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18 A Par

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HERE'S TO 2019

MIKE O'CONNOR, EDITOR

ere it is, that unusual time where I try to sum up the year in photography - in November! Yes, this may be the December issue of AP, but work on it started a fair time ago.

Even a couple of months out from 2020, its safe to say 2019 has been a memorable one in all sorts of ways. On the technology front we've now seen every major camera brand (and some not-so major ones too) join the mirrorless camera race. For the first time the technology is mature enough that both the traditional DSLR and mirrorless camera are both viable options regardless of what you shoot something that's perfectly encapsulated in the cutting-edge Sony A7RIV that I review on page 68. It's also worth noting what a challenging time it is for camera manufacturers in 2019. With smartphones now firmly entrenched in most people's minds when they think 'photography', there's a certain disconnect where the expectations we place on technology to be ever-evolving comes at a time when profits for camera companies are being squeezed like no time in their history. For us at the sticky end, it's an exciting time to be a user, but also a nervous one as photography continues to be reshaped around us. Looking away from the technology to the images that defined the year, it would be hard to look past the remarkable image of AFLW star Tayla Harris caught in a stunning mid-air kick by AFLW senior photographer Michael Willson. In a way, this image and the resulting furore it created encapsulates perfectly the mood of the day. It touches on the #metoo movement, the double-standards facing female sportspeople and, perhaps most strikingly, the power of social media to both disseminate information while simultaneously uniting and dividing us. It's no surprise that the photographer believes the image could become a landmark moment in Australian sport – it's already one of the landmark images of 2019.

Finally there's been heartbreak this year too – the death of landscape photographer Dale Sharpe in June, wildlife photographer Matthew Dwyer in October and a personal hero of mine, Robert Frank in September - were moments for reflection and a chance to sit back and consider what's really important, our family and friends. It's something I'll be doing this Christmas, and something I hope you can make time for too. Enjoy the final issue of Australian Photography for 2019, and from all of us here I'd like to share our deepest thanks for reading, commenting and sharing what we do. We'll see you next year. ۞

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Bringing a sense of order to big public crowded events is a real challenge even for seasoned photographers. Fresh back from shooting India's iconic Holi festival, Matt Horspool shares his tips for capturing the real sense of a big occasion.





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It's a technique that doesn't quite seem real – an image that captures the happenings both above and below water, all in one image. 2017 Photographer of the Year winner and underwater photography expert Jordan Robins explains the process from beginning to end.



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From shots that defined the news agenda to beautiful landscapes and the world's most captivating wildlife images, these are our favourite images of the year.



52 COMPOSITING 101: A Shoot-to-process Compositing Workflow

Compositing isn't as complicated as you may think, and in this tutorial, Melbourne's Javier Roldan details the steps he followed to produce a striking portrait in a local forest with the help of Photoshop.



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Saima Morel critiques a selection of readers' images, and picks the winner of the Fujifilm XP140 camera.







DOUG GIMESY

Doug Gimesy is a professional award winning conservation and wildlife photographer who travels a lot. See more of his work at gimesy.com, and on instagram @doug_gimesy



MATT HORSPOOL

Matt Horspool is an adventure travel photographer based in Sydney. His passion lies in exploring cultures and landscapes in areas of the world many do not get to see. See more on instagram @etchd





JORDAN ROBINS

Jordan Robins is an international award winning, self-taught ocean wildlife and ocean art photographer based in Jervis Bay. See more of his work at jordanrobins.com.au



68 TESTED: SONY A7R IV

61MP...yep. That's a ton of megapixels! But is the A7R IV a one-trick pony, or are we looking at the future? Mike O'Connor takes a closer look.

COVER

This month's cover was shot by the endlessly talented Rachel Stewart – @rachstewartnz. The image, of what has to be *the* most photographed tree in the world, was captured at Lake Wanaka, NZ, at sunrise in Autumn 2019.

JAVIER ROLDAN Based in Melbourne, Javier Roldan is a Spanish-Australian photographer. Photography has become a fundamental part of his life as a means to tell stories. See more of his work at javierroldan.com

AN ESSENTIAL PAIRING

Australian Photography magazine

World Photo Adventures

Join Australian Photography and World Photo Adventures on our three amazing workshops for 2020/21.

At Australian Photography, we love to help photographers take better images, and there's nothing quite like doing it in some of the most picturesque locations on the planet. So join us for our workshops aimed at photographers of all skill-levels. As well as Australian Photography Editor Mike O'Connor, some of your other hosts will include popular imaging guru Mark Galer, Snap Happy TV producer Tim Robinson, and experienced World Photo Adventures' guides Darran and Frazer Leal.

World Photo Adventures commenced in 1989 as a project to combine the experience of a holiday and the education of photography. The camera is an essential item that we all bring away with us on holiday. Darran and the crew at World Photo Adventures are continually striving towards, the chance to turn those holiday photographs into something a little more. WPA offers an experience, where you can learn about photography and a destination, whilst making photographs in the field with a small group.



Darran Leal





Mike O'Connor

2020 PHOTO WORKSHOPS

* May - Flinders Ranges

* October - Blue Mountains

2021 PHOTO WORKSHOPS

* April - Southern Andes (Patagonian fall colours.)

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IN THE DRAFT STREET

PHOTOGRAPHER: DOUG GIMESY

If you'd asked me several years ago, 'Do you think a reptile photo could end up being one of your favorite portrait images?, I'd probably have said 'I doubt it'. But over the past year, I've been working on a series about the

illegal trade of reptiles out of Australia, and the more I look at these amazing animals, the more I have fallen in love with them.

Of course, as an ex-zoologist, I'll always find something to love about any animal, but as a photographer, the Boyd's forest dragon (*Lophosaurus boydii*) has captivated me – it really does look like a dragon!

Whenever I think about taking a photo of any animal, my first thoughts always go to their welfare. There are so many things photographers can do which may have unintended negative repercussions. Recently I've been especially interested in impacts of additional lighting and, whilst there are way too many factors to discuss here, some key questions I always ask include; how sensitive might they be to light (and knowing whether they are primarily nocturnal or diurnal gives one a good clue); will the additional lighting be flash or continuous; will the light be harsh or soft; how far away from the animal will any additional light be; and how big might the lighting appear from the animals perspective - for if its very close or large, it may appear more threatening and intrusive. I especially pay close attention to how bright any additional lighting will

be compared to any ambient light. I'm sure everyone can appreciate that when a flash that goes off during the day, it's generally less noticeable than if it goes off in your face at night. Finally, I always try to use the lowest level of additional lighting possible. To do this, I simply crank up my ISO beyond what I normally like to shoot.

For this shot I really wanted to highlight the spines on its throat and head, so to achieve this, I decided to add some rim lighting and also shoot the dragon against a plain black background. This rim light was placed down low behind and to the left. Of course I also wanted to show off the fabulous texture of its scales, and so I set a primary fill light (using a soft box with a grid), a couple of meters away, to the left, and to the side. It's worth mentioning that not having this primary light too close not only reduces the chance of bothering the dragon, but also ensures any specular highlights in the eye doesn't look too large and unnatural. I also chose to use a long macro lens (105mm) so I could keep some distance from him – again, this not only reduces stress, but also means the subject is more likely to keep still. When I now look back at this image, I'm really happy with the result. I think it does allow people to appreciate how wonderful the Boyd's water dragon is, and see that it really does look like a dragon!

NIKON D850, NIKON 105MM F/2.8 MACRO Lens. 1/2008 @ F22, ISO 800. OFF Camera Flashes: X 2. One through a Soft Box with grid, one through a

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DJI ANNOUNCES SUB 250G MAVIC MINI DRONE

JI has officially announced its new sub-250g ultra-light drone, the Mavic Mini, which in an interesting move, should fly under weight restrictions proposed as part of a drone registration scheme by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

The Mavic Mini is easily the smallest and lightest drone DJI has made to date, coming in at a featherlight 249g, some 51g lighter than the DJI Spark.

Inside, it features a 12-megapixel 1/2.3-inch sensor, and can record 2.7K video at 30fps and 1080p video at 60 frames

per second. The camera module is mounted on a three-axis gimbal that sits centered beneath the main frame of the drone, which maintains the same compact form-factor and foldable design.

Flight time is expected to be 30 minutes, with onboard Wi-Fi and GPS for transmitting video to the included controller. According to DJI, the Wi-Fi system has a maximum range of 4km.

The weight of the Mavic Mini is significant due to the imminent implementation of a drone registration scheme in Australia. Expected to become mandatory in mid 2020, the registration scheme is expected to affect any drone heavier than 250g and require owners to register with the authority.

In the US, drone registration is already mandatory through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for drones weighing over 250g and less than 25kg - effectively every consumer drone on the market.

Along with the Mavic Mini, new updates to the DJI Fly app should help get new pilots off the ground, with preprogrammed settings for a variety of different basic flight modes. A new collection of accessories specific to the Mavic Mini have also been released, including propeller guards, a charging base, propeller holder, a 'DIY creative kit' with stickers, and an adapter to allow other attachements to be added.

The Mavic Mini is expected to be available shortly via DJI's online store for \$599, with the Mavic Mini Fly More Combo, featuring a carrying case, propeller guard, charging base, and three batteries, priced at \$799. You can find out more at DJI.com



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20mm F/2.8 Di III OSD M1:2 (Model F050) 24mm F/2.8 Di III OSD M1:2 (Model F051)

NEW EXHIBITION Showcases A world at war

A NEW exhibition now open at the Australian National Maritime Museum, reveals some of iconic moments of World War II, as captured by photographer Dorothea Lange.

Capturing the Home Front is open now until 16 February 2020, and features work by Lange, on loan from the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, and photographs by Toyo Mi-

yatake, a Japanese American internee and professional photographer from Los Angeles who smuggled a lens into Manzanar and built a camera to capture camp life.

Today considered an icon of documentary photography, Dorothea Lange established her reputation as a documentarian when she was commissioned by the government to travel the United States in the 1930s to capture and reveal the devastation wrought on Americans by The Great Depression.

During WWII Lange was commissioned by the US Office of War Information to photograph America's factories, shipyards and farms as the nation went to war. Her unvarnished de-





pictions of the forced internment of Japanese Americans from coastal California to inland camps in 1942 were considered too realistic and raw for public consumption and Ansel Adams was commissioned to document the desolate camp at Manzanar in a better light.

Complementing the American content are reproductions from Australian collections of the evocative work of Sam Hood, William Cranstone, Jim Fitzpatrick and Hedley Cullen who documented wartime industry, Japanese internment, family and country life on our side of the Pacific. *Capturing the Home Front* runs until 16 Feb 2020, 9.30am–5pm daily.

More info: sea.museum/homefront.

OLYMPUS ANNOUNCES OM-D E-M5 III

OLYMPUS has announced the OM-D E-M5 Mark III, a followup to the four year-old E-M5 Mark II that introduces many of the features of the flagship OM-D E-M1 Mark II and E-M1X in a considerably smaller and lighter package.

Standout features include a 20MP sensor, Pro Capture prerecording mode, better weather sealInside, it gains a TruePic VIII image processor, and also offers face and eye detection.

There's a 5-axis in-body stabilization system that delivers up to 6.5 stops of shake reduction with a compatible lens. The EVF is the same 2.36-million dots as before, but now

features a clearer, higher-contrast OLED, rather than an LED. Battery life is still weak however, offering about 310 shots. Video features include UHD and DCI Cinema 4K at 30 fps, or 1080p video at 120 fps. The OM-D E-M5 Mark III will be available from late November 2019 for an RRP of AU\$1,999 for the body, or AU\$2499 with a M.Zuiko ED 14-150mm f4.0-5.6 II lens. Visit Olympus.com.au for more information.

35mm F/2.8 Di III OSD M1:2 (Model F053)

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ing, and 4K video-recording capabilities. The OM-D E-M5 III is the first in the E-M5 series to have an on-sensor phasedetect autofocus system. It features 121 phase-detect AF points, along with a contrast-detect system inherited from the E-M1 II and E-M1X.



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*When you purchase the GFX 50R from a participating dealer / retailer during the promotional period. Cash back via redemption. Australian residents only. Limit of one GFX 50R claim only per eligible claimant. The cashback promotion also applies to other selected cameras and lenses. Cashback amounts vary from product to product. Limit of one claim only per selected model of camera and lens per eligible claimant. See www.fujifilm.com.au for full details. Promoter is FUJIFILM Australia Pty Ltd (ABN 80 000 064 433).



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35-150mm F/2.8-4 Di VC OSD

CANON COMPLETES THE TRINITY WITH RF 70-200MM F/2.8L IS AND THE RF 85MM F/1.2L DS IS LENSES

CANON has announced two new RF lenses: the RF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS and the RF 85mm f/1.2L DS I, which completes the company's trinity of f/2.8 glass for the full frame mirrorless RF mount. The announcement expands the total number of lenses in the RF series to ten.

Completing Canon's F2.8L trinity series for the RF mount, the RF 70-200mm F2.8L IS USM is Canon's shortest and lightest interchangeable lens with (stay with us here) a focal length of 70-200mm f/2.8 for

interchangeable lens cameras with a 35mm Full Frame image sensor. In real terms, it's 27% shorter (145mm vs 199mm) and 28% lighter (1066g vs. 1480g) than the EF version.

The lens is the first Canon lens to feature two Nano USM motors in charge of autofocus, which should keep things quiet and smooth while still fast.

Meanwhile, the RF 85mm F1.2L USM DS sits in the new RF line-up as a complimentary lens to the RF 85mm F1.2L USM. It fea-



tures an added Canon DS (Defocus Smoothing) coating.

This is a vapor-deposited coating on the front and rear surfaces of an element in the lens that helps to improve the look of bokeh in photos.

Other feature include a minimum focusing distance of 0.85m, a customisable control ring, and typical L-series weather-resistance. No pricing has been confirmed for either lens yet. You can find out more about the new glass at Canon.com.au.

CANON CONFIRMS 1D X MARK III IMMINENT

CANON has announced the development of the EOS 1D X Mark III, the successor to the three year-old 1D X Mark II, and the new flagship in the company's EF-mount lineup.

According to a press release, the EOS-1D X Mark III will continue to prioritise 'speed, image quality and durability for the most demanding of professional photographers.'

Although details are still scant, Canon says the new camera will feature an allnew CMOS sensor with Dual Pixel AF and a new Digic proond shooting using the OVF and 20 with live view. With live view, photographers can choose to shoot using either the mechanical shutter or electronic shutter. Canon says there's also a new AF algorithm, which features more stable performance and will utilise deep learning technology to further improve tracking capabilities.

Although we don't know don't know how many AF points there will be, Canon says the Mark III will have approximately 28x the number of effec-Canon tive pixels compared with its predecessor. There's also EOS-10 dual CF Express card slots, and the buffer has been increased by five times compared to its predecessor. Details regarding pricing and availability aren't yet available. You can find out more about the development of the new camera at Canon. com.au.

(Model A043) For Canon and Nikon mounts. Di: For full-frame and APS-C format DSLR cameras.

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cessor. With this, the camera will be able to shoot 10-bit HEIF files (High Efficiency Image File) for wider dynamic range and color representation compared with JPEG. AF and AE tracking will see a big improvement, with up to 16 frames-per-sec-



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"I was so happy with the sharpness. I shoot fashion and wearable art so it's really important for me to be able to see the really fine details."

Vicky Papas Vergara Nikon Australia Ambassador

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FUJIFILM OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCES THE X-PR03

FUJIFILM have officially announced the X-Pro3: the Japanesecompany's latest flagship model in the X Series range of mirrorless digital cameras.

The classic rangefinder style, portability and dials have made the X-Pro series popular with those in the fields of documentary and reportage photography, and also retro lovers something Fujifilm have embraced with the X-Pro3's somewhat polarising flip-out rear monitor.

First, the rear monitor. It's a hidden 3-inch, 1.62-milliondot, 180-degree-tilting touchscreen. When in the closed position, there's a mini-display that can be configured to show essential camera settings, or when shooting JPEG, the chosen film simulation. Fujifilm says it "removes the distraction of a fullscreen while shooting."

Inside, the X-Pro3 features a back-illuminated 26.1-megapixel X-Trans CMOS sensor, up slightly from the 24.3MP one found in the X-Pro2. An X-Processor 4 Quad-Core imaging engine powers the camera.

The top and bottom base plates of the camera use titaniumhalf as dense as stainless steel but seven times more durable.

The X-Pro3 is available in three different colours. The X-Pro3 Black will be available from the end of November for \$2,699 AUD RRP, while the DURA Black and DURA Silver will be available from the end of December for \$2,999 AUD RRP. For further information visit fujifilm-x.com.

MOMENTO PRO WINS PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL PRINT AWARD

SYDNEY-BASED photobook printers, Momento Pro has recently taken out the graphic arts industry's highest honour, winning the 2019 Premier Print Awards James H. Mayes Jr. Memorial 'Best of Show' prize, for a collector's edition art book, Middle-hurst | Middle Earth, by Australian landscape photographer, Peter Eastway.

Considered the Academy Awards of the print world, this year the Premier Print Awards celebrated their 71st edition. In 2019, there were 2,238 from 13 countries submitted for the Premier Print Awards – the world's most prestigious international print competition. Michael Makin, President and CEO of Printing Industries of America, stated, "The Benny winners represent the best our industry has to offer". To be recognised on the international stage in a forum such as this is a truly impressive achievement.

The 'Best of Show' is selected from all the Best of Category winners. Middlehurst | Middle Earth had won the Art Books (4 or more colours) category.

In June, Momento Pro was notified that the book had won the 2019 Best of Category for Art Books (4 or more colours), representing the most outstanding coffee-table book devoted to the reproduction of art, photography, or artistic collections.

Since the establishment of the print-on-demand photo book service in 2004, Momento Pro has won 100 print awards.



NEW BOOK CELEBRATES KODACHROME PHOTOGRAPHY IN '50S AND '60S VICTORIA

Visions of Victoria

A NEW book that shines a light on classic 1950s and 60s film photography in Victoria

many photographers of the day.

The book primarily features the work of



has hit the shelves.

Visions of Victoria - The Magic of Kodachrome Film 1950-1975 by Nick Anchen, is a self-published 'labour of love.'

"The publication came about because of my love of old colour images, especially high quality Kodachrome transparencies from the 1950s and 60s," Anchen explains.

Kodachrome film became commercially available in Australia in the early 1950s, and with its vibrant colours and grainless quality, it quickly became the film of choice for two Melbourne photographers, Peter Ralph and Bernie Kelly, along with a number of other Kodachrome shooters who have opened their collections for the book.

"My aim has been to produce a book which takes a reader on a journey back in time, to a very different Melbourne and Victoria. I have attempted to capture a real sense of the social history of the times." Visions of Victoria is available now though all good book stores, or from Nick Anchen directly at sierraaustralia.com.

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LEICA Q2 Accept nothing but perfection.

Introducing the new Leica Q2 – with its newly developed, 47.3 megapixel full-frame sensor, extremely fast Summilux 28mm f/1.7 ASPH. prime lens, fast autofocus, innovative OLED technology, the Leica Q2 elevates the tradition established by its predecessor. With the addition of its special weather sealing to protect the camera from dust and water spray, the Leica Q2 stands out as the only camera in its class that can stand up to even the most unfavourable weather conditions. From its classic design and respected "Made in Germany" quality seal to its integrated digital zoom that covers a range of focal lengths up to 75mm, the Leica Q2 transcends the revered story of Leica's full-frame compact story to new heights.

Find more inspiration at www.q2.leica-camera.com

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YOUR BEST SHOT

WHEELS

Although we received plenty of 'typical' shots this month for our Wheels photo comp, we were really looking for images that did something unique and creative with an object we see just about everywhere. Being creative is the way to roll.

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Barrancos

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

Now that's a wheel! Sérgio Conceição tells us this image was taken in the village of Barrancos, Portugal, and is the product of 106 images stacked in Photoshop. You've done well to balance the exposure in the church, while not overexposing or underexposing the foreground. Shots like this take a lot of patience, and this has come up a treat. Well done.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Canon EOS R, no lens information. 106 images, 25s @ f2, ISO 2000.



Go Shop

Thanks to the team at Blonde Robot, Stephen Peters has won a brilliant Peak Design 5L Sling bag & Peak Design Slide Lite strap, with a combined valued of \$274.90. The smallest, lightest bag in the Peak Design Everyday Line, the Everyday Sling 5L is ideal for organization, transport, and quick-access of essentials, whether you're carrying camera, drone, or everyday gear.



EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Stephen Pethers says he took this image at the recent Swell Sculptures exhibition on the Queensland Gold Coast. What we like about it is its use of an everyday item in a peculiar and suprising way: we know it's a set of shopping trolleys we're looking at, but nothing else about them seems to make any sense at all, something that's exagerated by the use of a fisheye lens. We're not 100% sure on the background, but regardless, this is an interesting image that left us with questions – something that good photography has the power to do.

TECHNICAL DETAILS Panasonic Lumix G9, Laowa 4mm circular fisheye lens. 1/500s @ f5.6, ISO 200. +1EV. MORE INFO: Peakdesign. Com

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ALEX PIREZ

Big yellow coupe

HOW I DID IT A visit to my local motor show with my new Sony 10 to 18mm wide angle lens. I was impressed with the performance of this lens on my first outing with it.

TECHNICAL DETAILS Sony A6500, Sony 10-18mm F4 lens at 10mm. 1/640s @ f5.6, ISO 100.





HELEN POTTER

Untitled

HOW I DID IT

On the way back from photographing the sunset from Derby Jetty (WA) I spied

a workplace of trucks. Suspecting my presence was illegal I grabbed a quick shot. Without people, the impressive size of the wheels is missing. The moon and single star add context.

Olympus OM-D E-M5, 12-50mm 3.5-6.3 lens @ 20mm. 1/15s @ f5, ISO 200.

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RAN FUCHS

Umbrellas

HOW I DID IT

Walking the market of Ueno in Tokyo, patters interweave and every corner is a new photographic

opportunity. This was a pattern created by paper umbrellas over lanterns. The dark surroundings created a nice black effect around the unbrellas, which I further enhanced in editing.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Fujifilm XH1, XF18-135mmF3.5-5.6R LM OIS WR @ 28mm. 1/100s @ f4.2, ISO 200.





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DAVID MUNRO

Conserving energy

HOW I DID IT

The first hill on lap one of five, Stage Three of the 2019 Tour Down Under (TDU) in the Adelaide Hills. This was a long steep climb on a very hot and humid day making the cyclists stick together in the early stages. The early slow pace allowed me to get this headon shot from the middle of the road just after the lead motor bikes had passed behind me.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Canon EOS 5D mark IV, Canon 70-300mm f/4-5.6L IS USM lens @ 221mm. 1/200s @ f5.6, ISO 320. ... and the **ONLY** L-Bracket system with **Peak Design** & **Arca Swiss** compatibility.



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- 4. Images must be in JPEG format.
- 5. Email file size must not exceed 7MB.
- 6. Please include the following information about your entry in the body of your email: Name, image title, and up to 200 words explaining how you created captured your image. Please also include technical details including camera, lens, focal length, shutter speed, aperture, ISO, tripod (if used) and a brief summary of any software edits.

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THE OF A CONTRACT OF A CONTRAC

Big public events create all manner of challenges for a photographer. Here's how to make sense of the madding crowd and come away with memorable images.

here's no feeling quite like the energy of a mass human congregation. Be it a large-scale music concert, cultural festival or political demonstration, regardless if you are a photographer or participant, it can be a sensory overload and one that can yield highly unique imagery.

The dynamic, and often volatile nature of mass crowds means that as a photographer, you must be prepared physically and above all mentally if you are to capture the true essence of the event. For me, that means getting in super close to the action, closing my

eyes, pressing the shutter and praying for the best. Well, almost.

While the accompanying images in this article are directly related to India's Holi festival, the tips and tricks can be applied to almost any large-scale gatherings and events.

RIGHT: When looking for a way to frame your subject, think outside of the 'box'. Environmental elements, people and the use of tele zooms with wide open apertures can all help bring attention to your subject. Olympus E-M1X, 45mm f1.2 lens. 1/1000s @ f1.2, ISOO 200. -2EV.



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PLAN FOR SAFETY

It goes without saying that the number one consideration when covering an event is your safety and the safety of those around you. No shot is worth your life and an injury could prove devastating to you completing a project. Not to mention the lack of medical assistance in some places is next to nothing.

Large crowds can quickly become dangerous places for those who aren't prepared. Spend time researching and scouting all entries and exits to a location should you need to make a quick exit. Many organised festivals will provide first aid stations, so it's a good idea to familiarise yourself with their locations. If you are abroad, then I highly recommend taking a small first aid kit with you. A young man split his head open at Holi, and I was the only person with antiseptic, gloves and bandages. Appropriate choice of clothing is something people often overlook when heading into photograph a significant event. Tightly packed crowds are a pickpocket's paradise. For that very reason, I always wear pants that feature zips. I also store valuable items in pockets of my bag that are closest to my body. Using a rain cover is a great way to deter thieves and keep your bag clean at the same time.

International cultural events often warrant modest clothing choices, particularly for females. When in doubt, cover-up. It will save you headaches and potential harassment issues. For authentic photojournalist style images, aim to blend in with the crowd and not be the centre of attention. If you are there purely for fun and to capture some holiday snaps, then, by all means, party with the locals! Mobile phone coverage is often terrible at best during large congregations of people. With thousands of Snapchat stories clogging up the airwaves, don't rely on your phone to contact your friends or navigate your way out of an unfamiliar city. Download offline maps in Google or use an app like Maps ME that don't rely on mobile reception.

If you are travelling with other people, agree upon meeting locations, check-in times and have action plans if someone does not return at the designated time.

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"WITH THOUSANDS OF SNAPCHAT STORIES CLOGGING UP THE AIRWAVES, DON'T RELY ON YOUR PHONE TO CONTACT YOUR FRIENDS OR NAVIGATE YOUR WAY OUT OF AN UNFAMILIAR CITY."

OPPOSITE PAGE: While it might have been tempting to zoom in close for a portrait shot of this man, using a wide angle lens brings more context to the scene, and helps to depict event participants interacting with each other. Olympus E-M1X, 7-14mm f/2.8 lens @ 7mm. 1/80s @ f4.5, ISO 500.

BELOW: You can plan shots like this fairly accurately if you know that it will happen in advance. All morning men were throwing buckets of water on people exiting the temple below. I simply had to wait. Olympus E-M1X, 7-14mm f/2.8 lens @ 7mm. 1/1000s @ f3.5, ISO 500. +0.7 EV.



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"THE AGE-OLD SAYING THAT IT'S THE PHOTOGRAPHER BATHER THAN THE GEAR THAT MAKES THE GEAR THAT MAKES THE MAGE HOLDS SOME CERTAINTY OF TRUTH HERE, BUT ONLY TO A POINT..."

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The age-old saying that it's the photographer rather than their gear that makes the image holds some certainty of truth here, but only to a point.

While a mobile phone may be a great way to capture the overall scene, when lighting becomes challenging and a split-second event unfolds before your eyes, fast shutter speeds and blistering fast autofocus are a must. You can't merely stop the crowd and ask for them to reenact a moment, so have your camera set and ready to shoot before you start.

Lens selections will depend on what you already own, are willing to spend, and ultimately what you are ready to carry with you. Just remember that the lighter your kit, the faster you can move, the longer you can shoot and the more fun you will have.

Fast glass is a must to keep your shutter speeds high and freeze the action, even when the light begins to dim. Whenever possible, I shoot with two camera bodies strapped diagonally across my body for security in large crowds. On one camera body, I prefer to have a wide-angle zoom lens attached and on the second body, my 12-100mm f/4 (24-200) equivalent or my 45mm f/1.2 (90mm eqv). If you are limited to one lens, a good bright and wide to a tele zoom lens like a 24-70mm f/2.8 should cover most bases.

Choose the largest and fastest sized memory cards you can afford. There's nothing more annoying than picking your camera up to capture a once in a million image, only to have the dreaded 'memory card full' flash up on your screen. Format all cards before the event to ensure you have free space and use a card that matches the speed of your camera.

Finally when working in dusty and dirty environments, I tend to keep my lens cap attached and only pull it off when about to shoot. As daggy, as they look, lens cap leashes can save you grief should you accidentally drop the cap. The less protection to worry about, the more unique shots you will undoubtedly end up capturing.

WEATHER THE STORM

Cultural events like Holi and La Tomatina will throw just about every possible substance on earth at your camera. Most of which will work its way inside every part of your camera. With this in mind, you should be looking to utilise some form of external weather sealing.

LEFT: Look for opportunities to convey movement. Slow shutter speeds and a steady hand will help achieve this. Olympus E-M1X, 7-14mm f/2.8 lens @ 14mm. 1s @ f4.5, ISO 200.

- BUDGET \$: Plastic bags held together with tape and rubber bands.
- MID RANGE \$\$: Dedicated rain covers that will often have clear plastic eyepiece viewers to see what you are shooting.
- **HIGH RANGE \$\$\$\$:** Waterproof housings that offer full functionality and waterproofness at the expense of cost, size and weight. Digipacks are an excellent alternative to full-fledged housings. If your camera sports decent weather sealing you can also get in on the action without any need for protection.

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WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

Firstly, take time to survey the scene without your camera. The best lenses are the two inside your head. Use these to pick out subjects or smaller events that might be unfolding out in the peripheries that might otherwise be overlooked.

Regardless of your photographic style, it's a good idea to capture a variety of different angles and perspectives to tell the story. Using a wide-angle lens and getting right into the heart of the action will make your audience feel like they were there with you. Shooting with a tele lens, you can hone in on specific details through the crowd. Look for portraits and whimsical moments for your subjects; everyone attending has their own unique story.

Have patience. While it may be tempting to stage a person or group of people for a photograph, I find that as soon as you interact and direct a scene, you immediately lose the sense of raw emotion that was once there. Instead, why not wait for other participants to interact with each other? Don't forget to move. Basically, move with a person or group of people as the scene unfolds. All the while ensuring you don't get injured as you hustle in different directions. There is no better way to capture a dynamic image or a high-intensity crowd than by moving as if you are a part of it. Practice shooting with both eyes open and use your peripheral vision.

Finally some prior research and scouting of a location will give you ideas on where you might be best to position yourself for the event. Small staircases leading to rooftops and high vantage points are often hidden behind masses of people when the event unfolds so knowing your environment beforehand can really help. Rooftops are a great location to capture the entire scene below, but as always, your safety is worth more than the shot.



CAMERA SET-UP

For me, manual mode is the best setting to choose, and you'll likely keep most of your settings the same unless light begins to chang. But for a more straightforward method, I will often set the camera to Shutter Priority and set it to 1/200th or faster to freeze the action.

When shooting in Manual mode, set your camera to a relatively narrow aperture of around f5.6-f10. Depending on

the amount of light available don't be afraid to push your ISO high if it means shots are in focus. Noise can be fixed in post-production; blurry shots cannot. Of course, there are many times when big beautiful bokeh and depth can be used to create impact.

Events generally contain movement of some degree so you'll want to ensure your camera is set to continuous autofocus. That way if your subject moves within the frame, hopefully, your camera refocuses for you. I tend to opt for smaller sets of autofocus points as the camera can often be tricked into focusing on the wrong person when presented with a sea of faces.

Set your camera to burst mode. While this method will eat up your memory card space, it will give you more options to choose from when performing selects. This method could mean the difference between capturing a quick and emotive facial expression or one that

lacks context.

Finally when it comes to metering, times out of 10 I will leave my camera in Matrix Metering or one that automatically reads the situation across the majority of your sensor. Modern cameras do a great job at correctly exposing a scene. If lighting becomes difficult with harsh shadows, try centre weighted or spot metering and centre over your subject.

PRO TIP: set up a back-button focus. This way, you can track and lock focus on a subject much easier and without accidentally pressing the shutter.

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OPPOSITE PAGE:

Patience and a smile go a long way to capturing an engaging image. With tens of photographers hassling this young lady for an image, I instead stood back and waited for her to look at me. I gave her a smile, which she returned and captured this. Olympus E-M1X, 45mm f/1.2 lens. 1/640s @ f1.2, ISO 200. +0.3.

RIGHT: Be prepared for all types of dirty conditions and always consider where the sun is in relation to your subject. Sometimes a step to the left or right can totally change the look and feel of an image. Olympus E-M1X, 7-14mm f/2.8 lens @ 7mm. 1/1600s @ f4, ISO 500. -0.3EV.



GET CREATIVE

Regardless of the event you are photographing always be looking for new and exciting scenes as they unfold. Get low, get high, get in on the action.

People are everywhere, so why not use them to create your frame? Framing single figures surrounded by others, or using clusters of people to balance the frame. Don't be afraid to break the rules of composition, and remember a long or tele lens can help isolate figures in the crowd. No technique expresses movement and chaos better than a slow shutter. There is no need for 150mm 10stop NDs either. A shutter speed of 1/8th is enough to create some blur in a scene in daylight. And, if you are sporting a camera that has a Live ND mode, you can really begin to have some fun.

The beauty of events is that no second is ever the same. Try to draw on this sponteneity in your images and you'll be well on your way to shooting something great.

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SOLUTION SOLUTION SOLUTION

BY THE AP TEAM

It's no mean feat to attempt to summarise a year in photos in just eight pages, and when we started, we quickly realised there was no way we could do it justice – after all, we look at hundreds of the world's best images everyday. So instead, we focussed on some of the award winning images recognised this year that made us ask questions, made us go 'wow' and sometimes, just made us sit back and wonder. Enjoy.





PORTRAIT

Unseen Gujarat, India, by Irfan Borgave. Finalist in the 2020 Sony World Photography Awards Open, Culture category. "With the knock of modernisation in India, finding the old culture and traditions [as] well as the ancient people is not an easy job. However, there are still some states in India where one can refresh himself and have a glimpse of the old Indian people and their simple lifestyle," says Borgave. Sony A7R Mark III, 16-35mm F4 ZA OSS lens @ 16mm. 1/200s @ f6.3, ISO 1250. – 2EV.

The 2019 Nikon-Walkley Portrait Prize Winning image by Justin McManus, The Sunday Age."Landon and Joey". Landon Punch is a young Yindjibarndi man who lives in the town of Roebourne in remote Western Australia. Landon, like many others in the community has a fearful and strained relationships with police. Landon is pictured with a joey that he is hand rearing until it is big enough to be released back into the bush, after he killed the baby kangaroo's mother for food. Nikon D5, 70-200mm f/2.8 lens @ 90mm. 1/250s @ f5, ISO 50.



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SPORT/DOCUMENTARY

Winner of the 2019 Nikon-Walkley Photo of the Year Prize. Jason South, The Age, "Pell". Cardinal George Pell runs the gauntlet of media and angry Christians at the Melbourne County Court before hearing his sentence. Canon 1D X Mark II, 16-35mm f/2.8L III lens @ 16mm. 1/1250S @ f3.5, ISO 100. 2 Competitors race during the Six Day Series at Melbourne Arena on February 9, 2019, in Melbourne. The six day series or Six Day Cycling Series is an annual series of track cycling events featuring world class athletes. Finalist in the 2019 Nikon-Walkley Press Photographer of the Year prize. Scott Barbour, Getty Images and AAP. Canon 1D X Mark II, 70-200mm f/2.8L III USM lens. 0.5s @ f11, ISO 320.

Akashinga - the Brave Ones. Petronella Chigumbura (30), a member of an allfemale anti-poaching unit called Akashinga, participates in stealth and concealment training in the Phundundu Wildlife Park, Zimbabwe. mage by Brent Stirton, Getty Images. Environment - Singles winner of the 2019 World Press Photo. Canon EOS 5DS R. EF24-70mm f/2.8L II USM lens @ 24mm. 1/200s @ f18, ISO 200.















LANDSCAPE/ ARCHITECTURE

Stefan Krebs, Germany. A retro style petrol station. Finalist in the Open, Architecture category, 2020 Sony World Photography Awards.

The Golden Dust, by Randall Cliff. Middle of seeding, May 2019 in Kimba South Australia. "Spending countless hours on the tractor playing with my drone. This photo was taken at sunset with the golden light reflecting off the deep red dust." Finalist in the Open category, Landscape, 2020 Sony World Photography Awards. DJI Phantom 4 Pro, 8.8mm (24mm equic.) lens. 1/50s @ f4, ISO 500.

Family camp under the stars on the Colo river, NSW by Lauren Hook. "The family all asleep and a small nightlight still on in the tent, I was enjoying the last remaining heat from our camp fire when I saw this composition. Shot low to the ground at a wide angle, I wanted to capture as much of the sky and canopy as I could. Luckily as I was taking the image, campers further down the hill added firewood to their campfire and illuminated the trees even further. Shortlisted in the Open, Travel (Open competition) category, 2019 Sony World Photography Awards. Sony A7 Mark II, no lens data. 25s @ ISO 3200.



WILDLIFE

Land of the eagle by Audun Rikardsen, Norway. Winner 2019 Wildlife Photographer of the Year, Behaviour: Birds category. High on a ledge, on the coast near his home in northern Norway, Audun carefully positioned an old tree branch that he hoped would make a perfect golden eagle lookout. To this he bolted a tripod head with a camera, flashes and motion sensor attached, and built himself a hide a short distance away. From time to time, he left road kill carrion nearby. Very gradually - over the next three years - a golden eagle got used to the camera and started to use the branch regularly to survey the coast below. Golden eagles need large territories, which most often are in open, mountainous areas inland. But in northern Norway, they can be found by the coast, even in the same area as sea eagles. They hunt and scavenge a variety of prey - from fish, amphibians and insects to birds and small and medium-sized mammals such as foxes and fawns. Canon 5D Mark IV, 11-24mm f/4L lens @ 11mm. 1/2500s @ f14, ISO 800. - 1EV.

The moment by Yongqing Bao, China Joint Winner 2019 Wildlife Photographer of the Year, Behaviour: Mammals. The standoff between a Tibetan fox and a marmot, seemingly frozen in life-or-death deliberations. Canon 1D X, 800mm f5.6L IS USM lens. 1/2500s @ f5.6, ISO 640. +0.67EV.

Right glow by Cruz Erdmann, New Zealand, Winner, 2019 Wildlife Photographer of the Year, 11-14 years old. Cruz was on an organised night dive in the Lembeh Strait off North Sulawesi, Indonesia and, as an eager photographer and speedy swimmer, had been asked to hold back from the main group to allow slower swimmers a chance of photography. This was how he found himself over an unpromising sand flat, in just 3 metres (10 feet) of water. It was here that he encountered the pair of bigfin reef squid. They were engaged in courtship, involving a glowing, fast-changing communication of lines, spots and stripes of varying shades and colours. One immediately jetted away, but the other – probably the male – hovered just long enough for Cruz to capture one instant of its glowing underwater show. Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 100mm f2.8 lens. 1/125s @ f29; ISO 200; Ikelite DS161 strobe.

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BY JORDAN ROBINS

The 'over under' or split shot is one of the most striking forms of underwater photography. Our 2017 Photographer of the Year winner Jordan Robins shares his secrets for taking your own.



A white-spotted jellyfish drifts through the water at Jervis Bay, NSW, on sunset. Canon 5D Mark IV, 16-35mm f/4L IS USM lens. 1/15s @ f18, ISO 320.

magine an image where you can see above and below the water all in the one frame. Although your initial thought might be that it can't be real and it has to be a composite image, you'd be wrong. I present to you the art of the 'over under'!

Ever since the first day I picked up a camera I marvelled at the idea of over under images and how this unique technique can connect the familiar terrestrial world with the unfamiliar marine world. This is the style of photography I now specialise in shooting.

An 'over under' also commonly referred to as a split shot or 50/50, is a type of ocean photo where the viewer can see below the water in the foreground of the image and above the water in the background of the image, brilliantly captured in a single exposure. Images like these can typically be taken when snorkelling, as you'll usually be working in shallow water.

Capturing over under images can seem a bit daunting at first to the novice ocean photographer but, like anything, practice makes perfect and once you have learned the basics you will be nailing incredible over under images in no time.

My favourite time to shoot over unders is on sunrise or sunset as I like to capture atmospheric skies paired with the marine life that lurks below the water's surface at relatively shallow depths. There is a bit of gear required and specific settings which are needed to capture over under images and in this article, I am going to show you the technique, gear and settings I personally use to capture them. Firstly, let's have a look at the camera gear that is required.



"THIS UNIQUE TECHNIQUE CAN CONNECT THE FAMILIAR TERRESTRIAL WORLD WITH THE UNFAMILIAR MARINE WORLD."

THE GEAR

At its most basic, you'll need a DSLR, mirrorless camera or a compact underwater camera such a GoPro. An underwater camera housing/case will allow you to use your camera in the water. I personally shoot with AquaTech water housings, which have a wide selection of housings for all the major camera brands such as Canon, Sony, Nikon, Panasonic and Fujifilm.

In terms of lenses, an ultra-wide or fisheye lens is necessary. For full-frame sensors I recommend a 16-35mm, 12-24mm or 15mm fisheye. All of these lenses will give you a super wide field of view which is essential for shooting over under images. For APS-C sensors I suggest either a 10-18mm or 8-15mm fisheye lens.

You'll also need a dome port on the front of the camera housing. I shoot with an AquaTech PD-85 8" dome port and a custom 12" dome port. You can also use a flat port to create a different effect but it is much harder and you will need very calm water.

For best results, an underwater flash or strobes are also important, and essential if you are planning on shooting over unders in low light or on sunrise or sunset. This is because when shooting on sunrise or sunset we want to expose for the sky, but this will mean areas below the water are dark and underexposed. Strobes allow the photographer to correctly expose and illuminate below the water. All these images were shot at 1/4 power.

Of course, shooting with strobes is a more advanced technique, and I would suggest getting comfortable shooting over unders with natural light first before experimenting with them. You could also practice during the day. Shooting during the daytime doesn't require the use of strobes or flashes as there should be suffi-

cient ambient light to work with.

Finally, when I am shooting, I will often be in the water for a prolonged period of time, so I wear a wetsuit to prevent heat loss and to protect from sunburn. A mask, snorkel and fins are also required if you are planning to shoot while snorkelling.

LEFT: A Green Sea Turtle swims as the sun sets over the Great Barrier Reef. Taken on one of those rare days when the stars aligned with a stunning sunset and crystal-clear water. Canon 5D Mark III, 16-35mm f/4L IS USM lens @ 16mm. 1/125s @ f18, ISO 1000.



Swallows Cave off the Island of Vava'u, Tonga. In the afternoon when the sun is positioned above the entrance of the cave, beautiful shards of light pierce the water column at the entrance of the cave. Canon 5D Mark IV, EF8-15mm f/4L Fisheye @ 15mm. 1/320s @ f14, ISO 800.

"...IT ALSO GOES WITHOUT SAYING, BUT SHOOT IN RAW FORMAT TO ALLOW FOR THE GREATEST CONTROL DURING POST..."



PLANNING

There is a bit of planning involved with shooting over unders. Firstly, you need clear water to reveal enough detail of your underwater subject. If the water is murky or dirty, I typically won't bother shooting.

The ideal weather conditions for shooting are when the wind is light, and the swell is small. This makes the surface of the ocean calm. When the ocean is rough and turbulent from swell

and wind, it can be difficult to frame your images.

Calm bodies of water such as sheltered beaches, lagoons, rivers, inlets and protected bays are ideal places to shoot. I also find that shooting in shallow water will give you the best results as it will allow you to get a good balance between under and over water content.

Like with most things, a local knowledge of the area you are shooting in is also essential. Understand how wind, tides and currents will affect the visibility of the water.

Check any location first to see if it is a suitable place to shoot. Entering the ocean is always a risk so ensure you are a capable swimmer and never go out shooting in dangerous conditions beyond your capability. Finally, the conditions on the ocean can change rapidly so make sure you always check the weather and surf forecasts before you go out shooting.

SETTINGS

I only ever shoot with full manual settings as this gives much greater control, especially when shooting at sunrise and sunset when the light is changing. For sunrise and sunset as a rule of thumb I will have my camera set to 1/200s @ f/14, ISO 640. For daytime, I will have my camera set to 1/400s @ f/14, ISO 200.

After configuring the settings, I then take a test shot and adjust the ISO or shut-



ABOVE: When shooting over unders during the day I prefer to shoot on days when there is scattered cloud rather than clear blue skies as this can create a more dynamic contrasty scene. This turtle was feeding in about 10m of water and every 15 minutes it would rise to the surface for air. I waited patiently for it to reach the surface and had a few seconds to capture the moment before it swam under. Canon 5D Mark IV, EF15mm f/2.8 fisheye. 1/250s @ f18, ISO 320.

RIGHT: Surge Wrasse at Lord Howe Island. These fish are very agile so I had to constantly look through the viewfinder with my finger on the shutter waiting for that split-second moment when one would dart past my camera. Canon 5D Mark IV, EF15mm f/2.8 Fisheye. 1/160s @ f18, ISO 400.

ter speed accordingly to get a correct exposure. I will generally overexpose the sky by one stop to get a good exposure below the water. Shooting with a camera that has a high dynamic range will allow for greater control when it comes time to edit the images in post-production. It also goes without saying but shoot in RAW format to allow for the greatest control during post.

When shooting with strobes or flashes I also have them set on manual and adjust accordingly, either increasing or reducing the output of light depending on the situation. I tend to avoid shooting with automatic settings on the strobes as it will most often overexpose below the water.

APERTURE

When shooting over unders a good depth of field throughout the photo is necessary, and to achieve this you need to shoot with a narrow aperture. I shoot anywhere between f/11 all the way down to f/22 depending on how much depth of field is needed. Shooting at very narrow apertures has its disadvantages as it can give you a softer image. This is called diffraction.

The key to overcoming this is to identify the 'sweet spot' (the sharpest aperture) for your particular lens. Each lens will have a different sweet spot so experiment using different apertures till you find out what works best for your specific setup.

I find that f/l4 is the sweet spot for both my Canon EF 16-35mm f/4 and Canon EF 8-15mm f/4 fisheye.

QUICK TIPS

- Water droplets have a habit of forming all over the dome port. To reduce them, cover the dome in a layer of saliva and leave it to dry overnight. Then, when you are out shooting next, wash the saliva off so the dome is nice and clear. Before you take a photo, give the housing a quick dunk under the water then take the shot to also minimise them.
- After every use (especially in saltwater) make sure you wash your housing in fresh water and let it soak for about 30mins submerged in fresh water to remove any salt build up.
- Always make sure any o-rings on your camera housing are lubricated with silicone grease and are free of debris such as sand or hairs.
- Each time before you shoot, submerge your camera housing below the water and hold for 10 seconds to make sure you've got a watertight seal and no water is leaking into your housing. If you treat your housing well, it will treat you well for many years to come.



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"I WILL ALWAYS FOCUS ON MY SUBJECT BELOW THE WATER, AS OPPOSED TO THE SUBJECT ABOVE, AS THIS GIVES THE BEST DEPTH OF FIELD."

SHUTTER SPEED

If you are shooting a static scene during the day where there isn't much movement, I would suggest using a shutter speed of 1/125s or faster. If you are photographing moving subjects such as a turtle or a stingray, use a shutter speed of 1/320s or faster to freeze the movement. These are just general guides though and you can get as creative as you like by shooting with faster or slower shutter speeds to create different effects.

When shooting with strobes your camera's shutter speed will be restricted by your flash sync speed which may vary depending on the camera you're shooting with. I shoot with a Canon 5D Mk IV which has a sync speed of 1/250s. This means that when shooting with strobes 1/250s is the fastest shutter speed I can shoot with. However, I can still shoot all shutter speeds slower than this. When I am shooting with strobes on sunrise or sunset, I will shoot with a shutter speed between 1/250s down to 1/60s.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

During the day time, I shoot with an ISO of 200-400 depending on the lighting and time of day. If I am shooting a slower shutter speed I will lower the ISO and for shooting a faster shutter speed I will increase the ISO. When shooting in low light I will use an ISO of 500 up to 1000. You can shoot at higher ISO depending on how your camera handles the noise. With the white balance, when shooting during the daytime I have my white balance set to daylight. This will give you consistent colour. When shooting with strobes I have my white balance set to automatic and correct the colour during post processing if need be.







SHOOTING AND FRAMING

I always shoot with autofocus, and have my focus set up with one autofocus point right in the middle of the focus area. My shooting process is relatively straightforward. I first look though the viewfinder to make sure I am getting an accurate focus on my subject. When shooting in low light I often focus using the live view on my camera or use a waterproof torch and aim it on my subject

below the water to the area where I want to focus.

I will always focus on my subject below the water (as opposed to the subject above) as this gives the best depth of field.

The next step is to submerge the camera and housing below the water. Looking through the viewfinder I focus on the subject below the water by half pressing on the shutter button. While keeping your finger

ABOVE: Lord Howe Island. I am a big fan of shooting over unders in sea caves as they create such a dynamic scene and it is always a great adventure searching for caves to shoot. For these shots, a fisheye lens is essential to get all of the cave in frame and often you will need to position yourself right at the back of the cave. I always like to have people swimming in the water to give some perspective. Canon 5D Mark IV, EF15mm f/2.8 fisheye. 1/400s @ f18, ISO 640.

on the shutter half pressed, I lift the camera housing half above the water and recompose, making sure you have an even balance above and below the water. I find that this is the most difficult part of the process and can take a lot of practising to get right.

Remember you also need to be quick as you only have a few seconds to capture the scene before the dreaded water droplets start forming on your dome, which can ruin a shot. You might be a little disappointed at first but, like anything, practice makes perfect and over time you will find out what works best for you. Have fun. ©



LEFT: Silver Drummer in the crystal-clear waters surrounding Lord Howe Island. These fish were found in shallow waist-deep water, the perfect depth for shooting over unders. In shallow water like this you can get great results just shooting with natural light. Canon 5D Mark IV, EF15mm f/2.8 fisheye.

IN JORDAN'S BAG

- Canon EOS 5D MK IV
- Canon EF 8-15mm f/4 Fisheye lens
- Canon EF 15mm f/2.8 Fisheye lens
- Canon 16-35mm f/4 lens
- AquaTech Elite II 5DIV Underwater Housing
- AquaTech 8" Dome Port
- Custom 12" Dome
- AquaTech PX-30 Port Extension
- Canon Speedlite 580EX II
- AquaTech Speedlite 580EX II Flash Housing
- 2x Inon Z-330 Strobes



with 16-50mm VR Zoom & Bonus Nikon Backpack









express your creativity. Photographer Javier Roldan shares his workflow for producing a striking image in a Melbourne forest.

n this article, I will show you how I combined five photos in Photoshop to create a composite image, 'The Messenger' and how to plan, produce, and shoot your own compositions.

Firstly, what is a composite image? At its most basic, it's a combination of two or more photos. It can be a useful technique to use in instances where it's not possible to get the scene you have in mind with a single shot.

For example, in the case of The Messenger, I couldn't capture in perfect sharpness a subject walking in the dark with enough image quality and only a small kerosene lantern to light the scene. By compositing multiple images together I was able to realise the image. daytrip when I saw, from the driver seat and cast by sunset light, a bushwalk that really attracted my attention. Months later, I decided to go back on my own to explore it, and I found a place that was haunting, eerie, magic, and peaceful.

At that point, I already knew I wanted to portray that location but had no idea what to do with it. While reviewing the test shots at home, it occurred to me that I could do something creative with this environment. I visualized a girl, wrapped in a pelt and armed with a lantern, travelling on a cold night to pass an urgent message.

Questions started popping up: Would I need to take the photo at night or during the day? If I wanted to use a low ISO to achieve higher quality, wouldn't the subject be blurry? Would I use a flash? But if I did, wouldn't it be noticeable the light didn't come from the lantern? Some of these problems took me a lot of time to solve.

I've found photo compositing one of the best vehicles to transport what's in my imagination to an actual, tangible image. Furthermore, it's an excellent way to remain original. Compositions leave you free to create almost anything, works that are very personal, intimate, and only exist in one's mind until everything is pieced together on the computer. Let's take a look.

INSPIRATION

This type of project takes time to mature, and 'The Messenger' was no exception. It was during a family

RESEARCH AND TESTING

One of the main challenges I faced was how to recreate with actual light what I had envisioned: an arch of light over the subject resembling a gothic cathedral. I knew that lowering the overall exposure in Lightroom wouldn't work because the shadows would still be in the inner part of the canopy (and daylight was

The final image composite as seen here is made of five images. (Two for the lantern, one for the subject and two for the background). The final image is comprised of 33 PSD layers. All images were shot with a Nikon D750 and Nikon 70-200mm VRII Lens.



LEFT: I often use Lightroom to visualise quick drafts and to get a feel of how the image could look, including 'drawing' lights and shadows, changing colour, etc. In this test, I used a tripod set up in advance at the estimated subjects' height, to help me visualise the figures size in the frame. Nikon D750, Nikon 70-200mm VRII Lens @ 110mm. 1/125s @ f5.6, ISO 3200.

OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: I performed tests with my son, first in my backyard and then on location. Nikon D750, Nikon 50mm AF-S f/1.4G lens. 1/125s @ f2.8, ISO 100;

Two images that illustrate the difference in light gathered at two apertures. Nikon D750, Nikon 70-200mm VRII Lens @ 110mm. Tripod. Left: 1/30s @ f2.8, Right: .8s @ f/11, ISO 100.

coming from the open areas outside). I also knew that the light generated by a hurricane lantern alone wouldn't be sufficient to light the arch in this way.

My iPad, Google, and YouTube became my best friends. As with any sort of photography, there is always a great deal to discover. I learned what hurricane lanterns are, how they work, and also how I could successfully diffuse the light to make it appear as if it was generated by the lantern.

Eventually, I settled on a Gary Fong dome, a type of diffuser that provides a soft omni-directional light and mounts to a speedlight. With this positioned on a tripod mounted, remotely triggered flash, placed where the subject would be, I could overpower the ambient light and "reverse" the shadows.

The most complicated aspect of this image was illuminating the subject.

I wanted both the lantern and the flame to be real in the final image. I knew however I couldn't use the light from the lantern alone as it was very dim, nor could I use a flash in front of it because it wouldn't look like light was coming from the lantern. Eventually, I asked my subject to hold a flash upside down using a handle I made myself resembling the lantern. This meant that replacing the flash with the lantern in Photoshop was much more straightforward.

Once I was done with all tests, I chose the attire carefully for the subject's final shot, and we went on location to take it. I could have used a green screen and shot near home, but the location's soil was difficult to replicate. The costume is an aspect that's always important to me because I want my images to be realistic. There are a few options for this: finding something affordable in eBay, buy or rent a stage costume in a specialized shop, sew one yourself or a combination of these options.

POST-PROCESSING

I had noticed that the light effect created at f/2.8 was impressive, but dull at narrower apertures. And, as I wanted to get everything throughout the frame sharp in the final image, I ended up merging two shots in Photoshop; one at f2.8 and one at f11 (See right). I used the f/2.8 one for the lit areas and the f/11 shot for the surrounding darker zones.

I shot both images from precisely the same spot; likewise placing the tripod with the flash and the subject in the same place. Everything else was





matched for both the environment and subject images: focal length, ISO and overall exposure level (with different combinations of shutter speed and aperture for each shot). I shot the lantern separately in my backyard. The trick after importing it in Lightroom was to resize the file so the lamp matched the size, in pixels, it was supposed to have in the final photo. Once I was done replacing the flash with the lantern in Photoshop, the subject's image was ready to be inserted into the landscape.

I imported all pictures to Photoshop as layers and followed the following steps:



ABOVE: When I need to remove something in Photoshop, I often use a combination of the Clone Stamp and Spot Healing tools, which are incredibly powerful.



1. REMOVING THE TRIPOD LEGS

Using the environment image taken at f/2.8 as the background, I removed the tripod legs in a separate, empty layer with the Clone Stamp tool. I did this so the legs wouldn't be visible once I introduced the subject on another layer.

2. DE-HAZING

I de-hazed the right side of the canopy (the area surrounding the flash) to make it match the darker, left side of the frame. In Lightroom, I opened up the same f/2.8 environment image, performed the de-haze, and brought it back to Photoshop as a separate layer. I used a layer mask to make visible only the area affected by the dehaze.

3. INTRODUCING THE SUBJECT

It was time to bring the subject into the scene. I added a new layer with an image I had already prepared of the girl holding the lantern. Then I added contrast to some parts of the subject with a Levels adjustment.

4. BACKGROUND DETAILS

I darkened and cleaned up the part of the background behind the girl with a combination of Levels, Clone Stamp, Spot Healing, and Dodge & Burn in separate layers so they wouldn't distract me while working on the rest of the image. Finally I combined the layers into a single group.

5. VIGNETTE FOR EFFECT

At this point, I added a vignette, let-

ting some of the f/ll image through, as it was darker than the f/2.8 background I was working on so far.

ABOVE: I don't use Dehaze much, but in this case, I found its effect more subtle and seamless than increasing Contrast.



LEFT: I used a layer mask here to make sure only the girl and the small area around her showed through.





Adobe Photoshop CC 2018		
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ABOVE: I used Levels and Dodge and Burn to darken the largest light areas behind the subject. On the other hand, Clone Stamp and Spot Healing were better tools for smaller bright spots.

LEFT: I used a mask to let through the areas I wanted to make both darker and sharper. The f/11 image was inside a group.





ABOVE: The changes in each image are very subtle yet essential, as they tone down stray highlights that could ultimately distract the viewer.

6. TIDYING DISTRACTIONS

In a new, empty layer, I cleaned up the highlights using D&B and Clone Stamp / Spot Healing again to avoid distractions.

7. FINAL GRADING

I added a bit of vignette in the foreground path (the bottom of the image) using Levels. Then I performed colour grading on the whole image. I chose blue tones as it gives the feeling of a cold night. Blue (the scene) and orange (the lantern) are also complimentary colours which balance each other. I performed these steps with a combination of Curves, Hue/Saturation Color Balance, and Levels adjustments. Finally I sharpened the subject with frequency separation. This separates the high frequency pixel information from the low frequency pixel information in images and make edits to them separately. In other words you can work on texture and detail independently from colour and tone, and vice versa.

Rather than using lightroom's tools to do this step, I employed version five of Tony Kuyper's action panel (which can be downloaded from



ABOVE: With colour grading and a last Levels adjustment (mainly to boost the highlights), I achieved the look I wanted.

goodlight.us/writing/actionspanelv5/panelv5. html), although it can also be done manually.

8. CROPPING

Most times, I leave the cropping to the end, and I usually do it in Lightroom (although rotation, if needed, is better done at the beginning of the process.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Creating this image has possibly been my most challenging project up to date but, the greater the challenge, the greater the reward. I have to admit there were moments when I was on the brink of giving up. I thought I couldn't do it while keeping up with my day job and family life. During one of my first tests on location a friend and I were forced to leave because some people started shouting at us. It happened at night and felt very discouraging at the time.

In these and other moments it's important not to rush. Let things rest for a few days or longer. Most of the time, it's not a matter of whether the image is possible but finding out how to do it, tackling one challenge at a time. Good luck!



THE ART OF ADVENTURE

ream job' is an expression that likely means something different to just about everyone. After all, ask a journalist what their dream job would be, and they might tell you it's working for anything from a TV network to National Geographic.

But for photographers, the thought of travelling to the world's most beautiful places, and then supporting their family while doing it, might just be something they can all can agree on. For Darran Leal, it's something he's been doing ever since he first picked up a Kodak box brownie as a young man in 1975.

"We'd taken a school trip to Carnarvon Gorge in Central Queensland, and I pulled out the Bakelite camera from my bag. The teacher laughed at such an old camera, right in front of my friends!" You would think this would put any budding photographer off, but it actually motivated me into photography and was a real turning point."

Born in Queensland, Leal would be the first to admit he fell into photography, with a career in sports, cricket, rugby or league a much more likely path. But a fortuitous opportunity working on Norfolk Island in 1980 sparked an interest in nature photography that never went away. He'd been employed for a couple of months as a food and wine waiter when the Island's photographer left. Pine Studios was after an experienced photographer to shoot everything from weddings to images for the local paper. Having purchased an SLR a year earlier, he thought 'why not?"

BY MIKE O'CONNOR

From his monthly Straight Shooter columns and his tours and workshops to some of the planet's most photogenic places, Photographer Darran Leal has been a constant in *Australian Photography* for more than 35 years. He speaks to *AP* about his humble beginnings and the realities of having one of the best jobs on earth.

"I realised I could explore the wilderness by myself for weeks, or months at a time, and could use this time to fine tune my photo skills in the field."

For the next 10 years, Leal mixed short stints work-

"I bluffed my way, explaining I could do the job"! he laughs.

Having low skills, but a passion for photography, the learning curve made him work hard, and it wasn't long before he discovered a niche for himself – shooting the wilds of Australia. ing in camera stores with a touch of diamond exploration and spells working on gas pipelines, all to have enough money to follow his passion, photography. "I remember my sister Merrill at one point asking me

"when are you going to get a real job?" he says, laughing. His work, and his reputation, began to grow. In 1984 he was first published in Australian Photography Magazine. In the following years his work appeared in Photography International Magazine, f11 Magazine plus images in Audubon, Australian Geographic, Qantas and more. He even supplied images for the Queensland Pavilion at World Expo 88.



While digital photography has changed the imaging world, my base techniques and photo thought processes have not. Although shot in September 2019, I would have used the same techniques 40 years ago. What has changed for me is opportunity. This was my third tour to Death Valley, a privilege that I respect as part of the perks of my job as a professional photo tour operator. Lumix G9 with a Leica 8-18mm lens @ 8mm. 1/320s @ f11, ISO 200.

PROFILE: DARRAN LEAL



THE PHOTO TOUR GAME

While Leal had first guided a group in 1981 and several in the following years, it wasn't until 1989 that he undertook his first 'Darran Leal' branded Photo Tour. "Of course Norfolk Island was the place to start," he remem-

bers. "I went with 11 male photographers from Brisbane, and halfway through the tour, I met Julia who had with her a group of 13 female travel agents from NZ. We hit it off immediately." Little did he know she would later become his wife.

By 1989, he'd guided about a dozen trips through Australia. The photo tour and workshop industry was very much in its infancy at the time, and Leal says he can only remember two other operators working in Australia - remarkable when you consider the sheer number of photo workshops/tours available for keen photographers in 2019. It helps, he says, that right from the start, he was 'a realist.' "I quickly discovered that if you want to make photography your business, you needed to be good at business too. In fact, at least 60% business and 40% photo skills is, I think, a good balance to success." "I moved to NZ in 1989 to be with Julia, which affected my Australian photography

career as no one in NZ knew me. After a period with C.R. Kennedy as NZ's sales Rep, I started full time photo education, running workshops for Kodak across the country in the early 1990s. This caught the eye of Qantas, who sponsored us for two years, which helped us to reach our

30 YEARS OF WORKSHOPS BY THE NUMBERS 4004 photo events worldwide: from one day seminars to three-week expeditions chree-week expeditions goal of overseas tours.

We moved back to Australia in 1995 and continued tours and workshops with Julia working in retail travel. A combination of a young family and her ability to earn a regular wage was important back then."

Leal is clear that part of the company's success came when he married Julia in 1991. With her background in both retail and wholesale travel and having visited many continents already, it was inevitable she would bring her skills to the company and to the company's adventures. He finally talked her into working for the business about 12 years ago. Today, along with Julia, his sons Pearce and Frazer are integral to what is a uniquely family affair, both leading tours to all corners of the planet. Together, they make up what is believed to be the only family operating a photo tour business in the world.







"I QUICKLY DISCOVERED THAT IF YOU WANTED TO MAKE PHOTOGRAPHY YOUR BUSINESS, YOU NEEDED TO BE GOOD AT BUSINESS TOO."



ABOVE: Like many photographers today, I have a lot of images and many I will add into my 40-year-celebration book, but if I had to pick one favourite, it would be 'the three giraffes'. Back in 2006, the technology was not available to easily shoot low-light images like this. A three-second exposure back then would be much easier to shoot today with sensors that can offer 3200-6400 ISO sensitivity, allowing for shorter exposures. I have been back over 30 times to this same location in Namibia, but I have never been able to reproduce this result. I have printed the image to 2m x 1m, and for an old sensor at just 12MP, it comes up outstanding! Canon 5D, EF100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L lens. 3s @ f5.6, ISO 400. OPPOSITE PAGE: I love the flexibility that photo equipment offers today. One of the technical issues much easier to overcome is contrast from the highlights to the mid tones. While not a big fan of HDR shooting, for this particular subject, little choice was available as we could not use a tripod. I used the bracketing mode for five shots and blended the exposures together in Lightroom. Lumix G9, Leica 8-18mm F/2.8-4 lens @ 8mm. 5 shot bracket in 1 stop increments @ f5.6 ISO 800, handheld.



*``***I LOVE TO SEE A PHOTOGRAPHER GET A BUZZ OUT OF CAPTURING A SPECIAL**





MOMENT IN TIME...'



"Pearce undertook a two-year traineeship with us and has led over 50 tours around the world. Frazer has just completed his traineeship this year. At the beginning, this started with just listening and learning in the field, but progressed to working directly with our clients," explains Leal. "This hands-on experience is invaluable".

Like in any field, the photography tour business has changed immensely in the last three decades.

"I spend so much less time now helping photographers with basic concepts. For years, it was aperture, shutter speeds and even how to hold a camera. Now nearly everyone starting out picks up a lot of basics online or via YouTube."

"In the early days, it was difficult to get photographers to spend a couple of thousand dollars on a trip. I would make breakfast, put together a picnic lunch and keep costs down as much as possible. Today, travellers want a comfortable hotel, lovely meals and the choice of exotic destinations."

Much of the business planning today is about identifying the next 'hot' destination.

Guessing when and where photographers will want to go next, is still as challenging as ever, and what is a hot destination one year, can suddenly be cold the next. We rarely cancel an event, but we might postpone it by a year, and suddenly go from little interest to fully booked in the blink of an eye.

The other change has been with his competition. As budgets for traditional paid work have declined, the number of photographers diversifying their skills into leading tours/workshops has increased exponentially. "Competition is good, except some are cutting corners", believes Leal.

"I think what frustrates me the most, is photographers offering tours and thinking that the term 'workshop' means that there's no need for liability insurance to protect their customers. We make sure we have the correct permits and appropriate tour operator liability cover for all of our destinations, but for many operators, this is an afterthought. This sets a dangerous precedent, and I encourage any photographer looking at booking a tour or workshop to ask about this as ultimately they are the ones who lose if it goes pear-shaped.

EVOLUTION

The other big change has, of course, been with the technology we use. But for Leal, it wasn't just digital cameras that changed everything, it was digital editing, helped by a chance meeting.

"In 2003, Nikon Australia contacted me about a USA Adobe representative who had been bugging them, to see if I could help him explore a location in Australia during his visit. The timing wasn't great, as I'd been travelling a lot that year. I contacted him and said that as long as the family could join us, I could help him. He was happy to do that, so we ended up at Lamington National Park, one of my favourite playgrounds."



Leal's guest for the week was Russell Preston Brown, a key contributor to the launch and development of Adobe's Photoshop 1.0. He had famously said to Adobe in 1989, "we must buy Photoshop from the Knoll brothers".

"Russell contacted me about a month after returning to the USA and said "Darran, would you like to get into digital gear"? I said yes and a huge box arrived at our front door with boxes and boxes of Photoshop."

This was in the days when a single licence for Photoshop could have cost as much as \$1,000.

"I used the boxes of Photoshop to swap for a digital DSLR (a Nikon D1X kit) and a laptop computer. And although I had been using digital technology since 1994 by scanning film and being creative in Photoshop, using a digital camera was a game changer for me."

After shooting with Nikon and Canon for many years, today Leal's kit is made up of Panasonic mirrorless cameras, including G9 and S1R bodies and a relatively travel-friendly combo of three Leica lenses.

THE ENDLESS ADVENTURE

As Darran Leal explains, even with 30 years of living the dream, photography is still as captivating as ever, and even a stroke in 2015 hasn't slowed him down.

"I still love the adventure of photography. I can be locked in the office for a while, but out in the field is where I love to be. I am happy to photograph anything from the smallest insect to the grandest landscape. As Leal explains, people and cultural shoots are the most challenging. "I still enjoy the interaction with people in their environment and trying to tell their story.

My favourites to shoot are the Himba people in Namibia. They are such tough people, yet so nice to be with. We have a lot of laughs. Because I visit them every couple of years, we have become friends. I love to take back past images, which are a great hit. Laminated, they will last for years.

Wildlife is more of a challenge. "I find it takes more work – finding a subject and then taking the time to capture it at its best. It is the most unpredictable form of photography. As an exampleI love to help photographers try and capture something different anod out of their comfort zone, like a landscape specialist capturing hummingbirds for the first time.

"Today, this is what inspires me the most about photography. I love to see a photographer get a buzz out of capturing a special moment in time, or capturing something they did not think was possible. For me, knowing that our family has had a part in that is very special." ©

DARRAN'S FAVOURITE AUSTRALIAN LOCATIONS

Norfolk Island	Flinders Ranges	
Carnarvon Gorge	Tasmania	
Lamington National Park	The Kimberley	

PERSONALISED





ABOVE: Shot on film, around the turn of the millennium, this is still one of my greatest memories. I had a camping group at Uluru-Katajuta National Park. It was a rare heavy cloudy day. suggested we go to Katajuta and "just see what happens". It started to rain, and tourists were running to their cars, but I suggested to our group to use a couple of bushes as shelter. At that moment, like someone turning on a series of lights, the clouds lit up sequentially. I yelled to the group, "quickly setup, it's about…" and at that moment, the sun light hit Katajuta and a few seconds later, the rainbow appeared. Everyone was so excited and several were saying, Darran, what do I do? I said, "just shoot!" Nikon F100, 24mm lens, Kodak EPX film.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Back in the 90's we offered camping photo tours in Central Australia and the Top End. Film scan, no EXIF data.



chance to access their world leading network of accredited local tour operators.

From Antarctica to the Arctic, Africa to Asia, the USA to South America, we can help you to enjoy your own personalised travel arrangements, this allowing you to be in control of your photo adventure.

To find out how you can access some of the best tour operators in the world, visit the World Photo Adventures website and click on - **Personalised Travel**

W: worldphotoadventures.com.au









ow big is too big? It's a question that plenty of people were probably wondering when the 61MP Sony A7R IV was announced earlier this year. And although your initial reaction might be to simply dismiss it as too much for your own uses, there are some real benefits to having such a big sensor, especially so when it comes to cropping. But to treat the newest Sony camera as just a big sensor wonder isn't telling the whole story. It features a well-designed body, impressive AF, a fast drive speed and most of all impressive image quality that for the first time, gives us a big megapixel camera that is also very usable for everyday shooting. For this review, I took the A7R IV to Tasmania's Tarkine wilderness, where I faced rain, salt spray, and plenty of splashes travelling up and down the Pieman river.





BODY AND LAYOUT

By the time you get to the fourth generation of something you would expect it to be pretty refined, and if you're familiar with the form factor of Sony's cameras you'll find few surprises with the A7R IV. To the untrained eye it looks almost exactly the same as the A7III and A7R III, however Sony have listened to the gripes of a few vocal users and incorporated a refined hand grip on the RIV. It's a little deeper and ever so slightly taller which makes for a more solid grip. This is especially appreciated as, despite the size, it is quite a heavy camera, and a tiny bit heavier than the A7R III. Most of my time using it was with the Sony 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 lens, and the improved grip definitely helped with managing the heft of the big telephoto. The other more visible differences are a much larger 'AF-On' button, and the AF point joystick is also bigger and better textured. Other features are less significant but not unwelcome: a new dial and lock on the EV dial, a new latchless battery door, dual UHS-II card slots, a more robust cover and improved weather sealing.

VIEWFINDER

quality setting: you can't have both a fast and detailed display together.

AUTOFOCUS

If you've used any of the headline big sensor cameras released in the last few years (think the Fuji GFX50S, Hasselblad X1D and to a lesser extent the Sony A7R III) then you'll know that these cameras Achilles heel is often ABOVE: In body image stabilisation has made handheld shots taken at extreme focal lengths much easier. Sony A7R IV, FE 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 GM OSS lens @ 400mm. 1/200s @ f7.1, ISO 400.

The A7R IV uses a 5.76M dot OLED display that is bright and easy to see. There are two quality modes, 'Standard' and 'high', and as you would expect the 'high' setting uses marginally more battery. Within this there are two refresh modes, 'Fast' and 'Standard'. I stuck to standard for the length of the review, but the faster mode does what it says on the tin – offering a more responsive preview. Interestingly, this over-rides the

their autofocus performance.

The A7R IV is a totally different kettle of fish however. It features 567 autofocus points that cover 99.7% of the image area vertically and 74% horizontally. It's quick too, 10fps, with full AF and AE tracking, albeit with compressed 12-bit Raw files. Focus acquisition was extremely quick and accurate and I was able to shoot birds, including both slower moving sea eagles and whippet-fast wrens, with a LEFT: This is a fairly heavy crop and shot in APS-C mode, but the file is still more than 5000px on the long side. Sony A7R IV, FE 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 GM OSS lens @ 400mm. 1/125s @ f5.6, ISO 400.




hit-rate only marginally worse than my own Sony A7III.

In fact the performance was so good I only ever remembered I was shooting 61MP images when I would occasionally get the dreaded buffer for a few seconds despite using fast 300mb/s SD cards. But even with this caveat, the fact that you can be shooting detailed landscapes one minute and then fast moving subjects the next is very impressive.

Low light autofocus was also good. Many of the shots in this review were and retain plenty of shadow detail as well. As a test, I was able to easily lift images up to three stops in post with little to no loss of detail.

But it's the cropping power where a camera like this comes into its own. With 61MP to work with you can crop down to APS-C and still have a 26MP file to work with. I'll save the conversation about the need for mega megapixels for another day, but I will say there's something reassuring about knowing you can shoot and recompose your image in post later with little combine images in-camera). But that said, images shot at higher ISO values do display noticeably less noise as a result of combining multiple images.

Speaking of high ISO noise performance, I did find ISO 6400 was about the limit of noise I was comfortable with when shooting anything except relatively clean (and therefore easier to fix in post) subjects. It's not that images are unusable at ISOs above 6400, but noise does become more prevalent.

VIDEO

captured just after sunrise on cloudy days, and the autofocus barely bat an eyelid. That said if you're serious about sports and wildlife photography, Sony (and many other reviewers) seem to agree that the A9/A9II still hold an edge here for pure autofocus performance.

IMAGE QUALITY

With 15-stops of dynamic range from that 61.2MP BSI-CMOS sensor, images contain huge amounts of information knock on effect.

The A7R IV also gains a 16-shot high-resolution mode that can be used to generate 240MP images of static scenes. Unfortunately its a bit of a curious feature. There's no motion-correction which severely limits the range of subjects it can be used for, and the camera is unable to combine images internally, instead relying on Sony's proprietary 'Imaging Edge' software (unlike the Panasonic S1/S1R which both The A7R IV can record 4K UHD in SLog2, SLog3, and HDR. UHD video recording uses the full width of the image sensor, and there's also no recording limit and full pixel readout without pixel binning in Super 35mm mode. Some users will be disapointed to know there's no 10-bit internal recording, but for most users the 8-bit 4:2:0 internal recording will be sufficient. One of the headline features of the A7R IV is real-time focus tracking. Previously this fea-

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LEFT A sea eagle shot not long after dawn. Shot at ISO 6400, this image is pushing the high ISO abilities of the camera and does display some noise, especially in the out of focus areas. Sony A7R IV, FE 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 GM OSS lens @ 400mm. 1/1250s @ f5.6, ISO 6400.

ABOVE: Handheld from the deck of a moving ship. The APS-C Cropped ARW File is 51MB with a resolution of 6240 x 4160. Sony A7R IV, FE 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 GM OSS lens @ 100mm. 1/200s @ f4.5, ISO 800.

ture was only possible when shooting still images. When activated, the eye of a subject is automatically tracked in video modes. I must admit I didn't test this extensively, but found it very accurate in my brief hands on.

THE WRAP-UP

It seems a tad bizarre to call a \$5,699 camera that can shoot at nearly 9,500px suitable for everyday shooting, but the Sony A7R IV just about is. From its handling to image quality to autofocus, no other big megapixel camera can hold a candle to the all-round excellence of Sony's fourth iteration of the A7R. So why just about? Well, we can't confidently say that every situation requires as much resolving power as this camera is capable of, and if you're serious about bringing a camera like this into your workflow you'll likely need to make upgrades to your storage to handle the big files. But if this doesn't bother you, you'll be hugely impressed with the capability of the Sony A7R IV.

RESULTS

HANDLING $\star \star \star \star \star$ Sony have made some welcome changes to the handling of the A7R IV, including a deeper grip and better buttons. It is a heavy camera however.

FEATURES $\star \star \star \star \star$ Where to begin? Almost every feature has been enhanced over the A7R III.

AUTOFOCUS $\star \star \star \star \star$ Takes great leaps from any other big sensor camera we've used, but not quite at A9 levels yet.

IMAGE QUALITY $\star \star \star \star$ Excellent. Having a 9500px file to work with has the potential to totally change the way you shoot. High ISO performance is good.

VALUE FOR MONEY $\star \star \star \star \star$



SPECS	
Sensor	61.0 Megapixel Image Sensor
Sensor size	35mm Full-Frame EXMOR R CMOS
Size	128.9mm x 96.4mm x 77.5mm
Weight	665g
LCD	1,440,000 dots, 2.95 inch wide type
Battery life	Approx. 530 shots (Viewfinder)/ approx. 670 shots (LCD monitor) (CIPA standard)
Battery life Image stabilisation	approx. 670 shots (LCD monitor) (CIPA

At \$5,699, we're dealing with a serious amount of coin. But this is still less than similar cameras from Fuji (GFX 50S) and cheaper than Hasselblad's X1D II.

FINAL WORD

Sony's greatest achievement with the A7R IV is making a big-megapixel camera as usable as something with half (or even a third) of the resolution. The autofocus is snappy, and images retain gob-smacking amounts of detail. But of course like anything at the cutting-edge of tech, it comes with an RRP almost as big as its files. If you can wear this, and your computer is up for it, this is a fantastic camera for a variety of subjects.

Video	4K Movie recording, S-Log2/3, HDR
Autofocus	567 Phase Detect AF Points, 74% Coverage (nearly 100% in APS-C Mode)
Viewfinder	5.67 million dot UXGA OLED Viewfinder
Usable memory types	Dual UHS-II Card Slots (SD)



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NEVER STOP LEARNING

Even after nearly five decades behind a camera, this enthusiastic photographer is finding new ways to improve his craft with the guidance of his local camera club and APS.

WITH GEOFF SHAW

y love of photography began in my teens in the early 1970s, and was inspired by the amazing Tasmanian wilderness photography of Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis who I had the fortune to meet at the time. In these early years I was encouraged by my brother, who took up photography as a hobby about the same time and a group of enthusiastic school and university friends – we did a lot of gear and idea sharing.

Photography is a part of my life. At home I document our family's journey through life, photographing weddings and funerals, children through childhood, pets, holidays, places and events. At work I became the unofficial department photographer, recording social and departmental events as well as documenting my research. Making images for departmental publications and for sharing with colleagues became one of my releases from the pressures of work as an academic.

I resisted digital for a while – how could digital possibly be better than good old Kodachrome slide film? But once I tried, I quickly appreciated the versatility and immediacy. Suddenly images became cheap and I could experiment with no extra cost. My shutter count rose exponentially, and ever larger disk drives were needed.

With retirement impending, my wife and I joined the Waverley Camera Club. This was an excellent move. We got to see lots of other people's efforts in a stimulating en-



vironment. We learned new approaches and techniques, and, in particular, began to realise the power of post-processing. We both rapidly improved our skills and with the encouragement of the club I started submitting images to national and international competitions and gained enough acceptances and awards to qualify for AAPS. We now spend several months a year travelling, photographing wild places around the world before they suffer more damage from climate change and human rapaciousness. I try always to be ready with a camera to capture the next image and to soak up new ideas to apply to my own journey.

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I spied this small Christmas beetle on an Iris flower. The overcast day gave soft light and highlighted the golden sheen, and I decided this front-on angle from slightly below gave drama. I did a 5-image focus stack. It came out remarkably well considering that the flower was moving with the gentle breeze. Although the image was taken over a decade or so ago, it is still one of my favourites. Canon EOS 350D, Tamron SP AF 90 mm f2.8 Di macro lens. 1/8s @ f16, ISO 100.

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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Hamadryas Baboon; Red-eyed Leaf Frog; Crossing the old bridge.





Geoff has been an enthusiastic photographer since his teen years, and retirement has given him more time to hone his photography skills. You can see more of his photos at https://500px.com/geoffshaw1.

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BACK TO FRONT

Don't leave your background as an afterthought! Roz Zito shares a few tips for better out of focus areas.

WITH ROZ ZITO



You have a great subject and the light is good. You nail the focus. Later, in postprocessing, you realise that a messy and confusing back-

ground is distracting from your image.

Landscape photographers consider the background with care because it is often the hero of their shot – but it is also extremely important in wildlife, portrait and action photography. In some situations, like wildlife or street photography, you can't ask the subject to pose up in good light against a suitable background. However, you can try to plan your shot to maximize the dramatic impact of your subject. Choose your background first and wait for your subject to enter the scene.

Sometimes the background tells a story



ent vantage point, you must stay in the vehicle or risk being eaten!

You can still do something about the background in the way you prepare. If possible, change your position to get a good angle. On safari, ask for a private vehicle and try to get a guide who understands what photographers need. Look for light/dark contrast. Dark background gives drama, light gives impact and power to your subject. A warm coloured subject stands out against a cool background. Consider the lighting. Cloudy days create a giant softbox. On bright days, check for bright patches or dark shadows on the face. Bokeh is good, but very bright or highly coloured bokeh is distracting to the eye. Backlighting can add mood, cause the background to become abstracted, and create a halo around your subject. Try panning, to create a feeling of movement and blur the background. I took this photo of a Boobook Owl on a workshop at a wildlife sanctuary under dark, dense trees in a valley. We had a small LED light array to the left, which lit up the subject in a way that would not upset the owl as much as a flash. I used a 5D Mk III and a 70-200 f/4 Canon L series lens on a tripod. My first images were taken with manual settings of f5.6 and 1/320 second and AUTO ISO. This created an image with more noise and showed the confusing background. I

tried various ISO settings and settled on 2500, which underexposed the scene but gave a dark green background with diffuse bokeh. The cool colour is a good foil for the warm coloured feathers, and with judicious lightening in post-processing, the owl is shown off dramatically.

What to do if you can't get a clean, smooth background? You can choose a depth of field that will ensure your subject is in focus but your background is blurred. You can use a longer lens which compresses the image. Even so, your background may not be ideal.

In post-processing you can do your best to minimize background distractions. Perhaps your background has bright greens which draw the eye – decrease the saturation on your background. If bokeh is creating balls of bright, distracting light, lower the highlights in that area. You can isolate the subject in Photoshop and use Gaussian blur to make the background even more diffuse. It depends what you want to do with your image. If you want to print it for your wall or show it on social media, there are no restrictions. If you are going to enter competitions, check the rules as to what is permitted. A background showing off your subject can make or break the impact of your image. Next time you are in the field, check your background – it matters! 🏵

ABOVE: This Boobok owl made for a great opportunity for practising wildlife portraiture.

about the subject – a painter in his studio, a footballer, that bear fishing for salmon. I am particularly interested in wildlife photography, in which a smooth, complimentary background shows off your subject and will be judged well in photographic competitions. In the case of wildlife, getting this sort of background is not always easy. That pesky bird lands amongst a bunch of sticks or leaves. That leopard has branches growing out of its shoulders but you can't move to a differ-

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Images need a pick me up? The doctor will see you now.

BY SAIMA MOREL

LOVELY LIGHT

This image was made by Bruce Robinson on a late summer's afternoon. He wrote: "A long exposure, balanced with available light. For me the image is about the clean lines and shapes versus the reflection in the windows."

I love this image. It is sharp and level with good lighting - a mix of available and artificial lighting. The wooden panels on the upper level almost glow while the reflections in the windows on the ground floor add contrasting interest. The weaker areas of the image are the dead (unlit) area with the tree on the right of the building and the tops of the benches in the foreground. Without making any drastic changes, those bench tops can be easily

cropped, and so can some of the tree on the right. However, it would have been better to have shot in front of the benches, turning slightly right to frame without the tree.

SAIMA'S TIP: Late afternoon lighting with a mix of artificial and natural light can produce a slightly surreal effect with interesting colour.

TITLE: Camden City Council Building PHOTOGRAPHER: Bruce Robinson DETAILS: Fujifilm X-H1, XF14mmF2.8 lens. 4s @ f11, ISO





GO EASY ON SHARPENING

This is a little male variegated fairy wren on the search for food at Pottsville environmental centre, according to Chris Gibson. He said: "If you sit quiet for a few minutes these little fellows will eventually ignore you and flit around quite close." You have managed to capture quite a nice viewpoint on this little fellow, and it stands out well against the background. However, there is some noticeable noise overall, while the bird's feathers look a little unreal. It could well be the result of oversharpening. One of the problems with too much sharpening is that it can exaggerate the grain and so smooth-toned areas lose their smoothness. You could try adding an unsharp mask to the image so that only the edges, the areas of contrast, are sharpened, and those smooth-toned areas are unaffected.

SAIMA'S TIP: If making other adjustments, such as to colour or tone, sharpening should be the last adjustment you make.

TITLE: Master of his domain PHOTOGRAPHER: Chris Gibson DETAILS: Nikon D610, Tamron 150-600mm lens @ 600mm. 1/640s @ f6.3, ISO 640.

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SHARPEN UP

lan Glew ticked off one of his bucket list items with a trip to the outback and Uluru. He said: "Certainly its beauty did not disappoint and this shot shows the size and presence is something to behold and truly takes your breath away." Yes, it is a beautiful rock and it is hard

Yes, it is a beautiful rock and it is hard to beat the emotion of just being there, but unfortunately nothing in this scene is sharp – not the grasses nor Uluru. You needed a tripod and a better ISO, say 100, to get it as sharp as possible. Another problem with this image is the grainy effect and noise. Since this camera came on the market, the technology has greatly improved on what this device is capable of producing in terms of quality.

SAIMA'S TIP: Great subject matter deserves great quality and resolution.

TITLE: Uluru PHOTOGRAPHER: Ian Glew DETAILS: Sony DSLR-A100, No Iens info. 1/13s @ ISO 400.

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WATCH THAT SHUTTER SPEED

After Pinchas Birnbaum took this photo of a New Holland Honeyeater at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne, he wrote "I wasn't sure I was going to get a good shot that day but I'm pleased with this one".

In terms of framing the bird and tree trunk vertically, I think you made a wise choice and the content suits. Your choice of shutter speed was not such a wise move, as you have camera shake – with a slightly double image – so the image is not sharp at all. A better shutter speed shooting a mobile subject at a focal length of 400mm would have been about 1/1000s. The old reciprocal rule or guide stated that the shutter speed needs to be at least the inverse of the focal length e.g. 1/400s for a 400mm focal length, but with digital, you need about 1.5 times that i.e. 1/600s. With a moving subject you need to increase it again.

SAIMA'S TIP: When handholding at longer focal lengths, a faster speed is a little "insurance" in order to get an image as sharp as possible.

TITLE: New Holland Honeyeater PHOTOGRAPHER: Pinchas Birnbaum DETAILS: Nikon D7500, Tamron 18-400mm lens @ 400mm. 1/320s @ f6.3, ISO 400. Little cropping and Lightroom enhancement.





LOOK TO THE LIGHT

On a tour of the Kimberley region, Trevor Wilkinson took this shot of a beautiful blue winged kookaburra at El Questro. He said: "Birdlife around the Kimberley is quite abundant and some species are unique to this area."

The bird in this is sharp and clear. It is not too bad considering the dappled lighting which has resulted in a little loss of detail on the bird's head and a white mark on the bird's shoulder and neck area. You could clone out the white mark area, but not the head. You could just try a little less contrast – just being finicky! A wider aperture – say f2.8 – would have helped get extreme out-of-focusness in that background, but then you may

not be ready to shell out for a \$3,000 lens. A vertical format would help to eliminate some of the lighter distractions left (branch) and right (leaves)

SAIMA'S TIP: In dappled lighting situations, look for a shooting angle and composition with the most evenly lit areas, if possible.

TITLE: Untitled PHOTOGRAPHER: Trevor Wilkinson DETAILS: Nikon D7500, Nikkor 18-300mm lens @ 300mm. 1/500s @ f6.3, ISO 2800, handheld.

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SUBTLE TWEAKS

According to Robert Shepherd: "Following overnight rain, many plants had collected drops on their leaves, petals etc. I also liked this shot inverted vertically, but submitted it as shot."

This has good depth of field especially considering the use of an extension tube, and a lot of pixels ensures good quality. The colour is clean and rich, and the blue in the water droplets makes them interesting as well as stand out well. The symmetry also gets a tick of approval. That said, a little crop on the right would make the plant even more balanced. In terms of postproduction, a few tweaks would also make a difference, for example, the leaves on the left have gone a bit dark with the vignette, so slightly lightening it up with the dodge tool on that

side would bring the leaves out more. Also there are small white hot spots on the stem and some leaves that could easily be cloned out. As for a vertical format, this is the ideal sort of subject for that.

SAIMA'S TIP: Extension tubes are useful for getting in closer to a subject, but the downside is the limitation on the available depth of field.

TITLE: Rain drops reflecting **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Robert Shepherd DETAILS: Canon EOS 550D, Canon EFS55-250mm lens @ 79mm + extension tube, 1/200s @ f10, ISO 200, tripod. Lightroom adjustments: exposure, noise, vignetting, clarity





BURSTS OF LIGHT

This image was taken at Docklands in Melbourne, and photographer Cheryl Davis said that she had difficulty on the wooden deck and angles of the buildings behind but loved the light on the buoy and the deck.

I have to agree that the best part of the image is the illuminated foreground. The buoy and deck glow with that warm colour, and there is interesting texture in the boards and the shiny pole. It's a shame that the background lacks the same magic. The sky is dead, and the starburst highlights along the water's edge tend to be too fuzzy and blown-out. It would be nice to see this same scene shot much earlier in the evening when there is still

plenty of colour in the sky. Also, shooting at f5.6 rather than f9 would reduce the starburst highlights, and stop them being distracting and taking attention away from the main subject, the lifebuoy.

SAIMA'S TIP: Bright lights and overexposed areas of a scene draw attention to them, which can be at the expense of a main subject.

TITLE: Lifebuoy

PHOTOGRAPHER: Cheryl Davis DETAILS: Olympus E-M10, 12-40mm lens @ 17mm. 20s @ f9, ISO 250, tripod. Lightroom: cropped, dehaze, contrast, decreased highlights

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Plus, join Julia and Darran on The Cape To Kalahari tour and the chance (optional) to be filmed for the 6th season of Snap Happy The Photography Show. The last two seasons have been a lot of fun!



Prices start from **AU\$8,995.00** twin share including most land costs. Early bird discount is offered.

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