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# Smart Photography



Photo Feature

**Postcards from Cauvery Delta**

Showcase

**Madhu Sudan Sarkar**

Special Feature

**Photography in the Age of AI**

Learning

- **Open Gate Recording**
- **Get Ready for the Rains**
- **Tips on Photographing Waterfalls**

Printing & Beyond

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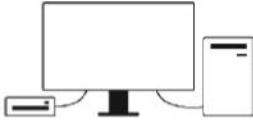
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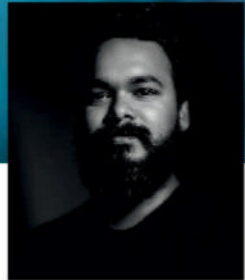
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# WELCOME

## Smart Photography

INDIA'S NUMBER 1 IMAGING MAGAZINE!

The Chinese 2026 Trade Show held in Beijing from May 15 -18 saw an aggressive wave of new launches from Chinese manufacturers including Viltrox, Meike, Thypoch, 7 Artisan, TT Artisan, Laowa, Youngnuo and SG-image. The new launches ranged from compact primes to autofocus mirrorless lenses. Compact pancake lenses, tilt and shift lenses, specialty fisheye designs as well as cine lenses were on show. Viltrox, for example, has launched everything from full frame lenses, APS-C lenses to MFT lenses in series which they call PRO or EVO. Drawing a lot of attention was the new tilt and shift 35 mm F 2.8 lens, which was an indicator of Chinese manufacturers moving into specialised optics. Mounts on offer included Sony's E mount, Nikon's Z mount as well as Panasonic's L mount.



For the consumer, it means a huge source of competitively priced lenses of rapidly improving quality. As of now, no one is complaining.

▣ H. S. Billimoria

## HERE'S WHAT MAKES US #1

### WE ARE GLUED TO THE GLOBAL IMAGING INDUSTRY

Our team is updated with all the benchmarks and road blocks that the field of photography and imaging across the globe experiences. This helps us record the changes in the global perspective, thus making us the first to predict which products will be a rage in the Indian markets.

### WE'RE IMPARTIAL

Loyalty towards our readers is a given, and their best interests are always on our mind. Every verdict is honest and not influenced by advertisers or personal favourites. So when we say a product is a 'BEST BUY', then, it is just that!

### OUR TESTS ARE CONDUCTED BY EXPERTS

All equipment go through a series of tests at the hands of our experts. Our reviewers are experts in the field of photography across the country and have many years of experience. That gives us the foresight to distinguish between a passing trend and a big change in the field of photography and imaging. And finally, our reviews are not extended to just fill up the pages!

### WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU

There is no debate on why we are here. Our sole goal is to provide you options and better your judgement in product purchase while, sharing tips and tricks to improve your images. Our biggest joy is in building a bridge between you and your perfect picture!

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Editor - Hoshang S Billimoria

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Photographer : Anitha Mysore



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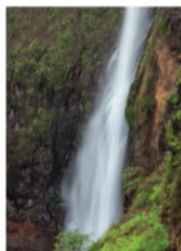
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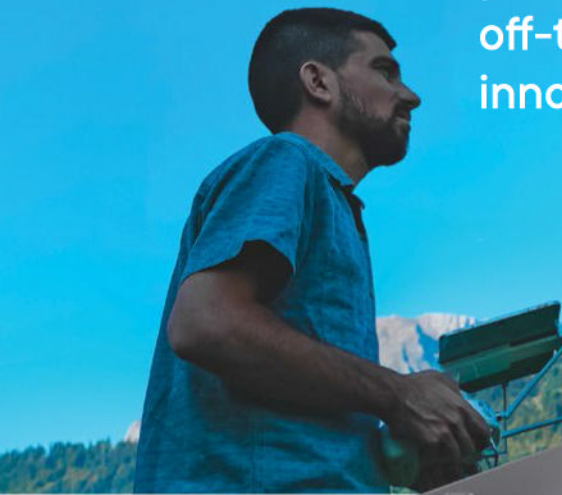
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## SNIPPETS

- Sony is expected to launch three new cameras in 2026. The A 7R VI, FX 3 and a ZV budget model are the ones that seem likely to make the cut. A new 100 – 400 mm F 4.5 GM lens is also expected.
- Canon is developing a gimbal camera and has already filed a patent to safeguard its features.
- Brightin Star is all set to announce four new autofocus lenses. First is the 12 mm F 2.8 full frame autofocus ultra wide lens. Second comes a 28 mm F 2.8 silver pancake lens for the Leica M mount. The third is yet another M mount lens viz the 35 mm F 1.7 Aspherical lens for Leica owners. The fourth is again an M mount lens; the 50 mm F 2 TRI- SIGHT lens for Leica owners.
- Kase, yet another Chinese brand, has announced a 150 mm F 5.6 AF reflex mirror lens. The lens features a magnetic front ring for filters and is claimed to offer a unique donut bokeh.
- The Manfrotto ONE platform has won two prestigious awards. The Red Dot Award and the iF Design Award for 2026.
- Nikon is developing the Nikkor Z 120–300 mm F 2.8 TC VR S with a built-in 1.4 x teleconverter. More Nikon lenses will follow. A new APS-C camera, a replacement for the Z 30, is also being rumoured.
- Leitz has released new Cine HEKTOR lenses for Nikon's Z mount cameras.
- Brightin Star has launched a 10 mm F 5.6 II ultra wide angle lens for just 66 dollars (Rs 6000). This fisheye lens weighs a mere 132 gms and is available in Sony, Nikon, Fujifilm and MFT mounts and is manual focus.
- Laowa ( Venus Optics) has announced a new 4.5–10 mm F 2.8 CF APS-C fisheye zoom lens for Nikon's Z mount. An indicative price of 399 dollars has been mentioned.
- 7Artisans has released an autofocus 135 mm F 1.8 full frame lens for the Nikon Z mount. Price is expected to be around 700 dollars.



## Canon launches videocentric EOS R 6 V

Following the EOS R 50 V, Canon has launched a videocentric full frame offering, the R 6 V. The R 6 V comes with a 32.5 MP sensor, up to 7.5 stops image stabilisation, a cooling fan and Open Gate control. Additionally, a lot of videocentric features have been added. A new lens to pair with the

R 6 V has also been announced, the RF 20 – 50 mm F 4 IS USM PZ. This is Canon's first power zoom. Expect the body to be priced around Rs 236000 and the lens at around Rs 143000. Canon seems to have targeted You Tubers and wedding videographers with this camera.

## Nikon reports losses

Due to one time costs and impairment costs, Nikon reported losses for the year ended 31 March, 2026. Nikon's imaging division accounted for 43 % of Nikon's revenue. Tariffs also played a role. However, Nikon reports that the Z 5 II, Z 50 II and the ZR sold particularly well.



## Canon's new EOS R 50 V

Canon has launched the new EOS R50 V. The 50V uses the same core components as the R 50 but with an emphasis on content creation and video. Key features include a 24.2 MP APS-C

sensor, a 14–30 mm F 4 -6 lens, upto 15 fps shooting, 4k 30p video recording, 3 inch vari angle touchscreen and a 2.36 m dot electronic viewfinder. Pricing is expected to be very competitive.



## LUMIX celebrates 25th Anniversary with the new L 10


We had forecast that Panasonic would update their compact camera lineup and sure enough Panasonic Lumix has announced the new L 10 to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Lumix brand name. The L 10 is the successor to the very popular LX 100. The L 10 comes with a

multi aspect 20.4 MP Micro Four Thirds BSI CMOS sensor. The fixed Leica lens has a zoom range of 24 – 75 mm F 1.7 – 2.8. Other features include a 3 inch free angle touchscreen LCD, 4K 120p video and POWER OIS. The camera will be available in black, silver and titanium gold finishes.

## Five best selling prime lenses

Minna Camera of Japan has announced the best selling prime lenses in its chain.

1. Fujifilm Fujinon XF 35 mm F 1.4 R
2. Sony FE 50 mm F 1.4 GM
3. Nikon Nikkor Z 50 mm F 1.8 S
4. Canon RF 35 mm F 1.8 Macro IS STM
5. Canon EF 50 mm F 1.8 STM ( DSLR)



ART  
35mm F1.4 DG II

SIGMA

## Sony announces new FE 100–400 mm F 4.5 GM OSS telezoom

Sony's new telezoom is a constant aperture 100–400 mm with a constant aperture of F 4.5 compared to its predecessor's F 4 - %5. The new lens is 328 mm long and weighs 1840 gms. 28 elements in 20 groups constitute the lens which also accepts drop in filters. The lens is also compatible with 1.4 X and 2 X teleconverters. Price is expected to be around Rs 450000.



## Sony announces a7R VI

Sony is ready with a replacement for the a7RV. The a7RVI is a 67 MP full frame camera and features a stacked CMOS sensor. The camera is supported by a Bionz XR2 processor. 759 focus points, a variety of autofocus options and

a fully articulated LCD screen are some of the other features on offer. A variety of video modes are on offer with or without cropping and the battery is good for up to 710 shots. Expect the body to be priced around Rs 450000.

## Multiple lens launches at China P & E Imaging Show in Beijing

All the major Chinese lens manufacturers lined up their new wares at the China P & E Imaging Show held in Beijing from 15 – 18 May, 2026. Listed below are Viltrox's new launches..

- Viltrox 28 mm F 4.5 Chip for L mount
- Viltrox 26 mm F 2.8 EVO pancake
- Viltrox 90 mm F 2.2 EVO APS-C
- Viltrox 75 mm F 1.8 EVO APS – C

- Viltrox AF 18 mm F 1.2 Pro APS -C
- Viltrox AF 35 mm F 1.2 Pro APS -C
- Viltrox Af 35 mm F 1.4 Pro
- Viltrox AF 25 mm F 1.7 MFT

Other manufacturers like Meike, Laowa, ZY Optics, 7 Artisans, Youngnuo and TT Artisan also launched a number of new lenses.

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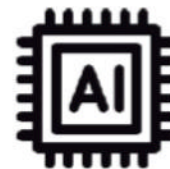


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# Enamored with Birds



**Madhu Sudan Sarkar**

**Madhu Sudan Sarkar** hails from Bongaon, a town in North 24 Parganas. He is a primary school teacher by profession but a wildlife photographer by passion. He says that Nature is a life-giving medicine to him. Whenever he feels low, he takes his camera and goes out to a forest near or far to refresh his mind. He loves taking beautiful pictures of wild birds.



*Male Scarlet Minivet*



*Dark-breasted Rosefinch*



*Indian Paradise Flycatcher*



*Common Tailorbird Feeding Plaintive Cuckoo*



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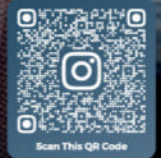
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*Indian White-eye*



*Jungle Babbler feeding Common Hawk Cuckoo*

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## ML100R

Full-color LED Video Light



## ML100R Kit

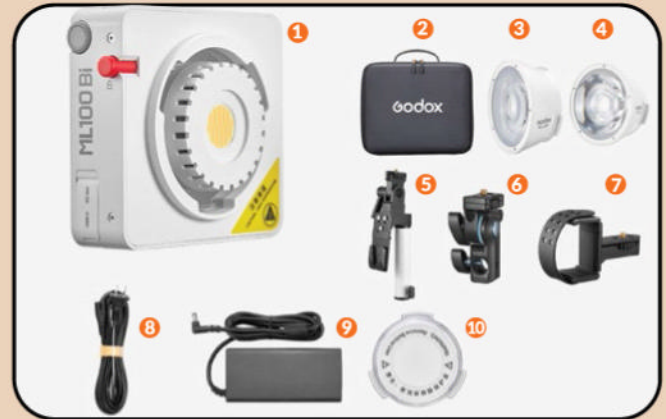


- |                          |     |                                |     |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Light Body            | x 1 | 6. Holder AD-E2                | x 1 |
| 2. Storage Bag           | x 1 | 7. Power Bank Holder PH01      | x 1 |
| 3. Lens Reflector ML-L36 | x 1 | 8. AC Power Cord               | x 1 |
| 4. Lens Reflector ML-L15 | x 1 | 9. Adapter                     | x 1 |
| 5. AK-B02                | x 1 | 10. Lamp Head Protective Cover | x 1 |

# Godox

## ML100Bi

Portable LED  
Video Light



## ML100Bi Kit 2

- |                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
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| 2. Storage Bag                 | x1 |
| 3. Lens Reflector ML-L36       | x1 |
| 4. Lens Reflector ML-L15       | x1 |
| 5. AK-B02                      | x1 |
| 6. Holder AD-E2                | x1 |
| 7. Power Bank Holder PH01      | x1 |
| 8. AC Power Cord               | x1 |
| 9. Adapter                     | x1 |
| 10. Lamp Head Protective Cover | x1 |

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*Coppersmith Barbets*



The Free Press Journal



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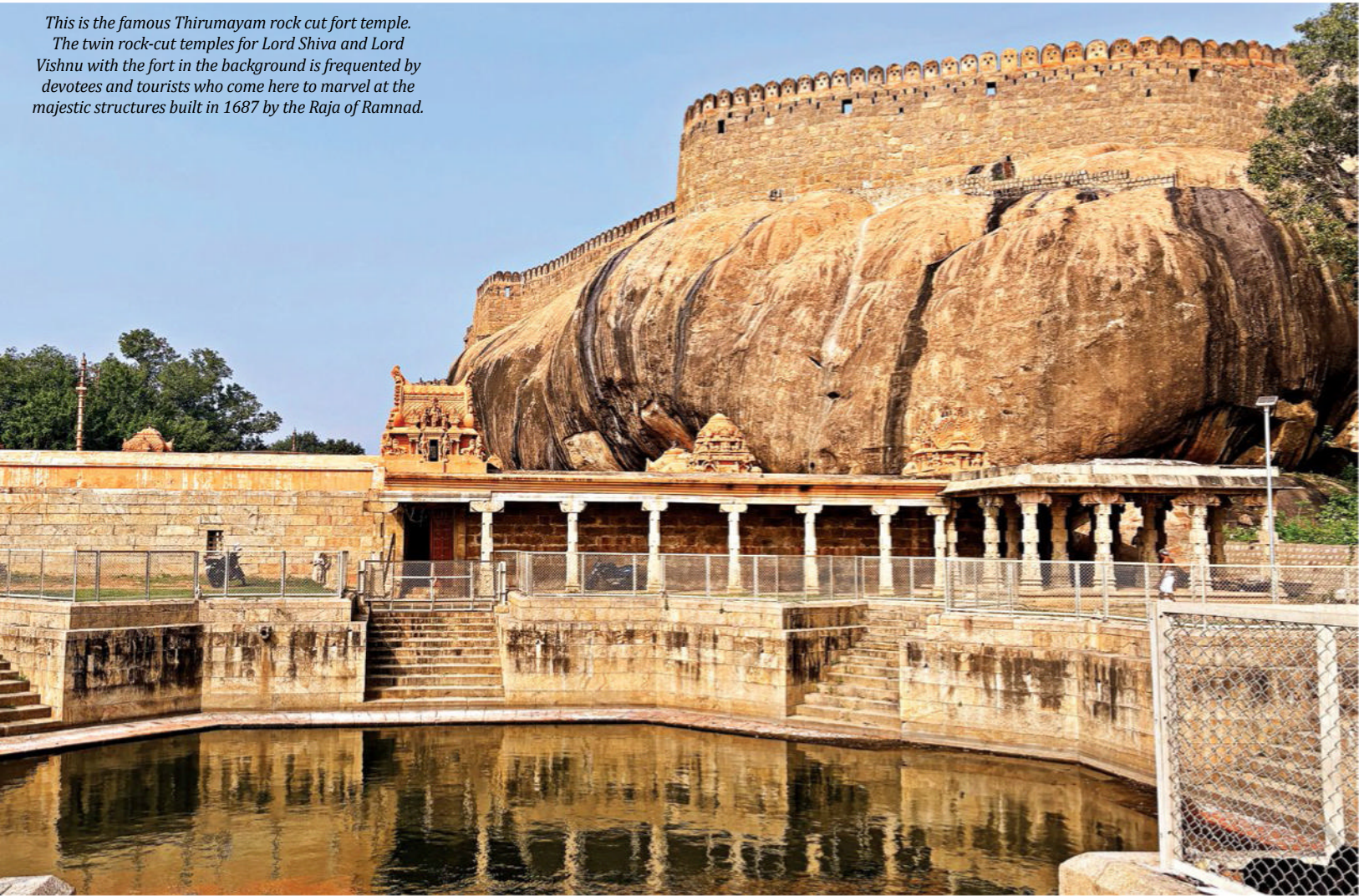
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# Postcards from Cauvery Delta

*This is the famous Thirumayam rock cut fort temple. The twin rock-cut temples for Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu with the fort in the background is frequented by devotees and tourists who come here to marvel at the majestic structures built in 1687 by the Raja of Ramnad.*



Srini Swaminathan's curiosity has taken him to 50 countries. He began his career on oilfield rigs and is now a marathoner and long-distance cyclist who has cycled from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Bhuj to Assam. An author and translator, he lives in Chennai and hopes to travel the world carrying his Indie dog, Oreo, in a backpack. He is @srini091 on Instagram and X.



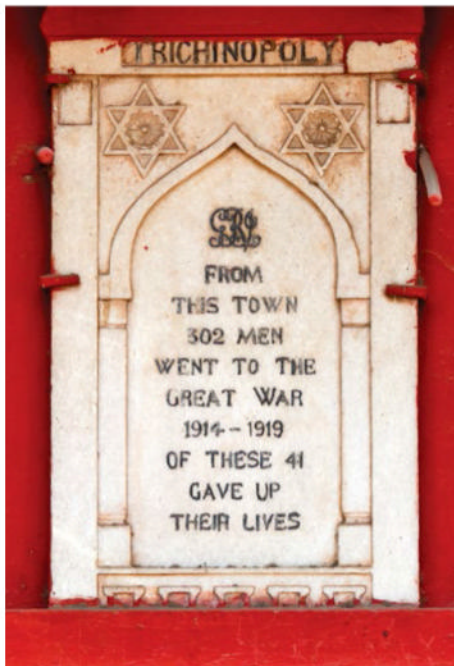
**Srini Swaminathan**

*The Cauvery Delta region is Tamil Nadu's rice bowl, its fields producing harvests for longer than most civilisations have had the chance to record them. At the head of the delta stands Kallanai, the Grand Anicut, a dam built across the Cauvery by the Chola king Karikalan around the 2nd century CE. Trichy, or Tiruchirappalli, anchors the western end of this landscape. From here, the delta region expands as the river Cauvery branches into many tributaries and canals, irrigating and turning hundreds and thousands of acres of land into lush green paddy carpets across Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Tiruvarur.*



*Basilica of Our Lady of Lourdes, also known as Poondi Madha Basilica, is a Catholic pilgrimage centre located near Trichy. The shrine was consecrated as a Minor Basilica in 1999 by Pope John Paul II.*

*Trichy sent 302 men to the First World War. Forty-one of them did not come back. The plaque still carries the old colonial name, Trichinopoly. It sits near the old Gandhi Market easy to walk past.*



*Temple monkeys in the delta have had centuries to figure out the hierarchy. Priests tolerate them, tourists photograph them, and devotees step around them. This one has decided the motorcycle parked outside belongs to him now. Shot at Mukkombu Dam.*

*The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes was built in 1895 into the ridge below Rockfort and its white facade catches the morning light from half the city. The church is considered one of oldest of the 22 churches in the city which are older than 100 years.*



## PHOTO FEATURE

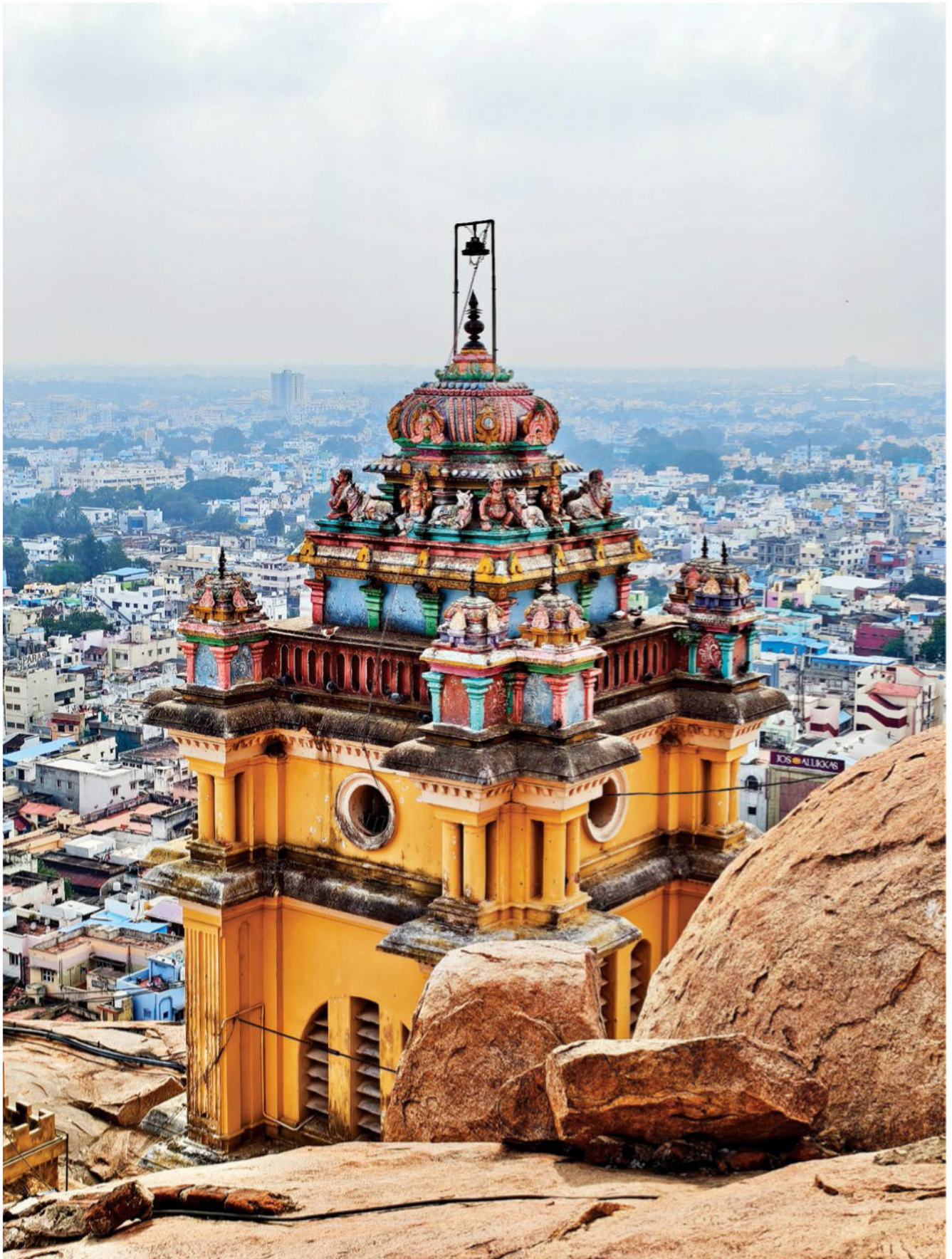
*Every family photograph has the one where nobody is looking quite the right way. Monkeys are no different. These three, perched on the wall of the Mukkombu Dam, managed a collective expression that falls somewhere between suspicion and mild judgement!*



*The Chola tradition of stone carving produced some of the finest figurative sculpture in the subcontinent. These panels depict scenes from myth and from court life, sometimes simultaneously, because in the Chola imagination the two were not always distinguishable. You can find these inside the famous Sri Rangam temple.*



*The delta's agricultural output arrives at markets like the Gandhi Market overnight, trucked in from surrounding villages and sold before the worst of the heat. The produce is seasonal in a place where the seasons still mean something.*



*The view from the summit of Uchchi Pillayar temple at the top of Rockfort puts a major portion of the city of Trichy in one frame. The rock rises 83 metres above the plains, and from here you can see the Cauvery curving below, the temple gopurams scattered across the urban spread, and on a clear day the outline of Srirangam island in the distance. People have been climbing this rock to look at this view since the 7th century.*



*The Cauvery supports a significant waterbird population along its banks and sandbars, including large colonies of painted storks, open-billed storks, and cormorants. The river's flow has been regulated for two millennia, since Karikalan's Kallanai Dam divided the current at Thiruvaiyaru, but the birds have adapted well to every version of it.*



*A Kumbhabhishekam, the ritual reconsecration of a temple, is performed every twelve years and includes repainting the gopuram in full. The ceremony lasts several days, involves enormous quantities of sacred water, and produces this kind of colour.*



*The Cauvery delta's back roads run between paddy fields and plantations on surfaces that are largely excellent and occasionally educational. Cycling on these roads is a delight, especially in winter when post monsoon blessings make the fields burst into various shades of green.*



*The flower economy of the delta runs on temple demand, weddings, and the daily requirements of household puja. Rose, marigold, and jasmine move in large volumes through markets like this one, arriving before dawn and mostly sold by mid-morning. The colour at peak hour is not something you need to enhance.*



*Malli, the jasmine of Sangam poetry, has stood for longing and love in Tamil literature for over two thousand years. Here it is sold by the muzham (12 inches), bundled and strung before sunrise, woven into hair across the delta by afternoon. The supply chain is entirely invisible until you see the market at five in the morning.*



*Teppakulam, the tank at the base of Rockfort, was built for float festivals where the deity would be taken out on a decorated raft. On those nights the rock and its temples, floodlit above, reflect perfectly in the still water below. This shot captures exactly that. The rock has been here for millions of years.*

*Clive House sits at the foot of Rockfort, facing Teppakulam. Robert Clive occupied it in 1752 when he came to Trichy as a military officer during the Carnatic Wars. The building was originally a Muslim nobleman's residence, with Islamic-style arches on the ground floor and a central passageway opening into a courtyard.*



*At Tirumayam, devotees who seek the blessing of Naga, the serpent deity, leave behind naga (serpent) stone sculptures as a votive offering. The practice is ancient and entirely personal. You commission a stone carving, bring it to the sacred spot, and place it among the hundreds already there. The Naga tradition cuts across caste lines and runs parallel to the temple hierarchy rather than through it.*





About 22 kilometres from Trichy, behind the temple at Tiruvellarai, sits one of the more quietly remarkable structures in the delta. The Swastika Well, or Marpidugu Kinaru, was excavated in 805 CE on the orders of the Pallava king Dantivarman. Its four arms are cut into the earth in the shape of a swastika, each with 51 steps descending to the water. The geometry is functional. The well was renovated in the 13th century and again in 2013-14

# Photography in the **Age of AI**

## Part 1

### *Authenticity, Creativity and the Changing Nature of the Image*

**Anitha Mysore**, a tech whiz hailing from the bustling hub of Bengaluru, India, had her fascination for photography kindled in her youth. Initially, her lens was fixated on



**Anitha Mysore**

personal mementos, but it was the moment she acquired her first digital SLR that her passion blossomed into a captivating voyage through the diverse genres of photography. Amongst all subjects, it was the enchanting realm of avian life that truly captured her heart. As her IT career sent her on journeys to various corners of the globe, it ignited her creativity for travel and street photography, weaving her unique stories with every click.

In 2016, Anitha Mysore's path intersected with the Youth Photographic Society (YPS), an enchanting world where she not only entered the realm of Salons but was also initiated into the captivating universe of Fine Art Photography, thanks to her interactions with YPS luminaries. In the timeless words of Henry Ford, who once said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young." Anitha Mysore remains a steadfast advocate that age never dims the spark of curiosity. In her view, each new day presents an opportunity for enlightenment. Over the course of more than eight years, Anitha has actively participated in National and International Salons, reaping laurels and accolades for her photographic prowess. Her works have graced exhibitions in over 80 countries, earning her a remarkable tally of over 9000 acceptances and 900 prestigious awards. Her expertise has led her to serve as a discerning jury member in both national and international salons.

A proud moment came when three of her photographs from Shraavanabelagola were chosen to adorn the domestic transfer corridor of T2 at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru—a fitting tribute to her creative vision. Embracing her role as Interclub Representative of YPS since the last four years, Anitha Mysore has been a tireless advocate for the art, a creative spirit intertwined with the very heart of the photography community. She has been actively involved in organizing the National and International Salons of YPS since the last four years. Currently, she serves as one of the Directors on the Executive Committee of YPS.

For most of photography's history, we looked at a photograph with a simple assumption in mind — someone had actually witnessed that moment.

A landscape photograph meant a photographer had travelled to that place, waited for the light and chosen the right moment to press the shutter. A wildlife image suggested patience, uncertainty and time spent in the field. A documentary photograph carried the feeling that something real had

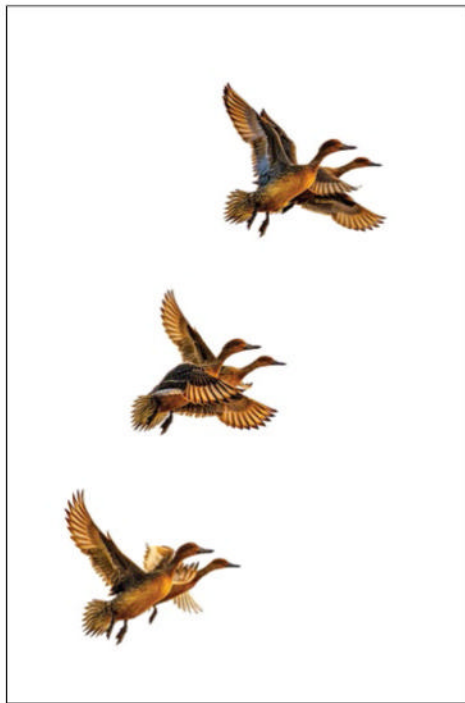
unfolded in front of the camera. Today, that assumption is beginning to change.

Artificial Intelligence can now generate images that look astonishingly photographic — landscapes that never existed, wildlife encounters that never happened and portraits of people who were never photographed. Increasingly, the challenge is not whether AI can create convincing images, but whether we can distinguish them from photographs at all.





*Eye Auto Focus*



*Subject Tracking*



*Scene Detection*

The lower image on page 24 was not captured on the camera at all. It is regenerated from a camera capture shown above on page 24. Photography has entered a very interesting phase — one that is exciting, unsettling and fascinating at the same time.

For photographers, the discussion around AI is no longer theoretical. It is already influencing how images are captured, edited, judged and even understood. Some photographers see AI as a powerful creative tool. Others see it as a threat to authenticity. Most are probably still trying to understand where the separation lies. And perhaps that uncertainty itself is what makes this moment so important.

### **AI Is Already Around Us**

For many people, AI still feels like something futuristic or highly technical. In reality, most of us already use it every single day.

When Google Maps predicts traffic and suggests a faster route, AI is analysing patterns from huge amounts of data. When Amazon recommends a camera bag or lens based on reviews and browsing history, AI is learning preferences and predicting behaviour.

Smartphones use AI for face unlock systems, portrait mode background blur and predictive typing. Tools like ChatGPT and Gemini generate text by learning patterns from massive amounts of language data. At its core, AI is really about learning from patterns.

It does not “understand” things in the way humans do. Instead, it studies enormous amounts of data and becomes very good at predicting relationships. Once exposed to millions of examples, these systems can identify patterns with remarkable accuracy. Photography is now becoming part of this larger AI ecosystem.

### **AI Behind the Camera**

In many ways, AI has already entered photography long before image generators became popular. Modern cameras are no longer passive recording devices. Increasingly, they recognize, predict and assist. Eye autofocus systems identify and prioritize eyes, even in moving birds or animals. Subject tracking systems predict movement and maintain focus as subjects move through the frame. Scene detection systems analyse the scene and optimize settings automatically. Smartphones combine multiple exposures and computational

processing to create cleaner and sharper images than their small sensors could traditionally achieve.

Many photographers already use AI regularly without consciously thinking of it as AI. These technologies are not necessarily replacing photographers. In many ways, they are reducing technical barriers. Tasks that once demanded considerable experience — accurate autofocus, complex masking or noise management — are becoming easier and faster. As cameras and software handle more technical complexity, photographers can spend more time focusing on timing, observation and storytelling.

At least, that is one side of the story. The other side is more subtle. As technology becomes increasingly capable, photographers may slowly begin depending on automation without fully realizing it. Earlier, sharp focus, clean files or accurate tracking often reflected a photographer’s technical skill and experience. Today, cameras themselves are making many of those decisions.

This does not necessarily reduce creativity. But it does shift where creativity matters. When technical



*Adaptive Presets – Gritty Portrait applied*

perfection becomes easier to achieve, originality, observation and personal vision become more important.

### Editing in the AI Era

The impact of AI becomes even more significant once the image leaves the camera and enters the editing

workflow. Here, it becomes important to separate two very different kinds of AI usage — AI-assisted editing and AI-generated editing.

AI-assisted editing enhances or refines what already exists in the photograph. Adaptive presets, Dust

removal, Noise reduction, subject masking, intelligent sharpening and removal of minor distractions all fall into this category. These tools save time and improve precision, but the underlying image still comes from the camera. In this context, AI acts mainly as an assistant.



*Dust removal – Identification of dust spots and one click removal*



*Noise reduction – With a control over the amount of noise reduction*



*Red areas shows intelligent masking of various elements in a landscape.*



*Subject Masking – Red areas show Intelligent masking of a Landscape.*

Generative AI takes the process much further. Tools such as generative fill can replace skies, remove objects, extend frames, or create visual elements that never existed in the original scene. Instead of simply refining the

photograph, the software begins constructing new image content. A distracting tourist can disappear from a landscape. A dull sky can become dramatic. Empty areas of the frame can be extended seamlessly using AI-

generated textures and structures. The technology is undeniably impressive. But it also changes the nature of editing itself. At what point does editing stop being enhancement and start becoming alteration?



*Sky Replacement – One click sky replacement with appropriate blending and lighting*



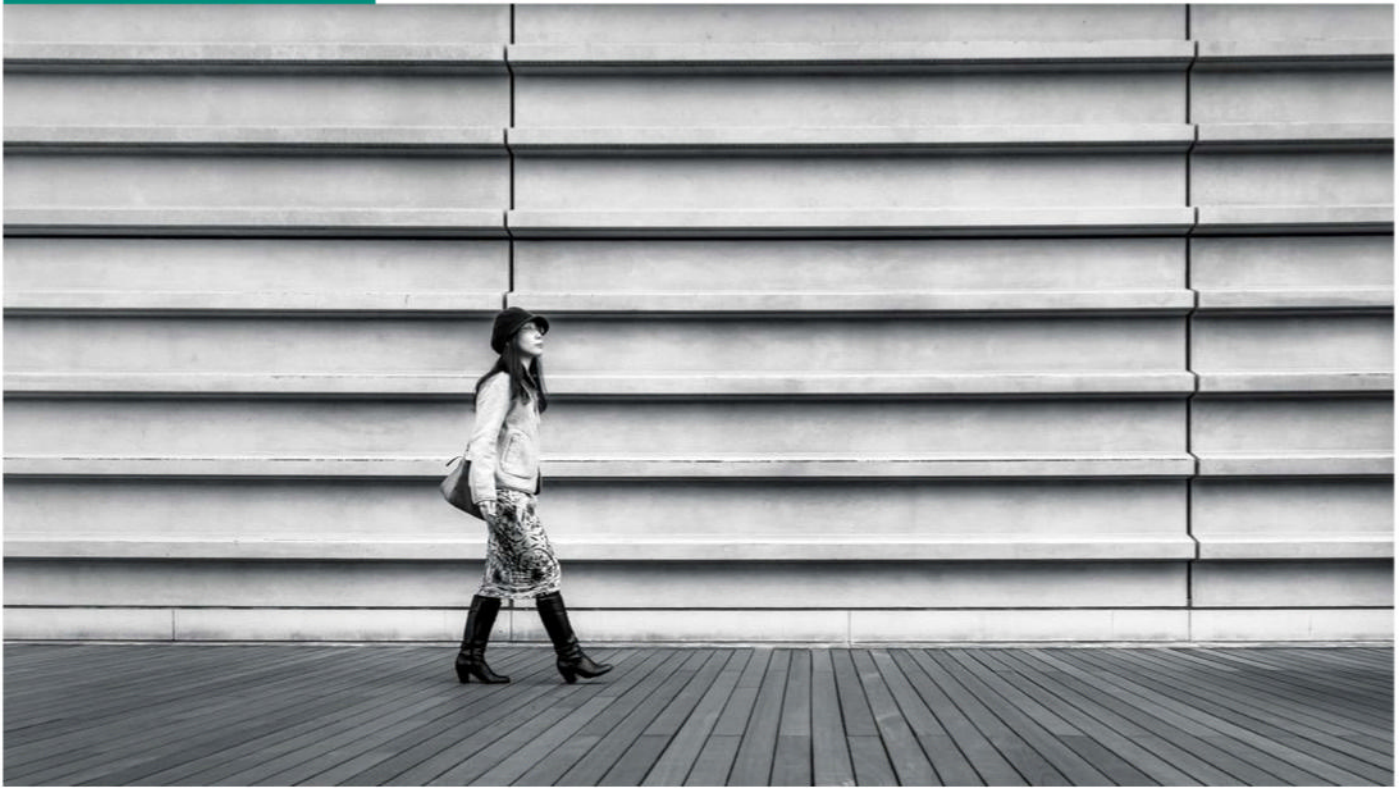
*Here, the people can be seen as distraction*



*People selected in red*



*After people removal*



*Remove with Generative AI*

Photography has always involved interpretation. Cropping, dodging, burning and colour adjustments have long been accepted parts of photographic practice. But generative AI pushes editing into a very different territory because the image is no longer limited to what the camera actually saw. Increasingly, photographers are not only editing

photographs — they are deciding how much reality to preserve.

This distinction between AI-assisted and AI-generated imagery may become one of the defining conversations in photography over the next few years.



*Content-Aware Fill or Generative Expand - Extend the canvas*

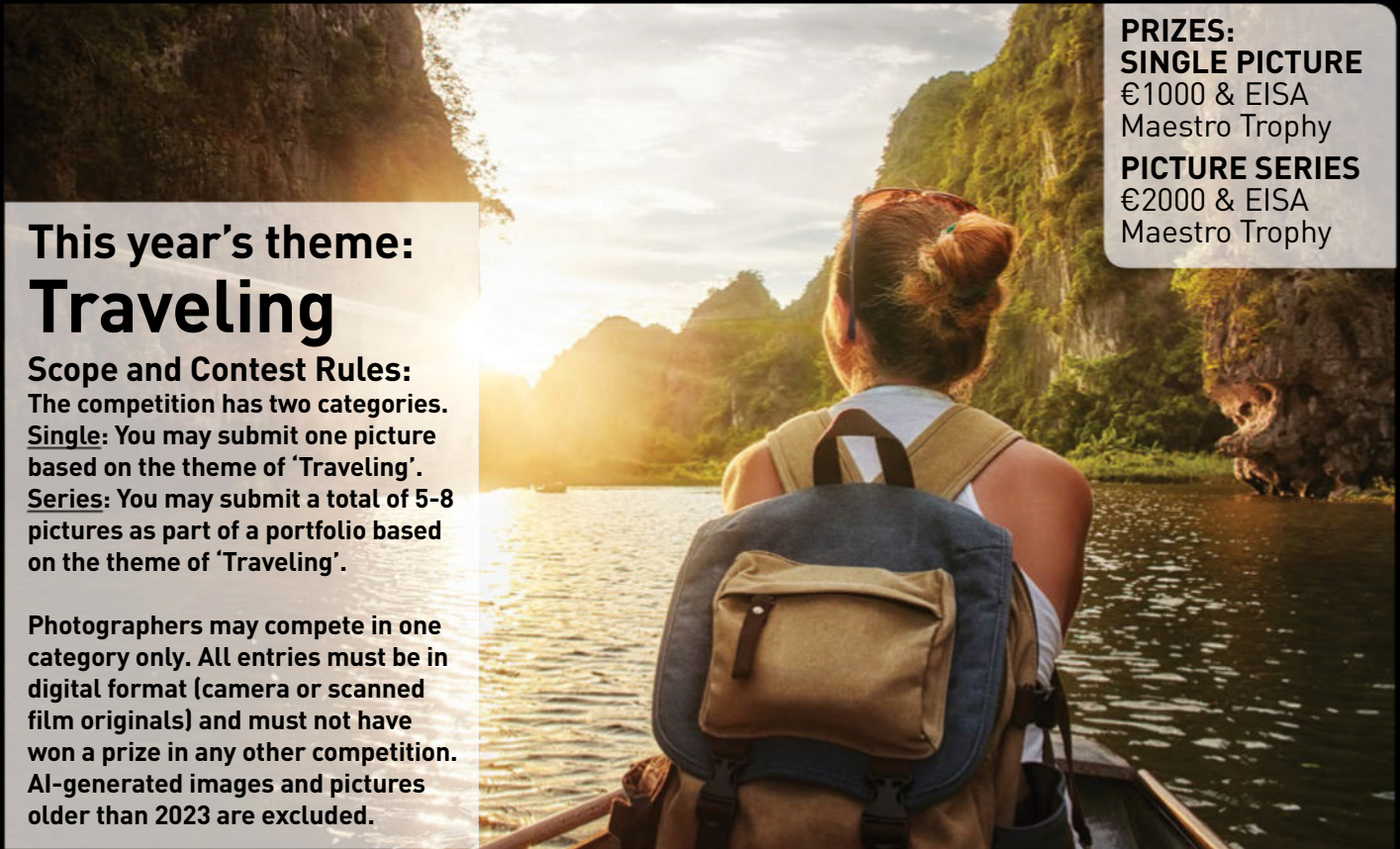
Most photographers are already comfortable with some degree of enhancement. Cropping, tonal adjustments and colour correction are widely accepted because they still remain connected to an actual moment captured by the camera. Generative AI changes that relationship fundamentally because the software can now invent

information that never existed. The resulting image may still look believable. In some cases, it may even look better than reality itself. That is precisely why the conversation around authenticity has become so important. **|SP**

*To be continued in the next issue*



# THE EISA PHOTOGRAPHY MAESTRO CONTEST 2026



## This year's theme: **Traveling**

### Scope and Contest Rules:

The competition has two categories.

**Single:** You may submit one picture based on the theme of 'Traveling'.

**Series:** You may submit a total of 5-8 pictures as part of a portfolio based on the theme of 'Traveling'.

Photographers may compete in one category only. All entries must be in digital format (camera or scanned film originals) and must not have won a prize in any other competition. AI-generated images and pictures older than 2023 are excluded.

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All entries must be received by this date. The winners (and runners-up) in each category will be chosen by the editorial staff of Smart Photography and the National results will be published in the July/August issue.

National Maestro winners will also be published on Facebook at the end of June for the EISA Public's Choice competition. Prize for Single and Series winners: €500

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TRAVELING

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The winning entries from each of the 15 participating EISA countries will then be judged together at the Association's General Meeting in June 2026. The final results of the International Maestro contest will be celebrated at the EISA Awards Gala in September 2026 and revealed, online, alongside the EISA product Awards on August 15<sup>th</sup> 2026.

The winning photographs will be published in the Sept/Oct issues of all 15 EISA photo magazines/websites.



For further details, terms and conditions visit [www.eisa.eu/maestro](http://www.eisa.eu/maestro) and <https://smartphotography.in/contest-eisa-maestro2026/>



# LEARNINGS

## LEARNING



**Anshu Kamdimalia** has been in the photography field for over three decades and has extensive experience in both film and digital photography. Being an instructor and film editor, he has worked with several aspects of digital photography and equipment. He has published more than a 100 articles on photography and has been published in several renowned magazines. *Photo+ Photography* is a local culture of photography that seeks and nurtures the talent of photographers and is a platform for sharing knowledge and learning. He is the only Indian photographer who has been featured in the Nikon campaign recently. He is currently working as a Managing Director and Founder, *Photo+*. You can reach him at [anshu@photoplus.com](mailto:anshu@photoplus.com).

## OPEN THE GATE!

Open the gate! Well, we do not mean the one in the front of your apartment! We are talking about a very useful feature that is gaining steady importance in videography and cinematography called Open Gate. In fact, in this age where many cameras boast of full frame (or even larger) sensors, 4K resolution, high frame rate recording, etc., one of the standout features has been the open gate recording. So, what is it and why is it important? While we go deeper and bring you all the details, let us brush up a few arcane points that will help us understand the concept better.



Picture 2: A full frame sensor in a mirrorless camera that is 36 x 24 mm in size and has an aspect ratio of 3:2.

First, let us recall the term "aspect ratio". It is the proportional relationship between the width and height of any rectangular shaped object (Picture 1). In other words, it is a pair of numbers, that gives the ratio of the dimensions of the width to height of a rectangle. The rectangle could be a film frame, a sensor (Picture 2), your monitor screen, a print, or even your room! So, if the print you are looking at is 12 x 8 inches the aspect ratio is 3:2.

The 3:2 aspect ratio is also expressed as 1.5:1 by some. If it is the same, if your room is 4 x 4 metres or your sensor is 36 x 24 mm. A special aspect ratio is 1:1 and in this case, you will get a square as all sides are equal. Another popular aspect ratio is 16:9 which is what your HDTV screen (Picture 3) corresponds to.



Picture 1: Aspect ratio means (W:H). As shown here, it is 16:9 that corresponds to your HDTV.

One important point here is that, it is the ratio and not the absolute size or numbers. For example, 3:2 or 3000:2000 or 60:40, all have the same aspect ratio. Now let us look at some aspect ratios that are relevant to us (photo) videographers. You know that cameras use different sizes of sensors. They use different aspect ratios as well, regardless of the size as summarised in Table 1. From the table you can see that Small Medium format sensor is around 21 times bigger than an iPhone 16 sensor but both have the same aspect ratio!

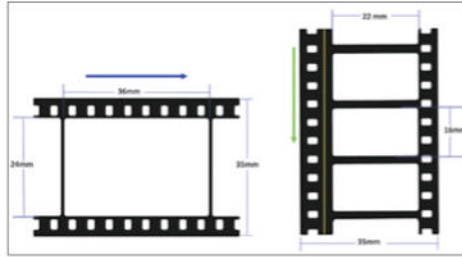
Table 1 - Sensor sizes and Aspect ratios

Type	Size (Approximately)	Aspect ratio
Full frame or FX Sensor or 35 mm film	36 x 24 mm	3:2 or 1.5:1
Cropped or DX Sensor or APS-C film	24 x 17 mm	3:2 or 1.5:1
Micro 4/3	17.3 x 13 mm	4:3 or 1.33:1
Small - Medium format (MFT)	44 x 33 mm	4:3 or 1.33:1
iPhone 16	9.6 x 7.2 mm	4:3 or 1.33:1
Roll film MF (Rolleiflex, Hasselblad, etc)	60 x 60 mm	1:1
12.8 in print	12.8 in	3:2 or 1.5:1
HDTV	Not Applicable	16:9 or 1.78:1

What has the term "gate" got to do with all that? It comes from the cinema field, specifically from the time when movies (kuttari films) were shot on film that was 35 mm in width. This is exactly the same as the 35 mm film used in still cameras (Picture 3). However, the active exposed area is different. It is 36 x 24 mm for still cameras and for movie cameras it can vary. The 22 x 16 mm shown here corresponds to what is called the 'Academy' format which was a standard for many years.

In still camera the film is moved horizontally (Picture 3, blue arrow) and in cinematography it is transported vertically (Picture 3, green arrow). The perforations (holes) on either side engage with the sprockets which were toothed cylinder like devices. These move the film while ensuring accurate frame positioning. In movie cameras and projectors, they also hold the film steady to avoid any jitter. The yellow line on the side is the sound track which will be absent for still photography.

Though the film width was fixed at 35 mm, the active exposed area varies resulting in different aspect ratios. To achieve this, a metal plate with precisely cut dimensions called gate was placed inside the camera. So, gate is a mask which defines the exposed area and also the aspect ratio. Various aspect ratios were obtained by placing different gates in the cine camera. Just for the record some of the aspect ratios used in 35 mm motion pictures are given in Table 1.



Picture 3: The 35 mm film as used in still and movie cameras.

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## LEARNING



Picture 1: A photograph of a waterfall with a person standing in the foreground.

## GET READY FOR THE RAINS

By Rohinton Mehta

It is the best of us, by the time you read this, the rainy season will be upon us. For several of us (including me) it is a time to specially enjoy our photographs. The flora will turn lush green, the fauna will either be thunderous or colourful, (or dull), rivers, streams and waterfalls will offer various opportunities for slow shutter photography. macro subjects will be out in full swing. landscape photographers will dance at the joy of seeing beautiful landscapes (at least twice), street photographers will also find numerous opportunities to get their shots on the front pages of newspapers, and sea waves thrashing the shore will be a sight to see and capture. This is also the time for photographers to pay special attention to their own safety and the safety of their equipment. Here are a few tips and tricks to do the same. Please note that this writing pertains

1. Your safety (and of those with you) comes first. Remember, dead photographers don't take photos! Don't stay out in the open in stormy weather when there are thunder and lightning strikes. At the same time, stay away from water bodies - pools, lakes, rivers and the sea. (Pic 1)
2. Do not stand under tall structures (like metal poles and trees). Buildings are safer because most tall buildings have lightning arresters. (Pic 2)
3. Get yourself an overcast raincoat (or your gadget bag can also be covered) or a good poncho. Protective rain shoes (like gumboots) is a necessity. If you go into leech territory, leech protection socks will keep you safe from leech bites.
4. Avoid ambulances with metal frame (the metal tip at the top) for some safety from lightning strikes. (Pic 3)
5. Always inform someone as to where exactly you would be going. This could help during an emergency.
6. When you are out in the field and lightning strikes, try to get into a building if there is one nearby, and stay away from open windows.
7. When you are in your car and there is a storm with thunder and lightning, stop your car, ensure that the doors and windows are properly shut, and put your feet on the seat, and avoid touching metal (doors, for example). If the lightning should hit your car, you will be safe since the metal car will act like a Faraday cage and will conduct the electricity to the ground (that's why you shouldn't be touching any metal part in the car).

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## LEARNING



Picture 1: A photograph of a waterfall with a person standing in the foreground.

## TIPS ON PHOTOGRAPHING WATERFALLS

By the time you read this article, the rainy season will be almost upon us. Here are some tips on photographing waterfalls.

- Photograph waterfalls under overcast lighting. If you shoot in harsh light, more than just highlights will be overexposed and shadows will go overly dark.
- If it has rained some time ago and the rocks are wet, the rocks will appear darker (good thing).
- Use a Circular Polarising Filter (CPL) to reduce glare, saturate colours and increase contrast.
- Frame the waterfall with some interesting foreground elements. Then go close to the foreground elements and try photographing the scene using a wide-angle lens. A wide-angle lens not only offers greater depth of field, it can also exaggerate the foreground element to draw in viewer interest by causing perspective distortion.
- Consider shooting in portrait as well as landscape orientation.
- If possible, use a steady tripod. This will allow you to photograph the waterfalls using your base ISO (generally ISO 100) for overall better

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**Ashok  
Kandimalla**

Ashok Kandimalla has been in the photographic field for over three decades and has extensive experience in both film and digital photography. Being an electronics engineer by profession and a photographer, he possesses a unique and deep insight into the technical aspects of digital photography and equipment. He has published more than a 100 articles on photography and some of his writings have also been published in the well-known international magazine *Popular Photography*. An avid collector of photographic books and vintage cameras, Ashok has a keen interest in the history of photography and a passion for sharing his knowledge on photography through teaching and writing. He is the only Indian photographer to be featured on the Nikon Centenary website. He is presently working as a Management and Engineering consultant. He can be reached at [kashokk@gmail.com](mailto:kashokk@gmail.com).

# OPEN THE GATE!

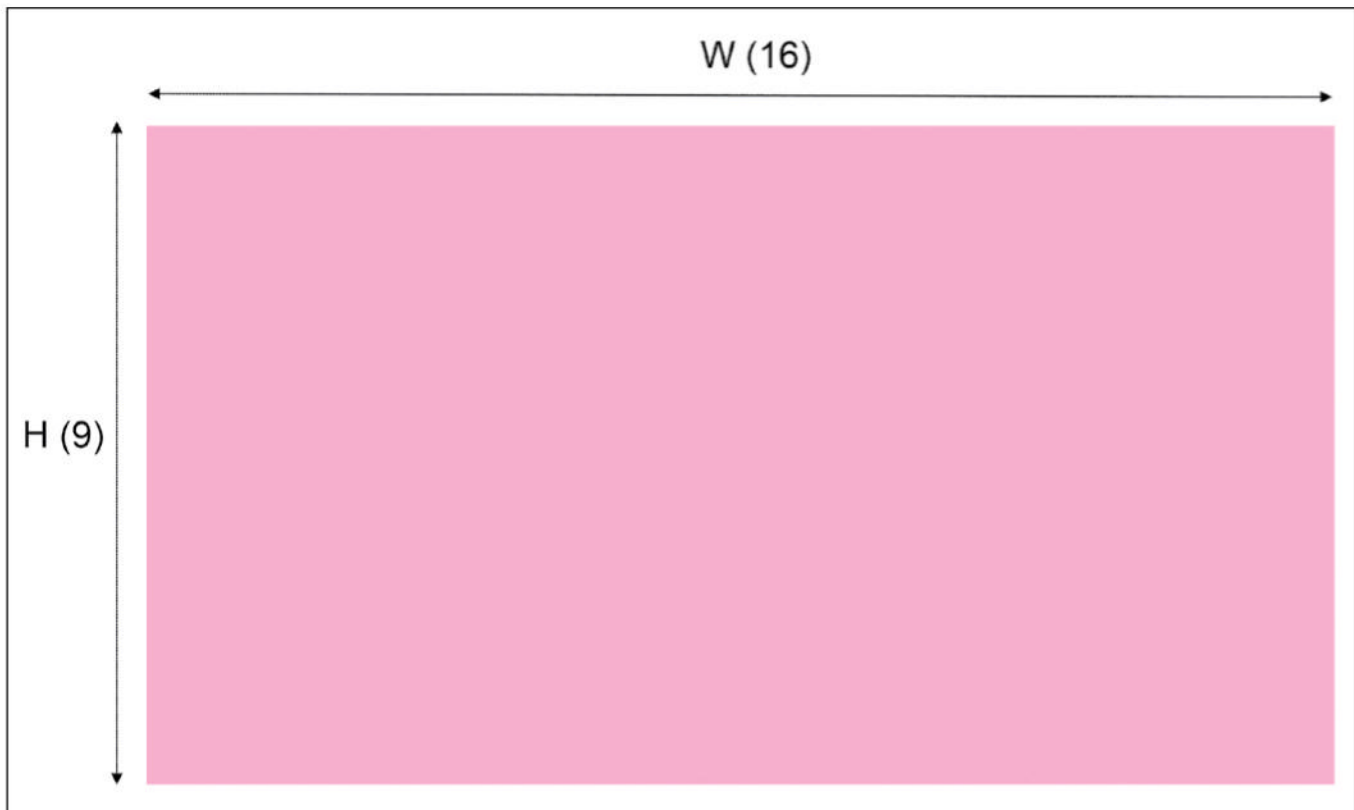
**O**pen the gate? Well, we do not mean the one in the front of your apartment! We are talking about a very useful feature that is gaining steady importance in videography and cinematography called Open Gate. In fact, in this age where many cameras boast of full-frame (or even larger) sensors, 8K resolution, high frame rate recording, etc., one of the standout features has been the open gate recording. So, what is it and why is it important? While we go deeper and bring you all the details, let us brush up a few arcane points that will help us understand the concept better.

First, let us recall the term “aspect ratio”. It is the proportional relationship between the width and height of any rectangular shaped object (Picture 1). In other words, it is a pair of numbers, that gives the ratio of the dimensions of the width to height of a rectangle. The rectangle could be a film frame, a sensor (Picture 2), your monitor screen, a print, or even your room! So, if the print you are looking at is 12 x 8 inches the aspect ratio is 3:2.



**Picture 2:** A full-frame sensor in a mirrorless camera that is 36 x 24 mm in size and has an aspect ratio of 3:2.

The 3:2 aspect ratio is also expressed as 1.5:1 by some. It is the same, if your room is 6 x 4 metres or your sensor is 36 x 24 mm. A special aspect ratio is 1:1 and in this case, you will get a square as all sides are equal. Another popular aspect ratio is 16:9 which is what your HDTV screen (Picture 1) corresponds to.



**Picture 1:** Aspect ratio means (W/H). As shown here, it is 16:9 that corresponds to your HDTV.

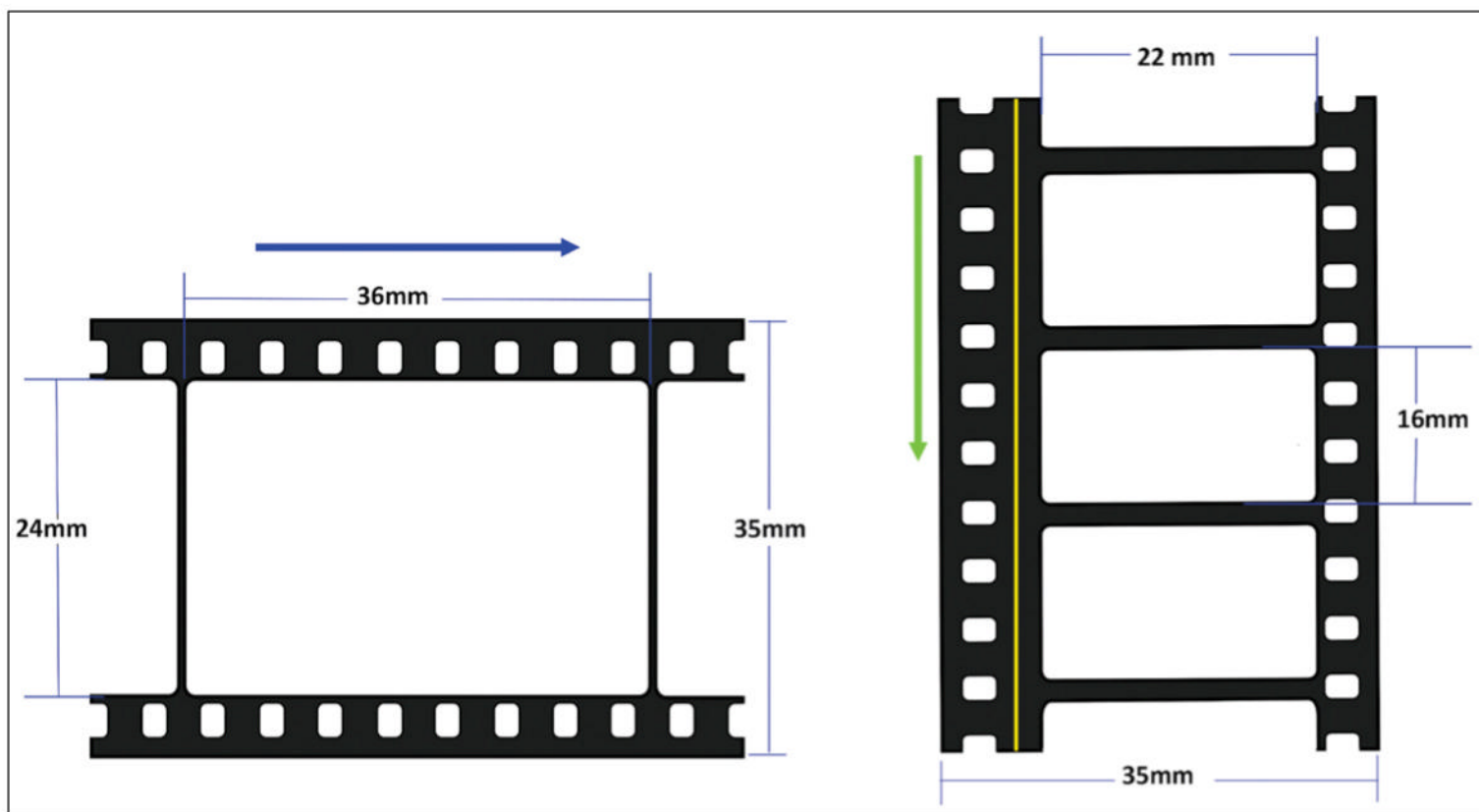
One important point here is that, it is the ratio and not the absolute size or numbers. For example, 3:2 or 3000:2000 or 60:40, all have the same aspect ratio. Now let us look at some aspect ratios that are relevant to us photo/videographers. You know that cameras use different sizes of sensors. They use different aspect ratios as well, regardless of the size as summarised in Table I. From this table you can see that Small Medium format sensor is around 20 times bigger than an iPhone 16 sensor but both have the same aspect ratio!

Table I – Sensor Sizes and Aspect ratios		
Type	Size (approximately)	Aspect ratio
Full-frame or FX Sensor or 35 mm film	36 x 24 mm	3:2 or 1.5:1
Cropped or DX Sensor or APS-C film	24 x 17 mm	3:2 or 1.5:1
Micro 4/3	17.3 x 13 mm	4:3 or 1.33:1
Small - Medium format (MF)	44 x 33 mm	4:3 or 1.33:1
iPhone 16	9.6 x 7.2 mm	4:3 or 1.33:1
Roll film MF (Rolleiflex, Hasselblad, etc.)	60 x 60 mm	1:1
12 x 8 in print	12 x 8 in	3:2 or 1.5:1
HDTV	Not Applicable	16:9 or 1.78:1

What has the term ‘gate’ got to do with all this? It comes from the cinema field, specifically from the time when movies (feature films) were shot on film that was 35 mm in width. This is exactly the same as the 35 mm film used in still cameras (Picture 3). However, the active exposed area is different. It is 36 x 24 mm for still cameras and for movie capture it can vary. The 22 x 16 mm shown here corresponds to what is called the ‘Academy’ format which was a standard for many years.

In still cameras the film is moved horizontally (Picture 3, blue arrow) and in cinematography it is transported vertically (Picture 3, green arrow). The perforations (holes) on either side engage with the sprockets which were toothed cylinder like devices. These move the film while ensuring accurate frame positioning. In movie cameras and projectors, they also hold the film steady to avoid any jitter. The yellow line on the side is the sound track which will be absent for still photography.

Though the film width was fixed at 35 mm, the active exposed area varies resulting in different aspect ratios. To achieve this, a metal plate with precisely cut dimensions called gate was placed inside the camera. So, gate is a mask which defines the exposed area and also the aspect ratio. Various aspect ratios were obtained by placing different gates in the cine cameras. Just for the record some of the aspect ratios used in 35 mm motion pictures are given in Table II.



Picture 3: The 35 mm film as used in still and movie camera.

**Table II – Gates in 35\* mm Motion Pictures**

Name	Gate Size	Aspect ratio
Academy	22 x 16 mm	1.37:1
Super 35 (full)	24.9 x 18.7 mm	1.33:1
Super 35 (Wide Screen crop))	24.9 x 13.5 mm	1.85:1
Cinemascope (with anamorphic lens)	22 x 16 mm	2.55:1

\* Films of widths other than 35 mm are used in cinematography but they are not relevant to us.

Now that we know what a gate is, it is time to open it! In film cinematography open gate simply means removing (or minimizing the effect of) these masks and thus expose the maximum area possible. This allows more information to be captured than what would be projected in theatres. This allows flexibility in post-production and create an aspect ratio that movie goers will finally see.

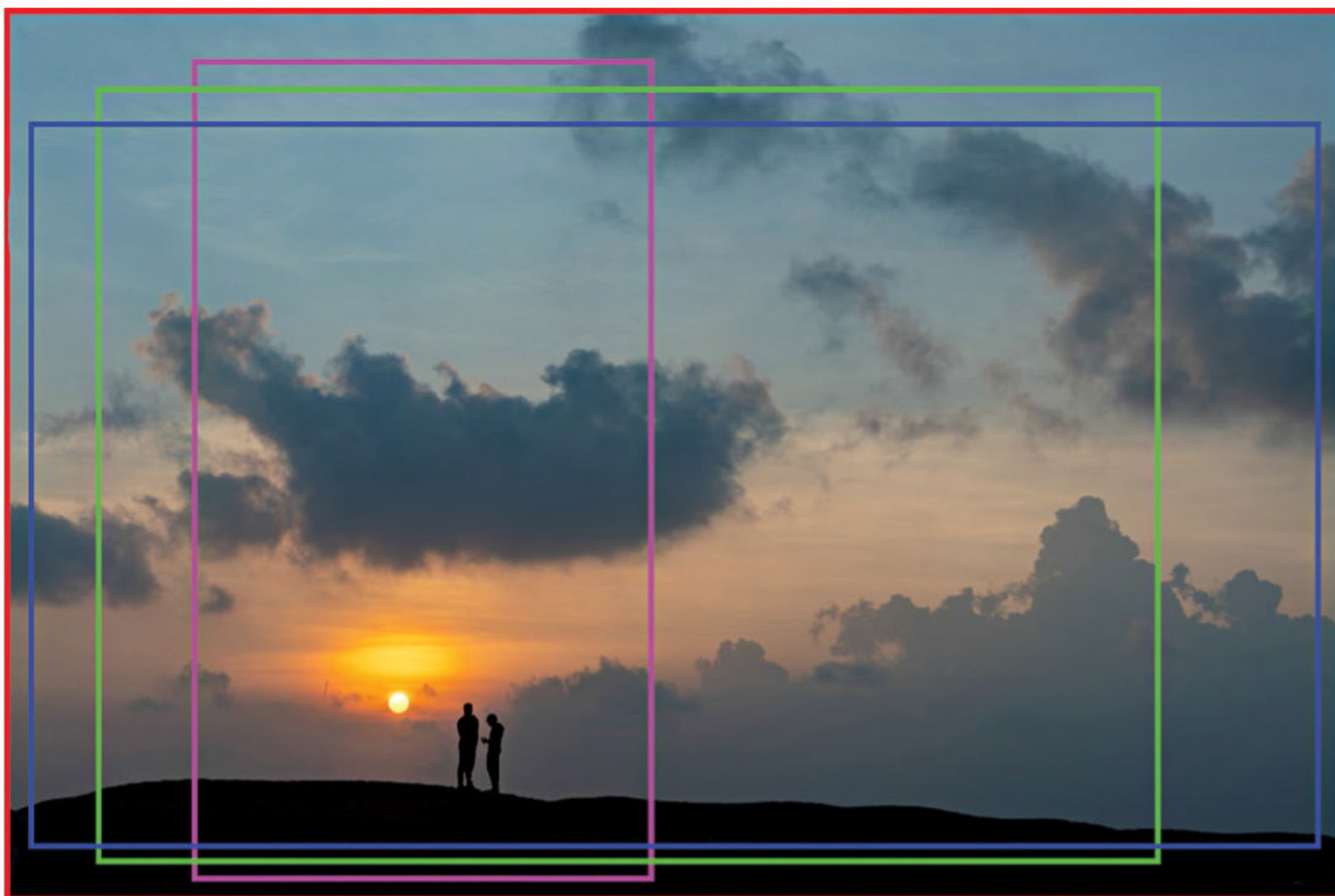
Digital cameras (of any type) use a sensor. The size and aspect ratio of a sensor

is fixed and you cannot change it once is manufactured. However, and this is important, the image produced can be cropped within the camera or outside (in post-processing), to get the aspect ratio you want! That is why even though iPhone sensor (Table I) has a native aspect ratio of 4:3 it can produce frame filling images on its screen which has a very different aspect ratio of 2.17:1!

Thus, cropping gives great flexibility in digital recording since we can shoot

at one aspect ratio and display that on a device having something else. So, which is the most optimal way to shoot? Obviously, shooting using the entire area of the sensor, which is the maximum possible, is the best. This way you will get to capture the highest number of pixels and thus record the maximum information. This is what we call open gate in digital recording and you can see that this is really not a new invention. It harks back to a concept first used in film cinematography decades ago.

Recall that Table I gives the aspect ratios of some of the sensors that are in use today. However, the popular display devices have very different aspect ratios (Table III). You can see a sort of mismatch here. The aspect ratios for the capturing devices are very different from the devices on which they are viewed, viz, TV, phone, and some of these via the social media.



**Picture 4:** Open gate (red) with other aspect ratios marked. See text for colour code.



**Picture 5:**  
Open gate 3:2.



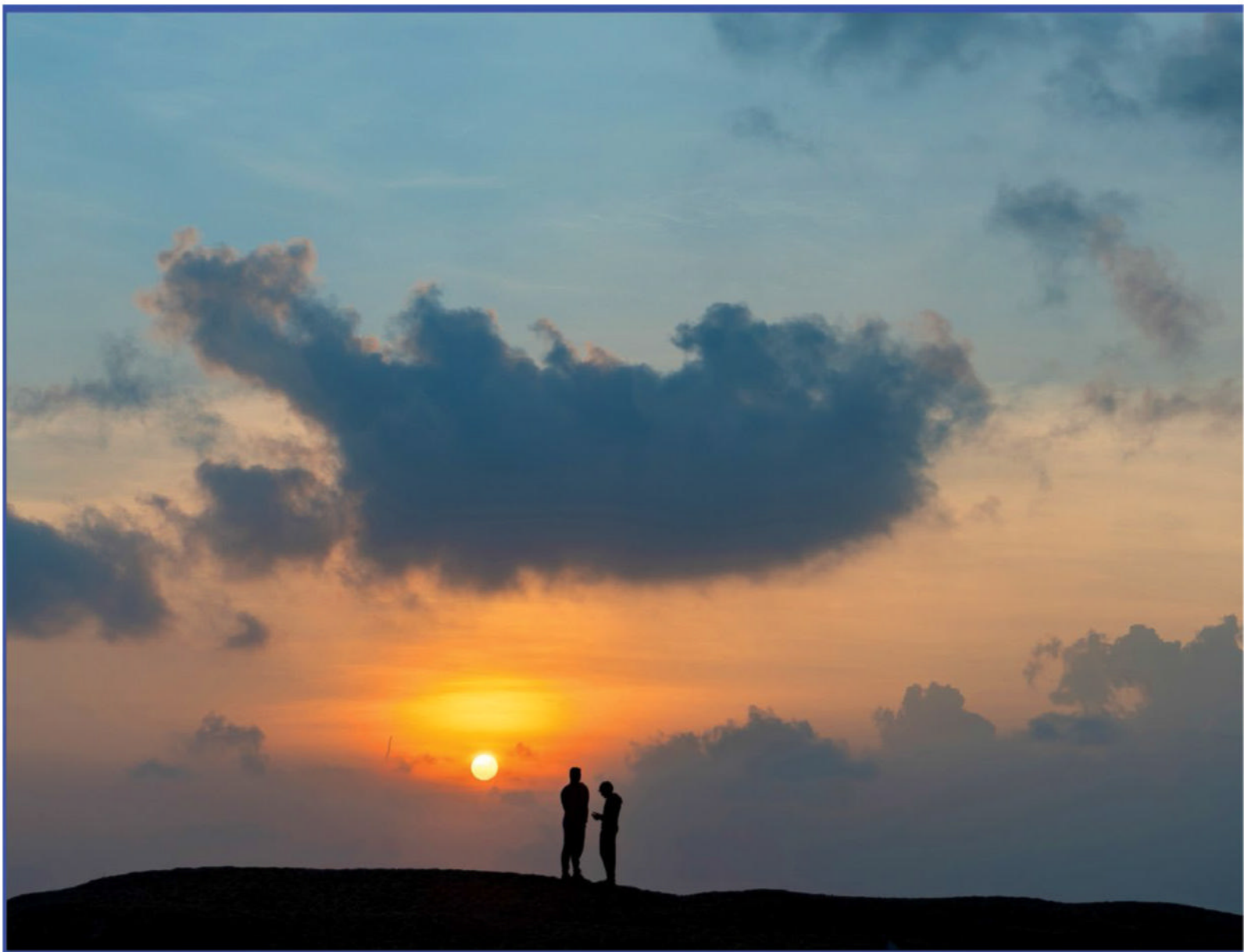
**Picture 6:**  
Academy 1.37:1.

Table III – Aspect Ratios of displays	
Name	Aspect ratio
TV and YouTube	16:9
Instagram Reels, etc.	9:16
Some social media	1:1
Cinema	2.39:1

Let us take an example. Assume we are videographing using a full-frame camera with a 36 x 24 mm sensor and an aspect ratio of 3:2. Picture 4 shows the capture using the entire sensor as well as crops to different aspect ratios. For clarity these are marked in different colours viz.,

Red: Open gate 3:2  
Green: Academy 1.37:1  
Blue: HDTV 16:9  
Magenta: Phone 9:16

**Pictures 5, 6, 7, 8** show how the images look after cropping to different aspect ratios.



Picture 7: HDTV 16:9.

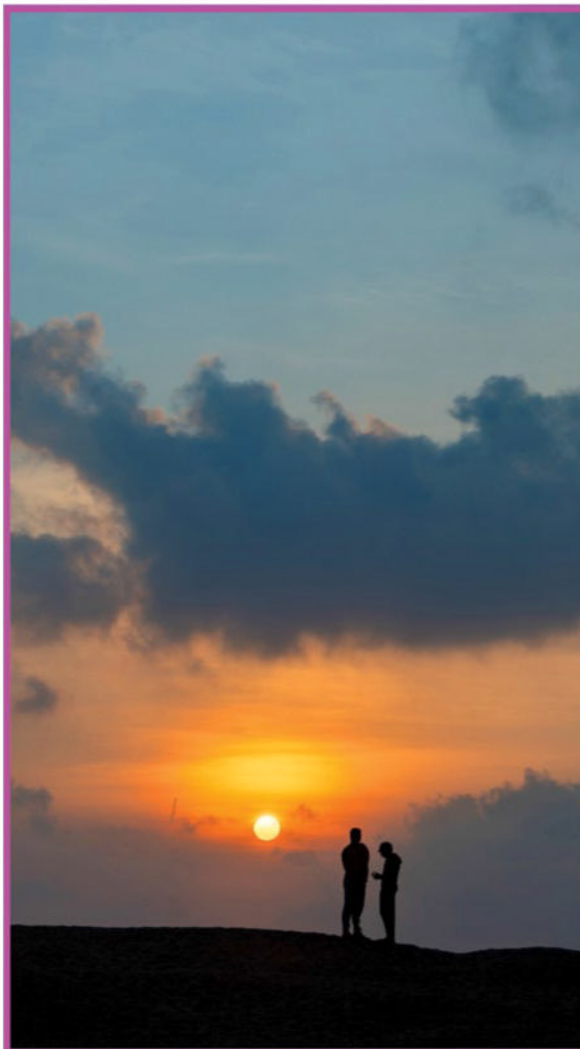
**Let us see what advantages open gate recording gives us.**

1. The full sensor is used thus we get the maximum out of the sensor – all the pixels. Either you can use all the pixels to get the highest resolution or sub-sample for better footage.
2. Uses the lens coverage power fully.
3. Crop or extract as you need to any aspect ratio as given in Table III from

the standard 3:2 (or 1.5:1) aspect ratio of the sensor.

4. Since the entire frame is recorded, more latitude is available when positioning the cropping boundary to any aspect ratio.
5. Sometimes it will be necessary to produce the same footage in both 16:9 and 9:16 aspect ratios. A good example is an advertisement that

needs to be displayed on TVs as well as phones (multi-platform delivery). Since the full sensor is utilized with open gate, we can use the full height of the sensor (and hence more pixels) which will be advantageous if we want an aspect ratio of 9:16 (vertical HD). This is better than rotating the camera 90° to portrait orientation due to the resulting poor ergonomics and disturbances to the workflow.



**Picture 8:**  
Phone screen 9:16.

6. Clients can be given a choice of aspect ratios to choose from without the need to reshoot.
7. Open gate also helps if your camera offers electronic stabilization which involves cropping and loss of pixels.
8. When shooting sports, birds in flight or similar situations where unpredictable action may occur, open gate provides additional framing margin.

9. More pixels are available when editing for visual effects. Those extra pixels will help get better quality.
10. Digital panning is possible.
11. Easy to create Super 35 (wide) or Vistavision type aspect ratio of 1.85:1 with more leeway on the vertical axis.
12. To summarize, record at maximum area (and hence pixels) and then frame, crop or extract later as needed.

As you can see there are many benefits, but there are some drawbacks too.

- a. Larger frame means more data and faster data rates. These demand higher speed and larger capacity memory cards and storage.
- b. Faster data rates also generate more heat that may restrict the continuous recording time.
- c. Reducing the readout speeds to overcome the above may result in rolling shutter distortion.
- d. While cropping can be done later, post-crop aspect ratios must be

kept in mind while shooting or else composition may get disturbed. Even worse, some parts of subject may get truncated. All this complicates post-production.

- e. If the deliverable is set to a definite aspect ratio, then open gate recording will add to unnecessary complications. **[SP]**

## CONCLUSION

The concept of open gate in digital video/cinematography is not something new. It is a sort of 'back to basics' philosophy that was existing from the days of film cinematography where the camera operator captures the full negative area but it is decided later what is to be included or discarded. In the digital era the same applies - shoot using the full area the sensor offers, and then frame later. The advantages, to recollect are – framing flexibility, multiple format delivery, and full utilization of the sensor and lens.



Pic 1

## GET READY FOR THE RAINS

▣ Rohinton Mehta

For lots of us, by the time you read this writeup, the rainy season will be upon us. For several of us (including me) it's a time to specially enjoy our photography. The flora will turn lush green, the skies will either be thunderous or colourful, (or dull), rivers, streams and waterfalls will offer various opportunities for slow shutter photography, macro subjects will be out in full swing, landscape photographers will dance at the joy of seeing beautiful landscapes (at least I will!), photographing lightning will be a challenge, street photographers will also find numerous opportunities to get their shots on the front pages of newspapers, and sea waves thrashing the shores will be a sight to see and capture.

This is also the time for photographers to pay special attention to their own safety and the safety of their equipment. Here are a few tips and tricks to do the same. *Please note that this writeup pertains*

*only to your/your equipment safety and is not designed to explain how to get great photos during the rains.*

1. Your safety (and of those with you) come first. Remember, dead photographers don't take photos! Don't stay out in the open in stormy weather when there are thunder and lightning strikes. At the same time, stay away from water bodies -- pools, lakes, rivers and the sea. (Pic 1}
2. Do not stand under tall structures (like metal poles and trees). Buildings are safer because most tall buildings have lightning arresters. (Pic 2)
3. Get yourself an oversize raincoat (so your gadget bag can also be covered) or a good poncho. Protective rain shoes (like gumboots) is a necessity. If you go into leech territory, leech protection socks will keep you safe from leech bites.
4. Avoid umbrellas with a metal ferule (the metal tip at the top) for some safety from lightning strikes. (Pic 3)
5. Always inform someone as to where exactly you would be going. This could help during an emergency.
6. When you are out in the field and lightning strikes, try to get into a building if there is one nearby; and stay away from open windows.
7. When you are in your car and there's a storm with thunder and lightning, stop your car, ensure that the doors and windows are properly shut, and put up your legs on the seat, and avoid touching metal (doors, for example). If the lightning should hit your car, you will be safe since the metal car will act like a Faraday cage and will conduct the electricity to the ground (that's why you shouldn't be touching any metal part in the car).



AI generated image

Pic 2



AI generated image

Pic 3

8. We all know that humidity in the air can cause fungus (plural fungi) in your equipment. During long trips away from home, when you cannot carry your humidity control cabinet with you, here's a simple trick. Carry on your trip a bunch of old newspapers, an electric iron and a few rubber bands. At night, after you return to your lodging, flatten the old newspapers and iron them well till they turn 'crisp'. You might see some 'smoke' coming out from the newspapers as you iron them. You are removing the moisture from the newspapers. Once done, immediately roll one or two ironed newspapers tightly around the lens (without the end caps), and turn the

rolled sides inwards as you see in the photo. Then put rubber bands at each end. Do the same with your other lenses and the camera body. Repeat the same procedure every night. This simple trick will save your equipment from fungi while on your trip. And yes, do pray that you have electricity!

One word of caution. Do not overheat so that the paper itself does not get burnt!

I have heard of someone saying that dry uncooked rice can also be used to extract humidity from your equipment, but I don't encourage that method. The same goes for

silica gel. In the humid rainy climate, the silica gel will get saturated with humidity within 5 minutes.

9. For your safety, do carry mosquito repellent that you have used previously (so you know that you are not experimenting with some chemicals in an unknown make of mosquito repellent).

10. In areas where leeches are aplenty, leech protection socks can come in handy. Following the ideas mentioned above can keep you out of trouble. I repeat what I mentioned earlier – your safety is important; dead photographers don't take photos! **SP**

Rohinton Mehta



1/4 sec

## TIPS ON PHOTOGRAPHING WATERFALLS

*By the time you read this article, the rainy season will be almost upon us. Here are some tips on photographing waterfalls.*

### ▣ Rohinton Mehta

- Photograph waterfalls under overcast lighting. If you shoot in harsh light, more often than not, highlights will overexpose and shadows will go overly dark.
- If it has rained some time ago and the rocks are wet, the rocks will appear darker (good thing).
- Use a Circular Polarising Filter (CPL) to reduce glare, saturate colours and increase contrast.
- Frame the waterfall with some interesting foreground elements. Then go close to the foreground elements and try photographing the scene using a wide-angle lens. A wide-angle lens not only offers greater depth of field, it can also exaggerate the foreground element to draw-in viewer interest by causing perspective distortion.
- Consider shooting in portrait as well as landscape orientation.
- If possible, use a steady tripod. This will allow you to photograph the waterfalls using your base ISO (generally ISO 100) for overall better

image quality. It will also allow you to use narrow apertures for greater depth of field without causing camera shake.

- Different shutter speeds will evoke a different response from the viewers. There is no right and no wrong shutter speed for waterfalls. Fast shutter speeds (like 1/500 sec and faster) will freeze the water droplets while slow shutter speeds will smoothen the flow of the water. The focal length of your lens, the amount/force of water flowing down the waterfall and the distance between you and the waterfall will have a say in the final look. I suggest that you try various shutter speeds and later on, in the comforts of your home, decide which you like the most. Do keep in mind that very slow shutter speeds can make the water lose its texture and detail. Also remember that strong

wind blowing against the waterfall can change how the final image looks, especially when shot with slow shutter speeds.

- If the light is not suitable for use of slower shutter speeds (that is, if the light is stronger than what you need), consider using Neutral Density (ND) filters. ND filters are available in different strengths. Personally, I have found that a 3-stop ND filter works well for me.

- If you have to place your tripod in the water, do spend some time to clean it dry after your work is done. Also dry/clean the camera as water spray will often settle on the camera.
- When standing in the water, take extra care that currents in the water do not drag you /your equipment into the water. It would be a good idea to have a friend (a physically strong friend) stand next to you just in case. **SP**

*A viewing platform has been created by the authorities but during my trip to Thoseghar in the rainy season, the wind pressure was so strong that I feared my tripod mounted camera would fall over if I left it unattended even for a few seconds. I also had to keep an umbrella open over my head and that was most difficult considering the very strong wind. As I took the pictures, I continuously noticed my own movement due to the strong wind pressure. Keeping the camera steady was no easy task.*



1/80 sec

Rohinton Mehta

Rohinton Mehta

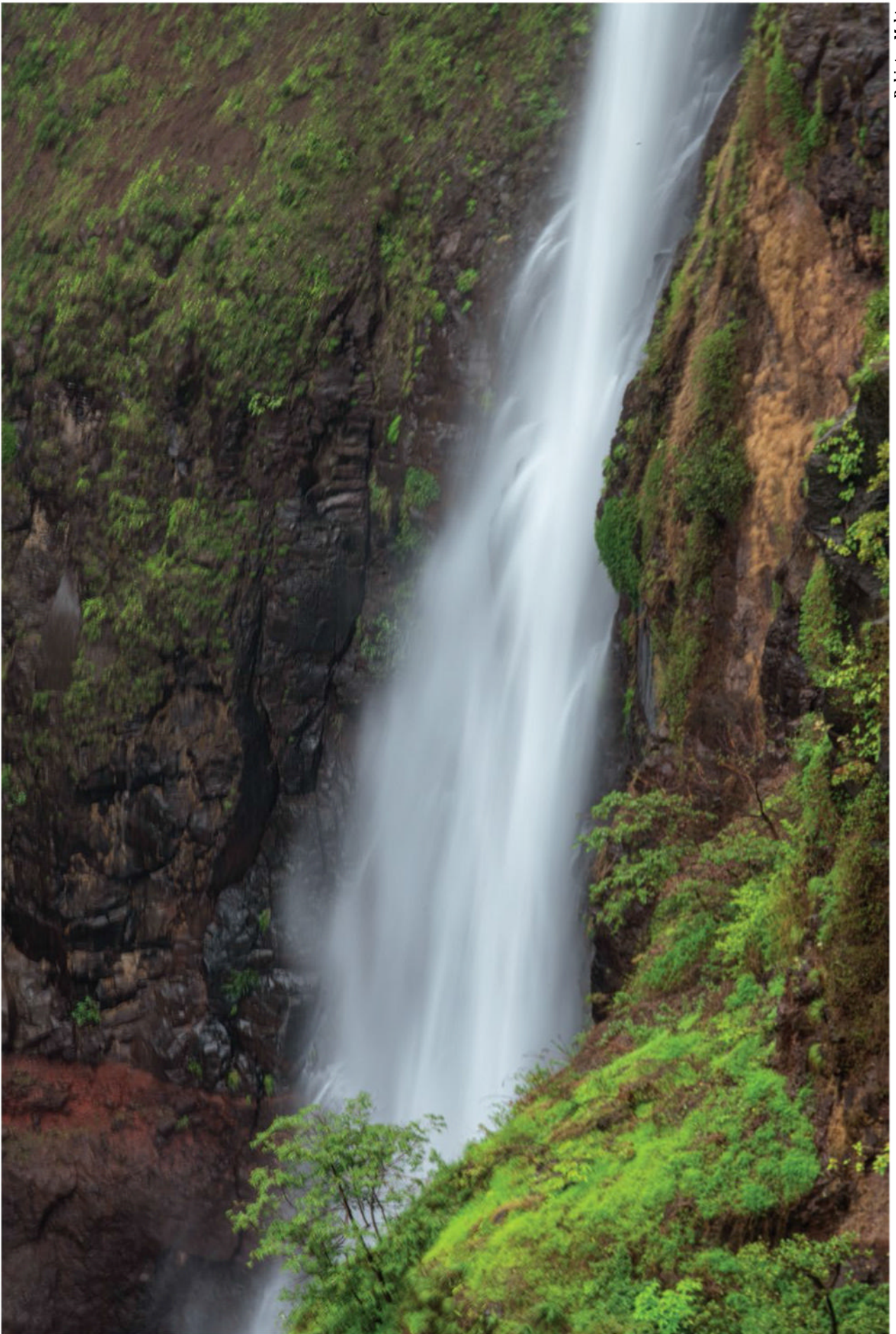


*1/200 sec*

Rohinton Mehta



*1/400 sec*



*1/4 sec (Wind blowing)*



Rohinton Mehta

1/250 sec



# PRINTING AND BEYOND



**Vimal Parmar**  
An independent marketing consultant and digital print evangelist with over 40 years of experience in the imaging industry.  
[@vimalparmar](#)

## Beyond the Photograph

*An exploration of the invisible half of professional photography and why the final printed album remains central to memory, experience, and brand value.*

**Dear Readers,**

**W**e often speak about photography as the moment the shutter clicks. The decisive instant. The perfect frame. The captured emotion.

But what happens afterwards? What transforms a collection of digital files into something a family preserves, revisits, and passes down across generations?

In this month's *Print & Beyond* column, I wanted to move beyond the routine printing of photographs and explore the world of high-value wedding albums and photobooks in greater depth. More importantly, I wanted to examine the invisible half of professional photography. The world of albums, print production, packaging, workflow, and delivery. Because for many photographers, it is this final stage that ultimately shapes reputation, referrals and the overall client experience.

My conversation with Kultar Singh Madan, CEO of Canvera Digital Technologies (Bengaluru-based, India's leading



**Kultar Singh Madan**

wedding album and photobook production company), offers a fascinating perspective precisely because he does not come from a photography background. His roots are in manufacturing, systems, and operations, which allows him to view the photography industry through a very different lens. One shaped by reliability, consistency, process and scale. What emerged from our discussion was not merely a conversation about wedding albums. It became a deeper reflection on why printed photographs still matter in an age

dominated by screens and why the "last mile" of photography is often the most overlooked.

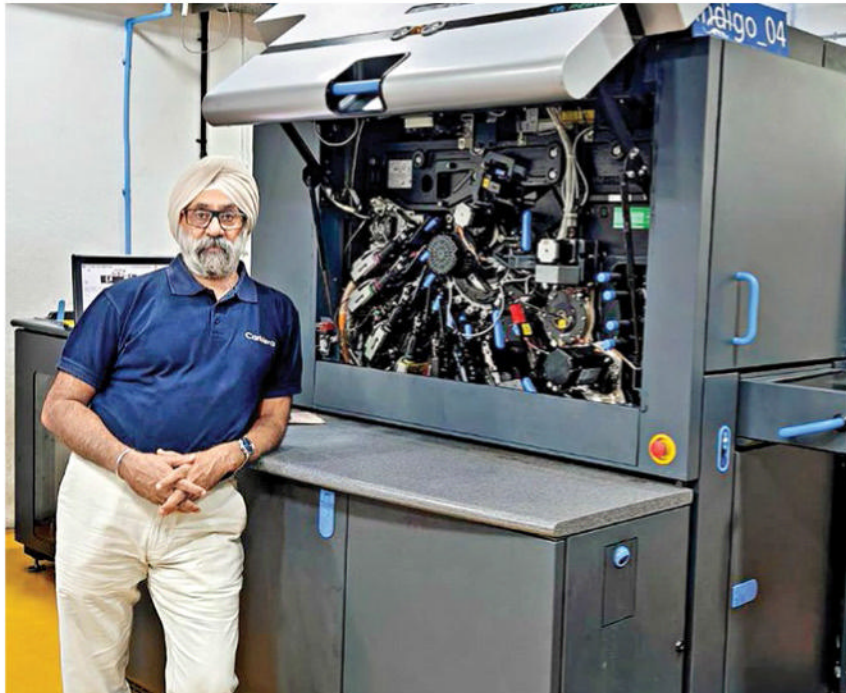
Today's photographers are not just image-makers. They are storytellers, designers, archivists, entrepreneurs and experience creators. Increasingly, the final printed product has become an extension of their brand and identity. This issue also raises an important question for photographers and print professionals alike: are we fully exploring the potential of print beyond weddings? Family histories, travel memories, maternity portraits, personal projects, corporate storytelling—these are all opportunities waiting to be reimaged through print.

As you read this interview, I invite you to think not only about the images you create, but also about how they finally reach people, how they are experienced and ultimately, how they are remembered. Because screens may display photographs. But print gives them permanence.

**Happy Printing,**  
**Vimal Parmar**

# The Last Mile of Memory: Kultar Singh Madan on the Invisible Half of Wedding Photography

*What happens after the shutter clicks is often where a photographer's reputation is truly shaped. In this conversation, Kultar Singh Madan reflects on nearly two decades of working closely with photographers, sharing insights into the unseen pressures, production realities, and evolving expectations that define India's wedding album and photobook industry.*



*Kultar Singh Madan beside an HP Indigo digital press used for premium wedding album and photobook production.*

## KULTAR SINGH MADAN

- CEO, Canvera Digital Technologies P Ltd., Bengaluru
- Over three decades in production, operations, and business leadership
- Expertise: Operational scalability, quality systems, workflow optimisation, digital print production, premium wedding albums and coffee table books

### Why This Conversation Matters

In an age dominated by digital images and fleeting screen experiences, printed wedding albums and photobooks continue to hold deep emotional and commercial value. What happens after the shoot—editing, album design, print quality, packaging, and delivery—often influences a photographer's reputation as much as the images themselves.

In this conversation, Kultar Singh Madan shares perspectives shaped by years of working closely with India's professional photography community. Beyond workflows and production, the discussion explores why printed albums remain powerful storytelling tools and how photographers can use print not only to elevate client experience, but also to strengthen their brand and build more sustainable businesses.

### From Leather Exports to the World of Photography

- **Vimal Parmar:** In brief, tell us about yourself and your journey so far.

**Kultar Singh Madan:** My journey into the photography industry has been somewhat unconventional. I began my career in Delhi's leather export industry, working with global fashion brands such as Gucci, Mango, and Pierre Cardin. Over fifteen years, I managed sales, production, sourcing, and large manufacturing operations. An experience that taught me discipline, precision, and the importance of delivering quality consistently under pressure. In 2007, I joined Canvera as one of its earliest team members, when it was still an ambitious startup. I moved to Bengaluru, set up the production facility

from scratch, and gradually took on responsibilities across production, operations, manufacturing, and supply chain management.

Over nearly two decades, I have worked across leadership and operational roles before taking on the role of CEO in April 2024. My background is not in photography or technology, but in building systems, teams, and processes that deliver reliable quality at scale.

- **In brief, tell us about Canvera and its role in the photography ecosystem?**

Founded in 2007 in Bengaluru, Canvera has spent nearly two decades building a reliable production backbone for professional photographers in India, specialising in premium wedding albums, coffee table books, and print products. The focus has been on helping photographers deliver high-quality work with consistency, speed, and reliability. Over time, the role expanded beyond print to include workflow support, design assistance, and services that simplify the post-shoot process, allowing photographers to focus on creating images.

An important part of this journey has been the wider ecosystem built around it. Designers, production specialists, press operators, and logistics professionals have all contributed to the growth of the industry through this space.

- **You have spent almost two decades around photographers but are not one yourself. How did this journey begin, and what drew you into this world?**

As shared earlier, I joined Canvera in late 2007 from the leather export industry, a world shaped by manufacturing discipline, supply chains, and global quality standards. At first, photography seemed like a very different space, but I soon realised the core challenge was familiar: creating a premium physical product and delivering it reliably at scale.

What drew me in was the gap in the ecosystem. Photographers were producing exceptional work but struggling with inconsistent quality, unreliable vendors, and limited delivery infrastructure. My background had been about building systems and processes to solve exactly those kinds of challenges.

### The Invisible Pressure Behind Wedding Photography

- **Do you recall a moment when you truly understood the kind of pressure professional photographers carry?**

There have been many such moments, but one still stands out. Early in my time, a photographer had to deliver ten wedding photobooks within an extremely tight deadline. We managed to complete production by late evening, but delivery became the real challenge. The client was scheduled to fly out the next morning.



*Inside Canvera's production floor, where memories become handcrafted albums.*

With no conventional solution available, we flew a production executive overnight to personally deliver the albums at the airport. The photographer checked each book on the spot and handed them directly to the client before departure. That experience stayed with me because it highlighted something important: a photographer's responsibility does not end with the shoot or even the album. It extends to every promise made to the client.

- **In your experience, what are the biggest pressures photographers face that outsiders rarely see?**  
From the outside, wedding photography appears glamorous, but what often goes unseen is the immense workload behind it. Post-processing, client management, vendor coordination, album design, and delivery. Many photographers are effectively running full creative businesses, often with very small teams. The pressure is both operational and emotional because they are responsible for preserving moments that cannot be recreated.
- **What do photographers worry about the most after a shoot is completed?**  
After the shoot, the anxiety shifts to the final outcome. Will the album capture the emotion of the day? Will the design do justice to the images? Will it arrive on time and in perfect condition? Underlying all of this is a deeper concern: will the client love it? A photographer's reputation is built not only on the images, but on the entire experience—from the first interaction to the final album handover.

- **In your private conversations with photographers, what concerns or anxieties come up repeatedly?**  
Consistency is a recurring concern. Photographers are confident about their shooting, but often uncertain about the delivery stage. Quality control, turnaround time, and whether the printed output will match what they see on screen.

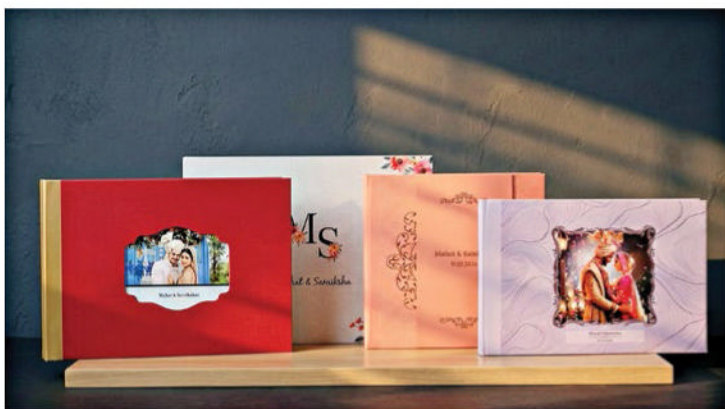
There is also a quieter business anxiety:

- How do I scale without compromising quality?
- How do I price my work correctly?
- How do I build a sustainable business?

These conversations may be less visible, but they are critical to long-term growth and stability.

## Why the Last Mile Matters

- **You often say the story of photography does not end when the shutter clicks. What do you mean by that?**  
The shutter click is only the beginning of the story. What follows—selection, editing, design, printing, packaging, and delivery—is equally important and becomes part of the photographer's creative legacy. A strong image deserves to be held, not just viewed on a screen. The physical album is where a photograph truly comes alive and becomes something families return to over generations.
- **What really happens between the shoot and the final album that many people overlook?**  
A tremendous amount of work remains invisible to the client. Images are culled, colour graded, designed



Premium wedding albums for memories that deserve permanence.

into layouts, proofed, revised, printed, quality-checked, packaged, and finally delivered. Each stage carries risk. A colour mismatch, binding issue, or poor packaging can affect the entire experience. That is why the production and delivery process matters just as much as the photography itself.

- **How does the final delivered product impact a photographer's reputation and brand?**

Enormously. In a world driven by word-of-mouth and social sharing, the album is often what clients show friends and family and that directly influences referrals. A well-crafted album reflects the photographer's brand, values, and attention to detail, while a poorly executed product can weaken even exceptional photography.

- **Have you seen situations where a great shoot was overshadowed by poor final output? What can photographers learn from that?**

Yes, and those situations underline how critical the final stage is. I remember a photographer who had created stunning images, but the album produced elsewhere had colour inconsistencies, layout issues, and poor packaging. The client's disappointment overshadowed the photography itself. The lesson is simple: the final product should never be the weakest link.

## Building a Sustainable Photography Business

- **Having worked closely with photographers for years, what patterns do you see in those who build successful, scalable businesses?**

The most successful photographers think in systems, not just moments. They build clear workflows, maintain consistent standards, and develop reliable partnerships. Their creative instinct is balanced by operational discipline, and that combination allows them to scale successfully over the long term.

- **What common mistakes do photographers unknowingly make, especially in the delivery stage?**

The most common mistake is treating delivery as an afterthought. Many photographers invest heavily in the shoot and edit, but compromise on album production in ways that do not align with their brand. Inconsistency is another issue. Using different vendors, materials, and styles without a coherent visual identity. Clients notice this more than photographers realise.

- **Where do photographers typically fall short when it comes to building consistency and trust in their brand?**

Pricing is one area. Many photographers underestimate the value they deliver. But the bigger gap is often in presentation.

Packaging, finishing, and the unboxing experience shape perception even before the album is opened. These details influence how clients remember and talk about the work.

- **What advice would you give photographers who are just starting out today?**

Start with clarity about the experience you want to deliver, not just the images you want to shoot. Every touchpoint, from the first interaction to the final album handover, shapes your brand.

Invest in the business side as seriously as your craft, and seek out mentors. Choosing the right production partner early is also important because the final album reflects your professional standards.

- **Beyond gear and shooting style, what should photographers focus on to build a strong, lasting reputation?**

Your reputation is built in the gaps between your best work. Anyone can look good when things go smoothly. What truly defines your brand is how consistently you deliver under pressure—tight timelines, demanding clients, or unexpected challenges. Reliability remains one of the most powerful differentiators in any creative profession.

## The Evolution of Wedding Photography in India

- **How has the Indian wedding photography industry evolved over the last decade?**

The transformation has been remarkable. A decade ago, expectations revolved around good candid photography. Today, clients come with mood boards, Pinterest references, and expectations of cinematic storytelling. The industry has rapidly professionalised, with photographers investing in advanced gear, pre-wedding productions, drone imaging, and global learning. Albums too have evolved into carefully crafted premium products.

- **How have client expectations changed during this time?**

Clients today are far more visually aware, shaped by platforms like Instagram and Pinterest. They are looking not just for good images, but a complete experience—storytelling, refined albums, thoughtful packaging, timely delivery, and professional communication. Simply handing over digital files is no longer enough in the professional space.

- **Where do you see the industry heading over the next five years?**

The industry is moving towards deeper personalisation driven by technology but shaped by a human touch. AI will streamline workflows and assist with areas like album design, making processes faster and more efficient. At the same time, clients will expect more individuality through bespoke albums, custom materials, and personalised packaging.

## Beyond Weddings: Expanding the Culture of Print

- **What role can photographers play in expanding the consumer photobook market beyond weddings in India?**

I feel strongly about this because India's photobook market is still overwhelmingly wedding-driven, leaving enormous untapped potential. Maternity shoots, newborn photography, birthdays, family portraits, travel photobooks, and corporate events all present opportunities for



*In an age of fleeting digital images, printed wedding albums continue to give photographs permanence, emotional value, and lasting meaning across generations.*



photographers to create meaningful printed products that clients will truly value. More importantly, the greatest benefit is for the end consumer. Digital images are often forgotten in phones, hard drives, or cloud folders, but a printed photobook becomes part of a family's everyday life. Something that is seen, shared, preserved, and revisited over the years. It transforms photographs from temporary digital files into lasting emotional objects.

Photographers are the gateway to expanding this market. When they educate clients about the emotional and archival value of printed photobooks beyond weddings, they not only create new revenue opportunities for themselves, but also help build a stronger culture of print across the industry.

● **Beyond wedding albums, what other print products should professional photographers consider offering?**

The opportunities go far beyond wedding albums. Fine art prints, large-format portraits, maternity and newborn collections, family photobooks, and travel albums can all create lasting value for clients.

Corporate coffee table books and curated printed festive gift sets are also emerging opportunities. These offerings not only create additional revenue streams but also help deepen long-term client relationships.

● **Why do you believe printed photographs, wedding albums, and photobooks still matter in a world dominated by digital screens?**

Because screens forget, but prints remember. We live in a world of endless digital content where images are quickly scrolled past, cloud folders remain unopened, and hard drives fail without warning. A printed photograph offers something digital screens cannot fully replace. It is tactile, present, and emotionally lasting. It does not need a password, charger or platform. It simply waits to be experienced again.

We are also seeing younger generations rediscover the joy of printed photographs, photobooks, and albums. They are reconnecting with something earlier generations always understood: printed memories feel more permanent, intimate, and human. My message to photographers is simple: you are not just capturing images; you are

preserving human experiences. The album, print, or photobook is what carries those memories across time. Do not treat it as an afterthought. Invest in it, refine it, and elevate it—because it may become the most lasting part of your work.

**The Person Behind the Professional**

● **After years in a high-pressure role, how do you usually unwind?**

Learning to truly switch off has taken years. Meditation helps create balance before work takes over, while music—especially Gurbani Kirtan—brings calm and perspective on demanding days.

● **What does a perfect holiday look like for you?**

When it comes to family holidays, planning is essential—largely thanks to my better half, who is far more organised than I am. As for destinations, I always gravitate towards the mountains. The silence, open skies, and connection with nature help me slow down and regain perspective.

● **Was there an early moment in your career that shaped the way you think about work or leadership?**

During my years in the leather export industry, I once made a costly mistake by copying incorrect sizes from a work order. There was no way to avoid responsibility. That experience taught me that leadership is not about taking credit when things go right, but about taking ownership when they go wrong.

● **Who has had the strongest influence on you?**

Personally, my father has been the strongest influence in my life. He believed that how you do something matters as much as what you do. Professionally, I continue to draw inspiration from founders, colleagues, and the photographer community itself. Their resilience and commitment to meaningful work remain deeply motivating.

● **Is there a personal philosophy you rely on when faced with difficult decisions?**

Whenever I face a difficult decision, I ask myself one simple question: Will I be comfortable explaining this decision honestly to the people it affects? I also believe strongly in balancing the long term with the realities of the present. The people and organisations that endure are the ones that learn to respect both. | **SP**



# REVIEWS

## FINAL RATING

The final ratings given in the reviews are not an indication of the performance or features of the reviewed device in isolation. It is a combination of all parameters including the price of the product.



68

Lens Review

**Sigma 17- 40mm  
F/1.8 DC ART**



Lens Review

72

**Tamron  
11- 20mm F/2.8 Di  
III-A RXD**



76

Smartphone Review

**Oppo Find X9 Ultra**



### In the Box

- ✓ Lens
- ✓ Lens hood with a locking button LH728-02
- ✓ Lens front cap LCF-67 IV
- ✓ Lens rear cap-LCR III
- ✓ Pouch



buttons – to facilitate the operation in landscape and in portrait mode.

The lens is constructed with 17 elements in 11 groups that include 4 SLD (Special Low Dispersion) and 4 aspherical elements. The SLD glass elements play a vital role in minimising chromatic aberrations around high contrast edges. A raised white dot on the lens body helps in aligning the lens while attaching it to the body.

Do keep in mind that this is an APS-C lens. Hence in terms of 35mm format, we are looking at a 25.5mm – 60mm equivalent lens. The lens was reviewed on a full frame Sony A7 V body. Since the lens is a crop sensor design, the body will automatically use the cropped area of the sensor.

### Ergonomics

The lens is easy to use and light in weight (525g). The lens barrel does not extend during zooming, which is a good thing. The lens hood stays put and a button on the hood needs to be pressed to release the lens hood.

### Performance

The lens was reviewed on a Sony A7 V body. All available in-body corrections were enabled. The lens produces crisp images with good contrast and colours. The lens is sharp in the center at wide open (f/1.8) aperture (unless you start looking for softness by pixel peeping) with a very slight decrease in corner sharpness. By f/2.8, I could see no visible difference in center/sides sharpness. I noticed this at all marked focal lengths.

Chromatic aberration was well controlled, but there was some focus breathing – an issue only with video. There is no IBIS but that does not really matter as compatible bodies do have IBIS. There was some vignetting, but hardly troublesome. Overall, the lens performed to our entire satisfaction.

### Value for Money

The Sigma 17-40mm f/1.8 DC Art is available at an MRP of Rs.92,000/- Being an 'Art' lens, as well as f/1.8, I would say the price is justified. **SP**

Sigma 17-40mm F/1.8 DC ART ₹92,000/-

# A General Purpose, High Performance Lens

▣ Rohinton Mehta

Sigma is one of the most respected Japanese third party lens manufacturers. Their lenses are manufactured entirely in Japan. The Sigma 17-40mm f/1.8 DC lens is available in Sony E mount, Canon RF mount, Fujifilm X mount and the Leica L mount. The lens under review was designed for Sony E mount

### Design & Build Quality

The Sigma 17-40mm f/1.8 Art lens, like all Art lenses, is very well made. The polycarbonate and metal body feels strong. The lens can withstand dust and water splashes; also has a rubber ring at the lens mount to prevent dust and moisture from getting into the lens.

Filter diameter is 67mm, and the Sony E mount lens weighs 525g.

### Key Features

The Sigma 17-40mm f/1.8 DC Art is a general-purpose high-performance zoom lens. The lens offers three rings – a focus ring at the front (with provision for AF/MF), zoom ring around the middle and an aperture Control ring in 1/3-stop intervals. You can set the apertures to click stops or smooth transition by using the slider switch marked 'Click' at the left of the lens. The ring can also be set to 'A' (Auto Aperture) in conjunction with the camera body. Ten gold-plated contacts at the lens mount transfer data to and fro to the camera body. The lens also has two round Autofocus Lock (AFL)

Camera: Sony ILCE-7M5  
Lens: Sigma 17-40mm F/1.8 DC ART  
Aperture: f/5.6  
Shutter Speed: 1/125 sec.  
Focal Length: 35.0 mm  
ISO: 125



Rohinton Mehta

**Camera:** Sony ILCE-7M5  
**Lens:** Sigma 17-40mm F/1.8 DC ART  
**Aperture:** f/2.8  
**Shutter Speed:** 1/800 sec.  
**Focal Length:** 135.0 mm  
**ISO:** 100



Rohinton Mehta

## FINAL SCORE



### Design and Build Quality



### Key Features



### Ergonomics



### Performance



### Value for Money



### Overall



## KEY SPECIFICATIONS

- **Corresponding mount:** L-mount, Canon RF mount, Fujifilm X mount, Sony E mount
- **Sensor format:** APS-C
- **Lens construction:** 17 elements in 11 groups (4 SLD, 4 aspherical)
- **Diaphragm blades:** 11, rounded
- **Aperture range:** F/1.8-16
- **MFD:** 28cm (11.1-inch)
- **Angle of view:** Sony E mount: 79.7° - 39.1°
- **Filter diameter:** 67mm
- **Dia. X Length:** Sony E mount - 72.9 x 117.9mm
- **Weight:** Sony E mount - 525g

### PLUS

- Very sharp results
- CA very well controlled
- Lightweight
- Easily available 67mm diameter filter size

### MINUS

- No IBIS (but compatible bodies have it)
- Lens breathing

## VERDICT

A comfortable, lightweight, easy-to-use lens with a very impressive overall performance. An everyday lens that is not a burden to carry. A good lens for portraits, family photos, and landscapes. Considering its build quality and performance, I have no hesitation in awarding it a Best Buy!

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### In the Box

- ✓ Lens
- ✓ Flower-shaped lens hood
- ✓ Front & rear lens caps

Tamron 11-20MM f/2.8 Di III-A RXD ₹67,500/-

## Super-Wide at Splendid Price

by Rohinton Mehta

The Tamron 11-20MM f/2.8 Di III-A RXD lens (model B060) is a constant aperture ultra-wide-angle zoom that could be used for most day-to-day photography, including architecture, interiors, landscapes and travel. The lens is designed for the APS-C format and is available in Sony E-mount, Canon-RF mount and Fujifilm X-mount. The lens that we received for review was the Sony E-mount (equivalent to 16.5-30mm on a full frame format).

### Design & Build Quality

The lens appears well-designed and strong enough to withstand daily use. The outer body uses engineering plastic. The front element is bulbous, but filters can be attached without any issue. A rubber ring at the mount

end prevents dust and moisture from entering the lens. When zoomed out from 20mm to 11mm setting, the lens extends by approximately 15mm. The lens is moisture resistant and weighs 335g for the Sony E-mount. Filter size is 67mm dia. The lens is designed in Japan and made in China.

### Key Features

This lens, designed for the APS-C format, is constructed with 12 elements in 10 groups that include 2 x GM (Glass Molded Aspherical), 2 x LD (Low Dispersion) and 1 x XLD (extra-Low Dispersion) elements. These specialized lens elements help to maintain high resolution performance and minimize chromatic aberrations when shooting wide open with ultra-wide-angle lenses.

The lens features a precision AF system with an RXD (Rapid eXtra-

silent stepping Drive) motor for speed and AF accuracy. A Fluorine Coating on the front element offers additional protection from smudges and hand grease. Ten plated contacts at the mount end transmit data to the body and back to the lens.

Photographers who love to shoot wide-angle-macro will be delighted to know that this lens has a minimum object distance of 0.15m (5.9") at the 11mm end, providing a magnification of 1:4. Though not a macro lens (Tamron does not claim it so), it provides a unique perspective to the wide-angle macro shots.

The lens has two rings – a Manual Focus Ring at the front, and the Zoom Ring towards the body end. Both the rings offer knurled grips. Focal lengths are clearly marked at 20, 18, 16, 14, and 11mm settings.

### Ergonomics

The lens is lightweight and very easy use.

### Performance

The lens was reviewed on a Sony A6600 body. All auto corrections were enabled. Wide open at f/2.8, the lens was sharp at the center, slightly softer at the sides/corners. At f/4, sharpness and contrast improved; at f/5.6, to me, the image appeared equally sharp and with good contrast at the center as well as the sides/corners. I would consider f/5.6 to be the sharpest, with f/8 being close. Some softening starts by f/11 and f/16 is comparably soft due to diffraction of light at very narrow apertures.

Chromatic aberrations and flare appeared well controlled though some ghosting was noticed in strong against-the-light shots. I also noticed some focus breathing during video. That said, the overall performance was very good.

### Value for Money

The Tamron 11-20MM f/2.8 Di III-A RXD zoom lens for Sony E-mount has an MRP of Rs. 67,500/-. I feel that at this price, the lens is affordable. |SP

Camera: Sony ILCE-6600  
Lens: E 11-20mm F2.8 B060  
Aperture: f/10  
Shutter Speed: 1/160 sec.  
Focal Length: 20.0 mm  
ISO: 100



*Disturbing wires have been removed.*

**Camera:** Sony ILCE-6600  
**Lens:** E 11-20mm F2.8 B060  
**Aperture:** f/10  
**Shutter Speed:** 1/1250 sec.  
**Focal Length:** 20.0 mm  
**ISO:** 400



Mahesh Reddy

## FINAL SCORE



### PLUS

- Compact
- Lightweight
- Value for Money
- User friendly 67mm diameter filter size

### MINUS

- No image stabilization (but compatible bodies have it)
- No AF/MF switch
- Extending design

### Design and Build Quality



### Key Features



### Ergonomics



### Performance



### Value for Money



### Overall



## KEY SPECIFICATIONS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • <b>Focal length:</b> 11-20mm                          | 1:7.6 (T)  |
| • <b>Aperture range:</b> F/2.8-16                       | • <b>Aperture blades:</b> 7 (Circular diaphragm) |
| • <b>Angle of View:</b> 105°20' - 71°35'                | • <b>Filter diameter:</b> 67mm                   |
| • <b>Optical construction:</b> 12 elements in 10 groups | • <b>Length:</b> 86.2mm (3.4") Sony E-mount      |
| • <b>MOD:</b> 0.15m (5.9") W; 0.24m (9.4") T            | • <b>Max. diameter:</b> 73mm                     |
| • <b>Max magnification ratio:</b> 1:4 (W);              | • <b>Weight:</b> 335g (Sony E-mount)             |

## VERDICT

The Tamron 11-20MM f/2.8 Di III-A RXD zoom lens is lightweight and offers great image quality. If you are primarily a video creator, you may have some issue with the focus breathing (I have seen much more focus breathing in some other lenses). The lens allows you to shoot wide-angle closeup shots (a fad these days), that provide exclusive perspectives. The lens offers sharp images even at wide open aperture. A great lens for various genres of photography, including shooting in cramped spaces, architecture (do use the auto corrections in your camera body), landscapes (but be mindful of the extra sky areas and leaning verticals that all super wide-angle lenses produce - but this would be a user error, not the lens!), closeups of flowers and medium size creepy crawlies etc. Considering the overall performance, I have no hesitation in awarding it a Best Buy.

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**ZOOM**  
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Oppo Find X9 Ultra ₹1,69,999 (oppo.com)

# Magnificent Monster

## In the Box

- ✓ 100W SUPERVOOC charger
- ✓ USB Type-C cable
- ✓ SIM ejector tool
- ✓ Documentation
- ✓ Protective case
- ✓ Pre-applied screen protector

▣ Srini Swaminathan

The Oppo Find X9 Ultra is, quite simply, a monster. Much like its predecessor, the Find X8 Ultra, this device pushes expectations higher. But specifications alone never tell the full story. The moment you open the box and hold the phone you can feel that it is premium, purposeful, and exceptionally well-crafted. More importantly, it earns the right to carry the Ultra badge.

## Design and build quality

The Find X9 Ultra continues Oppo's premium design philosophy with a refined metal-and-glass construction. The large Master Lens design module, developed in partnership with Hasselblad, dominates the rear design and signals that imaging is central to the Find X9 Ultra's identity. Do you admire the design? The balance and weight? The textured finish (Tundra Umber version), the striking circular camera island, and the attention to detail? I found myself holding it longer without powering up. It is that kind of a device that makes a strong first impression. And that impression lasts even after several weeks of usage across my travels in various places of India and Singapore.

## Key features

The Oppo Find X9 Ultra sets a new benchmark in smartphone imaging



with its Hasselblad Master Camera System, featuring dual 200MP cameras, the world's first Hasselblad 50MP 10x Ultra-Sensing Optical Zoom Telephoto lens, and Oppo's latest LUMO Image Engine. Powered by the Snapdragon 8 Elite Gen 5 platform, the phone combines cutting-edge optics, AI-powered image processing, and professional-grade computational photography to create one of the most ambitious camera systems ever fitted into a smartphone.

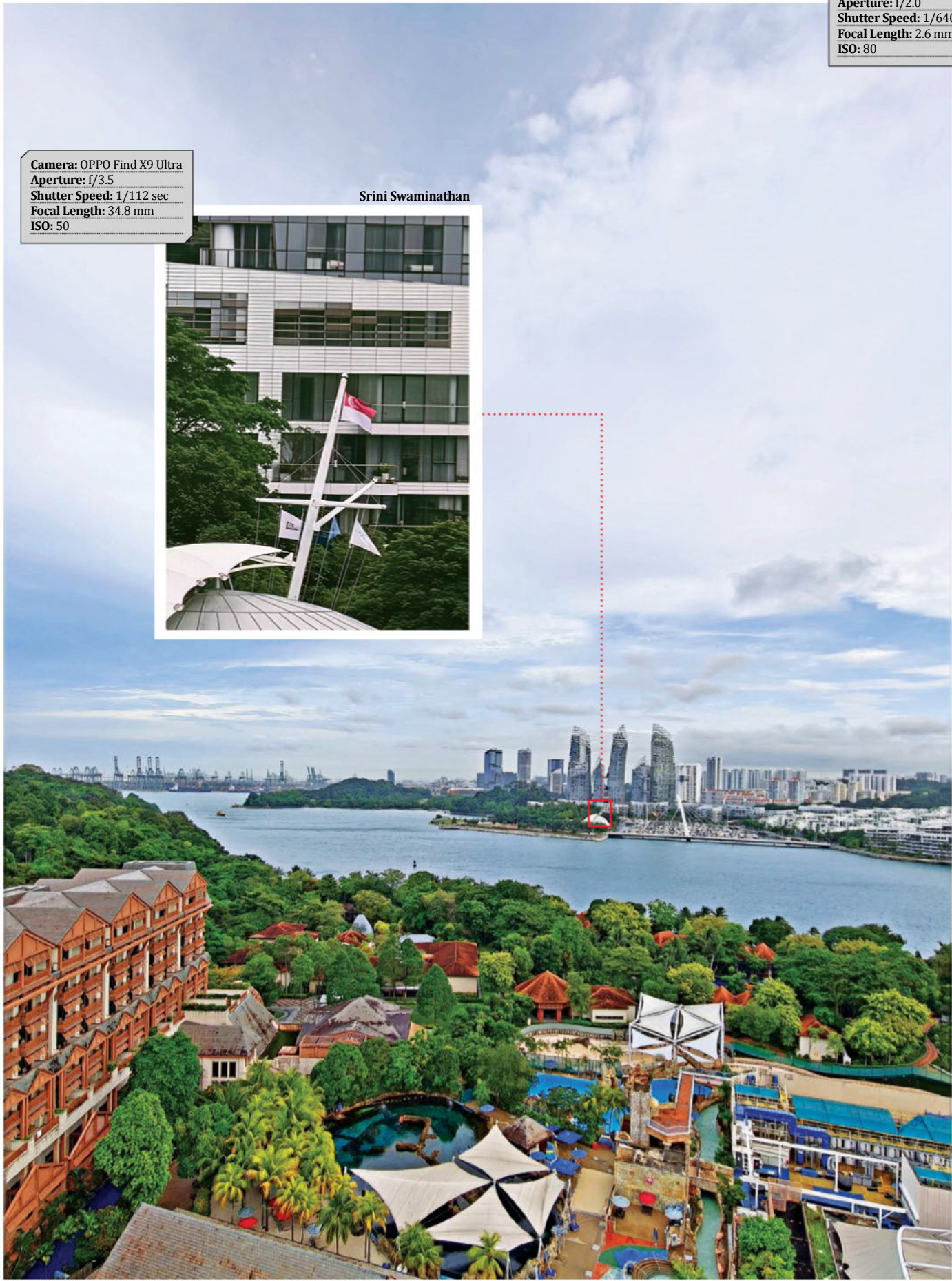
The camera hardware is genuinely impressive. The 200MP Ultra-Sensing Main Camera features a large 1/1.12-inch sensor with a bright f/1.5 aperture

and a 23mm focal length, delivering outstanding dynamic range, excellent low-light performance, and natural colour reproduction. Supporting it is a 200MP 3x Super Portrait Telephoto camera with a 70mm focal length, 15cm macro capability, a large 1/1.28-inch sensor, and an f/2.2 aperture. At the long end sits the headline feature: a Hasselblad 50MP 10x Ultra-Sensing Optical Zoom Telephoto camera with a 230mm focal length, 1/2.75-inch sensor, f/3.5 aperture, and Oppo's Quintuple Prism Reflection Periscope Structure. It enables true 10x optical zoom and up to 20x optical-quality zoom while maintaining impressive detail. Completing the setup is a 50MP ultra-wide camera with a 14mm focal

Camera: OPPO Find X9 Ultra  
Aperture: f/2.0  
Shutter Speed: 1/640 sec  
Focal Length: 2.6 mm  
ISO: 80

Camera: OPPO Find X9 Ultra  
Aperture: f/3.5  
Shutter Speed: 1/112 sec  
Focal Length: 34.8 mm  
ISO: 50

Srini Swaminathan



Srini Swaminathan

Camera: OPPO Find X9 Ultra  
 Aperture: f/1.5  
 Shutter Speed: 1/1000 sec  
 Focal Length: 1.5 mm  
 ISO: 320



Sri Swaminathan

length and autofocus support for landscapes, architecture, and macro photography.

Oppo calls this system “8 Pro Lenses in Your Pocket”, and after using it extensively, the claim makes sense. Powered by the LUMO Image Engine, the camera seamlessly covers eight focal lengths ranging from 14mm to 460mm (0.6x to 20x). During our travels and daily shooting, the flexibility proved invaluable. Whether capturing expansive landscapes, street photography, portraits,

distant architecture, wildlife, concerts, fireworks, or close-up macro subjects, the Find X9 Ultra consistently delivered detailed and natural-looking images. We even clicked crisp images from an aeroplane and undulating cable car high up in the hills!

Up front is a 6.82-inch 144Hz ProXDR LTPO AMOLED display with adaptive refresh rate, ultra-high peak 3600 nits brightness, Dolby Vision support, and razor-thin bezels. Whether you're editing photos, streaming HDR content,

## FINAL SCORE



### Design and Build Quality



### Key Features



### Ergonomics



### Performance



### Value for Money



### Overall



## PLUS

- Outstanding quad 200MP Hasselblad Master camera system
- Innovative Ultra-Sensing camera technology
- Excellent 10x optical telephoto performance

## MINUS

- Bulky camera bump
- Extreme zoom may result in aggressive image processing

## KEY SPECIFICATIONS

**Processor:** Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Elite Gen 5

**RAM:** Up to 12GB LPDDR5X

**Storage:** Up to 512GB UFS 4.1

**Battery:** 7050mAh Silicon-Carbon Battery

### Rear Camera System:

- 200MP Main Camera
- 200MP 3x Telephoto Camera
- 50MP 10x Optical Telephoto Camera (230mm equivalent)
- 50MP Ultra-Wide Camera

**Front Camera:** 50MP Autofocus Camera

**Display:** 6.82-inch ProXDR LTPO AMOLED, 3168 × 1440 resolution, 1-120Hz adaptive refresh rate, up to 3600 nits peak brightness

**Charging:** 100W SUPERVOOC wired charging, 50W AIRVOOC wireless charging

**Durability:** IP66, IP68 and IP69 rating

Camera: OPPO Find X9 Ultra  
Aperture: f/1.5  
Shutter Speed: 1/33 sec  
Focal Length: 7.7 mm  
ISO: 1250



Srini Swaminathan

gaming, or simply browsing, the display ranks among the best available on any smartphone today.

Powering the device is Qualcomm's Snapdragon 8 Elite Gen 5 processor, paired with Oppo's Trinity Engine optimisations and up to 24GB RAM. The 7050mAh silicon-carbon battery comfortably delivers all-day endurance, while 100W SUPERVOOC wired charging and 50W AIRVOOC wireless charging minimise downtime. The in-display fingerprint sensor is fast and reliable, Face Unlock works seamlessly, and ColorOS remains fluid throughout daily use.

### Ergonomics

The Find X9 Ultra balances a substantial camera system and a massive 7050mAh battery surprisingly well. Whether you are upgrading from an earlier Oppo flagship or experiencing an Ultra device from the brand for the first time, the Find X9 Ultra feels remarkable. The dedicated Camera-Style Dial and Camera Key add a tactile shooting experience that feels surprisingly close to using a traditional camera.

### Performance

Throw photography at it, macro, telephoto, low-light scenes, landscapes, portraits, or fireworks, and it delivers. Throw productivity, multitasking, or gaming at it and it delivers again. That consistency is its greatest strength.

Under low-light conditions, the large sensors and advanced image processing work together well but when you combine motion and low light, the camera is challenged. Yet, with the various options and settings, you can produce good images. Portrait photography is another highlight, with excellent subject separation, natural bokeh, and accurate skin tones. Video performance is equally impressive. The Find X9 Ultra supports 8K Ultra-Clear Video recording, advanced stabilisation, and professional-grade controls for creators. Footage is detailed, stable, and rich in colour.

Performance is effortlessly fast across AI workloads, gaming, multitasking, and content creation. For specification enthusiasts, the Find X9 Ultra offers flagship numbers in every department. More importantly, it succeeds because

those specifications translate into a polished, cohesive user experience that genuinely earns the Ultra name.

### Value for money

What stands out is not a single feature, but how everything comes together. The hardware, software, camera system, performance, battery life, and user experience work in harmony. In a market increasingly defined by headline features, the Find X9 Ultra distinguishes itself by excelling across the board. Long after the launch presentations and specification sheets are forgotten, what remains is a phone that consistently delivers on its promises. And I could hardly find anything to complain about except for some minor issues and nitpicks.

### Verdict

***The OPPO Find X9 Ultra is a magnificent flagship monster for serious photographers. With its class-leading Hasselblad Camera setup and imaging system, the Oppo Find X9 Ultra raises the bar for smartphone photography several notches higher. After weeks of use, the answer is an emphatic yes, it justifies the Ultra name. |SP***

Fujifilm Instax Mini 13 ₹8499/- instax.in

# Instant photos. Instant prints.

## Instant gratification

by Sрни Swaminathan

The Instax does not need any introduction. There are more than ten types of these instant camera printers by Fujifilm and you would have seen it in tourist places, classrooms, kiddy parties or in birthday gift lists. No matter how many times we see one, that moment when the shutter is clicked and the credit card size print pops out always makes people smile and the 90 seconds it takes for the print to develop is never dull! That is exactly what we felt when we unboxed and took the Instax Mini 13 for a spin.

Out of the box, the Mini 13 feels light and playful. It comes in five pastel shades (Blue, Green, Pink, Purple, and White) and the rounded, pillow-like shape makes it very easy to hold. It weighs 327g with film and strap, which is light enough to carry around all day or toss into a bag. The packaging includes the camera, a hand strap with a small rubber wedge attached (more on that below), two AA batteries, and a quick guide. You do not get a starter film pack in the box. Each film pack gives you 10 prints. A small window on the back counts down how many shots you have left.

Using the Mini 13 is genuinely as simple as it looks. You twist the lens to turn it on, twist a little further to switch to close-up mode for selfies or anything closer than 60cm,



and twist back off when done. The camera handles all exposure decisions by itself, including the flash, which fires automatically on every single shot whether you want it to or not. In daylight, the flash is basically invisible and the shots can sometimes look a little washed out. Indoors, the flash does its job well and gives you that warm, classic instant-film look that people love. In our tests, framing through the viewfinder was surprisingly accurate. The Mini 13 has parallax correction for close-ups, so what you see is roughly what you get. The small mirror next to the lens makes

selfies easy, and it frames them well too.

The big new addition in the Mini 13 over its predecessor the Mini 12 is a self-timer. A small lever next to the shutter gives you a 2-second delay (good for selfies) or a 10-second delay (good for group shots). It works well, but here is the catch: there is no tripod socket on the camera anywhere. To use the timer for a group shot, you have to prop the camera on a table or use the little rubber wedge from the strap to tilt it slightly. This can be frustrating and feels like an obvious miss - if you are going

to add a timer, you really should add a way to mount the camera properly. The battery life is good though: two AA batteries last you through roughly 10 packs of 10-shot film, which is about 100 shots.

The one thing to be realistic about with this camera is the photo quality. The prints are small, soft, and often a little bright or flat-looking, especially in outdoor light. There is no way to control exposure, turn the flash off, or adjust anything at all. You point, you shoot, you get what you get. It is delightful for parties, casual outings with friends, travel memories, and putting photos up on a wall or gifting them. If you want sharp, detailed images with control over how they look, the Mini 13 is not the right tool. Also worth noting: the film itself costs money, so every shot you take is a small purchase. Since there is no preview, you sometimes waste shots chasing a frame. That adds up.

### Verdict

**The Fujifilm Instax Mini 13 is a fun, fuss-free camera for anyone who wants to take casual photos and hold them in their hands a minute and a half later. It is not for people who care about image quality or creative control. It is for people who want something easy, colourful, and a little bit magical to click at a party, a trip, or a family get-together. |SP**



### ☐ Hoshang Billimoria

1. **Who has tied up with South Korean manufacturer L K Samyang for lens design and manufacture?**
  - a. Samsung
  - b. Hasselblad
  - c. Schneider Kreuznach
  - d. Meyer Optik
2. **Zeiss used to work with Yashica Contax decades ago. Today, lenses designed by Zeiss are made by:**
  - a. Sony
  - b. Panasonic
  - c. Canon
  - d. Nikon
3. **Who does Panasonic work with in lens design?**
  - a. Zeiss
  - b. Meyer Optik
  - c. Cosina
  - d. Leica
4. **At what age did India's ace photographer expire?**
  - a. 83
  - b. 73
  - c. 78
  - d. 80
5. **The best selling model in Olympus history was:**
  - a. OM 1
  - b. OM 2
  - c. OM 10
  - d. OM 4
6. **All photo equipment is getting more expensive by the day. Which particular item has become more expensive thanks to AI?**
  - a. Lenses
  - b. Sensors
  - c. Memory cards
  - d. Flashguns
7. **Which company of the following does not make photo paper?**
  - a. Hahnemuhle
  - b. Canson
  - c. Basildon Bond
  - d. JK Paper
8. **Sigma's Chairman has indicated that the company will diversify into other fields. Which one?**
  - a. Mobiles
  - b. Consumer electronics
  - c. Chips
  - d. Farming
9. **Kase is a new lens manufacturer. Where does it originate?**
  - a. Germany
  - b. South Korea
  - c. Japan
  - d. China
10. **Thyoch, a new lens manufacturer, has launched the 24–50 mm F 2.8 AF lens with a Sony E mount in the world market. Where is Thyoch from?**
  - a. China
  - b. Japan
  - c. Germany
  - d. Taiwan

ANSWERS : 1(c), 2(a), 3(d), 4(a), 5(c), 6(c), 7(c), 8(d), 9(d), 10(a)

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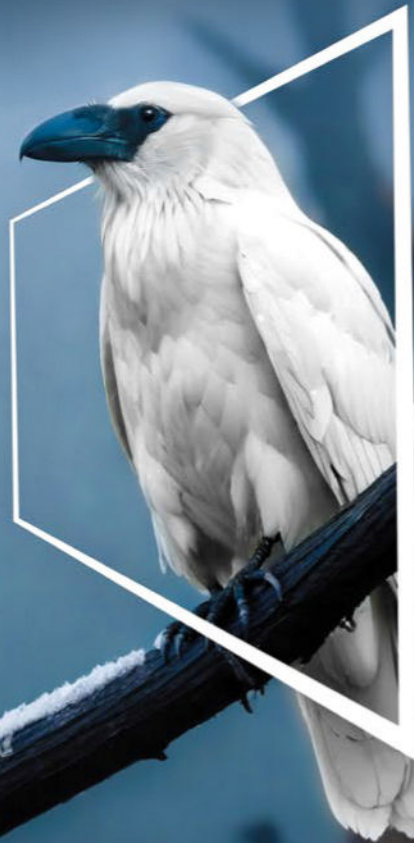
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