

ISSUE 14 | SEPTEMBER 2012



for PHOTOGRAPHERS
AND AFICIONADOS

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LARA JADE
Englishwoman in New York

TONY BRIDGE
Clarity and megapixels

RODNEY DEKKER
Climatic events

D800



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At the heart of the image



Welcome to *f11* Magazine

Welcome to issue 14, September 2012.

This month we feature the work of three more photographers working in radically different fields.

While their images may be very different, all three share the passion, commitment and single-minded determination necessary to keep producing images at a high level, even when under pressure.

Our cover photographer Lara Jade, hails from the United Kingdom and now lives and works in New York. Her fashion images are fresh and vibrant and we're delighted to share them with you.

Rodney Dekker, from Melbourne Australia, is an environmental campaigner with a camera. His disturbing images witnessing the effects of climate change are truly food for thought.

Popular *f11* columnist Tony Bridge completes the trio with a portfolio of his evocative images and an opinion piece entitled 'Clarity and megapixels'. These images will delight the eye, and the article may well challenge some of your thought processes.

As we ease into our Antipodean Spring, rest assured that we're working tirelessly to populate our virtual pages with images and ideas. Our hard drives are almost bursting with goodness, filling fast with stories and portfolios from around the world.

Often, it's not like work at all, instead we're on a mission.

That mission? To celebrate the profession and the successes, triumphs and tribulations of people very different, yet really quite a lot like you. People dedicated to the pursuit of great images as creators, collectors, co-conspirators or even spectators.

I hope you'll enjoy this issue of *f11* as much as we've enjoyed bringing it to you.

Onwards!

Tim

tim@f11magazine.com

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f11 Magazine

P O Box 37-233, Parnell
Auckland 1151, New Zealand
www.f11magazine.com

Publisher/Creative Director:

Tim Steele
tim@f11magazine.com

Editorial:

editor@f11magazine.com

Advertising Sales:

sales@f11magazine.com

Design/Layout:

Donna Hoyle and Danica Atkins
of Donna Hoyle Design

Web Developer:

David MacLeod

Contributors:

Gary Baildon :: James Madelin ::
Karim Sahai :: Tony Bridge ::
Malcolm Somerville :: Darran Leal

Featured In This Issue:

Tony Bridge :: Rodney Dekker ::
Lara Jade

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The *f11* team

GARY BILDON aka The Shooter was schooled in the dark arts of photolithography, before talking his way into a well-known Auckland studio in the heady 80's. Most of the 90's were spent in a plausibly deniable series of roles in the photo industry. After his disappointment at Y2K not signaling the end of the world, as we know it, he returned to shooting people, products and fast moving objects for filthy lucre. Helmeted and leathered, he's often sat astride a rather large and imposing British motorcycle, the latest in a succession of fast toys. For shits and giggles he plays both drums and bass in bands you've never heard of, in places you've never been to.



TONY BRIDGE is a fine artist, photographer, writer and photo educator... depending on which day you catch him. Yoda like, he hides away in the hills in Hanmer Springs, where, like any good modern day guru, he thinks way too much, constantly reinvents himself and pontificates on one of his blogs. Rather than joining the rest of the team in the cult of Mac, he insists on trying to build the 'ultimate PC' – poor deluded man. Apart from that tiny lapse of judgement, as the good Yoda himself would put it, "Learn from him, you will".



DARRAN LEAL is a photographer, adventurer and educator. An Australian by birth, he combines his twin loves of travel and outdoor photography by running tours, workshops and seminars and guiding photographers to stunning locations around the globe. Prior to inventing this great gig, he variously sold cameras, served food and wine, built gas pipelines, explored for diamonds and discovered that the life of a park ranger was not for him. When not up to his ass in crocodiles, cuddling gorillas or herding photographers, he fishes the world's oceans, rivers and streams. Only his fishing exploits suffer from exaggeration, believe it or not the rest of his adventurous life is, amazingly, true.



JAMES MADELIN is a former investment banker, a reformed press photographer and a stunning linguist. He's better known for his role as CEO and chief mad scientist at his company Enlight Photo. James is the inventor of the now world famous Orbis ring flash device, the indispensable Frio and a host of future products that shall, for the moment, remain top secret. When not jet setting around the world's photo dealers promoting his latest indispensable photographic invention, James may be seen around town on two wheels in an effort to reduce his massive carbon footprint. He strenuously denies the use of bicycle clips and insists that his legs are unshaven.



KARIM SAHAI is an accomplished photographer, a deeply conceptual thinker and an all-round clever guy yet he still insists on holding down a day job. He is one of those mysterious unsung heroes toiling away on the back lots of Wellywood as a visual effects artist for feature films. As you read this, he is most likely putting the finishing touches on a future blockbuster while planning his next expedition as his alter ego, the globe-trotting travel photographer and adventurer. Although he failed to meet the selection criteria by being far too young and good-looking we decided to invite him to join the *f11* team anyway.



MALCOLM SOMERVILLE spent far too much of his working life within the evil empire that once was the largest multi-national manufacturer in the photo industry. His resulting knowledge of photographic and chemical processes is so deep that he is still deemed to be a security risk. A past president of the NZIPP, Malcolm is the ultimate fixer, a go to guy for anyone wanting to know anything about professional photography and photographers. Malcolm has been a writer and industry commentator for many years and has the innate ability to spot a crock of the proverbial at 500 paces.



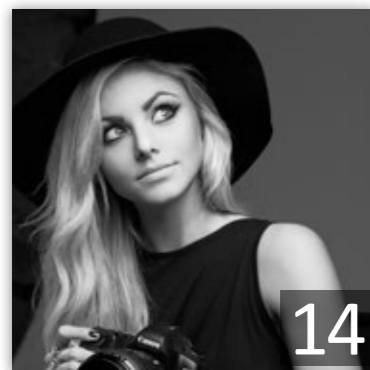
TIM STEELE is the ringmaster of the travelling circus that is *f11* Magazine. A former high wire artist for corporate masters in the photo industry, he still has nightmares about delivering the physically impossible, on occasion under the whip of the seemingly insane, and always for the terminally unappreciative. A brilliant escape from the last of these gulags left a tunnel for other prisoners and led him to consultancy in strategy, advertising and marketing. Always impressed by the Bohemian lifestyles, devil-may-care attitudes, cruel wit and raw talent of professional photographers, he now frequents their studios, shooting locations and watering holes in search of his personal holy grail, great images to share with *f11* readers.



WARNING - HOTLINKS ARE EVERYWHERE!

Amazingly, some readers are still blissfully unaware that this magazine is a veritable hotbed of hotlinks, so this is a friendly reminder! There are links to online content such as videos, and to websites which expand on the ideas on offer here in the magazine. Anywhere you see an image of a computer screen contains a link, there are highlighted links within articles and all advertisements link to the advertisers websites so you can learn more about the products you're interested in. Simply click on the ad.

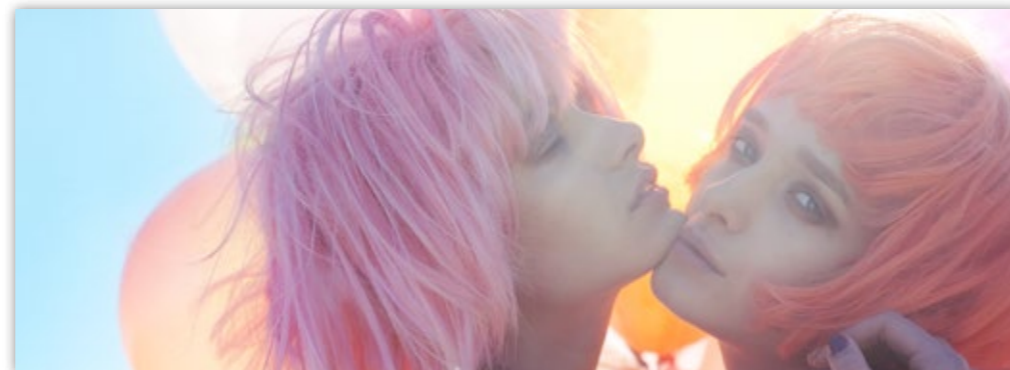
If this is still baffling, learn more in our expanded instructions on page 95 of this issue.



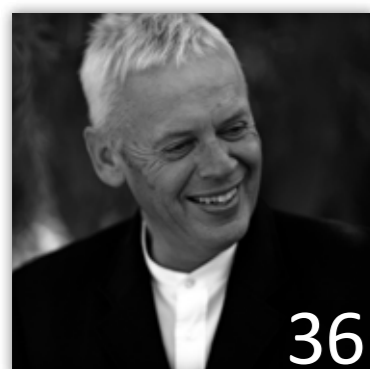
Lara JADE

Englishwoman in New York

Image © Corina V. Photography

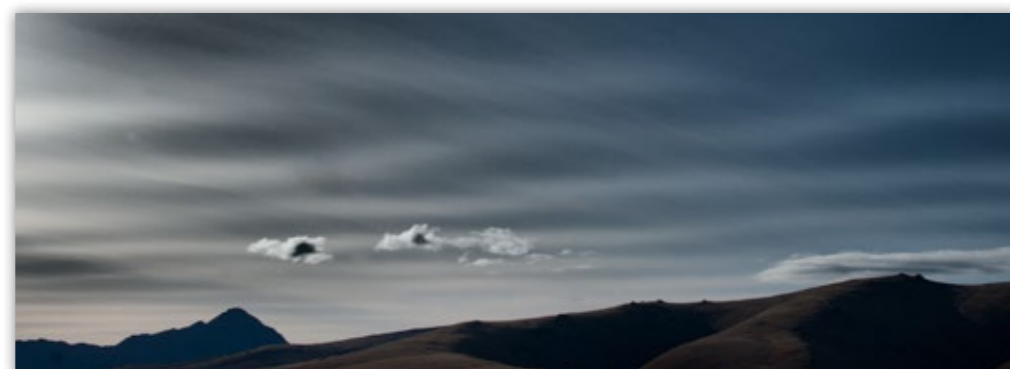


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Tony BRIDGE

Clarity and megapixels



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Rodney DEKKER

Climatic events

Image © Saville Coble



© Rodney Dekker



COVER IMAGE 'Last Rose Of Summer' for Papercut Magazine. Shot in London, UK with the Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade www.larajade.com

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UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Building a Leica lens – a behind-the-scenes look at the craftsmanship and manufacture of Leica lenses in the production facilities of Leica Camera AG.

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Iconic images

With this week's passing of Neil Armstrong, Apollo 11 astronaut and, unless you're a conspiracy theorist, the first human to set foot on the moon, I'm once again reminded of the way a truly iconic image can sear its way through our retinas and make an indelible impression on our minds.

It was 1969 and I was nine years old at the time, yet the black and white jerky-frame-by-frame video images transmitted back are as clear and fresh in my mind, and as exciting, as I remember them then. The official NASA studio portrait of all three astronauts would hang on my bedroom wall until it was replaced, many years later, by Farrah Fawcett in a red swimsuit... another iconic image.

Those moon-landing moments replayed over the last couple of days were in total harmony with the playback stored in my mind. Doubtless this was aided by the repetition of those images via various media over the ensuing years, keeping my mental prints fresh, clear and free of degradation.

Like these, some image icons are universal, shared by tens of millions of people from a certain age group or hemisphere, others unique to each and every one of us. Hope and despair, joy and sorrow, shock, wonder and awe, all recorded faithfully and, until our memories start to fail us, available at will for instantaneous playback in near Dolby Surround high fidelity audio, almost full HD mind's eye video.

Iconic impressions are not limited to those created by pictures.

Smells, sounds, even seemingly random thoughts give cause to synapse snapping visceral access to that repository of icons in the mind, all catalogued and available for retrieval and replay at will.

Others, images not recorded yet faithfully captured, exist simply in the mind's eye. You'll have your own, tucked away snugly yet instantly ready to evoke a burst of emotions.

Some icons are captured with photographic, video or audio equipment, but most are not. The very best Apollo 11 lunar pictures, the ones we saw much later, were taken with a 6x6 Hasselblad EL on special 70mm Kodak film, the camera left behind where it still awaits new owners. Others, like the birth of my three sons, were simply yet indelibly captured by two dark eyes a lot younger and more than a little misty at the time, now pointed at this screen and this flashing cursor.

So our capture devices aid and assist this process, yet we do not own the process. We produce some of our own icons, and if we're fortunate maybe an icon or two for others. Some of us, a very lucky few, will even produce globally significant icons, as you read this dozens will chatter through the film gate of the mind and as photographers, you'll even be able to attribute some of these to their authors by name.

Yet in the widest possible context, don't our cameras seem just a tiny bit superfluous and rather hopelessly outgunned by the usually reliable, occasionally wonderfully unpredictable, eminently superior capture device that is the mind?

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On the decisive moment

If we have been in photography for any length of time, we will have heard the phrase 'the decisive moment'. It is attributed to Henri Cartier-Bresson, the great French photographer.

In fact he never said it.

What he talks about however, in his book, *The Mind's Eye*, is finding that moment when everything comes together. Of course he was using this in the context of the photograph as document, for photographing life is what he did. We all know the iconic images he produced, such as the shot of the person jumping over a puddle or the small boy proudly fetching the bottle for his family. Cartier-Bresson was talking about the fact that all human interactions reach a perfect point where a truth is revealed. Often the participants are quite unaware that they are the characters in a narrative and that a story is being told. They are just getting on with their own lives. That ability to discern a narrative and then document it is, of course, what separates the great documentary photographers from the rest of us.

However, the decisive moment does not apply to documentary or street photography alone. Every type of photography bows to this law.

Whether you shoot portraits or landscapes, or even the light skimming a wall, there is a moment at which everything is revealed. It may be a moment when your sitter reveals who they truly are, or a moment when the light shifts and the landscape offers a vision of itself which we had never considered. Photography is a process of selection; selecting a viewpoint, an angle or a point in time. The inescapable nature of photography is that we work in seconds or fractions of a second. The question then becomes: which fraction?

I hadn't really thought about it until a student at one of my workshops asked me that question one day; how will I know which moment is the right one? There are so many moments, each one following the other like the frames on a roll of movie film? How will I know when to press the shutter? I believe somebody asked that question of the Great Master, Minor White. He is reputed to have said: be still within yourself until the object of your interest affirms your



© Tony Bridge

presence (White was a follower of the Russian mystic Gurdjieff). This means being open to the moment and what it has to offer.

If you are a photographer of life, then the answer lies in the small things, the minor details. Great photographs rise and fall on what happens on the periphery of your image, out in the corners. It is so easy to be so focused on the main subject that you lose awareness of the small details, which are, in their own way, just as important. Teach yourself to see a scene in its entirety, to give the minor chords just as much weight as the major ones. You are, after all, composing a piece of visual music.

I stopped by the side of the road, because this coffee caravan fascinated me, sitting as it was on a beach by the side of the highway in the middle of nowhere. The incongruity meant I had to make a photograph of it. It was waving its hands in the air, demanding to be documented. The framing was obvious,

and the ratio of camera to landscape easy to determine. It was the flag, however, and the different positions it adopted which kept me making versions of it, until like Goldilocks, I had found one which was 'just right'.

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Lara JADE

Englishwoman in New York

At seventeen, Lara Jade knew exactly what she wanted to do with her life and started a photography business shooting for portrait clients, book publishers and music labels throughout the UK. Few have the determination, vision and confidence necessary to do that at such a tender age, and realistically the odds of success are in the same realm as those enjoyed by lottery winners.

Undaunted, she began this process by shooting fine art photography and experimental self-portraiture in her hometown of the West Midlands, England before transitioning into the ever-changing world of fashion photography.

Eager to grow as an artist and extend her business internationally, she moved to London to connect with creatives in the photography industry and push her own boundaries as a photographer.

Today, Lara is an internationally acclaimed fashion, portrait and commercial photographer. In 2011, she made the move to New York City, where she currently resides, dividing her time between the US and Europe

▶ 'American Indian' shoot. Shot in Oxford, UK with the Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade

▶▶ Following spread: 'Gigi & Irena' for Material Girl Magazine. Influenced by the seasons trends and playful pastel colours, this is one of my favourite stories and is often one of the speaking points of my portfolio in client meetings. Canon 5D MkII and 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Lara Jade

for assignments. She summarises her work in this way:

"I am influenced by past and present style and whenever I shoot I like to create stories with an underlying sense of narrative, whether this is in my personal work, commercial campaigns or editorial projects. I am deeply inspired by elements of influential style, film noir, old masters in painting and photography, Romanticism and untouched beauty. All of my experiences in life thus far have been reflected through my imagery, and continue to shape me personally, and as an artist."

Wanting more, we chatted to Lara long distance:

f11: Welcome to f11 Lara, thanks for allowing us to share your work with our readers. Our mutual friend Sue Bryce introduced us, so I'm once again in her debt.

Lara: Thank you for the opportunity.

f11: Can we start by talking about the early days. I have visions of this seventeen year old being eaten alive by potential clients... ▶





What was the early process of trying to secure work as a photographer really like?

Lara: I think if I'd have jumped straight into the fashion photography industry your visions may have been very realistic! However, I started very small (and perhaps a little naïve!), and took on as many clients as I could handle at first, taking each mistake as a learning curve. In the beginning, my clients were mainly young musicians, actors, dancers or portrait clients who were interested in a unique, conceptual theme over a standard studio portrait. Most often the shoots would take place locally in my hometown in the West Midlands because of the variety of locations – fields, castles, parks and lakes. As well as photographer, I'd also play the role of make up artist or stylist on set, as I found this helped the shape the theme of the photo shoot.

f11: As you kicked off your career, did you have many early influences, and who were these?

Lara: There were many influences in the beginning as I was keen to experiment and explore different themes and ideas. Photographers such as Cindy Sherman, influenced my early experimentation with self-portraiture, and conceptual stories I read during my childhood, and dark and mysterious films such as Alfred Hitchcock's 'The Birds' influenced my fine-art photography. During the first few years of my career, I was keen to create stories within a single image, almost as if they were fine-art paintings themselves.

f11: How long was it before you started to get traction with clients, and at what point did you realise that your dream was going to become reality?

Lara: The first few years of my career was very experimental and with the transition of my style moving into fashion photography it was clear that my clientele would also change. Some of my early work brought in interest from

art buyers and publishing houses immediately, who were keen to license and buy images. When I moved into the fashion and advertising photographer route a few years later, I realised my target audience was very different, and my work would have to attract a new audience, so I started building a new portfolio over the course of two years and again, it took around that long to start to generate interest in my work online and offline.

f11: Do you think being a woman makes it easier, or more difficult, to break into the fashion field? What was your experience?

Lara: I still believe that the fashion industry is a male dominated industry, but I feel women are starting to become more noticed for their photographic style. I will admit I've found it a lot harder than some of my peers (who are male) to secure a certain type of job or editorial, because the fashion industry relies on close connections. However, on the other hand I've also had some amazing advertising jobs where the client has asked for a female photographer and I've been recommended by several different advertising agencies, so it works both ways!

f11: What was your first major assignment, and how did you feel?

Lara: I think the one I was most surprised about is when I shot a story on spec (shooting for submission) for LUSH Magazine and they accepted it. The shoot was one of my first fashion shoots with a very experienced and talented creative team, so I was quite nervous about the result and even more so when the magazine agreed to give me an 8-page editorial and front cover! This was the turning point for me to venture into editorial shooting and experiment with creativity and fashion together. ▶

▶ Anastasia. Shot in my home studio in Brooklyn, NY, USA. Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade



f11: Tell us about the move to New York in 2011, what was the primary motivation for this, proximity to clients, lifestyle...?

Lara: The motivation stemmed from a desire to want to try something new in life – and then everything else followed. I visited New York in 2010 for the first time and re-visited at least 3-4 times in one year. At the end of that year I left with the inspiration that moving there would be my goal the following year.

f11: I guess it's still early days but what's it like there, have you found your feet, is it a long term proposition? Are you living the dream?

Lara: I'd like to say it's long term but you never know what the future holds – I am definitely not one to stay in one place for too long! I have to constantly move forwards and experience new things in life to find inspiration in my work. I enjoy living in New York, but I am lucky because I have the opportunity to travel back to London for work, and to travel to various worldwide locations for my workshops.

f11: Was it easy to integrate into the creative community around you there, in terms of relationships with other photographers, designers, art directors, stylists, assistants etc?

Lara: Most definitely, I find that New York is a place full of keen artists and creative individuals who are very open to collaboration. When I first got to NYC it was almost like I had to start again building connections and I was worried it would take some time to get going. However, I found quite a lot of contacts online (make up artists, hair stylists and wardrobe stylists), and I'd simply phone or email them and about 90% of them were interested immediately in working with me on my idea. ▶

▶ *Lera. Shot on a rooftop in central London, UK. Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade*



f11: On the continuum between ‘absolute gear freak’ at one end, and a ‘one camera one lens’ approach where do you sit?

Lara: I definitely sit on the ‘one camera one lens’ fence here. I am more creative than I am technical, and I am proud of that because I don’t think it’s necessary to bombard your work with tons of equipment, you only have to look at photographers like Avedon or Annie Leibovitz – they create stunning imagery out of an idea and a very simple set up. On larger jobs such as advertising campaigns or large editorial shoots, I am often asked to work with more equipment for a certain ‘look’ so it’s good to know you are able to do this, but on personal work I am more than happy using one light and concentrating more on the styling and creative direction.

f11: In terms of the equipment you’re using at present, what are your main preferences? Are these long standing or have you switched at any point?

Lara: I currently use the Canon 5D MkII and Canon 24-70mm f/2.8, 85mm f/1.2 and 50mm f/1.4 lenses for both my location and studio work. I’ve always used Canon equipment because of the warmth of colors and the ease of use and I guess because I am so comfortable in my ways!

f11: How about lighting, tell us about your approach to this and describe your lighting style.

Lara: For lighting – I use natural light around 80% of the time, and in the studio I replicate soft light by the use of strobes diffused with softboxes or octoboxes or continuous light.

f11: What’s the one piece of camera or lighting equipment you currently lust after? Or is that really a ‘bloke’ question, do women lust after gear like we do?

Lara: That’s most likely a bloke question – and I love how you guys use language like we

Brits do! When I moved to NY I had to buy all of my lighting equipment again, so I have just purchased a Profoto D1 air kit and if I must give you something – I’m currently lusting after a large octobox and a beauty dish!

f11: In terms of post-production, do you do your own or have this done for you? What’s your approach to this, and what software do you use?

Lara: I am my own retoucher, and always have been. Around 90% of the time unless it’s an advertising job and the ad agency or client wants someone else to retouch the shots due to budget or preference. I find that my retouching is a huge part of my work, so I like to keep as much control over it as possible.

f11: Are you still travelling backwards and forwards across the Atlantic or is the majority of your work in the US now?

Lara: I’d say my work is split 50/50 between the US and UK so I do like to make myself available in the UK as much as possible to work with my photography agency and take meetings with the UK industry. It’s still a very important part of my business because of how creative the UK industry is in terms of setting editorial style.

f11: Thinking about other photographers, and not necessarily those working in your own area, whose work do you enjoy and from what perspective?

Lara: I love Sally Mann’s raw and intimate approach to her portraits, Ellen Von Unwerth’s daring but flattering approach to photographing women and Steven Meisel for pushing the boundaries with fashion photography. I am also inspired by moving image – Floria Sigismondi and Eugenio Recuenco are both inspirations, it’s something I’d love to venture into one day! ▶

▶ *‘Last Rose Of Summer’ for Papercut Magazine. Shot in London, UK. The blur technique was produced by focusing through foliage, flowers and clothing material. Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade*





▲ 'Elena'. Shot in Central Park, NY, USA. Often my set ups are on location in some of the most popular areas in cities because there's so many beautiful locations that are easy to access in London and New York.
Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade

◀ 'Joan Of Arc' featuring Danielle @ Re:Quest Models NY, USA. Shot in a simple home lighting studio in Brooklyn.
Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade

f11: You've been down here in the Pacific this year, doing some workshops with Sue Bryce, how was that experience for you?

Lara: It was my first time over that side of the world and I really, really enjoyed my time. Me, and the inspirational Sue Bryce, were teaching at the 'Inspire Me 2012' event with another photographer Amy Wenzel at a 3 day event over the course of 12 days! It was a great experience watching how both photographers approached the course while getting to know them personally. Sue is very charismatic and I left feeling very inspired by what she had to say about the industry, and the way she approaches her business techniques.

f11: Tell us about teaching and lecturing, why do you enjoy this? How many workshops do you do each year, and where?

Lara: I try to host workshop events around 4-5 times a year and most often these are in New York and London but I do try to venture as much as I can to worldwide locations! I enjoy teaching because it's my opportunity to share my experience with other photographers. I have found a lot of people are interested in how to make their mark as a photographer, especially within the fashion sector, but there's not a lot of information online or available as to how one would approach it – with this in mind, I try to teach people on my workshop how you would approach a fashion shoot from start to finish from the initial preparation to the final stages of editing and how you would go about marketing yourself, with reference to my own personal story.

f11: Describe your dream photo assignment – what, where, when, who, why? Go on, let your imagination go wild, think perfect place, perfect people, perfect day...

Lara: My dream would be shooting a model such as Natalia Vodianova or Lily Cole for Italian Vogue, in Iceland wearing Alexander McQueen. One can dream, right?

f11: Absolutely, we gave you permission! Is there life after photography, are you transitioning into anything else?

Lara: If I had the time I'd start to transition into a creative director role so that I'd be able to direct my own short movies or music videos. Hopefully this is on the cards at some point, but for now I am spending a lot of time working on my creative portfolio and climbing the fashion ladder!

f11: If Lara Jade had not become a photographer, what would she have done instead?

Lara: I had many ideas as to what I wanted to become when I was younger – a dancer, a marine biologist (not sure where I got that one from?), airline cabin crew, a teacher, a nurse... I think being a photographer suits my personality, I love being my own boss and being able to arrange my schedule as I please!

f11: Thanks Lara, it's been a real pleasure, please keep in touch?

Lara: You're welcome, Tim! It has been great talking to you about the industry. Can we do this more often? Yes, let's keep in touch!

TS

www.larajade.com

www.facebook.com/larajadephotography

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► '60's Story for Stylelist.com. Inspired by Hitchcock and 60's fashion, I tried to re-create the style with a modern mix of 'in season' outfits combined with vintage image processing.
Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade

►► Following page: 'Joan Of Arc' featuring Danielle @ Re:Quest Models NY. Shot in a simple home lighting studio in Brooklyn, NY, USA, and inspired by the rise and downfall of Joan Of Arc.
Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade





▲ *50's Story for online magazine ContentMode, This shoot was inspired by the life of a 50's housewife – glamorous and beautiful, but falling victim to the downfall of the era. We wanted to re-create a setting in which she would be seen, so we chose Wall St, NYC. Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade*

► *Following spread: 50's Story for ContentMode. Shot in the financial district of NYC, USA. Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade*





'Sima' Hide & Seek shoot in Queens, NY, USA. Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade



'Sima' Hide & Seek shoot in Queens, NY, USA. Canon 5D MkII and 85mm f1.2 lens. © Lara Jade



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*Top 11 will be judged by FUJIFILM and Tony Bridge and decisions will be final. No correspondence will be entered into.



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Tony BRIDGE

Clarity and megapixels

Tony Bridge is a man of many parts: this will cause him to grimace. He is at once a professional photographer, fine artist, philosopher, blogger, educator, commentator and sage. Quick-witted and mercurial, he also happens to be a valued member of the small team of writers here at *f11* Magazine.

Tony's images reflect the depth of his understanding and his travels, actual and metaphorical, as a photographic journeyman. His passion to create images, and express both emotion and thought process through these, is undaunted by the fact that he has done so professionally for a good number of years.

For those fortunate enough to count him as a friend, or engage him as a mentor, he is a mental jousting partner par excellence, constantly seeking to unhorse his opponent by way of conversational skill-at-arms. Widely-read, well-educated, always thought-provoking, sometimes controversial, usually a delight, and just occasionally a complete pain in the posterior. ►



Here at *f11*, we have been planning to show a portfolio of his work for some time. When I read this opinion piece, which he intended for the blogosphere, it seemed a highly complementary and most appropriate companion for his images. Luckily I was able to persuade him to unveil it here and release it into the ether later.

A glass of single malt would be an excellent accompaniment, encouraging further reflection, and would no doubt meet with his approval.

TS

On clarity and megapixels

– an opinion piece

by Tony Bridge

“No man has the right to dictate what other men should perceive, create or produce, but all should be encouraged to reveal themselves, their perceptions and emotions, and to build confidence in the creative spirit.”

— Ansel Adams

I have been thinking.

Not long ago, perhaps a few weeks, a friend rang me up to ask my advice on an image he was judging for a club competition. My friend was not sure what to make of it, and really wanted to run it by me for a second opinion. I can do that, I said. We talked about it and, since it was a C-Grade image, we both came to the conclusion that it probably warranted a merit at that level. I enjoyed the image; it was simple, authentic and had no ambiguity whatsoever. It knew what it was and it possessed a clarity of vision which was quite charming. I felt refreshed.

Not long after that I got into a conversation about the new Nikon D800, with its humongous 36 megapixel sensor, and I remember commenting that whoever bought one would almost certainly need a computer upgrade ▶



Kehua, Mokau Falls, Central North Island, New Zealand. Sony a900 with 70-400mm lens. © Tony Bridge

to handle the files. I passed the comments that they would also certainly need to give up handholding their shots, buy the best possible lenses Nikon sold, and invest in the most massive tripod they could afford. From now on, if they wanted to get the best from the Big Boy on the Block, they had better switch to using manual focus and make their remote release their very best friend. Anything less would not be doing justice to what the camera was capable of delivering.

You see, I am coming to the conclusion that the current generation of cameras are so good that, when the picture does not deliver, it really has nothing to do with the camera, and everything to do with the 6 inches (sorry, 150 mm) behind it. But then we always knew that.

Didn't we?

I'm not talking here so much about the content (although that is important), whether it is original, fresh or creative (that is important as well), or the composition (although content and composition are bedfellows). Rather I am talking about a concept which has been developing in my mind for some time, an idea which has taken root and is beginning to sprout branches.

I am talking about clarity.

I think we all know, instinctively or otherwise, those photographs which have clarity. We all recognise it, but I wonder how many of us can quantify or qualify it. A long time ago I remember seeing a photograph made by Wellington professional photographer, Nick Servian. It was a photograph which appeared to have been taken in one of those swamps which are packed full of alligators, leeches, mosquitoes and probably feral locals a la Deliverance. It was a serene photograph, glitteringly sharp, beautifully lit (the one contributes to the other) and at once simple but complex. I read the data for the photograph and realised I was using the same film, ▶



*Towards Mt. Aspiring, from Little Mount Ida, Central Otago, New Zealand. Sony a900 with 70-200mm f2.8 lens.
© Tony Bridge*

the same cameras and the same lenses. Hell, I even had the same tripod!

So why was it that he had produced a photograph which resonated – while mine, even though taken with the same cameras and film, had a... muddy, murky look to them?

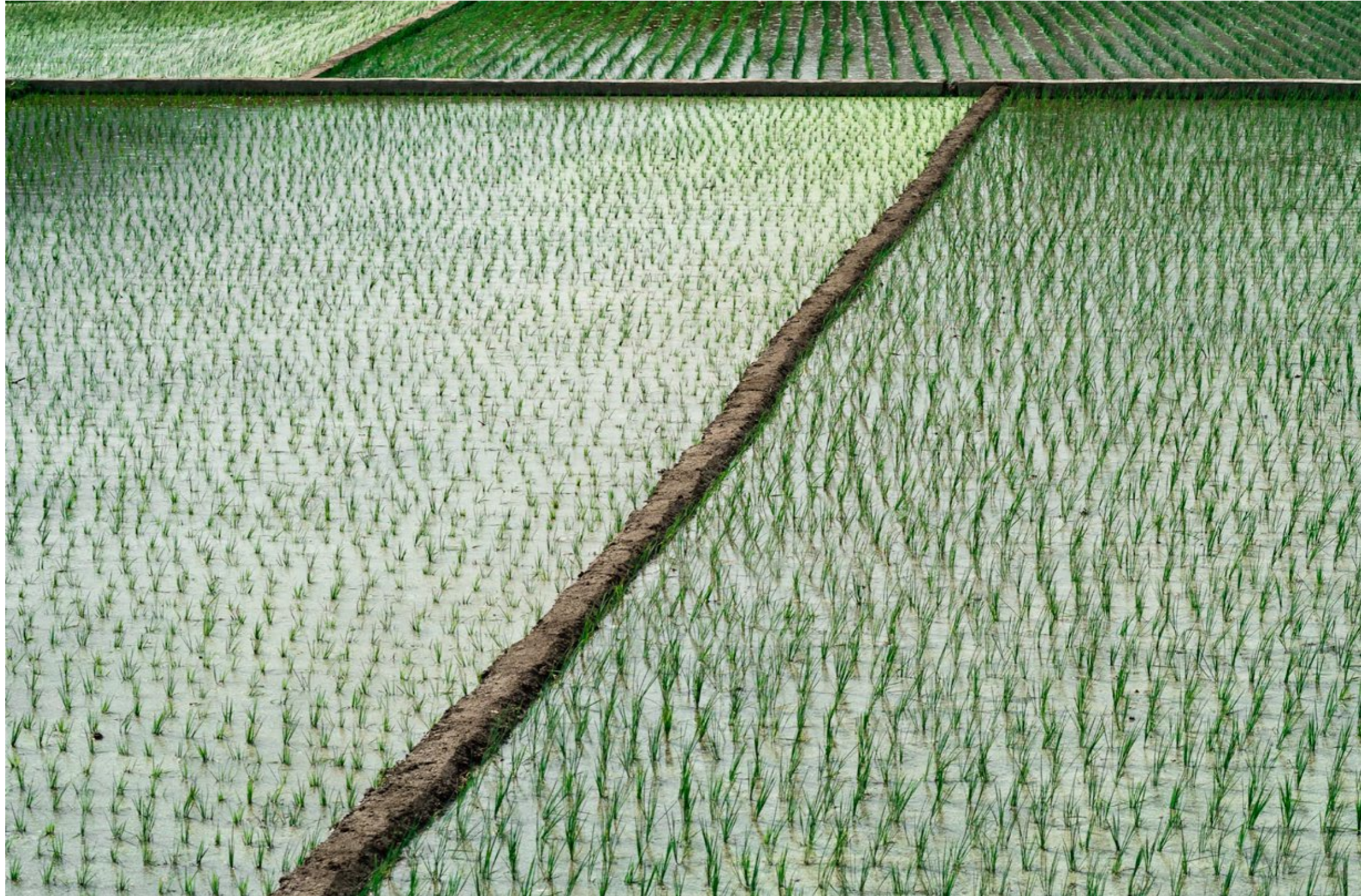
I had a lot to learn. I still do.

I wonder how many of us, if we are honest enough to get out of our own way and look at our photographs directly instead of through the distorting lens of hubris, can see that indefinable quality of clarity. And, if not, how do we go about getting clarity in our photographs?

It seems to me that clarity has very little to do with megapixels or uberoptics, or owning, and preferably using, a 12kg tripod. It has very little to do with owning CS6 and all the latest plug-ins although the software manufacturers would like you to think otherwise. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the cups, medals or awards proudly displayed on your mantelpiece, for who is to say that the people who gave them to you understood clarity themselves?

The interesting thing here is that you don't need 36 megapixels to get clarity. You only need that to be able to make bigger prints. What is the point in 36 megapixels if all you ever do is print up to A4? It is rather like shoehorning a big-block V8 into a compact car. Total overkill if all you ever do is go down to the corner store to buy a newspaper and a few groceries.

Another example. I visited a friend one night for dinner. On his wall was a genuine Ansel Adams print, made by the Great Man himself and signed. It was a simple image of backlit aspens, an 8 by 10. And it glowed. It resonated. It had such truth and honesty that its presence far outshone its size. Great photographs do that. It is worth studying Ansel. He put as much time into his philosophy as he did into ▶



Paddy Fields, Yunnan Province, China. Fujifilm X-Pro 1 with 60mm f2.0 lens. © Tony Bridge

his photography. His craft arose from his desire to express his beliefs, to make a difference and because of it, not because he needed to win awards or please someone. Two quotes make his beliefs clear:

“A great photograph is one that fully expresses what one feels, in the deepest sense, about what is being photographed.”

“It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment.”

So often it seems to me that we are working backwards to achieve clarity in our work, starting with our equipment, and a belief that equipment makes the difference, and then working backwards to our ideas. It should be the other way around.

Photographs do not start ‘out there’ and come towards us; they begin within us and move outwards. We are the stone falling into the pond, and our photographs are the ripples which spread outwards. If our photographs lack clarity; clarity of content, clarity of technique and clarity of expression, then perhaps it is because we lack clarity.

If we choose to listen to what others have to tell us and thus speak with their voice, then how can we expect any clarity in our own vision? Judges, tutors (I include myself) and people with firm opinions on what constitutes good photography can really mess up your own clarity. I have met photographers who could not touch a camera for years after they finished their course in professional photography, or their Fine Arts degree. When I questioned them, inevitably their vitriol involved their tutors and the feeling of having been driven in a direction which felt unnatural. They had lost clarity and a purity of vision, instead taking on what they had been taught was the ‘right’ way. ▶

*Trees and Stars, Wedderburn, Central Otago,
New Zealand. Sony a900 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens.
© Tony Bridge*



If you don't know who you are, what you believe, and what is true for you with your own photography, then how can you ever hope to achieve clarity of vision?

I am assuming here, of course, that clarity, photography which resonates, which speaks to many, which communicates clearly and honestly, is a goal we all want to aspire to.

Here are a series of questions we might ask ourselves about our own photography, about our own practice:

1. Why do I photograph? Is it to achieve recognition or is the camera a method of getting to know myself? Recognising that I am unique and special, how can I communicate that clearly to others? Clarity and clear are from the same word base...

2. Do I need medals and awards and letters? If so, then I had better 'get with the system', find out what works, and apply it. Whatever system we are within, be it a Photographic Society system or a professional association (they aren't that different), if we want the recognition, the awards and the status, we have to be prepared to live within the mores of that particular group. Any 'clarity' we achieve will be that of the group; will be the laws of the tribe. And, having made it to the top of the heap, what then? We might like the view so much we decide to stay up there. And go nowhere. There is only one direction we can take from the top of the mountain before we can climb the next one. Down.

3. Do I want my photographs to be singular, different and perhaps challenging? If the answer is yes, then I need to be prepared to be challenged, rejected and perhaps even ridiculed, to be a prophet without honour in my own village. I will need self-belief, the hide of a rhinoceros and a strong constitution indeed.

4. If I have worked out the answer to Photography and Me, then what do I need to

do, what do I need to learn, to be able to make that statement effectively? Are there gaps in my technique which need to be mastered? There always are. Are there gaps in my knowledge which need to be filled? There always are. Are there postproduction tools which would enable me to make my statement more clearly? Remember that, as photographers, we fall into one of two camps: those with something to say who need techniques to enable them to say it; and those with all the gear and techniques who are looking for something to say. You might ask yourself which of these two categories best describes you. The blunt truth is that we never stop learning. The day we decide we have all the knowledge we need is the day when we need to give up photography and take up golf, or bingo, or Turkish wrestling.

5. If I have found my place in the photographic world, then how can I develop that vision? How can I express what moves me with greater clarity of vision and purpose? Now that I know who I am and where I am, how can I advance that? What new learnings and understandings do I need to embrace? Note that there is no mention here of equipment or technology.

To summarise then, assuming that we seek clarity in our work, we need to line the ducks up in the right order. Clarity of vision begets clarity of approach, which in turn begets clarity of technique, which leads to clarity of expression.

But clarity of vision comes first.

And it has very little to do with megapixels. ■

TB

tony@f11magazine.com
www.thistonybridge.com
www.hurunuiproject.com

*Elemental 2, Central Otago, New Zealand.
Sony a900 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Tony Bridge*







◀ Previous spread: Papatuanuku Version 1, Central Otago. Canon 1DS Mk III with 70-200mm f2.8 lens.
© Tony Bridge

▲ Journey to the Centre, composite image - Lake Waikaremoana and the Vatican Museum.
Sony a900 with 70-200mm f2.8 lens/Sony NEX-5 with 18-55mm lens. © Tony Bridge



Dune 44, Sossusvlei, Namibia, Africa. Sony a900 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Tony Bridge



Field near Bontjieskraal, South Africa,. Canon 1Ds Mk III with 70-200mm f2.8 lens. © Tony Bridge



Field near Bontjieskraal, South Africa,. Canon 1Ds Mk III with 70-200mm f2.8 lens. © Tony Bridge

"I think we all know, instinctively or otherwise, those photographs which have clarity. We all recognise it, but I wonder how many of us can quantify or qualify it."



▲ Approaching storm, Canterbury, New Zealand. Canon 1DS Mk III with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Tony Bridge

▶ Hine-nui-te-po, Central Otago, New Zealand. Stitched image from Canon 1DS MK III with 70-200mm f2.8 lens.
© Tony Bridge

"I had a lot to learn. I still do."





White sands, Maniototo, Central Otago, New Zealand. Sony a900 with 16-35mm f2.8 lens. © Tony Bridge

"Photographs do not start 'out there' and come towards us; they begin within us and move outwards. We are the stone falling into the pond, and our photographs are the ripples which spread outwards."

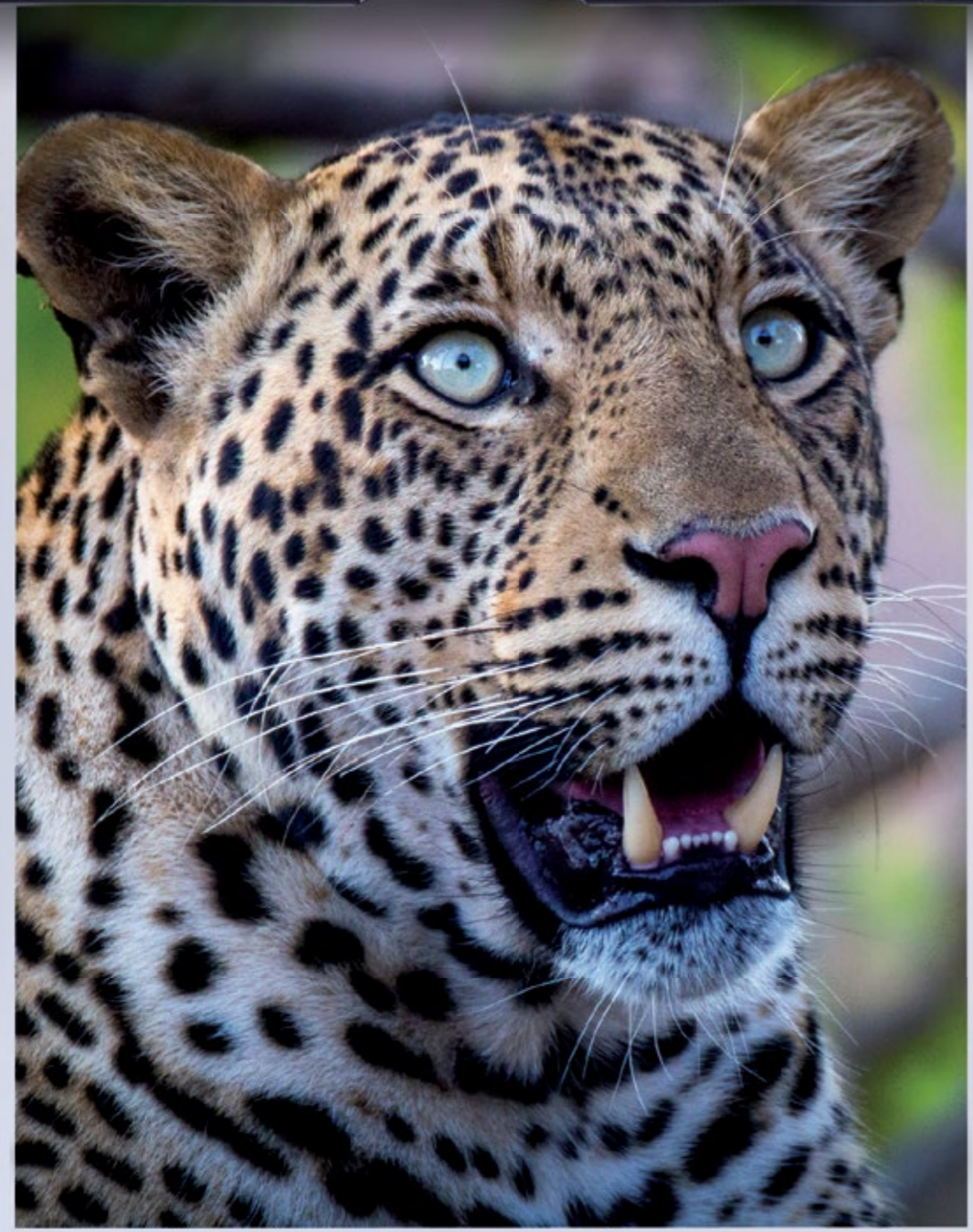


Windsong, Omakau, Central Otago. Canon 1DS Mk III with 100-400mm lens. © Tony Bridge



Fishers of men, Okuru, Westland, New Zealand. 2-picture stitch with Canon 1DS Mk II and TS-E 24mm f3.5 lens.
© Tony Bridge

*"If our photographs lack clarity; clarity of content, clarity of technique
and clarity of expression, then perhaps it is because we lack clarity."*



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*As of October 26, 2011.

Rodney DEKKER

Climatic events

Rodney Dekker is a Melbourne based Australian photographer and video producer predominantly covering environmental and social justice issues. His most significant project, carried out over the last six years, has been documenting the effects of climate change and its resulting hardship on livelihoods in Australia, Bangladesh, Tuvalu and Kiribati.

On many lengthy trips Dekker photographed the extended drought throughout the eastern states of Australia. He subsequently captured images and video after the shocking Black Saturday bushfires and recent floods in Queensland and Victoria. These are powerful images, dramatically illustrating the effects of long periods of drought on local communities.

Dekker was commissioned by Oxfam Australia to photograph and video the impacts of climate change on two South Pacific islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati.

He produced a five part multimedia series about the impacts of climate change on Tuvalu and Kiribati published Australian Geographic. Individual chapters were published by ABC News Online and Sydney Morning Herald.

Dekker's been a finalist of Reportage, UN Media Peace Awards, Australia's Top Photographers, Moran Photographic Prize, International Photography Awards, Px3, and received nominations for Prix Pictet and PDN's 30. He was also selected for the Eddie Adams Workshop USA.

His photos have appeared in many publications including The Toronto Star, The Jakarta Post, The Washington Times, ASIAN Geographic, Australian Geographic, The Age, Sydney Morning Herald, Crikey, New Matilda, The Big Issue, Outback, West Weekend, Australia's Wild Weather and Beyond Reasonable Drought.

A number of Dekker's photos are held in the National Library of Australia and in the state libraries of Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. He holds a Masters degree in Environmental Analysis and International Development, is represented by Obscura Photos and is a member of MAP Group.

Dekker is a founding member of The Story Collective which is working with community groups, NGO's, businesses, industry bodies and media outlets to draw attention to ▶



One of the towers of the Stony Creek Reservoir system, the reservoir supplies water to the city of Geelong. This photo was taken when water storage levels for the Geelong region was around 24% full. Victoria, Australia. Canon EOS 20D. © Rodney Dekker

important issues and bring them into the public consciousness.

2005 was a watershed year for Dekker, firmly establishing the place of photography in his life, and defining this as a communications tool critical to telling the stories he believed needed to be told well. This was the year that he 'caught the photography bug' shooting long exposure street photography at night after work and 'learning with a Nikon Coolpix in preparation for a DSLR...'

In that year, he would purchase a Canon 20D and spend a month shooting in the Philippines, confirming photography as his 'new working direction'.

Today, he summarises his work and his projects in this way:

'I photograph and produce stories that inspire change. The motivation for doing so is developed through my academic background in environmental science and international development coupled with a desire to document history.

I was completing my masters degree in Environmental Analysis and International Development when I was introduced to photography, this resulted in two passions being drawn together, art and the environment. I chose to focus on subjects that mattered to me and be dedicated to this end. In a short period of time I have managed to build a strong collection of images about climate change in Australia, Bangladesh and the South Pacific.

As a visual storyteller I provide a means of extending the anecdote or the issue to a wider audience. I'm interested in telling complete stories through long-term projects in the same way that Sebastiao Salgado does. I feel this provides a more interconnected picture of reality.

My passion for understanding the consequence of climate change is about people's way

of life being under threat, my work hopes to illuminate their struggle, to influence a collective consciousness.

Using video and audio in my multimedia stories adds so much to understanding a person; their mannerisms, humour, their struggle and approach to life are revealed to a greater extent.

Since 2006 I've documented what I believe to be one of the most important issues of our time, climate change. This ongoing project has taken me to the rural outback of Australia and remote villages in Bangladesh and the South Pacific. I've documented how livelihoods are being impacted and how people are responding."

He elaborates, 'In December 2006, I commenced drought and flood photography. At this point in time I considered myself an emerging professional photographer. I carried out 7 week long self funded assignments to Victoria, NSW, QLD and SA – all on spec from 2006 to 2008. This work has been published in: Outback, Australian Geographic, The Big Issue, The Age, Australian Red Cross, The Weekend Australian Magazine, The Weekend West, Capture, The Advertiser, The Weekly Times and Australian Traveller.

Most of my awards come from this collection. My peers chose to place me in the top ten of Australia's best photojournalists for two years running in Capture magazine.'

Some of the images we're showing here were taken on the Pacific island of Tuvalu. Dekker describes the plight of the islanders he photographed:

'Thirty percent of people in Tuvalu believe that God will save them from climate change. The appearance of a rainbow is a symbol of God's protection. These fragile coral atolls are only a few meters above sea level at their highest points so they are vulnerable to sea level rise. ▶



Ali Hossain and Fajilia have been living in this temporary house for one year, they are now finally having their house rebuilt. Podma village, Barguna District, Barisal Division, southern-central Bangladesh. Cyclone Sidr struck in November 2007. Save the Children estimate that around 10,000 people died. Canon EOS 1DS Mk II © Rodney Dekker



Tarawa, the capital Island of Kiribati, from above. Both Kiribati and Tuvalu consist of coral atolls which are only a few meters above sea level at their highest point, and hence they are vulnerable to sea level rise.
Canon EOS 5D Mk II. © Rodney Dekker



Teuga Patolo, standing in king tide waters that surround her next door neighbours house. Funafui, Tuvalu.
Canon EOS 5D Mk II. © Rodney Dekker

The Director of the Tuvalu Meteorological Service, Hilia Vavae, says residents see the impacts of sea level rise with “our own eyes, our own observations, we have never had this flooding as intense as this”. She says, “The signal of the sea level is actually rising”.

The impacts are far reaching. King tides have destroyed homes and people have relocated further inland. Salt from the sea is deposited into vegetable gardens killing staple crops. Coral bleaching has reduced fish stocks and fresh water is scarce. All these ‘symptoms’ can be traced to climate change.

Communities are adapting by building sea walls out of oil drums, growing food in raised beds and purchasing imported processed foods, bringing health problems such as diabetes. Governments are planting mangroves to stop the coastline from eroding away.

Reverend Tafue Lusama, a community and church leader says, “When we talk about the impacts of climate change, it’s important to remember that our people depend on land. If we have land, we have life. When our land is being gradually eroded [away] by the sea, we are literally seeing our life being eaten away. ▶

"My passion for understanding the consequence of climate change is about people's way of life being under threat, my work hopes to illuminate their struggle, to influence a collective consciousness."

We won't be able to give life to our children and grandchildren — that is how severe it is."

We posed a few questions to the seasoned campaigner:

f11: Welcome to f11 Rodney, thanks for being here.

RD: You're welcome, thanks for having me.

f11: As photography became important to you, where did you find influences and mentors? Can you name some of these?

RD: I'm inspired by James Nachtwey, where he says 'The strength of photography lies in its ability to evoke a sense of humanity'. When photographing climate change I try to document people in a way so the audience can relate to a person's struggle and I hope that this relationship carries forward to a change of perception or action by my audience. Nachtwey's approach when documenting people's hardship conducted with the utmost respect and gratitude opened my eyes to a process that I attempt to emulate. Also, Sebastiao Salgado for his epic photo essays and in depth storytelling.

In terms of mentors, unofficially Bill Bachman and former president of MAP Group Andrew Chapman have been instrumental in providing me with advice and guidance for which I am most appreciative.

f11: Are you shooting your video material with DSLR cameras or something more traditional? Why?

RD: I'm shooting with a DSLR. When at the Eddie Adams workshop in USA, Vincent Laforet was my team leader and he initially taught me how to shoot with a Canon 5D Mk II. I learnt the value of the camera's ability to deliver cinematic visuals at a fraction of the cost of traditional video cameras.

f11: Are you editing and producing the videos as well, or is that part of the process in other hands?

RD: I'm editing, scripting and producing videos mostly in association with the organisations commissioning the work.

f11: Are you a campaigner first and a photographer second, or the reverse?

RD: It really depends on what I'm shooting. I'm often commissioned by councils and NGOs to photograph events and portraits and so campaigning is not relevant. For projects where my visuals and ethics are aligned, I see my storytelling as a form of campaigning, my way to make a difference.

f11: Can you tell us a bit about the Eddie Adams workshop you attended?

RD: Multimedia storytelling was strongly emphasised which has had a profound impact on my direction.

f11: What are your plans for the future?

RD: I plan to continue my work about climate change in the Asia Pacific region over a sustained time period, I have just touched the surface. There are also exciting opportunities for me to work on quality video productions on many issues, new and established projects.

f11: These are serious images, addressing serious issues. Is there room and time in your life for photography of a more recreational nature?

RD: Well, yes. I enjoy taking photos and video of my son growing up with my iPhone. Does this count?

f11: Thanks for sharing these images with our readers, I'm sure we'll be seeing more of your work as time marches on.

RD: Thanks for the opportunity. ■

TS

www.rodneydekker.com
www.thestorycollective.com.au



© Rodney Dekker



"I was in Bangladesh to photograph its particular vulnerability to climate change. On November 15th, 2007, one of the strongest cyclones ever to hit the country slammed into the remote island of Dublar, killing thousands of fishermen out at sea. Cycle Sidr went on to destroy two out of every three buildings along Bangladesh's southern coastline, displacing millions of people. When I traveled to Dublar one year later, I found these fishermen praying for a benevolent sea. The captain of one small boat told me, "I've been fishing here for 22 years and these storms have never been as frequent as now. Nowadays we get storms in winter and not many in summer. I don't understand these things. see <http://www.nuruproject.org/products/rodney-dekker-01> Canon EOS 1DS MkII © Rodney Dekker



Fishing at Dublar Island, situated in remote southern Bangladesh. The island is nearly uninhabited for most of the year. Then, from mid-October to mid-February, thousands of fishermen and Hindu pilgrims arrive from all parts of Bangladesh. Thousands of fishermen died when Cyclone Sidr struck in November 2007 and Dublar Island was flattened. Save the Children estimate that around 10,000 people died. Canon EOS 1DS MkII © Rodney Dekker

"As a visual storyteller I provide a means of extending the anecdote or the issue to a wider audience. I'm interested in telling complete stories..."



*A young girl plays in Laanecoorie Reservoir near Bendigo, Australia. The reservoir had almost dried up totally, but a few days before I arrived it rained and covered the surface with water increasing its volume by 3%. There was a family there, kids playing in the cracked mud, dad looking for fish to catch, spending the day together Victoria, Australia.
Canon EOS 400D © Rodney Dekker*



*A farmer situated 20km north of Ouyen in north western Victoria ponders about his failed harvest, Victoria, Australia.
Canon EOS 20D © Rodney Dekker*



A dust storm rapidly approaches the town of Nevertire on the Mitchell Highway, Warren District, Central NSW, Australia. 24 February 2007. The last good rain received in this region was 7 inches in November 2000, the drought amplifies the amount of soil that is carried by the dust storm. The images were taken when dry conditions had persisted in south eastern Australian since October 1996, a total of eleven years. Canon EOS 20D © Rodney Dekker



Farmer Howard Flanner situated 20km north of Ouyen in north western Victoria inspects the soil on his land which is frost damaged and drought effected. Victoria, Australia. Canon EOS 400D © Rodney Dekker

"I photograph and produce stories that inspire change."



This reservoir has the capacity to hold 92430 Mega Litres, at the time this photo was taken it was holding 0 ML. The Grampians Wimmera Mallee water supply system extends from the Grampians Mountain Ranges in the Southern Wimmera to the north in Ouyen and Manangatang, the Mallee, Victoria, Australia. The volume of water held in reservoir storage for this region was just 4.8%. Canon EOS 400D © Rodney Dekker



Deep cracks, this is situated at Upper Coliban Reservoir near Castlemaine, Victoria, Australia. It was virtually empty at the time, it's capacity is 37,480 Mega Litres, it was holding just 50 ML at the time. The reservoir is part of Coliban Water authority, in mid January 2007 the overall reservoir capacity in this authority was 10% full. Canon EOS 400D © Rodney Dekker



On a grazing property near Hillston, NSW, Australia. The river hasn't flooded for years and no grass has grown for livestock to graze upon. About 850 hungry sheep flock towards a feeding trailer attached to a ute, the trailer holds three tonnes of grain. Canon EOS 20D © Rodney Dekker



Dirk, a Drover for most of his life, is "tying to fatten the cattle on the road" driving 640 cattle from Warren in NSW to Roma in Queensland, Australia. The cattle are from Dubbo, Wagga Wagga and Albury brought to him by road train. While on the road, water availability is his biggest problem, he remarks: "I've just got to take it as it comes, in this game you can't plan things, you don't know what is going to happen tomorrow, I suppose that's droving hey". Canon EOS 20D © Rodney Dekker

***"I see my storytelling as a form of campaigning,
my way to make a difference."***



During World War II American soldiers dug out pulaka plantions (once a staple food) to build the airfield on Funafuti, the capital island of Tuvalu. These created these "borrow pits" that are now full of rubbish and they are flooded at high tide. Canon EOS 5D MkII. © Rodney Dekker



Funafala, Tuvalu. "According to my grandfather, the distance between the ends of the two islands [pictured here] was so close that if you threw a stone across, it would land on the other island," says Eliakimo, who lives in a small nearby village. "Every year, I have been witnessing an increasing in the rate of erosion," he says. "I am really concerned about the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. The mangrove plantation, started in 2007, [is] part of a joint project between Tuvalu and Japan. The purpose [is] to reduce the risk of coastal erosion. This a protection measure for our shorelines. My message for world leaders now is to ask and to plead with them to cut their emission rates to a level where we can be assured that we can be saved in our small island countries." Canon EOS 5D MkII. © Rodney Dekker



Ekewi Nabubura (42) brings water to her vegetables. Tarawa, Kiribati. She and her husband have expanded their garden and have increased their income by selling produce to schools. However, access to water is a problem throughout Kiribati. "There's never enough water," says Tearei Maerere, a school teacher living in Bikenikora village. Tearei explains how her village relied on a local well to water their gardens. With salt water intrusion it was no longer useable. They have asked the government for more water but it is yet to come according to Tearei. "This is Kiribati. This is how we live... When you stay still you cannot survive. We have to use our hands, our minds, our strength, our energy... You have to be strong... But we still need some help," says Tearei. Canon EOS 5D MkII. © Rodney Dekker



Raita Kabiriera stands on the site of her family's old kitchen. Abaiang Island, Kiribati. She was forced to leave here in 2009. "We had lots of food growing on this land; this was my mother's land. We lost it all because of the sea water so we moved," says Raita. "There is no place to plant our food [now]." Canon EOS 5D MkII. © Rodney Dekker

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► *Chameleons are one of the few 'scary animals' for the local people. They will not touch them. This flap-necked chameleon was a great find. Canon 5D, Aperture Priority, with 100mm lens, at f9.5 1/180 sec with TTL fill-flash, 200 ISO. © Darran Leal*

On location

Kruger National Park – South Africa

I decided to target one small location for this feature because of its unique nature. South Africa was heading for a nature disaster decades ago, when over hunting and loss of habitat became a major issue. Fortunately, a few strong willed individuals coerced the government of the day into understanding the importance of bio-diversity, and the commercial benefits which a 'nature rich' location could offer for tourism and the status of a nation. Thus, Kruger National Park was born.

What I love about Kruger is its range of 'big' and 'small' game. Kruger's landscape is unlike the expansive plains of Tanzania and Kenya, or the desert like environs of Namibia, rather it is tree covered, with dissecting creeks and rivers.

You might have noticed I mentioned 'small' game as well. I think this is an important component of any visit to Africa's game parks. You can expect the big game, and Kruger offers all the BIG 5, but how good is the small game? From Klipspringer, to colourful birds, can the region you are visiting offer more diverse shooting options? This is really what stands out for me every time I visit Kruger.

Sometimes, an experience is worth more than a photo...

One of my standout experiences was on my first visit to Kruger, when lions decided to use our vehicle as a hide, in order to catch antelope. Five vehicles were lined up to see what was, at first, thought to be one lion. Soon, there were two and then three, all walking within arms length of the vehicles and on the opposite side to a small herd of antelope.

Of course we were using long telephoto lenses, these offering fleeting head shot chances, if we were lucky. After the action, three lion cubs came out. What a magic experience!

Few photos were captured, but that famous saying, 'You will always come back to Africa' has stayed with me from that day on.

Kruger, especially the southern section, is famous for another big cat – the leopard. These unique creatures are the super stealthy predators of the night. I have seen many leopard in Kruger, with most sleeping up in the trees and often near rivers for cooler temperatures. All cats dislike heat and will find any cool location once the sun is up and heating the ground. Hence, the best shoot periods for big cats are in the early morning light, or in the last two hours of daylight. If you are not out shooting at these key periods, you are unlikely to maximise your chances. ►



We have had many elephants charge us over the years, including on guided walks. The one key point is our use of experienced and professional local guides. These people make all the difference to your photo adventures, and to your personal safety.

One small creature to target is the playful Vervet Monkey. They are found around most camps, with a multi-purpose zoom lens the best tool. Chameleons are hard to find, but a worthwhile addition to the Kruger story. Generally, a macro lens will be less useful in this park, so you can use your everyday zoom lens for these subjects, particularly if yours offers some degree of macro functionality.

Without a doubt the essential lens you must take is a long telephoto. With an APS sensor camera, at least an effective 400mm is required. Not only can some of the animals be quite a distance away from you, but the telephoto can help to target smaller species like birds. Due to the trees and grasses, the limited depth of field will also help to isolate your main subject.

On one occasion, our guide spotted a leopard lying on the branch of a tree – its kill hanging on the other side of a precarious branch. I borrowed a fellow traveller's Canon 500mm f4 lens and 1.4X converter. Hand held, the combination of this lens and my camera's 1.6X APS-C sensor size, allowed me to shoot a unique image. It is still one of my favourite leopard images to this day.

Another reason to have a long lens is safety. Cape Buffalo and Hippo kill more people than any other creature in Africa. A long lens will help you to shoot at a distance that will not intimidate these unpredictable animals.

To my mind, the ultimate African safari long lenses are the Nikon 200-400mm f4 and 500mm f4, and Canon's 500mm f4 and their soon to be released 200-400mm f4 with built in 1.4X converter. For those on a tighter

budget, Sigma offer some great alternatives – 120-400mm f4.5/5.6, the 150-500mm f4.5/6.3 and the amazing 50-500mm version. All will perform well and get you into the action. I will talk more about tele-converters in an upcoming feature.

Now here is a long time argument – prime lens or zoom?

I am a fan of zooms. With over 30 photo tours to Africa, I have used Nikon, Canon and Sony versions and the one stand out reason for a zoom is that it offers more creative options. On safari, you are often in a vehicle with limited scope to move exactly where you would like to be positioned. Hence the need for a good zoom lens. The charging elephant is a classic example. If I had my 500mm fixed lens ready, I would have just shot part of its head. Instead, the 100-400mm Canon, at 100mm was perfect.

Kruger is an exciting location for about a week of shooting. It is great as an add-on to other African adventures and I would suggest this as a good starting point for your first 'big game' experience.

Enjoy your photography... ■

Darran Leal

darran@f11magazine.com
www.worldadventures.com

► *Water Buffalo require respect and a safe shooting distance. A long telephoto lens will offer the best results. I converted this shot to black and white in Adobe Lightroom. Canon 5D, Aperture Priority, with 100-400mm zoom lens @ 400mm, at f5.6 1/180 sec, 200 ISO. © Darran Leal*

FOUR lucky subscribers will each WIN the Darran Leal Ultimate Photo Kit, kindly supplied by Darran and the team at World Photo Adventures. SEE PAGE 111 for prize and entry details. Thanks Darran!



▲ *Lions get everyone excited. They can be hard to spot as they blend so well into the grasses. Walking around Kruger is only for the experienced! Canon 5D, Aperture Priority, with 100-400mm lens @ 275mm, at f5.6 1/500 sec, 200 ISO.*

© Darran Leal





Art photographer recognises value of PSNZ

She's won so many awards on both sides of the Tasman it's hard to keep track of them.

Jackie Ranken FNZIPP, MAIPP is an award winning professional photographer, author, lecturer, judge and teacher. She is also one of 10 Canon EOS Masters.

Above all the accolades and success, Jackie is a member of the Photographic Society of New Zealand (PSNZ) and believes belonging to an organisation such as PSNZ affords members multiple benefits.

"PSNZ offers members excellent opportunities for people to network together which allows one to build and develop all aspects of their photography. It also allows us to view other people's work," said Jackie.

Hailing from Australia where she commenced her photographic career, Jackie is a Master of the Australian Institute of Professional Photography (AIPP) and a Master and Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Professional Photography (NZIPP). She boasts 30 years experience as a professional photographer.

In both countries Jackie uses her photography skills and engaging personality to network and establish relationships with fellow photographers. She constantly enters her work in competitions, successfully exhibiting since 1988 and is a sought after presenter at conventions.

Earlier this year Jackie was a keynote presenter at PSNZ's National Convention held in Invercargill. Not only did she share her photographic journey with delegates, she was

able to demonstrate her particular style and techniques used to create specific images, which she hoped would help to inspire and move fellow photographers beyond their current level.

Jackie says she hopes that by sharing her knowledge it will help change the way other photographers approach, feel, think and work within their own photographic world.

"I try to give people a glimpse into my personal photographic world, and how I creatively approach making a photograph so that they too can expand their vision and grow their photography to another level.

"If I can make even the smallest contribution to someone's photographic aspirations through these activities, then I feel I'm making a difference to the wider photographic community," says Jackie.

Every year Jackie and her award-winning photographer partner Mike Langford take two months out to pursue personal projects which invariably involves travel. These projects usually have a commercial spin-off, including books, magazines and teaching in special areas, especially at their Queenstown Centre for Creative Photography.

For more information on PSNZ go here or learn more about Jackie Ranken here.

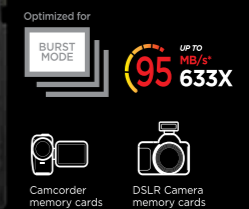
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Fake jeans will do...

At seven, my grandson likes his 'fake jeans' for school. These look like real jeans – same cut, same colour - but they're for winter and made of a soft, stretchy polypropylene fabric rather than denim.

Which really leads me to what intrigues me at the moment; software that 'does' what devices normally 'do'.

I recently went to an Adobe Roadshow – where presenters were waxing lyrical about some of the new CS6 features. Several components of the roadshow were nearly adequate demonstrations of software that 'sort of' replaced other tools that cost a lot, and for many will sort of do the job.

First, you no longer need to own or rent a Steadicam for that oh-so-fluid movement in video capture. In PremierePro, just run over the bumpy footage with the Warp Stabilizer application and it becomes as smooth as butter.

Another feature, this time in Photoshop, supplants the need to buy tilt/shift lenses. Instead, get the 'toy-town' look by applying another action, with infinite ways of customising where the soft focus bands fall in your picture.

It does the job that is currently very in vogue pictorially – but in reality, without enabling planes of focus to be controlled, or lens off-sets accommodated.

The day I went to the roadshow I guesstimated at 200 attendees... mostly designers with strong web based activity, and the balance being photographers and videographers.

My experience of earlier roadshows is that some sections resulted in narrow, eyes glazing over jargon but instead these sessions were an almost universal elixir. For once, there were simple universal solutions to designing web pages, editing video, making page layouts, treating photos.

All using new tools, recognising media for creation tools, and allowing distribution media from smartphones to tablets to broadcast TV.

Adobe showed how anyone can do anything with a common family of applications that continue to talk to each other over different platforms. As much as this is enabling, it also has the potential to undermine, as designer/photographer/director 'like' results are easily created and applied in such a way as to create a delusion of technical adequacy.

Ultimately, however, the end result is a blancmange of sweetness without any rigor of intellect and the delusion simply does not survive a second look, much less rigorous interrogation.

As much as this appears rewarding, timesaving, or seemingly offers breakthrough performance; at the same time it introduces elements of trickery and creates a false impression of professional competence – in lieu of real reputation.

Like fake jeans, it may be comfortable and adequate and appear to meet universal needs.

Another sensitive issue for me, in the same realm of someone 'passing off' as professionally competent, concerns photo competitions which have photo-journalism categories with no requirement for the submitted image to actually be a genuine capture taken on assignment. Instead, this can merely have been 'created' in the style of photo-journalism.

I see it as a huge insult to those whose career/life purpose/passion has taken them to terrifying places, and exposed them to personal risk in the honest pursuit of images that expose, empower, or influence.

When other images are rewarded for being 'photo-journalistic-like', we must ask, when were style, substance and meaning replaced by the glibly created impression of style, substance and meaning?

Unregulated photo-journalistic categories are laughable, or should I say, that they would be laughable, were they not so seriously at odds with professional standards of journalism of integrity and gravitas. Professional and amateur photographic associations take note.

MS

malcolm@f11magazine.com

**BUT WAIT –
THERE'S MORE...**

f11

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There are links highlighted grey within articles which may provide further explanation or take you to a photographer's website.

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Finally, there are email links to many of our contributors so you can engage with us.

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Enjoy.



© The 2011 ACMP Student Photographer of the Year is the Fashion category winner Gerwyn Davies, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University.

ACMP Student Photographer of The Year Awards 2012 returns with a prize pool valued in excess of AU\$9000.

ACMP SPY Awards returns in 2012 after an amazing inaugural year. The ACMP SPY Awards provide emerging photographers with the opportunity to gain career-building exposure within the photographic industry and wider creative community.

If you are currently enrolled as a full time or part time student of photography you are eligible to enter – entrants may be asked to show proof of enrolment. Even the colleges for Tertiary Institution of the Year, as colleges can enter with a body of student work!

Images must have been captured between 1st January 2011 and 9 November 2012 when the entrant was enrolled as a student in a course of at least 15 weeks duration.

Each student can enter up to 3 categories at \$30 per category. The categories are:

1. Portraiture (includes formal and editorial portraiture)
2. Commercial (sport, travel, corporate & industrial)
3. Fashion (includes editorial, catalogue and beauty)
4. Advertising (still-life, food, cars, product and people)
5. Documentary (includes sport)
6. Architecture (built environment, urban, rural spaces)



The ACMP student photographer of the year receives AU\$3000 in prizes: AU\$1500 worth of printing from the Edge Photoimaging, Manfrotto Tripod valued at AU\$1500, ACMP Manfrotto bag and certificate.

Five other category winners – each valued at AU\$1000 – Sponsors: Sally Brownbill, CPL Digital, Crumpler, Memento Pro, Nikon, Pixel Perfect, Protog. Best 4 images in one category: Complete set of ACMP Collection Books 1-10 – value AU\$440, AU\$500 worth of sponsor’s product, ACMP Manfrotto bag and certificate.

ACMP Tertiary Institution of the year receives AU\$1000 in prizes – Sponsor: Sun Studios. Best 5 student entries (20 images) from a Tertiary Institution: AU\$500 voucher to spend at Sun Studios, complete set of ACMP Collection Books 1-10 – value AU\$440, and certificate.

Call for entries: Monday 3 September 2012

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Announcement of winners: Monday 26 November 2012

Check out last year’s winners here.

For more information click here.

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After-capture magic

Many of the more visible technological evolutions we see in digital capture technologies are being embraced and put to work by millions of independent filmmakers worldwide.

With no end to technical development in sight, and so much to choose from, it's easy to solely focus on capture technologies and overlook the blazing rate at which innovation also takes place in the software tools which enables us to do things with the images we capture.

This month, we look at a few very useful tools by UK software developer 'The Foundry'. Many of their most important tools rely on advanced algorithms such as motion estimation to help us solve complex technical issues. Let's take a look at some interesting plugins from the Foundry's "Furnace" set of tools.

F_MatchGrade

With natural light filming, it is inevitable that disparities will creep into your footage. It is of course possible to manually compensate for these changes in the color grading tool of your choice. However, on long form projects, this seemingly trivial task can quickly become daunting. Many independent or small productions will often be out of time or budget to allocate resources to achieve color uniformity from scenes to scenes and shot to shot. But without proper color correction, the risk is to end up with a film with jarring tonal changes. This is certain to distract viewers away from the narrative in your story. With F_Matchgrade, the process of matching a

number of clips to a reference is automated and produces impressive results.

F_DeFlicker

Not everyone has access to professional lighting equipment and at times, what is used on set will create issues in the filmed material. Artifacts may be caused by localized flickering, poorly synchronized lighting rigs, or phase difference in the flickering of multiple on-set lights. All of these issues can be impossible to fix manually. With F_DeFlicker, powered by a solid implementation of the motion estimation algorithm, these issues can be solved very effectively and quickly.

F_Align

Arguably one of the most powerful plug-ins in Furnace, F_Align can be used for stabilisation and match moving. In its most basic form, it attempts to line up two images without having to select tracking points. Imagine filming several clips, handheld, before needing to composite them together. Inevitably, the general camera motion of one clip will not match that of the others. F_Align will essentially remap the handheld camera motion of a chosen clip so that the others inherit it. One can think of F_Align as a virtual motion control rig without the massive investment it commands.

While The Foundry's software products are numerous and may be overkill for many independent film makers, it is really worth checking out the rest of the impressive and incredibly useful Furnace suite – which runs on all popular computing platforms – as well as the powerful Nuke compositing software which is available as a trial version. ■

Karim Sahai

karim@f11magazine.com
www.karimsahai.com
blog.karimsahai.com

Karim Sahai is a photographer and feature films computer visual effects artist based in Wellington.



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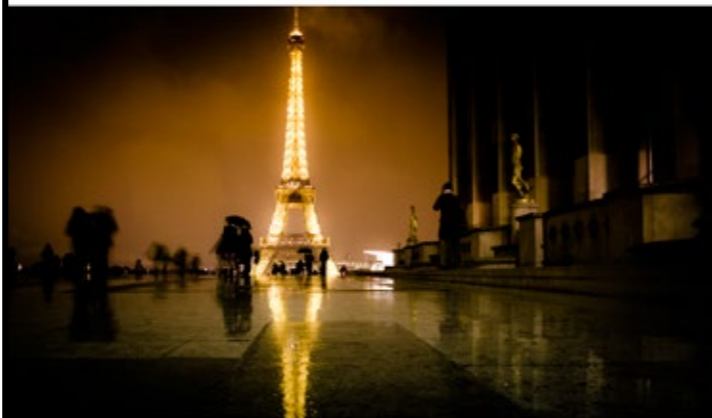
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The business of photography

Assignment templates – Plan better, earn more!

You must consider your photography career from the business aspect as much as the photography. I began this series encouraging you to keep your passion alive by embracing the life of a passionate amateur. If you do choose to make a living from photography, I've covered how to price, how to differentiate and more. Make sure you check out the previous columns once you've enjoyed this one, if you're serious about a long career as a photographer.

My last article dealt with the documentation you need to present to your clients before and after an assignment. Don't forget that you might need documentation during the assignment too, like model releases and even property releases. They very much depend on details like your location and the uses that your images will be put to, so you really need to seek advice from your national professional photographer's association.

This article covers something that most pro photographers overlook at their peril. Your own confidential, internal documentation to help you estimate work, prepare for it and deliver it.

A client will often call or email you about an assignment. They'll throw very general ideas at you and ask you for a price on the spot.

Unless you've worked with this client many times before, know them well and trust them, never – repeat NEVER quote a price off the cuff. Every time I've done this, I've always ended up in trouble.

One of my friends, expert commercial photographer and Hasselblad ambassador Nick Tresidder taught me this. Always have a line ready that you're comfortable with, along the lines of:

"I'd be happy to work up an estimate for you when I get back to my office in half an hour."

"I'm away from my computer right now. I want to give this the consideration it deserves, so let me get back to you within the hour."

When they say "But can you tell me how much it'll be?" you can say,

"I'm going to have a quick chat with my producer," or "I'm just working on an estimate for another client right now, I know how important it is to you and want to give it my full attention," or a variation on that theme.

Even if you're sitting in a quiet office staring at a blank letterhead on screen, do not pull a rough estimate out of thin air until you've had a chance to work it through in detail without being hurried. ▶

The second thing I'd suggest is to draw up your own briefing sheet so you know exactly what to ask a prospective client, and what information you'll need to give an accurate estimate.

I've already covered how to work out your cost of doing business, so you know how much you need to charge. As I've mentioned before, upselling is a crucial part of selling, so alongside the standard information you need, have a think about all the services that will add value for your client and at the same time, add to your income from the assignment.

Here are some things on my estimate form:

1. Overall budget for the project
2. Shoot date or shoot window
3. Shoot deadline
4. Subject matter
5. Source of subjects (models/ food/ items)
6. Intended use of images
7. Number of images required
8. Intended use of images
9. File sizes required
10. Delivery deadline
11. Licensing terms
(a key negotiable aspect of the estimate)
12. Fallback date(s)
13. Budget for photography and budget for extras (models, talent, venue, specialised equipment, specialised post-processing)
14. Releases required
15. Time of day requirements
16. Catering
17. Transport (both requirement of, and if applicable charge-out cost of)
18. Requirement of rushes (unprocessed or lightly processed samples from your shoot delivered quickly)
19. Assistant(s) or second shooter(s)
20. Insurance covers (will any extra be required, perhaps for vehicles or high value items).

Don't forget to include assignment extension charges so you're ready when on the day of the shoot you client says... "While it's all set up, can you just shoot this too?"

Make sure to include some elements that are optional offers to your client. They may say 'no' to some, but I guarantee they'll not have thought about some elements that may earn you a little more from the assignment.

It's no different to upsizing your fries, ticking an extra option on your new car and buying a chocolate bar at the checkout.

There are many more items you'll want in your own estimate briefing document. Be guided by past mistakes you've made when you missed something, the requirements of your particular niche and the type of shoot you're planning.

There are two main benefits of this process; the first is that you discuss your client's budget up front. It's a valuable opportunity to ensure that you're not wasting each other's time.

If a client calls me with a \$100,000 budget, I'm probably not the photographer for them.

Similarly, if they call me with a \$300 budget I also know I'm not the photographer for them. You don't need to guess which is more likely to happen in your career.

The second major benefit is to leave your client with the impression that you are considerably more professional and thorough than anyone else they'll talk to, differentiating yourself from your competition.

Feel free to fire me any suggestions you might have via Facebook, as the feedback would be valuable.

You may consider that I have missed more than a few elements which might constitute major or minor variables which you include in your own estimate planning.

I'll include them next time along with tips on releases, shooting in public and dealing with security. ■

James Madelin

Want to send me some feedback?
Find me on Twitter @jamesmadelin or
www.facebook.com/jamesmadelin

Links:

Nick Tressider:
@NickT_ on Twitter
www.nick-t.com

Assignment estimate form from the awesome ASMP:
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If you care about taking your images to the next level, seeing the latest new stuff and meeting inspiring photographers then Christchurch, New Zealand, is the place to be in September. The week of the 20-25th sees an astonishing array of professional photography related goodness descending on The Chateau on the Park.

The first three days (Thursday 20th – Saturday 22nd) are taken up with the Epson / NZIPP Professional Photographer Iris Awards. These awards celebrate the creative excellence of professional photographers in New Zealand. Entry is open to all professional photographers and judging takes place in an open forum over the three days. You can find details of how to enter the awards on the NZIPP website here. Even if you haven't entered you are invited to attend the judging and listen in as the judges discuss debate and award some of the very best of professional photography from the past year. Attending the judging is absolutely free.

As well as being the final day of image judging, Saturday the 22nd is also the public open day for the Industry Exhibition. Take the opportunity to meet the leading suppliers and check out the latest products all in one place. Entry to the exhibition is also completely free.

Then comes the Infocus Conference; Sunday 23rd and Monday 24th of September are dedicated to an intensive two days of learning and professional development aimed purely at professional photographers. The range of speakers and topics is huge.

Marcus Bell, one of Australasia's most respected and awarded wedding photographers will be talking about how he captures the emotive, storytelling images he is famous for. Peter Coulson, an award winning, internationally published photographer specialising in provocative fashion, beauty and advertising images will be pushing some buttons as he



talks about his work and his technique. In a completely different style, New Zealander Esther Bunning is a rule breaker too and she'll be talking about creating a fresh approach to traditional portrait photography. Peter Eastway is an AIPP Grand Master of Photography but at Infocus 2012 he'll be talking about the business of professional photography with an emphasis on planning for success.

If you've seen Gordon Ramsey on Kitchen Nightmares you'll have an idea of what Steve Saporito is all about; he is professional photography's version of Gordon Ramsey and he'll be talking about the seven reasons studios are unsuccessful and what to do about it. Conference registration for Monday includes the opportunity to attend two of three workshops; Steve Saporito on 'Setting Up For Success', Amber and Isaac de Reus on 'Creating and Using Light Effectively on a Wedding Day' and UCOL tutor Melissa Edmon on 'Fusion - creative and commercial possibilities'. Monday also sees the world premiere of 'Virtually Famous' Auckland photographer Ollie Dale's documentary film on social media.

The Epson / NZIPP Professional Photographer Iris Awards and Infocus 2012 represent a fabulous opportunity to learn and develop as a photographer...and there are some pretty outstanding social events too. You can find out more and register for the Infocus part here.

See you in Christchurch!

Full information including the speaker lineup, and detail about entering the awards is available now at www.nzipp.org.nz.

INFOCUS 2012

CHRISTCHURCH



TOP LEFT, ABOVE LEFT Images by Peter Eastway © TOP RIGHT, ABOVE, ABOVE RIGHT Images by Marcus Bell ©

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20-22 SEPTEMBER

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Entry is open to all professional photographers, with judging held in an open forum over three days.

Public Open Day

22 SEPTEMBER

Judging for the Iris Awards is held in an open forum, to educate, inspire and inform. Award winning photographs from the previous two days judging will be on display.

An Industry Exhibition, with leading photographic suppliers all in the one room, it is the perfect opportunity to see new products and services.

This is a unique opportunity, to view judging, award winning images and an industry exhibition all under the one roof.

Infocus Conference

23-24 SEPTEMBER

The premier professional photography conference, which includes two days of international and local speakers, industry exhibition, practical workshops, Iris Awards gallery, social functions, Masterclass and Gala Awards dinner.

INFOCUS 2012 VENUE

The Chateau on the Park
189 Deans Avenue
Riccarton, Christchurch

How much is too much?

Making sure you're adequately rewarded for your valuable time.

Like it or not, we are operating in an era where the client is calling more of the shots, more often than I've ever seen in my twenty-plus years in the industry. If I had a dollar for every prospective client that has asked for the moon for the price of a cricket ball recently...

"The budget is tight", "There is no budget", "There will be a budget next time"... I won't bore you with the details, but if a job doesn't fit my minimum criteria I walk – every time. Like many photographers, I don't work a solid five days a week these days (actually, did we ever?) But the days I do work are worth it and the days I don't I have plenty of "me" things to do.

I'm constantly hearing from these prospective clients that other photographers are "throwing in" valuable chargeable services just to secure jobs. While your time behind the camera is usually the major component of the shoot, it's the add-ons that can make the difference between a profitable business and an unprofitable one. There are times when I'm tempted to be over-generous too, but luckily I have a support network of colleagues I can call on if I think I might fall off the wagon.

OK, so now to the point – How much is too much when it comes to the "grey" area in terms of what you deliver to your client. Do you simply convert the RAW files and hand them over (of course you'd never hand a raw over would you?) or do you agonise over the crop, the colour balance, apply a treatment, do variations etc?

Of course there is a level of work required to deliver a professional result but that needs to be automated and embedded into your workflow in order to make it a simple matter to quickly process and "polish" a job before proofing it to the client. We are in danger of being trapped in a spiral of over-delivering to a point where we are unconsciously consuming time that should be spent on marketing, personal development and paid shooting.

I'm going to hark back to the "good old days" of film for a moment now. In the 80's we kept a fridge full of film, reps from both the majors would dutifully call in each month to keep it topped up and we charged a fixed price for a roll of film that included the cost of the film, the processing and a healthy margin – this was quite separate from the cost of our time.



Let's take a moment to absorb that...

Following a shoot there was nothing to do but drop the film off at the lab and hit your favourite cafe for an hour or so while the film goes through the soup. Then clip the trannies, mount them up and send them off – job done! There was a profit margin on everything – contracted out work, couriers, packaging and presentation materials etc, nothing came into the studio and went out again without a mark-up. Running a profitable business simply required the photographic and marketing skills to ensure enough work was coming in to cover the overheads and provide a healthy surplus. The funny thing is, we had more down-time too.

So how did we end up where we are now? Somehow in the transition to digital as an industry we have unconsciously shortchanged ourselves. At a time when major equipment makes itself redundant every few years and high-powered computers, masses of storage and up to date professional imaging software are all pre-requisites, we have less and less that we are able to charge for and then we go and give away our greatest asset – our precious time – too cheaply.

We are now our clients pre-press department, whether we like it or not, and failing to recognise and charge for the value we add here is culpable.

I believe going forward the only way to control the situation, assuming we can't reverse it, is to be confident in our ability and firm with our clients. We need to educate them and make sure they appreciate the value we are giving them in terms of professionalism, reliability and top quality work. Armed with this newfound knowledge, hopefully they will not expect you to go the extra mile as "part of the job".

When 'more' is needed I charge reasonably for it. If it's outside of my ability, I pass it on to my favourite retoucher who takes my best work and makes it even better!

Stay strong out there.

GB
(aka Buzzard)

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– Khalil Gibran



NIKON PRIZE WINNERS!

The lucky winner of the Nikon P7100 camera kit we offered as a reader subscription prize over our last two issues is Andrea Key of Wellington, New Zealand. Congratulations, Andrea, your new camera will be on it's way shortly!

In another promotion, we also offered some Nikon gear in the form of a Nikon branded cap and jacket. Our lucky winner here, is Ken Cooke of Queensland, Australia – doubtless you'll be strutting your stuff when this arrives? Thanks for entering, and we hope you will enjoy wearing the gear!

THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS AT TAMACALISTER, NIKON'S DISTRIBUTORS IN NZ, FOR GENEROUSLY PROVIDING THESE PRIZES.

Hail mighty Retina!

By now, as I have, you may have seen the revolutionary (sic) new Apple MacBook Pro with Retina display. Shame Apple's copywriters were much maligned over that wee pun, I quite enjoyed it. This is the Apple flagship of the moment, enjoying it's requisite fifteen minutes of fame before being dethroned by the next big thing, no doubt around the corner.

It's certainly evolutionary, being faster, thinner and lighter than any earlier MBP. The Retina MBP15 has received generally good press, eschewing a traditional hard drive in favour of all flash memory options, the adoption of quad-core Intel i7 processors and Thunderbolt connectivity.

Its come in for some criticism. Buy yours with less RAM than the 16GB maximum and you've made an irrevocable decision as no later upgrade is possible. As with previous MBP's, the battery is no longer user replaceable and this time no optical drive is on-board, space very likely clawed back for battery storage. You'll need to buy an external DVD writer.

All of this is preamble, background if you will, and if you're in the market for hot ticket, high performance, money-no-object mobile computing from the fruitiest technology brand around you've very likely ordered one by now.

The real story is about the component you feast your eyes on, the tale going well beyond what this 15.4" super thin, ultra high resolution display offers in this model today. At over 5 million pixels, and with a resolution of 2880 x 1800 pixels, it eclipses the 1920 x 1080 pixels on that new full HD 55" flat panel TV in your

lounge, you know, the one you're still making payments on? There are millions more pixels here than most of the other displays in your life. Text that looks like it's been engraved on the glass, images that beggar belief, pixels that are virtually invisible. Unless you're Superman, you'll be unable to discern individual pixels until under magnification in a graphics program.

Surely, one day soon all Macs will feature screens akin to this, and to be competitive other brands will be forced to embroil themselves in this new war of resolution. Imagine 27" iMacs and Thunderbolt 27" screens with Retina displays, you do the math, we're talking about a shed-load of pixels.

Historically, computer screen resolution was either 72 or 96ppi, and most older computer displays presently sit on that benchmark. This has been creeping north in recent years, typically up to 150 ppi. See [Pixel density and List of displays by pixel density on Wikipedia](#).

If you're waiting for the 'ah ha moment', here it comes. iPhone 4s and New iPad already boast Retina displays with greater pixel density than many competitive products. All three current Apple devices with Retina displays have screen resolutions in pursuit of, or exceeding, the traditional 300 dpi (dots per inch) benchmark for high quality printed material such as books or magazines. The key numbers are: iPhone 4s, 326ppi; New iPad, 264ppi; and Retina MBP15, 220ppi.

I'd like you to think about that, maybe even check out a Retina MBP 15, and I'll get back to you next month with part two. There are major implications here for photographers, publishers and content managers.

Stay tuned.

TS

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