## ISSUE 19 | MARCH 2013



## *for* PHOTOGRAPHERS AND AFICIONADOS

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## Welcome to *f11* Magazine

Welcome to issue 19, it seems like only yesterday when we broke into double digits, and yet here we are, only a few issues away from our two year publishing anniversary! How time flies when you're chasing writers, pursuing advertisers and stalking the world's photographers. Here's what this issue has to offer:

In our latest Real Life Review, New Zealander Neville Porter tells us exactly what it's like to own a Leica M Monochrom. Read it and weep, tears of envy that is, as few of us will sum up either the loot or the commitment.

Belgian photographer Olivier Du Tré shot our cover as part of his series taken in the Canadian Rockies, where he now lives. So inspired was he by this geography that he and his wife picked up sticks and moved to Canada to be near this target rich picture taking environment. Olivier's dedication to black and white is total.

Viveca Koh hails from the UK and is based in London. Viveca is a photographic version of video game character Lara Croft, venturing into potentially hazardous locations as an urban explorer, a bag of cameras in tow. Viceca is a storyteller with her lens, exploring places, themes and concepts, some dark and all compelling.

Paul Gummer lectures in photography in Palmerston North, New Zealand. We learn about his teaching experience and philosophy, from a man who spends his days in the lion's den of tertiary art and design education. We're featuring his personal images taken in Italy, together with a series of still life creations.

Our regular correspondent, Tony Bridge, and I are eerily on the same track this issue. He offers advice about the perils of the Delete button, and I rant about the evils of chimping in my editorial. Great minds think alike, fools seldom differ, naturally I'd prefer to think we're in the former category!

Finally, we have a new subscription prize promotion which will cover the next three issues of the magazine, offering the chance for one lucky subscriber to win the Fujifilm X-E1 camera with companion zoom lens, a prize worth NZ\$2299! See page 121 of this issue for full details, and yes, all subscribers are in the draw!

Enjoy this issue of *f*11. ■

Tim tim@f11magazine.com

Photographer : Toshimitsu Takahashi

#### Issue 19 | March 2013 f11 Magazine

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Paul Gummer

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## The *f11* team

GARY BAILDON 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, vou 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.

**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 *f*11 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 *f*11 readers.

### WARNING - HOTLINKS ARE EVERWHERE!

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 If this is still baffling, learn more in our expanded instructions on **page 107** of this issue.







## **Featured in this issue**



## Real Life REVIEW

Neville Porter on the Leica M Monochrom



© Leica



Viveca KOH Dancing with the dark



© Viveca Koh



Olivier **DU TRE** 

Canada bound

© Suzanne Lacoste



© Olivier Du Tré



Paul GUMMER

Masterclass



© Paul Gummer



**COVER IMAGE** © Olivier Du Tré www.olivierdutre.com

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## In plain sight

## A BURNING MAN FOR ANTS

An 11-minute journey to the Black Rock Desert, home to the 'Burning Man' event. A whimsical time-lapse film about the art, people, mutant vehicles and playa that make Burning Man such a unique event. A tilt-shift-time-lapse shot on a Canon 60D and 5D Mark II and produced by James Cole, Byron Mason and Jason Phipps.

Source: Cinematic Digital Media

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO.



## CINEMATIC DIGITAL MEDIA

See what the team from Lake Tahoe, California produces in their short, sharp show reel.

Source: Cinematic Digital Media

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO



## PHOTOSHOP IS A CITY FOR EVERYONE: HOW ADOBE ENDLESSLY REBUILDS ITS CLASSIC APP

Like New York or London, the image editing app is layered thick with the past. By Paul Miller.

The Verge

Source: theverge.com

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS WEBSITE

## SUBSCRIBE NOW FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A FUJIFILM X-E1 CAMERA WITH ZOOM LENS

See full details on page 121 of this issue. Please note all existing subscribers also go in the draw, which takes place at the end of May 2013.

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## **Editorial**



#### Chimping is cheating...

I'm not sure who we have to thank for the term 'chimping', but they made a memorable and highly appropriate observation which is now in common usage within our field of endeavour.

The modern day sage that is Wikipedia, the font of all human knowledge, the online oracle to which we all turn, defines it thus:

The term 'chimping' was first written about by Robert Deutsch, a USA Today staff photographer, in September 1999 when writing a story for the SportsShooter email newsletter. He did not invent the term but heard it passed down by word of mouth. The phrase is most likely derived from a comparison between the sounds and actions made whilst reviewing images and those of an excited primate...

The ability to 'chimp', as in check the previous exposure, or series of captures, on your camera's rear facing LCD has certainly advanced the science of photography and made teaching the subject easier.

For commercial photographers shooting highly unpredictable reflective objects in elaborate set-ups using complicated lighting solutions I'd have to agree about the benefits of the modern day Polaroid that is your LCD. It's the fastest and least obtrusive way to refine process and achieve the desired result while an art director hovers nearby watching the clock, chatting to New York, and wondering where his next cappuccino is coming from. He or she might even be peering over your virtual shoulder with a live view feed to their iPad – very scary stuff....

On the other hand, I remain unconvinced that the act of chimping serves to advance the art of people photography in any manifest way. However carefully (sneakily) done, the very act disrupts the flow of conversation, interrupts non-verbal communication and threatens any rapport previously achieved with the subject.

By all means do this while you're setting up but if you're so desperately insecure that you need to chimp every ten seconds during the shoot you might want to challenge that way of working, and consider a couple of things...

Weren't you perfectly competent and relatively trusting of your own abilities when shooting film? Didn't you get the lighting and the camera settings right and then have a conversation with your subjects while you shot the pictures? Maybe, just maybe, that built better rapport?

And surely, you didn't spend hours or days while the film was being processed agonising and catastrophising that you'd failed to get the shot? No, you knew that you'd done everything to the best of your abilities and that amongst those returning frames were some winners.

So yes, consider that chimping might just be cheating, you're cheating yourself out of a better, more relaxed and slightly more revealing conversation with your subject.

Maybe you're even cheating yourself out of making more compelling portraits, and denying yourself the joy of a few happy 'exposure accidents' which sometimes delivered real gems on film.

Start today, turn off that 'instant review' on your LCD and go shoot a digital 'roll' of 36 frames.

Then wait a while before reviewing your results, it's sobering, but curiously confidence inspiring as well. ■

ΤS



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Rehua © Tony Bridge

# Hanging on to your files

Your subconscious knows best

From time to time, when I am teaching a workshop, we will go into the field and I will come across a student busily editing (read: deleting) his or her files. I will firmly suggest that this is a BAD idea.

There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, if your mind is on selection, then it is off the excitement of the unfolding scene before you. While you are chimping away, your mind is not on the job, which is to make a great image, and the definitive moment may well have passed you by, sniggering as it sneaks past.

There is a more important reason. Putting aside all those accidental shots of your foot or the interior of your camera bag you made in your haste to capture the decisive moment, there is no way most of us can make a considered decision about whether to keep an image, or whether it works, by looking at an LCD in the field. However marvellous or modern your camera might be, the LCD is small and often hard to see in bright light. It is far better to wait until later, when you are in front of your computer and have time to think and perhaps work out your post production approach. Then, and only then, is the time to delete. Besides, storage is so cheap that having extra cards means you have plenty of space to play with. Don't you?

However, there is an even more significant reason for holding onto pictures, even when you think they have nothing to say. All of us grow in our photography, if we keep at it, not just in terms of our response to our subject or our ability to capture it precisely, but in terms of our knowledge of post production. As our knowledge and skills grow, we will begin to be more adventurous in terms of what we might do, or are able to do, with our captures. As we develop our post production techniques, we will often add to the library of our skillsets and, as a consequence, be able to do more with our pictures. That is the beauty of working digitally, for anything is possible, as long as we have the imagination and courage to expand our photographic vocabulary.



Canadian master photographer and teacher Freeman Patterson tells students at his workshops on visual design that, 'your subconscious is leading your conscious by 3 to 5 years'. When I first began teaching with him in the mid-1990s, I didn't really understand what he was saying, but one day I did.

I had made a photograph of the Blue Lake at St Bathans in central Otago, and at the time, when I looked at it on the LCD, I very nearly deleted it. For some strange reason I decided not to, and after a cursory exploration, put it to one side, and forgot about it. Something about the photograph resonated, but, for the life of me, I couldn't see it at the time.

Over the next three years, as I became bored with the straight photograph, I began to explore a range of post production techniques, moving further and further away from the representational. I discovered a range of ways of making statements that better reflected the inscape of a photograph, the inner life of what I'd seen before me. One day I was fishing through my back catalogue, when I came across the photograph I had very nearly discarded.

I pulled it up on my screen and sat there looking at it. By now I had come to a place where I wanted to express my own inner life rather than merely represent what was before me. The blue lake has always seemed to me to be a strange and mysterious place, the province of the ghosts and spirits of the dead miners who had worked far below the surface.

As I reflected upon this mystery, I found a way to express what I had subconsciously felt at the time. And I gave thanks for not having pushed the delete button on my camera.

#### ΤВ

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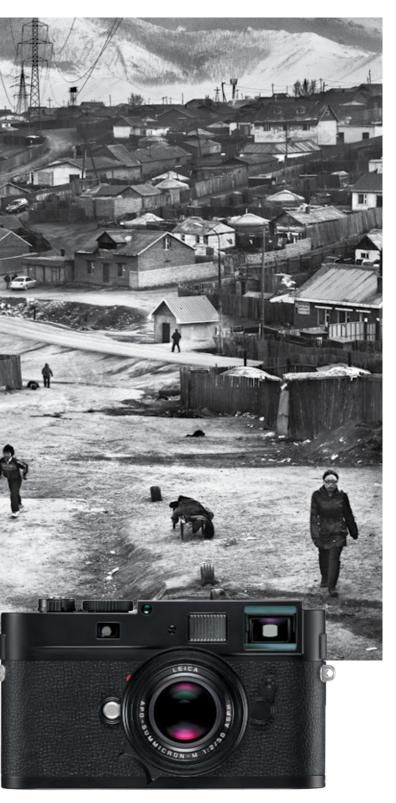


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The fascination of digital black and white photography.

The fascination of black and white photography is more alive today than ever before. Time for a camera that finally makes it possible to create authentic monochrome photography in digital form: the Leica M Monochrom is the first digital 35 mm camera developed exclusively for shooting in black and white. Its full-format sensor works without colour filters and thus delivers 'true' black and white images with unrivalled sharpness and dynamic range. This makes the M Monochrom the perfect tool for fine-art photographers and all lovers of black and white photography.

Discover the fascination of the Leica M Monochrom at www.m-monochrom.leica-camera.com



Leica M Monochrom, available in black chrome finish.

## Leica M Monochrom



Few photographic manufacturers would have the audacity to create a camera solely dedicated to the purpose of capturing images in monochrome. To do so limits the number of potential purchasers to a mere fraction of the total market and for most manufacturers, this idea would be an anathema to the decision makers in the ranks of their senior management.

Leica, on the other hand, exists as a legendary manufacturer well accustomed to operating within a niche. The brand is the last bastion of manual focus, ongoing champion of the rangefinder design (until Fujifilm's recent bold forays with the X series) and produces expensive products. Despite all of this, Leica sits on an enviable back order list for most of the products in their range. So why not explore a niche within a niche?

Enter the Leica M Monochrom, a manual focus rangefinder camera with heritage, quality and exclusivity assured for a very few.

New Zealand businessman Neville Porter is one of the few. A long time Leica owner and



aficionado, the Monochrom is not his first Leica, and it's unlikely that it will be his last.

Here, in our latest 'Real Life Review' we asked Neville to give us his observations of, and experience with, the camera.

It's worth a quick recap of the concept. When we ask someone to carry out a Real Life Review for *f11* it's in the knowledge that they have actually purchased the equipment they're reviewing.

Without fear or favour, they're going to say what they like about the gear and you'll get an unbiased opinion of what's good, bad or 'could do better' from someone without any agenda other than improving the breed.

*f*11: Welcome to *f*11 Neville. I understand that you also use Leica's S and M series cameras so before we talk about the Monochrom, tell us a bit about your background, and your history with the Leica brand?

NP: I am a businessman but I have always used photography to leverage my design concepts and work. My first business was involved with



the import and export of textiles and my most important product lines were all developed using my photographic skills. Latterly, a second area of business involving property and architecture has provided the opportunity for me to use my photographic ability, and the new digital Photoshop processes available, to create and combine digital output that is both illustrative and convincing of details, which a normal photograph could not do.

In May 2001 I bought my first Leica from Stephen Richardson at Town Hall Cameras. An absolute character, Stephen was to be an important influence in my association with Leica cameras. He had a tremendous knowledge of Leica. Stephen pointed out important details about Leica lenses, such as their ability to be used wide open, their 'character' and the potential they offered to deliver a photo that was almost three dimensional. From my very first Leica camera and lenses, I was amazed at the quality that came from the film that I shot, initially on a South Island hike. Oddly enough, on that trip I found another Leica and five lenses. I took an

South Island, New Zealand. Leica Monochrom. © Neville Porter

option to buy it on my return to Auckland. I was stunned at the results of the first camera. I purchased the second camera, and with no time to test, left three days later for a trip to Italy. I returned weeks later with more than 40 rolls of film which all developed well beyond my expectations and my connection with Leica quality was firmly established.

## **f11:** How did you greet the news of the Monochrom? Did it come as a real surprise, and from that day, was it a foregone conclusion that you would own one?

NP: The news of the Monochrom was surprising. While Leica had been enjoying considerable success with the M9, it seemed that the Mono was indeed a niche product. The gross oversight in anyone's thinking about this new black and white enabled camera was underestimating the sheer quality of file that was now possible. The simple description of a camera dedicated to B&W invariably raises some negative comment but correspondingly, for anyone that uses the camera they soon find that it has an ability to deliver quality at an unimaginably high level. At the time of the Monochrom's release I was working with a newly acquired Leica S and the lenses available at that time.

Suffice to say, the budget was well spent and taking on such a niche camera was simply not on my horizon. It was suggested to me and even without testing I declined.

#### **f11:** What changed your mind?

NP: At this point I should explain the circumstances which changed my mind to buy a Monochrom. I had been invited to be an advisor to discussing the use of a Leica M, and a Leica S, and a Monochrom, in a very special international art project. This happened right at the time of the very first world deliveries of the Monochrom. At the time no reviewer had yet reported on the camera. The project leader insisted that I try the Monochrom, and report at the next meeting 48 hours later. I was very busy at the time, and also conscious of the value of the camera to the project. I really couldn't afford for anything to happen to the camera, so I simply put it around my neck and that's where it stayed the next two days. There was no time, no agenda, just shoot as many different subjects as possible as I moved about my life and business over that 48 hours.

I took my first shot at night with streetlights. Notwithstanding the potential of 10,000 ISO, the camera didn't need anything near that to get the shots. With use, I started to see the beauty of this camera. This 48 hour 'unboxing' was definitely happening in a way I could not have imagined. Frankly this became a seminal 48 hours in my photographic life. This modest little camera was proving to be quite extraordinary in what it could do, and what I could achieve with it. A very interesting point was that the people in my photographs were quite fascinated by what they saw of themselves in this medium. The photos just pop, they are unique, way beyond just B&W their ambience and sharpness is quite captivating.

As we've subsequently seen in testaments from reviewers and owners, the consensus is that until you shoot with this camera you cannot judge it. It is absolutely type different from anything else that has ever been produced and certainly vastly superior to any black and white file conversion. It is simply another realm, with a definite visual signature to the image file produced.

## *f***11**: By way of comparison, what were you primarily shooting with before?

NP: Previously I had been shooting with the Leica S and M and assorted Canon SLRs depending on the job at hand. While the Pro Canons are benchmarks, it is remarkable how the Leica cameras have the ability to generate documentary which is different and inspiring to the viewer. I most often see this in aerial photography from helicopters, even without stabilisation or auto focus!

## *f11:* Were you primarily a black and white shooter before, or do you enjoy colour as well?

NP: Until the Monochrom I would say 99% of my photography had been in colour. Saying this, I must confess I have always been very interested in black and white photography. In November 2005 I specially visited Christchurch to view the Ansel Adams exhibition. Seeing B&W images printed by experts, and properly lit, is an experience beyond the usual printed page. The fact was blazingly clear that B&W photography is the most uncompromising medium.

#### f11: What's it like to shoot with?

NP: This question raises an important fact about the Monochrom.

Its DNA is from the long line of Leica rangefinders. It's small, it's not modern looking, and it has no markings of brand or model. With this in mind you must appreciate there are two sides to a Leica M, the subject's side and the photographer's.

From the photographer's side, the M has the smallest menu of options. Any adjustments can

be made very quickly. This means the photographer's eye and effort is nearly 100% on the scene and the subject. There is very little technical distraction.

From the subject's perspective, whether it be one person, a group, or a street scene, this diminutive camera creates absolutely no misconception of intent. The subject has no concerns of the pro photographer, branded big camera, invasion of privacy, paparazzi styled situation. There is absolutely no signal that this little black camera can create a blindingly powerful photograph.

## **f11:** Do you have a particular lens which you feel is a good match, or do you use a range with the camera?

NP: Having used the M7 (film) the M8 (cropped sensor) M9 (full CCD colour) I have acquired a range of lenses that have suited my use and style with those cameras at the time. With the Mono, my three currently preferred lenses are the 50mm collapsible Elmarit, the 75mm Summarit, and for the wider range the Tri Elmar 16-18-21 mm. I have just received the new APO 50mm f2 and can see the results already.

## **f11:** I'm told that you need to remove the bottom plate to change the battery or the memory card – good design or curious anomaly?

NP: Well that's just how it's always been with the Leica M. I am sure if Pininfarina or Apple were involved this feature might change. Actually at Photokina last October it was announced that Sir Johnny Ive of Apple is going to be involved in creating a one off Leica. Let's see if that bottom plate gets a makeover.

#### *f***11**: Are you capturing in RAW or Jpeg?

NP: I currently I shoot Raw DNGs and Jpegs.

### f11: What's your post production workflow?

Before answering this I must emphasise that the time it takes me to work through to the final stage of a 'print ready' B&W is a fraction of the time it takes with a colour photo. It's still a very exacting process and possibly it's a personal thing but there is a certain innate sense of what seems right and wrong.

First, I download the images using Image Capture on my Mac. Then I use Media Pro software to manage my digital assets quite independently of the applications that I may choose to develop the files. Here I manage my selection of images and decide whether they are destined for Photoshop, Lightroom, Aperture, HDR, or Panorama stitching. I want my photo collection to be independent of the final editing application.

I open my RAW files in Lightroom 4 for the initial edit for straightforward stuff like angle exactness, cropping and exposure. I might also use Silver Efex Pro 2 where it is possible to easily apply a lot more artistic license. Monochrom files have an enormous amount of data and it can be used in many ways to to 'dodge and burn' the final delivery. Then depending on the required output(s) I use one of a number of Lightroom Presets to export to a folder, email, website or Drop box for sharing.

## *f*11: What's the best thing about the camera?

NP: The results. The fact that you can verify your shots in the viewfinder, chasing down exactly what you're after while you're still in shoot mode. Then the wealth of data detail on the file gives a lot of editing latitude and room for artistic interpretation. The ISO of 10,000 and the appropriate level of 'film like' grain that comes with it. The resolution of the files is just extraordinary. Users of medium format and the Nikon D800 will be very surprised.

# **f11:** I can guess the answer but, where do you sit on the measure of satisfaction? 10 being brilliant and 1 being 'wish I'd never bought the thing...'.

NP: That's simple, it's a 10. This is a unique camera that has the simplest of menus, the highest levels of output quality, and the

photographer is driving the whole process of photographic creation and artistic expression – not the camera.

**f11:** Thanks Neville, great to have your thoughts, and thanks for sharing a couple of your images on *f11*'s virtual pages!

www.nevilleporter.com

Intrigued? Here's a range of some of the very detailed reviews online:

#### Steve Huff:

http://www.stevehuffphoto.com/2012/10/05/ the-leica-monochrom-review-part-1understanding-the-camera-and-vs-film/

#### Thorsten Overgaad:

http://www.overgaard.dk/leica-M-Monochrom-Henri-Digital-Rangefinder-Camera-black-andwhite-sensor-page-21.html

#### **David Farkas:**

http://www.reddotforum.com/content.php/226-Leica-M-Monochrom-Review





Skippers Canyon, South Island, New Zealand. Leica Monochrom. © Neville Porter

# Viveca KOH

Dancing with the dark

Viveca Koh is drawn to abandoned places as if by magnetism, and the images she creates reflect the dark places of the mind as much as the unlit and unloved locations she so often frequents.

Her images are often combinations of the ethereal and the conceptual; the dark punctuated by shafts, patches and pools of light. These images are rhetorical, questions asked rather than answered. Therein lies their power.

An emerging fine art photographer, Viveca hails from the UK and lives in London. She finds her inspiration in abandoned buildings, in their details and in the darker side of life.

Aficionados of this style of photography know this as 'Urbex', or U.E., both shortened versions of 'Urban Exploration'. We first featured this in issue #5 of this magazine, with a story on Michael Gakuran, and we have more of this genre in store for future issues.▶



The Retreat. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh

But it's not all Urbex in this portfolio, there's a lighter, more conceptual side to Viveca's work and we're pleased to share some of these images as well.

## *f11:* Welcome to *f11*, Viveca, before we talk specifically about the work we're showing here, tell us what first sparked your interest in photography?

VK: I have been taking photographs since I was a small child, when my Mum let me have a go on her 126 Instamatic camera. I loved the buttons and dials, the funny smell that it had, the sheer magic of taking pictures and then seeing the results in the little square prints that used to come back from the chemist. I think I was hooked from that day forward. I bought my first SLR when I left school in 1982, a secondhand Pentax K1000, later followed by an Olympus OM4-Ti, which incorporated excellent spot metering and really enabled me to get to grips with accurate exposure. In 2008, after some years of using a very basic compact digital camera, I purchased a Nikon D700 and have not looked back. I am entirely self-taught as a photographer, apart from one week of adult education when I was sixteen, where I learned to develop and print monochrome and slide film in the dark room.

## **f11:** You hail from a creative family, across many disciplines – so why photography, rather than painting for example?

VK: Yes, I do come from a very artistic family, my mum is a landscape painter, my dad an architect, my grandpa and uncle also architects, and my other uncle a poet and artist. I did dabble with painting and drawing when I was at school, achieved an A-level in art and also attended a Foundation course in Art and Design at St Martin's School of Art in my early twenties, but found that I was not as good as I hoped to be and failed to get onto a degree course in illustration and graphic design, which is what I thought I wanted to study at that time.

I really, truly love taking photographs, and I hope I will never lose that sense of achievement I feel when I know I've captured something good. I love the whole process of seeing a potential photograph with my eyes, mentally framing it in my head and then finally framing and shooting it with my camera. When I used to draw I was always very slow to produce anything, and whilst my drawings were technically accurate with hindsight I feel that they lacked in soul and emotion. With photography the result is far more immediate, there is a lot of me in my photos, and it is so obvious now that this is my perfect form of creative expression.

## **f11:** So, describe your work for us, your subject choices and your motivation?

VK: I get a lot of pleasure from photographing items and places that are often considered rather un-lovely, and the mood in my work can be quite dark – which I believe comes from the depression I suffer from on and off, yet without this aspect of myself I would not take the photographs that I do. I read a lot and have a very vivid imagination, which I believe helps me to see potential photographs where others wouldn't. It is so often the details of places that attract my eye, the minutiae that collects in hidden corners, the small parts of bigger things that are fascinating in their own right, which I often feel deserve some attention.

## *f***11**: You're not yet a full-time photographer, is that the plan one day?

VK: I am self-employed as an architectural librarian, managing the technical and samples libraries for architectural practices in London. I have been doing this since about 1994. Sadly, I have lost a lot of clients during this recession. At the moment, photography is my passion and creative outlet. I see potential images **>** 

Magic Castle. Nikon D700 with 14-24mm f2.8 lens.
© Viveca Koh



everywhere around me, often things that many seem to miss or simply pass by. Exhibiting and selling my limited edition fine art prints is the kind of photography that I really want to do, as opposed to the more practical and potentially lucrative subjects of weddings and children. I do however enjoy photographing buildings and architecture, and naturally my work as a librarian has brought me into contact with many architects, some of whom have already commissioned me to shoot their recently completed building projects, so I am hoping to develop this further in tandem with my more 'arty' photographs.

## **f11:** Let's talk about these places that attract you so strongly, these slightly dangerous, usually dirty, very fascinating spaces.

VK: I first discovered Urban Exploration (Urbex) in 2009, through a contact on Flickr whose photographs of abandoned buildings I admired. He took me with him to an abandoned mental asylum and I was immediately entranced with the place and found much photographic inspiration there. Since then I have visited a number of different abandoned buildings, and I still find them fascinating, poignant and often quite sad but I think they deserve to be well photographed with a sense of the utmost respect for the lives that these places once contained. In contrast to this, I enjoy being in wide open spaces where the sky is above me, so I do like to shoot seascapes, woodland and rolling hills, but I will always strive to make them 'my own' in post production, usually by adding additional texture layers to make them different from other landscape photographs.

#### f11: Do you feel like an intruder, or ever run into strange people while visiting these places?

VK: I met my current partner Mark, another photographer, at an abandoned mental asylum in August 2009. We are always quite amused to tell people how we met. Personally I have never felt like an intruder in any of these abandoned buildings, but I think that comes from a sense of respect for the building and in meaning it no



The Trick is to Keep Breathing. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh

harm. Sadly there are a lot of vandals who eventually find out about these places, who will go in to smash up and ruin them, which is why the Urbex community tends to be quite secretive and it takes a while to build up trust amongst members. I generally go with Mark or maybe a couple of other like-minded friends, although I have been to an abandoned house on my own, but it is generally safer to go with others – it feels spooky to be alone too, where every natural creak and thump of a building seems to be magnified tenfold. Part of the thrill of urban exploration is being in an abandoned building without permission, having gained entrance through a hole in the fence or a broken window. None of us will ever break in, it is always the case of finding access that is already there, so we never cause criminal damage which would be an arrestable offence. Trespassing is a civil matter, and therefore we can only be asked to leave if caught by security or the owner, which we always do quietly and with the minimum of fuss. The Urbex mantra is 'take only photographs, leave only footsteps'.

#### f11: Any less savory experiences while exploring?

VK: These buildings are often filthy and invaded by pigeons so there will frequently be quantities of bird excrement over everything, plus the inevitable dead birds and other unfortunate creatures that entered and became trapped, and there is also the risk of asbestos being present. There can be broken glass, jagged wood, nails sticking up from floors, big holes to fall through, hypodermic syringes and sometimes even squatters although I avoided those so far. Derelict buildings are dangerous, so constant awareness, consideration for where one is putting one's feet and practical, sturdy clothing are all a must.

*f11:* With the long lasting recession in the US, I know that this has become a rich environment for Urbex photographers, with many abandoned factories and facilities to be explored. Is this the same in the UK, and do you have a long list of places on your 'yet to visit' plan?

VK: I do have quite a long list of places that I would like to visit, but more of these seem to be in Europe at the moment, although I would really love to photograph Detroit in the States some day. Friends of mine have been to Europe and photographed some beautiful buildings, some of which barely look abandoned at all, often still fully furnished and blissfully un-vandalised. This kind of place seems harder to come by in the UK, and two of my favourite asylums here are now almost completely demolished to make way for new housing.

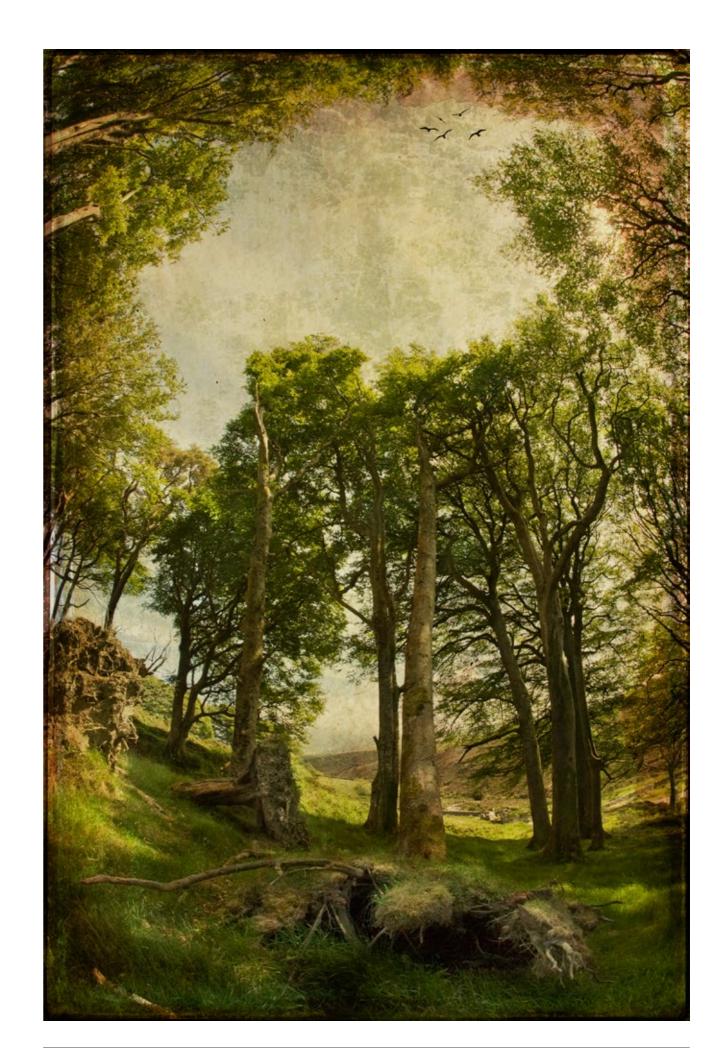
## *f***11**: Do you belong to any photographic clubs or groups?

VK: It was a great sense of personal achievement for me to gain first a Licentiateship distinction from the Royal Photographic Society, then secondly Associateship within the space of 14 months. The RPS distinctions are internationally recognised benchmarks of a certain level of skill and photographic talent, and I was incredibly proud to obtain the first two. I am planning to work towards the final distinction of Fellowship, but it is not something to be rushed and the work must show that one is thinking and seeing at the highest level as a photographer. I really enjoy being a member of the RPS, and have already met so many interesting people through the Society, and received much positive feedback and encouragement about my work.

## *f11:* Tell us about any influences, either people or styles which have inspired you?

VK: If I wasn't taking the kind of photographs that I do, I would have liked to have been a war photographer, as I greatly admire the work of Don McCullin and Robert Capa, and find their photographs very inspirational, as well as somewhat humbling. I understand what a dangerous job war photo reportage is, but for  $\blacktriangleright$ 

Old Master. Nikon D700 with 16mm f2.8 lens.
© Viveca Koh





If You Go Down to the Woods Today. Nikon D700 with 14-24mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh

some reason I'm not entirely sure of, this makes it more appealing to me. I also appreciate the photographs of Joel Peter Witkin and Sally Mann, both of whom have a real darkness about their work that naturally appeals to a 'Gloom Monster' like me. I am fascinated by the work of Hieronymus Bosch, for his grim and fantastical creatures and nightmarish portrayals of the world, but I also love the pure beauty and romanticism of the pre-Raphaelites, and the vivacious beauties painted by John Singer Sargent.

## *f***11**: Describe the way you work, your approach and technique?

VK: I hope that I will always keep learning, and never become complacent about my work, as I want to continually develop my skills and technique and I know that there is still so much more to learn. The style of my work has already changed and developed so much over the last three years that I know it will carry on doing so as I move in different directions, many of which I can't quite imagine yet. It feels like a very exciting journey for me.

When I am out and about I will often photograph interesting textures such as damp walls, cracked paint, peeling paper, rusted metal, crumpled fabric, vintage documents and the like, as I know that I will be able to use these as additional layers to complement my photographs. I like using textures as I feel that they add a different dimension to my photographs, and in many cases makes them look what I would describe as 'painterly'. This is why I describe myself as a fine art photographer. I have now published a number of photographic books via Blurb, and find the end result to be generally very pleasing. It is a different way of showing my work, and now that the hard copies can be published as eBooks as well it means that people can view my publications on their tablets or computer.

**f11:** Like they're doing right now reading about you in this magazine. We're showing your images in a range of formats, do you have a preference for one over another?

VK: I love to shoot square, it is my favourite format and I find it very easy to compose within this shape.

## **f11:** Tell us about your current equipment choices, and how much of your kit goes with you when you go 'combat' urbexing?

VK: My equipment consists of a Nikon D700, AF-S Nikkor 14-24mm f2.8, AF-S Nikkor 24-70mm f2.8, AF-S Nikkor 70-200mm f2.8, AF Nikkor 16mm fisheye f2.8, AF-S Nikkor 50mm f1.4, Nikon SB900 Speedlight, Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX3, iPhone 4S and Manfrotto 190X PRO B Tripod. I usually take most of this kit when I go urbexing, although I don't use the fisheye much these days, tend towards natural light over flash, and the iPhone has taken over a bit from the LX3 for shooting my much-loved square photos. A tripod is essential as so many of these buildings are dark inside, also for shooting panoramas and self-portraits.

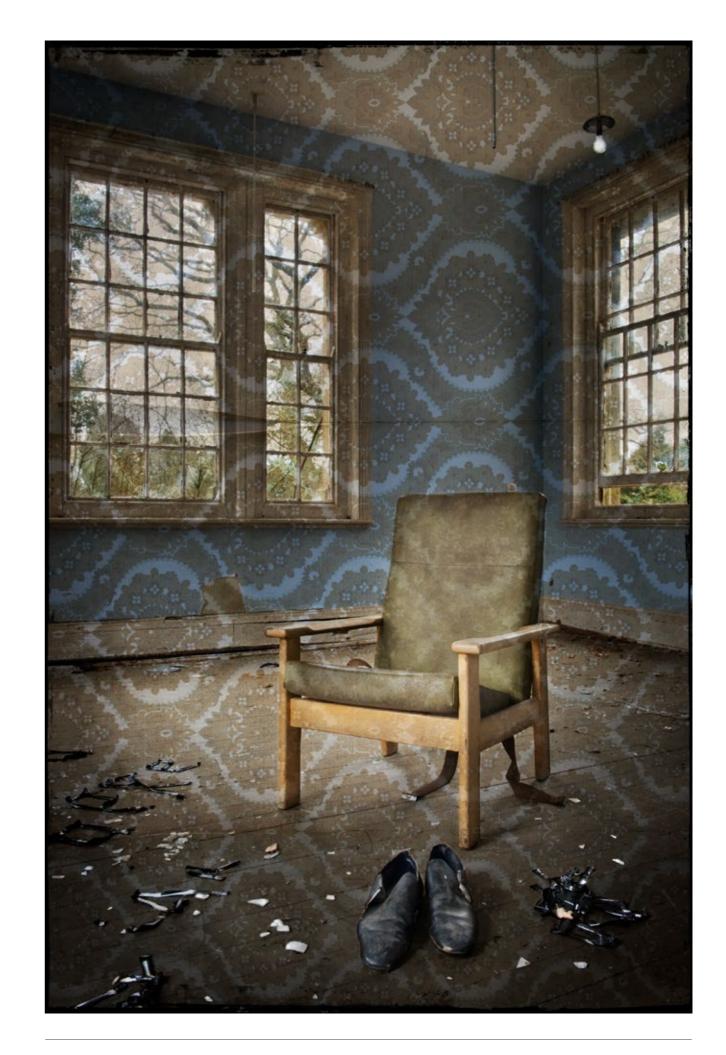
## *f11:* Do you have a favourite camera/lens combo for this type of work?

VK: The lens I tend to use most often is the 24-70mm f2.8 as it is such a good all-rounder, excellent for close-ups as well as for shooting a whole room, and the maximum aperture has a lovely depth of field. My second favourite lens is the 14-24mm f2.8, which allows me to capture more of a scene without using panorama.

## *f***11**: Are you capturing in RAW or Jpeg, and why is this best for the way you work?

VK: I always shoot in RAW, mainly because of the way I work on my photographs in post production – a JPEG simply wouldn't stand up to the sort of manipulation that I do. I always aim for the highest possible quality in every respect. ▶

A Blindness That Touches Perfection. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh



## *f***11**: Can you tell us about your post production, what software do you prefer and what is your workflow?

VK: I use Lightroom 3 for cataloguing all my photographs, and then Photoshop CS3 to work on them further if multiple layers are being used. Lightroom is brilliant for working on nontextured photographs, as all the required adjustments such as curves, white balance, lens correction, noise reduction etc are available and can be synchronised across multiple similar images. When I work on a textured image I open it in Photoshop via Lightroom so that the latter programme has a full record of the workflow on that image, and I do all my processing via adjustment layers and layer masks. I never flatten my images in Photoshop even once I consider them finished, just in case I ever need to come back to that photograph and work on it again.

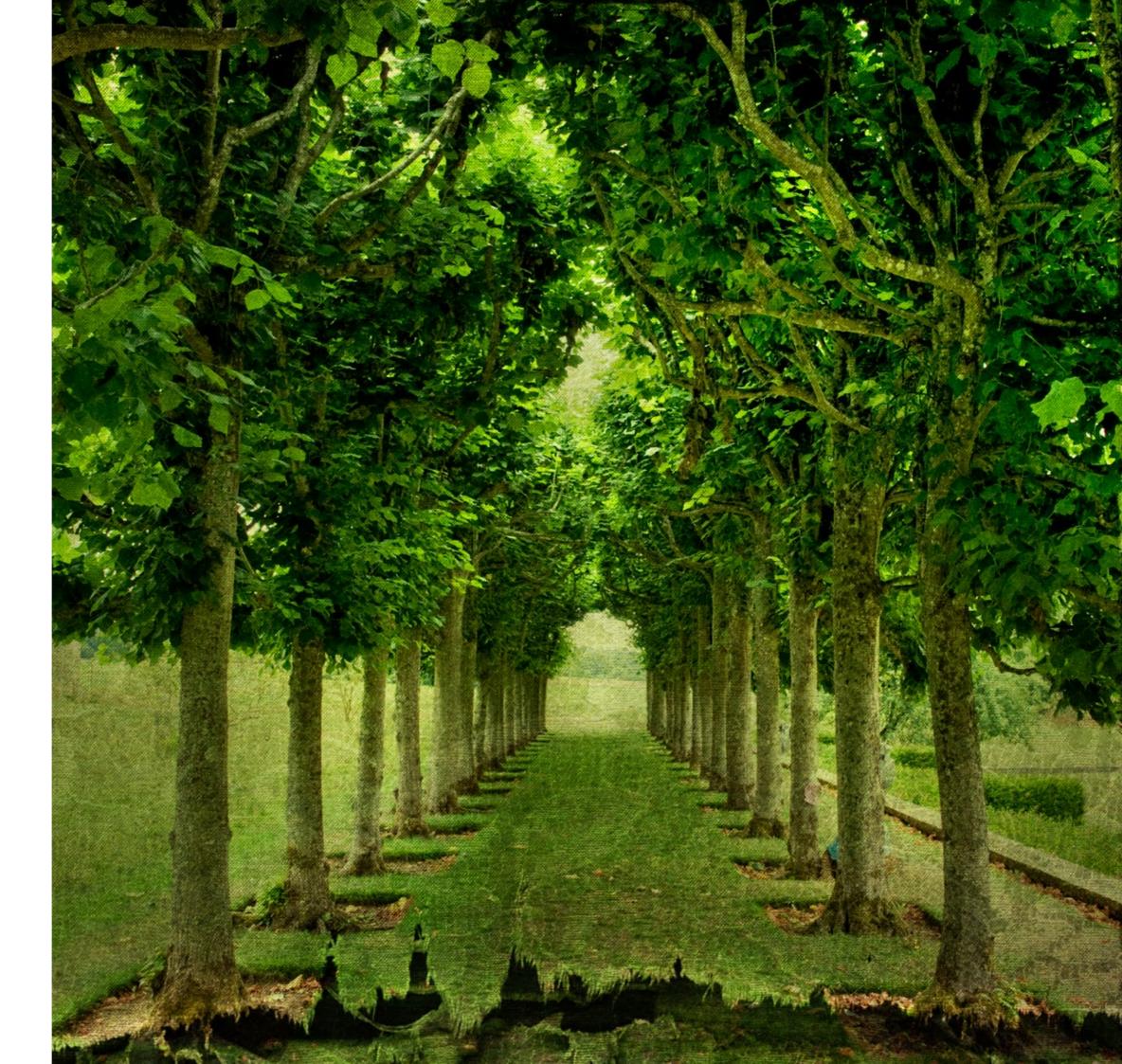
## *f***11**: Thanks Viveca, we'll be keeping an eye on your work and hope you'll stay in touch.

VK: Thanks Tim, I certainly will, and I'm really happy to be a part of the worldwide *f*11 Magazine community.■

## ΤS

www.vivecakohphotography.com www.vivecakohphotography.co.uk

Sleeping Avenue. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh





Communication. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh





Pigeon. Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX3. © Viveca Koh

'I love to shoot square, it is my favourite format and I find it very easy to compose within this shape.'

Rabbit. Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX3. © Viveca Koh



Leviathan. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh

'I met my current partner Mark, another photographer, at an abandoned mental asylum in August 2009. We are always quite amused telling people how we met.'



'I see potential images everywhere around me, often things that many seem to miss or simply pass by.'

The Transmitter. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh



Swan Flight. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh



Dreamscape. Nikon D700 with 14-24mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh





Warfare. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh

Fallen Angel. Nikon D700 with 24-70mm f2.8 lens. © Viveca Koh

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At the heart of the ímage

# Olivier DU TRE

Canada bound

Olivier Du Tré was born 35 years ago, and raised in Ghent, Belgium. After graduating with a Graphic Arts degree in '98, he picked up a camera, fell in love with photography and found his real passion. The images we're proud to display here absolutely reflect his passion for both place and medium.

The apple, as they say, seldom falls far from the tree. Olivier's family has been involved in the arts for generations. His grandfather was a painter of some note, and his father had been a wedding photographer on the side and painter for over 40 years. He's retired now. He was, for Olivier, an inspiration for exploring this 'new' form of art, the son marveling at his father's command of exposure with his Leica M3 – without a light meter.

Olivier enrolled in photography school and spent three years immersed in black and white photography, film theory, dark room techniques and the use of various cameras.

'When I look back, that old style schooling still plays a large role in my work – even in this digital world. Combining theory with my extensive



Five Shacks, near Beiseker, Alberta, Canada, 2011. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré Photoshop knowledge, allows for a great diversity in my art.' – ODT

Between 2002 and 2009, he and his wife made numerous trips to Canada. Western Canada attracted them strongly, largely for their love of the mountains. In 2004, they decided to take the next big step and immigrate to Canada. That's where we've chosen to pick up the story.

### f11: Welcome to f11 Olivier, we've been corresponding for a while so it's great to finally have you here! Let's talk about your big move to Canada and the effect it has had on you.

ODT: Thank you for having me. It is an honor. I will start this story in 2009, when we arrived in this beautiful country we now call home. We now own a home in Cochrane, a little town about 30 minutes west of Calgary. Those same Rocky Mountains that you talked about in the intro.

I was raised and lived the majority of my adult life in a large crowded city - miles away from the beautiful outdoors. I was photographing everything from rock bands to studio portraits, everything you could expect from a city photographer. It was liberating for me to be close to nature. I was finally able to pursue my life long dream of photographing what I loved most, scenic landscapes.

For me, being outdoors is a real sensory experience. I feel aware of everything around me. As a newcomer to Canada, I believe I have a greater appreciation for the beauty that surrounds me. It still amazes me that I live and work in this picturesque place. I can really say that this place has made me a different person.

### f11: Do you still miss Europe, and Belgium in particular, or are your roots firmly in Canada now?

ODT: I don't really miss it, no. Sure I miss stuff like some types of food and drink, and the ability to stay out late when you want to - there's no such thing as last call, who invented that anyway? I can say that I miss my parents and my friends but we really struck gold here. We have a >>



Empty, near Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, 2012. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré

'surrogate' family in Calgary and some pretty wicked friends as well. Sure it is different, but after being here for over 4 years, I can say more than ever – that this is starting to really feel like home.

### f11: Tell us about early, or current influences on your photography?

ODT: I love the work of Cole Thompson, Michael Kenna, Uwe Langmann, David Fokkos, Josef Shulz, Josef Hoflehner, Chuck Kimmerle and Michael Levin just to name a few – in no particular order. Levin is Canadian, and on the Canadian side I have enormous respect for a photographer called Darwin Wiggett. I can't help but love the work he does around our town (he lives in Cochrane as well) and the Canadian Rockies.

On my first trip here I found a little book by Darwin in some tourist shop. It had 'How to photograph the Canadian Rockies' as title. I thought it was intriguing. But that little book really started it all off. Imagine, as a newcomer to a region, you have a 'how to' book on how and where to photograph all year round! A true treasure trove of information. It made my life very easy for the first year that I was here. It also taught me a valuable lesson. And that, was that I had to explore this land for myself.

#### *f11:* Describe, if you will, your style and approach to photography?

ODT: I am a photographer who expresses my passion through the medium of black and white photography. This naturally lends itself to an approach of sophisticated minimalism. My fascination for symbolism and visual symmetry joined with an uncompromising attitude towards conceptual and minimal art can be found throughout my body of work. In my landscapes I try and challenge the viewer to see things differently, notice the unseen. Embodying subtle, quiet and at times a romantic take on unnoticed scenes that other pass by - often seen by others as mundane. My photographs lean toward 'formal aesthetic'- encompassing

contrast, scale and proportion, perspective and depth, and I try to visually well balanced subjects within a frame. Multilayered, in both meaning and tonality I seek to question the fragility and instability of our seemingly certain world and ponder the limits of spectacle based assumptions of what photography ought to mean to us. My goal is to offer images that don't tell the viewer what to feel, but offer a scene that they can step into and add their own stories and emotions.

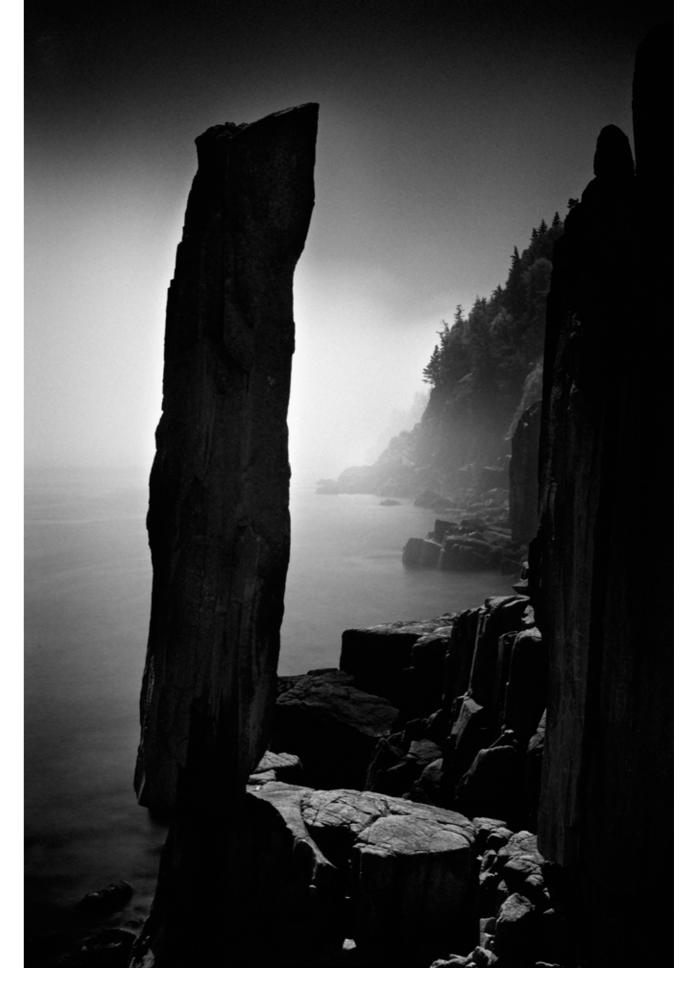
### f11: Are you full time in photography or combining this with another career?

ODT: I am not. During the 9-5 workday, I am a graphic designer working for an international agency in Calgary.

## f11: While researching for this article, I read an early 2012 interview you gave which talked about a move away from digital towards film photography. Tell us about this move, and the motivation for it?

ODT: Yes. I have moved away from digital. There are multiple reasons behind it. The biggest reason is that digital photography lost it's mystery for me, it didn't excite me anymore on a personal level. I was becoming lazy. As a graphic artist I work with Photoshop a lot so I knew - in advance - what I could get away with in taking a photograph. I understand that a lot of photographers would see this as a huge asset, and I thought the same about it in the beginning. But it wore off. And I was 'shooting first and visualising later'. That, I feel, was an error on my part.

Now with photographing on film, everything I do before I take the exposure - light metering, deciding what filters to use, composing - is directly related with the way the end results on the negative look. It really opened my eyes to how hard photography really is. I am challenged again, every time I go out. And I absolutely love it. There was also the reason that in a lot of work I see these days, I am hit by over-saturated colours, over sharpened scenes, dynamic >



Balancing Rock, Nova Scotia, Canada, 2011. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré

ranges that are absurd. It really alters the way we see things as a civilisation. And I did not want to be part of that scene anymore, at all. I don't need crazy 80MP digital backs that have 18 stops of dynamic range. I don't care about that. That's just not me. I don't need that kind of resolution, I don't need that kind of obscene sharpness.

I love the whole process of using film as well. And I have a lot of respect for the old masters. They did – in my opinion – do real photography. I am not ready to give that up yet. I feel that there is still a place for film photographers in today's digital world and in my opinion, there will always be a place for film. Film has feeling, has flaws and lovely grain, and is a real organic medium. Why would I photograph nature on a medium that has limitations set by some engineer in Japan? It doesn't make sense anymore for me to do that. My camera is now just a dumb box with a hole in the front and a roll of film in the back. Nothing more. If stuff didn't translate the way I meant it to be in the negative, then that simply means that I made a mistake somewhere along the way. Film is a hard teacher. But it is so much fun.

## **f11:** Yet all of the images we're showing here were taken on full frame digital SLR cameras, and they hardly lack resolution, so tell us more about finding a balance between the two technologies?

ODT: For the last year or so I have been shooting film and nothing but film. I haven't touched my digital at all since. I don't even think I remember what all the buttons do. I am a follower of the saying 'do one thing, and do it well'.

To answer your resolution question, a lot of people say I am an elitist using film. And I can only tell them to keep thinking that. To me it feels right, and that is an important thing I think for any photographer. That you produce work that is 100% you, work that reflects your inner self. Are my photographs any better you might ask? No, but they are different. Are my photographs any sharper maybe? No, certainly not. So what's it about film that attracts me to it? I don't really know how to answer that guestion. But somehow I feel like it is alive and knowing that helps me to understand nature even more.

### f11: Would you say that moving away from digital to medium format film capture has changed your shooting style in some ways?

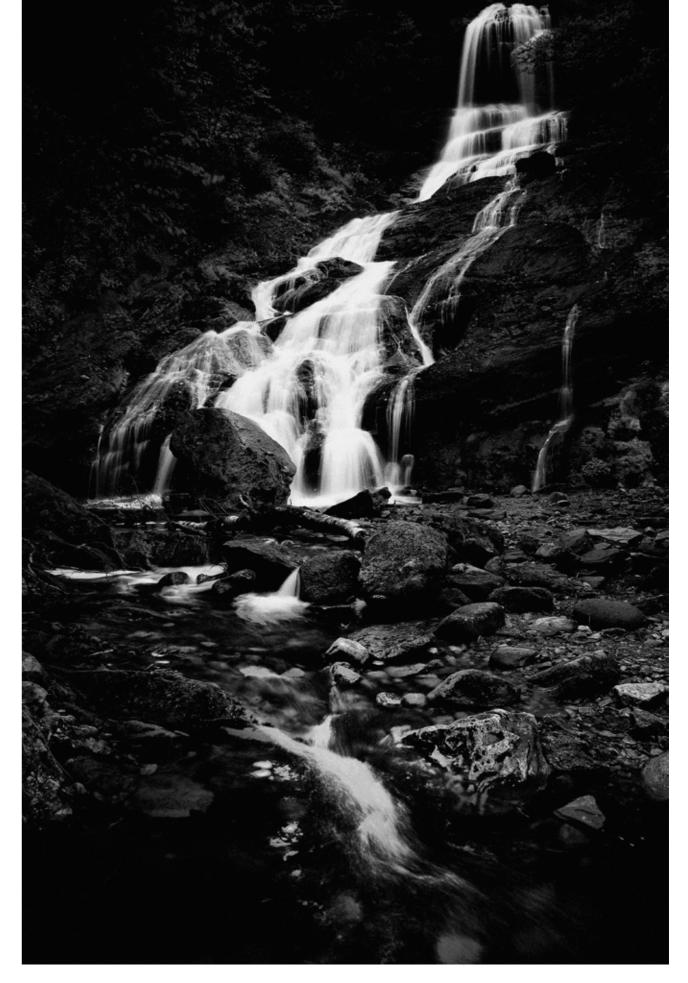
ODT: Yes my approach has drastically changed. Like I said earlier, I am relying more on previsualising a scene now (I don't have an LCD screen anymore) than in the past. What I did with digital was more post-visualising a scene. I 'recorded' it and saw afterwards what I could do with a particular scene.

I also do a lot more walking now too. I used to 'walk and shoot' and move on. And gradually 'work' a scene in digital. Now with the film camera, I don't do that anymore. I have a limited amount of exposures which I can make. You can say I make all my sketches in my head now, so to speak. It has become more of a mental process really.

## f11: So to equipment, you've been using a Canon DSLR for digital capture, what's in the camera bag now when you go out shooting film?

ODT: Yes I used to use a Canon 5D MkII with the 24-105mm f4L lens. Now I use two cameras and there's a third one on the way.

My main body now is a medium format Mamiya RB67 Pro SD with a collection of 4 primes, some filters, Ilford film, cable release and a Sekonic spot meter. I also have an old medium format Zeiss Ikon Ikonta that I have on me all the time. It's a real funky thing that was built in 1954 and to this day works perfectly! And my dad recently acquired a medium format Noblex 06/150E for me back home. I'm picking that one up in May when we are going back home for a brief visit. I am very excited about that thing. I hope I don't start a camera collection though... >



Beulach Ban Falls, Nova Scotia, Canada, 2011, Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré



Cloud over Badlands, near Drumheller, Alberta, Canada, 2012. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré

Tree in Fog, near Carstairs, Alberta, Canada, 2011. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré



#### f11: There are worse habits to have. Has that new 6x7 brought with it some 'new' favourite focal length lenses?

ODT: I use pretty much everything from semi wide angles (67mm) to short telephoto lenses (180mm). I also have a 2x multiplier so I'm pretty much covered on both ends. I don't really have a favourite lens but I think I use the 180 the most.

#### **f11:** Single most indispensable item in your camera bag?

ODT: Sekonic lightmeter for sure

## f11: Let's move now to post production, and your workflow. Can you describe those processes for us?

ODT: My post production process for now is kind of a hybrid. I photograph on film and then scan it and process it in Photoshop. I do only simple tweaks. Dodging, burning, contrast adjustments, local adjustments. All very simple. It resembles very much the processes in a darkroom. I don't use intricate masks. It really is all very rudimentary.

### f11: I'm loving your blog and I noticed that one of your new year's resolutions was to build a new darkroom. Any progress?

ODT: Yes and no. Eventually I do want to move away from using any digital method in my work. I really need to print my work in a wet darkroom again. Like photography, printing has lost a lot of its magic to me. Everybody can make a limited edition print run now and just put '10' in the copy box and print away. That is beside the point of making a limited edition run in my opinion. A real limited run is something where every print has it's own personality. It's own little quirks. Some prints will be better than others, and that's ok. But they will all be by the hand of a skilled photographer, which in my opinion is more valuable than anything. But there's no progress yet on the darkroom though. I am still doing research and still designing everything on paper first. I really need to get my behind in gear soon if I want to see this project finished by the end of this year. Thanks for the reminder!

### f11: Are you part of quite a wide photo community, or are you more of a lone wolf?

ODT: I would say, I do what I can. I am quite active on Google+ and have a little theme that I curate called #MinimalMonday. It's all about minimal landscape photography. Something that is very close to my heart. That's my personal way of giving back to the photo community. Locally I am part of a photographic friend circle called 'Caffeine & Cameras' and I am part of a storm chasers group as well, which is another one of my passions.

#### f11: Do you belong to any professional associations?

ODT: I try to stay away from those.

#### f11: When you go out shooting are you alone, or do you have company?

ODT: Interesting question because I just posed that same question myself on Google+. Personally I do my best work when I am out by myself. When I can get into my zone, I have moments of clarity. Moments where I don't think, but feel. When those happen, I am very driven, very motivated and I can go on for a long time.

Think of it as being an athlete of some sort. You need to mentally prepare yourself for the big game. I need to get into that zone. If I don't get into it, if I am distracted, I produce mediocre work.

#### f11: Do you ever shoot in colour?

ODT: Funny story. So I started out in B&W photography right, and in 2004 I believe I picked up my first digital camera. And for some reason, I started photographing in colour. I don't know why, but I just did. I struggled with colour photography for the best part of 6-7 years before I finally gave it up. I threw in the towel. I gave up because I knew I was not very good at it. ▶



Coulee, near Drumheller, Alberta, Canada, 2011. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré

Two years ago, on an outing to a little town called Claresholm, Alberta, everything fell into place. The weather was bad (it rained for 3 days straight), the light was gloomy, but I was in 'the zone' and felt at ease. The work I produced there told me clearly I had to pursue B&W photography and nothing else. Since then I haven't looked back.

*f11:* You've also written about curators on your blog, and this is part of what I do here at *f11*, act as a curator finding collections within other people's work. Do you think most photographers understand this process?

ODT: As previously stated, I curated a photographic theme on Google+. And I curate it honestly and with dedication. Doing that, has made me appreciate the other side of things a lot more. Curating is hard, let me tell you. Because you don't want to hurt anybody's feelings or egos.

The reality is, that that is far from the truth. I now understand that getting into a curated show for instance is not really an indication of how 'good' or 'bad' your work is. And getting rejected by a curator does not necessarily mean you are a bad photographer. It has little to do with that. A good curator likes to tell a story throughout the exposition they are pulling together. They too have a vision on things. And a technically flawed photograph can win it over a technically excellent but lifeless photograph if it tells the story better.

*f***11**: I often ask photographers, if you were suddenly denied access to this process and art form, what would you do instead?

ODT: Well I would love to say painting, but give me a paint brush – even if my life was

Sentinels no5, near Claresholm, Alberta, Canada,
2012. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens.
© Olivier Du Tré



dependent on it – and I will screw everything up in no time. I can't paint at all, and I mean AT ALL. So I don't know. Sketching maybe? I was pretty decent at it in art class.

## *f11:* What's the most exciting thing about photography right now?

ODT: The resurgence of all these alternative photography processes. Most importantly, I think the boom in wet plate photography. I find it very fascinating to see how we all are so bad at producing perfect plates yet those civil war photographers made perfect plates all the time. I think it proves that you can always find people out there who are willing to step out of their comfort zone and try something outrageous. I have a lot of respect for people who do that.

## **f11**: After you've shot everything there is to shoot in Canada, what's next? Any trips planned to exotic locations or countries on your 'bucket list'?

ODT: Photographing on the Prairies, I don't think I will EVER run out of subjects here though. These plains look different every single day. If it's the light, the skies, the forgotten rural places I come across, I can't tell you. But something keeps calling me back. Maybe I was some sort of explorer in a past life or something. I'm just curious I guess.

But I strongly believe that photographing iconic or exotic locations, doesn't necessarily mean you make great photographs. I believe in photographing close to home. Where you can connect with the land around you, and understand it in all it's facets.

## *f***11**: Olivier, it's been a pleasure, thanks for finally featuring in *f***11**!

ODT: Thank you so much for having me Tim. It was a real pleasure.■

### TS

www.olivierdutre.com



Image of Olivier Du Tré © Suzanne Lacoste



Mighty Tree, near Cochrane, Alberta, Canada, 2011. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens.© Olivier Du Tré

'I can really say that this place has made me a different person'



Devils Head, near Waiparous, Alberta, Canada, 2012. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré

'These plains look different every single day.'



Grain Silo, near Claresholm, Alberta, Canada, 2011. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré



Over the Horizon, near Claresholm, Alberta, Canada, 2012. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré



Summer Storm no1, near Carbon, Alberta, Canada, 2012. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré



Lonely Chair, Nova Scotia, Canada, 2011. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré Rock in Calm Foggy Water, Nova Scotia, Canada, 2011. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré

'I believe in photographing close to home. Where you can connect with the land around you, and understand it in all it's facets.'



Lenticular Clouds, near Cochrane, Alberta, Canada, 2012. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L lens. © Olivier Du Tré

# Paul **GUMMER**

Masterclass

Paul Gummer holds a Masters degree in Art and Design, and is a Fellow of the NZIPP, and a Master of the AIPP. He has won a slew of awards on both sides of the Tasman Sea and is a strong advocate of the advantages of both membership and active participation within a professional photographic association. He was the NZIPP Photographer Of The Year in 2009, the same year he took out the Landscape Photographer Of The Year award.

Born in the UK, he has made New Zealand his home where he now lectures at UCOL in Palmerston North.

We challenged him to define his life and career in photography, and the extent to which his occupation as a lecturer in the subject impacts on his own work.

To illustrate his work, we've chosen to combine a series of images drawn from his still life and Italian collections. Tonally, and compositionally, to our eyes these are not only highly compatible, but emblematic of his structured, disciplined and formal style. ▶



Monteriggioni, Tuscani, Italy. Canon EOS 5D with EF 75-300mm lens. © Paul Gummer

## *f11:* Welcome to *f11* Paul, what made you get into teaching?

PG: Originally, my plan was to get into architectural photography in England. I did this for a few years working for magazines such as 'Country Life' along with architects and designers. I saw teaching as something that I might be interested in doing after a decade or more in business. The local technical college needed someone to cover for a staff member who had been in a car accident and asked if I could start 'tomorrow' and teach all day for two days. With no experience and no resources it was certainly being thrown in at the deep end but I seemed to float and enjoyed it.

Part time teaching supplemented my freelancing work and when we moved to New Zealand with a young family, teaching seemed a sensible way to start a new life here.

After some part-time teaching in Auckland, I enquired about work around the country and Joe Sing gave me a full-time position at what is now UCOL in Palmerston North in 1998. Joe had just started a 12-week photography certificate course with a commercial focus, as few other institutions seemed to be doing that. I came in at the start of a one-year diploma. Within a couple of years we had expanded to a two-year programme, then a three-year diploma and a \$2 million purpose-built facility. Six years down the track and we had formed a degree programme driven by fast-developing technology and convergence among respective disciplines. For example, design and video skills are becoming more and more useful to photographers.

# *f***11**: How does having to teach a subject like photography impact on your own work in that field?

PG: Teaching in photography goes way beyond just being a competent photographer. You have to not only understand why we do what we do, but then have the ability to explain and demonstrate it to other people from all walks of life. Some are clued up and highly motivated, others have come from backgrounds with a lot of baggage so you are really on the frontline of working with the public.

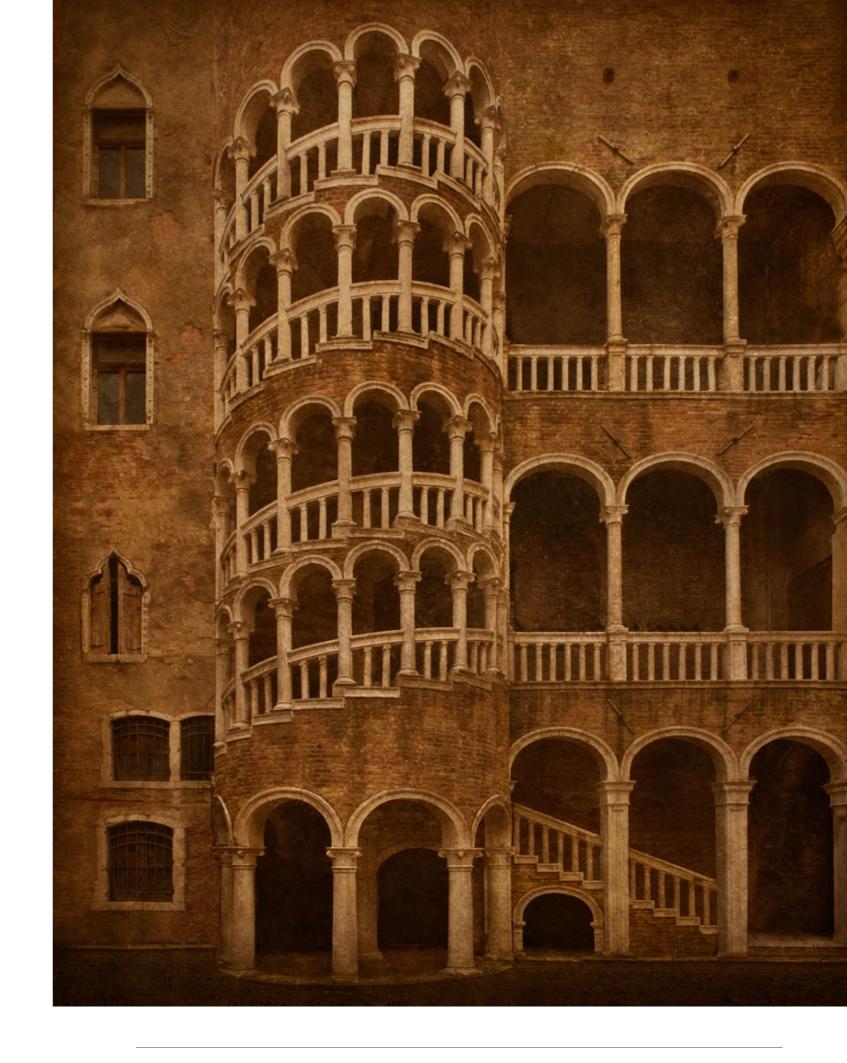
The job is about developing good working relationships with people, regardless of age, behavior and their varied life goals. I go into a class knowing that there will be people in there that know something I don't, so they deserve as much respect and help as I'd extend to a friend or colleague.

There will be plenty of knowledge and skills that I can offer them and the motivating force is watching them grow in their photography. By the middle of the second year they have developed the ability to produce professional quality images; they just don't yet have the wealth of experience a working professional has. But, as I always say to people, 'Even all the great photographers had to take their first picture'.

# *f***11**: How about the impact on your own work brought about by your working with young creative minds, blank canvases, fresh outlooks?

PG: The process of understanding photography, how it communicates in non-verbal ways, and how to use complex techniques forces you into really understanding the medium in a deeper way. People show me work in progress and ask for advice on how to push it further and I can usually see opportunities that I wouldn't have been able to see a decade ago. Sometimes you have to just stare at proof sheets for a while and then connections and trends start to

Scala Contarini del Bovolo, Venice, Italy. Canon EOS
5D with TS-E 24mm f3.5 L lens.
© Paul Gummer



materialise. The function of an educator is to not only observe these but then to help the photographer understand what it is they are communicating. Many people work from instinct rather than logic and so they don't always know what they are saying through their work. But once they become aware, the work can advance to a higher level. It doesn't matter whether the images are for a commercial purpose or purely expressive, the principle is the same. In fact many photographers tend to isolate themselves by saying that they are only this type of photographer or that type of photographer. The truth is, we are all in this medium together.

One thing I think is great about New Zealand photography is that in general, the better photographers are happy to discuss the medium with photographers from a range of fields. Although I will never become a wedding photographer, consistently the most interesting photographers I have heard speak have been wedding practitioners; they have a different way of seeing and so I transpose this into my areas of interest.

# **f11**: You've always been a strong proponent of keeping pace with advances in technology and technique, is this a moving target in education?

PG: Since technology is moving at such a fast pace, it is vital to keep up or get left behind. I was late to get into digital to the point that many students here at UCOL used to laugh whenever I mentioned Photoshop. I changed my thinking and became absorbed by the creative potential of the digital medium. I speak now in class about 'change thinking'; about getting out of habits and not being afraid of change; about positive thinking and pushing forward. The staff team at UCOL thinks like this a lot and we are now trying to teach new methods and technologies as they emerge. After all we are educating people for their future, not for our past. With this in mind, I used to be a film and darkroom addict but no longer see the need for these; the

future has arrived, young people don't live in the world we grew up in so we have to change for them and not the other way round.

So, all-in-all, teaching expands you as a photographer. It keeps you fresh and open to change. Not to mention getting younger every day...

# *f***11**: Tell us about that curious mix of creativity, motivation, expression, competitiveness, performance anxiety, creative angst?

PG: Working in a vibrant teaching environment is like being on a hotbed of creative ideas and innovation. When people share creative ideas it motivates everyone to push their work to another level. Sometimes I am blown away by the fascinating visual ideas people here come up with. Interestingly, a sharing environment is competitive, otherwise people would be loathe to share. The competition is with yourself; it's the desire to become better at what you do - the pursuit of excellence.

This is why we are heavily involved in both the New Zealand Iris Awards and the recently introduced Canon Eyecon Awards. People studying here see these as 'creative carrots' held out to them, encouraging them to take creative risks and improve. Both Canon and the NZIPP have been incredibly supportive of students but few institutions realise this. It's about bringing the next generation through into our industry. If young people build on current knowledge, it immediately places them in pole position for extending ideas for images. Like life generally, image making must keep unfolding rather than making the same pictures past generations made. This is why I can never understand why people stay locked into the past and knock digital as though it's a form of cheating. New technology has handed us the keys to a creative goldmine and all we have to do is walk in and help ourselves!

Teaching is something I never become anxious about. In front of a class, I know a little bit that

they don't and my job is to tell them about it. Then they know what I know and make pictures with that information. Then it turns around and I start asking them things. My photography knowledge keeps expanding because I have so many people to ask. And, I get paid for it – I can't really imagine a better job!

# *f11:* Let's talk about developing and working themes over time, such as your Italy and still life themes, are these still works in progress or done and dusted?

I have always felt that to learn something new you have to apply it and so, I have always worked in projects. They are rarely extensive and most are small scale due to time constraints. Freelance editorial work has always been based mainly around architecture, but includes gardens, whereas personal work has been based around the landscape, which may include buildings.

Any kind of work is best built around your passions; curiously it is not really 'work' in the way most of the population views work. There are always new approaches that I wish to develop so I choose a subject of interest and pursue it.

The work of Australian photographer Peter Dombrovskis, who sadly passed away, was my key influence early on when I lived in Australia for a few years. I saw calendars of his Tasmanian images in the early eighties and made it my goal to work out how he made these images. American photographers such as Eliot Porter, Brett Weston and others also helped to shape the way I work.

Using a 5x4 camera and sheet film was instrumental in rendering fine detail but more importantly it slowed me down and helped to develop my ability to 'see'. I took this camera to the English Lake District for a period when I rented a room in an old 17th century farmhouse to work on an extended project. I learnt much about composition, light and exposure during this project. The Italy work came about as a short-term idea for images to submit to the NZIPP Iris Awards. Prior research in the local library revealed to me that the small hill towns were the places to target, rather than Rome and Florence. The opportunity to go to Venice was too hard to resist, so that was included on the itinerary. There was enough material for two years of submissions to the Iris Awards, which subsequently won me some significant awards. But one of the reasons for going was to gather architectural detail images for use in still life composite images.

I had experimented with this type of work using film but my ideas just seemed too complicated for the medium. As soon as digital came along, I saw the potential for composite based work. Combining an interest in Gothic and Renaissance architecture with organic forms pushed me out of my comfort zone and into the world of compositing. It was through this project that I came to really understand the power of Photoshop.

As much as I would love to return to Italy, life moves on. Current interests include sustainable power as an underlying theme for image making and diverging into fusion. My first forays into DSLR video made me realise why movies have such ridiculously long credits at the end. Attempting to be a one-man band video maker is an enormous learning curve. My ultimate dream is to photograph in Antarctica; one day I'll go there, for sure. My daughter Annie has recently got into photography and she wants to go with me, so who knows?

# **f11:** Can young photographers look beyond the superficial or is this a process which can really only take place over time and with exposure to other influences?

PG: There is, without doubt, a process involved in learning to become a photographer and I believe it is independent of age. Inevitably, everyone comes into photography just wanting to know how the buttons and dials on a camera work. Then they start to 'see' light and understand its impact. This is all happening while they are



Gondolas, Venice, Italy. Canon EOS 5D with TS-E 24mm f3.5 L lens. © Paul Gummer

'I photograph what I'm passionate about and believe an award winning image is mysterious in that it is up to the viewer's imagination to complete the story.' simultaneously exposed to the work of many photographers for visual inspiration and developing an understanding of how images communicate. I feel it is vital to show them work by the legends of the medium. If you want to be one of the best, then you should look at the best. So, inspiring people with images and discussion about the likes of Avedon, Salgado, Nachtwey, Tennesson, Liebovitz, Penn, Weston, Cartier-Bresson, Evans, Arbus and numerous others is arguably essential.

Then they begin to see how post production is significant to enhancing that communication. With commercial work, post production is generally 'invisible' whereas for awards work, it is more overt. The best photographers learn to do as much in camera as possible, so all the time-honoured skills have never lost their importance. But, some images are literally 'made' in post production and, of course, composited work falls into this bracket.

Once people are at a stage of understanding overall communication and technique and their symbiotic relationship, they begin to understand the next level of thinking and developing concepts and ideas that may be extremely subtle or powerfully obvious yet have depth. People are different and so their approaches to photography differ hugely.

Young people have the distinct advantage of being able to come into photography without the conditioning of many years. They take risks freely and have fresh ways of looking at the world. I look at the work of some young people and stand in awe. Why couldn't I think of something like that? We have young people leaving after two or three years of study and I can see big futures for them. The best ones have a highly professional approach to image making and a strong work ethic. ▶



The Last Supper. © Paul Gummer

#### f11: Tell us about your personal transition to digital, and the benefits and drawbacks of using digital in a teaching environment.

PG: As much as I was a film fanatic, digital has unlocked creativity on a massive scale. I took a long time to make the move as at first the quality was woeful in comparison to sheet film transparency material. Then there came a point about seven or eight years ago when digital quality became comparable to film.

For teaching, digital is far quicker as a learning tool as people can see results on the back of the camera instantly, like we used to with Polaroid. In class, we use tethered capture and projectors; a combination that is unparalleled when demonstrating lighting and compositional methods.

Teaching in a Mac computer suite is far more comfortable than a darkroom, results are quicker, images can be shared easily, post production is more extensive, integrating design and publishing is straightforward, blending stills with the moving image in fusion has opened up commercial possibilities, I could go on and on. Digital is without doubt the way of the future and when I see how far it's progressed in the past decade, how much further in another ten years?

For personal work, digital is exciting - I can do things that I couldn't even dream of previously. Staying in touch with technology is key to surviving and remaining enthusiastic.

f11: Thanks Paul, it's been grand.■

#### ΤS

www.paulgummerphotography.com



'...teaching expands you as a photographer. It keeps you fresh and open to change.'

▲ Courgettes. Canon EOS 300D with 18-55mm lens. © Paul Gummer

Following double page spread: Trevi, Umbria. Italy. Canon EOS 5D with EF 24-85mm lens. © Paul Gummer





'As much as I was a film fanatic, digital has unlocked creativity on a massive scale.'

▲ Grand Canal, Venice, Italy. Canon EOS 300D with 18-55mm lens. © Paul Gummer

**>>** Following double page spread: San Gimignano, Tuscany, Italy. Canon EOS 5D with EF 75-300mm lens. © Paul Gummer

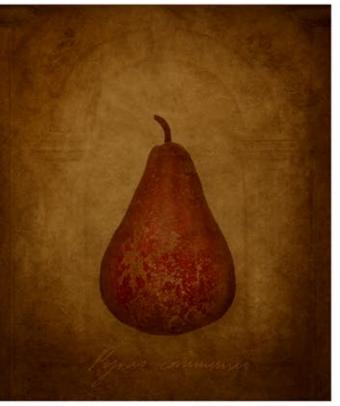




▲ Shells and Arches. Canon EOS 5D with TS-E 24mm f3.5 L lens. © Paul Gummer



Apples and Pears. © Paul Gummer





Mountain Village, Italy. Canon EOS 5D with EF 75-300mm lens. © Paul Gummer

'New technology has handed us the keys to a creative goldmine and all we have to do is walk in and help ourselves!'



Pumpkin. Canon EOS 5D with EF 24-85mm lens. © Paul Gummer



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While Antarctica offers a sense of surreal wilderness grandeur, it also has a dark side. In living history, whales were hunted and killed, in the thousands. It is banned, but the companies left most of the equipment. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, with 16-35mm lens at 16mm. f11 1/90 sec hand held, Aperture Priority, 200 ISO EV to plus 1 stop. © Darran Leal ▶

## On location

Antarctica

The most common observation made by anyone who has visited Antarctica is – 'no one will truly understand the Antarctic experience until they go themselves'. I must echo this, as Antarctica is the most surreal experience on this planet. I speculate that only a visit into outer space would match it! My third adventure to the continent offered more days in Antarctica itself and we even crossed the Antarctic Circle. Few get to experience this, as it is further south than the traditional tour to the Antarctic Peninsula. I even enjoyed my third polar plunge! Why not, you only live once and the water is not that cold at 2 degrees for a 'wee dip'.

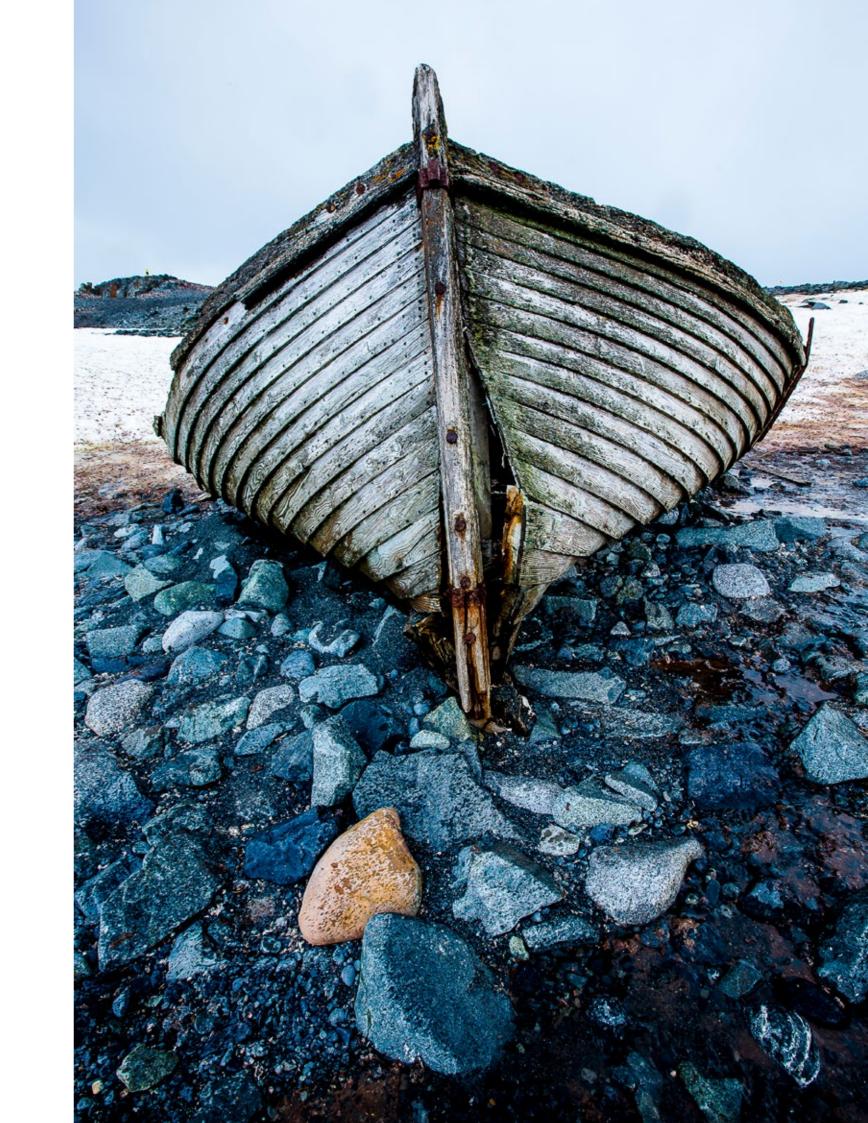
So, what is the best way to travel to Antarctica? To be honest, any way is a good way. One clear point, once you are on the Antarctic Peninsula, seas are far smaller. So, for those feeling the trepidation of the famous Drake Passage crossing, you have a clear target. Survive the crossing and look forward to the adventure that is Antarctica.

My first visit was on a small 50-berth ship. It was nice being with a small group but the ship was prone to movement, so a few of us suffered from seasickness. Later, in 2009, I took a second group of Australian photographers on a ship with a total of 72 photographers. We explored the amazing Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula. This was a great trip, but the old ship was not for the faint hearted, as it rolled around in the big seas. 24 days of passage contain many days in the open oceans.

Finally this January, I travelled for 15 days on a luxury ship. I say luxury, as it offered stabilisers and was fitted out beautifully. These stabilisers make a big difference! I tend to 'lay low' during the major sea crossings as I am prone to seasickness. The magic combination of new drugs, and vessel stabilisation made for a much better crossing of the Drake Passage, even with 6-7m waves. So much so, that I was able to write a couple of articles and watch several movies.

Did you know that in summer, Antarctica is not that cold? Most days are around 3 to 8 degrees Celsius. If a storm rolls in, the temperature will drop below zero and perhaps colder still with wind chill. Wind chill is usually the biggest factor in an Antarctic visit. One day on the recent trip it was 16 degrees! We were all stripping off the layers under perfect blue skies.

A typical day in Antarctica is very weather dependent. The right conditions will have you landing twice each day. After a hearty breakfast, you don rubber boots, water proof pants over your normal long pants, 2 pairs of thick socks



and over your shirt, a jacket and water proof coat. The important accessories are good warm headwear and gloves. Waterproof gloves work the best. If it is very cold, then thermal underwear will help.

Can I stress that most people can visit Antarctica! One of my best customers is a lady with very debilitating arthritis through her whole body. Joanne Gow from Central Queensland is amazing as she not only gets on and off zodiacs and walks the tracks as well as anyone, but she is also a very good photographer! Jo has now been to Antarctica twice, and to several other locations around the world. Jo and I encourage you to be brave and explore the world!

An Antarctic adventure has a lot of rules. These apply to everyone equally and are largely based around safety. The other part is directly tied to the environment. The aim is to leave Antarctica exactly as found, with just a few foot steps left in the ice. Perhaps the most challenging rule for photographers is maintaining the 5m distance limit to animals. The fantastic wildlife of Antarctica is often oblivious to humans. Hard as you try to maintain the limit, there is nothing to stop the wildlife walking up to you. So sometimes, the best images are shot by simply sitting in one location - strategically positioned - with a good telephoto lens.

No two ships can be in the same location and a maximum of 100 people are allowed on shore at any given location. This allows you to start to enjoy an 'on again, off again ritual'. That is, you look forward to leaving the ship in a Zodiac with about 10 other adventurers, as you know it will lead to new images and experiences.

Any standard SLR camera outfit will work. That's right, you do not need the most expensive kit to shoot great results. Some achieve remarkable results with just one camera and a 28-300mm lens. Of course, you have the opposite end of the equipment spectrum represented, with other gear in the group incuding a PhaseOne

with 80MP back, Canon 1Dx bodies, a 400mm f2.8 lens, and much more. A small fortune in the Zodiac! We had no major equipment issues. The key danger is water splash in the Zodiacs, or simply careless use of equipment, like leaving your gear sitting on the ice. Yes I have seen that done before and, surprise - the camera stopped working. Water damage is a risk that can be mitigated by using heavy-duty garbage bags which easily fit over your entire camera bag. The danger is not that your bag will fall in the water, this is very rare. More likely, is the risk of wave splash as you go to and fro, from ship to shore. Fogging is rare as the ship and the outside environment are very dry. Antarctica is a desert of sorts.

Yes, it's an expensive trip, but for most people it will rank as a once in a lifetime experience. I can't wait until 2015, and returning to the most surreal place on our planet. On that trip I'll be flying over the Drake Passage. I have decided that I am a photographer and whatever method can get me into the action the fastest, is the smartest choice. So, I will be flying from Chile to an island at the top of the Antarctic Peninsula. A short transfer to a lovely ship will have me shooting the same day. That's right, in hours shooting magic images in calm waters, instead of spending two days at sea – each way. I will get the same amount of time to spend in Antarctica, without 4-5 days of sea crossing. Guess who's going to use those few days to fly to the Falkland Islands for another adventure?

In fact, I am visiting twice that year with one special shoot of Emperor Penguins and living 'expedition style' on the ice for a week. Only a handful of photographers get to shoot this challenge each year.

Enjoy shooting ... ■

#### Darran Leal

darran@f11magazine.com www.worldadventures.com.au



▼ Zodiacs are the workhorses of Antarctica. While the main use is ship to shore and return, one other key use is as a floating exploration platform. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, with Sigma 50-500mm lens at 167mm - f8 1/500 sec hand held, Aperture Priority, 400 ISO EV to plus 1 stop. © Darran Leal



▲ The first iceberg is always exciting! 'Iceberg Graveyard' is a fantastic shoot location. Canon EOS 5D MkIII, with 16-35mm lens at 16mm f8 1/1000 sec hand held, Aperture Priority, 400 ISO EV to plus 1 stop. © Darran Leal



#### PSNZ National Convention offers the best – Camus Wyatt, Street Photographer

Other photographers say he's one of the 'nicest people you'll ever meet' and that his photographs are 'exquisite'.

We're talking about Wellington based street photographer Camus Wyatt who is one of the keynote presenters on the programme at the Photographic Society of New Zealand's annual National Convention, 'Positively Photography Wellington' to be held in Wellington, from 1-5May 2013.

For such a young age (26) Camus has worked hard to learn and master his craft, which has returned him many awards, accolades and notable distinctions.

His work includes professional documentary, commercial, sports and portrait photography, and he is sought after for judging and speaking roles.

He has twice been a recipient of a Ronald Woolf Memorial Trust grant, given to promising New Zealand photographers under the age of 30. He has also won top honours for two consecutive years in the National Photojournalism Competition and the Ronald Woolf Award for the top print by a photographer under 25 at the 2010 PSNZ National Exhibition.

Camus says his main photographic interest and passion is in 'examining human life', mainly through street photography and photojournalism genres. He says when he takes photographs his focus is on 'content, timing and design', and he doesn't pay great attention to specific technique or genre. His work has been published in New Zealand and overseas, including here in *f11* Magazine, and his exhibition 'Street Light, 2008 – 2010' has been shown in Wellington and Napier.

If street photography is your passion, this is your opportunity to learn from one of the best street photographers New Zealand has to offer. You'll also be able to meet and chat with Camus at the PSNZ National Convention – 'Positively Photography Wellington' being held at the Wellington Town Hall from 1 – 5 May, 2013.

To learn more about the PSNZ Convention, the programme and to register, go to:

http://positivelyphotography.org.nz/register

Moira Blincoe PSNZ Councillor for Publicity

Wellington 2012 © Camus Wyatt



### BUT WAIT – THERE'S MORE…

#### HOW TO FIND THE LINKS TO EXTRA CONTENT IN *f11* MAGAZINE

Each issue of *f11* Magazine contains dozens of hotlinks, all expanding on our content and offering an enhanced readership experience.

There are links to online content such as videos, and to websites expanding on the ideas on offer here. Passing your cursor over the link usually highlights it.

Anywhere you see an image of a computer screen contains a link, usually to video content.

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

All advertisements link to the appropriate website so you can learn more about the products you're interested in.

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

#### HOW TO USE THE LINKS

A single click of the mouse will activate the link you're interested in. Here's how they behave depending on how you're reading the magazine:

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### **TONY BRIDGE**

ARTIST, WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER, TEACHER, MENTOR

Tony Bridge is one of New Zealand's leading photo educators with over 30 years experience as a photographer himself, and as a teacher of photography at all levels. He is an industry commentator, a blogger and a popular columnist for f11 Magazine.

#### Bridge on teaching photography:

'Nothing gives me more pleasure than to share my knowledge, much of it not available in books, with people seeking to grow themselves as photographers'.

#### Bridge on his Hurunui Experience tours:

'Come, join me for a photo tour of up to 3 days, for only 3 people, and discover the astonishingly beautiful Hurunui District of the South Island.'

#### Bridge on his photography workshops:

'Share with others in one of my unique work shops, designed to get you thinking in new ways about photography.'

#### Bridge on mentoring photographers:

'Make a friend and become part of my strictly limited mentoring programme, a one-on-one journey, working towards your own goal and developing your own vision.'

These programs are often bespoke, tailored responses to the carefully analysed needs, wants and aspirations of the photographer concerned. It all begins with a conversation, and that conversation will very likely be an enduring one.

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# Knocking the edges off the stone....again!

Sometimes reinventing the wheel is a return to tried and true practice, and other times it is a whole new series of 'eureka' moments, as lightning illuminates for someone what has been self evident to everyone else for a long time. At least since it was last reinvented!

One recent eureka moment trend relates to stills photographers embracing video production without any formal education, apprenticeship or mentoring.

Instead, entry has been facilitated with ease by low cost, no real barriers and a relatively unsophisticated, undemanding audience.

The steep learning curve, bad experiences, increased demand for more investment and growing exposure to more rigorous technical and aesthetic requirements will only later prompt an interrogation of whether or not the initial investment path chosen was the correct one.

Perhaps a 'proper' dedicated video camcorder should have been chosen?

Perhaps a full immersion experience such as six months at a video school should have been taken?

Perhaps experienced lighting, editing and post people should have been contracted?

At heart is a linear and developing story, not just the stitching together of some 'nice stuff' in an attractive way – that's just full motion wallpaper.

Connecting with audiences, whatever they may be, requires a precise engagement with well defined targets. It requires fresh and original ideas, and the implicitly understood knowledge that every night the same audience is watching very sophisticated television on the best of technology. They also take in the leading cinema presentations.... be they high frame rate 3D or just 24 fps 2D. They are, quite unconsciously, visually sophisticated consumers of the moving picture accustomed to all that the very best craft can deliver.

Teaching yourself, rediscovering over and over again the craft techniques that are part of the long embedded skills of your new industry is such a wasted effort.

All of this has become well embedded in how we advance as a civilisation, and it's vital that we not ignore what history has demonstrated and proven.

In the midst of the Great Depression in the United States (the 1930's one), financial crisis combined with devastating droughts and massive dust storms, a mass migration to the west and the plight of poor tenant farmers. Roosevelt's New Deal programme directed the Department of Agriculture to form the Farm Security Administration.

As part of the role they had to address issues of extreme poverty and 'collectivise' agriculture ownership and they recognised how important a public photographic record would be in recording what was happening. Under the leadership of Roy Stryker, the Information Division of the FSA bought together some of the greats of American photography and combined their talents with those of contemporary writers, who were collectively commissioned to '...introduce America to Americans.'

Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Jack Delano, Arthur Rothstein and Gordon Parks were among those famous photographers who contributed to the huge exercise that ran from 1935 to 1944. Over 165,000 of the 250,000 images captured are freely available online from the US Library of Congress.

To bring this long story home, having such a wonderful template established with outcomes of individual images that are celebrated for the extreme strength and honesty of devastation and despair captured. Many became iconic images of the tragic and shattering chain of events, and icons of the individual photographers' work.

Yet it is hard to find a roll-out of such a template in other major events. Perhaps, as is evident, there is now a natural oversupply of personal experience digital records through social media, through news-media and broadcast television. Mass media capture seems to have replaced individual effort at the process of carefully considered image gathering with a less meaningful, less interpretative version of events.

When I search online through the official records of 9/11, of Haiti, of L'Quilla-Italy, of Tohoku-Japan, I discover massive publication but few significant authority funded studies such as the FSA one. Few commissions, just a reliance on the media of the day.

Here in New Zealand, the devastating Christchurch earthquake of 2011, and two years of aftershocks, have received major media coverage, and are represented by the official records held by our Police and emergency services, a documentary, books and exhibitions. But sadly, the opportunity to build an official human focus photo resource was missed by the low budget commissioning by the National Library of New Zealand of one relatively 'unknown' and inexperienced photographer to record images of effect, change and transition following the events themselves.

What a waste, of what could have been a fantastic record by a number of the best photographers in a variety of genre, many of whom are located, literally, on the spot. All officially denied access to locations, opportunities and events of heartbreaking importance to residents of Christchurch, Cantabrians and wider New Zealand.

It is a case of history being repeated, and as history is being created right in front of us it's likely future importance needs to be anticipated, considered, and recognised; and it's future value assessed from the widest possible perspectives.

Clearly not the case, but then that is always the problem with discovery and reinvention.

#### MS

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Photographer and ACMP Board Member Des Harris was recently thrown a bit of a curve ball when he was faced with moving country due to his wife's work relocation. With an established photographic business in Sydney he was lucky enough to have planned ahead to be able to sell it and profit from the move. Could you do it? Read his story to see how you need to think ahead in business.

Don't put your own name over the door.

Yep, that was the one piece of advice that I found the most important when setting up my last business. That's right, I've had others. In fact I have had 2 different guises when working as an independent photographer, both under my own name. Also an e-commerce business that branched into wholesale and retail too. But that's another story. It wasn't until the ripe old age of thirty...something..., that I decided to set up as a Proprietary Limited registered company. No more Sole Trader for me! Nope, I was planning ahead this time.

So, now you get to choose a trading name for your business, that's great fun.

Yeah...right. Well, not so fast. Your business plan is where you need to look first. The 'why am I doing this' and the 'for how long' and 'what am I planning ahead for?' etc. It should all be there in your Mission Statement, your Company Policy and most importantly for the purposes of this article, your 'Exit Strategy'.

The forethought and planning should always include an exit strategy. Hopefully this doesn't mean you will shoot photos until you die...or your kids take over the business. Ideally, you should be setting up your business so it can run itself. So you can take a holiday and business continues, so you can still have an income if you get sick, so you can sell it if you want, or need, to walk away.

You never know what life may bring you, illness, a change of family circumstances. I have a friend in the photography business who had to relocate interstate due to one parent passing and another needing care. They were happy to move and look after their parent and then start again in the new location. It was only 6 months later though that they realised what they should have done was to realise the value of the 15 years worth of business, reputation and client base they had built up previously. In my case, my wife was being relocated overseas for her work which meant I either stayed in Sydney without her and our 14 year old, or ran my business from Paris, or just shut the doors. Unless of course. I had a saleable asset. I did...

The story continues on the ACMP website:

www.acmp.com.au

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# aipp



Hair of the Dog... it's a funny name for a pretty awesome conference. The AIPP's Hair of the Dog in Brisbane is in its twelfth year in 2013, and with names attached such as the legendary Heide Smith, the new buzz Kelly Brown, and the always inspiring Jesh de Rox Hair of the Dog 2013 (HOTD) did not disappoint! Those of us involved in bringing HOTD to life began doing so soon after the last conference, but really it comes down to a good seven months of solid work from selected volunteers. We do it because we love it, and because we all have a drive to make each event bigger and better than the last. By all accounts we may have done exactly that this time around, with very strong positive feedback from our attendees. Oh, and for the first time EVER the conference sold out in the week leading up to the event.

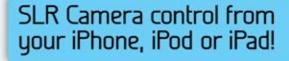
Each of the three days of the laid-back February conference, targeted mainly at those in their first five years of a photographic business, begins and ends with a keynote presentation to the whole group. In the middle of the day, attendees break off into focus groups to spend time with a speaker.

Those who attended Trevor Foon's workshop were lucky enough to see old-style wet plate photography in action. Those who wanted to spend more time learning about social media listened to David Watson from Strategy Point discuss the best ways to spend their energy for greatest return. Jesh demonstrated his use of the Beloved technique on a few unsuspecting subjects, and there was barely a dry eye in the house! Nick Melidonis demonstrated some mind-blowing Lightroom techniques, Johannes van Kan and Jo Grams told us their harrowing story of losing their studio in the Christchurch earthquakes, and Mark Broadbent showed us how we could start filming video with the equipment we already have access to. Shirl Heyman took her years of experience in running husband Rob Heyman's studio and explained how to grow a young business, Ian Wilkinson taught better digital workflow, and we had a fun session we entitled 'Short & Sharp'. The Short & Sharp session had six speakers - each experts in their own field.

But it's not all work! We work hard, we party harder. The first night saw a casual well-catered barbecue. This also featured our second annual Print Swap, where attendees are encouraged to bring along a print they would be proud to have represent them. Their name is drawn at random, where they will pick up a print. Even our speakers take part, so there's always the chance an entrant will end up with a very valuable print indeed! Next year... who knows what HOTD will hold? I can say that it will be bigger and better, and will involve some of the industry's premier experts in their chosen fields. Expect hands-on workshops, a trade show with excellent discounts and deals, inspirational stories and plenty of friends to be made!

Melinda Comerford

HOTD Committee Chairman



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Leica CS lenses guarantee uncomplicated working with either the focal plane shutter or integrated central shutter. Three new lenses – the Leica Super-Elmar-S 24 mm f/3.5 ASPH. super-wide, the Leica Vario-Elmar-S 30-90 mm f/3.5-5.6 ASPH. and the Leica TS-APO-Elmar-S 120 mm f/5.6 ASPH. tilt/shift lens – further expand the capabilities of the Leica S. A wide range of third party lenses can also be used on the S with dedicated lens adapters. For instance, the S Adapter H allows the use of Hasselblad H lenses without any loss of functionality.

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#### Find out more about it here: www.s.leica-camera.com



Do you have the courage to take a selection of twelve images that sums up your work as a photographer and submit them for evaluation to five photographers who are well established in their profession?

#### This is the NZIPP 'Q' process

Many occupational classes these days are regulated to some degree. You can't just buy an ammeter and call yourself an electrician. Not so in photography. Anyone with a camera can call himself or herself a 'professional' photographer. The more serious will have studied photography with an educational provider.

From a public perception, if you call yourself a professional photographer then a standard of professionalism will be expected.

It is this 'standard' that our 'Q' process is designed to set when one of our provisional members gains the right to full membership and are then able to use that fact in their marketing media.

There is a separate 'Q' for Wedding, Portrait and Commercial. Each one has it's own criteria. A Wedding submission consists of two albums from two different weddings of not less than 50 images each. A Portrait 'Q' of twelve prints from different sittings. And a Commercial 'Q' of 12 commercial images supplied as high resolution files.

As the Commercial Director of the NZIPP it is my role to organise a panel of five members for the commercial 'Q's. It is a great responsibility and taken very seriously by the panel of judging

photographers, a digital file these days contains a heap more information than just the visual side. Metadata can often reveal a great deal about how the photographer has chosen to cope with the image capture and the result this may or may not have had on the final image. I have just been involved with the latest round of Commercial 'Q's' and delighted that all those who submitted passed. Feedback on the result of a 'Q' pass or fail is given back to the photographer by the panel chair.

If you are earning an income from photography we encourage you to join the NZIPP. Our mission is to give everyone who wishes to operate as a photographer a level of professionalism that has a standard recognized by their peers, and the general public.

For more information on the NZIPP and the 'Q' process please visit our website: http://www.nzipp.org.nz

#### **TERRY WREFORD HANN**

Commercial director New Zealand Institute of Professional Photography

INFSCUS 2013



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# The things we must endure to get the job

Part 1 – The five questions you least want to hear

This month we look at five potentially irritating questions that might be asked of commercial photographers during the commissioning process, and how to tactfully address them. Responding to questions such as these is a part of your sales process, and it's commonly referred to as 'objection handling'. Done well, this can be an opportunity to educate your client and build a stronger working relationship. So learn to anticipate these, and other common questions, and have a carefully prepare series of answers which help your clients to be better clients in future.

### Why will it take so long? We only need one image!

Arriving at that 'one' image can be a lengthy process and that's often really hard for someone new to, or inexperienced in, commissioning photography to grasp. One must take a deep breath and walk the client through the process if they are new to it, explaining that every angle must be covered at the time of the shoot so as to ensure there is enough material available for them to select the 'one' image from.

I also point out to these folk that the ultimate decision makers further up their chain of

command will usually want some input into the final choice so a well crafted collection of suitable candidate images will show they're on top of the task. An example? Imagine having to tell the marketing manager, or the creative director, or your CEO, that you only brought home one angle from the shoot you ran, and that a reshoot might be required if they'd like a low right ¾ image rather than the high left ¾ you're looking at on screen.

## Do you really need to pay an assistant? Most of them work for free, don't they?

Ah, assistants... The days of adding 'hired help' in to each and every quote are pretty much over, for this photographer anyway. These days, when the nature of a particular job necessitates an assistant, I have to argue the case and push for this valuable resource, pointing out that a small expenditure in this area will give the client more of my much more expensive time to concentrate on their job. Value is a concept that most buyers 'get'.

If I had a dollar for every time a client who 'couldn't stretch the budget' to cover an assistant suggested I could find a free one... For me, an assistant is not a something you pick up on the way to a shoot, like a prop, and discard afterwards. These people are rare, and can't be found at short notice, and I don't believe anybody in this industry should work without reward. From my perspective, I need someone who will get to know my gear, and my work habits, and quickly become self sufficient – therefore being genuinely useful on a shoot.

### Professional talent is so expensive - I've got a friend, or there's someone at our office...

This is my response to this often innocent, and usually well-intentioned suggestion. Can your friend, or the receptionist from the office, turn up fully prepared for the rigors of a full day on set starting with makeup, hair and wardrobe, then deal with the hours of boredom interspersed with bursts of several minutes of intense activity that being a working photographic model entails? Can this person take direction, or will the whole process take twice as long as it should?

I explain that in my experience the answer is usually no. The friend may look suitable for the role, and have the best intentions, but professional modeling is no walk in the park. A professional model is a special and seasoned individual who understands exactly what's required and delivers every time. That's why they get the big bucks!

#### A producer? We're not making a movie, are we?

Many people simply cannot comprehend just how much work is required to pull a complex shoot together successfully. Even good marketing or agency people often underestimate how much planning, and detail management, go into a successful shoot. At best, a few understand that someone needs to take care of all the talent, locations, permissions, materials, wardrobe, props, catering, not to mention the performing seals, their wrangler and the gymnasts – and, of course, they'd like someone to take care of it all, but I explain that the photographer is NOT that someone!

## Licensing? What, you mean I pay you all of this money and I don't own anything?

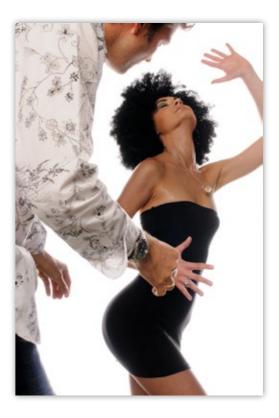
This is a question that usually arises with direct or new clients – as opposed to those working through agencies where the whole concept is already well understood. Sometimes the client may be totally unaware of the concepts of copyright ownership and licensing, and sometimes they've been known to play dumb hoping for a windfall from an inexperienced provider of photography.

Either way, its up to you to remedy this situation and the best answer is to make sure you thoroughly understand the process yourself and have a well rehearsed response at the ready when this situation crops up so that you can educate the client on the benefits to both parties. Once again, properly explained this really can be relationship enhancing, and generally only has to be done once.

#### Buzz

gary@f11magazine.com

Next Month: Part 2: Another 5 questions – this time, the ones you want to hear.



Both images © Gary Baildon





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### **Building Your Brand**

By now you'll have done some research into the brands on your radar, and given some thought to your own hopes and aspirations for your own brand. So how ambitious are these?

Start by assuming that all of your competitors are equally charming, talented, easy to get along with, well located and equipped and that they have an identical work ethic, and offer lineball pricing. This will save you lots of heartache.

Branding is a funny thing, it's a combination of so many tiny things, plus a few big ones – most of which you can totally control - but the end result, the 'take out' will often be a one liner based on how people identify with you/your brand – which you cannot control in any way!

So accept that all of your hard work and investment in your own ethos and brand might be perceived, remembered and then recalled in unforeseen ways. The most expensive photographer in Springfield? That guy in the fedora? The photographer with the Chihuahua and the round business cards? The woman who shot the baby in the terracotta pot, what was her name? So memorability – but with recall – is important.

However stunning your logo, elegant your typography, well designed your stationery and website, well turned out or well spoken, intelligent and ethical you are; or how good a problem solver you might be, or how great your creative solutions might be – the take out will vary, enormously, because your target market is made up of people. And people are notoriously fickle and unpredictable.

Let this not dissuade you from the task of slow and steady brand building, for build it you must. In the same way that you'd discourage your designer colleagues from shooting their own images, get help from them for your own logo and website, and do the same with experts in other fields, like marketing and promotional companies - treating each as a networking opportunity and making valuable connections.

One word is key, consistency – in everything you show, create and say. You should establish visual consistency across all of the elements which represent you; performance consistency in that you always deliver creatively on time, budget and brief; and message consistency in that whatever you say about yourself and your business remains on topic, on message, and expressed in exactly the same terms.

Brand messaging is like water dripping on stone, it ultimately achieves a tangible result based on gentle and consistent repetition over time.

These are only the starting points, for having ticked these boxes, you then ideally need to find a point of difference, a competitive advantage, or a unique selling proposition (USP) that you can leverage off. In the same order as presented, you could be: the photographer who always shoots naked (a point of difference); the photographer who personally hand delivers his images on three types of storage media (a competitive advantage in a paranoid world); or the photographer with the slogan 'On time, on budget or free...' as a company slogan (certainly a USP).

The journey of a thousand miles begins here... ■

#### TS

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