

ISSUE 24 | AUGUST 2013



for PHOTOGRAPHERS
AND AFICIONADOS

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PETER ELFES
Desert dreams

ELIZABETH OPALENIK
Reflecting on the Edge

MOHAMMADREZA REZANIA
Certain style

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Engagement, that's what it's all about. We engage with photographers, learn about them and feature their work in this magazine. As readers, you in turn engage with the material, and the feedback you're volunteering is most certainly appreciated. You're connecting with the images we show, and the ideas we expose. While we can't, and undoubtedly won't, please all of you, all of the time, we're going to carry on making genuine efforts to do so. Balance, that's what we strive for, and hopefully you think we're getting the mix of ideas, styles and genres featured just about right. Here's what we have for you in issue 24:

Elizabeth Opalenik is a fine art photographer, printmaker and photographic educator from the USA. She has lectured around the world and will shortly do so across Australia. We're showcasing images from her series, 'Reflecting on the Edge'. In some ways, these images feel more like paintings, some seemingly rendered in oil, others in watercolour, there's even a gouache or two.

Australian photographer Peter Elfes fell in love with a mythical place called Kati Thanda – Lake Eyre, a 10,000 acre pluvial lake set in an Australian desert, and returns time and time again to capture the magic of its ephemeral beauty.

Most, though not all, of Peter's work is shot from the air and this perspective provides a strong narrative, even though many of the images are essentially abstract artworks until the captions reveal their hidden depths.

Iranian photographer Mohammadreza Rezanian takes the most serene and composed portraits, and these demonstrate a personal style, confidence and maturity well beyond his years. All the more amazing, is the fact that he produces these images within a cultural environment where his work may well be regarded as more than a little avant-garde. A brave artist at play.

This is your invitation, not that you need one, to engage. Feel free to point us towards work you've seen and feel warrants greater exposure, and don't be afraid to make a submission of your own. Who knows?

Enjoy this issue of *f11*. ■

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The *f11* team

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



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



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



IAN POOLE has been a member of the AIPP since 1976, holding various positions within the Institute. Truly a trans-Tasman go between, Poole has been a long term judge of the APPA's and a guest judge in the NZIPP Awards for eight years. Well known for his extensive work as an educator at both Queensland's Griffith University College of Art, and Queensland University of Technology, and with a background as an advertising/commercial photographer in Brisbane, Ian is now turning his hand to finely crafted black and white portraiture. He is a director of Foto Frenzy, which specialises in photographic education in Brisbane. Erudite, witty and urbane, or so he tells us, he's *f11*'s latest Australian ambassador and a most welcome addition to the team.



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



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



WARNING – HOTLINKS ARE EVERYWHERE!

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

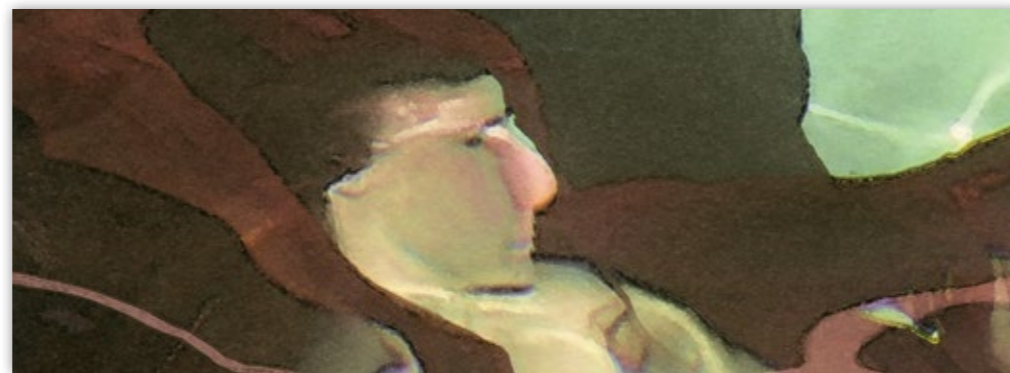
If this is still baffling, learn more in our expanded instructions on [page 119](#) of this issue.



Elizabeth OPALENIK

Reflecting on the Edge

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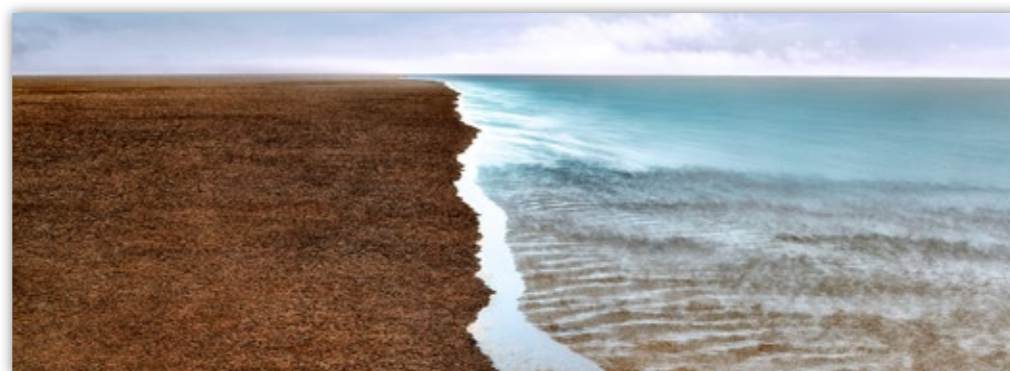


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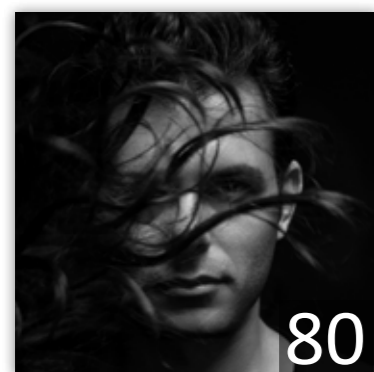


Peter ELFES

Desert dreams

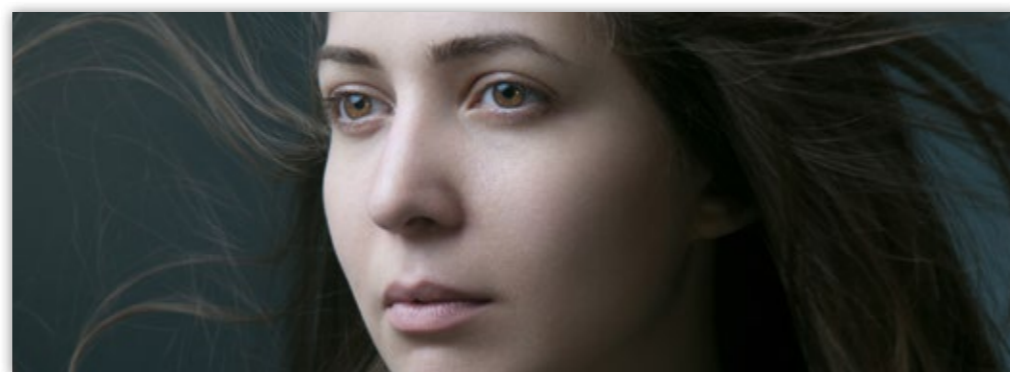


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Mohammadreza REZANIA

Certain style



© Mohammadreza Rezania

'When we make a photograph, be it a landscape, portrait or photograph of a sports game, in a sense we are opening a window onto a small section of the world, initially framing it and then freezing the moment for posterity. Our small box has created a portal others can look through.'

From Tony Bridge's article, 'Of Windows and Mirrors', on page 10.



COVER IMAGE © Peter Elfes
www.peterelfesphotography.com

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In plain sight

RED EPIC AERIAL RUSHES

Watch some of the aerial rushes from a TVC which director Mark Toia shot in Southern New Zealand. Shot with the RED EPIC 5K camera inside a SHOTOVER stabilised camera system with a 24-290 Angenieux Lens. Ungraded but gorgeous all the same...

Source: Cinescopophilia via VIMEO

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO



SHOOTING FOR APPLE

Watch San Francisco-based photographer Peter Belanger, the man behind some of Apple's most iconic product images, set up and shoot a cover for Macworld Magazine. Time lapse makes it all look so easy...

Source: Agnostica via YouTube

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO



WPPI 2013 FILM : WORLD PREMIERE!

An inside look at what makes WPPI the photo industry's must-attend event. Director Sion Michel explores what happens when more than 13,000 photographers from around the world meet up in Las Vegas to share ideas and inspire success. See for yourself!

Source: VIMEO

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It's less about the how, and more about the why...

As photographers, we invest a tremendous amount of our precious resources – thought, time, energy and money – into the 'how' part of the process of producing and selling our images.

Another camera, lens or cellphone, the latest piece of computer equipment, a software version update, some online training, a new widget or gadget, more powerful illumination, more RAM, a seminar or workshop – all are seen as investments in the business, investments in capability, and to a degree, an investment in ourselves.

Many invest weeks of time each year looking into, keeping current with, or simply investigating new tools, tips and techniques. An enormous investment – in the how. Sound ridiculous? Do your own sums, collate the amount of time you spend online in the pursuit of this stuff. Time being money, prepare for a significant revelation.

Seems like the more we learn, the more we need. This process seems to highlight gaps in what we own, or how we operate and the further analysis of these gaps invariably leads to purchases intended to bridge these wide chasms in our capabilities which we never knew existed.

Imagine then, an alternative scenario. Consider a period of time, say a trial period, maybe 3 months to begin with, where you approach your craft, your profession, in a completely different way.

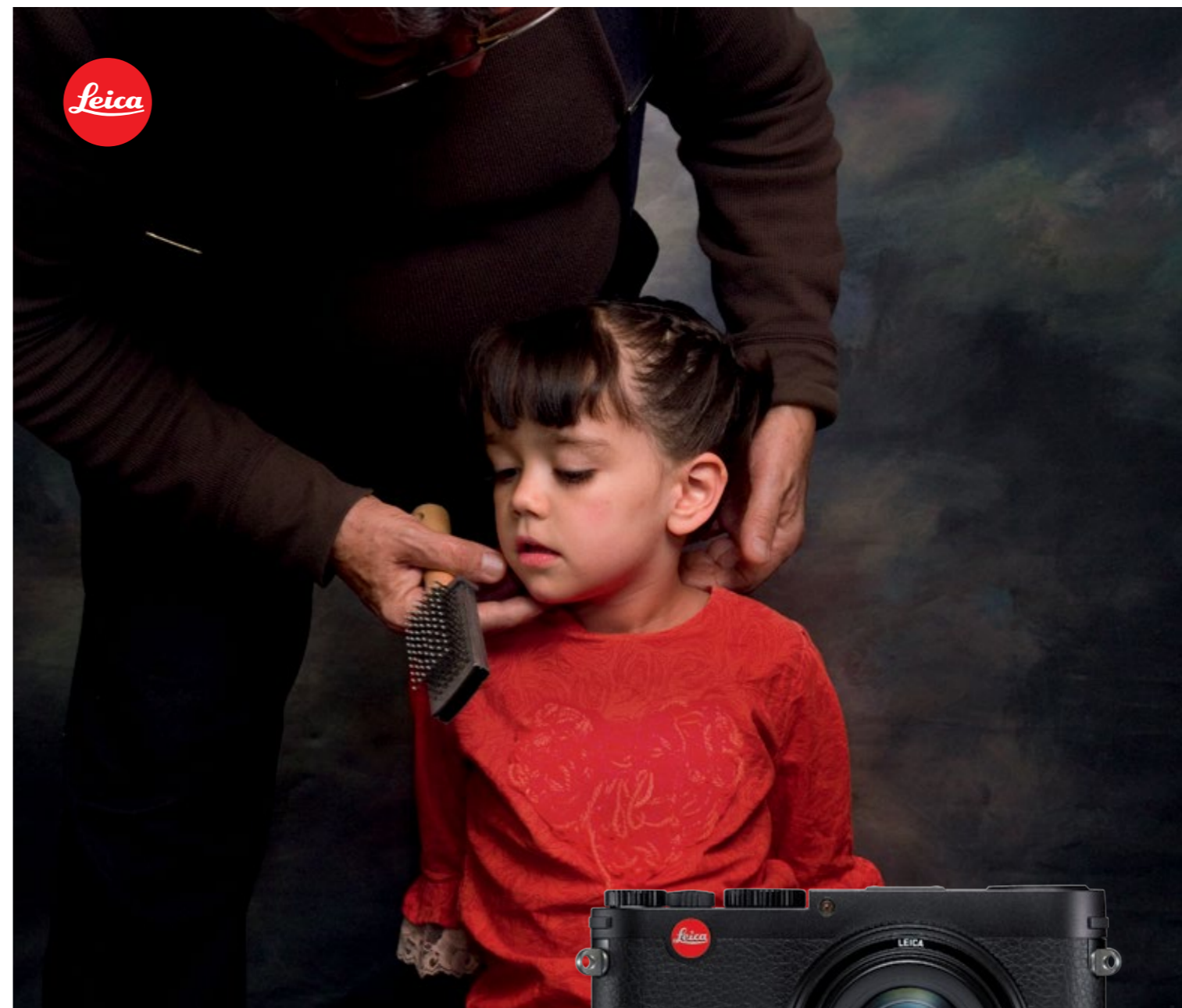
In this alternative universe, assure yourself that you have everything you need, more than you need in fact, in terms of the means of production for your business. Choose to change the internal conversation. Channel the same resources, or perhaps half of them, into an evaluation of the 'why'.

Why did that job I pitched for not come my way? Why did I light that portrait the easy way I always do? Why do I enjoy the images I see from this photographer? Why did I answer that question the way I did? Why don't I use this piece of equipment very often? Why don't I make more prospecting phone calls? Why did that bride choose another photographer? Why did that art director call me rather than someone else? Why don't I play around with that software I bought six months ago?

The difference should be clear. You already know that those 'how' questions usually, or often, lead to a purchase decision of some sort. The 'why' questions cause some soul searching, analysis or understanding leading to greater clarity, a recognition of the complacency often found in old habits, a shove in the right direction, a challenge from within to adapt, adopt, change or innovate.

That process could have real power. Try it. ■

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Of Windows and Mirrors

Part 1 of 2

For many years I have been fascinated by a quote from the great American photographer, Edward Steichen:

‘The mission of photography is to explain man to man, and each man to himself. And that is the most complicated thing on earth.’

While there are so many understandings to be had from this statement, both within photography and without, one way we might approach Steichen’s comments is to see that the photograph as an act and as a consequence can take one of two approaches, namely to be either a window or a mirror.

When we make a photograph, be it a landscape, portrait or photograph of a sports game, in a sense we are opening a window onto a small section of the world, initially framing it and then freezing the moment for posterity. Our small box has created a portal others can look through.

The act of matting, framing and hanging our moment on a wall or in a gallery only serves to

reinforce this idea of a window, both physically and psychologically. In a way, a photography exhibition is a series of windows, usually hung on a white wall that both contains and directs the eye. The artist has arranged them in a particular order, to direct our eye and hence our response in a particular way. He wants us to see the world through the same windows as he did, and he wants us to share his unique perspective.

Recently I attended a group exhibition put on by a local photography club. The walls were packed with small, framed works, row upon row of them. An enormous amount of effort had gone into taking those frozen moments, printing them and then placing a window-frame around each one. In effect, what I was seeing were a series of openings, each photographer’s outlook on the world. Moreover, and more interestingly, I realised that I the viewer was outside, looking in on their world through the frame/window glass, while they as artist had been inside, looking out past the curtains of their mind, when they had made the initial exposure. Would there



be a point at which each became aware of the other?

One of the great joys of photography is sharing our work, be it online, in an album, or in a gallery. In a sense we are only ever offering an opinion of how the world is. Photography as fact is almost impossible. Whatever the genre we like to work in, our offerings are only ever opinions. Since we cannot get our facts straight, we need to make our opinions coherent, and to realise that not everyone will agree with them.

A few weeks ago, I returned to the Maniototo area of Central Otago, New Zealand, to run a series of workshops. This year there was a record snowfall, and the old-timers in the district told me it was heavier than they could remember in their lifetime. One even referred to the snowfall of 1908 as being the only one that had brought more snow.

So, on our first day, we drove. The landscape was knee-deep in white and, as the snow continued to fall and block the horizon, any

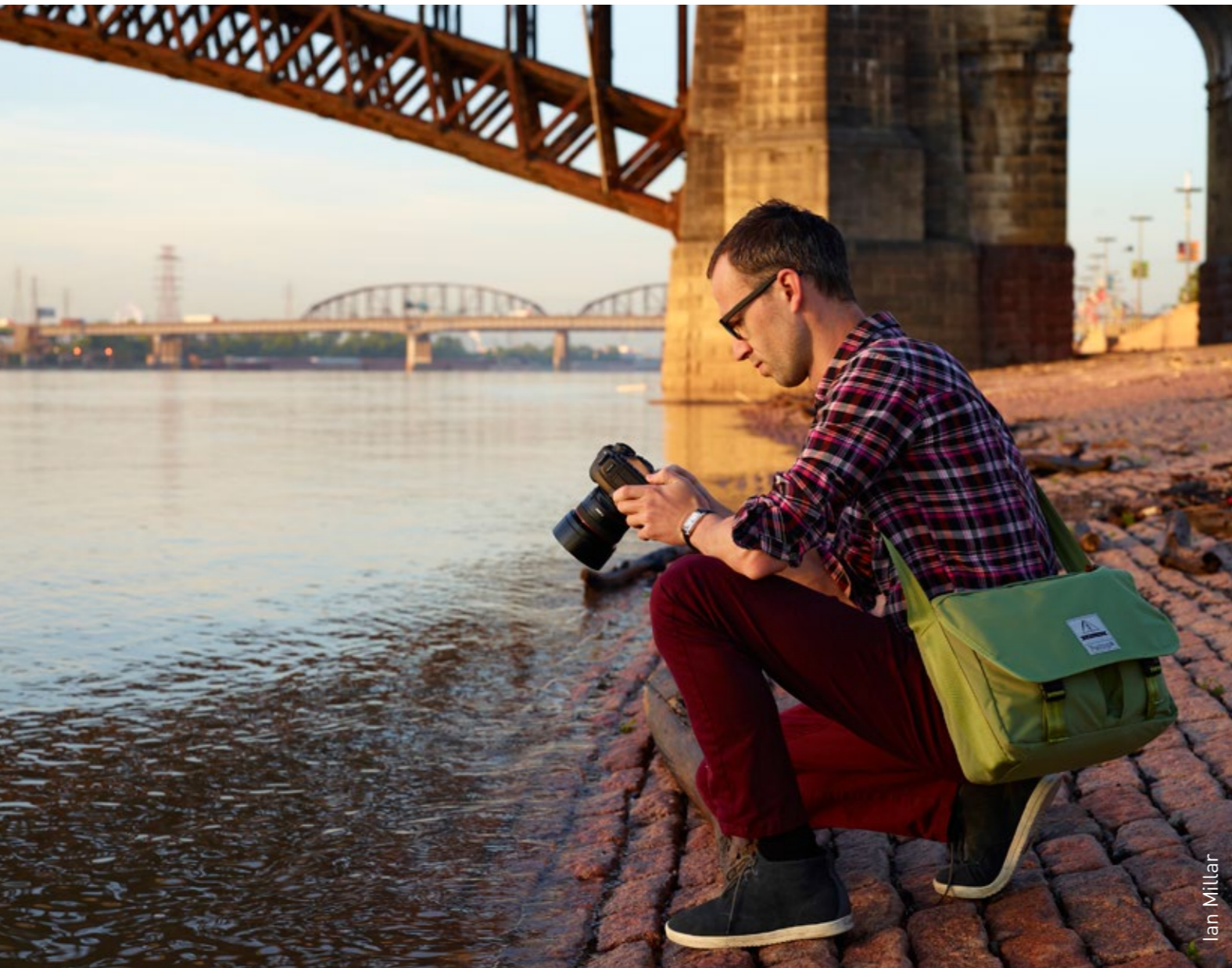
sense of scale and therefore distance was lost. We were adrift in a non-scape.

As we rounded a corner, a single tree huddled amidst the circling, swirling clouds of snow, its collar turned up against the wind. Something was calling and talking to me. Holding my camera close to my chest, I waded into the snowdrift to get closer, then stopped to study the scene. It took a moment to realise what had drawn me.

It was not the tree, that was too obvious. Eventually I got it, it was the brief shadow to its right, the suggestion of a window into... another place. ■

TB

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Elizabeth OPALENIK

Reflecting on the Edge

Trained in common sense, Elizabeth Opalenik was raised on a farm in western Pennsylvania and left home to the sound of peace marches and her mother saying, 'I knew you were different from the time you were two.' She evolved as a photographic artist from former lives as accounting manager for a major corporation, manager of a jazz club and as 'A Ms-Placed Lady' created her own construction business.

After a two week photographic workshop at The Maine Photographic Workshops in 1979, she sold everything, changed careers and never looked back. No regrets. Her art, like life, is a mosaic of passionate devotion for exploration.

Elizabeth is a fine-art photographer and sought-after educator who strives to bring a sense of wonder and possibility to students. Photography is the gift that has graced her with the many friendships made through teaching and travelling. Her images are collected and published internationally. Links to various portfolios and her monograph 'Poetic Grace: Elizabeth Opalenik Photographs 1979-2007' can be viewed at her website at the end of this article. ▶



Reflecting on the Edge #9261 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. I have become more and more drawn to the distorted body and the beauty within. It is amazing to me that nearly all of the images created here are the same model, Marissa. Fortunately, she is happy to be distorted and to be part of the creative process.

'Often my photography is a visual voice for stories left behind'

Her heart is in philanthropic projects and working in her darkroom, where she creates one-of-a-kind images, some in the Mordançage* process, others involving hand painting, and platinum printing. She mixes digital and traditional media when appropriate to maximise creative possibilities, using images as stepping stones to trace pathways of the mind.

*The Mordançage process alters silver halide prints made on either fibre or resin coated papers by producing a degradation of the print surface. The process is a chemical treatment which has two main effects, bleaching and a lifting of parts of the emulsion. Learn more here.

Elizabeth reflects on her life, her work and the series of images which are featured in this article:

‘We are our perceptions and I hope my vision is a reflection of the beauty that my subjects reveal. I am not interested in photography as reality, but as a journey into the possibility of what else there is; be it a memory, a moment in time or a feeling of self, vaguely recalled. In how they are made and how they are viewed, photographs are self-portraits that lie somewhere between imagination and dreams. They travel to where the mind has been and offer a fleeting glimpse into each of us.

Often my photography is a visual voice for stories left behind. My images may not change the world, but hopefully they offer a peaceful place for the soul or open one’s mind to other possibilities. Whatever the subject, for me, making art, any art, is a gift.

From the beginning of my photographic career, water has been the subject that has given me the most pleasure... and where there is pleasure, there is no losing. I am intrigued by its transformative qualities and find serenity just looking at water. It carries mystery, reflects back a life, can be a million jewels of dewdrops, brightens the dullest subject, can be the most powerful force, and yet causes reverie while gazing at its soft sensuality.

‘Reflecting on the Edge’ began last fall when I was reflecting on life. Perhaps it was that milestone age 65, or the loss of many dear friends, but one starts to reflect on career and accomplishments. Plus, photography as I knew it has been digitally turned upside down. iPads have replaced galleries, iPhones have replaced photojournalists and there is new visual acuity everywhere. I spent a lot of time looking at the water, thinking. I had access to a friend’s pool and wetting any subject for me loosens the creative block which has been rare in my life. Although I have worked with water images for more than 30 years, I felt like I suddenly learned how to see, to know how to see them. As I stared at the model in the pool, I saw the entire series in my mind and like the water, its ever-changing possibilities. One of my problems with digital photography today is that so much happens outside the camera. Perhaps as a teacher, I have heard too many instances of ‘I’ll fix it later...’ or ‘...I’ll make it better later.’

Truth is, the world is amazing and what is in front of us everyday is incredible. Learn to see it. I have strived not to let the ‘fix it later’ way of thinking invade my way of seeing. Maybe it is just a game I play in my mind to keep my vision acute, but I like the challenges of making these images in camera and if I can make them complicated and interesting, all the better. I love the combination of digital and traditional combined and utilise both for the best artistic statement, but seeing the light and capturing the image in front of me still makes my heart throb. ▶

Reflecting on the Edge #42 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. For me, props are whatever is available. These morning glories were on the nearby fence and the complimentary colors to the pool bottom were too hard to resist. They also seemed appropriate to the delicate complexion of my model, Vera.



I have never considered myself a color photographer, so this was also new territory for me though I must confess, after the first shoot at the pool, I immediately went out and bought myself a Nikonos V so I could do images from underwater too. But, that is another portfolio!

I also was willing to sacrifice a small point and shoot camera, being double wrapped in zip lock bags! That is how I started with underwater images in 1980. Yes, I do know they make housings for underwater use, but I am trying to stay focused with this body of work. What interests me more at this moment are the images made from above the water. They also combine my love of the hand painted image and in their distortions, images that look like they could have been paintings. The exploration into this water abyss thrills me. I spend more time these days looking at Klimt, Picasso, Botero and others. In truth, as photographers, we should always look outside our medium for inspiration. Like Mordança, which is where I thought I was going with this project (but didn't), the possibilities are endless. Often our paths can turn on a moment's vision and that day by the pool, mine did. To quote Robert Frost, 'Two roads diverged in a yellowed wood, and I — I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference.' Ironically, that was the poem in my pocket the day I left my first two week workshop in photography that so changed my life. I feel that possibility with this body of work.

All of these images are digitally made with a Nikon D700 and a variety of Nikon lenses, depending on my distance from the model or angle at which I am making the image. Images are made in camera and are printed on Awagami handmade Japanese papers with four deckled edges. I have also explored making my own paper as a truly handmade photograph has always interested me. Minimal Photoshop except to do what I would do in the darkroom, burn, dodge, adjust color balance, and spot. In a few images where I needed an edge contrast, I have applied an action, but my joy comes ▶



Reflecting on the Edge #186 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. Delicate images such as this are more reminiscent of older work I have done. They are a peaceful place to put the mind. This one hangs in my bathroom window, printed on thin watercolor paper. Backlit, it reminds me of a lovely fresco.

from creating the images with the fabrics, light and model. I am even rethinking those few as they might dilute the entire process. We'll see. To each, her own reality.

f11: Welcome to f11, Elizabeth. Thanks for joining us.

EO: Thank you for inviting me to do this article.

f11: Let's start with your discovery of photography, and the power that this must have had over you to make such massive changes in your work life.

EO: I was in my early 30's, living in Westport, Connecticut, and perhaps a year into being newly single. I had been interested in photography and had an SLR and rudimentary darkroom for my personal pleasure. Friends were going to take a workshop at the Maine Photographic Workshops so I decided to enrol also. They didn't go, but it changed my life. I always felt that I was a fairly stable, healthy minded soul, but after one particular assignment, I couldn't stop crying. I decided there must be some closet doors that I had not opened and that photography could be my vehicle instead of therapy.

f11: So one day you owned a construction company, and the next day you were somehow in photography?

EO: In my previous relationship we were Ms and Mr Handyman...it was the 70's after all. When we separated, he took the truck and the tools and I took the sports car. Once I had worked for myself, I could never go back to a straight job. Fortunately I learned that lesson by the age of 25. A lesser construction business was easier to handle out of the car and I became 'A MS-Placed Lady' doing more interior design, wallpapering, painting and small construction jobs. I was pre Martha Stewart on a mission to empower housewives that, they too, could do all these things. Today, you see lots of women in the business of construction. Then it was a little

more unique, but my farm upbringing prepared me to handle most things. It also served me well when I became involved with the Maine Photographic Workshops. They were a young organisation then and offered me work scholarships and a job on the staff. In exchange I helped to create housing spaces and atmosphere within the workshop. During weeklong workshops, students couldn't help but be inspired and creative in some of the rooms we created. This year the workshops, now called Maine Media Workshops, are celebrating their 40th anniversary. I have been part of that place for 35 years, teaching with them for at least 30 years. I still find myself straightening curtains, re-arranging furniture or adding a handful of flowers as I pass through a room. Each summer, it is like going home.

f11: Did you chase commercial work or concentrate solely on the art of photography?

EO: I think I always wanted to be a photographic artist, but started down the path of commercial work to support myself. I was fortunate in the jobs I was offered to do the kind of work I liked. I enjoyed the collaboration of working with a team of creative people but hated the 'business' of finding the work. I loved the problem solving, but after a head injury and the fact I could barely remember to put film in my camera, I knew my days of working commercially would be numbered. I couldn't handle the stress and my destiny lay elsewhere. ▶

Reflecting on the Edge #612 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. At first I thought I should wait for the bubbles to go away as the models expelled their breathe, but often the bubbles created another interesting element.



f11: How did you acquire the skills and learn the processes in that full immersion, jump in the deep end, career change?

EO: I think if you have confidence in yourself as a human being, you can do anything. Some folks do it better than others and some do it with more flair. When I left home in 1969 I put a map on a lazy Susan, spun it and moved to where my finger landed...Connecticut. I went to the World Book Encyclopedia that we had, read about Connecticut and left. How sane is that? I took the job with a corporation, and started down that path. Five years later, I like to say 'I called in well...' and have worked for myself since.

f11: Then the move towards teaching, did that come naturally?

EO: One of my first photography teachers in Maine, Kate Carter, was killed in a car accident. In many ways, I stepped in to fill a void left by her death in 1984. It was no doubt my destiny as I seemed to be in that role in life. I have a high school education and though I graduated with honors, to discover teachers and teaching again at age 32 was powerful. Craig Stevens was my other teacher in Maine. He talked about the poetics of space, the history of photography and asked you 'Why?' about so many things. Both he and Kate were great role models. I started assisting Kate and Craig the summer of 1983 in Provençe and it became a natural progression for me. Foreign workshops also fit my personality.

f11: What part does that play in your life today, and how much of your time does that occupy?

EO: For a while my time was divided into thirds. 1/3 commercial, 1/3 fine art and print sales, and 1/3 teaching. When I began in the 90's, not only teaching for other workshops, but conducting my own on a number of continents, it took a lot more time which also needed to be juggled with getting married and moving across country. I nearly quit entirely during the transition from traditional to digital. ▶



Reflecting on the Edge #671 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. I love how the water changes the shape and proportions. Camera angle is so important.

Workshops weren't fun for me in those early years when people stopped talking about content and only wanted to talk pixels and 'how did you do THAT?' I got tired of saying, 'Just because you can do THAT in Photoshop, doesn't mean you should. A bad picture in most cases is still a bad picture.' Fortunately that learning curve is smoothing out, and my workshops have again become about images, content and life. To be effective at anything, I think you need to devote yourself and I would say I have devoted myself to teaching these past 20 years, but now I am doing less and working on my own projects along with some philanthropic work. I can't leave it entirely because I love the people I meet and the connections I make. Workshops and teaching have opened the most doors in my life and given me the opportunity to truly love what I do. It also keeps me in the loop of what is happening in the photographic world even if I do run back to my darkroom.

f11: You're lecturing in Australia this September, tell us about that, and is this your first trip to our part of the world?

EO: I am so excited to be coming. Before I put that map on the lazy Susan that got me to Connecticut, I almost moved to Australia. I vaguely recall someone offering plane tickets to get women out there. That, and the Peace Corps intrigued me. Since I never went, it feels like another check on the bucket list. Any place with so many beautiful water possibilities has to be wonderful. When I backpacked through Europe many years ago I met so many folks from down under. They would all be travelling for a year at a time and I remember the great sense of humor and zest for life everyone had. I look forward to having some wonderful exchanges while teaching a workshop titled 'Finding the Ethereal Within' as part of the Ballarat Biennale. I will be the keynote speaker at the Alternative Process Symposium and then will teach Mordançage through Gold Street Studios, also in Victoria. From Sydney I will travel with Dawne

Fahey from the Fier Institute to Lightning Ridge for an Outback journey workshop including the Opal fields and Bangate Station. Part of this workshop will also include days digitally printing our images with a master printer, Dr Les Walkling. I am really looking forward to the sharing of a lot of ideas and creativity.

f11: Tell us about your equipment choices, what is your main camera outfit and what does this contain?

EO: I have always believed that cameras don't take pictures; people do, so I don't continually get the latest and greatest. I can't seem to part with any of my film systems, but have been a dedicated Nikon user most of my career. Digitally I primarily shoot with a Nikon D700 and I also have a D200 converted for infrared. My favorite lenses would be the Nikon 20-35mm, a Nikon 85mm f1.4 and the 105mm. Less is more for me if I am walking around. That's the reason I was given legs, isn't it? I still love my Leica M3 and its lenses, a 28mm, 50mm and 90mm which also now fit a Panasonic Lumix that I sometimes carry for ease. At home, for film I fall back on my Pentax 6x7 or Mamiya 7. I have the iPhone 5, using it for snaps with the Hipstamatic App.

f11: Are you all about available light, or do you use lighting, and if so, what's your approach to creating your own light?

EO: I am all about seeing the light and making it work. I will use reflectors, my white shirt or anything I can put my hands on to bounce or diffuse the light. I have Lowell Tota lights and soft boxes if necessary, but prefer to work naturally. ▶

Reflecting on the Edge #9162 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. Nothing moves fabric as gracefully as the water. It is my intent with many of the images to create a trompe l'oeil effect that misleads the senses as to how the model is standing or being.



f11: How about post-production, I take it this is something you'd rather avoid on the computer – in favour of doing this 'hands on' in the printmaking process?

EO: Yes, I am sure you have heard me moan this past week while preparing this article. I will always opt for making the image in camera as much as I can. I tend to change the white balance to suit my mood, create the image for how it 'feels' at the moment, rarely look at the histogram and I am very aware of my edges. Old habits die hard. Cameras are so technically smart these days that the best advice is to learn how your equipment works, then forget it. Take advantage of the myriad possibilities in front of you that you can capture creatively. That is what works for me, because I would rather do my creating that way. It is a personal choice and sometimes I am in awe of those folks who can sit all day tweaking pixels. Life is not perfect, as human beings we are not perfect, and I am not in search of the repeatability of the same perfect output every time. On the other hand, I have been known to spend 8 hours straight working on a Mordançage image one drop of water at a time. Go figure.

f11: So, to printmaking, which seems to be a great love of yours – tell us about this facet of your photography, and do you think photographers need to be more involved with this final stage of the process?

EO: Again, this is a personal choice, and one that I do see a lot of photographers missing. I am not ready to give up holding a little gem in my hand and I don't mean iPad, though it too is a little gem. There is so much beautiful imagery being made today, but it passes so quickly through the media, that much is being missed in search of the next spectacular moment. I love the tactile feel of a beautiful paper or the surface of a darkroom print. True to my nature, I am also trying my hand at making my own papers, but have found this Awagami Bizan paper to be beautiful. I love the deckled (rough or feathered)

edges which are also part of the statement for me.

I still love holding a book in my hand and I love all the alternative processes in their one of a kind, handmade possibilities. Please understand, I love a beautiful digital print too and the skill it takes to interpret what you saw and how it made you feel. Today we have so many tools for post production, but they are still just tools. For me, the art is in the personal interpretation. Perhaps we are on overload with all the visual stimulation and the time it takes to just manage the files. I think the desire for contemplation is driving the return to some of the alternative processes. The world is moving too fast, or maybe just too fast for some of us. Didn't I say photographs were self portraits? I like meditating on the possibilities, one image at a time.

f11: You're using the Mordançage process for some of your work, tell us more about this?

EO: I fell in love with the Mordançage process the first time I viewed the works of Jean-Pierre Sudre at his home in Provence. I was fortunate to learn it from this master but have spent most of my time perfecting my twist to the process which is often about saving the delicate floating silver veils that lift from the surface of the photographic print. I use these veils to 'dress' my subjects and add a three dimensional quality to the piece. Each piece is unique, as often the spidery veils are moved by drops of water and they often resemble etchings or Man Ray solarizations. Choice of process and imagery have to work well together, and while it was ▶

Reflecting on the Edge #575 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. I have a few silk kimonos that I use as props and it is interesting to me how the 'photo gods' give me hair to go with them. Love the shadow on the arm. It is always wonderful when you can dress the model in organic happenings.



my intent to make the images in 'Reflecting on the Edge' as Mordançage pieces, I found they did not translate to the process. They want to stay as paintings in color, but I am creating other images underwater that I think will become a different Mordançage project.

f11: What challenge does photography still hold for you?

EO: I am still seeking those elusive images that take your breath away. We have all made many beautiful images, but ones that we will be remembered for at the end of our careers...not many, not many.

f11: Are you quite a solitary worker, or are other people involved in your creative process?

EO: I have mostly been a one armed paperhanger all my life. Commercially, I liked the collaboration, but even then, I was often asked to interpret the assignment and did it on my own. I think for many photographers it is a solitary process. That is why I like the exchanges made in teaching. It is also important to have peers that you trust for feedback. I am blessed to have two photography friends here, Beth Moon and Brigitte Carnochan, who I meet with monthly at least. We share work, ideas and processes and communicate quite regularly on all things. My husband, Marty Martinez, is also passionate about photography and a great resource for bouncing ideas around with.

f11: Which people have been most influential on your photography, and your creativity in general?

EO: I think my associations with the workshops I teach have been the biggest influence on my life and career, especially my early years with the Maine Photographic Workshops and The Santa Fe Photographic Workshops. They opened doors and gave me the opportunity to meet the photographers of my generation, to share meals and stories with them and to watch nightly slide show presentations on their work ▶



Reflecting on the Edge #327 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. I have been working on a series of images in Mordançage involving the moon. I originally thought this series was going to be printed as Mordançage so I reflected a moon in the water.

and their lives. With MPW I began going to Provence every summer to teach and that expanded to Tuscany and other places. The exposure to European art and their way of life had an immense impact on my vision as I would meet the foreign photographers at the festival in Arles. It was there that Lucien Clergue introduced me to the Corrida, which also spawned another body of work. I travelled to Cuba and Mexico teaching with SFPW and help produce the National Geographic Expeditions workshops they organised in Venice, Provence and Tuscany. In those classes I had the pleasure to co-teach with many of the best National Geographic instructors. All these opportunities have formed the photographic artist I am today. Being around the workshop energy has allowed me to walk through many doors of creativity.

f11: Who is the one person who you've learned the most from as a photographer?

EO: Since my primary passion in photography is the Mordançage process, I would say the biggest influence was the French photographer, Jean-Pierre Sudre, who I mentioned in an earlier answer. I learned the process from him, but more importantly I witnessed his passion and dedication to his art. He had found the answers to life in the simple things surrounding him and it showed in the creations he made.

f11: Complete this sentence: Photographers are, without question...

EO: Photographers are, without question, some of the most fascinating people I know. They are the visual storytellers of life.

f11: What aspirations do you have for your photography and for the teaching side of this, over the next couple of years?

EO: My aspirations would hopefully be, to make a difference. Perhaps that is still to come in the philanthropic projects I now seek. As a teacher I hope that I have inspired someone along the way and that it made a difference in their life.

Perhaps my photography has given some pleasure, and where there is pleasure, there is no loss.

f11: Thanks for being with us, it's been our pleasure.

EO: I have loved the dialogue and emails that we have shared during this process. Thanks for your insightful questions and informative magazine.■

TS

www.opalenik.com
www.elizabethopalenik.com
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www.vervegallery.com

Learn more about Elizabeth's tour of Australia here:

<http://ballaratfoto.org/elizabeth-opalenik-workshop/>

<http://ballaratfoto.org/seminar-alternative/>

<http://www.goldstreetstudios.com.au/workshops/?ee=128>

<http://www.theworldfamily.net/lightning-ridge-the-opal-fields>

Reflecting on the Edge #1659 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. This might be one of my favorite pieces from the series. It lives in my studio reminding me of the simplicity and elegance of Asian art.





Reflecting on the Edge #1546 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. Like working with a view camera, I often see the images flipped or turned upside down even as I am taking them. I suspect that might be one of the few 'gifts' that came from a head injury.

'Making art, any art, is a gift'



Reflecting on the Edge #1549 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. I am always amazed at the transformation the water creates depending on how the hair flows or how the combination of fabrics blend.

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Reflecting on the Edge #1026 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. I was thrilled when the late afternoon sun created many of these shadows from the arbor reflecting on the pool.*





Reflecting on the Edge #8991 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. This image holds many places for me. It is a metaphorical mask. I am fascinated by the highlights creating the mask around the eyes.



Reflecting on the Edge #9107 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. I have been working in Colombia on projects with eye doctors these past few years. I have been fascinated by the Botero presence in Cartagena and love seeing the Botero roundness.



Reflecting on the Edge #1139 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. When you watch the light from a low angle you start to see these amazing rings appear, often from a gentle breeze.



Reflecting on the Edge #984 © Elizabeth Opalenik 2012. By the end of the day, the pool was starting to get a little cloudy as the nearby pine trees were sending down pollen. But the arbor was still reflecting nicely.

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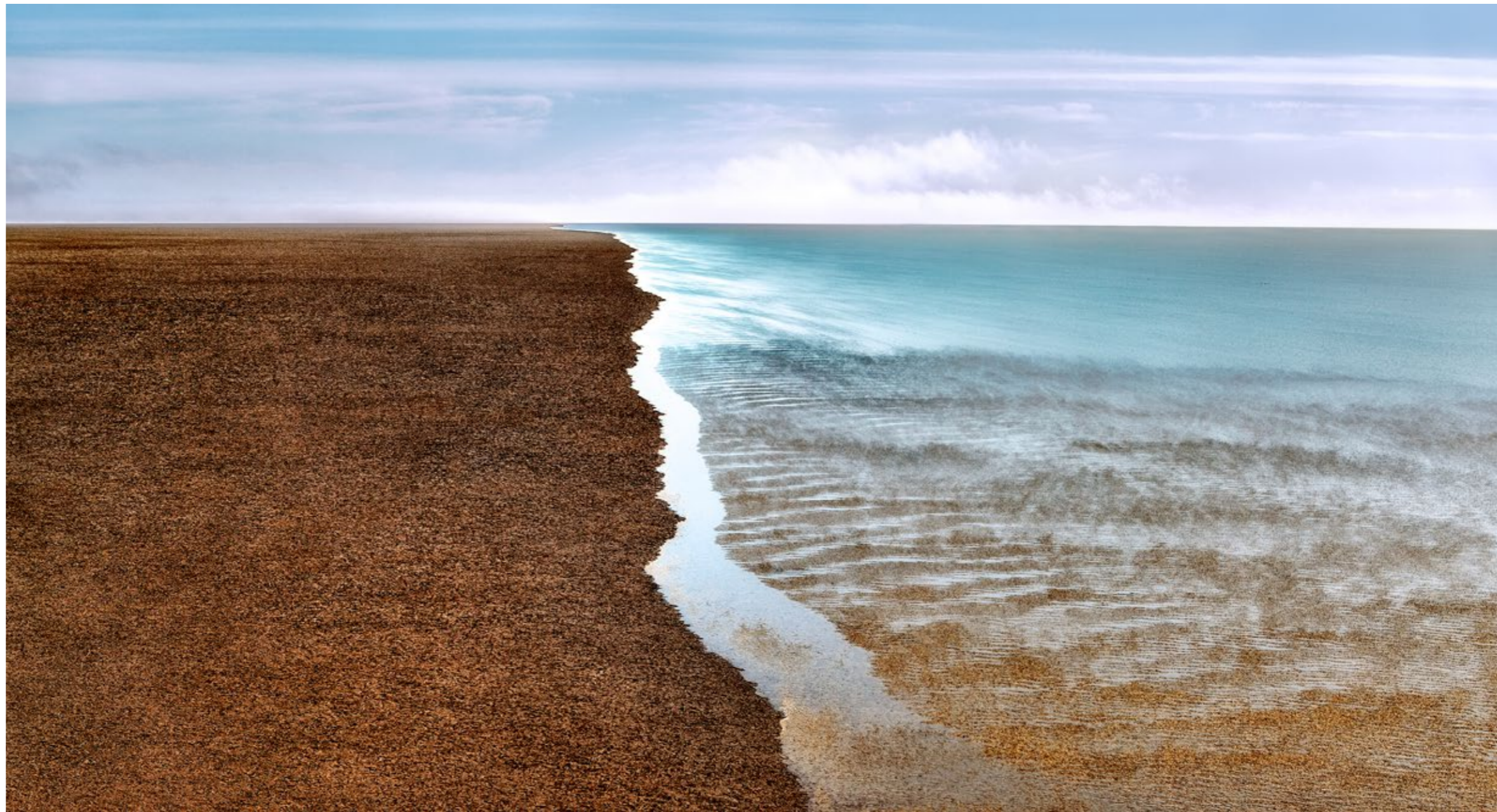
Peter ELFES

Desert dreams

Peter Elfes was born in Sydney and grew up in the inner city suburb of Darlinghurst. Influenced and inspired by his father, a photojournalist who emigrated from Greece in the 1950's, he developed a strong connection with the art of photography from an early age.

After working in his father's studio for a few years, Peter began work in 1981 at Freeman Studio in Sydney, the second oldest, still running photographic studio in the world, and became its manager. In 1991, he left Freeman Studio and moved to New York to further his knowledge of the art of photography. Returning to Sydney in 1992, he began working as a freelance photographer and was the official photographer for the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Association for ten years.

In a career spanning 35 years Peter has seen his photography art work finds its way into private and public collections in Australia and overseas, including the National Gallery of Australia, the Powerhouse Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2011 Peter Elfes was awarded 1st prize in the New South Wales Plein Air Photography Award for his photograph of the Barrier Range in north west New South Wales. ▶



This photo was taken at 6:30am at the top of Lake Eyre where the Warburton Groove breaks into the salt pan. The surrounding desert was still wet from the receding water. The water had travelled a thousand kilometers to reach the basin. I thought it was the most sublime scene I had ever seen, as well as being the world's longest beach.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L USM lens. © Peter Elfes 2012

▶▶ *Following double page spread: The magic and tranquility of the desert near the lake edge at dusk is only broken by the call of Tern and other birds looking for their night roosting place. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia.*

Canon EOS 5D MkII with Sigma 20mm f1.8 EXDG ASP RF lens. © Peter Elfes 2012



Peter has a longstanding interest in environmental and social documentary photojournalism. He has a personal dedication to people and nature as the subjects of photographic essays and an enthusiasm for the value of the photographic medium in highlighting the importance of preserving natural heritage around the globe.

Recently he travelled to remote areas in Australia and the South Pacific and returned with dramatic photographic essays of long treks through diverse environments and meetings with indigenous people. Peter's Lake Eyre Series and other photo projects have been internationally published in books and magazines.

His 'Green Desert' exhibition is currently showing at the Burrinja Regional Gallery in the Yarra Valley, Victoria until 11 August and will be shown at other regional galleries in Australia in 2014.

f11: Greetings Peter, great to finally get this feature together after what seems like a long gestation period!

PE: Hi Tim, it's nice to be in such salubrious company and yes, it has been a while since we first began talking about doing this story in *f11*. I'm pleased to be able to share my photographic experiences with your readers and thanks for persevering, it has been a pretty crazy period for me with exhibitions and my book.

f11: The work we're showing here speaks volumes about your love of the landscape, particularly when seen from above, can you explain what drives this and how it developed?

PE: The main reason I embarked on my first trip out to the desert was the arrival of water into the Lake Eyre Basin in South Australia, a natural phenomenon that only occurs every few decades. I thought to myself, now here is an opportunity to photograph an extraordinary 'once in a life time' kind of event. The only way to see and appreciate the scale of this happening is from the air. I managed to get myself out to

the desert within two weeks of the first reports and fortunately, a helicopter company from Victoria had also reacted and had a small Robinson 44 available. That was in May 2009.

f11: How many trips did you make out to the desert after that?

PE: I returned to the desert at least once a year, the last trip was earlier this year, February 2013. The pictures from the first trip were so dramatic that I realised this was the beginning of something big. But since the Lake only ever stays full for a season, I thought, well at least I got something, no one could have predicted that four years later it would still have water. The Lake alone covers 10,000 square kilometers so there is no shortage of places to photograph and each successive season, something would change. As an example, the water would change colour, going from green to pink; the north part of the Lake would fill and spill into the south Lake; and I would learn more each year about the science and develop a relationship with the Arabana People over the years. As it happened ▶

▶ *With such vast areas to explore, I had few opportunities to linger over any one place. However, when I first came across Siltcrete Island, with its intense colours and beautiful patterns, I knew I had to make an exception. I have photographed this island many times but had never seen it look like this before. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia. Canon EOS 1D MkIII with EF 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 L IS USM lens. © Peter Elfes 2012*

▶▶ *Following double page spread: 6:30am at the top of Lake Eyre where the Warburton Groove breaks into the salt pan. The surrounding desert was still dry after decades without rain. The water had travelled a thousand kilometers to reach the basin. I thought it was the most sublime scene I had ever seen. Canon EOS 1D MkIII with Sigma EF 70mm f2.8 DC lens. © Peter Elfes 2009*





the Arabana were in the midst of a native title claim of over 69,000 square kilometers of desert, which included Lake Eyre.

In 2012 their native title claim was recognised by the Commonwealth Government and I was invited to attend the hand over ceremony that took place not far from the Lake, which has since been officially renamed as Kati Thanda. Being able to attend the ceremony, and get to know the indigenous people, was to me as important as documenting the arrival of water.

f11: You're also delivering a message with this work, tell us more?

PE: I grew up in the old school era of large format photography and much as I still admire the great works of the masters of the classic landscape photography, I am aware that I am living on a continent with more deserts than any other on earth and all the pictures that I was seeing were consistently the same. They almost all approached the landscape photograph with that typical and traditional 'postcard' view.

I remember as a young man seeing these pictures in magazines and thinking 'wait a minute, this looks like the same photograph that Jo Blogs took, but in a different location'. What's so bloody interesting about that? In other words, it seemed to me that we weren't taking photos to develop a greater understanding of the art of photography or to challenge people to look at our planet in a unique way.

To be honest, as a result of looking at this kind of landscape photography for as long as I did, I became quite cynical of nature and landscape photography. Thankfully the advent of high end digital cameras has meant that not only professionals, but amateur photographers like Mathew Hood, were getting the bit between their teeth and giving the pros something to think about.

So yes, I am trying to say something with these pictures and as much as I'm not alone when it

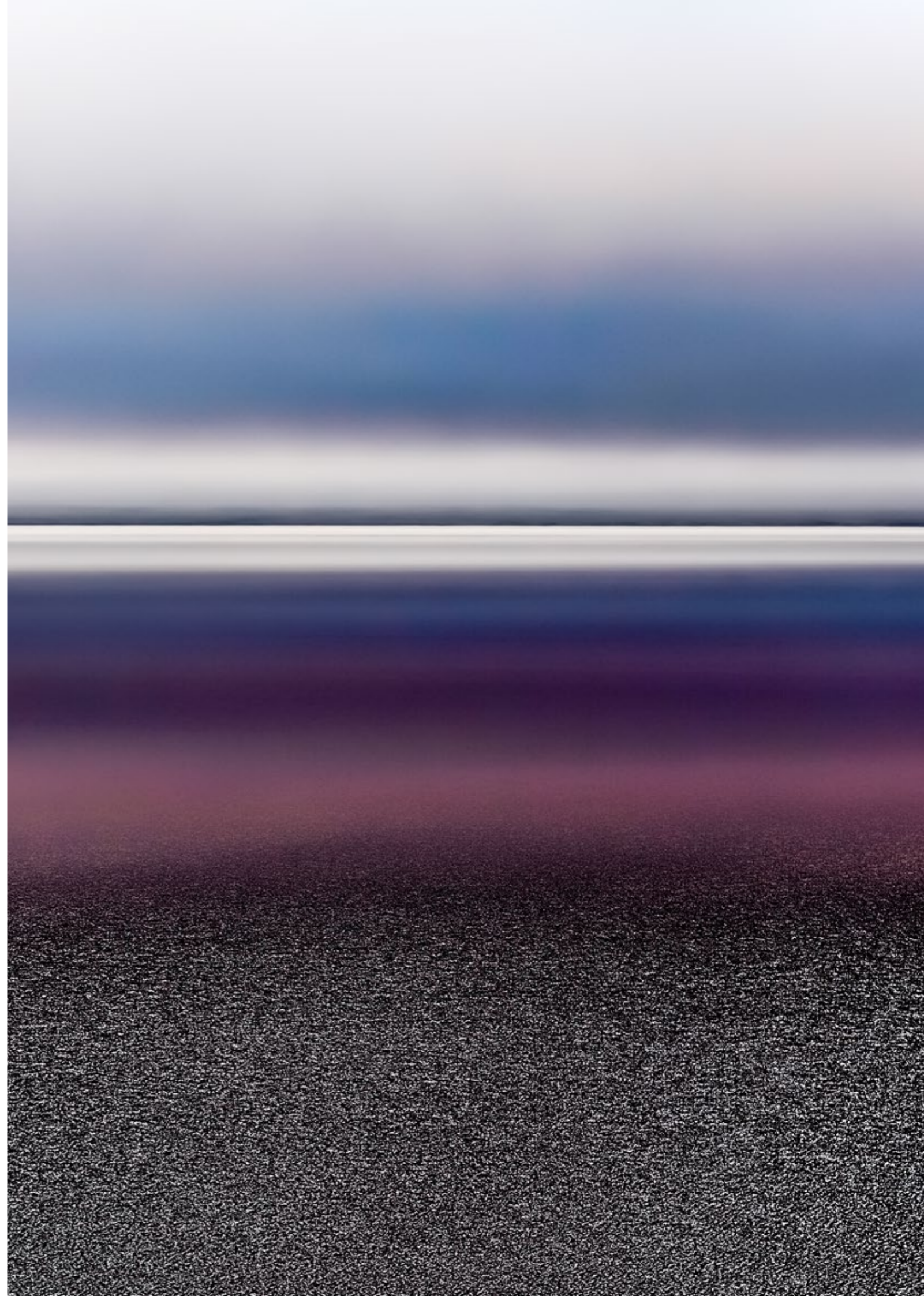
comes to working predominantly from the air, I am always looking for new ways to tell the story about a place, an event and what it means. If you look at how digital sensors with their extreme light sensitivity have changed photography, it shows that with a bit of creativity you can produce photos that are changing the way we all think and feel about the natural world around us.

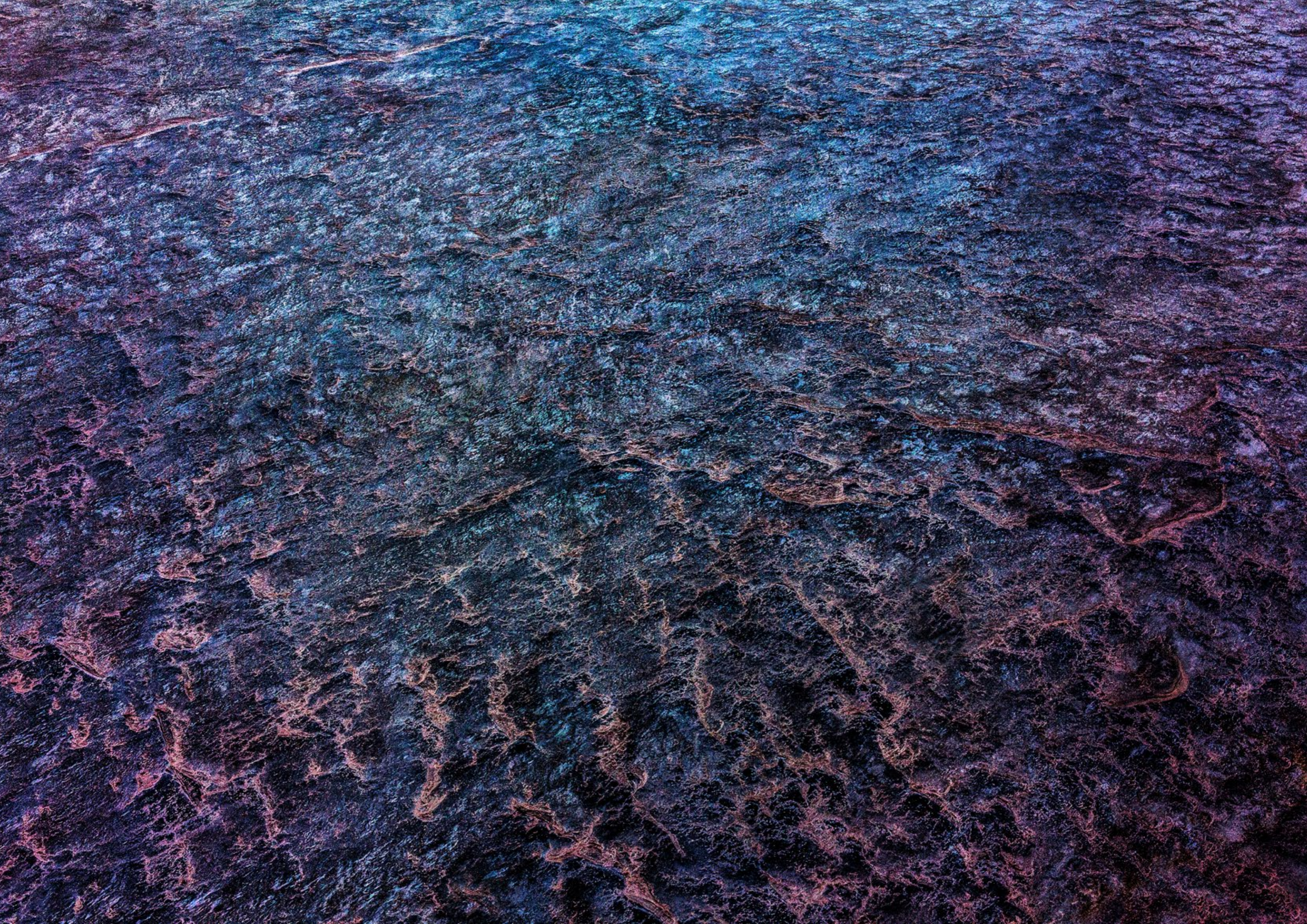
f11: Are you an environmentalist who photographs, or a photographer with an interest in the environment, and would you agree there is a difference?

PE: To be honest there are times when it's difficult to separate one from the other. I spent my entire working life in the inner city of Sydney or New York. I found the only way to recharge the batteries was to make regular trips into nature. Not only was it great for the soul, it was a great source of inspiration. As a young photographer, I was strongly influenced by the classic landscape photographers, like Edward Western, Minor White and Ansel Adams who established the zone system. While I was at ▶

▶ *Subtle colour effects are created by early morning sunlight reflecting off low fog. In this distant view, the pink water in the foreground appears grey – a trick of the light. The dazzlingly white salt pan is visible on the horizon. Canon EOS 1D MkIII with 70-200mm f2.8 USM IS lens © Peter Elfes*

▶▶ *Following double page spread: After four years of exposure to algae coloured water, the salt has been transformed into a kaleidoscope of colour and patterns. It's often difficult to get a sense of scale without a horizon. The features represented in this picture are several kilometers across. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia. Canon EOS 5D MkII with Sigma 50mm f1.4 EX DG HSM lens. © Peter Elfes 2013*





college, I was studying photography and working at Freeman Studio, helping my dad with his studio and going out at night to document Sydney's inner city sub-culture. I got so little sleep I was falling asleep in the darkroom at work but I was learning a lot about the process of photography, and my exposure to the alternate lifestyles of artists who lived in the inner city got me thinking about the art of photography. My college education was entirely technical, there was no room for arty-farty photos as my tutors called them. UTS was a government college full of photo-journalists and commercial photographers, and I was both.

f11: How has this work been received, when exhibited or published?

PE: Breaking into the world of fine art landscape photography is a bit of a gamble, you have to throw your hat into the ring and hope someone picks it up and hands it back. When I had my first show in 2010, 'The Arrival' at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney, it cost me \$10,000 to produce the prints and \$22,000 to frame the work. The reaction from the public was instantaneous, and I began selling framed and unframed prints from the opening right through to the last day. It was a huge relief because at that stage I had spent about \$50,000 in total. After five years and many more trips I decided to stop calculating how much money I'd spent, instead deciding to focus on producing the best prints possible. Recently, I sold several 1.5m wide prints to private and public collectors which again has been extremely encouraging. So despite the downturn in the economy, there are still people willing to spend several thousand dollars on photographic prints for their homes, which I think is an example of how people's taste in art has shifted from conventional art to my contemporary work.

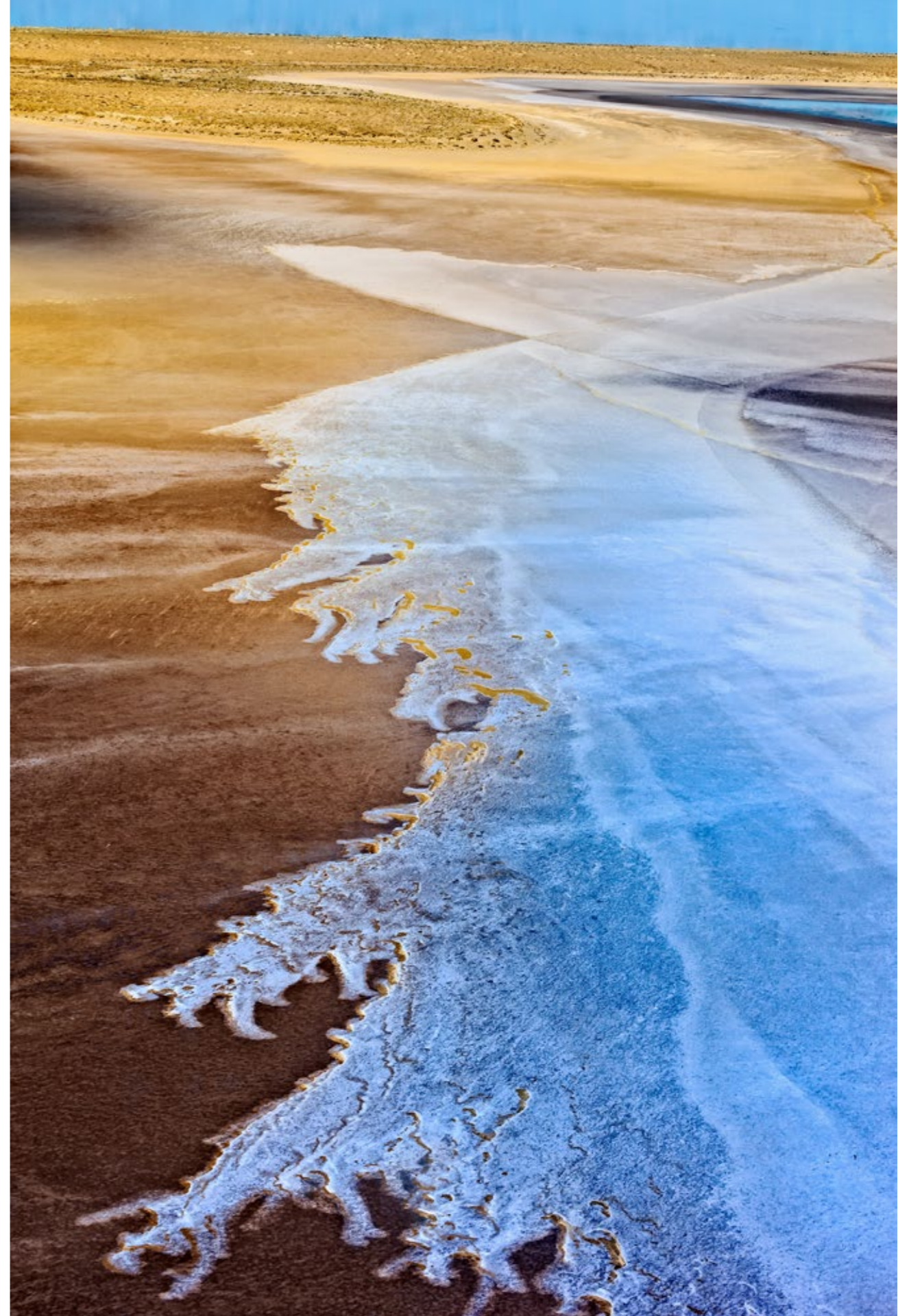
f11: Shooting from above is always technically challenging, talk to us about your methodology and techniques?

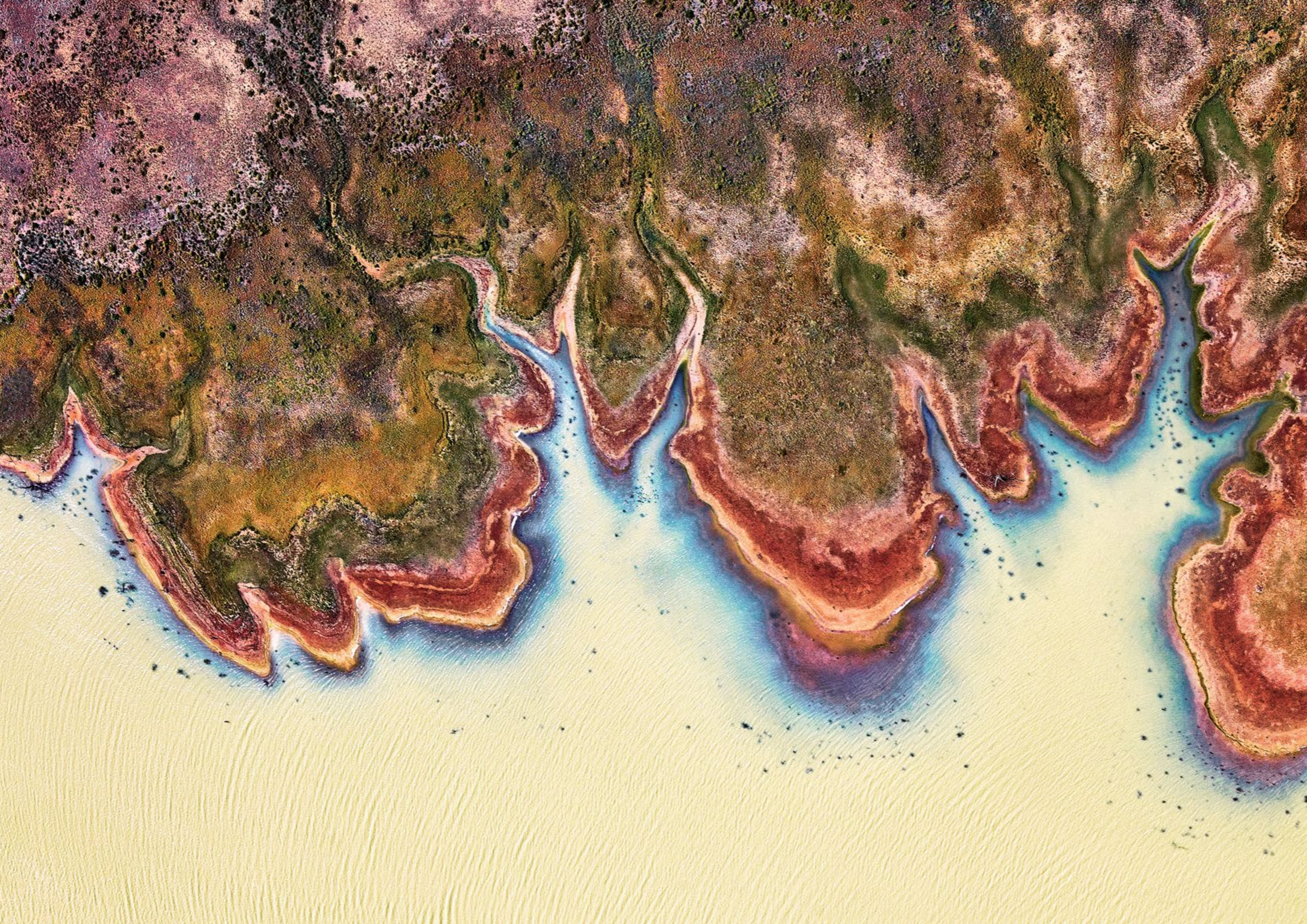
PE: Technically challenging is a good description Tim. It's usually winter when I go out to the desert so at 6am at 3,000ft it's cold when the doors are off the helicopter. Our ground speed in a straight line is at least 140-160km/h so that adds a wind chill factor, so yeah, bloody cold. The cold kills batteries and also makes it hard to hold the camera still, which is a struggle with wind and blade wash and gyroscopic effects all adding to the shaking. I don't like using zoom lenses so whenever possible I prefer to have several camera bodies with fixed focal length lenses. I don't have the luxury of image stabilisers which, to be honest, in most cases would struggle to make a difference. Depending on my focal length I use a variety of shutter speeds from as low as 1/250 to about 1/1250. Because I make 2m prints of my photos I need to keep an eye on the aperture so it's a real juggling act between the big three: ISO, shutter speed and aperture.

I have to wear an aviation approved harness of course, so this is set to limit me from going too far out the door, but it is also restrictive. The ▶

▶ *Salt formations on the edge of Lake Eyre. As water evaporates from the salt, it draws the fine silt up creating the effect of a drawn outline on the edge of the salt. The horizon is water in the lake reflecting the sky and clouds. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia. Canon EOS 1D MkIII with Sigma 50mm f1.4 EX DG HSM lens. © Peter Elfes 2009*

▶▶ *Following double page spread: This is one image from a series of photograph which I took on the survey for the WCMA. It prompted me to explore what causes the spectacular colours of the water and earth in our deserts. As a long-dry river bed finally fills, fingerlings of lime and sulphur laden water push out into the surrounding desert. Canon EOS 5D MkII with Sigma 50mm f1.4 EX DG HSM lens. © Peter Elfes 2011*





other really important consideration is something that I have noticed some other photographers don't do when shooting in these conditions, stow lens caps away! If you were getting into an aircraft with me, especially a helicopter, I can assure you I would confiscate all your lens caps before we took off. From a safety point of view, they wouldn't even be allowed in the cabin area, because if one flew off the seat or even out of your bag and got picked up by the howling wind rushing around the cabin and hit the rear tail rotor, it would be a very uncomfortable death for everyone on board because the chopper would spin around and around on the main rotor and crash in a flaming heap. From a photography point of view it would be like holding a paper cup out of your car window at 140+km/h and expecting to hang onto it.

f11: In terms of equipment, what's a typical outfit required to capture the images on display here?

PE: My preference is 35mm style DSLR gear. The main thing to consider is if you don't feel comfortable with multiple cameras and lenses then you better buy a really good zoom because everything is at infinity so detail is hard to achieve. Hence the reason I shoot with fixed lenses and use multiple camera bodies. This also gives me the security of not relying on one, or even two, camera bodies. If you fork out 4 or 5 thousand for a two hour flight and you're half way through the flight and your camera packs up, you have just paid for a really expensive joyride flight. So redundancy is critical. I use at least three cameras with a pair of lenses for each: e.g. camera 1 with a 35mm and 50mm; camera 2 with 70mm and 150mm; camera 3 with 200mm and 300mm. This probably sounds over the top to your readers but don't forget this affords me a contingency.

I have also used Canon's pro zooms like the 24-70mm f2.8 USM , 100-400 f4.5 USM and the very nice 70-200 f2.8 IS USM with reasonable results. The most obvious difference is chromatic

aberration that seems much worse on all zooms, this is a problem when you're making big enlargements. Software does go some way to remedy this, but nothing can be better than a good sharp lens.

Weight is never an issue since I almost always fly as the sole passenger. I prefer this because this keeps the chatter on the comms down to bare minimum so I can concentrate on framing my shots and communicating with the pilot, with whom I have very clear and precise instruction procedures. I flew with some videographers on a few trips back in 2011 and they started making small talk with the pilot, I almost pushed them out the door of the helicopter. When you're dealing with these kinds of dangerous and time critical conditions it is not a junket as it's 2 or 3 hours of mind taxing, physically exhausting work. It is not unusual for me to shoot 2,000 or 3,000 frames in a 2 hour flight. During my aerial survey for the Western Catchment Authority I shot 12,000 frames in 4 flights, on three cameras. So as you can see you really flog the bejeebers out of your gear. ▶

▶ *Hanging out of a helicopter as it circles close to the ground at a 45 degree angle is not much fun. Viewed through the lens, the ground seems to rush past at incredible speed. The pleasure comes later when I see the results. The combination of reflected blue sky and pink water creates this almost unreal water colour. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L USM lens. © Peter Elfes 2012*

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Even the roar of the helicopter's engine, and the blast of wind through the cabin, could not spoil the serenity of the infinite vista of this scene. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L USM lens. © Peter Elfes 2012*





f11: Are you using fixed wing aircraft or helicopters as camera platforms?

PE: I use both. I prefer helicopters, especially turbine powered ones, but if you have a really good pilot who knows a bit about low level flying a fixed wing is OK. You can also use a deflector on the open door of a fixed wing which redirects the wind away from you, so at least you have a better chance of hanging out of the aircraft and not having your camera blown out of your hands. Of course, the limit with fixed wing is ground speed and elevation, which are higher and faster.

f11: Do you do very much in post production, or are most of the images straight out of camera?

PE: This answer could probably take several pages. The short version is I shoot RAW, as you would expect. So yes, I post process and because of the atmospheric effects that affect everything from contrast to colour to detail, the process of recovering detail and colour is so difficult that it can take days if not weeks to get a file ready for printing. Some of my favourite images have taken several years to finally understand what they should look like and I'm still learning. On that topic I work with digital retoucher Matt Norris and master printer Warren Macris to get the best from the files. This has been one of the reasons I have been able to print them as wide as 3m from a 35mm file, with really good results.

f11: Looking across the selection we've curated from your work, what other areas feature prominently here, and what draws you to them?

PE: In the collection here, there are two principle areas, Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre in South Australia and north west New South Wales which is in the Lake Eyre catchment. They are connected in that way so I suppose it's part of the same landscape for me. The attraction for me is the treeless and barren appearance of these ▶



The combination of fog and cloud in the dawn light made for an eerie scene in this view of Siltcrete Island which seems to change colour dramatically depending on the weather condition. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L USM lens. © Peter Elfes

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Runoff from recent rain has filled ancient riverbeds in north west New South Wales to create alluvial fans resembling fractals. Aluminium, iron oxides and clay in the earth combine with magnesium salts, lime and other minerals dissolved in the water. Even in this harsh environment, algae and mosses can thrive. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 24-105mm f4 L IS USM lens. © Peter Elfes 2011*



abstract looking environments. It is the intersection of desert and water, the colours that are produced by this combination, and as much as anything, the minimalist appearance of these places, especially from the air. To me it screams Australian desert.

f11: Tell us about some of the other projects you're involved in, or planning, at present?

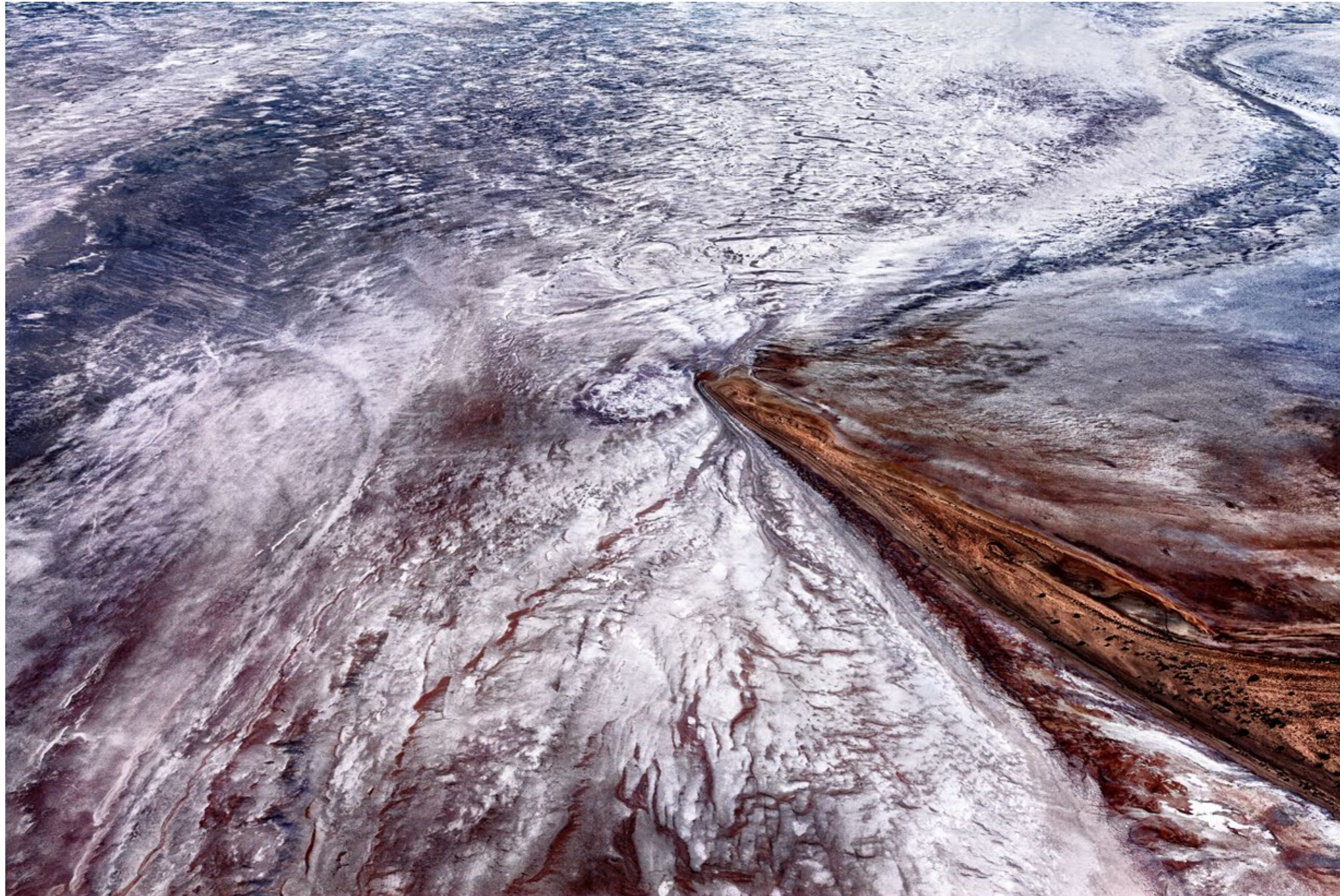
PE: Well between my new book, 'The Green Desert', and all the regional gallery commitments over the past few years, to be honest I'm struggling to keep up, even with a business manager, a retoucher, and a printer I still don't get time to go anywhere except when I'm in the desert. But I'm not complaining, I'm doing what I love in a place that not many people get to see and selling pictures to people for good money. What else does a landscape photographer want?

f11: Are there more books on the horizon?

PE: Yes, I have at least 3 other books in the pipeline. One is a fine art variation of 'The Green Desert' and the other two are very different and relate to my subculture years which I never had time to produce back then. Which in a way I'm pleased about, because I know I hell of a lot more about publishers now than I did back then.

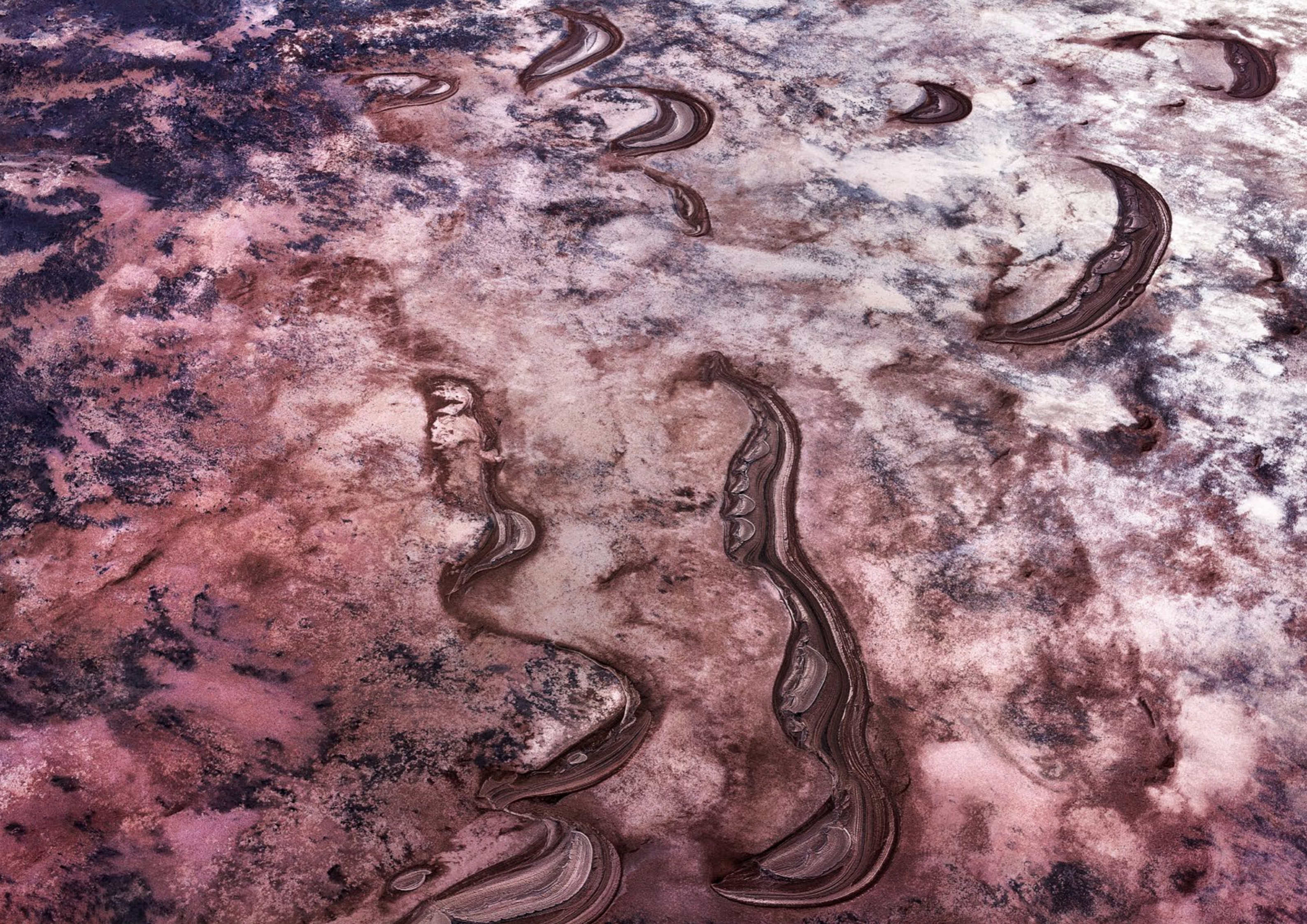
f11: Are you a member of any professional photographic organisations?

PE: As a landscape artist who exhibits in public venues I need public liability insurance and NAVA, the National Association of Visual Arts offers this with your professional membership which is a huge saving from the thousands it used to cost me. Over the years I have been a member of all the professional photo associations in Australia but when I quit being a commercial photographer the advantages of these memberships seemed limited. ▶



The colours formed on the salt pan by the mixture of algae and archaeobacteria bacteria which vary from green to blue and pink are one of the great attractions the Lake has for artists, photographers and scientists drawn to it for more than 100 years. This formation is about 500m long and I shot it from a fixed wing aircraft from an altitude of around 500 feet. Canon EOS 1D MkIII with EF 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 L IS USM lens. © Peter Elfes 2013

▶▶ *Following double page spread: This formation reminded me of the Arabana Dreaming stories about the spirits that live at the lake. To the Arabana people, the lake is a sacred place that is only visited during special ceremonies. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia. Canon EOS 5D MkII with Sigma 50mm f1.4 EX DG HSM lens. © Peter Elfes 2013.*



f11: If you ever hit a dry well creatively, where do you go for sustenance and refreshment?

PE: I live in the UNESCO listed Blue Mountains west of Sydney, so I don't need to go far. Mind you, I hardly ever take photos around where I live, mainly because I was visiting and photographing the mountains years before I moved here. So over the years I have spent a lot of time in and around this area hence my fascination with the contrasts offered by the desert. It was a place that I had never managed to get to as a young photographer.

f11: What region of the world would you most like to photograph, and why?

PE: Hmm... I recently returned from a trip to India and Nepal for a friend's wedding and took my camera, as you do. It was interesting but also depressing from an environmental point of view. I also spent several months in Canada and Alaska in 1996. My wife has seen my photos from that trip and has been at me to return so I would most probably go back to both, spending most of the time in Alaska's north.

f11: Thanks for joining us and I hope you'll keep in touch.

PE: Tim, thanks for producing a fantastic magazine. It has been my pleasure to chat with you and share some of my experiences with *f11* readers. ■

TS

www.peterelfesphotography.com



One of the unique features of the landforms in and around the Lake is their abstract appearance in a photograph, which can be tricky to work successfully into a composition. Canon EOS 1D MkIII with Sigma 50mm f1.4 EX DG HSM lens. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia. © Peter Elfes 2009.

'I grew up in the old school era of large format photography...'



◀◀ Previous double page spread: Siltcrete Island.
The four years that the Lake retained water allowed algae, bacteria and single-celled life forms known as archaeobacteria to form. These microorganisms are considered the oldest life forms on Earth. The colour of the water comes from pigments within the cell that produce carotenoids. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia. Canon EOS 5D MkII with Sigma 50mm f1.4 EX DG HSM lens. © Peter Elfes 2012

▶ A friend titled this photograph 'A Pause in Time', which struck me as very appropriate. I used a long lens to make the figures appear larger against their dramatic backdrop of sparkling salt and approaching storm. I first saw them from a distance and had to lug my heavy camera bag and tripod over the dunes and through the scrub to get into the right position. This is one of only three photographs I took of the scene. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, South Australia. Canon EOS 1D MkIII with EF 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 L IS USM lens. © Peter Elfes 2009

▶▶ Following double page spread: The colours formed on the salt pan by the mixture of algae and archaeobacteria bacteria which vary from green to blue and pink are one of the great attractions the lake has for artists, photographers and scientists drawn to it for more than 100 years. This formation is about 500m long and I shot it from a fixed wing aircraft from an altitude of around 500 feet. Canon EOS 1D MkIII with EF 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 L IS USM lens. © Peter Elfes 2013



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Mohammadreza REZANIA

Certain style

Iranian photographer Mohammadreza Rezania was born in Tehran and makes his home there today. To our surprise, he only took up photography 4 years ago yet his work shows qualities not often found after such a brief period of maturation. He discovered the craft while travelling with friends, and by shooting images with their cameras, found himself increasingly attracted to photography.

Those early images, of his friends and the scenery they travelled through, created his awareness of natural light, and a need to find beauty in a range of subjects. Initially, landscapes featured heavily but over time the lure of portraiture would begin to dominate his work.

While primarily self-taught, the isolation of his environment drove him to use the internet in general, and YouTube tutorials specifically, as a self-help library for tools and techniques. He also found inspiration and places to share his own imagery on 1x.com and 500px.com, something he still does today.

This is how he describes his work:

'I always try to do my works in a sensational or an emotional environment. In other words, I try

to entrap the viewer in a way that he or she would not be able to pass by the photos superficially; my hope is that instead, they feel them with all of their existence. This wouldn't happen unless a great connection was in place between the subjects and me as the photographer. I want the viewer to feel that connection.

My intention is to create a sense of uniqueness for the viewer. When people see my images, I want them to feel the unity, magnificence and splendor. I do my best to create emotion-filled portraits, that's why I've called my website, Sense Creator, and that is my most precious goal.'

His website contains a stunning collection of portraits, all of women, and he describes himself as a portrait photographer as some other genres of photography, such as fashion, are illegal in Iran, and therefore impossible to pursue. There are no modelling agencies in Iran, so he must find his subjects through family, friends and connections.▶

A dream about you © Mohammadreza Rezania



Mohammadreza describes the photography scene in Iran as 'active' in areas such as wedding, news and documentary, scenic and portraiture, but 'not as vast as it should be' in other areas.

f11: Welcome to f11, Mohammadreza. Thanks for joining us.

MR: I appreciate your invitation and the opportunity to do an interview with you.

f11: Is Iran a difficult environment for a creative person to operate in, and is it even more difficult for a photographer?

MR: Yes, it is true that for someone working as a creative photographer in Iran there are plenty of obstacles. However it is within these social constraints and limitations that creativity can excel. I am constantly jumping through hoops to find ways to get past the limitations but I have realised that while jumping I have reached my best capability.

f11: Do you feel that your work is under scrutiny, and that there is a hand of censorship on your shoulder before you even look through the viewfinder?

MR: I definitely sense the censorship on my shoulders, but as a photographer I take the risk to see much bigger rewards. However, I have to follow the red line in order not to jeopardise my social and personal wellbeing while living under such strict circumstances as an artist.

f11: Is there potential for commercial success in fine art portraiture such as yours in Tehran? Or do you need to fund this great love by doing other types of work?

MR: No, there is no commercial potential from my art because there is no history or trend towards fine art portrait photography in Iran. At the same time, you can make money by taking the usual portraits for normal people but there is no artistic aspect to it. Currently, I am working as a photo editor in a local magazine in Tehran. Also, I accept personal commissions from different people and take their photos.

f11: Are you part of an active creative community, say amongst other photographers around you, or is it a fairly lonely pursuit there?

MR: There is no active creative community but there are many friends of mine who share the same passion and we work together.

f11: So do you have mentors or influences within Iran, or do you find inspiration and learning entirely from abroad?

MR: I have no mentor here, I simply get my inspiration from photography websites and seeing photos from famous photographers such as Steven Meisel, Annie Leibovitz, Patrick Demarchelier and so on. Basically, I taught myself by observing fine art and photography and looking at different fashion and beauty pictures from all walks of life. The pictures I look at bring out the best of my creativity and I learn plenty from them.

f11: Apart from YouTube, what are some of your other online sources which keep your creativity challenged?

MR: You've mentioned that I utilise websites such as 1x.com and 500pix.com and I also use Facebook. Communities such as those found on these sites are a great source for finding photos and discovering pictures that are well known around the world. Also, I follow other fashion sites that share the best fashion images since this is my passion in photography. ▶

▶ *Invisible touch © Mohammadreza Rezania*

▶▶ *Following double page spread:
Through her gaze © Mohammadreza Rezania*





f11: Do you have good access to the equipment you need, or is this difficult to source?

MR: Yes, although all of the necessary equipment for photography has become extremely expensive in Iran due to our high inflation and importation tax. But fortunately, I have found the majority of the equipment I require for my work here in Tehran. But again there are some pieces of equipment that the majority of Iranian photographers lack due to limited access to them. But I make the best of what is available to me, as we all do.

f11: Tell us about your equipment choices, what is your main camera outfit and what does this contain?

MR: My main camera is a Nikon D700 with a 24-120mm Nikkor lens. As for lighting, I have 3 flash units, a softbox, an octabank, a beauty dish and all of the necessary peripherals.

f11: Let's talk about lighting, what are your preferences in that area, and what's your approach to lighting in general?

MR: This very much depends on the feeling and the atmosphere of the photo I'm creating at the time, as I use different forms of lighting. My main focus and concern during any photo shoot is that any lighting I use will look as natural as possible and that the atmosphere created in the picture appears real and believable.

f11: How about post-production, what is your approach to this, and how much work would you do on a typical portrait?

MR: In my opinion, post production is very important as it can change a good photo to an amazing and eye catching one. The final result of the picture will have more soul to it than an image without processing.

f11: There are no men on your website, and only a couple on your 500px.com folio, as a portrait photographer do men not interest you as potential subjects?

MR: In my photos I'm trying to create a feeling that is very profound and strong and this, in my opinion, can only be found in the facial features of women. That is the reason why I have chosen to photograph women almost exclusively.

f11: Although beautiful, there's a certain solemnity in most of your subjects, is that a look you're deliberately setting out to achieve?

MR: I always have a respectful view of women, and I think that shows in my photos. Women are very magnificent and powerful and I photograph them in a dignified manner. I think that is what you are noticing and commenting on. In my opinion, women can express and portray their feelings beautifully and this comes from their female inner force.

f11: Do you have a studio of your own, or do you photograph in the subject's own environment?

MR: Yes, I do have my own personal studio and thus far any photo I have taken was in my own studio. However, lately I've been thinking that I would like to work on a theme that takes place outside of the studio space.

f11: Do you work alone, or do you have hair and make-up artists as participants on your portrait shoots?

MR: In the past I worked alone, but in my latest photo collection I work with a team of hair and makeup artists. This is because I would like to step away from portrait photography and with all the restrictions surrounding me, enter the world of fashion photography. ▶

Enchantment © Mohammadreza Rezania



f11: You approached this magazine via our submissions process, are you actively seeking international exposure for your work, and where do you hope that this might lead?

MR: Definitely, that is my goal - to have international exposure. As you may be aware, Iranian art is one of the oldest cultural heritages of the World and it encompasses many disciplines including: architecture, painting, pottery, music, calligraphy, and metal work. Currently, photography as an art form, or creative category, receives much less attention than any other type of creative work done in Iran. However, given all the restrictions and red tape in Iran I do not wish to make my name known in this industry and create problems for myself. Artistic activity followed by fear and pressure has been a difficult situation to work with. In general, I hope to find international success in this artistic field and to have my work seen all around the world.

f11: Where would you like to be in five years time, and what would you like to be doing?

MR: I would like to be somewhere where I can freely follow my dreams in fashion photography. Perhaps a city like New York might be a suitable place to carry on this work.

f11: Thanks for being with us, it's been a pleasure.

MR: It was my pleasure and an honor to be interviewed and featured in *f11* Magazine, thank you. ■

TS

www.sensecreator.com
1x.com/member/mrrezania



You once told me © Mohammadreza Rezania

'...I taught myself by observing fine art and photography...'



▲ *More than words* © Mohammadreza Rezania

▶ *Let you go* © Mohammadreza Rezania







▲ *Feel the rhythm* © Mohammadreza Rezania

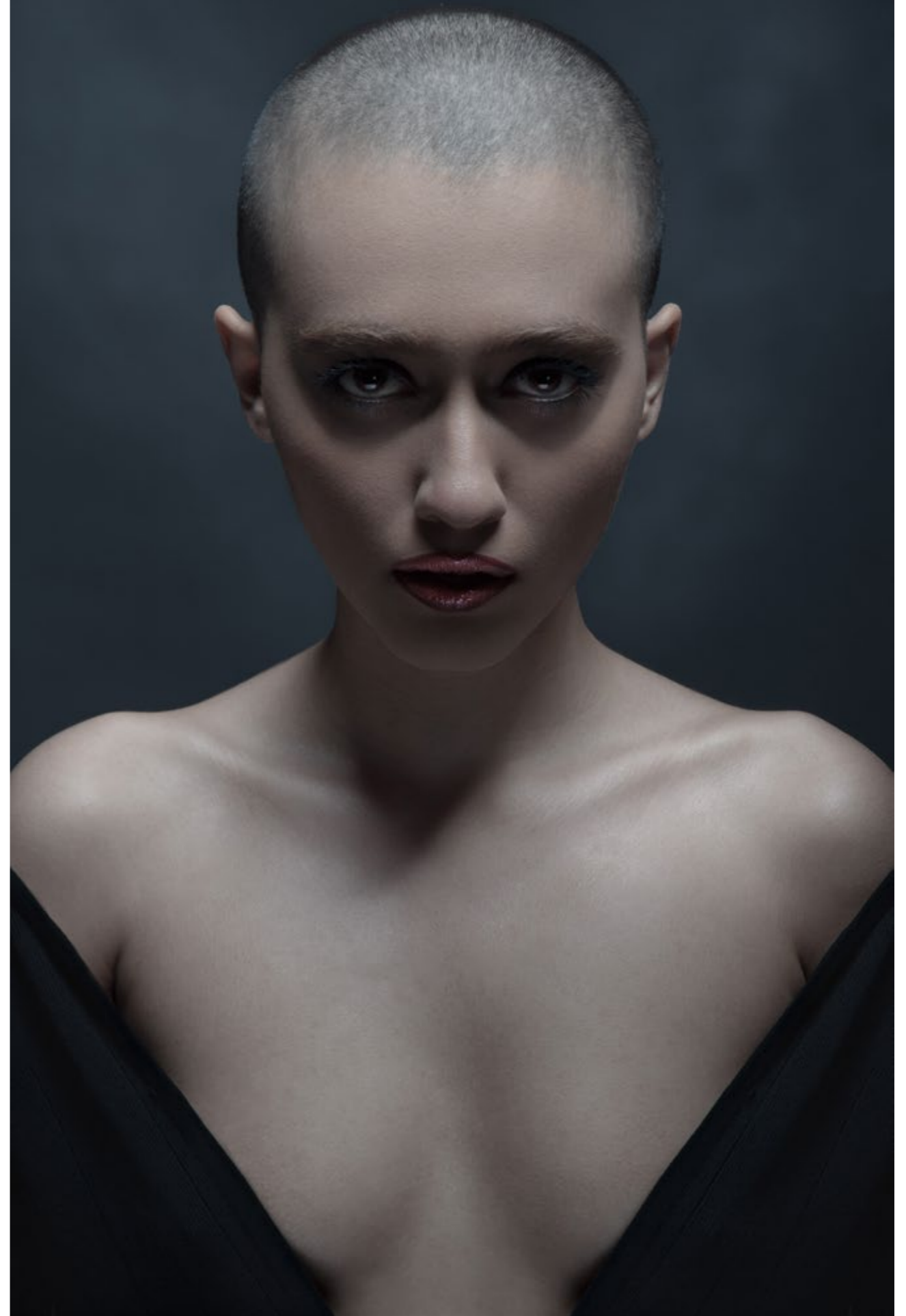
◀◀ *Previous double page spread: After the flame*
© Mohammadreza Rezania

▶ *April in her eyes* © Mohammadreza Rezania





Unspoken © Mohammadreza Rezania



Quiet times © Mohammadreza Rezania



▲ *Future memories* © Mohammadreza Rezania

▶ *Eternal melody* © Mohammadreza Rezania







▲ *Wounded soul* © Mohammadreza Rezania

▶ *Beauty of silence* © Mohammadreza Rezania

◀◀ *Previous double page spread: Dream your dreams* © Mohammadreza Rezania







▲ *Lady in red* © Mohammadreza Rezania

▶ *Hidden smile* © Mohammadreza Rezania

◀◀ *Previous double page spread: Silent eyes* © Mohammadreza Rezania







▲ *Restless* © Mohammadreza Rezania

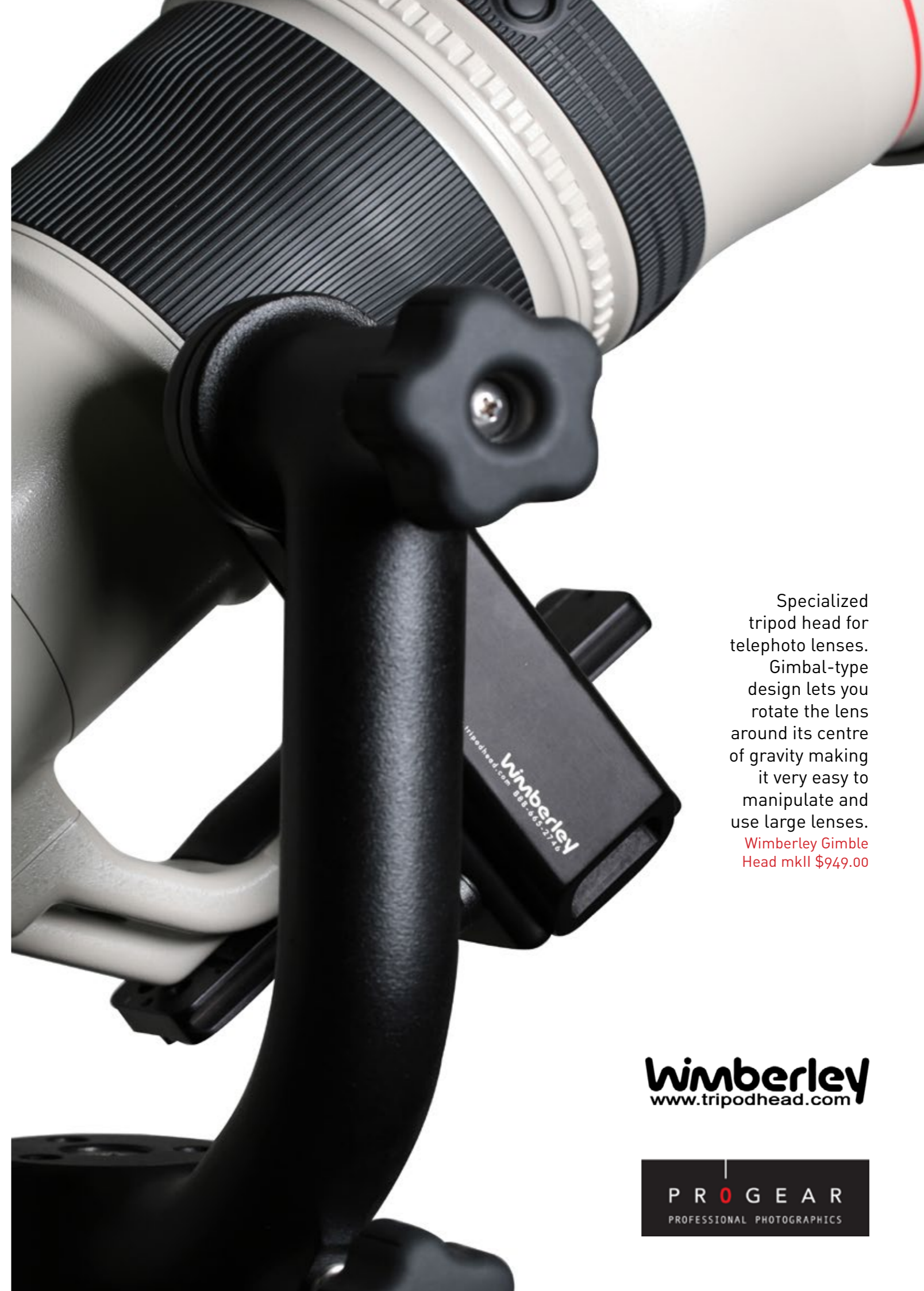
▶ *Lost in her eyes* © Mohammadreza Rezania

◀◀ *Previous double page spread: Endless silence* © Mohammadreza Rezania





Breathe in the deep © Mohammadreza Rezania



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P R O G E A R
PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHICS

One of my favourite shots from the tour, and organised by my son Pearce, we wanted to show the intense study during exam time for the young monks. They loved it and enjoyed looking at the results on the rear LCD of our cameras. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon 70-200mm f2.8 lens. Aperture Priority, 800 ISO, f2.8 at 1/500 sec. © Darran Leal

On location

BHUTAN Mountain Kingdom

I love to explore new lands and to visit places that few have trodden. So with great excitement, I departed to the mountain kingdom of Bhutan in 2010. What a stunning photographic location! Three years later, my second visit was just as good as the first.

Bhutan has a reputation for only allowing a limited number of visitors each year. This is true, and it's mainly due to the limited range of services available. You must have a local guide and you cannot self-drive. You also need a visa before arrival.

I am a big believer that you get far more out of any visit with a local guide. They add the history, and the small points that help you to understand the culture and people of the land.

Photographically, Bhutan is diverse. Its landscapes include waterfalls, rainforests and deep valleys that offer changing shades throughout the day. With mountain peaks over 7,000m, snow can be seen for most of the year. However, this is not what most visitors come to see. Most visit Bhutan for its people, culture and Dzongs – ancient fortresses.

Bhutan is a small Buddhist country with a little over 700,000 people. Paro is the main entry point, as it offers the only international airport. Access points to the southern border with India allow for further access by road. However, the roads are very narrow, winding and at times, not for the faint hearted.

Paro is a more traditional town, with older buildings. It is the main staging ground for one of the countries greatest treasures – the Tigers Nest, Taktsang Monastery. Perched high up on the edge of a mountain, this monastery has great significance due to a small cave in the main building. For the photographer, it opens up a raft of visual opportunities from the Dzong itself, to beautiful rainforest and even the odd nature shot.

Our groups have enjoyed a horse ride up the steep track to Taktsang Monastery – a great laugh – this allowing us to walk the last section and be 'in the best mind zone' (at just over 3,000m above sea level) to look for images that are a bit different to the norm. Prayer flags cross hundreds of metres to link up the other side ▶



of a small gorge. For the best images look across 'the viewing point' to the monastery. My personal favourites were shot through the rich rainforest section. You cannot come all this way and not go up to this ancient site, albeit steep and breath taking – literally!

Thimpu is found just over an hour east. It is the capital, and clearly the fastest growing part of the country with the most western and Indian influence. While a good range of accommodation is now available, most with slow WIFI, we pick the 4 Star hotels for comfort. Off peak season, they are of course, better priced. Thimpu offers new, with the old. It has the national archery centre, which is the country's national sport. It is worth spending a couple of hours to watch how accurate these guys are at around 150m with their arrows. Test your skills to capture that split second when the arrow leaves the archers fingers. Monasteries and other attractions offer further photo shoots.

Heading east on the main road, (most Bhutan roads are linked to this 'main road', across the country) we quickly hit farming land. Rice terraces, deep valleys and clear running streams. Eventually, we start to climb one of the main passes. Dochula Pass peaks at just over 3,000m and is a top shooting location. On my first visit in 2010, it was shrouded in mist. This time we had blue skies and could see the snow capped peaks of the Himalayas. The few clouds around were swirling over the peaks very fast, making for great imagery.

While the scenery is spectacular, you would visit Bhutan for its Buddhist Dzongs, monks and people. The people and portrait shoots are endless. As a guided tour, my son Pearce and I set up planned shoots and took advantage of countless ad-hoc opportunities.

In general, the people of Bhutan are quite open to being photographed. The simplest method is to shoot first with a longer lens and ask politely for closer-up images. If someone does not want their image taken, they will soon let you know

and you can discretely back off. I delete such 'grab images', of where I know that the subjects were not happy to be photographed. This scenario is rare however.

Monks are outstanding to shoot, especially the 'mini monks' (teenage novice monks). This trip coincided with exams for the young monks. We found them at a couple of monasteries, busily practicing for exams. Our group was a great break from the pressure. They loved to be photographed and we combined a mix of natural shoots, plus pre-visualised creative shoots.

Be aware that you are not allowed to shoot inside the temples themselves (no one is permitted to do this) and that other limitations may apply, from 'no tripods' in some locations, to 'no shoes' in the temples. I love being bare foot anyway...

The more important festivals of Bhutan are around November. However, festivals and celebrations occur throughout the year. We targeted a quiet and little known festival on our June visit. Only a handful of other westerners were present, this helping to add to the authentic nature of the day. Several hours of dances and story telling offered hundreds of unique images.

Bhutan is outstanding. It is quiet, slow and a very refreshing contrast from some of our destinations. I am now only a few days away from China, what a contrast awaits me! But that is for next months feature ...

Enjoy shooting ... ■

Darran Leal

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

Darran Leal travels the world visiting most continents each year. He is the owner of World Photo Adventures, specialising in photo tours and workshops.



▲ The Tigers Nest is something that all photographers and visitors want to see. I enjoyed spending several minutes by myself in this lovely forest, searching for a new perspective. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon 70-200mm f2.8 lens. Aperture Priority, 400 ISO, f4 at 1/750 sec. © Darran Leal

▼ Monks are great subjects, and usually open to being photographed. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon 70-200mm f2.8 lens. Aperture Priority, 800 ISO f8 1/350 sec, EV plus 1. © Darran Leal





A Gannet Study © Alistair McCauslan APSNZ

Tough competition expected for National Triptych Salon

Triptych – ‘threefold’ – derived from the Greek ‘tri’ – meaning three and Ptyso – ‘to fold’.

Today we know ‘triptych’ to be made up of any three art works designed to complement each other and be displayed together.

In 2012 the Nelson Camera Club on behalf of PSNZ hosted the inaugural National Triptych Salon – and what a success it was.

Salon convener Don Pittham was overwhelmed with the response, which saw a total of over 100 print images and nearly 350 digitally projected images entered.

Closing date for the 2013 competition is at the end of this month – 31 August – and Don says he fully expects the number and quality of entries to surpass that of 2012.

The Nelson Camera Club initiated The Triptych Salon to encourage and stimulate photographers in the skill of creating three images that not only work well together but also succeed in providing a total impression on the viewer that is greater than the sum of the three individual photographs.

Both prints and digitally projected images may be entered into the Salon but the images must be made up of three (and only three) distinctly separated photographs presented on a common background.



Don offers some tips to consider when making up a good triptych image:

The individual photographs must be technically competent.

The total triptych should demonstrate the creativity of the photographer – by the approach taken with a familiar subject or by the choice of an unusual subject.

The complete work should communicate something to the viewer

The images can also tell a story by showing a sequence of events.

They may depict different objects that reinforce a common theme or pattern.

The compositional strength of the total image may be dependent on lines and shapes in the individual images that only reveal their significance when the three images are presented together.

While the selection panel is made up of some of New Zealand’s top photographers, Don says he is anticipating the selection process to once again be as ‘challenging and demanding’ as last year.

‘With the subject matter being ‘open’, selecting the top print and top digital images will no doubt be the most difficult part of judging,’ said Don.

Full details of the terms and conditions of entry are available at the dedicated National Triptych Salon website.

Moira Blincoe is the PSNZ Councillor for Publicity

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THERE’S MORE...**



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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:

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Bridge on his photography workshops:

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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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Another TED worth spreading...

New Zealand's most easterly city is Gisborne, on the East coast of the North Island, 'First to see the light.'

My heading is but a ruse, I'm not writing about the excellent TED talks on the web. Instead, I well remember another Ted, from Gisborne. Ted Mitchell, founder and owner of what was a very successful photographic business Kandid Kamera Kraft, unfortunately more commonly known as KKK. While this might have been the end of a business in the US, there are no negative associations with that sequence of letters in our region of the South Pacific.

Ted was a man of insightful and direct observations, the one that resonates most was: 'There are two types of people who live in Gisborne, those who use a butter knife and those who don't.'

Elegant cut through that encompasses culture, history, wealth and practice.

For years we have been able to generally make clear simple Ted like claims that 'there are two types of photographers...', generally posed with a rider such as one of these:

'...those who use Hasselblad or those who use Mamiya...'

'...those who use labs or those who print their own...'

'...those who use Nikon or those who use Canon...'

But the waters are now a lot muddier, as photographers ask themselves time and time again, what their chosen craft is all about. In part, this is because the challenges to good commercial practice are constant and can be debilitating, but also because the single image is becoming lost – among composited single images and amongst moving images.

Over the last few weeks I have had my spirits renewed as I witnessed emerging new work that reinforced for me, and I think for the creatives involved, just how liberating it is to shoot privately sponsored projects in a thoughtful way clear of the impediments of client or brief.

A 'body of work', to many, is a photographers' collection of clever, interesting and insightful images and less likely to be conceptual projects – 'missions of endeavor' that address or answer self imposed questions.

Tony Whincup semi-retired last year from an influential and notable career as a Professor at Massey University's Wellington campus. While still involved with Massey in their 'Pacifica' programme, this year he has been supervising grad students on a degree programme at The Photo School. This is a return to his love – photography. His student group includes senior Photo School students plus some seasoned working photographers returning for a part time programme that will add to their earlier diplomas and commercial experience.

Earlier in the month Tony gave a presentation to Wellington AIPA members on what fine art photography was all about by using his own self directed projects to illustrate the defining steps of a process and the teasing out of the results and end purposes such as exhibition, publication, public lectures, and professional attribution. His core value of creating such work was that it was based around addressing a question. A question posed through photographs is evaluated, commented, maybe answered, but in the very asking becomes the constant within a body of work that is the project.

A week later the class presented their work to date in an exhibition which becomes part of their full year programme but not necessarily their full project. Each demonstrated how their series was conceptualised with a written artist statement that set out their 'question' as their purpose, and generally how they addressed that in photographic terms.

A week later on the other side of town I went to an opening of another exhibition at Pataka Art Museum. Here was Joseph Michael's 'Dark Cloud: White Light' exhibition. There was an exhibition on large video monitors of time-lapse photography of extraordinary accomplishment. Using Nikon D800 cameras, Joseph and his team had trekked, climbed, and perched in some of New Zealand's most remote and iconic scenery to capture a day in a few minutes. In several locations they were shot with a purpose built

two-camera rig to create 3D. The unique project was then enhanced with each having original music created that lifted the total performance to a level that exhibition opener Mike Hutcheson extolled as a leap forward from the National Film Unit's celebrated three screen magnum opus 'This is New Zealand' that was produced for the World Fair in Osaka in 1970.

'Dark Cloud: White Light' was remarkable by being comprised of many still images (probably 20,000) but significantly, the framing for each was very carefully chosen so that they could stand on their own as individual images and at 32MB each, hold together in any media.

So, my faith was restored in just a small local series of events, reinforcing that in private projects we still have purpose ... and with the right questions we have challenge and opportunity to be excited by.

So are there two types of photographer? ■

MS

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Frances Andrijich is one of Australia's finest photographers and a longstanding ACMP member. Her extraordinary images – whether captured in the townships of South Africa, the Croatian countryside, or Indonesian slums – have earned her a growing international reputation. But at heart Frances is a Western Australian, and arguably her most captivating work are studies of the personalities and places closest to home. As such, the inspiration for her new book 'Margaret River' was literally on her doorstep.

Shooting intuitively and incisively, Frances' photographs can be lush and painterly, or witty and surprising; they are always technically superb. Her work has graced magazines, books and campaigns in Australia and around the world, including Gourmet Traveller, Decanter Magazine, Australian Geographic, the Weekend Australian Magazine and Good Weekend, and she has an impressive commercial client list too!

Her latest book documents Margaret River and is out later this month, August 20th. Here's a little sneak peek from Frances:

'The elements come together, natural and man-made, and images are seized while fossicking for moments. I work instinctively, trying to get to a place that will show me the heart of it. Nowadays, some of my closest friends are here; visiting the produce market I meet and greet dozens of familiar faces. My connection with Margaret River grows with each trip and I'm forever grateful to the locals who share their stories and secret spots with me. I hope with this book readers discover something new – that it offers a glimpse of the magic that I have been privileged to encounter and capture. It's a special part of the world, revitalising and inspiring, and when I venture here camera in hand, I'm totally absorbed.'

The book is available from all good bookstores and online from 1 September.

Sacha Walters, ACMP Administrator



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AIPA

Gatherings

For a number of years now, our Wellington AIPA members have been gathering at the Southern Cross Garden Bar on the first Tuesday morning of each month for a coffee and a casual chat. This has always seemed like a great idea to me as it gives local pro photographers an excuse to catch up with one another on a regular basis.

Back in the days of shooting film I remember how visiting the local lab (or specialist photography store) was often a rewarding social experience – even though I certainly didn't recognise this it at the time. Whenever you were dropping off or picking up film you inevitably bumped into a colleague and spent a fair amount of time talking about the industry and life in general.

Since the advent of digital photography, and online shopping, the opportunities for this kind of casual face-to-face interaction between professional photographers has diminished dramatically. I'd say it wouldn't be uncommon for many pro photographers to go for weeks or even months without ever speaking, in person, to another pro photographer. As a result it's hardly surprising that so many freelance photographers now feel isolated from one another. And if you don't get to know your professional counterparts it's easy to fall into the trap of labelling them competitors (i.e. threats to your business), when they should be viewed as colleagues (i.e. 'brother in arms'), who could even be good friends (i.e. supporters and advisors).

Social isolation is a breeding ground for paranoia and self-doubt. It's these negative qualities that certain clients, especially large publishing

companies, love to take advantage of when they negotiate with commercial photographers. For example, a publisher's representative will say something like, 'Every other photographer has signed our [highly exploitative] contract, why are you being so difficult by refusing to sign?' – knowing full well that because the vast majority editorial photographers don't (and won't) talk to each other, this blatant lie will be accepted as fact.

Combating the isolationist tendencies of freelance photographers is one of the primary aims of the AIPA. That's why we've always strived to hold at least 4 or 5 general meetings, and a conference, in Auckland every year. But that's obviously not enough to effectively address this issue. So we've decided to follow the lead of our Wellington compatriots and start our own regular monthly get-togethers in Auckland. Our new secretary/treasurer Melanie Tollemache has even come up with a catchy name – The Percolator.

From 9:00am to 10:30am on the first Monday of every month The Percolator will be held at a cafe somewhere in Auckland city. To keep things interesting the location will change from month to month – we'll just list the name and address of the venue on the AIPA website home page a few weeks in advance. All AIPA members who attend receive a complimentary cup of coffee (or hot chocolate) upon arrival. Non-member photographers and assistants are also welcome to come along and join in the fun!

Aaron Key
AIPA Executive Director

Hold the phone

Every now and then something so indispensable comes along that we simply have to share the word.

This month we have three such 'finds', all are dedicated to the camera phone end of your photographic equipment, and all come from JOBY.

First up is the **Grip Tight Mount**, a smartphone mount for everybody. (1)

It's tiny, lightweight, diecast and foldable – and it'll hold your phone securely as a freestanding device, or when you attach it to anything with a 1/4 inch screw. It's adjustable grip fits all iPhones and all but the very largest of Android and Windows smartphones, and your phone's case does not need to be removed for use.

The **GripTight GorillaPod Stand** combines the GripTight Mount with a small GorillaPod tripod. The fully articulated legs allow you to position your phone at a wider range of angles, or to cling to another support such as a table leg, railing or tree branch. (2)

Finally, the MPod Mini Stand fits between the two, as a fun and friendly ministand for your phone. Made from ABS plastic, and with an elasticised cord holding the phone in position between two grips, this unit has smaller and integrated, rather than detachable, GorillaPod legs. It's adjustable grip fits all iPhones and all but the very largest of Android and Windows smartphones. (3)

All of these devices are high quality, relatively inexpensive at between NZ\$30 and NZ\$60 each, and practical photo accessories. ■



WIN WITH f11 MAGAZINE!

f11 has 5 prizes on offer: 2 x GripTight Mounts, 1 x GripTight GorillaPod Stand and 2 x MPod Mini Stands – to give away thanks to Joby's NZ agents, Lacklands Ltd!

Here's how to enter:

Email us at admin@f11magazine.com with 'Hold my phone Joby' in the subject line of your email, and your contact details and postal delivery address in the body of the email. You must be a current subscriber to win, and we will be checking – so make sure that you enter with the same email address that you used when you subscribed to f11. If you're not sure which one that is, check any issue reminder email we have sent you recently.

Entries close on 23 August 2013 and we'll announce the 5 lucky winners in our September 2013 issue. *Good luck!*

NZIPP InFocus Conference 2013

As part of our 2013 InFocus conference, the Photography Industry Exhibition will be open to the public for one day only on Saturday 3rd August, from 9.00am – 7.00pm, at the Pullman Auckland Hotel, Corner Waterloo Quadrant and Princes Street, Auckland.

If you are a professional photographer, ardent amateur or simply want to keep up with the very latest in technology, you cannot miss this golden opportunity to see the all the main photographic brands under one roof.

We are fortunate to have Epson NZ as our main sponsor for our 75th Jubilee and the Epson team will have the latest in big and small digital printers including the totally new 'SureLab' printing system on display.

AARQUE graphics will be present with a range of exciting new products in printers and inkjet media technologies.

Nikon NZ will display a full range of cameras and lenses, bring along your favourite lens and check it out on a D4 or D800.

C.R. Kennedy will have a full working studio set up on display, featuring Bowens lighting, a huge range of Sigma lenses, Hasselblad, and brand new Ilford papers.

Independent Photo (IPS NZ) will feature and technically support the entire range of Kodak Professional Silver Halide, Inkjet Paper and IPS Canvas Media, Film, Ink and Photo Chemistry,

along with the tried and proven Noritsu Drylab Technology – all supported by IPS Professional Digital Profiling Service. IPS NZ offers Online Pro Event Photography Solutions and fully supports the professional photographer as a Gold Sponsor of the NZIPP.

Kodak Professional will feature albums printed on the new Kodak Endura EP Paper that gives Kodak Professional Endura quality to images printed on Electro Photographic technology Kodak NexPress and Indigo printers. Also the latest Kodak Professional Endura and Endura Metallic papers with increased colour gamut.

Also come and see new products from Canon, Fujifilm and many other photo trade exhibitors.

On behalf of the NZIPP I would like to thank all of our sponsors and trade show participants and also thanks to *f11* Magazine for giving us the opportunity to have an ongoing presence. Their support is invaluable.

After a good look around the industry exhibition, why not make a day of it and finish the day at our public seminar 'From then to now' with our keynote speaker, Rachael Hale McKenna. Tickets available from www.nzipp.org.nz

Look forward to seeing you there.

TERRY WREFORD HANN

Commercial director New Zealand Institute of Professional Photography

INFOCUS 2013 AUCKLAND



Images by Rachael Hale McKenna ©

Public Open Day SATURDAY 03 AUGUST, 9.00am – 7.00pm PULLMAN AUCKLAND HOTEL

An Industry Exhibition, with leading photographic suppliers all in the one room, it is the perfect opportunity to see new products and services. There is no cost to attend the Public Open Day.

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

Rachael Hale McKenna, From Then to Now! SATURDAY 03 AUGUST, 7.00pm – 8.30pm PULLMAN AUCKLAND HOTEL

NZIPP presents a public seminar with kiwi born photographer Rachael Hale McKenna. Showcasing her journey from New Zealand to France, and the 14 books published along the way.

\$45.00 per person

FOR MORE INFORMATION
and to purchase tickets for Rachael
Hale McKenna function, visit:
www.nzipp.org.nz

The unbearable lightness of... lightness

Doing things properly, not so popular these days it seems...

I've always been of the opinion that if something is worth doing then surely it's worth doing well. I'm well aware that statement has just pigeon-holed me as old and irrelevant to most of the generation following my own. It's a concept that is either not taught in schools these days, is simply passé, or maybe fell victim to the 'financially challenged' world we operate in these days. A quick clarification, that's financially challenged when it comes to paying suppliers of creative services, not authorising management bonuses.

On the subject of what's now taught in schools, I was speaking to a friend and photographic educator the other day who mentioned he was about to hold a class on high and low key lighting – as opposed to shooting it straight and bugging around with it in Photoshop. I found this remarkable, I'd never thought anyone would do that. I shoot it the way I want it as it's a damn sight more efficient than fixing it in post. Bloody hell, maybe I am out of date! On the flip-side, it did reassure me a little that the 'proper' way of doing things is being taught in at least one school.

When I was doing my apprenticeship, school wasn't really an option as the only proper professional photography school that I knew of

at the time (this was the early 80's) was Wellington Polytech. And with tutors of the calibre of Tony Whincup and Kevin Capon it was a wondrous place, and time, from whence many a top photographer emerged, most of whom are still making a valuable contribution today. Since I have a strong aversion to wind and politicians (ostensibly the same thing? – ED) I took the seemingly easier path of tagging on to various photographers I admired in the hope that something would rub off on me along the way.

This was something of an eye-opener for an impressionable young lad, as some of the people I had placed on a pedestal proved not quite so worthy when seen through an insider's eyes and others who I had not previously rated proved far more clever than I ever imagined. I like to think that I was exposed to enough of the spectrum to pick up some good habits (no need to interject here Tim) and I certainly learned what I did and didn't like to photograph during this time. The photographers I admired, and learned the most from, were what I would call 'the complete package' – complete in the sense that they were creative thinkers, visualisers



© Gary Baidon

and problem solvers equipped with the technical nous to pull off the most complex and challenging jobs to a very high standard.

Once I flew the nest I regularly worked with art directors and creatives who knew a lot about photography and lighting and had strong views about what the end result should look like. This demanded a lot of a photographer as there was no 'relax, we'll fix it in Photoshop' fallback available as, at the time, desktop publishing didn't really exist and retouching and compositing was astronomically expensive and slow.

It was simply imperative that things were done properly – and the first time around. Complex shoots were exciting, challenging and, once they were over, so very rewarding. The unforgiving nature of transparency film provided us with the opportunity to paper large walls with a Polaroid diary covering years of jobs and I fondly remember the deep and meaningful (by photographer standards) conversations held in coffee bars – they weren't all called Cafe's then – while waiting on clip tests, E6 processing and proof sheets to magically appear from the back of evil smelling processing laboratories.

I can reminisce all I like but I don't know that I'd really like to go back to that way of working as digital cameras, DTP software and today's crop of relatively un-demanding clients have made life rather easier in many ways, though definitely less rewarding, especially given the fact that we now have to share the creative credit for our work with retouchers, mac operators and 3D modelers – to name but a few allied trades.

At the end of the day though, no matter how seemingly menial the task may appear to be, there's still some warm fuzziness available by knowing that you did it properly – even if increasingly no-one else knows, understands or cares.

Go forth and be excellent, even if only you know the distinction between this and decidedly average... ■

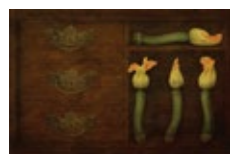
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▶▶ Continued from page 134...

unable to delegate, or has no one to delegate to. A lone wolf is often a business jack-of-all-trades who is unlikely to share business decisions or ideas.

Whilst some lone wolves eschew the social aspects of joining an industry body, it is more the business aspects of belonging to such a body that are important to me. Such a membership assists in validating my involvement in the photography industry, it gives me an introduction to other practitioners in distant towns and even more distant countries. One of the tangible benefits for joiners, is access to the managed on going education that is best orchestrated by an industry body, this often tailored to contemporary needs as opposed to the primary education which was required prior to entering the profession.

Whilst I occasionally cast envious glances at lone wolves, I have to admit that there is some comfort in having a secure place within an industry body – if that makes me a middle of the road type of photographer then I am proud to be a joiner.

My association with fellow joiners has provided comfort beyond measure in difficult times, more than a few very close friendships and camaraderie within a large group of people on the same journey, even if our destinations, accidental or intended, are manifestly different. ■

Ian Poole

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ONLY THE GOOD STUFF

Joiners versus lone wolves

To the dismay of my Mother, my Father was a committee-man. Therefore I can't help it, it is in my DNA! What Mother saw as wasting valuable family time, Dad saw as an altruistic repayment of events from an earlier life. He was a returned serviceman who had had a narrow escape in the Battle of the Coral Sea and devoted a lot of time to war widows and ex-servicemen's associations; and of course our local Boy Scout Troop. Mum had trouble talking to the neighbours – but was good at sewing Scout badges on the correct sleeve and getting four sons off to Sunday School on time, with clean faces. I was exposed to the classic joiners versus lone wolves scenario at a very early age.

Me – I started work in a small two man office, then worked in a small marketing self-contained unit, until I started my own photography business with a partner. I had never been part of a large business structure and was accustomed to making decisions without too much supervision. With this background, and the aforementioned DNA, I was destined to be a joiner. It also helped combat the somewhat lonely existence of the photographer working in a small environment by giving access to similarly minded people dealing with like problems. Within six months of forming my first photographic business I was a member of my local state council of the Australian professional body.

For a joiner like me it gave me the security of being able to mix with other photographers, to

share ideas and thoughts, and on occasion to brainstorm problems with people suitably qualified, by dint of experience, to do so. My membership of a professional body also gave me the opportunity to seek peer assessment via a structured process. This also proved valuable in finding my place in the professional pecking order of the day. Today, I enjoy helping others entering the funnel of achievement to do exactly this, attempting to repay the kindnesses of those who helped me.

Conversely I can see an advantage in being a lone wolf. Running ahead of the pack and not looking over your shoulder must be liberating – if you have the courage of your convictions and the requisite skills to conduct a profitable business without access to moral support. In a day and age when so many photographers have no formal photographic education (which causes me great heartache – but that is a rant for another day), I doubt that the lone wolf concept is useful within a personal development context. The lone wolf can only assess their photographic value by means of customer support and satisfaction, and self-assessment against similar published images within his or her genre of operation. In my experience, the lone wolf is often an entrepreneur or a workaholic who is

◀◀ **Continued on page 133...**

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