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CAMERACRAFT

Incorporating Master Photography & f2 Freelance Photographer



COVER

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See: thenewbornphotographyshow.co.uk

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See: photohubs.co.uk

Hasselblad HD-6c 400



WITH TWO PIXEL SHIFT MODES

allowing either a true RGB four-shot 100 megapixel image, or additional half-pixel shifted horizontal and vertical captures for six multishots creating a 400 megapixel raw file, the Hasselblad HD-6 400c MS joins the Sony A7RIII, Pentax K-1 and K-3, and Olympus OM-D E-M5 and M1 MkII in adopting this technology. Apart from the piezo shifted sensor and firmware, the camera offers USB 3.0 type c, 30fps live view, CFast 2.0 and SD card slots, a 3-inch touch rear display, HD/UHD video, WiFi, True Focus II and single-shot connection for technical view camera use. The H6D-400c MS is available now at £36,250+VAT or for rent at c. £399 a day (with up to 50% saving for long periods) excluding shipping, insurance, and fees.

hasselblad.com/h6d-multishot



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TURNING photos into realistic painted art is a great way for photographers to increase their profits and show customers something that is stylish and different. The problem is that virtually all digitally painted photos do not look like authentic paintings – until now!

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There is a massive market for this painted art. A painting is very flattering for the subject. They are very popular with brides, High School and College kids and parents for a family painting.

LayerCake offers two ways for you to offer this art to your customers. You can purchase the software from their website and create it yourself. Or you can have one of their experts paint your photos for you and you charge your customers accordingly. Photo labs and specialist printers – LayerCake lets you offer a premium art service to photographers. You can review the quality of their work below.

www.studiomagic.co/PhotoBooks/painter.html



Sony reaches a hire level

SONY full-frame mirrorless system owners keen to find out how good the fast Sony GM lenses are can now hire from Lenses For Hire for as little as £69.

A three-day shoot with the 24-70mm f/2.8 FE GM OSS, delivered on a Thursday and picked up on the Monday by courier, would cost under £100 including insurance and carriage both ways and only £69 direct from the Maidenhead hire specialists.

System lenses stocked include



the new 12-24mm f/4 G, 16-35mm f/2.8 GM, 24-105mm G OSS, 90mm f/2.8 OSS macro, 70-20mm f/2.8 GM

OSS, new GM 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 OSS and the versatile travel-friendly 24-240mm.

Tele converters, the latest Metabones Mark V Canon EF adaptor and accessories are offered. Sony A7II, A7RIII, A7SII and A9 bodies can be hired from £94.

With GM lenses costing from £2,269 upwards an affordable hire period helps you make the right buying decision, saves you money and gives you the best choice for your work.

www.lensesforhire.co.uk



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Nine new full frame FE-mount Sigma ART lenses have now been announced. All use a new dedicated controller for their focus systems, though these are derived from the DSLR models. This gives them the ability to work much better with Sony's phase and contrast detect AF than adapted lenses, even when Sigma's MC-11 converter is used for Canon or Sigma native mount glass.

The range and the prices (for the first seven lenses) are as follows:

Sigma 14mm f1.8 DG HSM Art. Available from July 2018, SRP: £1,679.99

Sigma 20mm f1.4 DG HSM Art. Available from June 2018, SRP: £859.99

Sigma 24mm f1.4 DG HSM Art. Available from June 2018, SRP: £799.99

Sigma 35mm f1.4 DG HSM Art. Available from May 2018, SRP: £799.99

Sigma 50mm f1.4 DG HSM Art. Available from May 2018. SRP: £749.99

Sigma 85mm f1.4 DG HSM Art. Available from May 2018, SRP: £1,199.99

Sigma 135mm f1.8 DG HSM Art. Available from July 2018, SRP: £1,399.99

All prices include VAT at 20%.

While offering the same high-performance optical design as other lenses in the Art line, the new Sony E-mount models will feature a newly developed control algorithm that optimises the autofocus drive and maximises the data transmission speed. In addition, these lenses are compatible with Sony's

Sigma launches full frame mirrorless lens range

Continuous AF (AF-C) and high-speed autofocus, which are not addressed by Sigma's Mount Converter MC-11. Like the converter, the lenses will be compatible with in-camera image stabilisation and in-camera aberration correction which includes correction of peripheral illumination, chromatic aberrations, and distortion.

Thanks to an autofocus drive control program tuned for each lens and high-speed data transmission, the lenses will offer high-speed autofocus at the same performance level as that of a lens designed exclusively for mirrorless cameras. In particular, in E-mount cameras offering Sony's Fast Hybrid AF, AF-C mode will deliver exceptional subject following performance. Moreover, autofocus will remain extremely precise even in those E-mount cameras offering only contrast AF.

The lenses will be compatible with in-camera image stabilisation. The Sony E-mount camera senses the focal length of the lens and automatically optimises image stabilisation performance.

The lenses are fully compatible with in-camera aberration correction, which includes corrections for peripheral illumination, chromatic aberrations and distortion. We can



also expect to see Adobe profiles available and transfer of built-in information to *Lightroom*/ACR.

Making the mount native to the lens makes possible a more rigid and stable feel to the lens. Featuring a surface treatment to enhance strength, the brass bayonet mount offers a high-precision fit and exceptional durability. The mount connection area incorporates rubber sealing for dust- and splash-proof construction.

Rather surprisingly given the major difference in register, the Mount Conversion Service still applies to this range, meaning they can be converted to Canon, Nikon, Sigma or Pentax mount. This service is performed exclusively by Sigma themselves and their subsidiaries like Sigma (UK) Ltd should be contacted for details of how to obtain it and what the cost is.

See: sigma-imaging-uk.com

Fast 105 and new 70

Sigma has also announced two new lenses which will be available (as all the new E-mount designs already are) for mainstream Canon, Nikon and Sigma DSLRs.

These are the 105mm f1.4 Art, seen above left with tripod mount fitted, and a new version of the 70mm f2.8 Macro. This is not the same as the classic DSLR lens, as it has fly-by-wire internal AF and a compact 49mm filter thread, made possible by 13 elements in 10 groups, and a closer focus point of 25.8cm.

The 105mm is a very advanced design and is appearing on the market close to £2,000. It has 17 elements in 12 groups and focuses down to 1m, weighing in at 1645g. It's also built to a well-waterproofed sports specification.



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FAR AWAY THE BEST!

In this issue we're focusing on macro photography – we reckoned that eventually some flowers and insects would emerge again, after their one-week special appearance in April. Don't worry, in the next edition we get round to travel, even if it means our calendar starts to look like an archive of old copies of AP.

During the weeks of hard study working out what can be said about macro without getting into focus stacking, one thing became very clear. There are hardly any conventional macro lenses left, and as a result most modern autofocus macro lenses place the lens itself much closer to the subject without gaining any advantages of scale.

There are some extremes around too. In theory a 50mm macro lens should be about 80mm from the subject at 1:1, allowing 1cm for half the glassware thickness and 1cm for the front mount metalwork. The current Sony FE 50mm, using hybrid internal focusing, ends up just 45mm from the subject. The Nikon 40mm f2.8 DX VR Micro-Nikkor (for crop frame, so equal to a 60mm) focuses to 16.3cm for life size, but don't be fooled – that 16.3cm includes 45mm of camera body thickness and 65mm of lens. When at 1:1 the front rim is 17mm further forward. So the subject clearance is 36mm, and that's not very much if you want to use any kind of lens-mounted lighting or avoid disturbing what's in your shot.

A simple 40mm lens, which is 40mm from the imaging plane at infinity, is 80mm from it at 1:1 and the subject will be 80mm away as well (with some loss both ways from the thickness of the optical unit).

This is how macro photography used to work. The lenses were simple Tessar derivations, and the focusing a double helicoid which racked the entire lens forwards. A 50mm macro would have a working distance not much less than 100mm at



Above, taken using a 100mm macro with 15.5cm clear space between lens and subject. This allowed a studio flash head to be adjusted for the reflection and light in the water drop when a 50mm lens did not, and cast a shadow.



Below, three macro lenses. The Sigma 70mm f2.8 EX DG Macro, left, is now considered a classic and one of the best designs ever made – it gives a good distance from lens to subject. The Tamron 60mm f2 Macro 1:1 is a lovely lens, but with internal focusing it is more like a true 40mm at closest focus. The Sony 30mm SAM DSLR lens leaves only 1.5cm clear at 1:1.



life size, and a 100mm macro a very useful 200mm. That's how things work if you can find a bellows unit and a classic old Bellows Micro or Macro manual lens. Some enlarging lenses work adequately, most do not. The 1:1 Apo-Rodagon and other similar slide copier/scanner lenses are better corrected, as the most expensive enlarging lenses were of course made for 20 x 16" prints... and that's a 1:16 image scale, almost portrait distance.

If you look up macro photography on Wikipedia, you'll find

a big table of macro lenses and their minimum focus distance. It omits many modern designs, and quotes the film plane to subject distance not the lens to subject clear space which really matters.

You have to work it out yourself or find out, and manufacturers do not quote this distance (or the size of the lens when extended). There's one lens which stands out with the best clearance of all, probably because it is a very old design – the Sony A-mount 100mm f2.8, a 1985 Minolta with a new skin.

At 1:1 this still-current lens clears 155mm from filter rim to focus point. The Zeiss Makro-Planar 100mm is similar though an extension tube is needed to reach 1:1, and the PC-E Micro-Nikkor 85mm is good too, along with its benefits of tilt-shift perspective and focus plane control.

The search for more working distance ends up excluding any lens which offers in-lens autofocus, or stabilisation, or has been designed for mirrorless bodies. Completely internal focus like the Tamron 60mm f2 or hybrid focus like the Sigma 105mm f2.8 enables faster AF. A lens which changes focal length and maintains a constant angle of view works better for video, and also for any kind of stabilisation.

When a 100mm simple lens is at 1:1, it has the same angle of view as a 200mm lens at infinity. Stabilisation, whether in the lens or body, has to 'know' this or it goes wrong. This is why if you use extension tubes your IS/SS/OS may add blur, not reduce it. When a teleconverter is fitted, it has a chip which talks to the lens or body ensuring stabilisation is correct. Stabilised macro lens focusing (in the latest designs) conveys the changed angle of view and focus distance to the stabilising computer. The Sony 100mm version (8-contact mount) mentioned here sends more accurate information to its 30-year ancestor does (5-contact mount). And so on.

So, why are your own macro images perfectly fine? Easy! Selective focus is fashionable, 1:1 is not needed on APS-C sensors very often, you may add flash or use high ISO and get shake-free sharpness by shooting at 1/1000s or faster using a wide aperture. Once macro meant f22, a tripod, powerful ringflash or trying to get big lights safely in place. Now it often does not but it still helps to know how things work and why!

– DK

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FUJINON XF 80mm f2.8 R LM OIS WR Macro

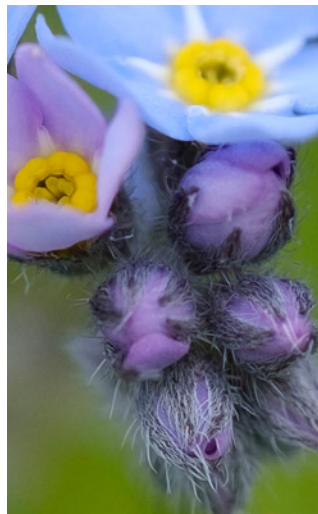
One of the most significant gaps in the Fujifilm X-system lineup was closed last year with the introduction of the **Fujinon XF 80mm F2.8 R LM OIS WR Macro** – a high-end, weather resistant autofocus true macro lens with 1:1 reproduction ratio and 25cm minimum focus from the 13cm-long internal focusing, stabilised design.

Build quality is, as with all XF-series lenses, impeccable with a compact barrel and wide manual focus grip plus aperture ring from $f2.8$ to $f22$; there's also switchable focus limiting for 25-50cm, 50cm to infinity, and full range. Optical stabilisation can be switched off here, and a compact 62mm filter thread keeps the cost of filters to a sensible level. A deep lens hood is provided.

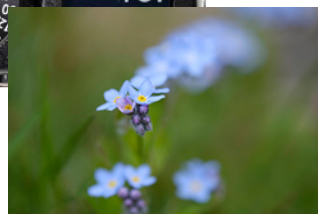
Despite the bulk, the APS-C specific construction means it's actually one of the smaller options vying for this section of the market, with a lens diameter of 80mm and length of 130mm. Weight, on the other hand, reflects the dense construction and powerful magnetic rail floating focus system, at 750g.

AF, which on recent Fuji X bodies works in partnership with on-sensor phase detection, is rapid and precise, helped in part by the floating focus system. Manual focus has fairly light feedback, however, which if you're used to manual focus macro lenses and careful adjustments of focal plane can be a little tricky. Rely on the AF, and you're going to get the best results possible.

Contrast and brightness are stunning – as you would expect from a lens at this price point – and out of focus rendering is exquisitely smooth, with beautiful clarity of subject edges. Although not a target for this lens, it's got potential as a 120mm portrait



Above:
100%
detail of
 $f4$ smooth
bokeh
1:1 frame
below



lens – in fact, such is the clarity and speed of AF that as a wedding lens with potential for head and shoulder portraits and details alike, it's an immensely versatile option.

Only the most critical photographers would find flaw with the results at $f2.8$, but the MTF charts and pixel-peeped results do show a small improvement around $f5.6$ all

the way to $f22$. Pushing the lens towards portraiture versatility is the optical image stabilisation, a feature which until recently has been essential for handheld use with any of Fuji's X-system bodies. Now the X-H1 exists, with advanced 5-axis in-body stabilisation, the necessity of the OIS is a little reduced.

In real world terms, that does open the door for X-H1 owners finding more utility in

adapted glass, where manual focusing via the bright viewfinder and stabilisation regardless of mount or technology. Picking up a classic macro suddenly becomes a useful option for handheld photography too, even with the critical X-Trans III sensor vs. the naturally forgiving nature of the film that such lenses were originally designed for.

For every other Fuji user, this is another case of almost tediously predictable quality – an XF lens with consistent controls, excellent build and as close to flawless optics as you can get. At £1,149 typical street price, it needs to be; the original slightly shorter 60mm is no substitute for a true macro, but it is affordable. Fuji have really gone all out to not only rectify the lack of the 1:1 ratio, they've aimed high to make one of the finest modern macro lenses you can buy.

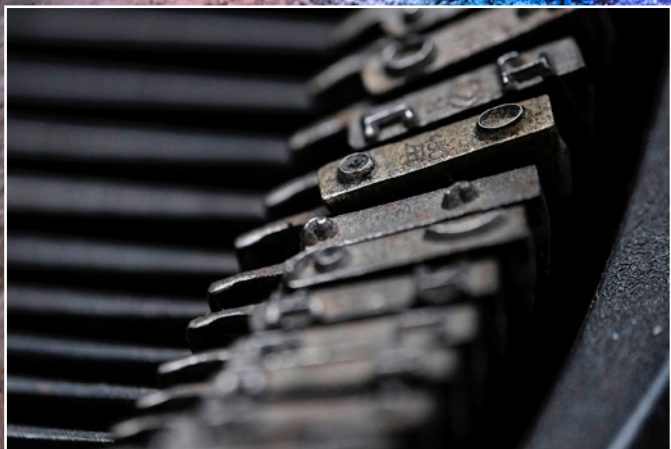
It also has matched 1.4X and 2X tele converters which create 112mm $f4$ and 160mm $f5.6$ 1.4:1 and 2:1 macro ability at the same close focus distance.

Combined with the forthcoming firmware updates that enable automated focus stacking, the fast AF motor will come into its own.

– Richard Kilpatrick

www.fujifilm.co.uk





The 1.4X tele converter is probably the most useful for portraiture with a maximum aperture of $f/4$ and a 112mm (170mm equivalent) focal length.

Typewriter taken with the 1.4X converter at $f/4$ wide open, top; with the 2X converter at $f/10$, centre; and with the 2X wide open at $f/5.6$ (reported in EXIF as $f/5.7$). The internal focus means that maximum aperture is not lost at macro range. The working distance between the lens front and the subject is 10cm at the closest focus, whether or not a converter is fitted.

Background image of wall in coloured light; sharp from corner to corner, using the 1.4X converter, wide open, $f/4$.



For moving subjects, it's worth stopping down to $f/4$ for a touch of extra depth of field and using AF not manual focus. 100% detail at 300dpi above; crop from frame below showing the bokeh quality. Photographs by Richard Kilpatrick.



COOLER AND CLOSER – LED AND HYBRID FLASH BURST LIGHTS

LED lights are the future. If you shoot movies, the British-made Rotolight system is probably your main lighting kit. If you shoot stills, the odd balance of blinding brightness (for the subject) and surprisingly little actual light (through the lens) may have put you off the idea, but that will be because you are used to putting light into dark places. LEDs are more about adding a touch of light to already bright-enough places.

The key to LED power is the number of the small diode bulbs which can be packed on to a reflector surface and operate for as long as you require without overheating. You may think of LED light as 'cold' but that is only from the front, where the light comes out. They get hot at the back, and need a heat sink or good ventilation to avoid overheating.

The latest trend – used by Rotolight in their little Neo2 – is to over-run the diodes for a burst which is similar to electronic flash. It's not, though. It's more like sending a brief pulse of 24V power through as 12V halogen lamp, without going to the old flashbulb extreme of setting the metal filament on fire to ignite some even more explosive stuff.

Some LED lights offer an overdrive level for brighter continuous output, subject to a timer-limiter. You can punch them up to double brightness but it will only last a few seconds. Some offer a synchronised flash burst for more than double brightness, typically four times the normal rated light, for around 1/50s. This is much longer than a xenon flash tube burst, though many flashguns do put out light for longer than 1/200s if you count the decaying afterglow. Testing the Rotolight Neo2, we found that synchronising at 1/30s was ideal, with the light displaying 1/50s duration at the maximum power always needed. Even so, the LED



Using the low-cost Neewer Ringlight, just enough fill was added to close-up subjects in conditions like patchy or obscured sunlight (above). In full sun, the light was visible but did not provide useful fill-in. The flash mode gave full illumination around this scale with 1/60s at f11, ISO 640 – this was given 1/125s, so the ringlight helped but did not overpower. The 'paddle' macro light was much weaker and of no real use.



burst could never be compared to flash and it was impossible to take a flashmeter reading (Minolta Flashmeter IV) as the meter simply didn't recognise the light as flash or accumulate it into an ambient reading. This applied to every LED 'flash' tested – your digital camera becomes your flashmeter.

Despite the uncomfortable brightness of the LED light for any subject in a dimly-lit interior, typical exposure levels demand working at ISO 1600 and having an f2.8 or faster lens. There's a good reason why Rotolight demo videos usually feature a model in evening

or sunset light with the LED used to provide accent or fill. It is much more comfortable for the subject and well balanced in the final shot or movie clip.

The Neo2 is ideal for small subjects or food photography – especially for food photography, where its high Colour Rendering Index and ability to control colour temperature can produce luscious looking plates. A CRI of 95 is desirable for food, but so many commercial and domestic lighting LEDs don't even reach 90. For any photo studio, gallery or viewing room use the CRI should be over 90, preferably around 92-93. You can get LED bulbs, and lighting, with a CRI close to 100 (which both natural daylight and incandescent tungsten bulbs achieve). They are very expensive. By having fewer big gaps in the colour spectrum, they render subtle shades better and are much kinder to skin tones.

This brings us to the abundance of inexpensive LED photo lights (with or without flash burst) you will find on-line. If the pictures look the same but the name is different don't worry, they are all the same basic kit and worth about what you pay for them.



Mincheda LED light sticks are about a third to half the power of industry standard products but cost under £40 each, and recharge through a USB connection. The light spread is wide (the left hand example is lit as shown, with the lights above the statuette). The appeal of these is freehand lighting, as in the right-hand version where the left side stick was held almost horizontally wrapping light round. 1/80s at f4, ISO 1250 (boost could have doubled this).

We tested a couple of Neewer branded LED-flash devices which use a very similar camera hot shoe mounted controller holding four AA batteries, with an LCD rear screen giving different functions for an identical button layout.

With macro as one of topics in this issue, a ringlight seemed a good idea. They are under £25 including a bunch of very poor plastic adaptor rings, and use 48 LEDs. You can get exposures around 1/60s at f11 at ISO 800 mounted on a macro lens. The flash function doesn't really add anything, and the duration of the flash does not stop subject

movement. The light is fairly well daylight matched.

The variant of this with three lighting paddles on flexible arms only has 12 LEDs, behind a diffuser, for each of two white panels and six to twelve coloured LEDs (no flash function) on the third. The exposure level was so low it wouldn't even provide useful fill or the backlight accent promised by the flexi arms. The flash output was a fraction of the ringlight and had no visible effect.

After watching Gavin Prest use an 'ice-like' we got two Mincheda brand rechargeable light sticks for £39.99 each from Amazon. Though lightweight and simple with a flat diffuser surface, they have wireless remote adjustment, daylight or tungsten colour bias, seven power levels and a boost function giving 720 lumens. A tripod bush in the handle end allows fixed lighting set-ups when not playing light sabre. As with the other LED sources, startling brightness facing the subject translates into a fraction of the light you expect from flash. They do not have a burst or flash function.

Two of these at arms' length from a sitter produced f4, 1/60s, ISO 640. Unlike the Rotolight Neo2 with its densely packed LEDs you could never accent, fill or overpower daylight with them. The genuine IceLight from Westcott, at over £500, puts out 1740 lumens daylight balanced with a CRI of 96. The Rotolight Neo2 has a CRI of 99 for skin tones, and costs £299. You can control a whole studio full of them in four groups using Elinchrom Skyport Plus HS, including HSS flash sync. You'll need a studio full, the flash output from a single one may be 85,000 pops from six AA batteries but that's a clue as to why you'll want a fast lens and high ISO.

All these LEDs are a cut above the Aputure Amaran of 2010 which needed a 23 CC magenta filter to remove green and was still over 6200K – CRI off the bottom of the scale.

– DK

Westcott IceLight2 (the real thing) and Rotolight products are available from our advertisers WEX Photo Video and The Flash Centre.



The Rotolight Neo2 has won a few industry awards recently, and was one of the first third party products to use Elinchrom's Skyport protocol after the flash maker released it as open source. It's actually a good macro light. Below, the warm and cool LEDs adjust from 3150 to 6300K and a kit of filters is supplied.







Macro images from the Image of the Month competition of the Guild of Photographers. Top left, by **Deanne Ward** (Silver) – Nikon D800, 105mm, flash at f22 and ISO 400. Bottom left, by **Cliff Spooner** (Gold) – Canon EOS 5D MkIII, 105mm, 1/180s at f10 at ISO 200, spot metered existing light. Above, by **Debbie Longmore** (Silver) – Nikon D7000, 105mm, 1/250s at f7.1, ISO 1600. Below, by **Katrina Wilson** (Bronze) – Canon EOS 5D MkIII, 105mm, 1/640s at f5.6, ISO 500.



From close-up to macro – creating four images all judged a success

by Steve Collins



I wanted to shoot these blueberries against a textured background – a piece of slate bought as a cheese board really complemented the colour well.

The set up for these images was very simple. The slate was placed on my kitchen floor next to glazed double doors, with Velux windows directly above. The blueberries were rinsed in water and then placed wet on to the slate.

A weathered dessert spoon was positioned next to them, with some blueberries placed on to the spoon. The Canon 80D

on Manfrotto tripod was set up directly over the slate.

The lighting was beautiful and soft, a late afternoon in January with no direct sunlight. Two Yongnuo YN-560 speedlights were used on low power bounced off a white vaulted ceiling to accent the top and left side and balance out, but not overpower, natural light from the top and right sides. I always experiment with positioning of the speedlights to ensure the final result delivers the best combination of the softness of natural light and the crispness that

the speedlights give to the image. The only shot specifically set up or “styled” was this first image of blueberries and vertical spoon. Taken with Canon’s budget price 50mm f1.8 at f13, two-second ambient exposure plus flash, at ISO 100.

The second shot is essentially the same image as the first one. All I did was rotate the slate to produce the diagonal. It’s amazing the difference between these two shots, when the only things changing are just the angle of the subject and lens focal length

(switching from the Canon 50mm to a Sigma 105mm macro).

That second image has already won a Gold in the Guild of Photographers monthly contest, and was chosen by the judges as one of the top four images of the month, earning me a beautiful framed print from One Vision.

The next image was the close-up of the spoon with blueberries. I knew I wanted a close up shot where one blueberry was sharp and the others were falling out of focus. Nothing changed in the set-up except moving the tripod



and camera to a different position, setting the aperture to $f4.0$ and giving a quarter-second exposure.

The final image in this set of four, and only one that is truly a macro shot (on the basis of macro being from life-size 1:1 to 10X magnification) is the single blueberry.

The Sigma 105mm macro was set to $f11$ and needed an exposure of 3.2 seconds at ISO 100. I moved one blueberry slightly to separate it from the others. As before, it was shot with the Sigma 105 macro but obviously much closer to the subject.

At this close range, it's very difficult to achieve more than a thin sliver of focus, even at this aperture. I focused first on the top of the blueberry and in a second shot I focused on the water droplets on the slate. These two shots were then focus-stacked using *Photoshop*.

Raw conversion in *Lightroom* was fairly typical – bringing down highlights, lifting shadows, adding vibrance, lens correction, and so on. I wanted the blueberries/slate to be very obviously blue so the white balance was moved to the cooler side, and some tweaking using curves was undertaken to enhance the overall blue tones further. Gradient circles were used on individual blueberries to add clarity and exposure as required to help them 'pop' more.

Many of the reflections on the spoon and blueberries needed tidying up in *Photoshop* (the spot healing tool being so much faster than the equivalent tool in *Lightroom*), and extending the slate background in the first image allowed me to get the square composition. I also added borders, for competition presentation, in *Photoshop*.

I was thrilled that with one quick and simple set-up, I was able to achieve a series of four, quite different blueberry images, and achieve a Gold, Silver and two Bronzes in one monthly round.



Steve Collins is a member of Harpenden Photographic Society, the Royal Photographic Society and the Guild of Photographers. Find him on Facebook: @SteveCollinsPhotos

VOIGTLÄNDER MACRO PROVES ITS REPUTATION

A year since testing the pre-production **Voigtlander 65mm f2.0 Macro Apo-Lanthar**,

we have not found any lens which matches it, or any macro lens which offers the same qualities of extreme corner to corner sharpness, flat field and zero distortion from landscape to macro range.

There is an old precedent for the odd 65mm focal length – it's what Leitz offered as a standard Elmar to fit original Leica bodies fitted with the Visoflex SLR mirror box adaptor. Because this added a full sized reflex mirror in front of the 25mm thickness of the Leica register, unlike actual SLRs which pushed the mirror further back towards the film plane, 65mm was the shortest focal length able to focus to infinity. The purpose of the Visoflex was to enable parallax-free telephoto and macro to close-up composition and focusing.

The difference between a standard 50mm focal length and 65mm is enough to improve sharpness and illumination across the frame, and increase the working distance for close-ups. It was a popular lens. When Nikon wanted to make a top grade enlarger and copying lens, it was a 63mm. Burleigh Brooks, the US lens design firm behind the Computar brand, made a 65mm fast colour enlarging lens.

The Voigtlander will go down as a 65mm which is better than any predecessor, better than any 50 or 55mm macro, and probably better than current macros in the 90 to 105mm range. All of these are good, including Voigtlander's own 90mm. The designers at Cosina who make this lens believe it's the best they have ever produced.

The 31cm close focus at half life size is easily extended on the Sony E-mount using extension tubes. It's not a good idea to fit a close-up lens, which will negate the high degree of colour correction. When focusing manually on the Sony E/FE bodies



Top: at f2.8, the centre and a ring of petals only are sharp. The smooth defocused image, above, picks out the butterfly well at the same aperture. Below, f8 might work for a lesser lens, but so sharp is the zone of focus with the Macro Apo Lanthar that rock just a few inches front of back is noticeably softer. The 42 megapixel sensor reveals this.



which this lens is made for, the high contrast and sharpness maximise focus peaking. You can set it to Low and still see it appear within a clear zone. The automatic invocation of focus magnification – something which adapted manual or AF macro lenses lack – is a shortcut to accurate focus.

This lens should really be made for the Fujifilm X mount too, as the register is a similar 18mm to the E-mount. Leica owners would love it too. However, it probably can't be made for DSLRs or for the Fujifilm GFX. Cosina has already shown with the 40mm f1.2 sister lens in the FE range that a Leica M version can use a different optical design (the M and FE versions of that lens are not identical).

Do you need it? We have only one regret, our test lens went back before the A7RIII with its pixel-shift multi shot mode arrived. Since testing the 65mm, we've found another favourite macro in the 60mm f2.8 M.Zuiko for the Olympus kit but that is more for its relative 2:1 macro power and travel-friendly size – it does not offer the same resolution.

If the 65mm Voigtlander f2 Macro Apo-Lanthar was universally adaptable to fit all camera bodies, it would be the lens used to check the performance of sensors and their use or omission of anti-aliasing filters. As it stands, you've got to own a Sony and preferably a 42 megapixel full frame to enjoy the benefit of the world's sharpest images.

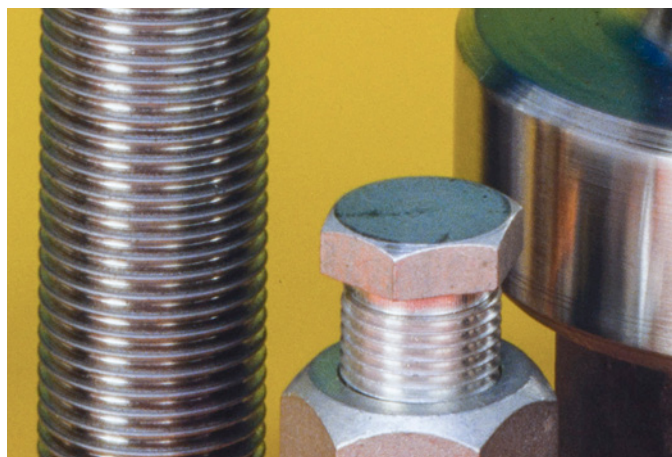


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DIGITISING SLIDES AND NEGATIVES WITH LIVE VIEW HIGH RESOLUTION

The office medium format film scanner is switched off. It was always good to leave running over a lunch break not a coffee break. Now, using a regular macro lens and copy stand with an LED light panel, the dynamic range and resolution of full frame DSLR and mirrorless sensors makes scanning redundant. For 35mm slides or negatives it's even easier. A vintage manual bellows unit with slide copier attachment forms an assembly with the camera, needing no stabilisation or any support as the entire thing can be hand-held with a suitable light source to aim at.

Unmounted film can be photographed at an optimum aperture like $f5.6$ and anything from 36 megapixels up will reveal film grain (on any



Above: 5 x 4" rephotographed using a macro lens on camera. 42 megapixels is equal or better, 45 or 50 certainly so. Below left, FP4 black and white from 1972. Raw file opened using a reversed Point curve, plus Adobe B&W02 profile. Right, from a colour slide, aiming for full range using Camera Neutral.



film). Slides are not flat and may need $f11$. Sharpness falls off at $f16$ due to diffraction. Getting even light on a 5 x 4" transparency is not so easy and really needs a 10 x 8" light box not the small LED light used for the example here, but again the sharpness is far better than a 6 x 9cm professional desktop film scanner. Not only that, instead of minutes each copy can take just seconds. It's been surprising to find that dust and scratches are not such a problem, where the scanner always emphasised these unless Digital ICE was used. The new Adobe Camera Raw/LR Profiles have also been useful for getting the best from black and white negatives. If you have an archive to copy and own a high resolution DSLR or full frame mirrorless this is the way to go (crop format won't work with bellows copiers made for full 35mm).



A COMPOSITION FOR TWO PLAYERS

The idea of splitting one face between the two outer edges of a print was something I had been previsualising for a few months. I don't shoot studio portraits, work with models or use *Photoshop* for montage and effects – in the real world, my images are almost entirely unretouched and if I so much as remove a wire from the sky I mark them as digitally altered.

Going back to a past life, as a commercial photographer working with a full range of formats on film, montage and afterwork were far more routine. My studio and darkroom had pin-register frames, lith film and even two enlargers set up next to each other allowing runs of prints to be made using two images and hand-cut masks. We used rubylith (a red adhesive transparent film) and photopaque (painted on, with a similar exposure-blocking effect on the masking line film). Sometimes, a cutting mat and craft knife came in handy to cut through two prints carefully aligned, the subject on top being cut round precisely with the knife going through the print below with its sky or background scene. Then we'd dry-mount the 'jigsaw' perfectly joined under a heatseal film. I enjoyed doing this.

Double or multiple exposures were often made in-camera (by others!) and required accurate tracing of the size and position of each element on a groundglass screen, whether a 5 x 4" monorail or something like the 6 x 8cm Fuji GX680 giant SLR we had in the mid-1990s. The background normally had to be dead black. Tightly controlled lighting and masks in a matte-box lens hood, kept the elements in their own space. I always tried to avoid in-camera multi exposure, apart from a few experiments with Cokin and Ambico pre-cut masks.

Digital capture means that none of painstaking marking and measurement is needed now. I still think ahead when planning shots. Scott and Eryn (award-winning young musicians who perform

David Kilpatrick created a concept inspired by two young musicians, Eryn Rae and Scott Turnbull, with a simple two-light studio setup and layer assembly of four images using Adobe's latest *Photoshop CC 2018*



This portrait has been kept low-key as brightening for reproduction is practical, but an over-bright image can't be toned down as well.

as a duo when not appearing in the seven-piece group Northern Company) said that a promo photograph would be useful. The left and right half portrait idea could also work with two faces not one subject. Time to try experiment!

Using the 42 megapixel Sony A7RIII with 85mm f1.8 lens at f5.0 and ISO 50, I left plenty of space filled by under-lit background cloth. Elinchrom BX250Ri

and BX500Ri heads, in one 60 x 90cm and one 90 x 120cm softbox, gave a very slightly biased broad frontal lighting. In the past on film I'd have used two 4 x 6 foot white panels either side of the camera facing the sitter, but digital needs more contrast, as given by the direct softbox light. The fall-off also keeps the backdrop subdued but not black. I switched to a 55mm f1.8 to photograph the

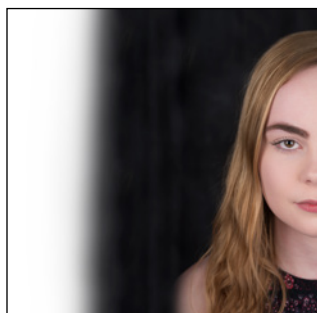
fiddle and guitar carefully held by their owners to pick up the light as wanted. The entire session took about twenty minutes, with a little more time spent on a straightforward duo portrait.

With the benefit of the very large file size and the sharpness of the detail, when composing the four elements into a final layered *Photoshop* canvas I used free proportional rescaling – the fiddle and guitar could not be in true relative scale, while the two separately photographed faces needed to have accurate scaling and also perfect vertical alignment (for the edge crop) and eyeline (Scott's eyes are placed very slightly higher than Eryn's). It didn't seem to matter how much I resized and moved the layers, the detail was held.

A bit of soft-edged Eraser and Clone helping give the transitions, and Lighten blending was used for the instruments after first backfilling round them with solid black. Normal, Lighten, Darken and Opacity are the key controls to this kind of overlay blending. This allowed the strings and some details to blend over the edges of the portrait heads. Since all tonal adjustments were handled in Adobe *Camera Raw*, I worked in 8-bit not 16-bit mode but still broke the gigabyte (and more).

The mockup of an album cover was first made working from JPEGs on my laptop – the final composite, from raw files, has fewer glitches in the montage but with a need to ensure bleed and trim and a little straightening up it's slightly different in scaling of elements. During work on the image, I realised that the full dual portrait without the square crop also worked well and that it would allow a Facebook header shape image cropped top and bottom. The full image is 68 megapixels, the square crop is 28.

You can find Scott and Eryn at www.magneticnortheast.com and Northern Company with the help of Google. My thanks for their allowing publication.

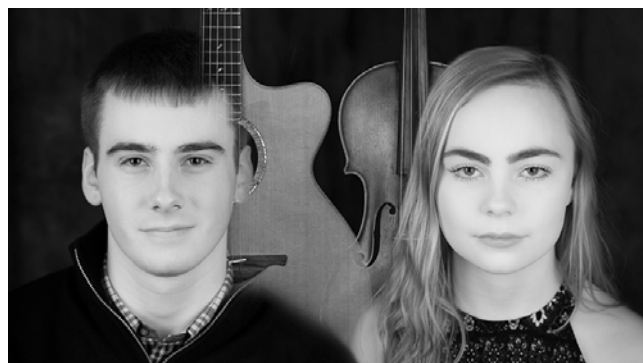




Planning for the final use

The concept of the dual portrait of Scott and Eryn was based on possible poster, flyer and CD/EP use. One by-product of this was that the portraits planned were very direct, head-on, and not necessarily the best angle for either of the sitters. However, it works when the two halves are used as the design intended.

For Facebook, a full depth or narrower crop works well. The ideal size for a Facebook page or profile header is 820px wide by 462px high (right).



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SAMYANG 21mm f1.4 CS ED UMC

When a lens with a known pedigree comes up at half price, it's not a bad risk. Because the **Samyang 21mm f1.4 CS UMC** is a 'dumb' option with no camera connections at all, intended for APS-C, I had ignored it and probably still would have at almost £300 retail (\$399 when Rokinon branded in the USA).

Then a bargain WEX 9+ grade used example came up at £160 less a 10% checkout discount. A month later, I realised the little kit zoom of my Sony A6000 had been supplanted by a lens without stabilisation, and with a modest 31.5mm wide view. One of the first things I checked out was how well the lens covered, with no lens hood, on full frame. The answer is surprisingly well, enough for a clean 10 x 8 format crop from the 35mm frame – in fact, almost a 40mm image circle, the vignetting starting beyond the ends of the 24 x 36mm sensor but corners cut off. The sharpness and distortion also hold up well beyond APS-C.



Coverage of the 21mm used on full frame with close focus

However, that was just curiosity. At the start of my photographic life I owned a Pentax Spotmatic but had no good wide-angle. The Meyer Lydith 30mm f3.5 manual preset lens was the cheapest on the market, so I got that. Often used with orange or red filters, it gave me some competition winning landscapes including a few favourites taken on a day of special sky conditions in the village of Allonby on the Solway Firth.



Above, a classic use of the 31.5mm focal length in a shot which closely matches one taken decades ago using the 30mm Meyer Lydith, a pioneering East German wide-angle. Below, the 21mm on A6000. Note the very deep lens hood, highly efficient for an angle of view just under 70°.



Bottom: a sunburst through forest trees at f16. Note the small blue flare spot. This is one of the few flaws of the lens design, or its Ultra Multi Coating.



Chance put me back in Allonby, almost half a century later, with only the Samyang 21mm on A6000. I was able to repeat one shot almost unchanged, a striking building with a drainage dyke leading directly towards it. This angle of view, not quite 28mm, was still right for the shot.

The big difference was the sheer sharpness of this Korean glass stopped down for depth of field. I've also used it wide open, and for many shots around f4 to f8, and the sharpness never falters – perhaps thanks to no less three aspherical elements and one extra-low dispersion. At small apertures it produces a neat sun star but the UMC coating does not suppress a small sharp flare patch. Wide open it has dramatic focus effects using its very close 20cm focus. The 9-blade aperture produces a smooth effect across the aperture range as you stop down and it never gets 'wiry'. In short, it's on the same level as the Samyang 12mm f2, one of the best APS-C lenses around.

It's been surprising to find how easy manual focusing is in comparison – 21mm and f1.4 gives much less margin of error than 12mm f2. The focusing scale, at least on my camera body, hits infinity before entering a very small extra travel. There is an Adobe profile for this lens, and switching it on and off shows just how little barrel distortion is present.

The lens is typical of Samyang, with a light alloy construction and a solid but soft metal bayonet mount. The focus travel covers 120° and is very smooth and even. The aperture scale is in half stop clicks, evenly spaced, from f1.4 to f22. The 58mm filter thread and small front element allow normal thickness filters to be used, not need for ultra-slim, and the bayonet lens hood is very deep indeed for the 70° view angle.

If this fairly neat sized 275g lens had active electronic contacts, or even better was autofocus, it would be easier to justify the cost when Sigma's superb 16mm f1.4 is only £150 more. But I've



Above: a 100% (300dpi) section from full aperture, $f1.4$ and focused on the centre of the building. Remember, this is more or less a 28mm $f1.4$ equivalent.

managed to get along without the EXIF data, or stabilisation, or AF... and not had a single below-par result. Colours are perhaps not the brightest and there's a slight warm tint to the rendering. When details are viewed at 100% the reserve of sharpness at medium apertures like $f5.6$ to $f11$ is not far off what we expect from Cosina-made Zeiss or Voigtländer.

If you find one of these at the right price for your Sony, Fujifilm X, MicroFourThirds or even Canon EOS M (where it's a 33.6mm equivalent) rest assured it's worth owning.

– David Kilpatrick

www.samyang.co.uk

Depth of field and rendering or bokeh: above, a 20cm focused drystone wall mini-landscape of mosses, with the hills beyond Derwentwater in the distance (from Castlerigg). At $f11$ there is just enough foreground depth of field, and the blur on the hills is very smooth. Below, at $f1.4$. What impresses here is the lack of green/magenta 'focus colour bokeh shift' so often found in fast lenses. It seems almost apochromatic!



Elinchrom ELB 500 TTL field test

The backward and forward compatibility of Elinchrom's 2.4GHz wireless Skyport triggering system is an example to all other makers. The first generation Skyport of 2005 introduced one of the world's smallest and lightest camera top triggers with channels, groups and remote control of power and modelling. Initially, a receiver had to be fitted to flash heads and packs but the RX range incorporated this.

With a USB transceiver stick for Mac or PC and well-designed visual interface control software, wireless control extended to multiple studio sets from a single computer, often also used for tethered image capture. The wifi module and app for iPad, iPhone, and iPod Touch extends control to handheld iOS. Skyport Speed enabled faster shutter speeds, Skyport Plus improved the interface with a larger trigger unit, then Skyport Plus HS added hi-sync HSS simulation with dedication to major cameras including Sony and Fuji X. Now a firmware upgrade turns Plus HS into **Skyport Pro** with TTL and true HSS. And everything is compatible within the limits of its original features. Even the £164 D-Lite One RX has the built-in wireless sync.

It's this longevity and adherence to standards which has given Elinchrom a massive loyal user base. It's not the most prestigious brand, nor the most widely stocked, nor the lowest cost feature for feature but reliability and longevity are the most important factor for professionals. This is also what drives Profoto and Broncolor sales at the top end of the market.

Elinchrom has distribution and service through The Flash Centre in Leeds, Birmingham and London as well as through retailers like WEX Photo Visual with their former Calumet stores. The sad demise of once-British Bowens and the reliance of most other brands on rebadging Chinese products gives Elinchrom a unique position.



The EL accessory (reflector bayonet) mount is lighter than the Bowens fitting and has no lugs, allowing accessories to be stacked together without marking the inside of reflectors. It has not changed in 40 years since the introduction of the EL compact monobloc heads. A new small reflector fitting arrived with the Ranger Quadra battery portable in 2009, but the EL adaptor has proved more robust and functional and the recommended Portalite softbox is something many users already owned from their first entry into the EL system.

Now Elinchrom must bring the range up to date, faced with the arrival of TTL exposure in rival systems and the crossover between speedlights and studio strobes. The first steps were taken with the co-operation between Elinchrom, Phottix and Sekonic which produced the latest Skyport protocols, hi-sync (HSS ready) and direct communication with flash metering. Further R&D with Phottix brings the first true HSS and TTL in the portable **ELB 500 TTL** lithium-ion powered successor to the Quadra Ranger series, and the Skyport Pro is joined by the Phottix Odin2 for a choice of triggering and control.

Unbroken system

The Quadra has previously offered around 400Ws with a fixed ratio split between two heads attached by removable multicore leads to well-sealed sockets on the two-part power pack. The battery clips on underneath a power module which contains the capacitors, recharging and triggering circuits, and from the RX version onwards built-in wireless control. With each generation the power has increased, the battery has become lighter, the touchpad top controls and display have been refined.

With the ELB 500 TTL, there's a near-25% power lift plus full asymmetric split between two heads, at any power up to the maximum (displayed as 6.7 on the Elinchrom scale with a single head – if you mix any current Elinchrom heads or packs and heads, the decimal scale is proportional). The maximum 500Ws with a single head and 48° reflector gives an ISO100/m GN of 64.8, and 400 shots on a full battery charge, with 2s fast or 3.5s 'eco' recycling. The power can be reduced by 7 stops, in 1/10 increments for manual, or 1/3EV correction for TTL. The fastest action mode speed is 1/20,000s ($t=0.1$) and at minimum

power you might get 28,000 pops.

The ELB 500 TTL system has the benefit of TTL when needed, or a TTL reading locked in for consistency. The 5200K full power colour is held within 200K over the 7-stop range. Power repeatability is within 0.05%. The modelling light also runs at 5200K.

IGBT, which Elinchrom has only used in a limited way in the ELC studio monobloc models, precisely gates the flash duration at a constant output level and can control the multiple microbursts used to enable HSS (high speed sync) as opposed to hi-sync or hypersync which relies on timing a focal plane or progressive shutter to coincide with a more or less constant plateau of continuous flash output typically lasting 1/250s or longer. The circuitry maximises battery life, if there's any possible trade off it is flash tube life.

To cope with this the ELB 500 uses a single new type head, no choice between the previous S (standard, hi-sync capable) and A (action, short duration, not hi-sync capable) and HS (long duration hi-sync for ELB 400 only) Quadra heads. The tube is designed to withstand whatever the stroboscopic, TTL and HSS abilities of the pack can throw at a single attached head. Most photographers will want two heads in use most of the time and this further extends the lifetime of components. It is possible to select an Action mode on the pack, to ensure the shortest manual flash durations, which are displayed on the OLED panel separately for each head as the power and ratio is adjusted. The duration will only be matched between the heads if a 1:1 output is used.

The head is a bit slicker in style, with a rounded housing, and a 2.5m cable is permanently wired in rather than the earlier Quadra/ELB 400 approach of a socket on the head and one on the pack. We requested extension cables as working with two 2.5m cables limits the positioning of the flash. The extension cable choice is

4m or 10m, with a couple at 4m probably the best addition to a kit. It's exactly the same extension cable as the original Quadra, no change to the connectors or wiring despite the new TTL function. We tested the light loss and with a single head, a situation giving $f22.4$ on the Minolta flash-meter with the 2.5m fitted cable dropped to a reading of $f22.0$ with a 4m extension added – slightly under half a stop.

The reflectors and accessories are all equally unchanged so a new ELB 500 TTL pack and heads just slots in beside any older Quadra you may have. No harm will be done if you connect the new head to older packs. The new pack will recognise A, S or HS heads but *refuse to fire* and display 'Head Error' (so no risk of overdriving a 400-415Ws tube with 500Ws).

The kit we tested comes in a shoulder bag with four dividers, two compartment flaps and two inner top flaps, a zip and clasp closure and document pockets, shoulder strap, and lighting stand straps to hold these on side loop. There is a padded jacket for the flash pack, a clear plastic rain cover for the control pad, and a shoulder strap for this. The entire kit is cabin baggage friendly, at 56 x 22 x 31cm and 9kg. I was able to squeeze two Nano stands into the top but this space is more friendly to a couple of small umbrellas or Portalite softboxes. It's like having a suitcase slung over your shoulder when walking through a city centre. A rolling bag solution would be superior.

Everything fits the case well enough, with the supplied keylight and spill kill reflectors slotting into spaces adjusted so the dividers form a wall protecting the bare flash tube, if you don't want to remove them and fit the tube covers. The cables wrap round the small head body and stand mount. You can leave the pack's jacket on, or its velcro attached clear rain cover which allows the touchpad and rotary controls to be accessed. It's all designed for field use, with well-sealed connector covers and a security contact on the battery preventing shorts. Air travel certification is

permanently labelled on to this, with downloadable documents to support.

The pack can remain in the bag with the heads on their cables, reflectors pre-fitted, taken out for use. It was very quick to deploy and pack away.

City centre session

We took the ELB 500 TTL to meet Kevin Wyllie, one of Scotland's best-known social photographers, with a track record of location flash technique. Kevin uses Fujifilm X cameras and a Chinese TTL li-ion flash which has triggering for this system, I use Sony. With only Canon and Nikon Skyport Pro released just after the launch, Kevin's friend and regular assistant Tam brought along his Canon EOS 5D MkIV and 70-200mm. Model

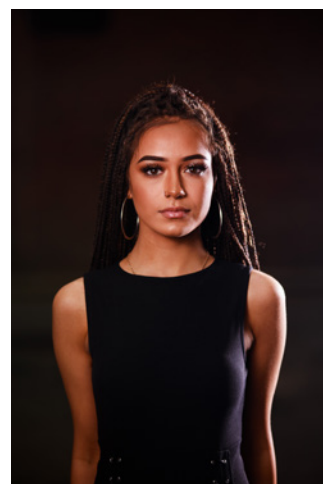
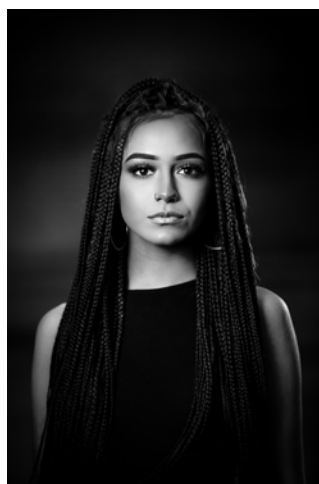
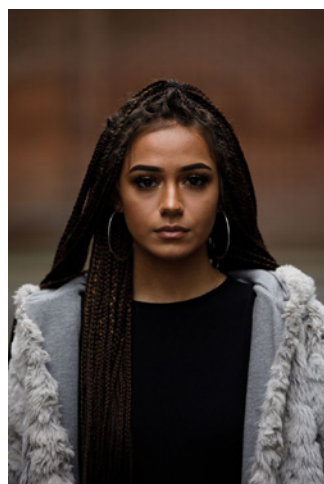
Rosie completed our party to walk to a street location, appropriately just outside Glasgow's Street Level Photoworks gallery.

It was no trouble to carry the kit across the city. The wind gave more problems – I had brought two heavy duty Elinchrom stands and bag, from my own EL BX250Ri kit. Despite the stands' large footprint and extra weight, we needed to hook Rosie's rolling case over the base of one stand with a 39" shoot-through brolly on the head. Tam used a Lastolite triflector-type hand held panel to bounce the second head as an accent and hair light.

The LED modelling, which is more than adequate indoors and is now variable with proportional 40-level dimming on the independently adjusted heads, can't do much outdoors even in a

fairly shaded street and overcast light. You can control modelling light on time or use it continuously for video indoors. We had to work very quickly while the street was closed off to traffic by roadworks, checking the modelling only briefly and relying more on visual alignment of the flash. And this is where the TTL function simply shone.

All that we had to do was set the ELB 500 TTL pack up, fit the Skyport Pro to the Canon and enable TTL with a suitable ISO and aperture choice. Before the Pro trigger communicated with the pack, the power was dialled up to full output but with TTL on the Skyport Pro this wasn't necessary. From the first exposure it was spot-on, with the best balance between daylight and flash adjusted by tuning the shutter



Above: the set-up in use. Left portrait example, natural light. Centre (b/w) with strong flash but some background detail, slight reflected rim light. Right, with flash overpowering existing light, and stronger reflected second light.



speed. We moved the flash round to a couple of positions to try different backgrounds, and set HSS to secure an action-stopping shutter and flash speed without ghosting. The main problem lay in timing the Canon release to match Rosie swinging her braided hair – Kevin is now used to the instant electronic first curtain reactions of the mirrorless Fujifilm X, and a Canon DSLR adds a significant delay which all photographers once used to allow for, pressing the shutter before the peak of action. Mirrorless has changed this, reducing reaction allowances from 1/15s or so to 1/50s. Conditions demanded very quick working and moving the entire set up for heavy delivery traffic. Once the roadworks were gone we would have been running out into the street with the heads on stands, positioning and shooting then running back to avoid the next car.

The hair sideways flip shot used the second flash to add light to the wall and shutter doors and also to Rosie's hair braids. Kevin Wyllie used a Canon 5D MkIV fitted with 70-200mm f2.8 Canon lens, at full aperture, to get an HSS sync exposure of 1/1000s at ISO 200. The exposure was TTL controlled via the Skyport Pro trigger. A second standard trigger on David Kilpatrick's Sony A7RIII fired the flash for the behind-the-scenes shots, below using 1/60s at f11 and ISO 320, 24-105mm lens at 24mm. The flash pack had only the 2.5m fitted cables (after this, we got extensions to use).



Given just a half-hour shoot using a set-up which no-one had fully tested before – this was the test – the results were more than satisfactory. Had this been a wedding or a sports event, under the same conditions, a quick chimp to the camera back would have confirmed all was well. Alongside Kevin, I was using a first generation (non-speed) EL Skyport triggered by the centre shoe contact of my Sony A7RIII. This, of course, fired the ELB 500 TTL without any TTL control. Where Kevin's shots were wide open at f2.8 using TTL/HSS, mine were at f11 and 1/60s using the flash at full manual power.

The ability for Kevin to work successfully with me firing off full power pops from the ELB, only losing one shot because I got in at the wrong moment when he was just about to fire, tells you how fast and powerful the new Quadra generation is.

Adjustable power ratios

The lighting ratio between the two heads (1:1 split in TTL) was created using the light shapers and the two different sized reflectors provided in the kit. The TTL plus/minus exposure level of separate packs can be adjusted on the Skyport Pro (in third-EV steps), but the individual power of the two asymmetric heads can only be set on the pack in manual exposure mode, which also permits 1/10 stop control. You can not adjust the ratio between A and B heads on a single pack, or their TTL exposure levels, using the Skyport Pro. You could use a 10m extension to the cable on one head to get a 2:1 ratio. You can set different TTL corrections in third-stop plus/minus steps for every Group on the Skyport Pro – a Group is, effectively, another ELB 500 TTL pack with one or two heads attached.

The Phottix Odin2 trigger can remotely set the power ratio between the A and B heads on a *single* pack whether using TTL or manual. Ratios of 1:1, 1:2, 1:4 or 1:8 can be set on the Odin2. The £199 Odin2 therefore seems like a good choice for anyone buying the ELB 500 TTL right now. It is most likely that Elinchrom will upgrade the Skyport Pro functions in future.

Sony users need to note that the Odin2 currently sold fits the older Minolta/Sony shoe and not the new Multi Function Shoe used by all current bodies – the official or third party adaptors may not necessarily communicate reliably. The Skyport Pro upgrade for the existing Sony (MFS) version of the Skyport Plus HS is imminent, and Olympus and Fuji owners can expect support in future too.

We'd suggest that some demonstration or training is a very good idea before using the ELB 500 TTL for the first time on any critical job. Either that, or a period of experiment finding out how it works. It's unlikely to let you down, as with HSS and TTL you can pretty much guarantee good exposure 'out of the box' as we did.

– David Kilpatrick



Above, a second location where we attempted to get some textural skim light across the bricks but mostly relied on the white shoot-through brolly. Moving the kit with two stands and the pack was easy – just lift and walk, best with two people but possible solo. The whole kit is designed to survive the weather and is labelled for air travel, with short circuit protected battery connections and a wired in lightweight cable to each head.



See: www.elinchrom.com
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CAMERACRAFT PORTFOLIO

JOAN BLEASE



DIGITAL IMAGINATION





























Even from an early age Joan Blease, from Warrington in Cheshire, had an obvious talent for drawing. This led to an offer of a place at art school, in the 1960s, which she was unable to accept due to her family circumstances.

Ten years ago, Joan decided to embark on a distance-learning degree in art, one optional element of which was photography. "I picked up my camera, put my paintbrushes and pencils down and I have never picked them up again since" she says.

Joan got her first camera, a Nikon D300, in 2007 and has upgraded recently to a D5. She tends to use the Nikkor 24-70mm for her general photography, along with an 85mm Nikkor for portrait work.

She uses Bowens studio lighting in what she describes as a "very small home studio". She often positions her models in front of a grey vinyl backdrop because she will often extract the model and then create the background herself, in *Photoshop*.

"I have found that photographing a model in front of a mid-grey background makes it much easier to extract them from it, than it would be if I photographed them against a white or black background", she explains.

Joan tries to light the model as flatly as possible. "I don't know, at the point I photograph my model, what I am going to do with that particular image", she says. "If I light the subject in a specific way, it limits me to using a specific background. But, if the lighting is flat, I can put the subject into any scenario and I can then create the shadows, as and where I want them in the final image, using *Photoshop*."

Joan often finds her models through word-of-mouth and rarely has a final image in mind when photographing them. "I have an array of costumes that the model can wear and when these are coupled with a pose that the model might hold – such as appearing to be stepping forward, for example – it can lend itself to many different scenarios.

"My advice is to pay for a good model. If you take 50 images of an

JOAN BLEASE



Above: more examples of Joan's work including a recent Guild Gold Image of the Month award, top, and two homages to Old Masters.

See: www.joanbleasephotography.com

and for details of workshops and tutorials, studio shoots, prints for sale and her range of texture files see www.butterflysmind.com

inexperienced model, you may get three or four good shots. If you pay for a professional model 49 of those 50 shots will be excellent and the last one, if it's not so good, will be because you didn't focus properly, or the light failed."

Joan's remarkable post-processing expertise has been honed over several years of self-teaching. "I remember being shown how an object could be removed from an image at a camera club" she explains. "I came home and said to my husband 'I need *Photoshop*'. I have no idea what it is; but I need it. My advice is to not to try and master all of *Photoshop*, but to learn to use a few tools expertly well." Joan also uses *Corel Painter* to achieve her effects, like the Van Gogh treatment for the opening image of this portfolio.

In the last few years, Joan has exposed her work to some of the most demanding judging, where small details of technique and execution count as much as the creative concept.

Joan has helped with the success of Warrington Photographic Society in local and national competition and is a regular speaker on the north-west and national circuits. In June she's presenting on images, inspiration, workflow and post-processing to the Royal Photographic Society in South Wales. She is a Permajet ambassador and expert exhibition print maker, and now uses an Epson SureColor SC P-800 printer with UltraChromeHD inks

With her ARPS, FBPE, EFIAP (award of excellence from the Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique) and DPAGB (Distinction, Photographic Alliance of Great Britain) she still has higher goals to aim for. In February she won The Guild of Photographers Creative Digital Image of the Year and Judges' Choice (printed in our last issue). She was confirmed, as this was being written, as a PAGB judge – moving on from being judged in salons herself. Teaching others, creating and selling textures, printing and selling her own calendars... look out for Joan Blease on the lecture and exhibition circuit. – SP & DK



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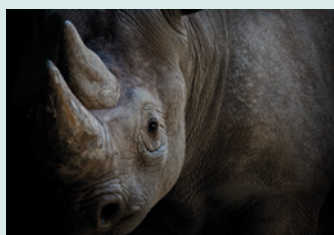
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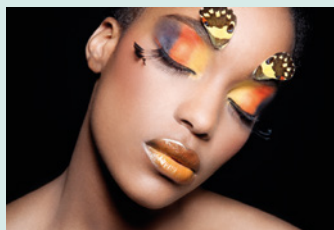
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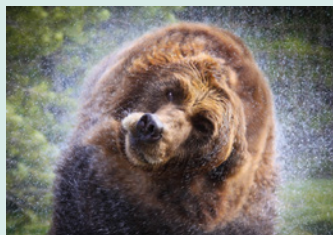
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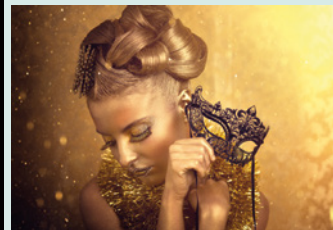
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NO MORE WAITING FOR GODOX

For over 20 years I've prided myself on making great images using pretty modest equipment. I was one of the earliest proponents of wireless flash when Minolta introduced it to the world in the 1990s. I used it extensively in my travels to add some 'Wow!' to my images with the greatest of ease.

But over the years I started to hit its limitations. It wouldn't reliably trigger outdoors (or in a large gym, as I discovered on an important shoot). The intensity of the flash would be severely reduced when trying to 'overpower the sun' using High-Speed Sync (HSS).

Recently I wanted to up my game and start taking outdoor portraits using fast glass wide open. That almost always means using a fast shutter speed, necessitating either a camera with a leaf shutter in the lens (like the Sony RX-10 or Fujifilm X100 series) or using a powerful strobe capable of HSS. Essentially, what I wanted was the benefits of modern technology so I could do portraits that would wow my customers (and of course other photographers).

So I got myself three Godox flashes, a Chinese brand that seems to be eating the world because of its low cost and high reliability. These products have full TTL and HSS compatibility, in wireless mode, something third-party flash manufacturers aren't always known for getting right. The models I got were the AD600 (600 Watt second battery-powered monobloc), an AD200 (think of it as a 200Ws speedlight on steroids), and finally a tiny TT350S flash whose power output is unpublished but is a good match for my A6500 when traveling. The TT350S can also act as an off-camera flash, and a radio controller to provide fill-flash



In the last three years the Chinese-made Godox flash brand has taken the world by stealth, so much that li-ion powered monobloc and speedlight strobes are now a standard choice. All the big brands are playing chase if not leapfrog. Gary Friedman decided to take the plunge and invest in wire-free TTL and HSS.

at the same time. The only thing it can't do is work in HSS mode when off-camera.

Godox products are sold as different brand names in different countries. In the USA, the retailer Adorama is selling them under the Flashpoint label. They change the model names as well for complete confusion. Hong Kong rebranders Neewer put their own name on, European distributors Photomart use the original Godox name alongside their own iLux brand, UK independents Essential Photo have the Pixapro and Pika names and their rivals Lencarta sell as Godox. Rebranders normally take responsibility for support and warranties, but Godox themselves issue firmware updates and these work with all the 'makes'.

Features and performance

Most of the specs and features of the flash can be found on-line so I won't waste space reprinting them here. I will note that the AD200 comes with two flash heads – a traditional direct flash tube in a Fresnel lens rectangular reflector like most speedlights, and a bare bulb (reflectors and light shapers extra) preferred by most wedding photographers. The speedlight head comes with colored gels, barn doors, and a honeycomb grid for control of light spread.

All three flashes are radio controlled using an XT-16, XT-32, X1T or XPro transmitter which sits atop the camera's hotshoe and comes in versions for Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus and Fujifilm. As you'd expect you can separately control five groups of flashes (16 with the XPro) and 32 channels independently from the tiny but intuitive user interface on the back of the transmitter.

My first surprise is when I did test shots using the tiny TT350S as an on-camera fill. Have a look



at the pair of images on the right – the left one using the Sony flash and the right one using the Godox, both in program mode using Auto ISO. Notice that the Sony example looks a little blown out. That's because ever since the Alpha 77 their cameras have been overexposing their subjects (and sometimes their backgrounds) by one stop on purpose. But look! The Godox unit was doing fill-flash correctly!

See my blog post at <https://bit.ly/1xaahKX> for more on this important topic.

The idea of being able to just set everything to Auto once again and just trust that the camera will make the right choices feels a little bit surreal. Plus, I thought it was the camera body that determined the flash exposure – why wouldn't this flash be told to put out the same amount of light?

Out in the field the behavior was a bit different – when used as a fill flash in Aperture Priority mode the entire image came out a bit "hot", which was easily correctable via a slight curve adjustment in post.

My second surprise (having nothing to do with the flashes) came during my first portrait shoot with the new equipment. I had intended to use my Alpha 99 II, because all of my fast exotic glass was A-mount: 80-200 f2.8, 135 f1.8, 85 f1.4, and 28-70 f2.8. In the studio, shooting at f8 or so, these lenses are awesome – you can pixel peep all day long and count every eyelash.

But in order to get these beautifully defocused backgrounds you have to shoot wide open, and in doing so I discovered that my calibrated A99



Above left – no fill flash. Above right – Godox TT350S fill-in, A mode, is a bit too 'hot'. Below, curved adjustment fixes the overall brightness.



II despite no measurable back-focus was not accurate enough to nail eyelash focusing even 30% of the time. I haven't shot wide open like that since the days of film, when nobody cared how many eyelashes you had.

Surprise #3: While still testing with the A-mount, I discovered

that the flash would underexpose considerably when the camera was set to manual focus. This is with the flash in either TTL or manual output mode. This a reproducible bug.

Due to all of the above problems I was having with the A-mount, I decided to tackle the

portrait session with the E-mount and use my ultra-sharp 70-200 f4 lens on my A7RIII, while ensuring a beautiful background bokeh the old fashioned way... by keeping the background far away from my subject. That setup, combined with Sony's Eye-AF feature, yielded a substantially higher hit rate, and I was thrilled with the results. I also shot with my Zeiss 135mm f1.8 via an adapter – check out the comparison below. You don't need an ultra-fast lens to get beautiful bokeh!

Because I was still uncomfortable leaving things to chance in an important shoot, everything on this setup was on manual. I exposed for the background, over-exposing it by one stop, and set the AD200 flash (shot into an umbrella) at 1/4 output. ISO 125, 1/160s, f4. Also ISO 50, 1/160s, f1.8.

Surprise #4: Actually this was more of an annoyance than a surprise.

The AD600 and AD200 have modeling lights to help you focus and also pre-visualize where your shadows will fall when shooting indoors. The AD200 has modeling in the speedlight style head, or added to the bare bulb head if you mount one or two units on an AD-BM Bowens reflector mount adaptor. Both models turn their modeling lights on automatically as soon as you move the transmitter's power button from Off to On. That won't happen if the transmitter wakes up from sleep mode. If you take no action the modeling lights stay on for about ten minutes, draining battery power. In bright daylight you may not notice the modeling is on. With the Godox X1T trigger,



you double-click the Check/OK button to turn the modeling off (or on again). With the new XPro trigger, there's a modeling light on/off button and you just press this. Otherwise you need to go to head and use its buttons.

And none of these units (including the transmitter) turn themselves off when the camera turns off. Some third-party flashes like the unreliable Nissin can do that.

Surprise #5: When you first get powerful flashes like this, you think 'Oh, with this much power and HSS, I can easily overpower the sun anywhere!'

Well, not quite. I'm still getting to know how far I can push this new equipment. Shortly into a day of shooting engagement shots, I realized that the images on my A7R III at 1/800s were coming out too dark. So I switched to the RX-10 IV (my backup camera whose flash sync speed is 1/1600s) and things came out nice and bright as I wanted.

Lesson learned: Yes, the AD600 is powerful, but you're still best off shooting in a shady area where it doesn't have to work too hard. Not for the benefit of the flash, but to get the most pleasing image.

How portable?

I'll admit now I'm not used to working with studio strobes out in the field. I'm also not used to being my own lighting assistant, and schlepping the light and modifier AND my camera and lenses by myself. The main reason anyone would want an AD600 is so they can use a giant softbox (48" in my case) at a distance using high-speed sync. That takes a lot of power, and so I can't possibly complain that it's heavy to carry to the beach. But when you add an octabox to a head, it becomes vulnerable to winds (and being top-heavy doesn't help...).

Normally the solution to moving it would be to collapse the softbox, but you then realize that most softboxes take about eight minutes to set up and take down. One exception to this is the EzPro line of softboxes from Fotodiox: <https://bhpho.to/2GwLHNx> which can set up in about 30



Taken during an engagement shoot. Above, the 48-inch octa softbox requires a hand to prevent it catching the wind, and the AD600 adds to its weight. Left, how the light looked without the flash fill – right, with the flash added.





Above: musician and producer Melissa in the studio, gelled flash. Below: Melissa in the street with AD600 main and AD200 backlight.



Action stopping high speed options

In a world filled with higher-priced Broncolor, Elinchrom and Profoto strobes, are you giving up any capability with the Godox battery powered options?

A sports photographer would say 'absolutely,' as the more expensive location units can often provide a shorter flash duration, even when not using HSS or TTL.

Is there a big difference? Usually when comparing units you have to take into account the power output at the lowest setting (measured in watt seconds) and the time it takes for about 90% of the light pulse to be emitted (measured in an industry term called $t=0.1$, which means the duration for which the output is above 10% of the peak intensity).

I tried to compile a direct comparison of battery powered choices but as expected most manufacturers only give you a part of the puzzle – Watt-seconds at full power, or the $t=0.5$ duration of the flash output above 50% peak, or the shortest flash duration without making it clear if this at minimum or maximum power. Both can apply, depending on how the flash power is controlled and the type of flash tube and capacitor banks used. Every make is unique.

This table shows $t=0.1$ durations where published:

Profoto Pro-10 – 1/80,000 (world's fastest, AC mains pack)

Profoto B2 – 1/15,000s (Freeze Mode, $t=0.5$)

Profoto B1X – 1/19,000s (Freeze Mode, $t=0.5$)

Godox AD600 – 1/10,000s

Godox AD200 – 1/13,300s

Elinchrom ELB 400 – 1/5,700s (Head B, Type A, at 33%, min power)

Elinchrom ELB 500 TTL – 1/20,000s

Elinchrom ELB 1200 – 1/8,850s

Broncolor Siros 400 – 1/750s (1/350s at minimum power)

Broncolor Siroe 800 – 1/350s (1/175s at minimum power)



Mask Mode

Godox also offers this holdover feature from the old days: If you have two strobes, you can configure them to fire alternately; so if you fire off two shots in continuous drive mode, the first flash will fire on the first image, and the second flash will fire on the second image. TTL is not available in this mode. Why is that useful? If you have the first flash on your subject and the 2nd flash on a white wall behind the subject, the 2nd shot will produce a silhouette of the subject, ideal for creating a mask layer in *Photoshop*, allowing you to isolate your subject without needing time-consuming masking and cut-out techniques, and then place it in front of a backdrop of your choice.

seconds. As soon as this article is finished I'm going to sell my Paul C. Buff softbox and get one of these.

Other tidbits

Godox's marketing materials claim that these flashes can also respond to optical TTL signals just like a manufacturer's native speedlight; however I wasn't able to get that to work with a Sony wireless flash controller. There is a normal optical slave cell, not an infra-red or flash pulse communication method like the original Minolta and Sony wireless remote.

They have an 'intelligent slave mode' for this optical sensor where it will ignore the first pulse but trigger on the second – which fails to cover many TTL wireless flash protocols that use more than one pre-flash pulse. It would be better to have a learning mode which can detect the number and timing of pre-flash bursts and then fire the remote flash to coincide with the exposure.



To read further:

Gary's *YouTube* video explaining high-speed sync:

youtu.be/edkLa0HEbcA

An introductory guide to get you started with wireless flash:

friedmanarchives.com/WWWF



FUJIFILM
Value from Innovation

Why this photographer is football's real 'film' star

Former Liverpool football club manager Bill Shankly famously opined: "Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that."

And if Shankly hadn't said it then widely acclaimed Lincolnshire-based documentary photographer Stuart Roy Clarke almost certainly would have.

The aftermath of the Hillsborough tragedy – a human crush calamity that killed 96 people at the Sheffield stadium in 1989 – literally kick-started a 30 year-long mission for Stuart Roy Clarke.

He says: "Hillsborough – and the subsequent Taylor Report – were massive watershed moments and I realised it needed someone to record all the changes that were going to take place in football – but over a protracted period."

Stuart's 'Homes of Football' nationwide survey began as a ten-year project to document the country's passion for the sport – from grass roots and modest pitches up to revered and iconic stadia. But this unique snapshot of the genre is now almost three decades old and still counting. This touring exhibition has been shown in almost a hundred museums and art galleries since its inception. Now some of Stuart's favourite work is on display at Manchester's National Football Museum – which is set to attract 500,000 visitors over the next year. Recently BBC TV's *Newsnight* closed its programme with images from the show, and their *Premier League Show* recorded an interview.

Stuart has built an archive of 110,000 images – shot entirely with film on a 25-year-old medium format Bronica.

This is a photographer that doesn't crop; indulges only in scant retouching and uses a standard lens with no light meter. His 'brief to self' is to "surprise with simple, humorous and authoritative work".

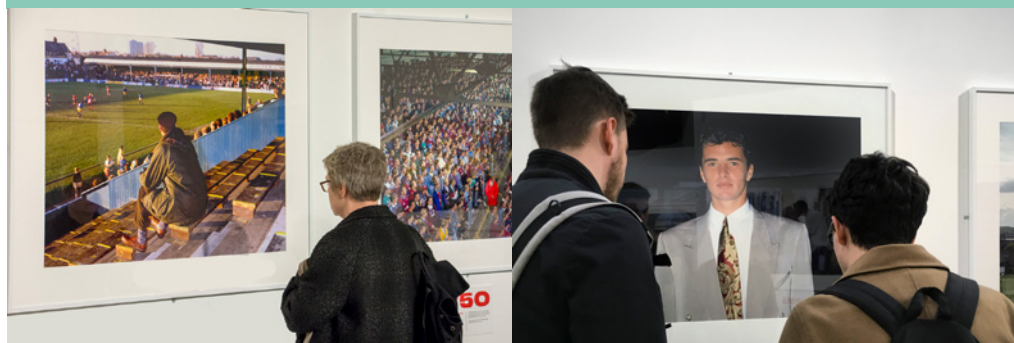
He says: "The muscular athleticism of what I set about doing was very important. Sometimes I'll turn up at a ground six hours before the kick-off and I am just as happy to be at St. Albans or Barrow AFC – as I am at Wembley.

"I am simply trying to tell the truth. I want to get it right in the camera. And when you've got a film-based capture system that can say something sensationally, simply, beautifully and truthfully – why change it?"



Above – Stuart being interviewed about his Manchester exhibition for the BBC Premier League Show

'I shoot transparency film on a 25 year old Bronica and always print my exhibition images on Fujiflex Crystal Archive material' – Stuart Roy Clarke



The 'Homes of Football' exhibition success is all about teamwork

STUART'S project really is a game of two halves. Capture is vital – but equally important are output and presentation. He notes: "It was clear from the start that I needed supreme quality prints – and that is where Digitalab came in to the frame.

"Lab manager Jeff Heads never gets it wrong – I just leave things with him. People see colours subjectively, but Jeff knows exactly what my version of true colour is. And so does Fujifilm!"

He adds: "I have always printed on Fuji papers. Now, for my exhibitions I insist on Fujiflex Crystal Archive. It's a marvellous print material on a super high-gloss polyester base – perfect for large displays. I see Fujifilm and Digitalab as my trusted expert partners for all my work – alongside my medium format film camera, of course."

Says lab owner Jill Roe: "The fact that Stuart shoots on film is no problem for us – and some would argue that it allows more exposure latitude, shadow and highlight detail than digital capture."

Jeff Heads adds: "Under often challenging lighting conditions and shooting with silver halide, what the film captures isn't always what Stuart was seeing. My task is to adjust exposure and colour balance of the film scans to achieve a true likeness of what his eye was seeing.

"The extra vibrancy and colour saturation achievable with Fujiflex Crystal Archive makes it the closest print material able to replicate the feel of looking at an image shot on transparency film. Some images are dependent on one, maybe two, strong colours – and nothing can match Fujiflex in that respect."

Alongside standard Matte and Gloss C-type papers the lab also offers specialist papers like Fujiflex, Pearl (metallic) and Velvet Matte.

Says Jill: "Our customers demand the highest quality possible and that's exactly what Fujifilm Crystal Archive DP11 Professional Papers offer."

See: www.fujifilm.eu/uk, www.digitalab.co.uk and www.homesoffootball.co.uk

AN AYE FOR THE LADIES

“I don’t have a professional photographic background or education”, says

Roxanne Bunn, from Belper in the Peak District of Derbyshire. “I’m a full time primary school teacher and have been for the past five years.”

Although Roxanne has had a huge interest in photography since being a little girl, it was only two years ago that she decided to take her photography further and buy her first set of studio lights. “I cleared a space in my small dining room at home and since then I spend most of my weekends and school holidays shooting and trying to improve my skills” she says.

Despite her comparatively neophyte status, Roxanne has already had some competition success with her work, including Gold Awards and a runner-up place in a Child Portraiture competition, from the Guild of Photographers. “I would love to consider myself as a professional photographer in the future, but right now I know I have a lot to learn; and I am thoroughly enjoying the journey. I feel that I am still very new to the whole thing, so it’s very nice that people look at my work and say that they like it”, she says.

“I have always really liked portrait photography and the emotions that can be portrayed. Of all the genres that are available to me as a photographer, I like portraiture the most and have stuck with it, because I can show how people feel and how they are in themselves”.

She uses her sister, Sinead who is a professional ballerina at the Bayerisches Staatsballett in Munich, Germany, as a regular model and features her in a number of recent prize-winning images. “She only comes home once a year, in the summer, and I

If you think photography is still an old boys’ club, you’re out of touch with the profession and the art alike. Stephen Power meets three women competing with the best.



1: Roxanne Bunn



A moody portrait, above, is unusual in Roxanne’s portfolio. Below, texturing styles a ballet school moment.



get her into the little studio space that I have, to take pictures of her. She is a really good model and enjoys posing for me, so I get a lot of portraiture practice in with her” Roxanne says.

Roxanne’s first camera was a Canon 650D “which I used a lot on automatic mode”, she says. “I got to a stage when I started putting it on manual exposure mode and took more of an interest in how the camera actually worked. I decided that it was a great hobby, and it helped to take my mind off planning and assessing and everything else that I did in my day-job.” Roxanne decided that she wanted to get better at photography and it was at that point that she upgraded her camera; first to a Canon 5D MkIII and then to a 5D MkIV.

“I upgraded from the 5DIII to the 5DIV at Christmas last year, which was my gift to myself”, she says with a smile in her voice. “We are all into photography in my family, my grandpa always was, and my dad, who is a mechanic, was thinking about getting a new camera, so he bought my 5DIII and I upgraded to the 5DIV”.

In terms of the increased functionality that the 5DIV will provide, Roxanne feels that she will need to do some more investigation and testing of the camera before she is fully aware of what it can do.

“The way of using it is pretty much



The eyes are the key to the portrait, Roxanne believes.

the same as the MkIII, although the touch screen function is new to the MkIV. The wireless image transmission is also an advantage, although I do tether the camera to a computer, so that's not as important as it might be for other photographers.

"Also, the wireless has failed to work now and then, especially if the connection has been down

at home or I've had problems with the router, although I can usually get it back up. Once, we went camping as a family and it took a very long time to transfer images across from the camera to an iPad".

For her portraiture work, Roxanne has two Bowens 500Ws studio flash heads and often uses only one of them, fitted with a 120



Roxanne's sister Sinead is a regular sitter for portraits.

Octabox or a 60 x 40cm soft box. "I also have a Bowens 21" beauty light and a Lastolite Triflector which I occasionally use. I'm really happy with my lights, but because Bowens are no longer trading, I'm just hoping that they don't ever break in the future".

Roxanne is inspired by the work of child portrait photographer Christina Lauder and has attended a workshop with her in the past. "When I went to visit her, I didn't even know how to turn a light on. She says she is really proud of me and of how I have come on."

Roxanne's home studio is a former small dining room space. "It was quite tricky at first, but I've got used to it now. It's a conjoined living room and dining room, and I open the dividing doors so that I can get a backdrop in there and photograph people from a greater distance with longer lenses". Her father has recently built a cabin studio in the garden, which he intends to use as a home-office, and has offered it to Roxanne for use as a studio at the weekends or during school holidays.

Roxanne mainly edits her images in *Photoshop*. "I try to set the

mood of the image in camera RAW before importing it to *Photoshop* for post processing and then play around a lot in levels and curves, on different blend modes. I think those tools are two of the most powerful ones in the software", she explains. "I'm currently trying to learn more about them, to improve my editing techniques. I also like using some of the Nik Collection presets. I have a Wacom Intuos Pro tablet, which I absolutely love and I find it a lot easier and much more accurate than using a mouse".

In terms of the immediate future, Roxanne has several main ambitions. Although her photography is currently mainly intended for competitions she intends to introduce a more commercial aspect to her work. "I do get people enquiring about having me make portraits for them. I'm really enjoying it, so I hope this will increase in the future. A friend has a dance school and some of her students have asked me for dance portraits, and that is where I may find my first clients. I also hope to offer more animal portraits, as I started with my own dogs, who really love to pose for me.

"Another goal is that I would love to work more with natural light. To further that ambition, I plan to attend more lighting and editing workshops to extend my knowledge and skills. In many years' time I'd also love to become an educator and pass on what I have learned to others but for now I'm working hard to develop my style. "I like to find subjects with an interesting look. Especially people who have a story in their eyes. I always feel

that the eyes make a portrait. It's like seeing into a person's soul by looking into their eyes. I try to tell the story of the subject through their eyes."

It is apparent that this talented photographer and trained teacher is determined to learn as much as she can about her new-found passion for photography, to pass on her skills to others. We wish her well with her journey.



roxannebunnphotography.co.uk

Dance is Roxanne's recurring inspiration.



2: Imelda Bell

Based in the village of Kingswood, near Leeds Castle, Kent, Imelda Bell studied at King Alfred's College in Winchester, part of the University of Southampton, and began her working life in 1994, with a career in broadcast engineering, eventually working for Channel 4 and ITV, working in the studio and technical side of broadcasting.

"It's everything from *Playout* to studios running cameras; I was a studio manager for a while and also trained crew in using cameras and sound equipment and was generally technically responsible the studio and broadcast equipment", she explains.

Imelda decided that the hectic commute and shift work, at a time when she had young children, was not practicable and consequently gave up work for a few years in 2004 to look after her growing family. This is when her interest in becoming a photographer blossomed – "Like many parents, I took lots of photographs of my children. Other mums at



Imelda uses here photography to support animal welfare and threatened species, whether it's to draw attention to tigers or rhino.

play-groups asked me to take photographs of their children. I went along with my camera set to auto, not really knowing what I was doing. It got to a point where I realised that I wanted to take my understanding of what I was doing with the camera further."

Imelda joined the Guild of Photographers in 2014 and started to learn as much as she could about setting her camera on manual exposure mode and also about using *Photoshop*. She then began to experiment with *Photoshop* and use her imagination to create composite images.

"Initially, my Photoshop use was better than my photography and I decided to do something about it. I started to learn more about lighting and other photographic skills, in order to bring my photography up to a level to match where I was with my *Photoshop* work" says Imelda.

Imelda says that joining the Guild led her to not only to 'a great bunch of people' but to training and qualifications. "Since then I have trained with many top photographers and improved my technique and skills. I love to learn and progress, and the most important thing to me as a



photographer is to keep on learning and improving every day.

“Being a photographer, after having a busy career with lots of people around, can be a very lonely experience. I realised that I needed to find a community and improve my photography skills, so the Guild was perfect for me in that way.”

Her main photographic interest is portraiture, particularly of children, although she does photograph people of all ages from new-born babies upwards. “I love photographing interesting characters and have been commissioned to create images for actors, models and historical re-enactment groups, amongst others.

“I also advertise my commercial services and sell some other images as stock photographs, and sell my creations as artwork and home furnishings through various on-line traders, although this is very much secondary to my portraiture”. Imelda is also very passionate about wildlife conservation and creates and donates images for fundraising and awareness of this important cause.

In terms of camera gear, she uses a Canon 5D MkIII with a Canon 24-105mm *f*4 L IS lens and 70-200 *f*4 USM lenses. Imelda works from a studio in her back garden where she has two Bowens Gemini Pro 500 studio heads and a selection of Speedlites.

She is self-taught in terms of her digital imaging work and imports her images into *Lightroom*, where she will undertake some minor adjustments before transferring them to *Photoshop* for the majority of her editing work. For this she uses a Wacom Cintique 13HD visual display graphics tablet.

“I couldn’t edit without a graphics tablet, especially when working on composites. I don’t feel that I have the same dexterity when working with a mouse, so the fine work is impossible. However, as I edit on a 27-inch iMac with Retina screen, I might as well use an Intuos Pro Medium, as I don’t usually look at the Cintique screen, unless I am away from home and take it with me to edit on my MacBook Pro”.



Recently Imelda has been styling theatrical character portraits.

The image of little Caitlin in the wheelchair was made by taking her into the woods and photographing her near a tree, on to which Imelda drew the shape of the ballerina using the Brush Tool in *Photoshop*. “That little girl has been through a lot in her life, including seven or eight heart surgeries and two strokes. I’ve had her in my studio a few times, and she enjoys playing with my props

— we have fun with the session”, she says.

Seeing how much fun Caitlin was having in the studio inspired Imelda to undertake her ‘Every Child is Beautiful’ project. Imelda invites nominations for a child who has been through a difficult time in their lives, perhaps because of loss or trauma, to receive a free photoshoot and a download link of the images.



The children are usually nominated by their parents, or occasionally a local paediatrician. Imelda puts their names on a mailing list and chooses one child per month to be the recipient of the photoshoot. “I never take people off the list, and so children who may not be selected in the month they are nominated, can be offered the photoshoot at another time” Imelda explains. “It has generated some interest in my work, but it’s really the satisfaction of doing something nice for somebody else that encourages me to do it.”

Amelia, the girl in the ‘Remembering Manchester’ image (right), was nominated by her mother for the ‘Every Child is Beautiful’ photoshoot after she was traumatised by being present at the bombing at the Ariana Grande concert at the Manchester Arena in on 22nd May 2017. She damaged her vocal chords from screaming and required intensive speech therapy and counselling to help her recover.

The image was printed in the *Manchester Evening News* and the BBC later interviewed Imelda about the shoot. The images are now being sold to raise funds for the Manchester Children’s Hospital. Loxley Colour have also made a framed print which will be donated by Imelda to the hospital and mounted on a wall for public display.

“I’m not really sure how Amelia’s family heard about me, and I was quite surprised to hear that they were coming from the North of England”, admits Imelda. “Part of Amelia’s healing was probably having to come down from Sheffield to me in Kent, on public transport.”

Amelia also wanted to help create an image to remember the victims of the Arena attack. This inspired Imelda to create the image using candles, with Amelia holding one of these in a lantern. The dress that Amelia is wearing is her own, which was extended by Imelda, using *Photoshop*. The candles were also added in *Photoshop*.

“The original shot was Amelia in a mid-length purple dance dress, holding up the lantern.



Her 'Every Child is Beautiful' offer has touched the hearts of many, with the Remembering Manchester image featuring in local and national media.



Everything else was done in post-production, including the bee, which is the symbol of Manchester. I photographed the bee in my garden as I don't use stock images at all.

"I like to know that my work is all my own. I make fund-raising images for The Aspinall Foundation and Save the Rhino – I'm passionate about animal conservation. I go to the zoo and take lots of animal images and I'm always thinking about how they are lit, so that I can plan how to use them with my studio images once I put them all into *Photoshop*."

Imelda has gained a lot from joining the Guild of Photographers, meeting new friends including some of the other photographers in this feature, and attending workshops, conferences and awards events.

"Photography is very lonely, you can sit there for hours at your computer and not see another person, so it's good to go out to something like a PhotoHubs event and meet other people."

With work of this standard, it's unlikely that this talented, altruistic and very generous photographer will be feeling isolated for long.



photographybyimelda.co.uk
[@photographybyImelda](https://www.instagram.com/photographybyImelda)



3: Sarah Wilkes

Sarah Wilkes' photography studio is currently based in a garden centre in Lambley in Nottinghamshire. Sarah is known for being a newborn specialist, one of the first photographers to bring the 'Cake Smash' image style to the UK, and co-founded The Newborn Photography Show in 2013 with Tracy Willis.

On leaving school, Sarah qualified as a nursery nurse. She has worked with children in many different ways, including working for private families and in nurseries and schools for deaf children. She's taken time out to have her own children – "two wonderful boys Joshua and Daniel both with the most amazing impish souls", she says. So, it's no surprise that now, having moved into photography as a career that she finds herself photographing children and younger people much of the time.

"I have always loved photography, but I became truly passionate about it after I had Daniel", says Sarah. "While trying to get pregnant in 2006, I was on a fertility website which had a DSLR forum. Most of the women there were from the USA and I was in awe of the images I saw posted, especially the new-born ones. I had never seen babies posed in that way before and it wasn't being done by UK photographers, as far as I was aware."

"After Daniel was born I went in search of a photographer but couldn't find one with a style that inspired me, unless I wanted to hop on a plane to the US. I decided, at this point, that I could possibly do better myself. I was so inspired to learn the art of photography – and my children became my subjects."

Sarah turned her conservatory into a natural light studio, used a Sony bridge camera in manual exposure mode and spent every waking second shooting and editing images. "From there I started shooting friends, then friends of friends, and put a Canon 5D MkII on my credit card."



"Then in 2010, two years after my second boy was born, I woke up one morning and rang the tax office told them I was in business as a photographer, even though I had no idea about running a business. However, I found a business advisor and went on a few free courses that she arranged for me". Sarah was completely self-taught at this point, both in terms of her camera work and her post-production skills – "I just lived and breathed photography, every waking second, other than looking after my family I was either editing or shooting."

Later, Sarah's circumstances changed and she had to move to a new area. She could no longer work from home, so set up a

mobile photography business. "I was forced to use studio lighting because the clients' homes I visited didn't always have enough natural light. I hated it so much that I had to make a decision to find a studio or give up."

"This was such a scary time for me. I was concerned about whether I would make enough money to pay the overheads. I took a leap of faith and found a bungalow in Farndon that was being let for commercial purposes, and I worked out of it for a few years."

Eventually, the bungalow studio became too small too for her ever-growing props collection – what Sarah describes as 'the curse of a newborn photographer – and certainly too small for her

increasingly diverse photographic styles. She took another leap of faith and moved to my current 2000 square foot studio, "a grey concrete shell in a garden centre that I spent eight months and 20k refurbishing".

"It needed a lot of work doing to it, and a huge amount of money spending on it and I wasn't sure what to do. I knew that it could be amazing, but I would be paying to refurbish somebody else's building." Despite these concerns, Sarah took out a £10,000 bank loan and "shot and shot and shot, in the bungalow studio", to earn additional money that was required. She then went ahead with the renovations which cost around £20,000 in total. The work took



almost a full year to complete and Sarah opened her studio in the garden centre in April 2014.

Sarah's main camera now is the Nikon D810, with the D800 as a backup. Lenses in her bag include a 50mm *f*1.4, 85mm *f*1.4, 24-70mm *f*2.8, 70-200 *f*2.8 (all Nikon marque) and a Sigma 105mm *f*2.8 macro. In the studio, Sarah uses Elinchrom flash heads and has multiples of the D-Lite RX1, D-Lite RX2 and BX500Ri. Her light modifiers include a range of Elinchrom soft boxes including the Rotalux 90 x 110cm Rectabox, a Rotalux 70cm Deep Octabox, two 50 x 130cm Rotalux Stripboxes and two beauty dishes of 44cm and 70cm diameter.

Sarah's post-processing workflow includes using Adobe *Camera Raw* and *Photoshop*, with a Wacom Cintiq 27" HD Touch tablet. "I just love how I

can edit straight onto the image, with the tablet. I would be lost without it now and I can't edit with a mouse any more", she says.

Some of her eye-grabbing images that show a female subject with animals are so well-composited that viewers have asked how the animals such as lemurs and zebras were brought into the studio. In fact all of the animal images were shot at West Midlands Safari Park and then montaged into the images via *Photoshop*.

"I'm not sure that the garden centre would let me lead zebra or a giraffe through to the studio", Sarah says with a giggle. "I bring the model into the studio, and I have an idea of where the animal will be placed in the scene. I shoot the model in such as way as to make her appear to be interacting with the animal, when the two images are composited together".

As for the future, at the time of writing the garden centre had gone into administration. It is hoped that the businesses operating within it may still be allowed to continue, although this is a worrying time for Sarah. "It might mean the end of my business. I

get it at such an amazing rate, I'm not sure where else I would get such a good deal. I may have to go mobile again", she says.

Sarah says that her passion has moved on more to older children although this is currently in the form of personal projects rather than paid work and she enjoys entering her work into competitions.

"I would love to get paid for this though as I really have come to love it", she says.

"I also want to try to work more for the child fine art market, to see if that can take evolve for me, and do more creative projects, as I feel my mojo has gone to sleep a little lately. I need to fire that back up. I thirst to learn

more and create more all of the time. You never ever stop learning and I really want to push myself further."

It would seem that whatever this determined and resourceful photographer decides to do, should fate take her down yet another road she will succeed.



Sarah Wilkes:
sarahwilkesphotography.co.uk
Facebook Page: @sarahwilkesphotographystudio



Hannah Couzens working with Profoto A1 on-camera studio quality flash and Canon 5D MkIV.

SHOOTING FAST AND FREE: FROM B TO A WITH PROFOTO

Hannah Couzens is well known for her Instagram one-shot tutorials showing how she uses lighting, especially on location. Behind the blogger, there's a seasoned professional owning a busy portrait studio.

At only 19 Hannah Couzens qualified as a Licentiate of the BIPP. That ranked her as equal to many establish social, commercial and general photographers two or three times her age. In 2011, at 28, she

became an Associate, two years after expanding her Cuffley village studio business and opening a second base in larger and busier St Albans. It was not easy to run two studios with seven staff at the height of one of our frequent

financial crises so the new St Albans studio became her sole base. The world of international media, advertising, entertainment, finance and sport has always been her focus alongside loyal local customers. She was travelling the world shooting major sports events when many photographers are still at college, and travel remains a priority. No surprise, then, that she has been drawn to action-friendly battery powered location flash.

An experienced user of many lighting systems, she worked with Elinchrom's pioneering battery kit until Profoto introduced the B series. A move to the B2 (with a battery pack and cables) was followed by the B1, with TTL wireless flash control, HSS and a monobloc design. Like many Profoto users she found the upgrade to the B1X in 2017 worth the outlay, extending the HSS power range to give more effective light at 1/8,000s while increasing stamina to 325 full power pops from the on-board battery. The 24W LED (130W tungsten equivalent) modelling also improved her ability to judge the effect of daylight flash main or fill lighting before shooting tests.

The surfer portrait of Tassy Swallow (*left*) was taken using two B1 heads on a dull day, one from beyond the subject to the right, and one from the camera side left. Using ISO 100 for highest quality on her Canon 5D MkIII, Hannah was able to open her 85mm f1.2 lens up to f3.2 for the right depth of field and obtain HSS flash sync at 1/2500s.

Hannah has now added the camera-top 'studio speedlight' Profoto A1 to her AirTTL trigger compatible kit. "My general rule is to use the B1x if I'm shooting outside with HSS", she says. "The A1 is great for fill but I couldn't ask it to overpower the sun as it





isn't designed to have that amount of power. The portrait with the hat and the autumn colours (*top*) was taken using the A1 fired into a medium white deep umbrella. The sunflower shot used a single B2 with a 60 x 90cm softbox."

It's easy to learn more about how she uses the lights, as her Instagram photo feed (look for **[hannahcouzensphotography](https://www.instagram.com/hannahcouzensphotography)**) provides brief descriptions and often a neat lighting diagram. This

has lead to Hannah writing regularly for magazines like *Digital Camera* and taking the stage for tutorials and demonstrations at The Photography Show. Unlike many ambassadors, this is not her primary work. She has a very busy diary handling editorials, commercial and advertising work, business headshots and similar commissions alongside social photography which family clients can afford. Her investment of

thousands in location-friendly flash is enabled by the often four-figure spend of her portrait clients. Her basic sitting fees are affordable, it's the results achieved which bring in the big print orders and corporate clients.

The speed and bullet-proof TTL exposure of the Profoto B1 and A1 location flash, set up without needing access to AC mains power and completely free from any packs or cables, makes

anywhere from an office to a city rooftop her studio. Location shoots with studio lighting quality have always been her strength.

"I used Elinchrom Quadra before moving up to the Profoto B2 pack and head", Hannah told us, "but I like the freedom given by the B1 and A1 with no cables to worry about on locations like the beach."

The B1X single monobloc AirTTL HSS li-ion powered head has twice the output of the original B2 – 500Ws in a single head compared to 250Ws through one or two heads per pack. The new A1, which Profoto call the world's smallest studio flash, offers the same TTL and HSS functions with 76Ws output and 350 full power flashes from a charge. The power may not seem much, but cameras like the 5D MkIV can be used at high ISO without any significant quality loss while HSS enables very fast shutter speeds and wide apertures with flash in daylight.

Hannah is no longer a BIPP member, but you can find her work and the courses she runs at **hcuphography.co.uk** and also at **learnwithhannah.com**.

– DK



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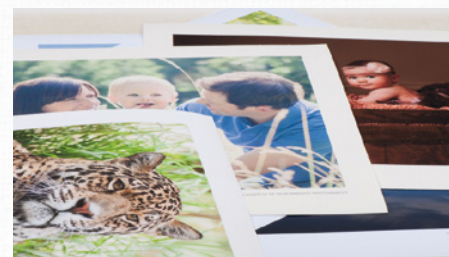


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SUSTAINABLE PHOTOGRAPHY SOLUTIONS... COFFEE-CUP ALBUMS AND BAMBOO PRINTS

Trees are going to be turned into paper, and so is with cotton fibre, until we finally stop bothering with books, magazines or printed photographs. Here at *Cameracraft*, it's been a thorny problem (trees can be like that). We're against waste of resources and that's why you can not buy the magazine in newsagents – they trash two to three copies for every one sold, and the amount of ink, glue, plastic and coatings used prevents efficient recycling. Today every single magazine copy we print goes direct to the reader, zero waste.

So many magazines now have laminated covers that special recovery processes have been devised to recycle the paper split from the plastic film.

GF Smith 'Extract'

Gail Mellors, from the paper and board makers **GF Smith**, showed us their 'Extract' wedding album cover with a fabric-like textured paper produced by recycling plasticised coffee cups, in ten colours using James Cropper's CupCycling technology, with 90% of the cup converted into FSC-certified paper fibre and the remaining 10% of polyethylene recycled... zero waste. GF Smith is not just an album maker. They are a major papermaker and paper converter.

This was at The Photography Show, where it was clear that most photo magazines were just no longer being printed the way we had been since 2013. Really thick paper had been replaced by much lighter stock. Even the *RPS Journal* had lost one third of its thickness and weight without losing pages.

Part of this is no doubt down to a need to save every penny when vital advertising has moved on-line, but in the same way that household energy bills make you think twice about the setting on your room thermostat, the need to change comes most from ever-rising costs.



But it's also a responsible change. Everyone who had used recycled materials will know that they cost much more for the same quality. We've used recycled mailing envelopes and we know our printers buy from Forestry Stewardship Council approved suppliers, and now have cut-from-the-roll computer controlled presses which hardly waste any paper or ink.

GF Smith are not the only ones looking to see how recycled paper and fibres can be turned into new materials in future. Lee Simpson, owner of **SIM Imaging** and SIM Lab, put up a complete display at the show using packing crates to show a full range of products all made using recycled stock. This is not a marketing gimmick, he's passionate about cutting waste. Special systems cut the acrylic



Left, SIM Imaging's Photography Show stand included a special tea-chest display devoted to recycled products and sustainable materials. Above, the edge of a bamboo block mounted print. Bottom, GF Smith's Extract brand special papers are made from recycled coffee cups, and they include textured album coverings.

prints made by SIMLab to allow recovery of clean plastic which goes back to make more acrylic sheets – there are no wasted offcuts. Prints are mounted on bamboo blockmounts. They offer the photographer options which can in turn be presented to clients who may have committed views on conservation of resources, recycling, sustainability and reducing waste.

Of course photography is not all eco-friendly and if you want the real silver process (as with **Fujifilm's** now very popular 'Originals' range of silver halide based colour papers) you have to remember it's now totally isolated from the drainage and landfill – silver products, and chemicals used to process silver, create conditions where natural breakdown by microbes stops. So nothing now leaves a photo lab without going for silver recovery and full chemical waste treatment.

SIMLab has recently taken over two northern specialist services, **ProAm Imaging** the traditional lab and **ProPrints** with their inkjet service.

When talking to Hahnemühle, the sustainable paper aspect came up and we were pointed to one paper type – **Hahnemühle FineArt Bamboo 290gsm**. This is in their Smooth range, and has a natural slightly warm colour with a soft rendering ideally suited to portraiture.

Bamboo and Rice

Armed with the sample pack **Matt FineArt Smooth** (two sheets each of six papers), we downloaded the profiles for Epson 3800 and looked at how well they fared. The Photo Rag Bright White 310gsm prints a little more saturated and neutral than the other Photo Rag (cotton-based) papers – Duo double sided 276gsm, Ultra Smooth 305gsm and standard 308gsm. The Bamboo shifts in the opposite direction.

In contrast, the other eco-sourced material **Rice Paper 100gsm** prints coolest of all, but then it's a pretty cool paper. It is lighter than this magazine page, the same weight as some paper we run through our office printer for documents, yet has more stiffness and a coating to fine art inkjet standards. This would be a very appealing paper to send as set of prints by airmail – you could send 36 Rice Paper prints and they would weigh less than this magazine.

Overall, given that a photographer would not be likely to offer all the surfaces, print to print matching with the generic profiles worked well as our grey bordered (level 153 in RGB, all equal) tests showed. The Bamboo paper will naturally appeal to customers who buy bamboo fabric clothing, and should be ideal for newborn and baby prints. You can even label the prints as made on Bamboo Fine Art paper, archival and sustainable, 90% bamboo and 10% cotton.

On the theme of sustainability, although Epson gave our **Stylus Pro 3800** a five-year service life expectation when it was bought



You see what I did? The Bamboo 290gsm is the print with bamboo and shadows of the plant on a wall. The Rice Paper has green rice growing in India (by Shirley Kilpatrick). And the Rag papers have three pictures of Berber rag rug makers in Morocco with some Spanish rag dolls, by Shirley. The colours of all reproduced really well but these matt fine art smooth papers are really better suited to muted portraiture, art reproduction and monochrome.

Websites: GF Smith – www.gfsmithphotographic.com
SIM – www.simimaging.co.uk, www.simlab.co.uk
Hahnemühle – www.hahnemuehle.com
Marrutt – www.marrutt.com



The Marrutt refillable cartridge system relies on visual checking of ink level but the saving is worth it.



back in 2007. It's passed its 11th birthday and for the past three years has used Marrutt refillable cartridges and bulk ink (photos, left). The cartridges are semi-transparent so you check the ink level visually, the electronic indication being disabled, and fill using syringes with a long steel 'needle'. The maintenance cartridge, which soaks up surplus ink, does still need replacing. The result is not only economical, with the printer working perfectly well past retirement age, it's identical to the original Epson inks for profile purposes.

And as for Cameracraft, we've returned to 68 pages, removed the plastic lamination from the cover and used a sealant coating instead, and cut the paper weight by 12%. The result is a 30% cut in overall paper use and post/carriage tonnage. No magazine can ever be fully environmentally responsible but that goes for purely digital media too.

We just don't need to be plugged in or charged up to read!

– DK

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CC Imaging pass with flying colours

Leeds based pro lab 'CC Imaging' have been supplying photographers, artists and commercial clients with services for 50 years.

Managing director Chris Rose said, "As 2018 is our celebration year we decided to increase the level of services we offer as an ongoing commitment to our expansion programme. CC Imaging work with artists, museums, education establishments, local authorities and photographers supplying high quality exhibition, gallery and limited edition prints and our Tetenal contact sales manager, Chris Allsopp asked why we hadn't put our name forwards to become a Hahnemühle Accredited Studio. Although we already offer prints on Hahnemühle paper, accreditation would fill a gap in our existing service range."

Tetenal encouraged us to apply and a meeting with Hahnemühle was arranged. Hahnemühle informed us that not just anyone could become accredited and CC Imaging Photolab would have to go through a rigorous and extensive programme of visits and checks over a period of several months to ensure our current services and practices met compliance.

With our colour controlled lighting booths, Epson SC-P20000 printer (recently purchased from Tetenal) colour calibration systems and extensive knowledge base along with support from Tetenal we passed with flying colours.

CC Imaging have many product partnerships and we are proud to be associated with and trusted by the brands of both Hahnemühle and Tetenal"

Below: Mark Senior and Chris Baxter from CC Imaging Photolab Ltd with their Hahnemühle accreditation plaque



If you're interested in learning more about the programme then drop us a line at marketing@tetenal.uk.com for more details

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Still life product expert Rob joins Guild panel

ROB HILL has joined The Guild Panel team responsible for judging submissions. Rob has been a photography enthusiast all his life and, while much of his work is studio-based, he enjoys the diversity of shooting many different genres of photography.

Though coming from a background in electronics and technology, Rob is often happiest working with old mechanical cameras to create images. He is an active Guild member and a Guild Master Craftsman as well as being All Round Photographer of the Year 2016 and winning Image of the Year for his Commercial imagery in 2016.

Many readers will know Rob for his strong commercial work, though he is skilled in other areas too, as reflected in the fact The Societies recently named him as Fashion Photographer of the Year 2017.

www.robhillphoto.com

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www.photoguild.co.uk

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• Plus much more, including legal costs and expenses cover in the case of identity theft, and legal defence against any motoring prosecutions

Some of these features are also available to members outside the UK – the Guild office will be happy to advise.

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CAMERACRAFT

REARVIEW

Impact in an image does not have to be created by the camera, or by post-processing. Often it is the pose which a subject strikes – or is directed into – which really gives the pictures a unique character.

Our main photograph in this gallery is by **Graeme Hewitson** of Monument Photos – he has just won the Scottish Master Photographer of the Year (General) award and this image won the Digital Art category

monumentphotos.co.uk

It's the dramatic pose which completes a well over the top sunset fantasy.

Top left of the facing page is a truly excellent bit of family portrait posing by **Liz Roberts**. It's not just a distinctive pose in terms of the way the arms and hands wrap and flow, the head and eye-line angles and overall oval shape work perfectly.

Top right is a picture of model Scarlett Fox from the panel of prints which has recently earned **Mel Pettit** professional qualification with the Guild.

Bottom, a pose which may not be unique given a soft high key treatment by **Steve Collins** whose macro blueberry set appears earlier in this magazine. When a dancer or model can produce shapes like this, you can expect to see them in the portfolios of many photographers. The pose is striking and suits this sculpted-stone look well.





Striking a pose



Back in 2012, I wrote an editorial about plagiarism. It's not a bad idea to reprint much of it now, as when I was planning this magazine one key picture choice was pointed out to me as too closely derived from another photographer's ideas. Then, while writing the final page, Graeme Webb contacted me to show how a picture I had published in 2016 seems to have inspired a 2018 reprise – once again, a bit too close to the concept for comfort.

Hundreds of books, websites and tutorial programs have been created which show you how to take pictures exactly like the author or their photographic heroes. The best of these deal with concepts, techniques, light, colour, exposure, interaction with the subject, the studio or location environment and in some cases with the history of art. Some just offer the photographer templates to copy, down to the brand of lighting to use and which off-the-shelf props are most popular. They provide 'answers in a box' to create saleable work in popular fields such as babies, children, High School seniors and boudoir. Of course it's better to think outside the box.

I've seen photographers try to take action, right up to the level of claiming copyright infringement or professional misconduct, to protect ideas which they believe are their unique intellectual property. The root cause, often enough, is public taste and demand (or the similar demand from awards and qualifications judges for images which conform to their taste).

If compelling photography is published widely, and the public sees it, they'll actually want something similar from their local photographer. They will not travel to New Zealand or Singapore or expect to book a prominent Scottish photographer for a wedding in Devon (even if the best clients do indeed fly their chosen photographers from far afield).

So, studios all round the world have been on the hunt for lovely colourful soft knitted stuff in the last few years for newborn and baby props – just as they all went out to find big flowerpots after

CAMERACRAFT

Emulation, imitation, or plagiarism?

Looking at tens of thousands of images, I often get a sense of déjà vu. Sometimes I fail to get it when I should. Photographers have always copied ideas and techniques.



In 2016 this picture was published as part of a profile when Graeme Webb included it in his MPA Licentiate panel. The pose (see our Gallery, previous pages) may not be unique but Graeme added the reflection. Two years later he's seen exactly the same pose, with a reflection added, from another photographer in a regional competition. Is it plagiarism, or just taking an idea forward? "Dancer" – Canon 6D, 1/250s at f11 and ISO 100 in the studio. www.gwphotography.co.uk

Anne Geddes's seminal babes in buckets, barrows and sunflowers put newborns into storybook settings.

When a photographer places a newborn in a certain composition on a toy fire tender and displays the image do they have a right to complain about a studio nearby searching out the exact same toy truck and offering 'copy' sessions? Of course not, and there are studio prop supply companies which will happily sell the same exact item to competing photographers. The best such props are unique, hand-made one-offs whether clothing or furnishings. The best photographers often make their own to be absolutely sure.

We have seen more than one example where contemporary studio styles using certain types of expensive wallpaper, laminate or floorboards, skirting, chairs, tables, hats, scarves and similar props are copied. That's because the original images are well-known. You can buy a Westcott wallpaper background, made with the pattern very subdued and on a different scale to actual wallpaper to ensure it works well behind portraits even in a small studio. Every photographer buying the same background will have that distinctive familiar pattern in their shots. But this is a business decision. Recently when John Parris hosted an open day at his studio

near our offices it was impressive to see a plain white backdrop roll up to reveal a printed wooden effect. These are also off-the-shelf 'drops'. John normally uses a wide aperture which puts it so much out of focus it's not really reproduced in the image. At some point he'll sell it to another photographer and buy a different one – I know this because he bought one of my own wide Lastolite 'walk on' canvas drops, ten years of careful use and then it moves on. I now have slightly different painterly splodges, and his pictures with that background didn't look anything like the ones I produced with it.

Creative people cross-fertilise. They create copies as an exercise, to work out how the 'master' produced the original. They go on to develop their own unique fingerprint. Some go far enough to make a breakthrough, and then see a new generation inspired in turn.

Copyright only applies to the actual work. It never applies to the idea or even the look or feel of the work. If you show the world your work, enter for qualifications which you know may be shown to the world by the awarding body, go in for contests and awards where visibility is the object then it is inevitable that if that work is genuinely original and good you will see imitators.

I do not believe any organisation can sanction a member because they admire, follow and emulate the work of another. Nor can judging panels always manage to spot a case of imitation verging on copying too closely.

If this was the case, dozens of past awards and qualifications would be questioned. This is not the same as a stock or commercial situation where a client sees an image they want to use, but can't afford to licence, and asks another photographer to reproduce the shot. That kind of imitation ends in a judgment against the copier. Copying a setting, props, lighting or 'image look' to create a private portrait doesn't – or hasn't yet for any artist or photographer I know of.

– David Kilpatrick



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