I know that’s a really big thing in the industry.” She wants them to wear the clothing they like best. “I know a lot of kids are going to go out and buy new outfits, but I also hope they’re



CAREER TIPS

Portrait photographer Kristina Carlson offers three tips for photographers as they build their businesses:

Be true to yourself. "Not doing that, it caused me a lot of years of not liking what I was doing, because I was creating art for other people and not for myself or my clients," she says. She also believes that art comes first and business second. "If you don't love your work, you probably don't love what you do, and it shows. And you probably won't be very successful if you don't love what you're doing."

Value your work, no matter the stage you're in. "Even for your friends and family, in the beginning, when you're starting out, you need to set a standard that this isn't for nothing," Carlson says. "Your time and your effort, no matter your skill level, are worth you being paid in return." She also regrets the perfectionism that initially held her back from sharing her work on social media. You're never going to think you're the best you can be, she points out, and that's good. "Don't shy away from valuing what you do even if it's not at the level you want it to be yet."

Find a supportive professional community. "I don't think I would have ever made it further in my career without the support of other photographers," says Carlson, who is working toward her PPA master of photography degree. "These professional communities really are looking out for you as an artist, and they're looking out for the community at large, and they want photography to be this wonderful thing that more people can experience."





going to show up in their favorite outfit, something they would wear on a normal basis.” If they ask for advice on which outfit is best, she asks them, “What would you wear in real life? What would you normally pick?” Her sessions aren’t styled fashion shoots, she notes. “I just want them to feel really good and comfortable in who they are.”

At the beginning of each senior session, Carlson asks the subject’s parent or parents if she can take a photo of them with their high school senior. She doesn’t ask ahead of time because she doesn’t want the mother to fuss over her appearance. “They always scoff, like, ‘Oh, no, I don’t look good. I wasn’t ready for this,’” she says. “That’s not the point of the picture. I want that kid to see that picture someday and go, ‘That’s what my mom looked like. That’s how my mom looked on a daily basis when she was lugging around my gear, taking me to sporting events, and being my Uber driver. Here she is in this photo, this real picture of how much my mom loves me.’”

GUARD DOWN

“I’ve taken dozens of posing classes over the years,” says Carlson, “and I still feel like that’s something we can always grow from.” That said, she describes her work as “not overly posy” and while there are certain poses that work for almost everyone, “I think you have to find out what is natural for each kid,” she adds.

“One way I work though this is to pose right along beside them,” she explains. She sits or stands next to them to physically show them what she’s looking for and “kind of build the pose together,” which is more effective than her yelling directions at them from a distance while standing behind a camera. By working out the poses together, “if something doesn’t



“I THINK ONE OF MY SUPERPOWERS IS READING PEOPLE.”

work or looks weird, now I look weird, too, and we can laugh about it and move on,” she says. “Most teens, and honestly most *people*, can really get into their own heads during the session, and that’s when you start to see stiffness in expressions and posing.” Her method keeps that stiffness at bay.

Carlson says her personality tends to put teens at ease. “I’m a super awkward and kind of weird person,” she laughs. “I definitely don’t give off the cool photographer vibe.” And she doesn’t want to; she’s found the more she lets her awkwardness shine, the more her subjects relax and act naturally.

“I think one of my superpowers is reading people and knowing what they would feel comfortable doing and who they are,” she says. “It’s really more about being able to build a relationship with somebody.”

BRINGING OUT THE SPIRIT

Carlson is proud of her use of true-to-life color, which is easier to capture when using off-camera flash. “Natural light can of course be really beautiful, but it also introduces a lot of variables through a session, like the cool tones in open shade versus the warmth of direct sun, or color casts from the surrounding environment, including the worst

offender: bright neon green grass in the spring and summer.” Using a light allows her to capture “that rich color in their skin tones,” and prevents them from appearing washed out, she explains.

She photographs with a Nikon D850 with a 70-200mm lens and uses a Godox AD200Pro light with a Glow EZ Lock 42-inch white beauty dish carried by an assistant. In general, she places the light in the same area each session: about 45 degrees off to the side of her camera, slightly higher than her subject, and angled downward. “I rarely point the light straight at them,” she says. “I like to feather the light across my subject,





ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

CAMERA AND LENS: Nikon D850 with a 70-200mm Nikon lens

EXPOSURE: 1/200 seconds at f/2.8, ISO 125

LIGHTING: A Godox AD200Pro with a Glow EZ Lock 42-inch white beauty dish on a Manfrotto, Photo Master Stand, Air Cushioned

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE:

"I discovered this location a few years ago, and it's become one of my favorites because it looks completely different depending on the season and time of day. This image was taken in autumn, just before sunset. The senior is standing in a small pocket of open shade, with full sun right behind him. I love the contrast and depth this creates. I am positioned at a good distance from him so I can shoot at 200mm and really compress the background. The distance is key in creating this buttery soft background from the light filtering through the trees in the far distance. The back-lighting from the sun is a key part of what makes this portrait work. I underexposed the image to preserve the highlights. To properly expose the subject, I used a Godox AD200 and my favorite modifier, the Glow EZ Lock Beauty Dish. All post-production was done in Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop. It's one of those setups where there's a lot going on from a lighting standpoint, but the final result feels simple yet magical."

so it wraps around them a little more and doesn't feel so harsh." She aims for a natural no-additive-light look, but when she wants extra drama, she simply moves the light closer to the subject, increasing the contrast between the light and the ambient scene.

To bring the focus to her subject's face, she goes with a wide aperture of f/2.8 with her lens zoomed in at 200mm. "That compression combined with the 2.8 aperture

really creates this buttery soft beautiful backdrop that no longer is competing for attention with the person," she says. "Even if I want a wide scene, now I will just run across the street with my 70-200, so I can still zoom all the way in and get the wide scene. ... My artistry is about bringing out the kid's spirit, and if that's competing with the background, you're just getting a cool, pretty picture, and not necessarily a portrait." •



DREAMING

DAVID BUCKWALTER IS
ALWAYS UP FOR A CHALLENGE

BY MARK EDWARD HARRIS

BIG





DAVID "BUCK" BUCKWALTER

"IT'S ALL IMAGING USA'S FAULT,"

jokes Central Virginia-based David "Buck" Buckwalter, who specializes in photographic wall art for commercial and residential settings. "I initially joined PPA for the insurance, and then after reading the magazine for a couple years I thought, *Well, I'll go to this Imaging convention and see what it's all about.*"

He first attended Imaging USA in Atlanta in 2019, where he was wowed by ChromaLuxe's metal prints on the expo floor. After learning that Bay Photo did printing for ChromaLuxe, he wandered over to Bay Photo's booth and was smitten. Metal became his printed

medium of choice. "Now all my paper prints are sitting in a pile marked 'clearance' at art shows," he says, while he offers his images on dye-infused metal in different sizes and a version overlain with acrylic.

BEHIND THE CAMERA

While Buckwalter has over 20 years of photography experience, primarily in landscape, wildlife, and figure studies, his full-time job and steady income is as a power plant engineer.

As for photography, "The hook was set very early on," Buckwalter says. In 1984, his dad was working





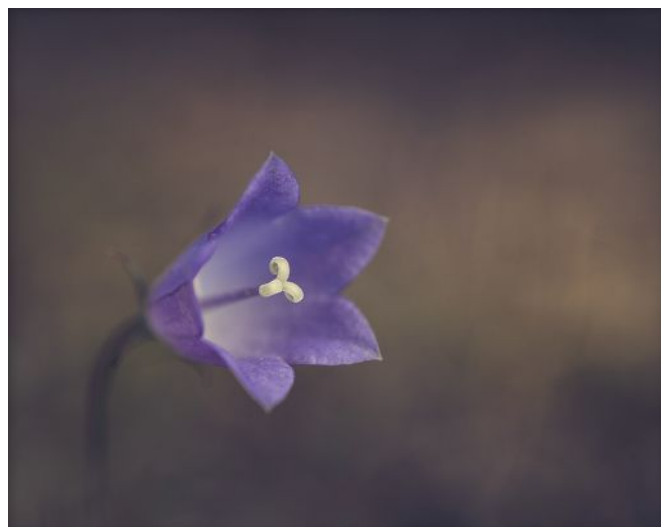


for a company that made parts for the space shuttle. Before each launch, it held a lottery for access to the press area at Cape Canaveral. When his father won a spot, 3-year-old Buckwalter went along, peering through his dad's telephoto lens to see the shuttle up close. "When we got the pictures back, I was able to mentally connect that those pictures came from his Pentax camera and how he pushed the button and worked the lever," he recalls. For Christmas, Buckwalter was gifted his first camera, a Minolta point-and-shoot.

Photography remained a hobby through high school. College didn't take, so when he withdrew, he became a substitute teacher at his former high school. When the photography teacher needed time off, she asked if Buckwalter would like to run the photo lab. The gig included free film and developing. He jumped at the opportunity. "Ending up as a long-term substitute for photography got me thinking more seriously about the medium," he recalls.

A year and a half later, Buckwalter joined the Navy's nuclear program. Before leaving for his initial deployment, he upgraded from his Pentax film camera to his first DSLR, a Nikon digital bought at the base exchange. He has been working with Nikon digital ever since. "Traveling out to sea on a submarine," he explains, "memory cards take up less space than film canisters."

Buckwalter was in upstate New York teaching nuclear operations when tragedy struck: his fiancée died, which drove him into depression. He ended up leaving the military and got a job with a nuclear power station near



WHAT'S IN HIS BAG

BAG

Think Tank BackLight 26L

CAMERA BODIES

Nikon D850

Nikon D850 (infrared modified)

Nikon D500

LENSES

AF-S Nikkor 300mm F2.8G ED VR II

AF-S Nikkor 14-24mm f/2.8 S

Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8 S

Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S II

Nikkor 50mm f/1.2

Rokinon 35mm F1.4 AF

Homemade "soda can" lens

Nikkor 50mm f/1.4 modified for automatic indexing with front element flipped for increased blur vignette

Nikkor Teleconverter TC-2.0x and Nikkor Teleconverter TC-1.4x

ACCESSORIES

Benro Mach3 9x Series 4 tripod

Induro BHL3S Ballhead

ProMediaGear GKJr. Katana Pro Gimbal Head

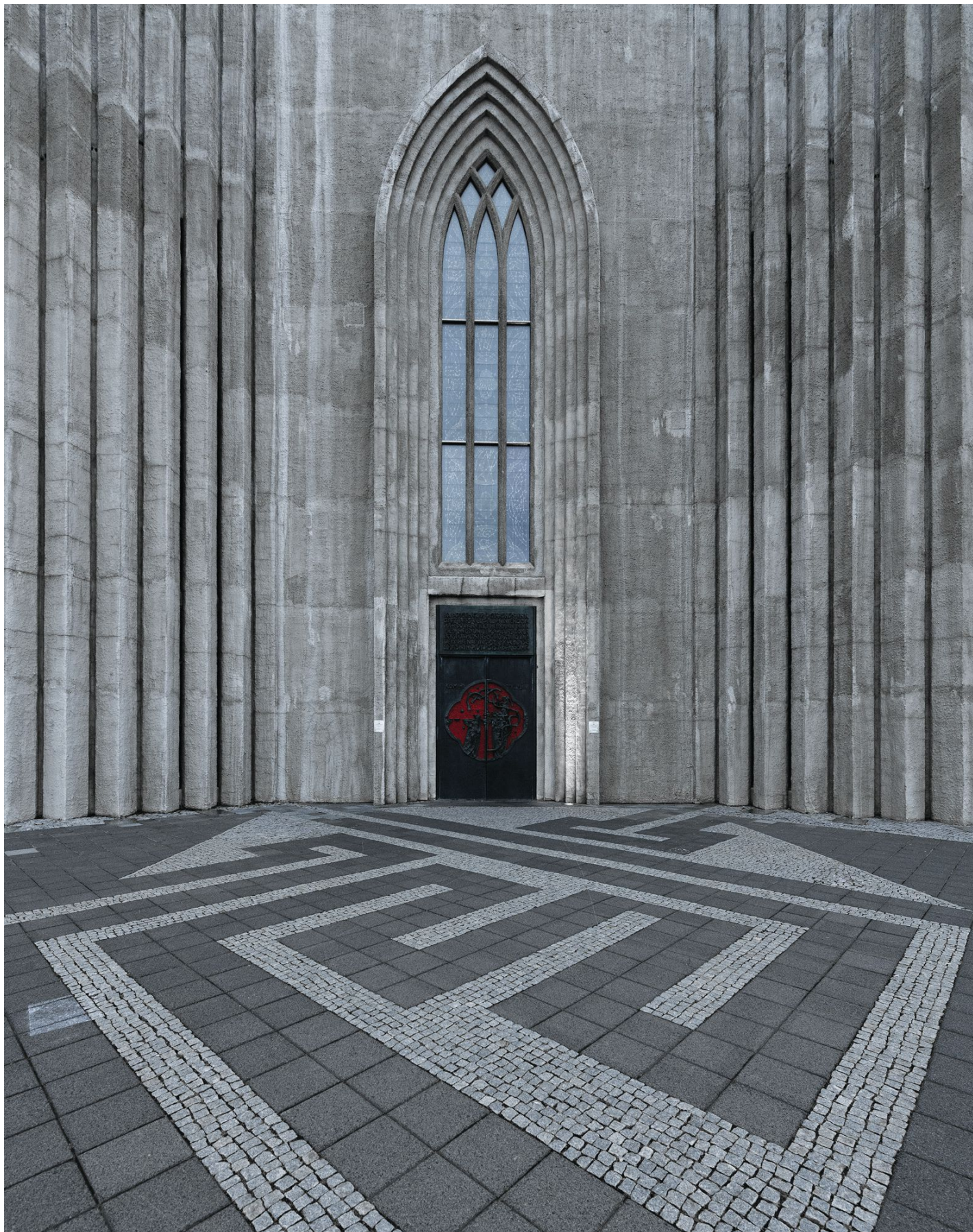
ProMediaGear 42mm Carbon Fiber Monopod

XQD and SD Memory cards

Batteries

Allen key set

Universal screwdriver





his home in Virginia, where he still works. Part of the job was traveling to other company-owned plants, which Buckwalter relished. The trips meant “traveling to Connecticut, traveling down to coastal Virginia, taking my camera with me and going out to photograph birds or whatever I could find on my off time.” What started as work photography trips, he says, “turned into, *Hey, I’m getting pretty good at photography*, with friends and family saying, ‘You should sell these pictures.’”

Civilian life also gave Buckwalter more time behind

his camera. He credits PPA, *Professional Photographer* magazine, and Imaging USA with helping advance his career.

ATTENTION GETTERS

These days Buckwalter captures his landscape images all over the world. How does he convey the essence of majestic places in a 2-D medium? First, he assesses the overall “grand scene” to determine what draws his attention. Then he considers how to frame the image. “Then I look at it from a technical standpoint. If I’m working around water, sometimes neutral density,

sometimes graduated density, or just stopping down to a low ISO works,” he explains. For example, when he photographed Krka National Park in Croatia (page 62), he determined that many of the best angles to photograph came from floating wooden walkways. “So, I had to restrict my exposures to no more than about one second or else somebody walking 30 feet away would cause vibrations into my tripod,” he says. “But in this case, one second was more than enough to catch the motion of the water.”

Buckwalter enjoys photo-



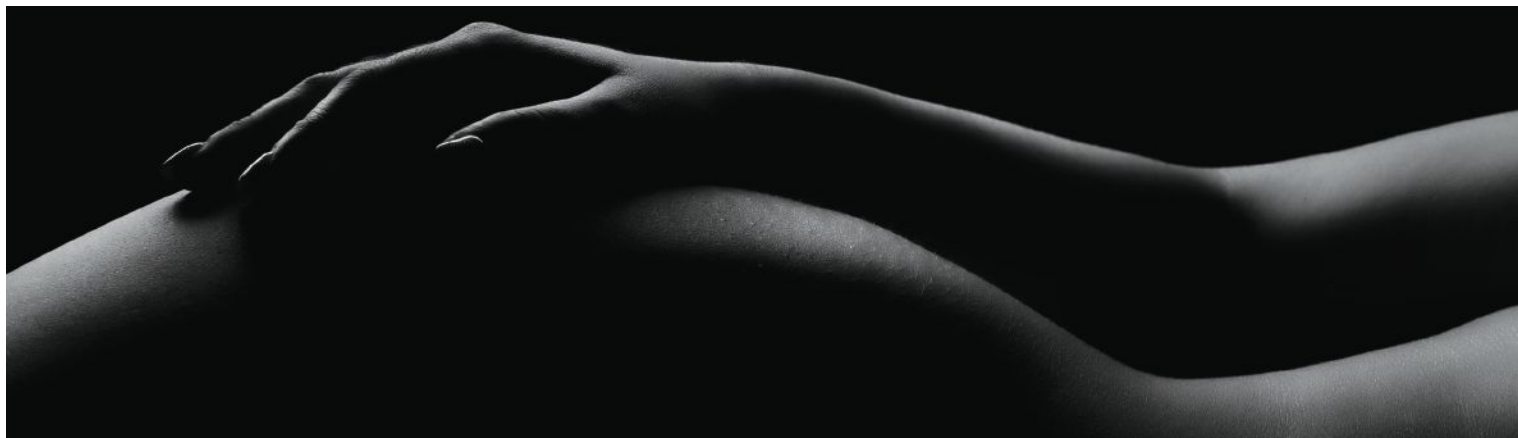
ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

SUBJECT: The International Space Station passing in front of the sun

CAMERA AND LENS: David "Buck" Buckwalter used a QHY 585M planetary and autoguider camera on his solar telescope. "It's an 8-megapixel sensor, about the size of a thumbnail," he explains. Buckwalter controlled the process via laptop. "It's an electronic rolling shutter. Instead of ISO, you set gain, so you're getting more into the electronic engineering end of things, rather than traditional photography."

INSPIRATION: He dreamt up this image when Richmond, Virginia-based photographer and mentor Jamie Hayes advised him to "submit what you love, not what you think will win" for photographic competitions. "The judges see amazing photo after amazing photo," Hayes told him. "Show them something they've never seen before." So, Buckwalter, an engineer by training, tapped into his inner "space nerd."

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "There's a website, ISS Transit Finder, that tracks the International Space Station, China's space station, and the Hubble Space Telescope. You put in your location, and anytime the International Space Station passes between the earth and the sun and the moon within the radius you've selected, it'll chart that out," Buckwalter explains. "It's a very narrow path and the event lasts for a second to two seconds at most. There's a lot of math behind it. So, I went to that website wanting to catch the space station in front of the sun."



graphing in many genres, but says his nature scenes, wildlife, abstracts, and fine art nudes (above) sell best. His first art show was Arts in the Park in Richmond, Virginia, a large show where he didn't make a single sale, he recalls. "But looking at other people's booths, not just other photographers," he says, "gave me a lot to think about." He shifted to smaller shows where he wouldn't be competing with so many established artists, such as the Heart of Virginia show in Farmville, Virginia, where his parents live. "Worst case, I'm out the \$45 booth fee," he says he told himself. He sold a lot there, he says, especially his images of eagles (right) and deer, which are popular in the rural Virginia market. "That set the tone for me for art shows," he says. "Now I do about six to eight a year." Buckwalter's pieces range from 12x18 inches to what he calls "attention-getters" in 24x36-inch, 30x45-inch, and 24x48-inch sizes.

For now, Buckwalter is sticking with DSLRs, rather than mirrorless cameras. "In 35mm, I'll bounce between a Nikon D500 for birds and wildlife, a D850 for portraits and landscapes, and a second D850 body that's been converted





"I WANT TO HAVE GALLERIES ALL OVER THE WORLD WITH MY NAME OVER THE DOOR SELLING HUGE PRINTS FOR SIX FIGURES. THAT'S THE GOAL, THAT'S THE DREAM."

to infrared that I'll also use for landscapes and portraits," he explains. "I've got the 600mm f/4 and the 300mm f/2.8, the big wildlife bazookas."

He uses a Toyo 4x5 field camera when he really wants to "pour into a landscape," he says. "With a 4x5, you're getting 350 megapixels out of that negative before you even upscale, so you just get so much more detail. And it forces me to slow down and breathe and enjoy the scene. It's not just *click, click, click* and moving on."

His engineering background is evident when he describes how he conducts his work. For his large-format photography, Buckwalter scans his 4x5 negatives using an Epson Perfection V750 he converted for wet plate scanning, "so I get rid of all the dust, air bubbles, and Newton's rings." He also built a camera using medium-format film wrapped around a piece of PVC pipe with a cross-section cutout and a pinhole on the end (image example, right).

A dramatic self-portrait (page 64) taken in 2020 demonstrates Buckwalter's prowess with artificial lighting. While finishing his college degree 20 years later, he took a fine art photography class. One assignment was to

photograph any subject using a hard light with a soft fill, so he set up a bare bulb and held a piece of white foam board in his lap to reflect fill into his own face. "I threw that up on Facebook, and all my friends were like, 'When's your country album coming out?'" he says. "I was half shaved and had COVID hair, but this is still one of my favorite images of myself."

Since he still works full-time as an engineer, Buckwalter has positioned himself well to engage in the photography he loves without the financial pressure. But he's still struggled with imposter syndrome, he admits, mentioning professionals he knows with their own named studios and "seven-figure business." "... I'm selling prints at weekend art shows," he says. "It's taken me a long time to realize that what I do can be just as professional."

Buckwalter looks to renowned Australian nature and landscape photographer Peter Lik for inspiration. "I want to have galleries all over the world with my name over the door selling huge prints for six figures," he says. "That's the goal, that's the dream. I've come to realize, *Hey, I can't just jump into that. We all start somewhere.*" •



Life Member Spotlight

FLORENCE BENDELL STILL WORKING AT 100



IMAGES COURTESY FLORENCE BENDELL

Illustrating the joy Florence Bendell has always found in photography, this image shows her photographing her granddaughter's bat mitzvah in the early 1980s with one of her Mamiya cameras with a twin lens.



©OSHRIT HAKAMON

Life Member Florence Bendell celebrates at her 100th birthday party with Angela Lamia, right, her assistant of 40 years.

"Photography is my life," says PPA Life Member Florence Bendell.

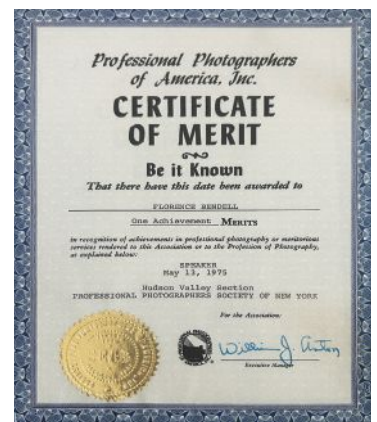
And a long life it's been. Bendell, a prolific wedding and portrait photographer from Long Island, is 100 years old. Just two years ago, she did a portrait session for a family in Atlanta. "It was stunning," she says proudly.

Bendell's first camera in the 1950s and 1960s was her husband Mike's Graflex Speed Graphic with sheet film, which she used to photograph children in various summer camps in New York's Hudson Valley. She intuitively learned how to pose portraits using window light. At a bungalow colony where she spent summers with Mike and their young daughters, Bendell met a couple of Hungarian immigrant photographers who taught her how to

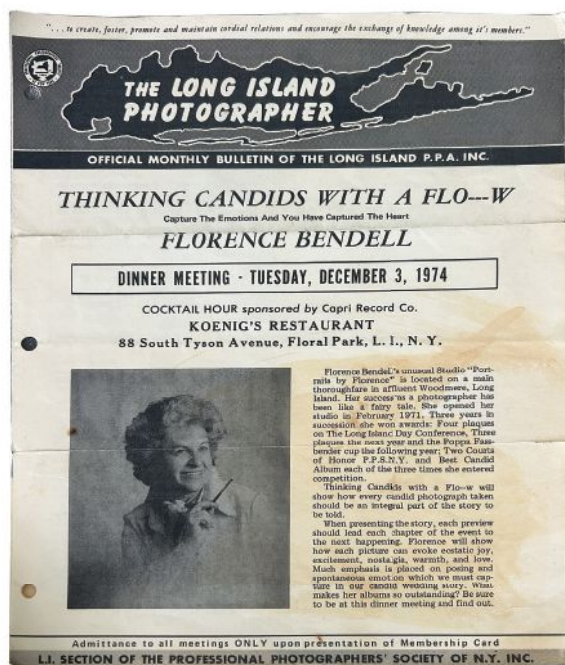
color black-and-white photographs with oils. "I became very good. ... People swear they have paintings," Bendell recalls, adding that she started selling the painted wall art.

In the early 1960s, a photographer she met in Long Island invited her to a meeting of a local guild affiliated with PPA. She started attending workshops and entered monthly photographic competitions, where she frequently won in portrait categories. "I'm very persevering. I was very competitive," Bendell recalls. "PPA taught me so much. We had a lot of lecturers, and they were very good in their field."

In 1971, she opened her first studio in Long Island and moved to a larger space in 1979. A year later, she lost almost everything



Florence Bendell receives an award from PPA in Long Island (top) in the 1980s. One of her many certificates from PPA (above). Portraits by Florence was Bendell's studio (left) in Long Island.



"PHOTOGRAPHY IS
MY LIFE ... I CAN'T STOP
[PHOTOGRAPHING], AND
I NEVER WILL."



Life Member Florence Bendell celebrated her 100th birthday this spring with family and friends in Atlanta.

©OSHRIT HAKAMON



in a catastrophic fire. True to her determined nature, Bendell opened a third studio in 1981 and continued her wedding and portrait business there until health concerns forced her to close in 1993. She kept working as Portraits by Florence even when she moved to Atlanta eight years ago to be closer to her daughter and daughter's family. She says she still takes pictures because she loves capturing the beauty of humans. "I can't stop [photographing], and I never will," she adds. Asked to sum up her photography journey in one word, she answers, "Fulfilling."

In 2003, Bendell became a PPA Life Member, a designation available to

those who have been active members for at least 10 consecutive years and have accumulated a total of 95 qualifying years (awarded for each year of membership plus the age of the member). Life Members have all the rights, privileges, benefits, and services as PPA full members at no cost, as well as complimentary Imaging USA registration. Members who want to maintain their CPP status still pay the fee and must comply with certification requirements. Wedding or portrait photographers can add \$25/year to continue the indemnification trust benefit. If you qualify for Life Membership, fill out the simple appli-

cation and sign that you understand the parameters. Life Member candidates are voted on by the board.

A Life Member like Bendell is full of wisdom and zeal for the industry, which she shares freely. "Every picture you pose, that picture has to talk to you. It has to say something. It has to reach your heart. If you sit stagnant ... it says nothing to me. So, every portrait has to have some kind of movement," she says. "Most important is that you capture a mood. You reach for their soul. You don't just take what you see." •

ppa.com/life-retired-ppa-memberships



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Meet the Board

JEFF GALINOVSKY IS PASSIONATE ABOUT HIS SECOND DREAM CAREER



©PPA

JEFF GALINOVSKY

Starting March 1, 2026, four new members joined the PPA board of directors. Sacramento, California-area portrait and volume sports photographer Jeff Galinovsky, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, is one of them.

How did you become a professional photographer?

I've had a passion for photography since high school, when I was taking black-and-white film sports images for our school newspaper. Over the years, that passion grew as I photographed friends, family, and my kids' sports teams, and created end-of-season videos and posters from the images I captured.

One day, a parent whose child was on another sports team asked me to photograph the team and offered to pay me. That was the first time I realized this passion could become something more. Around that time, I began participating in photography travel workshops and connected with a mentor who encouraged me to pursue formal training, join a professional community like PPA, and build a business around my work. With that guidance, I made the leap from passionate hobbyist to professional photographer.

Why did you want to serve on the board of PPA and how did you go about making it happen?

I've always been someone who gets involved in the things that matter to me. It felt natural to channel that same energy into PPA. I started by getting involved at the local affiliate level, which led to building relationships and becoming more engaged with PPA nationally. I was honored to be elected to the nominating committee, where I served for three years, including two as

chair. That experience led to the opportunity to serve on the board.

How do you start your workday?

My mornings are run by our two golden retrievers. I'm up around 7am to feed them and help get my wife out the door for her day of teaching, and then I take the dogs for a walk. After that, it's time for coffee, then I sit down, open up my planning and to-do system, and map out the day.

What's the most important lesson you've learned as an entrepreneur running a photography business?

We're all drawn to photography because of the art and the creative side, but long-term success comes from treating it as a true business. That means learning when to say "no," seeking guidance, creating repeatable processes, understanding your financials, and delivering a consistently strong client experience.

What PPA benefit has been most helpful to you?

The degree and certification programs have had the biggest impact on me. Going through that process pushed me to grow both technically and creatively, and it significantly increased my confidence.

If you were not a photographer, what profession would you choose and why?

I already had my "first dream job." I spent 31 years in the

high-tech world at Intel. I am lucky enough to have two dream careers. I just got to live them in sequence. I took early retirement in June 2024, and now I'm focused on building my photography business.

What piece of camera/photography equipment can you not do your job without?

My top camera right now is my Canon R5. Also, Photoshop is where I can really exert my creativity and power in editing the images.

Where would you travel to if you had unlimited funds and time?

Antarctica and Iceland. I'm drawn to the raw, rugged beauty of those environments. I'd capture landscapes, wildlife, and the ever-changing conditions.

How would you describe yourself in one sentence?

I am a father and husband first and foremost, highly motivated and driven, and I love learning, horror, soccer, dogs, and photography, and as a whole, I am a little bit twisted.

Who would play you in a movie about your life and why?

I'd go with Bruce Campbell from Evil Dead franchise. He's got that mix of confidence, humor, and just the right amount of over-the-top personality. •

KICKSTART SCHOLARSHIP OPENS DOOR TO IMAGING USA

APPLICATIONS IN AUGUST

PPA members looking for a boost in their photography business have a new opportunity to attend Imaging USA, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 2027, in Charlotte, North Carolina, with help from the Kickstart Scholarship.

Created to help photographers take the next step in their careers, this scholarship gives selected PPA members access to one of the profession's premier education and networking events. The scholarship helps remove financial barriers for members ready to sharpen their skills, strengthen their business foundation, and connect with the larger PPA community.

Applications for the next Kickstart Scholarship cycle are open Aug. 1 through Aug. 31. Applicants must be active PPA members in good standing and may be full-time or part-time photographers. Previous Kickstart Scholarship recipients are not eligible.

PPA will award four scholarships. Each recipient gets a complimentary Imaging USA all-access pass and a pre-convention class. Travel, meals, and lodging are the responsibility of the recipient.

For past recipients, the scholarship was more than a pass to the conference. It has meant education, practical business insight, and lasting professional connections.

Jessie Collins, a 2026 Kickstart Scholarship recipient, and equine and portrait photographer, says she was "deeply grateful for this scholarship and the opportunity to learn from such a talented lineup of educators." She adds that she looked forward to "refining excellence in lighting, growing my artistry, and connecting with other passionate creatives in the PPA community."

That combination of education, inspiration, and connection is at the heart of Imaging USA, where photographers can explore expert-led classes, pre-convention workshops, the expo floor, and networking opportunities with peers who understand the challenges of building a sustainable photography business. •

imagingusa.com/kickstart

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue sleeveless dress with a tie waist, large hoop earrings, and a necklace. She is standing in front of a wall covered in colorful graffiti. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

Work toward your PPA degree, one image at a time.

Enter the September Merit Image Review by August 30.

PPA.com/MIR



COMMUNITY NETWORKS DIRECTORY

When you get together with other photographers in your area, you'll see a world of opportunities open up to you.

One of the best ways photographers hone their craft is through peer interaction. Finding a mentor, meeting with like-minded people in your area, and relying on a network of business friends are keys to your success. Thanks to the Community Networks program, you can easily find and connect with professional photographers near you.

PPA has Community Networks across the United States. No matter where you live, odds are there's a Community Network to welcome you.

ppa.com/community-networks

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COMMUNITY NETWORK SCHOOLS

EDUCATION NEAR YOU

Looking to update your photography education and skills? Find inspiration, knowledge, and camaraderie by attending a Community Network School. These schools typically provide photographers with educational opportunities on a statewide or regional basis during one week of the year (and participating is a great way to befriend your fellow photographers).

Many Community Network Schools offer scholarships. As schools differ in tuition and housing arrangements, contact each school directly.

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2026 COMMUNITY NETWORK SCHOOL DATES

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

September 25-28, 2026

Holiday Inn Resort, Orlando, Florida
thefpp.org

BACKGROUND

Milford, Connecticut-based newborn, maternity, and family photographer Ute-Christin Cowan says her gender-reveal sessions like this one are “all about anticipation and surprise.” This couple was blindfolded while they were painted, and confetti in the revealing color was prepped off camera.



Cowan used one Paul C. Buff PLM umbrella with a white diffuser above as the main light to create a clean, soft look, and another to the side for a touch of fill.

The biggest challenge was keeping soon-to-be big brother occupied, she recalls, especially while his parents were blindfolded. “He was ready to bolt at any second,” she says. “But with some quick thinking (and maybe a few animal sounds), we managed to catch the magic just in time.” •

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**PROFESSIONAL
PHOTOGRAPHER**

A man with curly hair, glasses, and a beard, wearing a grey t-shirt and brown pants, is kneeling on a light grey surface. He is surrounded by various pieces of photography equipment, including a large black backpack, a camera, lenses, a red coiled cable, a black box, a silver reflector, and a black softbox. He is holding the red cable in his hands.

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- Negligence and malpractice protection
- Data loss protection and recovery services



PPA.com/WorryLess





Community Network
with PPA

Stronger Together

Join Your Local Association

Photographers helping photographers is what Community Networks are all about. These local creative communities nurture and provide the support and tools to help you grow. As a member of your local Community Network, you will:

- ♦ Connect with peers and mentors
- ♦ Sharpen your skills by competing in your local image competitions
- ♦ Earn merits towards your PPA degree by attending or speaking at a PPA Merit Program
- ♦ Get recognized, build credibility, and set yourself apart
- ♦ Give back to your photographic community
- ♦ And much more!

There's never been a better time to get involved. After all, it's together that we thrive.

Find a Community Network Association near you:

[PPA.com/Community-Networks](https://ppa.com/Community-Networks)