ELEMENTS

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE • 45

Daniel Bergmann / Michele Sons / Sam Krisch / Bruce Barnbaum / William Neill / Joseph Rossbach / Rachael Talibart / Zac Henderson

EDITOR'S WORD

Steven is travelling so it is my duty and pleasure to set in motion the November issue.

Before I brief you on this month's content, on behalf of our team, Steven and I would like to welcome our new readers. If you have just joined, please note that every issue is crafted so that it is relevant for many years to come. In fact, Steven, our key curator, and our team often quip that we should call it the journal rather than the magazine. So please make sure to read older articles and specials. Also, every December we release one special issue related to a key topic, for example printing or image-processing. These special productions contain a wealth of ideas and photographic insights from photographers such as Christopher Burkett, Charles Cramer, Rachael Talibart or Michael Kenna, to name just a few. This December won't be any different as you can expect another special – this time about travel photography. We will cover some superb locations.

Let's get to our brand-new issue.

We start off with a fascinating and informative interview with **Daniel Bergmann** who specializes in Iceland. You will learn about his childhood, early influences, how he chooses locations, including his favourite locations, gear, etc. The interview is accompanied by original images of Iceland, which should inspire you to discover your own way of seeing this beautiful land. We are grateful that Daniel put so much effort into answering our questions and sharing his work with our readers. Make sure to check out his Iceland and Greenland workshops. If you are interested in these locations, he is one of the best people to shoot with.

Next, we are heading to Antarctica with **Michele Sons** and **Sam Krisch**, partners who are both landscape photographers and who met through their shared interest in photographing the continent. They write: "With its extraordinary range of colour, geography, weather and scale, Antarctica represents the pinnacle of the emotive landscape, offering the photographic artist an opportunity for expressive image-making." In the form of questions and answers, Michele and Sam answer the most important questions about photographing in Antarctica such as locations, conditions, what they like to photograph and much more. A must-read!

It was more than a year ago that we visited **Bruce Barnbaum** at his house and his studio at the footsteps of Cascade Mountains. Back then Bruce showed us round and discussed the images he was preparing for his upcoming book "Discoveries of a Lifetime." Just recently we visited Bruce again but this time he presented us with the book itself. Given that the book contains images which he took throughout his long career but never published, you may think that they might be secondary. Quite the opposite. I personally think this might be one of his strongest works yet. The book itself was printed in Germany and it is beautifully produced.

Not only does it contain superb black and white photography but also numerous essays which are a superb read for every serious landscape photographer. Make sure to add this book to your collection. In fact, Bruce agreed to sign every copy readers of Elements Magazine order (North American orders only). Please use the following link to order your copy.

It is always fascinating to read **William Neill's** articles. Many of you may remember William's Outdoor Magazine column which he wrote regularly. We are honoured that he chose the ELEMENTS Magazine to share his writing and photographs with our readers. William writes: "I'm writing from my home studio outside Yosemite National Park. Much of my photography has been focused on Yosemite throughout my career and I am excited to share another favourite area I've been photographing for decades. My portfolio is called Coastal Zen, a visual exploration of Big Sur and the Monterey Peninsula. With my images, I want to convey the sense of magic and wonder I've experienced photographing this area since 1980 and I finally feel that this body of work has built the depth, quality, and variety I strive for." As always, beautifully written and photographed! We will try to share more of William's work in the coming months.

There is no question that with a plethora of image-processing tools, it is easy to get overwhelmed and frustrated. We would like to introduce a new technical column titled "Dispatches From the Field" by **Joseph Rossbach**. Joseph is known for his sophisticated eye and superb image-processing skills. In the first episode of the series Joseph talks about "Lightroom's Calibration Tab: A new way to think about adding saturation." We trust you will find his segment insightful and actionable. Also, please feel free to share with us any post-processing questions and ideas you would like Joseph to cover in upcoming segments.

In our October issue, we presented the first part of a two-part, exclusive series on Workflow from **Rachael Talibart**. She writes: "'Workflow' has become a trendy term and it's not unusual for clients on my workshops to include in their objectives the acquisition of a streamlined workflow. Over time, I have developed a workflow that suits my particular brain. I'm not sure it's streamlined, but it is a workflow designed to keep me feeling motivated and creative." In the second article of the series Rachael writes about developing, printing, publication and projects. If you haven't had a chance to read the first part, tap into the October issue first and then continue. It is a very important, valuable and rarely covered topic.

EDITOR'S WORD

Zac Henderson continues his series on panoramic photography. This time he writes about "Panoramic Digital Photography." Here is his intro to the article: "Panoramic photographs carry properties that have been celebrated since the birth of the medium. The expanded aspect ratio gives photographers greater freedom in composition, and the immediately noticeable aspect ratio entices and invites viewers in for closer inspection, rewarding them with a more immersive viewing experience when observed at appropriate sizes. Though film offers a speedier and more direct capture method, it cannot stand up to the flexibility and convenience of digital capture when properly implemented, nor can it practically execute more complicated panoramic outputs, making panoramic digital photography a more capable, if more demanding technique." The article is accompanied by the amazing imagery of **Steven Friedman**.

The October issue closes with photographs which our curation team chose from images shared on our social media platforms by readers and followers. Almost daily we look at images posted on Instagram, in the Elements Magazine Facebook group, and on other social media channels. This is one way to have your image featured in the magazine so we encourage you to keep sharing your best work. Don't forget to use the #elementsphotomag hashtag. We hope you enjoy this month's selection of outstanding images along with the stories behind them.

Next month, we are preparing a special travel issue. You won't want to miss it. Also, our team is working hard to bring you new, engaging and informative content in 2025. We will start the new year strong with an exclusive piece about legendary woodland photographer Eliot Porter.

Immerse yourself in the November issue – until next month!

Olaf Sztaba
Co-editor of ELEMENTS Magazine

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COVER IMAGE

DANIEL BERGMANN

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THE COVER STORY

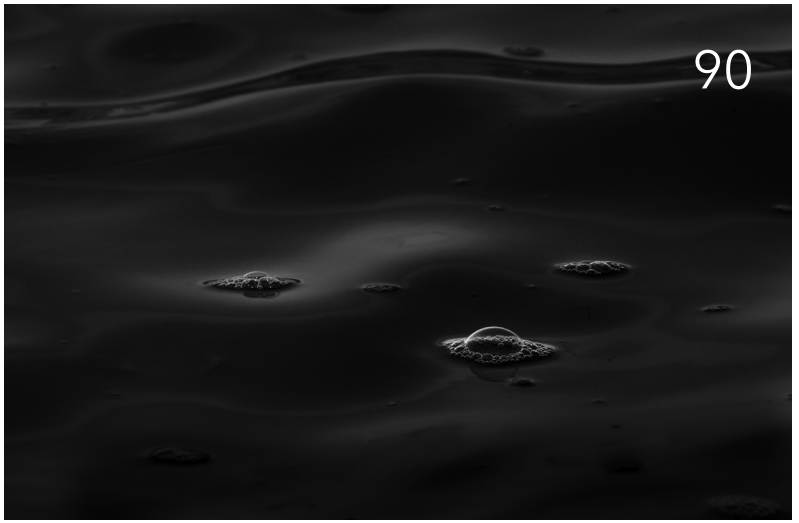
In late August 2012 I was leading a photography tour with a small group in Iceland's highland. We were camping inside the Fjallabak Nature Reserve, which made it possible to visit nearby locations for sunrise and sunset, something that is more difficult in this area if you are staying in a hotel, as there is considerable travel time between the lodging and the favourable locations. I had always wanted to photograph the Hnausapollur volcanic crater at sunset and this evening offered that opportunity. We arrived when there was still direct light on the Tjörvafell mountain on the opposite side of the crater, as this side of it faces northwest. I climbed up a hill where I knew from previous visits that I would have a good view of the whole crater. The framing was obvious as I just wanted to capture the beauty of this place in soft evening light. I set my Canon 5D MkIII up on a tripod and used a 21mm Zeiss Distagon lens. Then it was just a matter of waiting for the soft glow after the sun had set. To smooth the water, I exposed for five seconds, which also gave a soft appearance to the sky, as the clouds were moving fairly fast.

I have been to this location many times since, but this remains the favourite image I've made there. I still recall the feeling of calm on this evening. It had been a windy day but as it got closer to sunset the wind died down, as it often does in the mountains in the evening. We were the only ones there, which does not happen often anymore as this an accessible location close to the road into Landmannalaugar, which is the most visited place in the highland.

Daniel Bergmann

ELEMENTS

NOVEMBER 2024



FEATURED INTERVIEW:

DANIEL BERGMANN

"When doing editorial work, you are always looking for ways to tell a story with the photography. Sometimes that can be achieved with a single image but most of the time a series of images are needed to tell the full story."

Could you please tell us about your youth? What were your interests? Did you show any interest in art or photography back then?

I grew up on the edge of Reykjavik, Iceland's capital city, and there was wild heather and moorland just outside my house. That immediate access to nature had an influence and I remember the calls of the moorland birds, Golden Plover, Whimbrel, Snipe and Meadow Pipit, as the sounds of summer. I started photographing at the age of 12 and although from the beginning I had dreams of becoming a nature photographer I was soon drawn into the world of editorial photography – portraits, fashion and sports. I studied journalism at college and worked at newspapers in the summer and then mostly did freelance work for magazines once I left school. It can therefore be said that photography has always been part of my life and I knew from an early age that I was going to be a photographer.

Who or what influenced you the most at the beginning of your photographic adventure?

I spent a lot of time studying the work of photography artists, mostly through books and magazines. Fashion photographers such as Bruce Weber and Herb Ritts influenced my own photography, and I followed the work of photojournalists, especially James Nachtwey. Through the National Geographic magazine, I got to know the work of some of the finest nature photographers of the time. Jim Brandenburg was a strong influence and his story about the White Wolves of Ellesmere Island, which appeared in the Nat Geo magazine in the late eighties, is responsible for steering me onto the path of nature photography. I felt that in Iceland there were nature stories that needed to be told and animals that needed to be documented. I felt a need for increased public awareness of the wild and unspoilt nature that we were surrounded by, which many did not understand or appreciate and were willing to sacrifice in the name of progress. I was infected by the idealism of youth and believed that with photography I could make a difference. Although I still recognize the power

of photography to bring awareness, I have become slightly wiser as I age and most of the idealism has been replaced by realism.

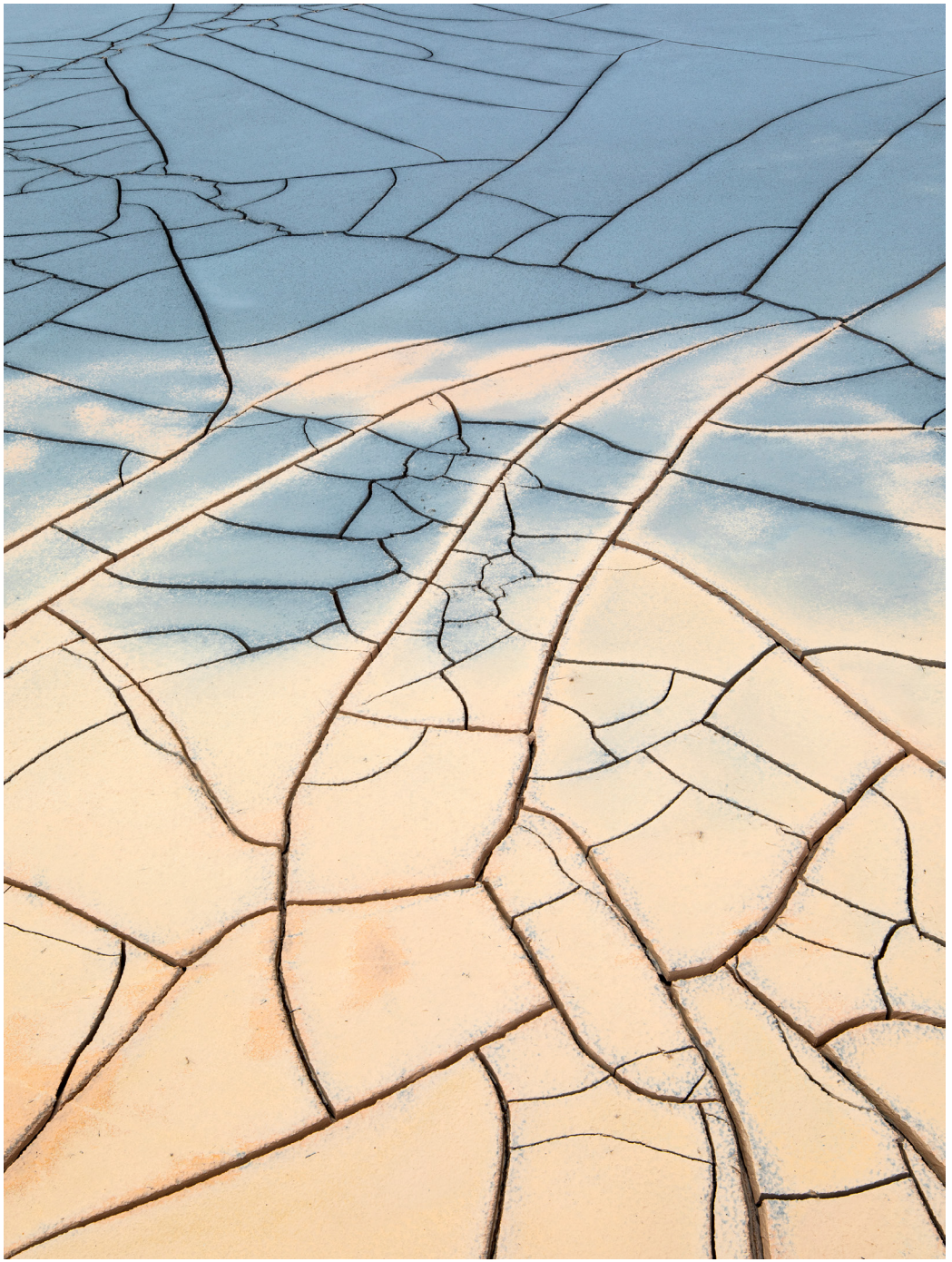
You worked as an editorial photographer. How did that period help you in your later career and what is the most important lesson you learned working in this position?

I don't feel there is much difference between the different disciplines in photography; practising any of them will hone the skills needed for the others. Sports photography is in many ways like wildlife photography and photographing architecture is like photographing landscape. When doing editorial work, you are always looking for ways to tell a story with the photography. Sometimes that can be achieved with a single image but most of the time a series of images are needed to tell the full story. A variety of compositions are also necessary, and "secure" images need to be made before any experimentation can take place. I keep these principles in mind when photographing in nature, except maybe sometimes when practising landscape photography when it just becomes intuitive and conscious thought seems to fade into the background.

Is there an image that is especially important to you and which paved the way to your current photographic path?

The images I made in the first summer I was fully concentrating on nature photography are dear to me and confirmed my intuition that I was on the right path as a photographer. In the summer of 2000, I sat in a hide photographing a nesting Gyrfalcon and after I had packed away the hide and was sitting outside, close to one of the young falcons that had recently left the nest, its mother came and landed on a rock close to me and just sat there with us. I carefully lifted the camera and clicked the shutter, thankful for the trust I was being shown. A similar moment happened later that summer on an expedition to the Hornstrandir Nature Reserve in a remote part of northwest Iceland. I spent weeks there photographing Arctic foxes, mostly at one den, and one day the female in this territory came to where I was sitting, curled up next to me and fell asleep. When she woke up, she stretched, and I clicked the shutter. Moments stay with you forever when wild animals show you complete trust, or simply don't care about your presence, and as a passive observer you just become part of the environment.

"THE IMAGES I MADE IN THE FIRST SUMMER I WAS FULLY CONCENTRATING ON NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY ARE DEAR TO ME AND CONFIRMED MY INTUITION THAT I WAS ON THE RIGHT PATH AS A PHOTOGRAPHER."



When did your fascination with birds start and how does your bird photography complement your landscape work, or vice versa?

I have always had an interest in birds and nature, but it wasn't until my late twenties that I started photographing birds. We have very limited fauna in Iceland. The Arctic fox is the only native land mammal, so birds soon become the centre of attention for nature photographers. The number of breeding bird species is low, compared to the mainland on both sides of the Atlantic, but some of the species that do breed here do so in very large numbers. When I travel outside Iceland, for example on Arctic expeditions, I photograph wildlife and landscape equally but here in Iceland I tend to focus on one at a time. When I'm out photographing birds, I may not even be aware of the landscape opportunities, as I'm fully engaged in bird photography. I do, however, always look for scenes where a bird or a group of birds are small in the landscape, a kind of "birdscape," as such images are more challenging to make than bird portraits, so do well and can be strikingly powerful when successful. Then when I'm in landscape mode I may not even carry the telephotos needed for birds so I don't get distracted. Some of the most rewarding landscape locations are in areas with little or no birdlife such as in the highlands. I shift between modes, birds and landscape, and at its core these two interests are different. Bird photography is more action oriented, more about being responsive and predicting behaviour, while photographing the landscape is a more contemplative discipline. But at the same time any one kind of photography complements other types.

"BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY IS MORE ACTION ORIENTED, MORE ABOUT BEING RESPONSIVE AND PREDICTING BEHAVIOUR, WHILE PHOTOGRAPHING THE LANDSCAPE IS A MORE CONTEMPLATIVE DISCIPLINE."

Iceland is a massive place. How do you choose your locations? Do you have certain visual criteria when you look for locations?

I still do assignment work, mostly for ITA (Iceland Travel Association), so sometimes the locations are chosen for me, as they are what I've been hired to photograph. That work has given me an opportunity to explore regions of Iceland that I would not necessarily explore otherwise. And although Iceland is certainly large there are parts of it that are simply more photogenic than others. We have a great range of different landscape features in a relatively small place.

How do you prepare for your photographic trips in terms of logistics, food etc.?

It depends on the type of work I'm doing. Most of my travel these days involves leading photography tours and workshops with clients, so then everything is set up for us, whether it is ship- or hotel-based. When I'm doing assignment work locally, I tend to work out of a vehicle. I mostly sleep in the car because that gives me the freedom to be in locations very early or late with no need to think about accommodation. I carry the provisions I need for the trip, which is usually no more than a week at a time, because I have the convenience of just going home when the weather changes and becomes less appealing for photography.

What's your approach to composition? Is the process of arranging elements within the frame intuitive or more structured and deliberate? What would you say are the three most important tenets of composing your images in the context of framing?

I don't think very much about composition, at least not consciously. I compose in a way that just feels right and a final composition in the landscape is often one that I've arrived at by exploring and trying different things. I am drawn towards strong foreground elements, and I am fascinated by rocks and geology. But I also do a lot of intimate landscape work, where I explore smaller parts of any given location, looking for forms, shapes and texture and consider how the light hits the land. I explore with an inquisitive mind and respond to elements that come together in a photograph. I'm open to anything that feels and looks right, usually without any preconceived ideas. There are times, though, when I'm very aware of composition, or more precisely which compositions not to do, and that is at iconic landmarks which have been photographed in the same way endless times before. In such locations I shy away from the obvious and look for different ways of interpreting that location.

"I AM DRAWN TOWARDS STRONG FOREGROUND ELEMENTS, AND I AM FASCINATED BY ROCKS AND GEOLOGY."

What's your favourite area in Iceland and why?

For landscape photography my favourite area is the interior of the country, known as the highland. It is a vast area and many parts of it are rarely visited, although some parts have become quite well known in the past decade. Most of the highland requires a modified 4x4 vehicle to get around or requires extensive hiking to explore it properly. It is a barren and otherworldly landscape that has endless photographic opportunities. I'm also very fond of ice and glaciers and most of those locations are at the opposite end of the spectrum from the highland, mostly on the south coast and packed with tourists year round. But ice is ever-changing in the landscape and even the most photographed location in Iceland, the Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon and it's nearby Fellsfjara beach, still excite me as a photographer after hundreds of visits and with an endless numbers of visitors always present.

Do you have a favourite season for photographing Iceland?

The autumn, September into October, is my favourite time of year. There is a crisp quality to the air, the light is ever-changing, the vegetation becomes colourful, and the daylight hours have become more reasonable.

How do you create fresh images of Iceland when so much photography is being done there?

By taking the road less travelled or by being open to seeing differently in the most photographed locations. There are always new images to be "found" if you look at the details in the landscape and forget about trying to capture the large vista. I've learnt a lot by spending time with David Ward, whom I consider the most brilliant landscape photographer of our times. I've had the privilege of working with David since 2012, while co-leading tours in Iceland and being with him in the field. Observing how he approaches composition has opened my eyes to different ways of seeing. I now tend to look more beneath my feet rather than straight ahead, which opens a new world of possibilities. At the same time, some of my assignment work requires me to photograph the wider view, and often in well-documented locations. Then I enjoy the challenge of coming up with new compositions – something that I've not seen before. And even though a location has been photographed in the same way countless times before there is nothing wrong with repeating it yourself if that composition feels and looks right when you are there. Although an iconic mountain is the same from one year to the next, the light and other conditions might be very different. It sometimes surprises me though when I come to one of those photography icons such as Mt. Kirkjufell, which is close to my home, that most photographers seem to go straight for the obvious, iconic view rather than walking around and exploring before settling on a composition. There is a hint of trophy bagging in that approach to landscape photography.

> **You write: "My work is mainly project based – some are long-term projects that may take years to unfold. Much of my work is published locally in Iceland and does not reach a wider international audience." Could you please expand on this?**

I'm talking about my ITA assignment work. My personal work is quite theme oriented and it may take a long time for some of to reach an end point. For example, I photographed Gyrfalcons here in Iceland for over 20 years before I felt I had the material needed to put a book together. That book was finally published in Iceland a couple of years ago and is currently being translated into English. I have long-term landscape projects that I've been working on for years that I'm not ready to release yet. I have several themed projects going on at any time so that when I'm in a location I may be thinking about images that may fit into one of those themes. One of those landscape projects has come to an end point and will be published soon.

What are your three favourite tools in image-processing?

I don't do much image processing so the standard tools, Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop, is all that I use.

What's your favourite presentation medium: books, print or gallery settings? Why?

I love making books. The process of selecting images, writing the words, designing the book – the whole book-making process is a very enjoyable journey. And I love books. I collect photography books and like the feeling of holding something solid in my hands and browsing through it. I've not done much printing and very few gallery shows so the book is my absolutely preferred medium.

How do you use social media for your business?

I've never been very active on social media. I use Facebook a bit but have not yet put anything on Instagram. I feel that the scrolling process, especially while looking at Instagram, is a viewing overload and it's hard to appreciate photography in that way. It is just not for me. I keep being told that I must become more active on social media, but it just goes against my beliefs for healthy living. I have young children and I am therefore acutely aware of the negative impact social media can have on us, especially the young and more vulnerable. I wish I could do without the need to be slightly visible on social media to stay connected to friends and clients.

Which camera are you currently using and why?

Currently I'm mostly using the Canon system. I've switched to mirrorless tools, Canon R5 and R3, and have a wide range of lenses ranging from 16 to 600mm. I'm still using a lot of my Canon EF glass with adaptors. For landscape work, the 24 and 90mm tilt-shift lenses are still my favourite. I also use a micro four-thirds system when I need lighter gear for long hikes and have used digital medium format in the past but the file quality from the current Canons is more than enough for my applications.

"I FEEL THAT THE SCROLLING PROCESS, ESPECIALLY WHILE LOOKING AT INSTAGRAM, IS A VIEWING OVERLOAD AND IT'S HARD TO APPRECIATE PHOTOGRAPHY IN THAT WAY."

What is your favourite lens especially in terms of photographing Iceland – the lens you would never leave home without?

I would never leave home without my 100-500mm zoom lens, as it is my most used glass for both landscape and bird photography. I enjoy the discipline of using the tilt-shift lenses but they slow me down and require a tripod. I could do most of my photography with that long-range zoom plus the 24-105mm lens. Those two lenses on a couple of bodies would cover most of what I do.

Please share your experience using drones for photography.

For my ITA-assignment work I used to do aerial photography airplanes but have been using drones during the past few years. The nature of that work is quite descriptive. I need to just illustrate the landscape, showing it as it is. And drones are perfect for that, as by just lifting it a few meters off the ground a new and fresh perspective opens with more depth. I have not used drones much for my personal work but have experimented a bit by flying over areas where it's impossible to walk, such as geothermal fields, and photographed straight down. What you can see through the drone in such locations is very interesting and usually quite exciting. Drones are tools that add a new dimension to landscape photography.

How do you feel about the explosion of photographers flocking to Iceland? Has it changed the places where you take workshops? What would you advise a photographer who is looking for a workshop in Iceland? What are the key things to consider?

I've been offering photography tours in Iceland since 2004 and there have, of course, been massive changes. I was starting to become uncomfortable with the influx of photographers and photography tours when it was peaking in the couple of years before Covid hit us, and as a result I started offering tours into lesser known parts of Iceland. Since travel opened again, I've not been aware of as many photography tours although tourism this year has peaked again, which makes some of the tourist locations impossible to visit at certain times of the year.

For someone looking into coming to Iceland I would offer the following advice. First, consider what type of tour is being offered. I distinguish between a photography tour and workshop; they are not the same. What I do falls into the tour category. I use my local knowledge to get people to rewarding landscape locations at the right time. I follow the weather and choose locations based on the current conditions. As I know the areas intimately, I will always have multiple plans that take different weather and conditions into account. Something I've noticed with foreign photographers who bring clients on tours to Iceland without local guidance, is that when their plan A is impossible, they just don't have alternative plans. This is why I'm often hired as a local guide by visiting photographers and their clients. Local knowledge is extremely valuable in a place like Iceland, where the weather and road conditions, especially in winter, change at short notice.

Once I'm on location I am always available for technical assistance if needed and I try to give inspiration if I sense that a client is struggling with compositions. On some tours, like the ones I do with David Ward, we do set time aside for lectures and image reviews so in that sense they would be considered workshops. So, I would choose a tour or workshop based on how much of a learning experience I am looking for as opposed to just the opportunities of being safely guided to the best available photography locations. Looking at the work of the tour/workshop leader is of course important as we will choose to travel with someone whose work we can relate to and admire.

What are you working on right now?

I am writing a book. This is one of my ITA-projects. On an Icelandic scale the organisations has a large membership and has produced a yearbook for its members since 1928. I am fully responsible for next year's book, which has the working title "Birds and Bird Locations in Iceland." It will go to the printers in February and then go out to the 12,000 members or so in early spring. Once this book is off my table I'll be finishing work on my next book of landscape photography from Iceland, which is long overdue, with the hope of publishing that before the summer.

Daniel Bergmann

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Antarctica: TWO VISIONS

Michele Sons and
Sam Krisch

Michele Sons and Sam Krisch, partners who are both landscape photographers, met through their shared interest in photographing Antarctica. The White Continent serves as a canvas for their personalized visual interpretation and stylistic experimentation as well as a contrast in their individual styles.

Image by Michele
Dramatic mountain reflections in the waters around Petermann Island, 2023.
Canon EOS R5 + RF 14-35mm f/4 L IS USM, 1/180s, f/13, ISO 200, 25mm

Blue. White. Grey. Pink. Fog. Wind. Ice. Silence. Distance.

With its extraordinary range of colour, geography, weather and scale, Antarctica represents the pinnacle of the emotive landscape, offering the photographic artist an opportunity for expressive image-making. We have been travelling there since 2011. The animal life – seals, birds, orcas, and yes, penguins – are abundant, but to us, the ice and the dramatic cliffs and peaks rising from the dark waters make us eager to go back. The wilderness is austere and exquisite; untouched and pristine; spacious, yet filled with opportunities for intimate, detailed and abstract work. Drifting through channels and harbours, feeling the wind or sun, cameras at the ready, we have captured ice in its many sculptural and faceted forms. We have gloried in the wild swings in the weather from low, grey fog banks to showy crepuscular-rayed clouds over channels and islands, and by howling winds giving way to calm silences. The emotions stirred by the vast land, sea, ice and weather have enabled us to express our reaction in our individual ways.

Image by Michele
The moon rises behind a sundae-shaped, ice-encrusted land mass near the Lemaire Channel, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM, 1/500s, f/5.6, ISO 800, 140mm

Image by Sam
A small group of penguins show the scale of the icebergs that fade into the distant fog, 2023.
Sony ILCE-7RM3+FE 70-210 F2.8 GM OSS II,1/1000, f/7.1, ISO 320, 91mm

To travel to Antarctica means feeing both depth and distance. The continent and islands are most accessible from South America, either by ship over the dramatic and violent seas of the Drake Passage from Ushuaia, Argentina, or by plane from Punta Arenas, Chile to King George Island. Either way, the usual itinerary is to go southward through the South Shetland Islands, Half Moon Bay and Deception Island, and through the Bransfield Strait to the Lemaire Channel, Port Lockroy, Paradise Bay and sometimes beyond.

Image by Sam
"Night Castle," a "day for night" rendering of an iceberg in a sparkling sea, 2011.
Canon 5D Mark II + EF85 f 1.2 L II USM, 1/2500, f/10, ISO 200, 85mm

Each trip has its own mood, ranging from dull, dark and grey to blindingly bright and intensely colourful. Storms whip up quickly. Some of the larger tabular bergs create their own howling winds and weather mini-system. Sam's first trip to Antarctica in 2011 was a journey with low hanging clouds and diffuse sun. It was a magical time to gather images of the deep slate greys of the water and the cerulean blue of the ice. For Michele's first trip in 2015, conditions were entirely different: exciting, varied, and colourful, including pink skies and a dramatic full moon rising and setting.

Image by Michele
The moon rises just before sunset above a pastel-coloured Antarctic landscape, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM, 1/750s, f/5.6, ISO 400, 170mm

When was your first trip to Antarctica? What delighted you and what disappointed you?

Michele: In February 2015, I travelled with Michael Reichmann and the Luminous Landscape aboard the Ocean Nova. I had limited experience in the landscape genre at the time. There were several legendary photographers on that trip including Art Wolfe and Charles Cramer, and it was sharply life-changing for me on several levels. What I found most surprising was the colour. Antarctica exhibited the most intense blues, soft pinks and golden yellows. I didn't expect that, although I delighted in it, as I love to explore colour in my work. My second trip in December 2023 was very different in terms of conditions – it was white and flat, resulting in a spare aesthetic – so it was interesting to contrast the images from each trip. My only disappointment was that at the end of the trips, I felt as though I needed more time there. In 2015, I suffered from seasickness, which robbed me of a day and a half of shooting. And then I got quite sick with a virus in 2023, which knocked me out and reduced my productivity in the second half of the voyage. So on both occasions, I was left feeling as though I simply hadn't had enough time to make my best work.

Image by Michele
Glowing sunset light on our first evening at Half Moon Island, 2023. Canon EOS R5 + RF 100-500mm f/4.5=7.1 L IS USM, 1/500s, f/9.5, ISO 640, 500mm

Image by Michele
The surface of a glacier reveals its many layers and beautiful shapes, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM, 1/150s, f/8, ISO 200, 200mm

Sam: My first trip in 2011, also aboard the Ocean Nova, was led by John Paul Caponigro and Seth Resnick. My only disappointment involved technical challenges. I had equipment failure and had to rely on a single body, changing lenses in the wet and dusty Antarctic conditions. Despite that, I delighted in how conditions and subjects favoured my style of image making. Grey skies and dark clouds mirrored my (then) moody and dramatic style. The variety of blues in the icebergs, from powder to cerulean, as well as their architectural and geometric diversity, was a constant source of artistic inspiration. Some icebergs were like castles, others faceted and sculptural, and yet others anthropomorphic, resembling animals or mythic creatures. That trip intensified my fascination with Arctic and Antarctic landscapes. I was fortunate to participate in four further voyages led by my friend Joshua Holko to the Peninsula and to South Georgia. As a bonus, I was able to improve my craft as a printer and create large prints that captured the vastness of the landscapes I had seen.

Image by Sam
An icy arch in a grouping of blues against a grey and magenta sky, 2023.
Sony ILCE-7RM3+FE 70-210 F2.8 GM OSS II,1/2000, f/10, ISO 400, 93mm

Do you feel the trip changed your approach to your work?

Michele: Before Antarctica, I was an enthusiastic amateur photographer. Afterwards, I was a highly motivated student of both the art and craft of photography. I was mesmerized by the wonder I could see through my photography and I believe others took me much more seriously as an artist. In 2015, relatively few people had travelled there, and there was a great interest in Antarctic imagery. So I believe it added an element of legitimacy to my work. The trip opened a world of possibilities in terms of what I perceived to be possible with photography, my understanding of wilderness, and my thirst for adventure. I was excited about what I had seen and the images I had created. In the wake of the trips, I found myself energized and absorbed in my work.

Image by Michele
A beautiful small iceberg echoes the shapes of the mountain range behind it, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 17-40mm f/4L USM, 1/45s, f/22, ISO 200, 23mm

Sam: The journeys to Antarctica were fundamental in my development as an artist. I learned to work quickly, to capture very large tableaux and monuments of ice. I was in awe of the fleeting moment and the vastness of the challenge of portraying such large vistas. This has been a beautiful and demanding enterprise which will always amaze me. I am very grateful.
It has allowed me to see in a more cinematic way: vast stages and large forms. I feel that without those journeys I could not have advanced my visual sense of space and drama.

Image by Sam
"Passage V," captured on the stern of a ship in a "calm" moment in the Drake Passage, the swells create a beautiful angle that threatens both the photographer and his equipment, 2013.
Canon 5D Mark III+EF 24-70 f/2.8 L USM, 1/1250, f/11, ISO 200, 24mm

Image by Michele
Last light bounces off the high clouds above the Lemaire Channel, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM, 1/250s, f/5.6, ISO 800, 80mm

What was your favourite landscape/seascape/geographical feature to shoot?

Michele: The Lemaire Channel is utterly spectacular, with sheer black spires rising sharply from the watery depths. I also really loved Petermann Island for its drama and layers of interest and Pleneau Bay for its unanticipated and endlessly fascinating icebergs.

Image by Sam
A perfect natural mirror in the Lemaire Channel, 2014.
Nikon D800E +14-24mm f/2.8, 1/1600, f/13, ISO 200, 14mm

Sam: My favourite locations: The forlorn isolation of the deserted Whalers Bay on Deception Island; my first landing in Antarctica, Half Moon Island, where I experienced the multi-hued sunset and twilight over the landscape and sea; also the pristine wide vista and drama of the rising snowy peaks above a still and silent Lemaire Channel.

What are your favourite Antarctic conditions?

Michele: In almost any other place, my answer would be fog but in Antarctica, I've been most mesmerized by the colour in the light. There's a purity and intensity to it whether it's the powerful magenta of high clouds over the Antarctic Range at sunrise or the intense aquamarine blue of dense ice. I found the spectrum of colours to be surprising, stunning and thought-provoking. The colours shine brightest in conditions other than fog, so I would say Antarctica is a rare instance of where I am drawn to clear conditions.

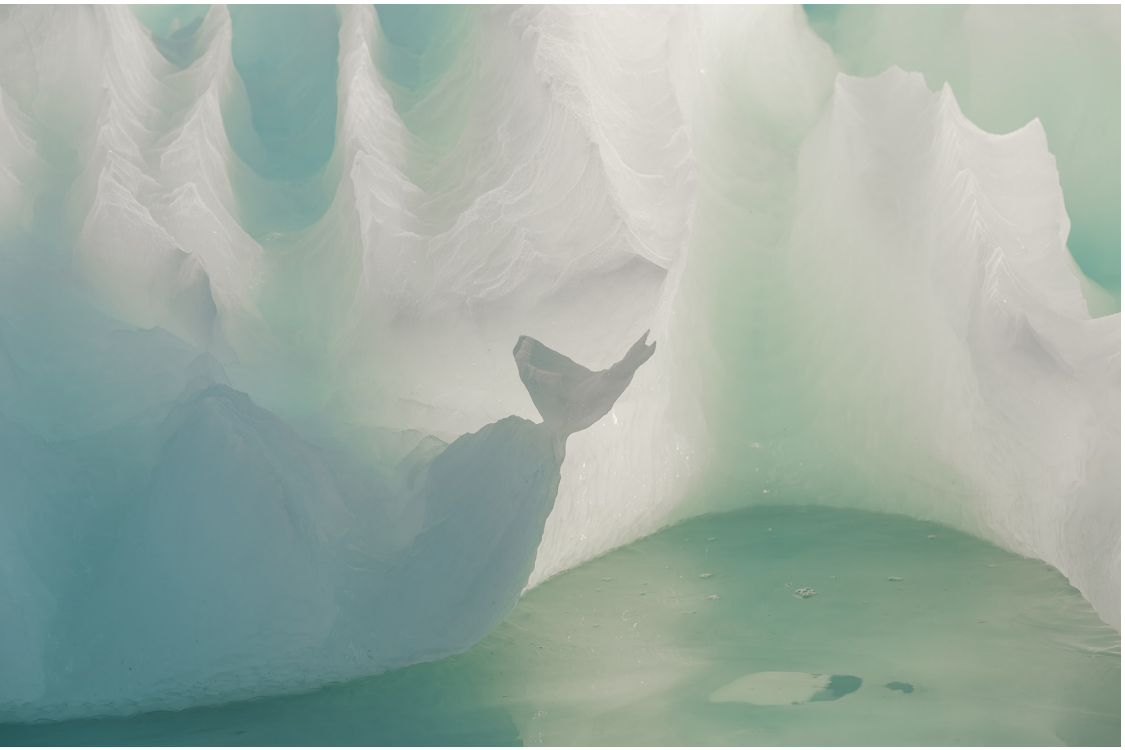

Image by Michele
An aquamarine-coloured ice formation mimics the shape of a whale tail, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM, 1/750s, f/8, ISO 200, 135mm

Image by Sam
"Palace," a large architectural iceberg rules in a large seascape, 2012.
Canon 5D Mark II+EF 16-35 f/2.8 L II USM, 1/8000, f/10, ISO 200, 16mm

Sam: I prefer muted light, sun through clouds, and sea conditions that allow for lots of landings as well as shooting from the ship's deck. The landscapes and icescapes change by the minute so the parade of ice and light creates constant new vistas and compositions. So much of the experience of the continent is anticipating the next turn of the ship or drift of the ice and dreaming of the emotions you could express.

Image by Michele

Salmon-pink tones and the earth's shadow highlight this trio of icebergs somewhere along the Antarctic Peninsula, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM, 1/250s, f/5.6, ISO 800, 285mm

Image by Michele
A pair of penguins provide a wonderful scale on this unusually shaped iceberg surrounded by sea fog, 2023.
Canon EOS R5 + RF 24-70 mm f/2.8 L IS USM, 1/180s, f/16, ISO 200, 70mm

If you were to formulate a one-line statement about Antarctica what would it be?

Michele: A distant, wild land at the edge of the earth, Antarctica is an icy paradox: serene yet savage, vast yet intimate, profoundly silent yet laden with stories of the past and the future.

Image by Michele
Dramatic mountains form the backdrop for a small penguin colony on Petermann Island, 2023.
Canon EOS R5 + RF 24-70 mm f/2.8 L IS USM, 1/125s, f/16, ISO 200, 58mm

Sam: Antarctica is a dreamy canvas to create vignettes of wild and remote lands, exotic masterful dances of ice, and inspiring plays of light and form.

Image by Sam
Greys and blues frame the bow of a large tabular iceberg, 2023. Sony ILCE-7RM3+FE 70-210 F2.8 GM OSS II, 1/2500, f/11, ISO 1250, 111mm

Image by Michele
An impossibly shaped iceberg rests in Wilhelmina Bay, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 17-40mm f/4L, 1/250s, f/11, ISO 200, 24mm

Image by Michele
A subtle spot of light graces the land and is framed by a wonderfully textured frozen arch in the foreground, 2015.
Canon EOS 5DMkIII + EF 17-40mm f/4L USM, 1/250s, f/11, ISO 200, 40mm

Antarctica has been transformative for our creative work as well as for our life journey. We have bodies of work from our voyages that have advanced our styles and given us confidence in our craft. On a more personal note, on our December 2023 expedition we were married ashore at Paradise Bay on the continent of Antarctica, marking the beginning of an adventurous new chapter in our lives and our artistry.

Michele Sons
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Sam Krisch
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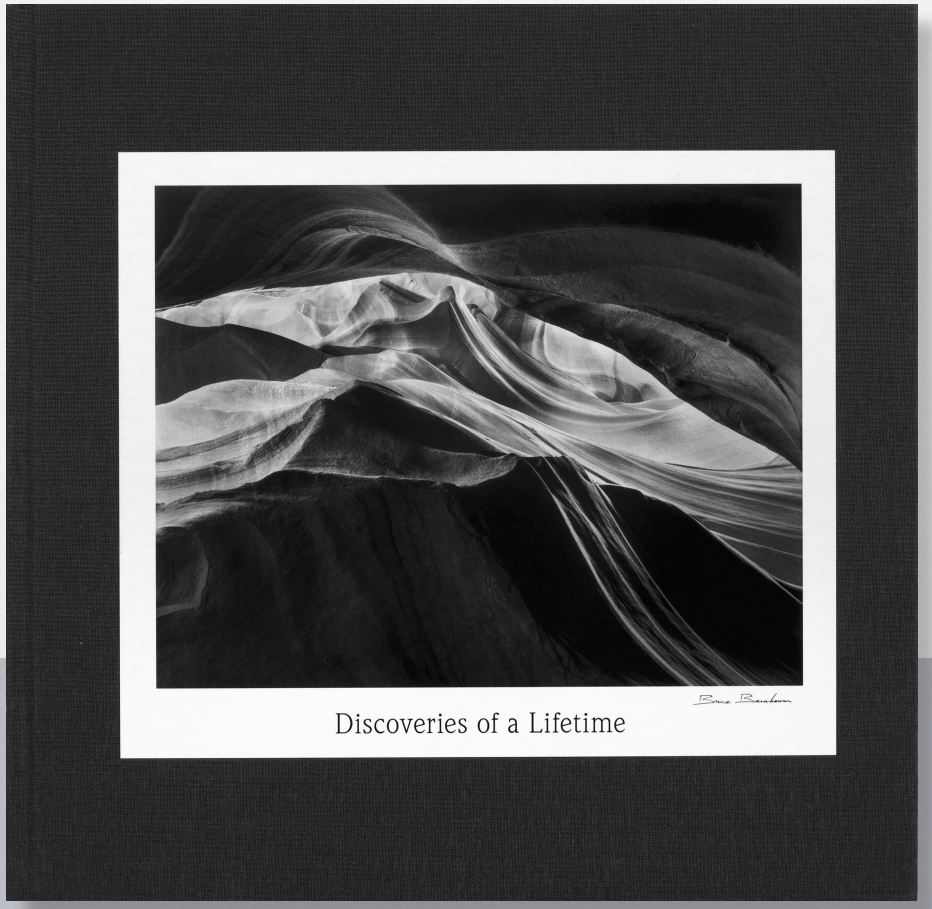
FROM THE BOOKSHELF



Bruce Barnbaum

What prompted you to create the book? Was that your goal or did the idea for the book evolve?

It evolved. I had started a review of all of my 4x5" images, from the very first one I ever exposed, just to see if I had overlooked one or two good ones. When I began uncovering one after another of real merit, I was initially baffled about what to do with all of the newly discovered images. Eventually the concept of putting them into a book came to mind, and the result is *Discoveries of a Lifetime*.

Could you please tell us about technical aspects of the capture?

First, I have to comment that I hate the word "capture" as applied to any aspect of photography. I firmly feel that you can capture only two things: criminals and enemy soldiers. Not photographs.

The images in the *Discoveries of a Lifetime* book are 4x5" film exposures (with one exception). They were all printed traditionally in a standard darkroom, then re-photographed digitally to create the digital files needed to print the book.


Discoveries of a Lifetime
Bruce Barnbaum

How did you decide on the image selection for the book?

I had many to choose from. The difficulty was not deciding which ones to choose, but which ones to discard. Removing the images proved to be the most difficult part.

What was one lesson you learned while working on the book?

There were many, but surely one was trying to solve the question of how to sequence the images. Any ten people would come up with ten different sequences that they felt were wonderful. I did my best. I hope the readers and viewers find my sequence to be sensible and meaningful.

What advice would you give a photographer who wants to start working on their own book?

Through my workshops and emails I have regularly found people wanting to put together a book well in advance of the needed quality and quantity of imagery. I've published a number of books previously, so I had a reasonable basis of comparison of the quality of imagery in *Discoveries of a Lifetime* with those previously published. It was a great help. Most specifically, I felt that these previously unpublished images in *Discoveries of a Lifetime* were not "second rate" to those previously seen.

What determined your choice of paper and printer? Did you self-publish?

The choice of printer was made by the publisher, the same printer of their magazine, Silvergrain Classics. The choice of paper was jointly approved by the printer, D+L in Germany, using their Heidelberg printing press, the publisher and myself.

Where can we buy the book?

The book can be purchased in two ways:

1. Directly from me via my website of www.barnbaum.com then going to the "Books" page and following the prompts for *Discoveries of a Lifetime*. All books purchased in this manner will be personally signed to the buyer by me.
2. From the publisher, Silvergrain Classics in Germany, by going to their website https://shop.silvergrainclassics.com/detail/index/sArticle/77317/sCategory/3758.

Allow me to note that if you live outside the USA or Canada, shipping costs are significantly lower if the book is purchased through the publisher. Of course, books purchased through the publisher are not signed.

Bruce Barnbaum

www.barnbaum.com

Courtesy of PeterEssick

Courtesy of Chuck Kimmerle

COMING SOON

a special travel issue

Courtesy of Paul Wakefield

Coastal Zen... a visual exploration of the Big Sur Coast

William Neill

"*The looming cliffs at Big Sur sustain me, remind me we are nothing without saltwater, wind and waves. Each horizon, each place holds its own evolutionary power. For me, this is the nature of peace. Our task is to learn how to see it, feel it, hear it, and care for these places as our own home ground.*" –**Terry Tempest Williams**

Pfeiffer Beach, Big Sur, California 2019

Monterey Pines in Fog, Monterey, California 2005

I'm writing from my home studio outside Yosemite National Park. Much of my photography has been focused on Yosemite throughout my career and I am excited to share another favourite area I've been photographing for decades. My portfolio is called Coastal Zen, a visual exploration of Big Sur and the Monterey Peninsula. With my images, I want to convey the sense of the magic and wonder I've experienced photographing this area since 1980 and I finally feel that this body of work has built the depth, quality, and variety I strive for.

Rock forms, Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, California 2003

Rock Design, Big Sur, California 2024

Rock Forms and Pebbles, Big Sur, California 2022

When my kids were growing up, our family would come to the coast to escape the heat of summer, visit the Aquarium, and explore the beaches. I would sneak out to photograph at sunrise and return to spend the day with the family. Our evenings were often spent playing on the beaches, me with my camera and the kids splashing around in the surf.

Rock formations and twilight surf, Garapatta State Beach, Big Sur, California 1991

Because I worked as the resident photographer at The Ansel Adams Gallery in the early 1980s, I had the great fortune of meeting and becoming friends with Ansel and the opportunity to visit him and stay at his home in Carmel. During these visits I became entranced by Big Sur's rugged coastline.

Twilight, Big Sur, California 1995

Rock formations at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, California 2022

Kelp, Big Sur, California 2021

When you look at my images on these pages, or any photographs for that matter, take note of the overall composition, the balance of tones, how the graphic forms and lines fit within the frame, the use of light and weather, and how those factors convey mood or emotion. For me, emotion is the magic element that all our techniques can elicit in our photographs, in ourselves, and in the viewer. The joy of photography for me is the process of exploration and experimentation. I experiment extensively as I photograph, trying many shutter speeds and camera angles, moving my camera up, down, left, and right. I look to see where the sunlight on the scene works the best.

Then, during quiet moments in the field, I think about how I might process the final photograph such as giving a dark and moody rendition or a high-key and lighter interpretation. I often review my exposures during these breaks in the action and find ideas to try while my camera is still set up. I might find, for example, that my longest exposure times wash out some texture in the moving water so I'll go back and use a shorter timing that works better.

Stream Flow, Big Sur, California 2022

Surf and Stream, Big Sur, California 2022

I have often found wonderful lighting along the coast no matter what the weather is. On days when there are no interesting clouds, I look for reflections that take advantage of low-angle lighting, especially in the evenings. Here I've lined up the sun to be reflected in the stream flowing into the surf and making use of the diagonal lines flowing out into the surf and creating patterns in the sand and disappearing into the blurred motion.

Long exposures for coastal images are prevalent these days and I hear photographers say they are tired of them. I, for one, am not! I often used my 4x5 film camera at twilight, which necessitated exposure times of several minutes. Currently, I regularly use Kase Revolution magnetic neutral density filters with my Sony A7r cameras. The misty mood I can create is magical for me.

Regarding compositional balance, an important consideration is where the horizon line falls in the framing. My thought process is to consider which area I wish to emphasize. When the weather and light are the key to the scene, a low placement in the frame will emphasize the sky. I place the horizon line high in the frame when there are strong foreground elements such as patterns in the sand or rock formations. Long exposures will give a contrast between rock and the misty effect of blurred surf. The strength of this type of image depends on the spacing and rhythm of shapes and forms. With surf and rock formations, take many frames using many shutter speeds. Don't get locked into a set preferred time. Be sure to check the back of your camera to see how the blurred water defines the spaces you've created between rock and water, as each frame you make will be different. Make adjustments of exposure time and exposure.

Sunset, Garrapata State Park, California 2022

If you are like most landscape photographers, you have your own set of coastal images that could be developed into a strong portfolio. As I've written about in my Portfolio Development book, curating your work into themes with an evocative and cohesive theme is perhaps the most effective way to elevate your photography.

I hope my essays and photographs give you a few ideas about making expressive coastal images, some inspiration, and a moment of Zen.

William Neill
https://portfolios.williamneill.com/index

DISPATCHES FROM THE FIELD

LIGHTROOM'S CALIBRATION TAB:

A new way to think about adding saturation.

Joseph Rossbach

The one mistake I see most often when reviewing images is the overuse of saturation. It's tempting to take that slider to the max and pop those colours in the photo, but this often leads to an unnatural and usually garish result. Less is more is one of the photographic philosophies I frequently teach when conducting classes and field workshops. I suggest that the photographer avoid distraction and focus their vision of the scene on a few elements that tell the "story" they are striving to convey through the visual language of photography. I believe this method or philosophy also serves us well in the digital darkroom. This is especially true when deciding how much saturation to add to the image.

I will focus on Lightroom adjustments here, but if you are using Adobe Camera RAW this also applies. In the basic tab, at the bottom you will find both the Vibrance and Saturation sliders. These two, or some combination of both, are what most photographers use to add saturation to their images. I, however, use neither. I prefer to use the Calibration Tab to add saturation to my photographs, finding this method far more effective in giving me a great boost in colour saturation and acting as a fill light adjustment, adding an extra "pop" of light to the image.

The trick to using the calibration adjustment is deciding which colour is least represented in the overall image and using that slider for the adjustment. In Calibration, you will find three sliders: Red, Green, and Blue, RGB. Although there is also a Hue slider, I ignore that and focus only on the saturation slider (using the Hue slider often gives you very strange colours).

As an example, let's look at this image of fall aspens from Colorado that I photographed last month while leading a workshop. After regular tonal adjustments and white balance in the first image, I added precisely +40 using the Saturation slider in the basic tab, producing a very garish result. The colours, especially reds and yellows, are too saturated and look unnatural.

In the second image, I added +80 using the Blue Saturation slider in the Calibration tab. I obtained more natural results while adding excellent colour and light to the image. I have noticed that this method keeps my neutral colours from changing much, once again giving me the pop I want with more natural results.

When using the Calibration tab to add saturation, you can, of course, use any combination of Red, Green, or Blue instead of just using the least-represented colour in the image. The method works best most of the time. This allows you much more control over the saturation than a single slider does in the Basic tab.

You might wonder why I haven't mentioned using the Colour Mixer (HSL) tab to add colour saturation individually to the image. I often use the Colour Mixer, but mainly to reduce saturation in colours that have taken on too much. I'll dive into those adjustments in next month's article, so stay tuned.

In the meantime, try this technique and see how you like it. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the results.

Until next month, best of light to you. Get out in nature and enjoy the experience of capturing her beauty.

+40 Saturation added using the Saturation slider in the Basic Tab

+80 Saturation added using the Blue Slider in the Calibration Tab

Joseph Rossbach

www.josephrossbach.com

Ideas for a Creative Workflow – Part II

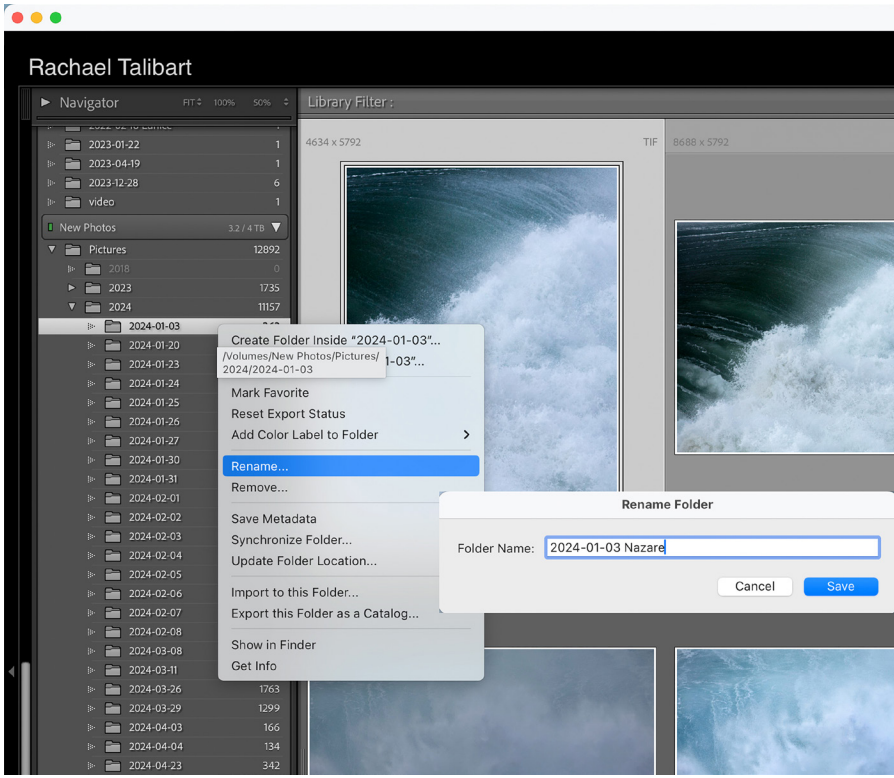
Rachael Talibart

"Workflow" has become a trendy term and it's not unusual for clients on my workshops to include in their objectives the acquisition of a streamlined workflow. Over time, I have developed a workflow that suits my particular brain. I'm not sure it's streamlined, but it is a workflow designed to keep me feeling motivated and creative. In this article, I share my workflow, from inspiration to publication, and the reasons for it. Not everything will suit everyone, but hopefully there will be some ideas you might be interested to try.

This is the second part of this article. For thoughts about inspiration, planning and working on location, see part I (October 2024).

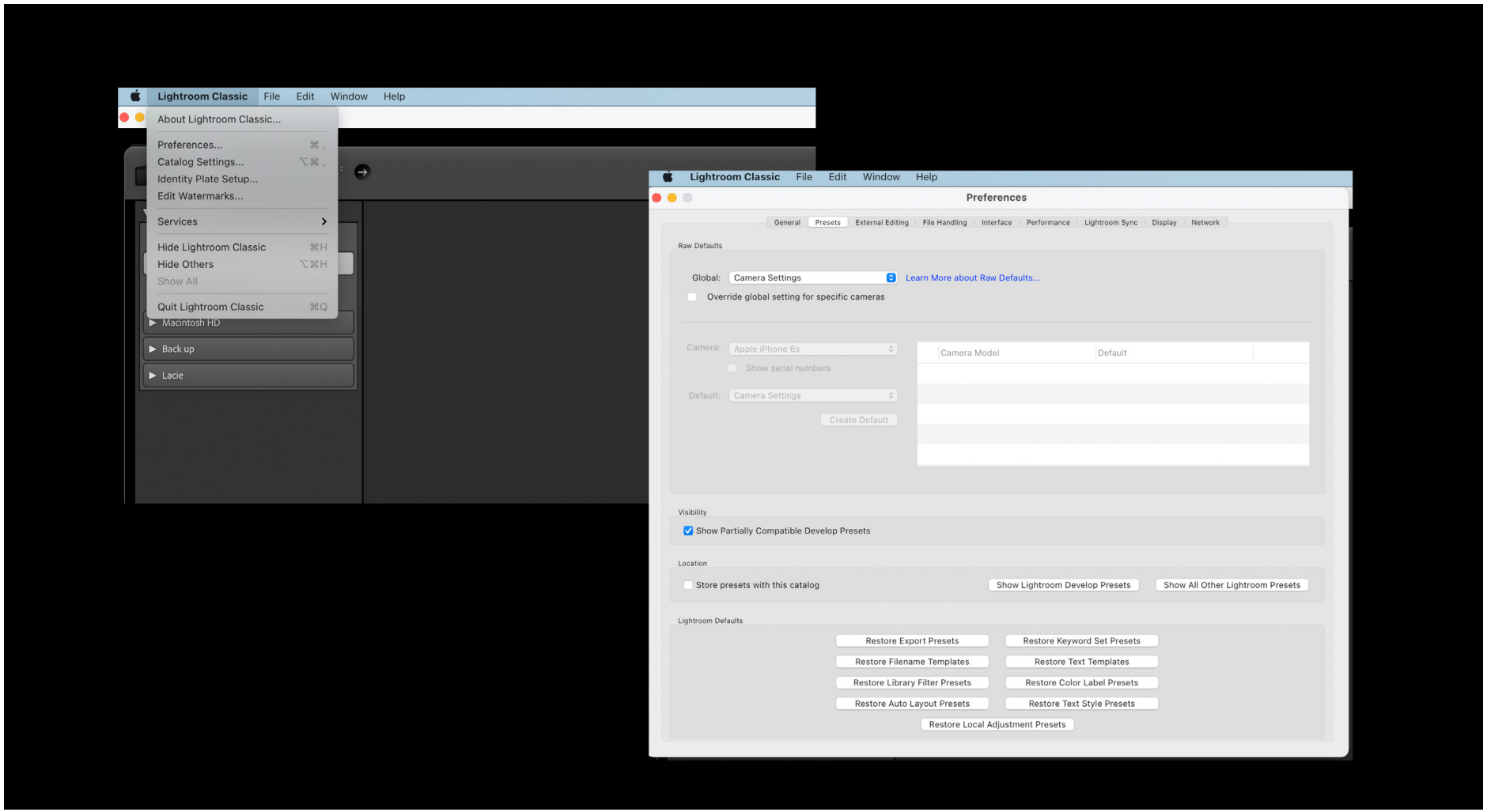
1. Developing

In part I of this article, I talked about the cooling-off period I impose on myself between capture and edit. Of course, I do have to approach my computer eventually! After enough time has elapsed, I upload the card via Lightroom and, once the contents are backed up, I format it. I know some photographers who keep their old cards as back-up, but I have enough backups, take too many photos, and would rather not keep buying new cards. I allow Lightroom to organise the photos in the default date format and I enable smart previews so that I will be able to work on files when away from my external hard drives. Once the photos are fully uploaded, I may assign appropriate keywords but, more consistently, I also rename the files by adding the location after the date.



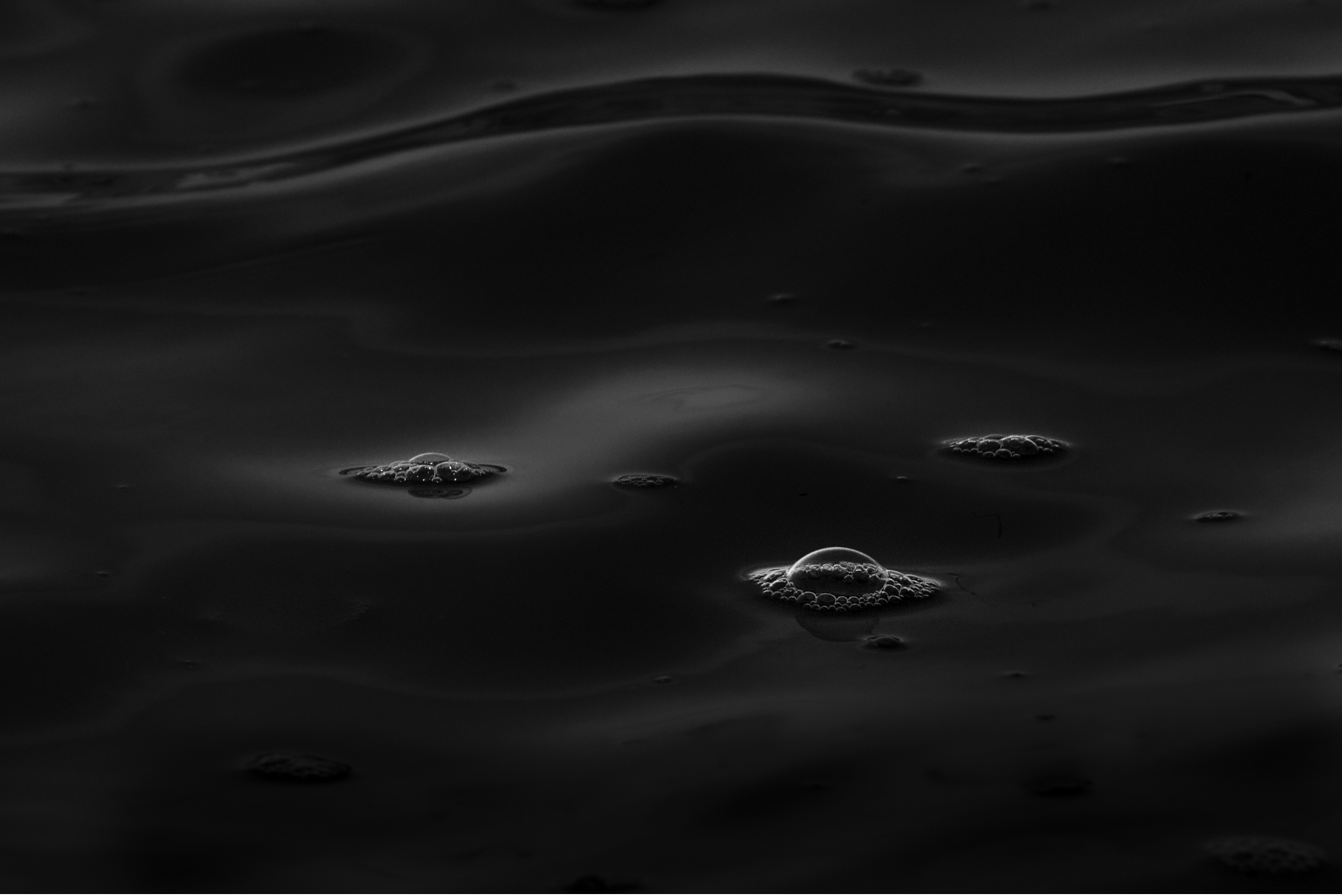
I find it convenient to upload to Lightroom using the default date format but then I rename the folders by adding the location after the date.

When we import photos into Lightroom, by default the Adobe Colour profile is applied. This is not a setting in our cameras. Of course, I can edit the RAW file back to what I want, but why settle for that disconnect in your workflow? I have set up Lightroom so that it imports the RAW files with camera settings rather than the default Adobe Colour. So, for example, if I have worked in Camera Monochrome, the photos come into Lightroom in monochrome. I now have a more relevant starting point for my edit. As I explained in part I, I like to choose the picture profile in camera, so this is an obvious next step. Some people have told me they prefer to work with as natural a look as they can so they have a starting point closer to the basic RAW file (and the JPEG histogram in camera is a little more relevant). Even so, I would still recommend this workflow because Adobe Colour is not the same as the neutral setting in your camera.



I have set up Lightroom so that it imports using my camera settings rather than the default Adobe Colour.

When I review the photos, I usually start with those I rated in camera. I might use the pick flag (keyboard shortcut “P”) for frames I want to edit soon. I am looking for frames that interest me, that are a little bit different. The only photos I delete are complete disasters. The photographer I am now is not the same as the photographer I will be in the future. I might have a particular agenda now that will drive me to value certain captures more than others. Next year, I may be looking for something different. I definitely don’t want to be too tidy now and risk destroying photos that may later become favourites.



I prefer not to delete. This is one of several photographs in my portfolio that I would have lost if I were too tidy in Lightroom.
Canon 5D-SR + 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 at 400mm, f/11, 1/640sec, ISO400

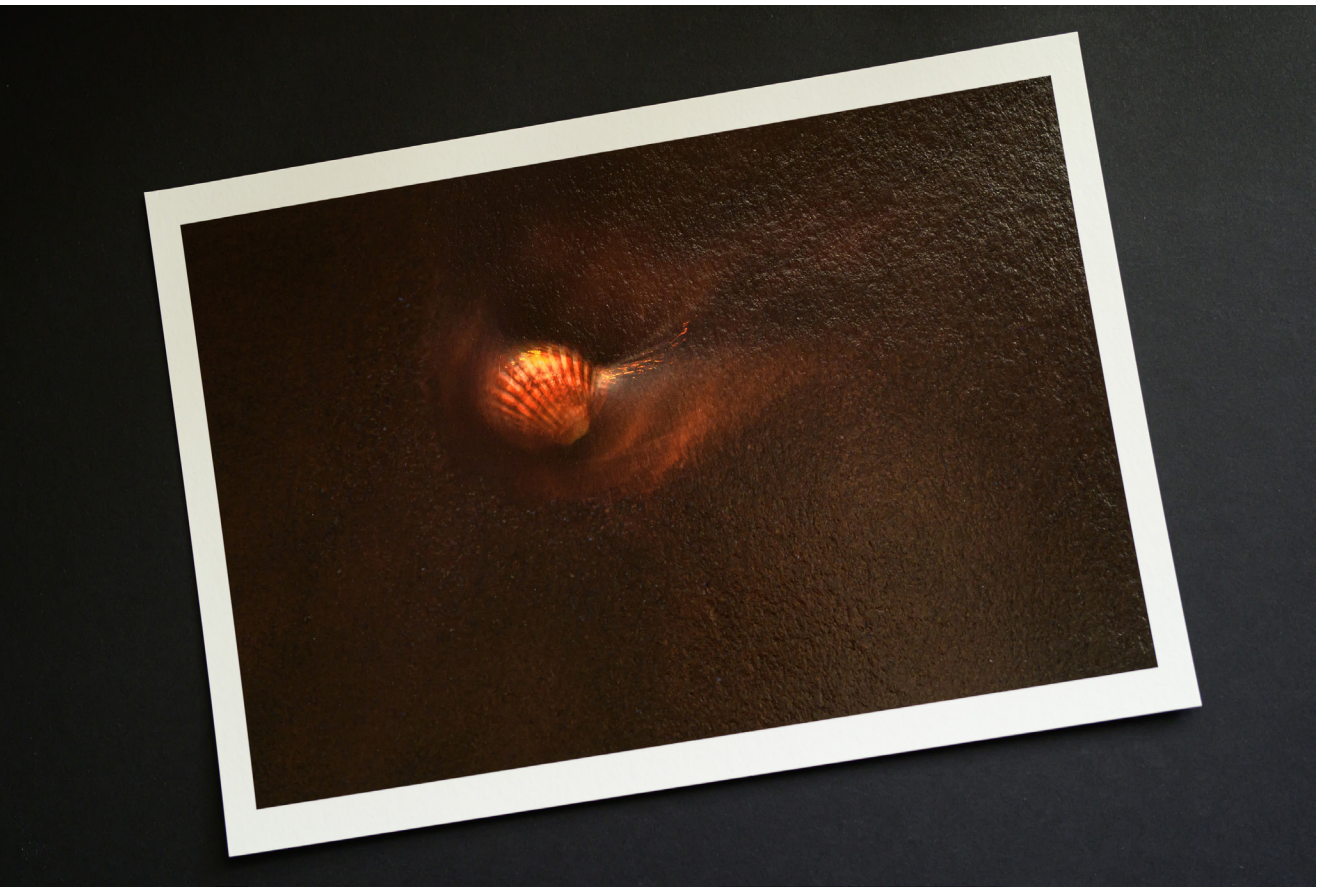
Editing is, for me, a fairly brief interlude. I am an outdoor photographer because that is my happy place, so my workflow is designed to enable me to come as close as I can to my finished artwork while I'm in my happy place. However, I obviously do have to develop my photos. "Straight out of camera" is not a badge of honour! I think it's important to remember that what we see and what the camera sees are not the same. We don't even know we've seen anything until it's been mediated by our brain, influenced by our unique life experience and imagination. I develop my photos to look the way I saw them in my mind's eye when I captured the moment. However, there are limits. I prefer to work with what nature is giving me – I won't try to make a clear day into a foggy day, or a stormy day into a tranquil one. I'd rather go out and seek those conditions than try to create them in software. Most of my edits happen in the basic panel and my favourite selection tool is the brush. I hardly ever need to go to Photoshop, and I don't use plug-ins. As a reminder, I am not saying it is wrong to use those things. However, it suits me to have a swift and simple editing workflow; the sort of work I create does not require any more manipulation than Lightroom allows; and I like not generating enormous TIFF files in external editors!

I prefer not to work against what nature is offering me, in processing and in camera. Here, I used a fast shutter to capture the action on a stormy day and a slow one to express the tranquillity of a calm one, and I processed the files sympathetically.
Left: Nikon Z8 + 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 and 1.4x TC at 560mm, f/11, 1/1250sec, ISO400
Right: Canon 5D-SR + 16-35mm f/2.8 at 26mm, f/16, 180sec, ISO100

2. Printing

Once I have finished an edit, I will print the photograph, usually at A3 size (approx. 16”), on the paper I think I will use for that photograph if it makes it into my portfolio. I love printing and it has become an indispensable part of my workflow. I enjoy the way my choice of paper can change and elevate the artwork. I have favourite papers and usually know instinctively which is right for any photo, but at the start I experimented with many different papers, and I do still occasionally try new ones. For me, black and white work is always on a matte paper with a white base, but I usually print my colour work on a pearl paper and have recently been impressed with some test prints I have made on a new bamboo baryta. I could witter on about paper at length, but then we’d need a part III!

I like the way printing has made me a slower and more thoughtful photographer.



Once I have my print, I pin it to my wall and live with it, seeing it every day as I come and go in my studio. After a while, I may notice something I want to change. If so, I edit the photo and print it again and so on. It's only after a photograph has withstood this level of scrutiny that I decide it's ready to be published.

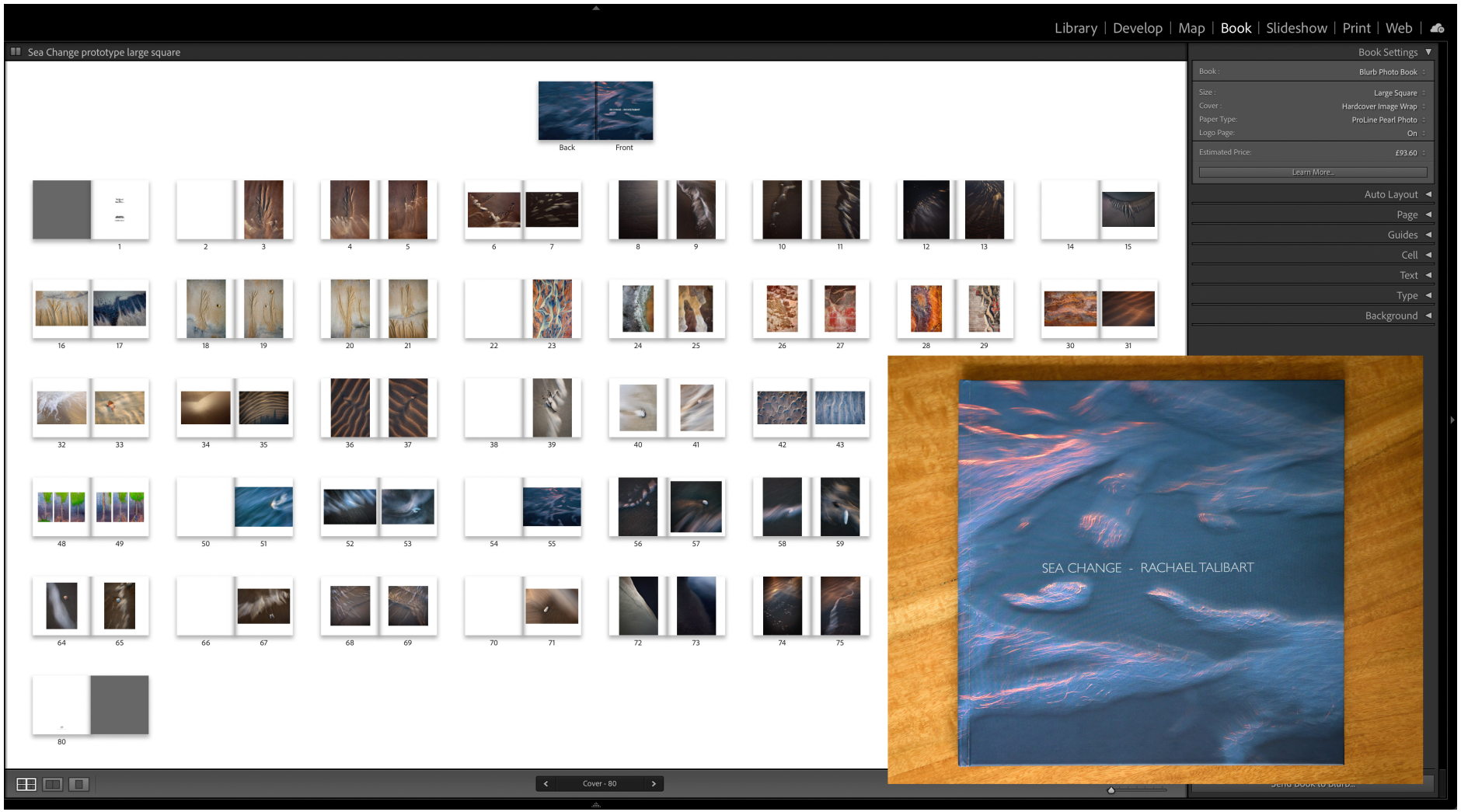
I have a set of papers I know I like, but every now and then it's fun to try others. I was recently impressed with this new (to me) paper by Hahnemühle, Fine Art Bamboo Gloss Baryta.

3. Publication

Publication, for me, can mean my website, social media, press, exhibitions and books. If you want to know more about exhibiting and selling pints, you can find my two-part series about it in the October and December 2022 issues of Elements. I do not have the sort of online presence that puts me under pressure to share new work frequently. Unfortunately, social media algorithms do not reward this approach, so if you are looking to make or boost a career as a photographer, you may find it better to ignore this part of my workflow. I don't think you can change who you are at heart, and I prefer not to publish work before it is ready. Do I sometimes make mistakes and share work that later makes me cringe? Of course, but I can honestly say it happens less frequently because of my workflow.

4. Projects

A final word about something else integral to workflow: I have found working on projects keeps me feeling fulfilled, so much so that I hardly do anything else. Projects are professionally important because coherent portfolios appeal to collectors, are more interesting for the press to write about, and make great content for books. More importantly, taking an idea and extending it over a whole body of work is creatively rewarding. I always have several projects on the go, which means that whatever the conditions or location, there's something I can work on. I keep all my projects in collections in Lightroom and occasionally create books out of them using the book module or making them by hand. I do not attempt to market these; they are for my own satisfaction. I'm enjoying using photographs that don't fit in my "brand." For example, I recently made a Japanese stab-bound book of black and white photographs from my garden. It's just for me and I am really pleased with it.



I occasionally make books through Blurb in Lr, just for me. The day the postman delivers a beautiful book of my work is always a happy and encouraging one. It's not cheap, but if you have a book ready to go, and are on Blurb's email list, you only have to wait – there'll be an offer along soon enough.

The reason for mentioning this is that I don't believe anyone's workflow should be too streamlined. In part I, I mentioned a chap I encountered in Iceland who had a very streamlined workflow, but what a price he paid for it! I think workflow should be less about efficiency and more about enjoyment. By all means avoid wasting time – it's a finite resource, after all – but make room for the occasional diversion. It's the best way to keep your imagination in play. I firmly believe that if you adopt a workflow that brings you pleasure, it will enrich your experience and show in your photographs.

It's important to allow space in my workflow for creative tangents, like this handmade book I created recently of photographs from my garden.

Rachael Talibart

https://rachaeltalibart.com

Panoramic Digital Photography

text by **Zac Henderson**
images by **Steven Friedman**

Panoramic photographs carry properties that have been celebrated since the birth of the medium. The expanded aspect ratio gives photographers greater freedom in composition, and the immediately noticeable aspect ratio entices and invites viewers in for closer inspection, rewarding them with a more immersive viewing experience when observed at appropriate sizes. Though film offers a speedier and more direct capture method, it cannot stand up to the flexibility and convenience of digital capture when properly implemented, nor can it practically execute more complicated panoramic outputs, making panoramic digital photography a more capable, if more demanding technique.

The simplest and most basic form of a digital panoramic photograph, as defined by an aspect ratio of at least 2:1, or at least 2 units wide for every 1 unit tall, is to crop a panoramic aspect ratio out of a single image. Composing in the field for an intentional crop with the knowledge that the final output resolution will be adequate for the intended output medium is a completely valid practice. This decision must be made consciously, however, as this technique leads to a drastic sacrifice in image area and resolution which can substantially hinder an image's output potential. A step beyond the simple crop is to capture several single images to be combined in post-production, thus expanding what the camera system is able to render in a single frame. Stitching also broadens the effective size of the sensor, increases the final image's resolution, and widens the lens's field of view.

For consistent panoramic stitches of the highest quality it's necessary to understand and execute some basic principles. Modern stitching software relies on image overlap in order to combine the final image properly, with a roughly 30% overlap between images as an ideal in most cases. Though it's possible to get away with less, when in doubt, more overlap is better than not enough. The number of images in a panorama will vary dramatically depending on the sensor, focal length, and composition. Panoramic digital capture is not beholden to a single row, so when capturing a multi-row panorama it's important to maintain a 30% overlap horizontally, as well as vertically. Conscious horizon level maintenance is essential to make the most use of an image set, as drifting above or below the horizon will result in an inefficient final stitch. The images that make up a panorama should all be treated as part of a whole and should share essentially every quality aside from composition. This means white balance, exposure, shutter speed, depth of field, plane of focus, and focal length, essentially anything that could differentiate one image from another, must remain constant. All these techniques apply whether the panorama is captured by hand or when mounted on a tripod. Though the former is absolutely possible with the right considerations, including careful shutter speed management, the latter is vastly preferred and can quickly minimize unusable portions of a stitched image.

Though digital panoramas don't necessarily require any specialized hardware, the nature of the capture process enjoys quick and dramatic gains from just a few items that can increase the reliability and efficiency with which panoramas are generated. Essentially any correctly levelled tripod will promote consistent horizon placement, but this can be a tedious task, as the trial and error required to finely control tripod leg height can lead to madness. This is especially true as even a slightly unlevel panning platform will lead to a tilted horizon and a stair-stepped final stitch, forcing a crop or the addition of artificial elements in post. By incorporating a levelling base that sits between the tripod legs and head, the tripod legs can be roughly positioned while the levelling base can be finely adjusted, allowing the panning platform of the tripod head to be precisely levelled far more effectively. The combination of a levelling base and a panoramic head in tandem further increase the efficiency with which panoramic images can be captured.

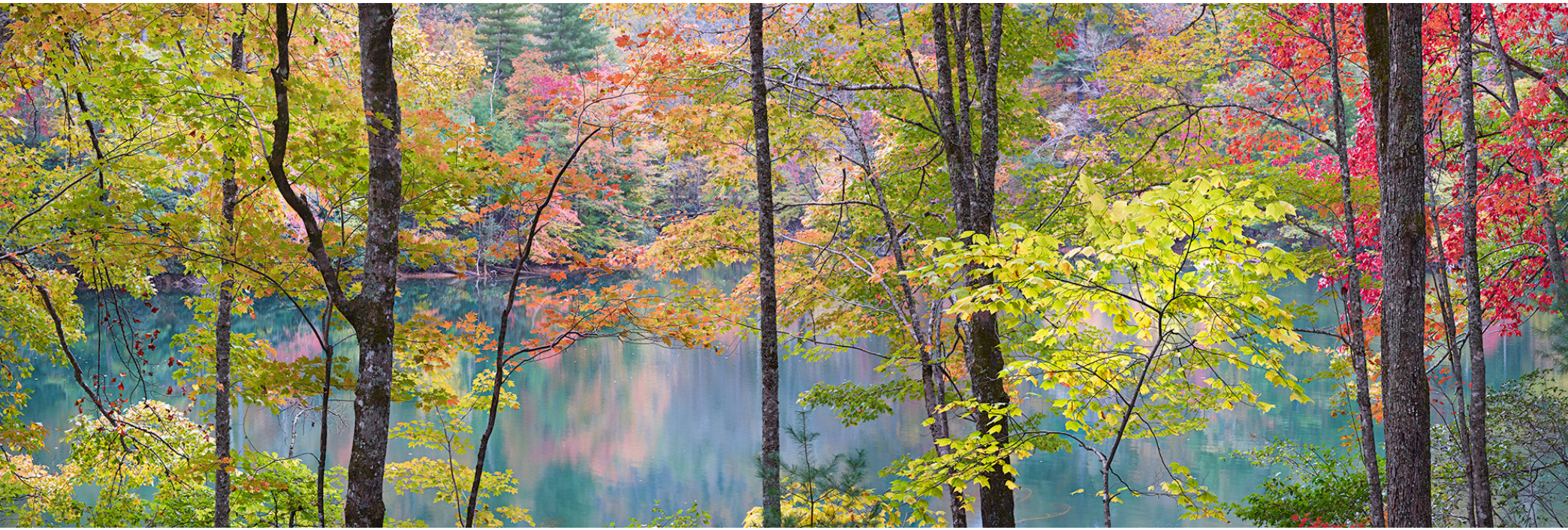
Panoramic heads come in a few different forms that promote more or less range of motion and may or may not include a nodal rail which I discuss in the next paragraph, but all separate rotation and tilt movements will often include placement markings and/or click stops. This enables precise camera placement during a stitch and allows the photographer to keep track of where the camera is during multi-row stacks, ensuring accurate overlap and preventing superfluous capture as well as skipped images.

A tripod with a levelling base and panoramic head streamline panoramic capture to a high level. However, we have yet to discuss parallax. Though less critical for distant subjects and longer focal lengths, wide angle lenses and subjects that are near the camera may present stitching software with unique challenges, particularly for architecture, interiors, and tabletop. Parallax shift occurs when the position of a lens's optical centre changes in relationship to elements in the composition during panning or tilting. This can lead a camera to effectively see "behind" a feature in a photograph that the feature blocked in a previous exposure. This new data can be misinterpreted in a stitching software and can lead to errors in the final stitch. The antidote for this parallax shift is to find and employ a given lens's nodal point, also called its "no parallax" point. This is a point in space of a given lens which, when positioned over the tripod head's rotational axis, allows the lens to maintain its spatial relationship with all elements in the composition and supports the creation of an error-free panorama. Finding a lens's nodal point requires testing and the use of a nodal rail. This rail allows the camera to be moved forward or backward in relation to the central axis of the tripod. Assuming the nodal point of a lens is found near the middle of the lens barrel, the middle of the lens barrel should then be placed over the centre of the tripod, specifically, the panning head's rotational axis. This positions the camera body "behind" the tripod a small amount. Once this no parallax point is found for a given lens it can be recorded and referred to again and again, but it will need to be found for each lens used. For zoom lenses, the nodal point for any given focal length in the zoom range will need to be found and recorded. This point in a lens is dependent on the lens's construction, so two lenses of the same focal length from different manufacturers may have a different nodal point. When used properly, the combination of a tripod, levelling base, nodal rail, and panoramic head can lead to the creation of flawless 360º spherical panoramic images.

Though more useful for traditional panoramic images, further dedicated panoramic hardware includes specialized camera bodies and tilt/shift lenses. Lenses with shift movements can position the lens's image circle independent of the camera sensor and lead to nearly flawless stitches when the camera body is mounted to a tripod. This is still an imperfect method for stitching, as in this scenario the camera body remains locked to a tripod while the lens's shifting movement is what changes the composition between captures, allowing parallax shift as mentioned above, though this time through lateral movement rather than rotation. When the shifting lens is stabilized to a tripod, however, and the camera's sensor is allowed to move within the stationary image circle, images may be captured and stitched flawlessly. And though there are no dedicated panoramic digital cameras, arguably aside from cinema cameras, panoramic camera bodies do exist. These bodies take the form of technical cameras, or large format style camera bodies that employ shift and/or rise/fall movements. For example, the Alpa 12 PANO's specialty is rear shift. Negating the need for pivoting around a nodal point for wide aspect ratio panoramic images, with a lens that casts a sufficiently large image circle, a digital back mounted to the rear of the camera body can enjoy 35mm of rear shift in either direction, allowing for an enormous stitched image free from any parallax shift, vastly simplifying the capture process. A more approachable body for various mirrorless camera systems, the Cambo Actus MV allows a variety of digital mirrorless bodies as well as digital backs to be used with 20mm of lateral shift on the front or rear standard, or both simultaneously, as well as 15mm of rise/fall on either standard in addition to tilt and swing capabilities.

Once images have been captured in the field, the next step is to process the individual files. Prior to stitching, images should have their distortion and optical vignetting corrected in consistent values. This lightens the load for the stitching software and contributes to minimal distortion and smooth gradations, as in an unbroken blue sky. Though less important for software that stitches to a .dng file, any and all image adjustment should be performed to raw files prior to exporting jpegs or tiff files for stitching, as raw files will be more flexible than a processed tiff or jpeg. Choosing an image out of the set with the greatest contrast for highlight and shadow adjustments as well as colour correction as a preliminary editing candidate is a good practice, allowing the same exact set of adjustments to then be applied to the remaining images in the set for a consistent final image. Once all of the images in the set have been carefully and consistently adjusted, it's finally time to put them together.

Panoramic stitching software is easy to find these days. Both Lightroom and Capture One, two of the leading raw processing and organizational software available, incorporate panoramic stitching. Though lacking in advanced controls, a major benefit of using the stitching function in either software includes the ability to stitch raw files into a .dng format, maintaining a great deal of latitude and adjustment potential from the original raw files. The resulting stitches from this software are generally adequate, though close inspection is necessary and is best used for uncomplicated stitches or rough approximations before exporting to more capable software. Should panoramas not perfectly mesh here, Photoshop's photomerge ability can be used with generally reliable results. For 360º panoramas and the greatest control over the stitching process, including repeatable templates, PTGui is the software of choice, and what I use in my work as a professional digitech for panoramic stitching on commercial projects.



Creating panoramic photographs via the above digital means is certainly the most repeatable, reliable, and most modern method available. Either through all or some combination of the described hardware and best practices, flawless panoramic photographs may be captured on a repeatable, consistent basis. What digital capture lacks in straightforward panoramic recording as in film, it more than makes up for in expanded capability, enormous potential size, highest potential image quality, and as a direct pipeline to current and future use cases. Modern stitching software is ubiquitous and can combine even imprecise captures, while careful and prudent photography can result in technically stunning photographs with uniquely engaging qualities.

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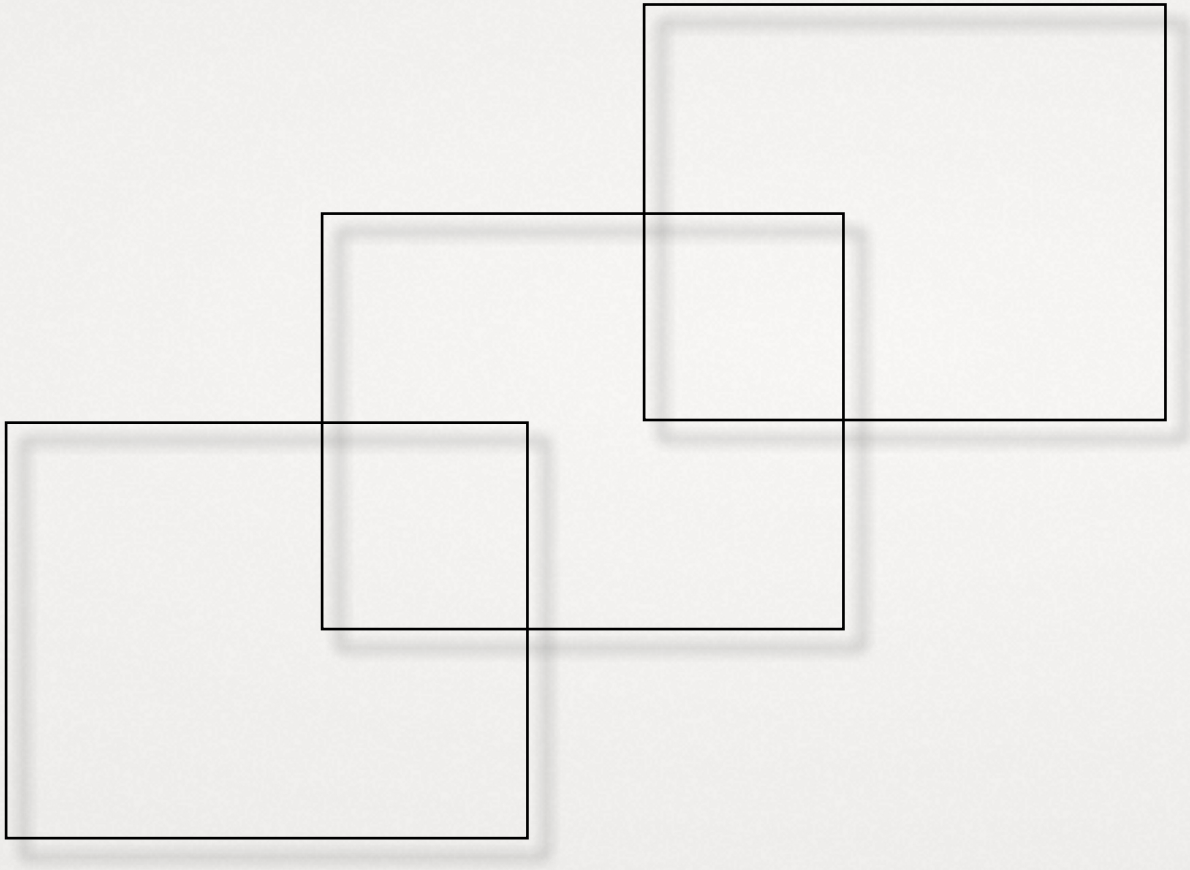

Brie Stockwell

Conversation on the Coming Spring

When I first visit a new location, I like to focus inward and listen closely to my intuition. It can be overwhelming to be in the newness. In this particular new-to-me place, there are big mountains, large swaths of very interesting rock formations and low areas with creeks and a variety of flora. I felt drawn to these low places to see the connections between the trees, shrubs and plants. As I explored, this image opened up to me and felt like a conversation about the imminent spring season between the elements.

www.wildwomanphotography.com

Hugh Sakols

Eagle Creek

This photograph shows the aftermath of the Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia River Gorge, Oregon. Fire is a natural process of plant communities in the Western United States. Unfortunately, humans started this fire. That, combined with an unprecedented trend of hotter and dryer conditions, created a fire that burned over 50,000 acres (20,200 hectares) for three months, threatening many nearby communities.

I took this photograph when on a waterfall hike. It was a strange, eerie experience hiking this section and I was thankful there was no wind. I took several frames, checking the converging lines and looking for the right amount of separation in the branches.

www.yosemitecollection.com

Mark Hopgood

I had visited Orpheus Island, which is just off the coast of North Queensland, Australia, two years before. I was attending a photography editing and printing workshop. I reviewed the images I had taken then, plus remembered those of other attendees and had a clear goal of the type of images I wanted to capture upon my return.

I tried a few compositions of the mangroves with only limited time to capture what I wanted as the area has large tides and I wanted the mangroves surrounded by water. Plus I had to work around the workshop's timetable. I didn't have any filters so that limited my exposure time. My tripod was setup in approximately 18 inches of water. The other distraction was having small sharks (roughly 24 inches) swimming around my legs as well as a few stingrays.

During the editing process I wanted a high-key look and tried to minimise the horizon line. Black and white images are my preference and that was what I set out to achieve with this capture. Luckily, as it was a printing workshop, I printed out both a colour and monochrome version. Virtually everyone preferred the colour version and I think the sprinkling of red leaves elevates it above the monochrome rendition.

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