

ISSUE 21 | MAY 2013



for PHOTOGRAPHERS
AND AFICIONADOS

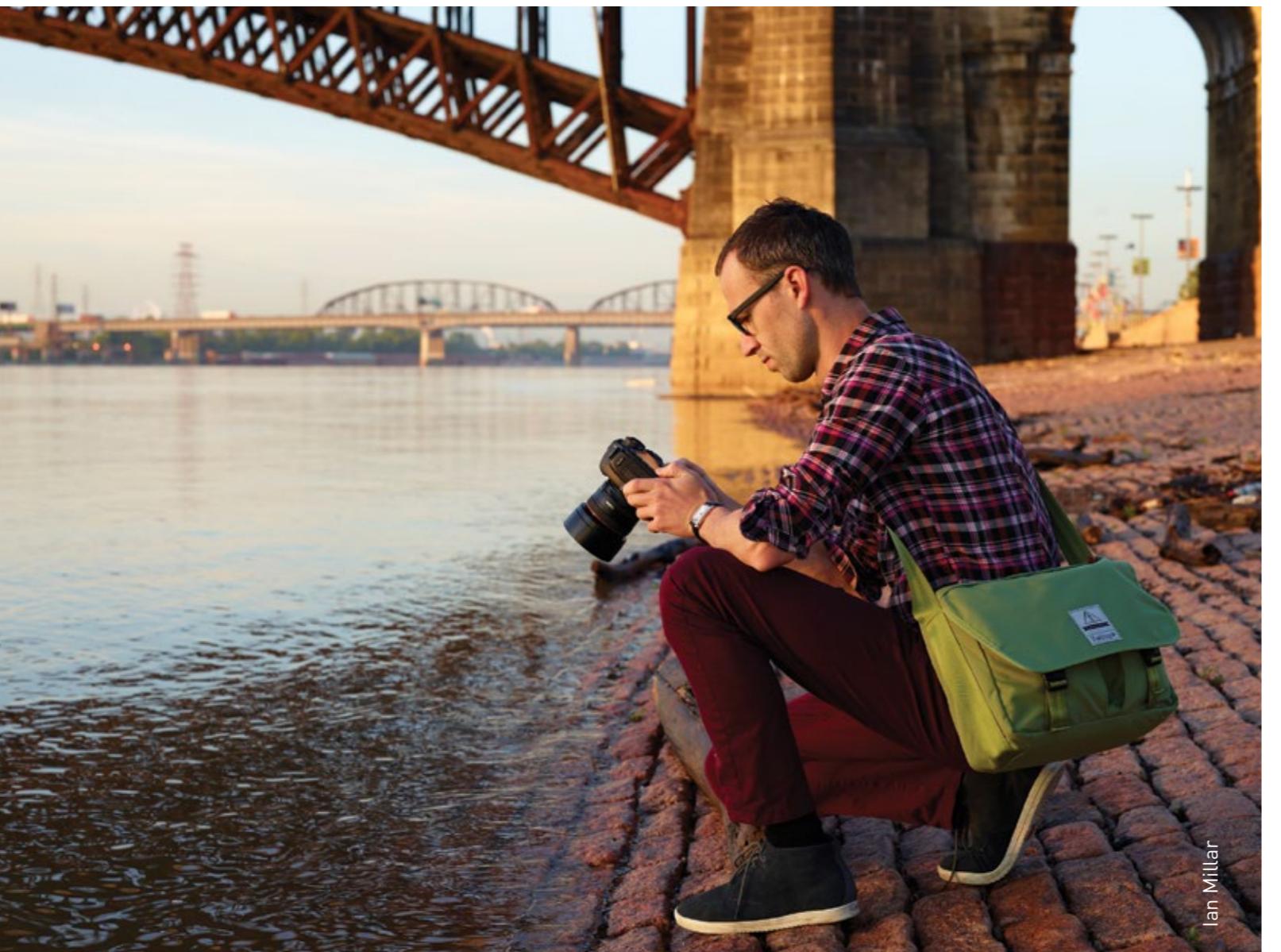
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RACHAEL MCKENNA
Cats and dogs

JOHN DOOGAN
Great outdoors

VANESSA WU
Hold very still





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Welcome to issue 21, another virtual smorgasbord of ideas and imagery for your viewing pleasure.

Three New Zealand photographers feature this month:

Rachael McKenna (nee Hale) now bases herself in the south of France and as this issue hits your inbox she's working on her next book set in New York. Some girls have all the luck. Our article shows ten images from each of Rachael's two recent books, 'The French Cat' and 'The French Dog', her love of animals driving her to fearlessly stalk domestic prey on regular walking safaris, rural and urban. Rachael shot our cover.

John Doogan is a specialist landscape and self confessed 'great outdoors' photographer. Based in Christchurch in the South Island, his work reflects an observant but gentle eye on the changing palette offered up by light and geography.

Vanessa Wu is an Auckland commercial photographer shooting for a huge range of clients and represented by a prominent agency. We present a folio of her carefully constructed twin passions – still life and food photography – on page 74.

A warm welcome to Brisbane based Australian photographer, and popular judge – if that's not an oxymoron – Ian Poole, who joins our team as a regular contributor. Ian will dive into, and often overflow, our back page thought piece – previously titled The Slack Page – but henceforth to be called, whenever Poole is in residency, The Deep End.

Our subscription prize promotion draws near to a close, offering the chance for one lucky subscriber to win the Fujifilm X-E1 camera with companion zoom lens, a prize worth NZ\$2299 – from our friends and supporters at Fujifilm! See page 131 of this issue for full details, and yes, all existing subscribers are in the draw which will take place at the end of May!

We now have over 18,000 subscribers around the world, and each issue now attracts well over 20,000 readers. A lot of that audience building is due to you, so our sincere thanks for continuing to recommend the magazine to your friends and colleagues.

Enjoy this issue of f11. ■

Tim

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Issue 21 | May 2013

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The *f11* team

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



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



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



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



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



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



WARNING – HOTLINKS ARE EVERYWHERE!

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

If this is still baffling, learn more in our expanded instructions on **page 115** of this issue.

Featured in this issue



John DOOGAN

Great outdoors

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© John Doogan



Rachael MCKENNA

Cats and dogs

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© The Rachael Hale Trust



Vanessa WU

Hold very still

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© Vanessa Wu



PSNZ NATEX

Eyecatchers

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© Bob McCree



COVER IMAGE © The Rachael Hale Trust
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In plain sight

INTERVIEW WITH CAMILLE SEAMAN

- FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHER

In this video, Camille discusses her photography techniques with Marc Silber. Listen to her tips on getting quality natural lighting in photos, using the right camera equipment, and treating every object you photograph as if it's a person.

Source: SilberStudios via YouTube



CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO



FULL MOON SILHOUETTES

Full Moon Silhouettes is a real time video of the moon rising over the Mount Victoria Lookout in Wellington, New Zealand. Photographer Mark Gee captured the video from 2.1km away on the other side of the city. Shot on a Canon 1D MkIV with a Canon EF 500mm f/4L and a Canon 2x extender II, the video is straight off the memory card with no manipulation whatsoever.

<http://markg.com.au/>

Source : Vimeo

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO



THE BROWNBILL EFFECT

Kudos to Sally Brownbill for launching The Brownbill Effect, a website connecting Australia's best freelancers with creative agencies, businesses and projects. Check out this new creative directory.

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO

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

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

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Career decisions...

I'm fascinated by why people do whatever it is that they choose to do, personally to some degree, but more so professionally. In these times of change where we're told to expect multiple career paths over a lifetime, it's easy for some to question, what comes next, or how do I predict where opportunities will lie in the future?

I clearly remember meeting a forensic pathologist some years ago and thinking, now there's an absolute conversation killer if ever I saw one, how many potential answers must she have had ready to the oft posed social starter question, '...so what do you do?'

I'd have said, 'I work with people', but then I'm wicked. Her response was direct and clear, and yes, there was a break in the conversation.

Of course, I'm most interested in the career decisions made by photographers, this being part of my lifelong study of all things imaging related.

I'm no longer surprised when photographers tell me, 'I was never going to do anything else...' or 'from that day on I knew I'd be a photographer.' To some degree this is not unlike a great many passions, once the hook is in place, the hook is in deep, and it's there for life.

This passion abides, seems to grow stronger over time, unlike some others, pursuits, pastimes or professions. Fires need fuel, and we're fortunate that in a world heavily reliant on the visual, and aided by virtually instantaneous communication, the constant bombardment of images we're so obsessed with is that stream

of injected fuel for our consumption as well as our consciousness.

That fuel delivers energy, enthusiasm and motivation to image-makers.

As we view, so must we produce, and thereby contribute to the flow of fuel for the consumption of others.

We often ask photographers, 'what would you do if you were suddenly unable to be a photographer?' and a sharp intake of breath is generally reaction number one. Then, a pensive few seconds before a generally pretty flippant, or wholly unconvincing, reply.

That's because it's almost always unthinkable, inconceivable, or a quite unpleasant point to ponder. Generally body language telegraphs disquiet, and a fight or flight fleeting impression of why on earth would we want to do anything else?

I've only ever met two people who literally 'gave up' photography and decided this would no longer play a part in their lives. I struggled to understand it at the time, and subsequent reflection has brought no clarity either. Their flame just flickered out, all the more surprising to me because for the most part what I see around me are well fuelled and well fanned flames burning brightly.

In spite of all of the profession's trials and tribulations, most of you cannot imagine doing anything else. I think that's a fine state of affairs, you must have chosen well. ■

TS

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Photography

It's also about relationships

Making photographs of the landscape comes with all sorts of baggage, baggage which we need to be prepared to shed if we are to speak with our own voice.

It is very easy to fall into the trap of trying to see through another's eyes, or to make work which will please another, for example a competition judge, but while this may supply short-term gain, in the end it will only generate long-term pain and frustration. In a world which is becoming cluttered with imagery, where viewers are becoming increasingly jaded, and the value of the photograph is becoming increasingly degraded, we need to work hard on what separates us from the pack, on what makes our imagery surprising and different.

There are a number of ways to do this: we can seek content which has never been seen before, an increasingly difficult task; we can push our postproduction by using the latest tools and techniques; or we can seek to spend time exploring our relationship with our subject matter, taking note of our feelings, philosophies, our own life journey and its effect upon what we choose to photograph.

Of all the photographic genres, landscape photography is the oldest and the most thoroughly explored, and finding a point of difference is an extraordinarily difficult task, especially if we have the voice of others in our ears as we work. We need to engage in dialogue with those who have gone before us, exploring their techniques and approaches and especially their reasons for why, and what, they photographed. However we cannot allow ourselves to listen to them when we are in the field. We need to integrate those ideas – and then forget them when we go to work.

All photographs are about relationships: the relationship of our subject to the light; the relationship of the component elements of our photograph, both to each other and to us; the relationship of foreground to mid-ground and background; and, most importantly, our relationship with our subject matter. There are many other relationships, but these are a few to begin with.

It is very easy to fall into the Slough of Appropriation, of being desperate to capture what is before us before it departs, with the



© Tony Bridge

result that we machine gun our subject, spraying it with unfocused intentions. If I shoot enough, perhaps I will get a good one. The answer is: you probably will not. Exploring relationships means taking time, standing back and considering your subject before you approach it, taking a deep mental breath before you go to work. The longer you can spend doing this, the more complete your understanding of the relationship between you and your subject will be, and the more likely you are to find a point of entry which you might never have contemplated before. The more you practise this type of contemplative photography, the more you will integrate it into your subconscious, and the more likely you are to open the door next time you photograph.

It was mid-morning when I made this photograph, on my way back from a helicopter ride over the Southern Alps of New Zealand. Because I was the guide on this journey, I had the luxury of being able to direct the enormously skilled pilot, and enjoy the delights of having a mobile tripod 2000 m above the ground. Looking out the window at a patch of landscape I had only ever seen from the ground, I was struck by the extraordinary relationship between the

mountains and the rivers flowing in the valleys. The blueness of the light only served to accentuate the collection of triangular shapes receding to the horizon. However it was the small complementary triangle provided by the patch of grass land playing counterpoint to the music of the mountains which provided the relationship and the axis around which the photograph would have it.

Hearing my gasp of wonder, he pulled into a parking place in the sky, while I slid open the door, put my feet out on the skids and made this photograph. ■

TB

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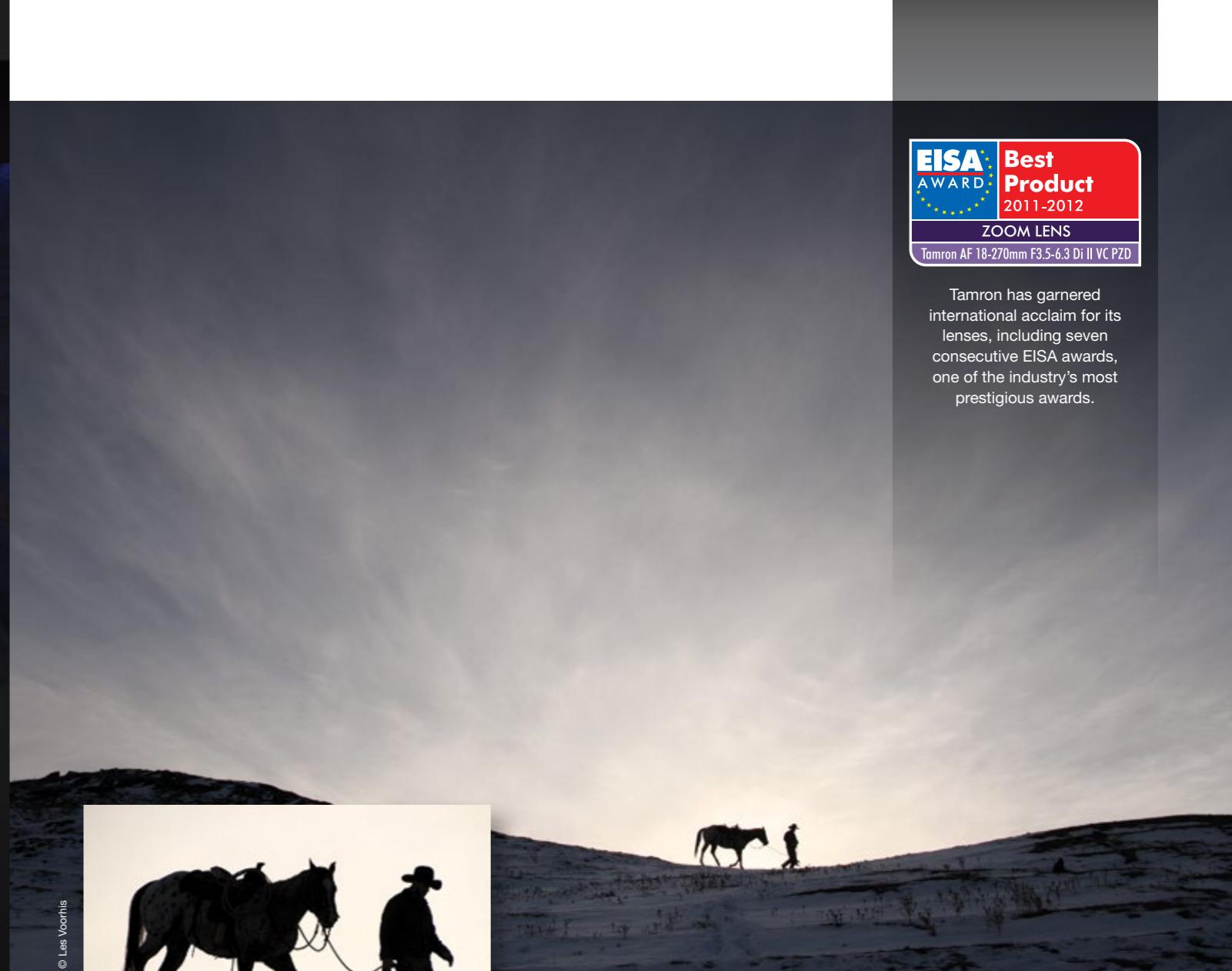


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TAMRON
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John DOOGAN

Great outdoors

John Doogan claims that he found his life's calling in photography. As a specialist landscape and 'great outdoors' photographer based in Christchurch, New Zealand, John says it's no accident that he chose to base himself in a region well recognised as a paradise for both pursuits.

A freelancer since 1997, he never really wanted to 'work for a living' and saw photography as a way to do meaningful work and earn his keep at the same time. He studied Computer Science at Massey University quickly deciding that this was not his calling, but it turned out to be useful when photography went digital a few years later. It also helped that he had an interest in creating images by merging exposures in the darkroom and had found his way into a job where he could specialise in just that, at DAC Photo Lab in Wellington. ▶



Composite image. Italy. © John Doogan

'When Photoshop and image manipulation came along, I was the first to put my hand up. The directors at DAC, Denis Clode and Peter Muller, were very generous in allowing me to do personal work after hours using their new digital suite. I absorbed myself in Photoshop 2.5 and Live Picture (now defunct, but a one-time serious contender to Photoshop) and learnt as the jobs came in. Eventually I struck out on my own and in 1991 I moved to Christchurch and started the business 'Digital Cactus' above a photo studio in Sydenham. I specialised in photo retouching when not many people were doing it. I gradually morphed into being a full-time photographer doing my own post-processing and just the occasional outside retouching job. In 2006 I was appointed an Adobe Ambassador and started a period of running workshops and attending conventions on behalf of Adobe. I still hold this role, though it is not as busy as it once was.'

The mainstays of John's work these days are commercial assignment photography and landscape stock photography.

'My particular niche is to be able to offer photography and post-production, which has led to some technically challenging assignments. Detail and planning are two of my favourite words.

One ongoing project has been South Island landscapes to run as murals along the air-bridges at Christchurch International Airport. The murals are 2.4 metres high and some are more than 30 metres in length. The only way I could achieve the resolution required was with a good knowledge of stitching, focus merging and seamlessly blending images together. I have shot panoramas from a whale watch boat, stitched together mobs of moving sheep and currently I'm photographing the grape harvest in Marlborough. The grape harvest concept is a challenging one – the mural will give the viewer the experience of walking past rows of grape vines and seeing different things down the rows as they walk by – not possible using standard

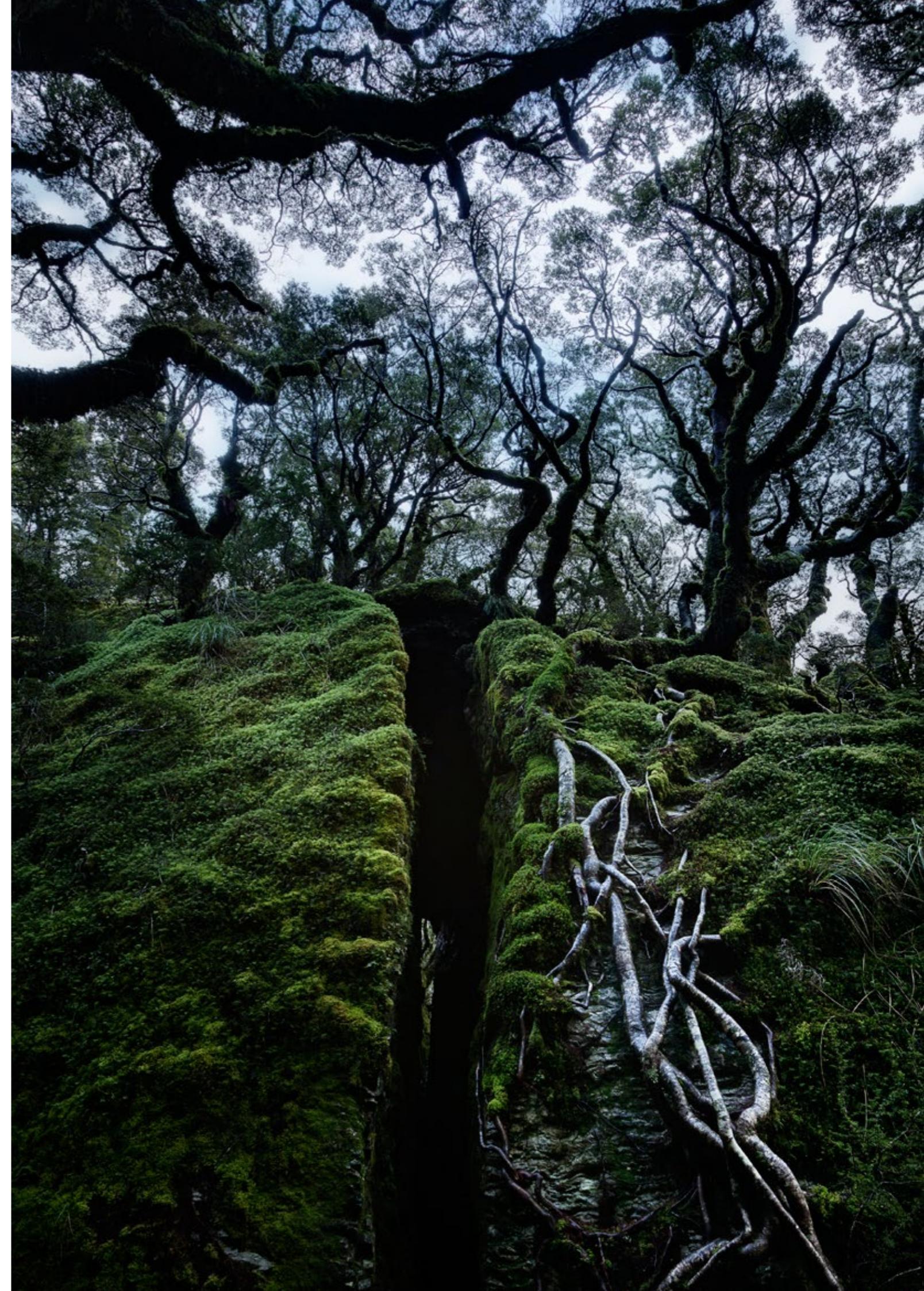
stitching techniques. I also enjoy architectural photography and have recently purchased a Canon 17mm TS lens to increase my capabilities here.'

John combines this commercial work with another venture, which combines two of his other great loves.

'My wife and I developed a passion for Italy (she is a foodie) and six years ago we started taking New Zealand photographers over there on organised tours. We made friends with some farmers in The Marche region and base ourselves there for 10 days. We are taking a break from the tours this year and will go to Italy by ourselves in December. I'm keen to try my hand at travel photography and writing articles in support of this. From the beginning, Italy has always been a place for me to practise my craft outside of my usual environment.'

Although I've pursued a few genres of photography I've found that landscape suits my personality and my interests the most. I've photographed about 6 weddings, but didn't enjoy the stress. I've also photographed fashion but found the whole scene a bit weird and I never really 'got' fashion. As for digital manipulation, the type of work I am doing currently calls for a restrained approach. It has to be believable, I'm not a big fan of the 'HDR look', too much information and the images feel like they're shouting.' ▶

► Split rock, Lake Mackenzie, Routeburn Track, NZ.
Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm lens. 5 exposures at f11 combined using HDR. © John Doogan



'As for influences: I loved the precision and mastery of craft of Ansel Adams, the conceptual thinking of Stieglitz, the darkroom creations of Jerry Uelsmann, the drama of the street photographer Henri Carter Bresson, the emotion and use of colour of Ernst Hass. In New Zealand the work of Andris Apse and Craig Potton lit my fire for the New Zealand landscape. Dick Poole was a big influence, abrupt and to the point, he was a great stirrer. As he once said – it's the process of making photos that I most enjoy. And I think that sums it up for me – you do need to love the process, the desire to keep working at it, regardless of success.'

We chatted to John about his life and work.

f11: Welcome to f11 John, good to have you here at last.

JD: Thanks, and congratulations on a stimulating magazine.

f11: What was the impact of the February 2011 earthquake in Christchurch in terms of its effect on your work and family?

JD: The year 2011, after the big February shake, was a particularly difficult year, as it was for most local professional photographers. Work dried up and there was a lot of damage to deal with. Many photographers said that if you could survive that year you would be OK and I think that is how it has worked out. Help from suppliers such as Adobe, Canon and Nikon; and our professional associations, the NZIPP and AIPA, made a big difference. Things are much brighter now, there will be many opportunities coming up, as there will be new buildings to photograph and empty walls to decorate. ▶

► Lindis Pass area, Otago, South Island, NZ. Canon 1DS MkII with 24-70mm lens. © John Doogan



f11: Some photographers only shoot when the meter is running. Do you fall into this category or do you shoot personal stuff?

JD: I've always shot personal work and this has often led to commercial assignments. I believe in the old adage 'what you show is what you get'. Showing personal work can lead to more interesting assignments, because you're more likely to be hired for a certain 'look' rather than an image anyone can make. I've sometimes thought of myself as an 'amateur professional' or a 'professional amateur'. However, the business side of professional photography is quite different to the creative side of photography. I've had to work hard at keeping the two sides in sync.

f11: Tell us about your involvement with professional photographers associations.

JD: I'm probably not the NZIPP's most active member, but I do appreciate the value of belonging even though most of the time I'm happy doing my own thing.

f11: Energy, ideas, enthusiasm – where do these come from and how do you sustain them?

JD: That is a hard question. I think it is the one thing you can't teach. It is one thing to go on a photo workshop and be inspired for a week but another to sustain that enthusiasm after the inevitable mistakes and failures. Not to mention, the time needed to practise and learn your craft. I did learn early on that you can't develop in a vacuum. It is important to look at other ➤

► WW2 gun emplacement, Godley Head, Christchurch, NZ. Canon 1DS MkI with 24-85mm lens. Stitched image made from three vertical shots. © John Doogan



creative work. And not just photography – painting, music, film – it's all part of it. It is also important to put your work out for critique and feedback via competitions, awards, and publications. It can be enlightening to see how others respond to your work, although it's not always what you expect.

f11: What's the most exciting aspect of being in photography these days?

JD: The availability of information and resources for learning. There has never been a better time to learn new skills.

f11: What's the best advice anyone ever gave you about being a photographer?

JD: 'Get up early, and be up high' – Galen Rowell

f11: When did you last expose a roll of film?

JD: I honestly don't know – probably 2003? I don't feel the need to go back there.

f11: Do you print your own work for exhibitions and awards programs?

JD: For awards programs yes, but for exhibition I use a specialist printer, Sean Dick from Evoke Studios in Auckland.

f11: Do you maintain your own stock library, or do you have a relationship with a library?

JD: I maintain my own stock library for landscapes but still have a relationship with Photo New Zealand for more general work.

f11: How important is stock in your current business model?

JD: It is very important. Concentrating on the New Zealand landscape for stock has often meant I can show work that can lead to assignments. Having good coverage in a niche, and high quality images, have become more important factors as the photography stock market has become more saturated. I don't think selling microstock for micromoney is much of a business model for photographers. ▶



Blue Lake, St Bathans, Otago, NZ. Canon 1DS MkII with 24-70mm lens.
Stitched image made from 5 vertical shots. © John Doogan

'Detail and planning are two of my favourite words'

f11: What are your equipment preferences?

JD: I've been a long time Canon user and I'm pretty happy with their offerings. My main camera body these days is the 5D MkIII.

f11: Anything on the 'wish list' at present?

JD: More prime lenses. 24mm f1.4, 24mm TS, 85mm f1.2...there is always something on my wish list.

f11: So 'where to from here' for John Doogan?

JD: I'm quite excited by time lapse photography at the moment and have a few projects planned around that. Also night sky photography has me inspired.

f11: Thanks John, look forward to seeing some of that work in due course. ■

TS

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*Moeraki Boulders, Otago, NZ. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm lens.
© John Doogan*



A tourist boat heads out of Milford Sound as a storm clears, Mitre Peak is on the left. Fiordland, South Island, NZ. Canon 5D MkII with 24-105mm lens. Stitched image made from 4 horizontal shots. © John Doogan

► Mackinnon Pass on the Milford Track, South Island, NZ. Canon 5D MkII with 16-35mm lens. Stitched image made from 4 horizontal shots. © John Doogan



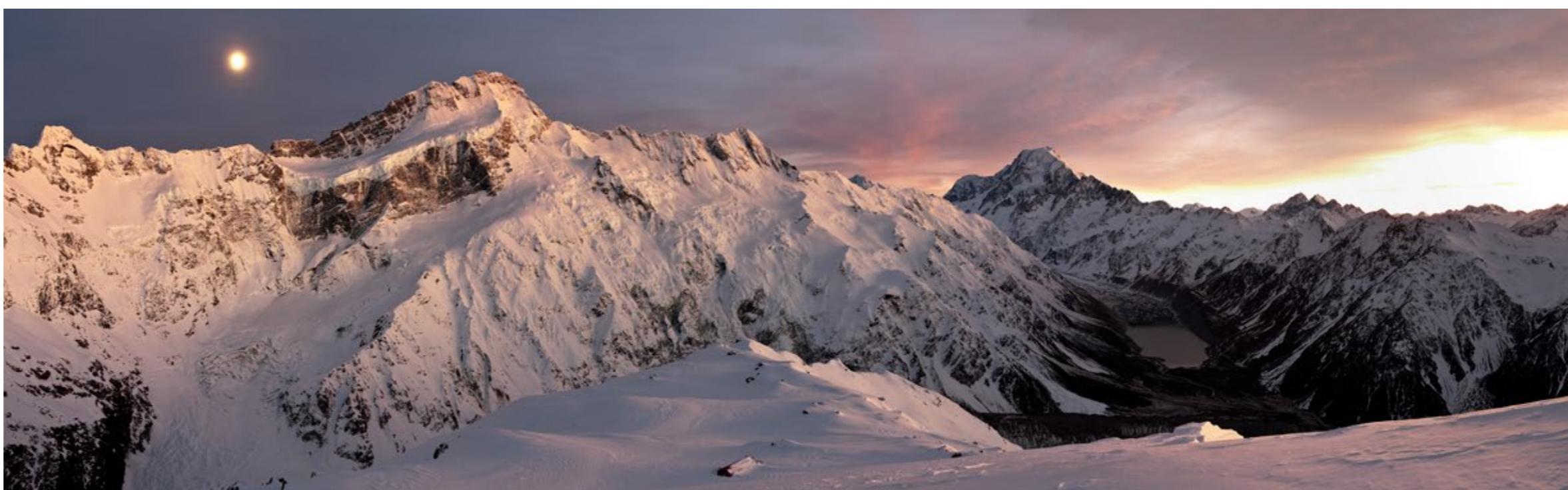




▲ Looking up the Waimakariri and Bealey rivers into an approaching storm, Canterbury, NZ. Canon 5D MkII with 24-70mm lens. Stitched image made from 3 horizontal shots, sky and land exposed separately.
© John Doogan

◀ Previous double page spread: Daly's Wharf, a well known local landmark at Akaroa, Banks Peninsula, NZ. I was actually after a picture with the antique light on at dawn but I was a little late and waited for this one instead. Canon 1Ds MkII with 24-70 lens.
© John Doogan

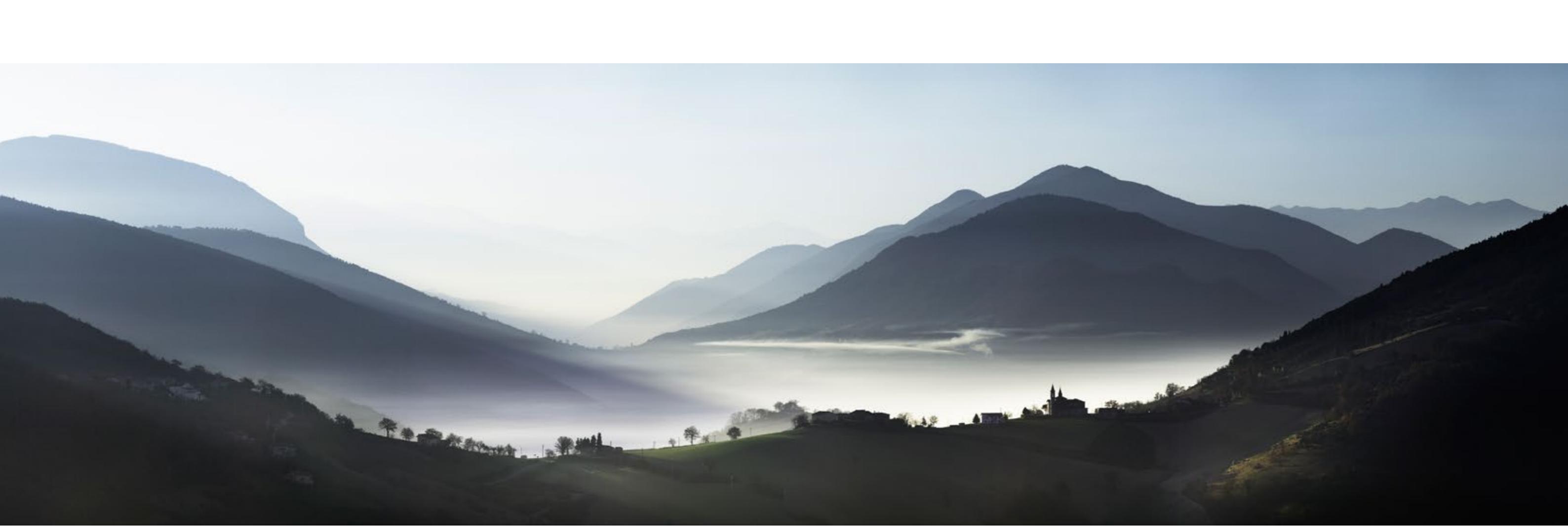
► Mount Cook/Aoraki (far peak) and the Southern Alps, NZ. Canon 1DS MkIII with 24-105mm lens. Stitched image made from 4 horizontal shots. © John Doogan





*Macrocarpa tree, Kaikoura, South Island, NZ. Canon 1Ds MkI with 24-85mm lens. A stitched image made up of 6 vertical frames.
© John Doogan*

'Although I've pursued a few genres of photography I've found that landscape suits my personality and my interests the most.'



Apennine Mountains, early morning near Arcevia, Italy. Canon 1DS MkI
with 24-70mm lens. Stitched image made from 8 vertical shots.
© John Doogan

'Italy has always been a place for me to practise my craft outside of my usual environment.'

►► Following double page spread: Te Paki giant sand dunes, Northland, NZ.
Canon 1DS MkIII with 24-70mm lens. © John Doogan





Looking west towards the setting sun and the Richmond Range from the Wither Hills, Blenheim, NZ. Canon 5D MkII with 100-400mm lens. Stitched image made from 3 horizontal shots. © John Doogan

'I've always shot personal work and this has often led to commercial assignments.'



Lagoon Saddle shelter lit by one candle and millions of stars, Craigieburn Forest Park, Canterbury, NZ.
Canon 5D MkII with 35mm f1.4 lens. Separate exposures for hut and night sky. © John Doogan



Shot with 0.9 Hard Grad and Filter hood



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Rachael MCKENNA

Cats and dogs

Over the past decade Rachael Hale, now Rachael McKenna, has become renowned throughout the world for her quirky and delightful images of babies and animals.

Rachael graduated from Wellington Polytechnic's Design School in 1991 majoring in photography. Her first job was working as a photographic assistant to then New Zealand based Anne Geddes, who was on her own journey to superstardom within the field of baby photography.

Three years later Rachael headed to Europe on what New Zealanders call their OE (Overseas Experience). Returning home in 1995, she was determined to set up her own studio specialising in photographing animals and children.

Her first big break-through came that year when she entered an image of a pig wearing a watch in a competition for New Zealand professional photographers held by equipment supplier APIX. The only stipulation was that the image included a watch or clock face. 'The pig was a Kunekune called Pixie,' says Rachael. '...and the watch was made out of an old clock, an ancient leather belt and some massive fake diamantes, fastened round Pixie's chubby neck.'

The prize was a set of studio lights. Rachael, only recently back from London, broke, and hoping to set up business on her own, desperately needed those lights. 'And I won!' says Rachael. The same image also went on to win a Gold Award at the Australian Professional Photography Awards (APPA). Now Rachael could concentrate on her two passions, photography and animals.

After the release of her first book, '101 Salivations: For the Love of Dogs' in 2003, the 'Rachael Hale' brand started to grow and Rachael spent the next few years creating animal images for licensing. As well as appearing on literally millions of greeting cards, calendars, posters and stationery around the world, Rachael's images continued to feature in a ▶

► *Image from The French Cat; Boone monitors the street life below from his Parisian window perch. St Germain, Paris, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.*



number of bestselling animal books including, '101 Cataclysms: For the Love of Cats'; 'Smitten: A Kitten's Guide to Happiness'; and 'Snog: A Puppy's Guide to Love'.

More recently, Rachael has turned her eye to babies with 'Baby Love' published in 2008. Altogether her books have sold nearly 3 million copies in 13 languages.

Twelve years on, Rachael admits that she was becoming 'bogged down' with the relentless nature of studio work and realised that the way forward was to simply do what she'd always wanted to do, work with animals in their own environment, in the wild, using natural light.

Rachael left the company she then owned with her business partner, leaving the Rachael Hale brand – and thousands of images she'd created – behind.

'The break couldn't have happened at a better time for me,' says Rachael. Soon afterwards she met Andy McKenna, a builder from the north of England. His energy and creative spirit matched hers, and within a year they were married, expecting a baby and planning a fresh start in France, a country they both love.

By then, says Rachael, 'I was ready to change my name.' And so came the twin births of my baby, and the Rachael McKenna brand. The images Rachael creates are now published under her new name, Rachael McKenna, and she is no longer involved with the images and merchandise published under the Rachael Hale brand.

Today Rachael, husband Andy and daughter, Charlize, live in a tiny village in the Languedoc region in the south west of France.

In 2010, when her daughter was six months old, Rachael set off on her first assignment under her new name, from her long-time publisher, PQ Blackwell. As she says, 'It was my dream job, traveling through France and taking photos of beautiful cats in the character filled villages, cities and countryside.'

Rachael's gorgeous new book, 'The French Cat', was published in the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, France, Germany and Japan in September 2011.

During 2011 Rachael created the images for her latest two books, 'Lunch in Provence, a sumptuous photographic journey of food and dining in Provence'; and 'The French Dog', a companion volume to The French Cat. Both books were published worldwide in 2012.

In this issue, we've chosen to feature images from 'The French Cat' and 'The French Dog' – showing 10 images from each book.

This year, 2013, brings another exciting project to the table, 'The New York Dog'. This is a project Rachael has dreamed of producing for a long time and she is determined to make this her best book yet. The New York Dog will be another PQ Blackwell publication and will be released worldwide in April 2014.

We had the opportunity to have a long distance chat with Rachael:

f11: Hi Rachael, and welcome to f11 Magazine.

RM: Thanks, it's great to be invited to feature in a publication from my home country and to share some of the behind the scenes experiences I have encountered through my photographic journey so far. ▶

► *Image from The French Cat; Grand Frère et Petit Frère (Big Brother and Little Brother) two little kitten brothers playfully chase light and movement across the window in a quaint French country home. Kerjacob, Saint-Gilles-Vieux-Marché, Bretagne, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.*



f11: How's progress on the new book? Tell us about 'hunting' these domestic animals, and are you now enjoying prowling the streets of New York?

RM: It's a really exciting, but also slightly daunting, project. New York is such a photographed city, so the challenge is to capture images that show the true New York but also offer a different and fresh view of this international city. We are spending 5 months in NYC starting in mid April; we are actually on the plane heading there as I type my responses to these questions, after finally getting our rather active and excited 3 year old to sleep! I can't wait to get back on the streets to explore the city further. The 10 days Andy and I spent in NYC in February gave us a great feel for the place but there is so much more to discover, it is an enormous city! I have received lots of submissions of fantastic dog models and will try my best to photograph as many as possible. I will be covering all 5 boroughs of New York City and possibly creating some images on the outskirts, maybe some of the pampered pooches in the Hamptons might get to grace the pages of the book!

f11: So the book will feature a combination of 'found' domestic animals and subjects cast, pre-visualised and set up with their owners?

RM: Most of the images I will be creating for The New York Dog will be images of domestic pets captured in areas they frequently visit, doing things they often do with their owners; or capturing images at local dog 'catch-ups' – there are heaps of these – in the parks and around the city. In addition, there will be a number of images that I want to create which involve a lot more planning, but I will still be using everyday dogs, not dogs trained for TV or movie work. There will be a lot more planning for The New York Dog than there was for The French Dog book; we never spent much time in one place during our travels through France, and the French are a lot more relaxed about

their dogs being photographed. In New York I will have to make contact with owners and seek their approval prior to photographing any dogs, therefore there is not the freedom to do quite as much 'capture the moment' imagery, though I certainly will do as much as possible, but model releases will need to be signed before any image is used within the book.

f11: Where animals are in the company of their owners have you ever had any resistance to allowing you to take pictures?

RM: Only once so far! An amateur actress walking her dog in Central Park got a bit defensive when I approached her about photographing her and her dog walking, it was early morning and I think she had come out without her 'face' on! Everyone else has always been really enthusiastic to be involved, that's the joy of working with animals; animal owners LOVE their pets and adore the fact that their precious fur baby may get the opportunity to feature in a book. Every owner of the dogs I photograph receives a print and a CD with the images I capture of their dog, or dogs, regardless of whether they make the final selection for the book. ▶

► Image from *The French Cat*; Do-Do relaxes in his favourite chair. Haras de la Potardière, Crosmières, Pays de la Loire, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens.
© The Rachael Hale Trust.



f11: Do you generally ask for animal 'model' releases? ;-)

RM: Definitely in America! I wouldn't want to risk publishing an image of a dog I created in New York without official permission granted from the owner. France was different, often there are dogs just wandering the streets, especially in the rural villages. I always tried to locate the owners whenever possible and get a model release signed, as I love to be able to send prints and a copy of the book, but there are a number of images within The French Cat and The French Dog books that do not have signed model releases, but it is not a problem in France. They are so laid back, that's why the lifestyle suits me so much.

f11: As photographers we're spoilt by the beautiful quality of light in New Zealand, tell us about shooting in France and the light there.

RM: The light in France is also spectacular, it can be very harsh – as it is in New Zealand – so I find the best times to shoot are early mornings and dusk, but during the day in Southern France the sun bounces off the walls of the houses that line the village streets, the majority of the village houses are pale stone so the sun reflects and bounces everywhere giving off beautiful reflective ambient light.

f11: Describe a typical day when you're working on a new project.

RM: For The New York Dog, if I don't have a 'scheduled' shoot, a typical day would involve heading out early with camera in hand and just wandering the streets capturing images of the city and people out and about with their dogs. During this time I am also location hunting to find places to revisit with dogs and owners in hand to capture images that will add New York essence to the pages of the book. Ninety percent of the time Andy will venture out with me, and often our daughter, and our au pair, will come along too; our projects have always been family affairs and we love involving Charlize in our day

to day lives. Travel is the best education you can give a child and her development is proving this to be true. When we were photographing for The French Cat and The French Dog, it was just the three of us heading out on our daily adventures. Charlize was younger then, so much easier to keep an eye on, and the villages of France are a lot quieter than New York. Andy is also now working in video and is often capturing his own footage to create a documentary of The New York Dog, so it will be impossible for us to have eyes on the job and on Charlize, hence bringing our au pair, so for this project we are now a family of 4 rather than 3.

f11: What are your equipment choices now, how have these evolved and where do you see this going as you move forward?

RM: For the last few projects I have been creating images on my Hasselblad H2 system with a Phase One Digital Back, I love this camera and the image quality is outstanding, in some ways, dare I say it, it surpasses the quality of film. For The New York Dog, I have been sponsored by Hasselblad, so they have provided me with a new Hasselblad H4 system which I am loving. I used to work mainly on large format cameras, I still have my Sinar 4x5/8x10 and my Toyo View 4x5 cameras, plus all my other film cameras, older Hasselblads, a Pentax 6x7, a ▶

► *Image from The French Cat; The first image I created for the French Cat book! My neighbour's cat Titus sits on a metal drum amongst a favourite scene of mine in my adopted village where we live in France. Causses et Veyran, Languedoc Roussillon, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens
© The Rachael Hale Trust.*





gorgeous twin lens Rolleiflex which was passed down to me from my grandparents, and a handful of other collectables. I don't often shoot film anymore but I intend to again, especially for capturing portraits of our daughter and also to teach her in the future. I still believe it is important to learn the original basics of photography by using film, developing it yourself and experiencing the discovery of print making in a darkroom, this is how I fell in love with photography to start with. I was exposed to it through my grandparents and I believe it is the way to learn the true quality of light. Digital is great, and it has its place, but to learn properly and to understand and develop a real knowledge of how a photographer works and captures their images, start with the original processes, this way you will learn to shoot from the heart and truly understand how your images come together.

f11: How much gear do you normally carry when out shooting?

RM: Not a lot, normally I have one body and a couple of lenses, and maybe some extension tubes. I don't classify myself as a 'technical' photographer, all my images are captured in natural light, my studio lighting has become redundant and I shoot from the heart and capture what I see, therefore this doesn't require a lot of gear.

◀ *Image from The French Cat; Kuzia rests in her favourite place, in the cool shadow in the entrance to Château des Salles, Saint-Fort-sur-Gironde, Poitou Charantes, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens.
© The Rachael Hale Trust.*

f11: Is post processing a major part of your process, and what's your typical production workflow in post?

RM: My images don't require a lot of post-production adjustments; the typical process would be to add some contrast, adjust the colours slightly when needed (often shooting in natural light requires cyan to be removed to warm the images) and to lighten the images in the areas required. The last step I would do is to create a couple of additional layers to darken the edges slightly in stages; this I find draws the viewers eyes into the image and has become something I do to most of my imagery.

f11: To plug-in or not to plug-in?

RM: I do not use any plug-ins, I treat and adjust all of my images individually and, as I said, not a lot of post work is undertaken. I also do all my post production work myself and I am certainly not a major whiz in the Photoshop department.

f11: Outside of these many book projects, are you also shooting any commercial assignments?

RM: I do a bit of magazine work throughout Europe and also some portraiture, but with all my book assignments combined with having a family I don't have a lot of time to create additional assignments. I am not sure how many more book projects I will undertake, there is talk of a German project, also involving dogs, after I have completed The New York Dog, but at some stage we are going to have to settle down and allow Charlize to start school and lead a more routine life, but at this stage we are loving being on the road. I am working on developing my portrait business further in the next couple of years and we are looking at possibly offering 'French Photographic Experiences' where people can come and stay with us for a week or two in the South of France and I will take them out on excursions where they can experience in person how I captured and created the imagery for The French Cat, ▶



The French Dog and also the Lunch in Provence projects. I would also hold workshops for those who would love to learn the 'ins and outs' of how to capture the soulful character images of animals and babies. We have a large house, and Andy is a great cook, so it would be a little like a 'Photography B&B', we live in a gorgeous part of France, we love having guests, and it would be great to be able to share my love of photography with people with similar interests. Andy and I also have a few personal projects we are working on that keep us out of trouble.

f11: You were quite active within the professional photographic community in New Zealand, what sort of professional support network have you developed first in France and now as you shoot around the world?

RM: To be honest, after leaving New Zealand I felt I needed a bit of a break from the industry, my life had revolved around photography and I had been so career orientated that I needed to do things for me! It all still involved photography, hence the books, but I needed to escape from the commercial world. So for the last three years I have lived a very quiet life, no competitions, no photographic organisations, just me. I am now starting to develop a need to involve myself again and will probably start to join some of the associations in the UK and Europe. I am in New Zealand in August this year doing my first public seminar in a while; speaking at the NZIPP's annual conference, and delivering the keynote address. I'm nervous, but excited, to share my recent experiences, it will also be wonderful to see many of my old friends and

work colleagues from my time spent as a photographer in New Zealand.

f11: Do you have a mentor, or mentors, and what ongoing assistance, comfort or security do these relationships provide professionally?

RM: I don't have a mentor as such; I would say my publishers Geoff Blackwell and Ruth Hobday from PQ Blackwell publishing in NZ would be the people I talk to the most, and bounce ideas off. They have always been incredibly supportive and encouraging of my work and are always there to offer assistance and advice. I try to keep up to date with what is going on in the photographic community worldwide, and I am very privileged to live close to Arles where there is an amazing photographic festival held in the city for 2 months every year. This festival always features photographic work from both well known, and up and coming, photographers; a visit to this festival is something I would work into the photographic workshops I may offer in the future.

f11: Does video interest you, and do you see an evolution of your still photography into video based documentary style projects?

RM: I love shooting video and it is something Andy and I are both taking a much more serious approach to for the future of our business. There is so much more that goes on behind the scenes that nobody gets to see in a still photograph, so to capture the same soul and character I always strive to capture in my images, through video as well, will be a great compliment to what I can offer clients, both commercially and for my private commissions.

f11: Is a rural lifestyle in France entirely compatible with what you do as a photographer? Tell us about the compromises and 'work arounds' necessary to marry these two worlds, is it a case of old tech meets high tech?

RM: Yes, there are a lot of frustrations and potential decisions such as, should we pack ▶

◀ Image from *The French Cat*; Sweetie hugs her favourite tree in the garden of 'Jardins Secrets', a boutique Hotel in Nimes, Languedoc Roussillon, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens © The Rachael Hale Trust.



up and move to Paris or London, where I would get a lot more work and be closer to better facilities and organisations, and of course have much better internet access? However, the lifestyle of rural Southern France is magical, I love the relaxed atmosphere, we have made some great friends, and it really suits us to be where we are. I have had such a busy working life that the thought of living in a big city again daunts me, and now we have Charlize in our lives I don't know if I want to work 24 hours a day 7 days a week. So at present, after we have completed the next couple of book projects, our thoughts lie with creating work for us where we live; developing a portrait business aimed more at foreign holidaymakers and offering the B&B photographic experiences. For years I helped develop a business to produce money; it ended up going in a direction that I didn't agree with, so I made the decision to leave, so it's not about money for me, it's about doing what I love and living a lifestyle that makes us happy.

f11: What were you doing two weeks ago and where will you be next week?

RM: Two weeks ago I was travelling in Germany creating images of dogs for the German based magazine DOGS, a fantastic magazine, really wish it was published in English. Next week I

will be fully into the New York Dog project, living a very different life than I have been over the past 3 years; I am really looking forward to this time in New York but I can guarantee that at the end of the project I will be desperate to get back to our quiet life in the South of France.

f11: Complete this sentence: The one piece of camera equipment I could not live without is...

RM: Dare I say it, my iPhone, they really do take fantastic images! No, truly my Hasselblad H4 with the 80mm lens, a beautiful combination.

f11: What's the best thing about being a photographer in 2013?

RM: For me, the freedom to spend a number of months working on a project for my publisher knowing they totally trust me to create the images they require to produce a beautiful book. I am really lucky, especially these days, to have such freedom. It's a tough world out there now for photographers, anyone can pick up a digital camera and capture images; and a lot of agencies now use stock images as opposed to hiring a photographer to create new imagery.

f11: What was your worst day ever in professional photography?

RM: The day I had to say goodbye to my muse and constant companion Henry Miller, my big chocolate brown Newfoundland dog that had given me so much inspiration, and had posed for so many of my images, in the early days of career. Henry was amazing, every image I created of him showed me another piece of his soul. Even after 12 years there isn't a day that passes when I don't think of him, or shed a tear in his memory.

f11: What's the dream assignment? Who, what and where in the world?

RM: Africa, I haven't been yet and don't really want to go until I can allocate at least 6 months to spend travelling through the continent and photographing the animals there. I have always ►

◀ Image from *The French Cat*; Stretching Cat. Romeo wakes and stretches ready to follow me around his village on another quest to find cats. Ventebren, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens.
© The Rachael Hale Trust.

wanted to create a book featuring all of the wonderful animal sanctuaries located in Africa, to capture images of the animals they save, and the amazing people working behind the scenes.

f11: Thanks for being with us, and look forward to seeing you at the NZIPP event in Auckland in August.

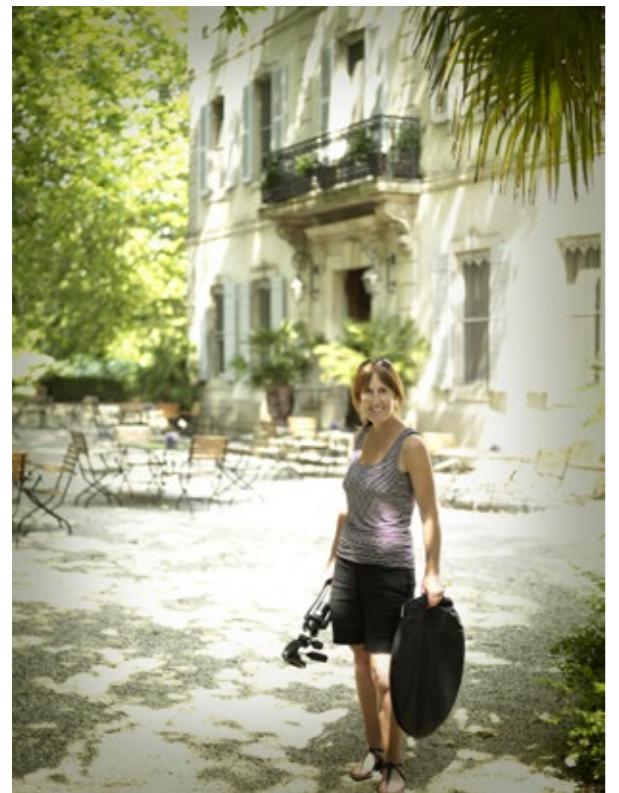
RM: You are more than welcome! I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the NZIPP conference too, not looking forward so much to doing my presentations, but I'm sure I will pull it off...

f11: I'm confident that you will, you'll be among friends. ■

TS

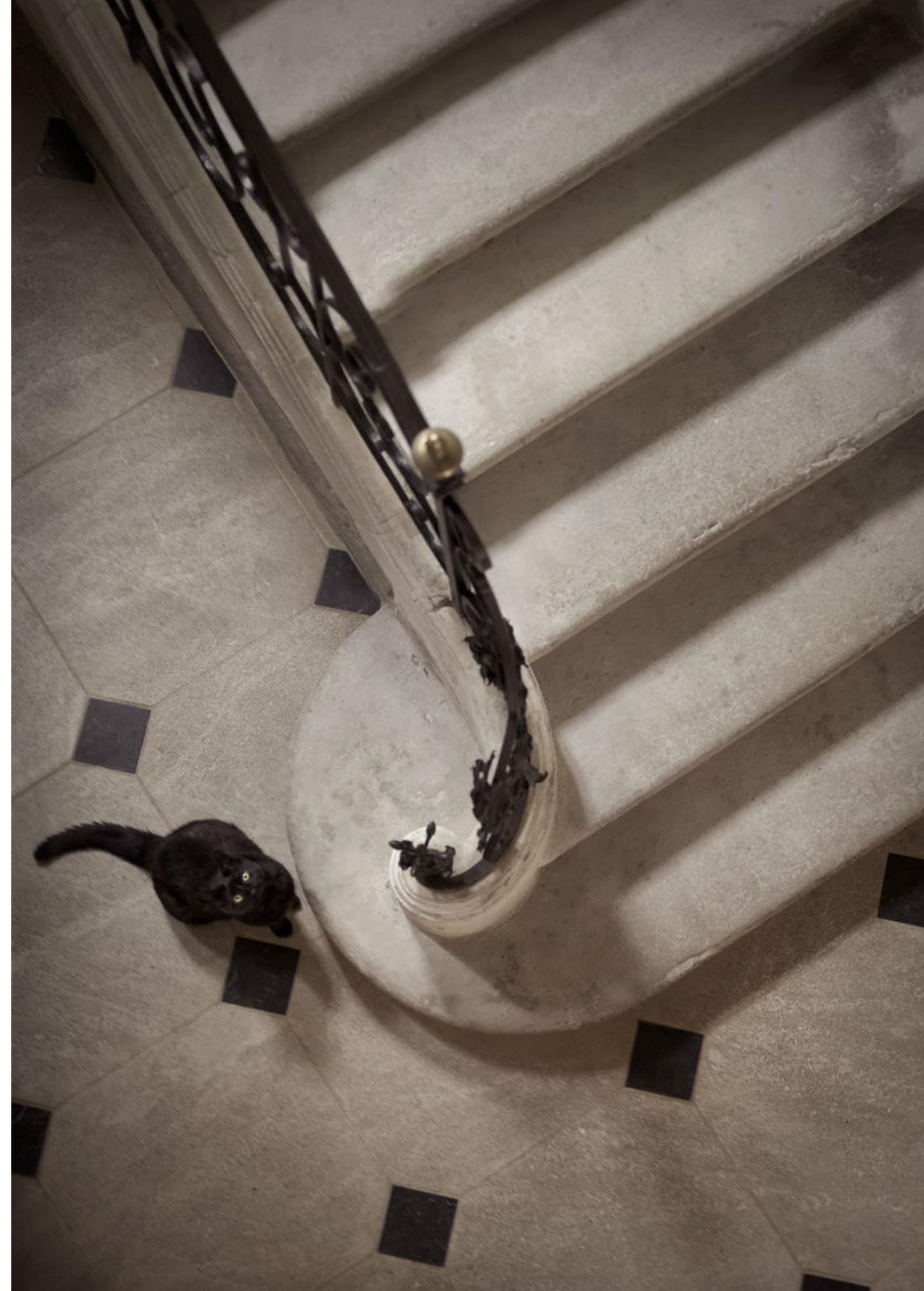
www.rachaelmckenna.com
www.thenewyorkdog.com

▼ Rachael McKenna at work © The Rachael Hale Trust.



'It was my dream job, traveling through France and taking photos of beautiful cats in the character filled villages, cities and countryside.'

► Image from *The French Cat*; Myrtle eyes me from the ground floor of Château de Varenne, Sauveterre, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens.
© The Rachael Hale Trust.





▲ Image from *The French Cat*; Abi, a very timid 'savage' cat (savage is the term used in France to describe a stray or wild cat) rests during the early morning on the driveway to Oustau de Baumanieré, a 5 star hotel in the heart of Provence; now home to approximately 10 savage cats! Oustau de Baumanieré, Les Baux de Provence, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.

► Image from *The French Cat*; Grisoville lazes in the courtyard at La Bastide Rose, Le Thor, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens.
© The Rachael Hale Trust.





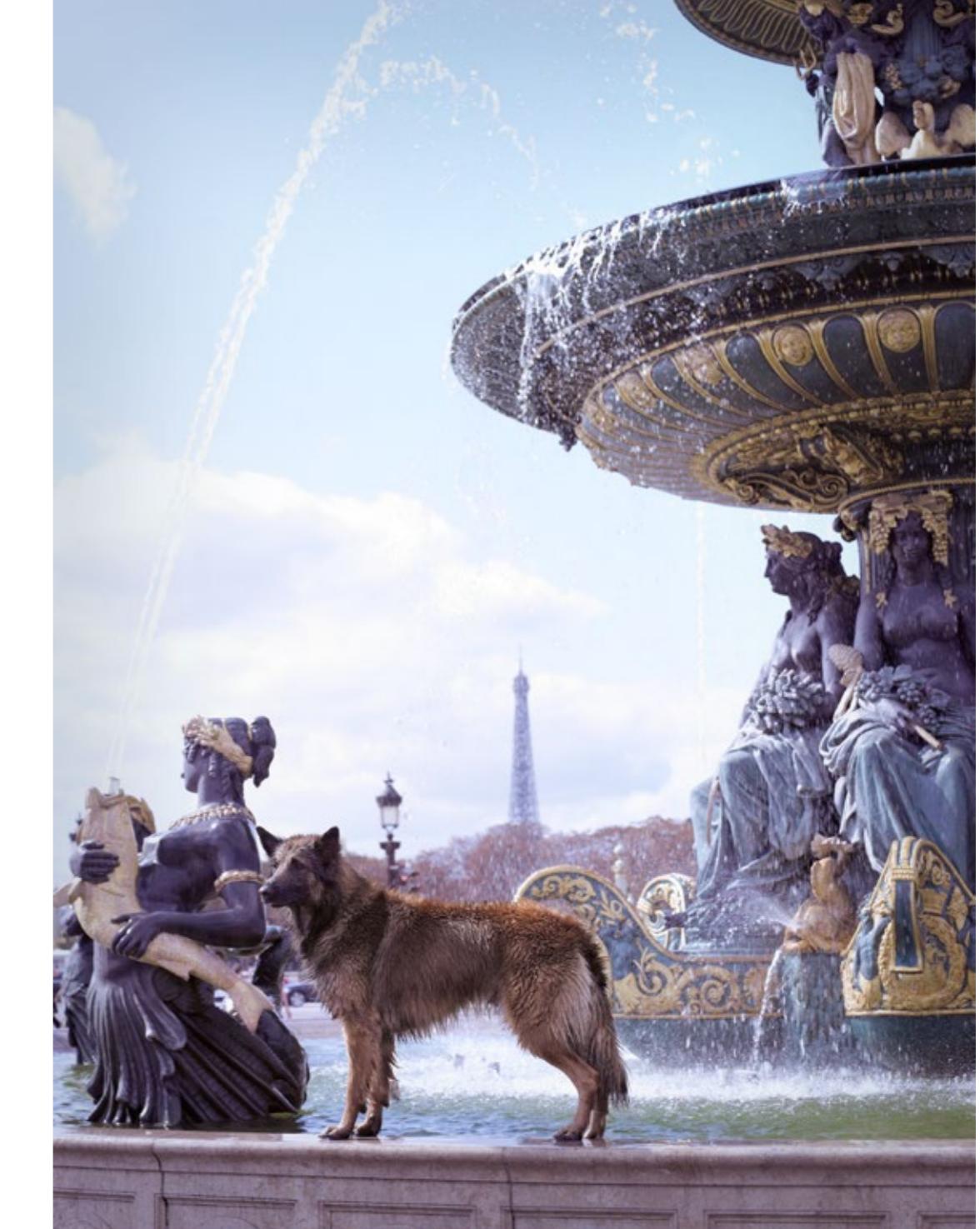


▲ Rachael and friend. © The Rachael Hale Trust.

◀◀ Previous double page spread: Image from *The French Dog*; *The boys in the fountain*. Best mates, Caesar and Bosco eagerly await another ball to be thrown into the fountain at La Place de la Concorde during the hot days of summer. Paris, France.
Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.

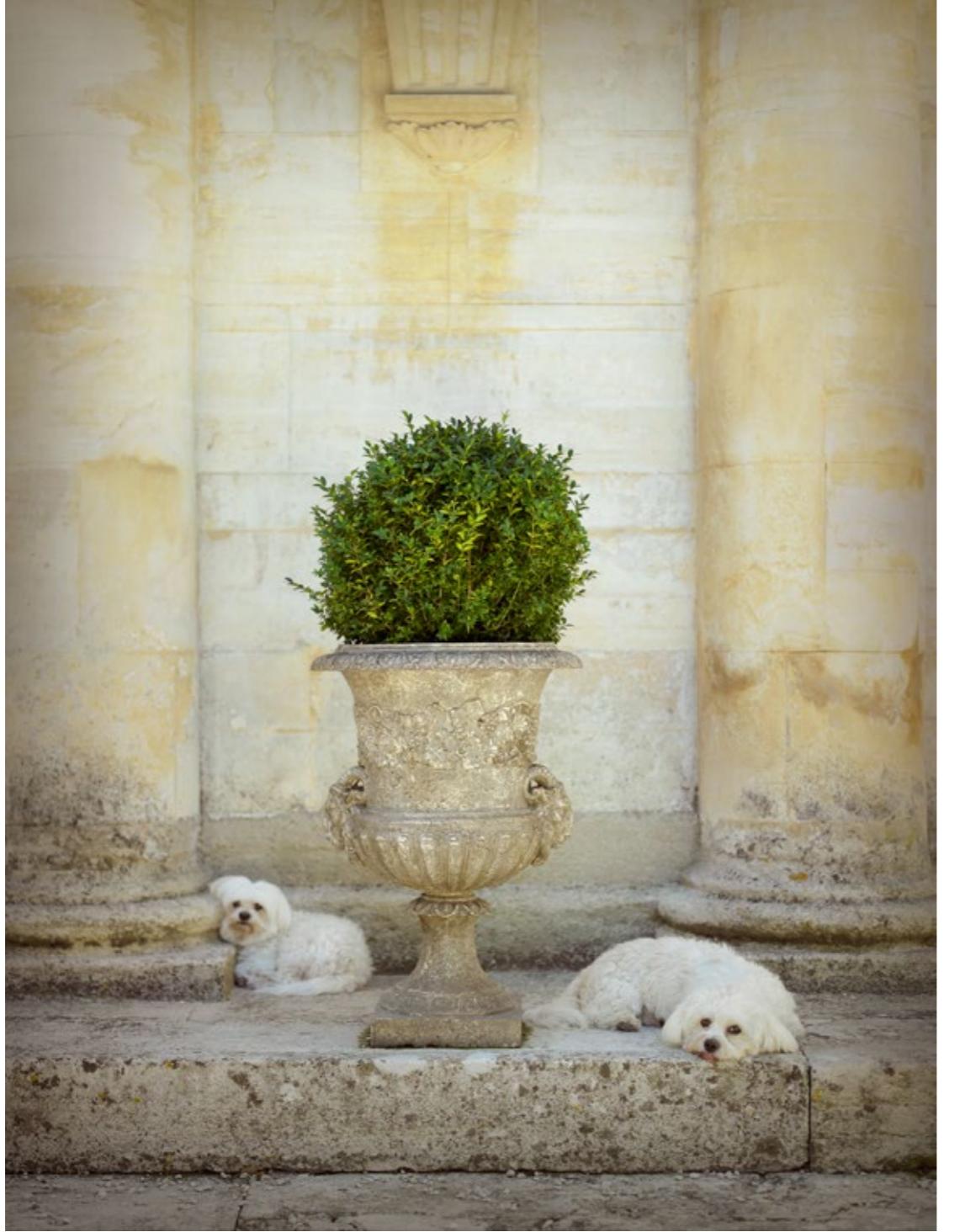
► Image from *The French Dog*; *Tchipie, the gentle and friendly welcoming party* at Château de Varenne, Sauveterre, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens.
© The Rachael Hale Trust.





▲ Image from *The French Dog*; The gorgeous regal Flash stands on the edge of the fountain at La Place de la Concorde in Paris, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens.
© The Rachael Hale Trust.

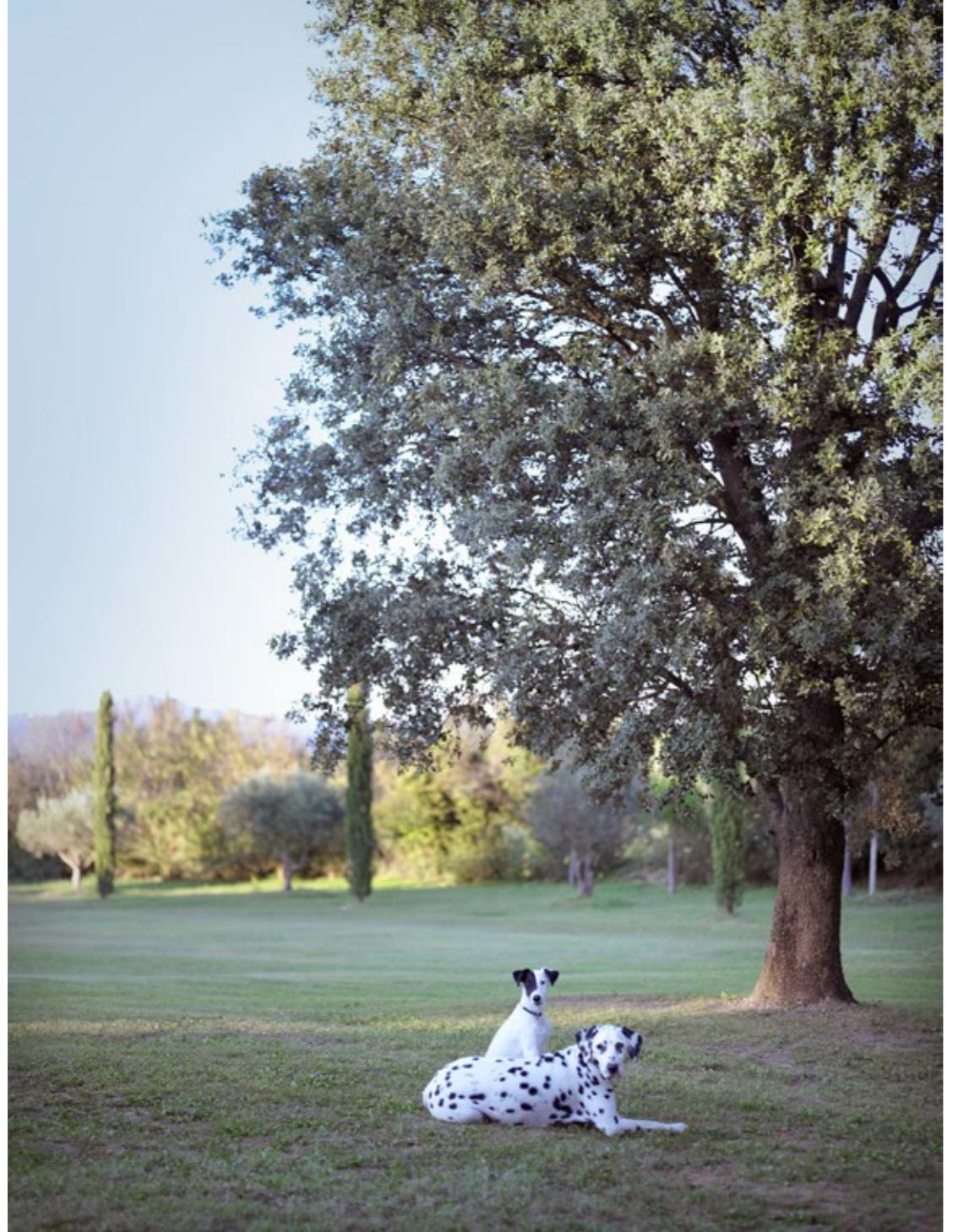
◀ Image from *The French Dog*; The beautiful Heyla strikes a pose on a wall in the Jardin des Tuileries, the Louvre Art Gallery stands in the background, Paris, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.



▲ Image from *The French Dog*; Beilingot and Beauty escape from the scorching summer heat in the shade of the entrance to Château du Martinet, Carpentras, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.



► Image from *The French Dog*; Dazzie poses gracefully on a frosty winter's morning in the gardens of Manoir de Kerlédan, Carhaix-Plouguer, Bretagne, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.



▲ Image from *The French Dog*; Elia and George pause to glance my way, during their morning play, in the garden so Les Mas des Songes, Monteux, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.



► Image from *The French Dog*; cheeky Jack Russell brothers, Jake & Elvis take a break from play to rest in the shade outside one of the entrances to their home. Château de Beauregard, Jonquières, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.



▲ Image from *The French Dog*; Laku waits patiently for his owner to throw his ball so he can take another dive into the ocean at Ville-Franche-sur-Mer, Côte d'Azur, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.



► Image from *The French Dog*; Napoleon and Mistral wait patiently in a classic French Citroën car while their owner goes to get bread from the local Boulangerie in Maussane-les-Apilles, Provence, France. Hasselblad H2 with a Phase One Digital P25 back, 80mm f2.8 lens. © The Rachael Hale Trust.

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B+W
FILTER

Vanessa Wu

Hold very still

Vanessa Wu was born and raised in Auckland, New Zealand. A professional photographer since the early 90's, her main passion is still life and food.

Driven by aesthetics, she has become well known for her beautiful, minimalist, yet distinctly feminine style, which references her life long interest in art and graphic design. Using lighting to enhance contour and form is her photographic signature. Her aim is to create beauty in her work that brings joy – this, Vanessa says, makes the process worthwhile.

Vanessa has been involved in numerous photographic and art exhibitions showing her personal work, as well as having a high profile in magazines and books. She has also been on the board of the AIPA (NZ Advertising and Illustrative Photographers Association), which involved organising and finding sponsorship for touring NZ Photographic exhibitions, awards and books.

As well as shooting editorially, Vanessa has photographed many advertising campaigns winning awards locally and internationally, including Clio and Axis awards. In addition she has won gold, silver and bronze AIPA awards.

Her client list includes Air NZ, NZTE, Visa, Coke, Meccano, Sony, Panasonic, Adidas, Seagars Gin, Robert Harris Coffee, McCoy fruit juice, Evian, Red Bull, Huntaway Wines, Oyster Bay wines, Vogels, Arnotts, Beehive Bacon, Mainland Butter, Meadowfresh, Puhoi Cheese, Kapiti, Nescafe, Cadbury, Bluebird, Vodafone, Telstra, Healtheries, Glaxo Wellcome, Aetna Health, Sun Alliance, National Bank, ANZ Bonus Bonds, Wella, Schwarzkopf and Shiseido.

We caught up with Vanessa for a brief chat about her life and work.

f11: Hi Vanessa, welcome to the magazine. Tell us about your pathway into professional photography and the journey to where you are today.

VW: I started doing photography and graphic design at school and followed on to Polytech where I majored in photography for 2 years. ▶

► Shot for BCG2, Client: Phloe. Canon 1DS MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L lens. Retouching by Lightfarm Studios.
© Vanessa Wu



This led me into a full time assistant and junior photographer's position with a leading advertising photographer. There I learnt the ins and outs of continuing to be a creative, but also how to run a successful business.

f11: How about any mentors, strong influences and the like?

VW: I believe in finding inspiration from anything and everything. There are no limitations to where creativity and inspiration comes from.

f11: You're represented by an agency, Match, tell us about that experience. Did you ever represent yourself or have you always worked this way?

VW: I have been with a couple of agents here and overseas and I've also represented myself. I definitely enjoy working in collaboration with an agent. It also helps being a part of a group of outstanding photographers in terms of inspiration, marketing and general morale. Match Photographers have been excellent, lovely to work with and their team definitely make my life easier with negotiation and production.

f11: Let's talk about the images you're showing here, are these the result of very tight briefs or concepts from clients, or are these rather more free flow in their construction?

VW: Both. Advertising shots tend to be on a tight brief with just a small variable for creative license. My exhibition shots are personal, being totally creative without boundaries.

f11: You've exhibited regularly with a small group of fellow photographers here in Auckland, what keeps you returning to that forum?

VW: The F8 group was founded in 1992 when we were all budding young assistants and over the years we have all become great friends, photographers, parents, teachers, film makers or producers. We still love to create and all of

us understand what's involved after having numerous exhibitions together so it's an easy fit.

f11: Do you print your own work for exhibitions and awards programs?

VW: No, I prefer to use digital prints and vary the paper stock.

f11: Many photographers today are transitioning into video to some degree. Do you have any interest in the moving image?

VW: I have dabbled in moving imagery, shooting some work with DDB with McDonalds, and loved the experience and it felt quite natural doing this.

f11: Do you maintain a permanent studio, or use hire facilities when necessary?

VW: I did have a studio, but choose to hire now as the facilities and gear hire these days are so fantastic. This way I can also hire the most appropriate studio for each job.

f11: Is yours a silent contemplative studio or a musically driven one? What's a typical soundtrack when you're working?

VW: Musically driven. Upbeat, yet ambient, in order not to distract from the shoot but also to keep everyone on a happy and upbeat temperament.

f11: What are your equipment preferences?

VW: Now everything is digital I swap between the Canon 1DS MkIII DSLR gear, or the Hasselblad, Leaf or P45 systems, depending on the job requirements. Lighting is usually broncolor or Hensel. ▶

▶ Chilli. Canon 1DS MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L lens.
© Vanessa Wu



f11: What were you doing two weeks ago and where will you be next week?

VW: Lots of quoting and meetings, and next week hopefully all the jobs will eventuate.

f11: What are your professional goals or any specific ambitions for the next couple of years?

VW: To stay creative and enjoy what I'm doing.

f11: What excites you most about photography today?

VW: The fact that a lot of people are sharing and keeping up with each other via pictures taken on their phone. Love Instagram.

f11: What's the most frustrating thing about being a photographer in 2013?

VW: The 'craft' seems to have been lost and everything seems to be rushed and requires more retouching. Also, other photographers undercutting and ruining the industry standards, and a reduction in budgets because of this.

f11: If you had to give up photography tomorrow, what would you do instead?

VW: I'd still be in something creative and I'd probably do the odd exhibition.

f11: What are your interests outside of photography?

VW: Food and cooking, so food photography was quite an easy match!

f11: Thanks Vanessa. ■

TS

www.vanessawu.com

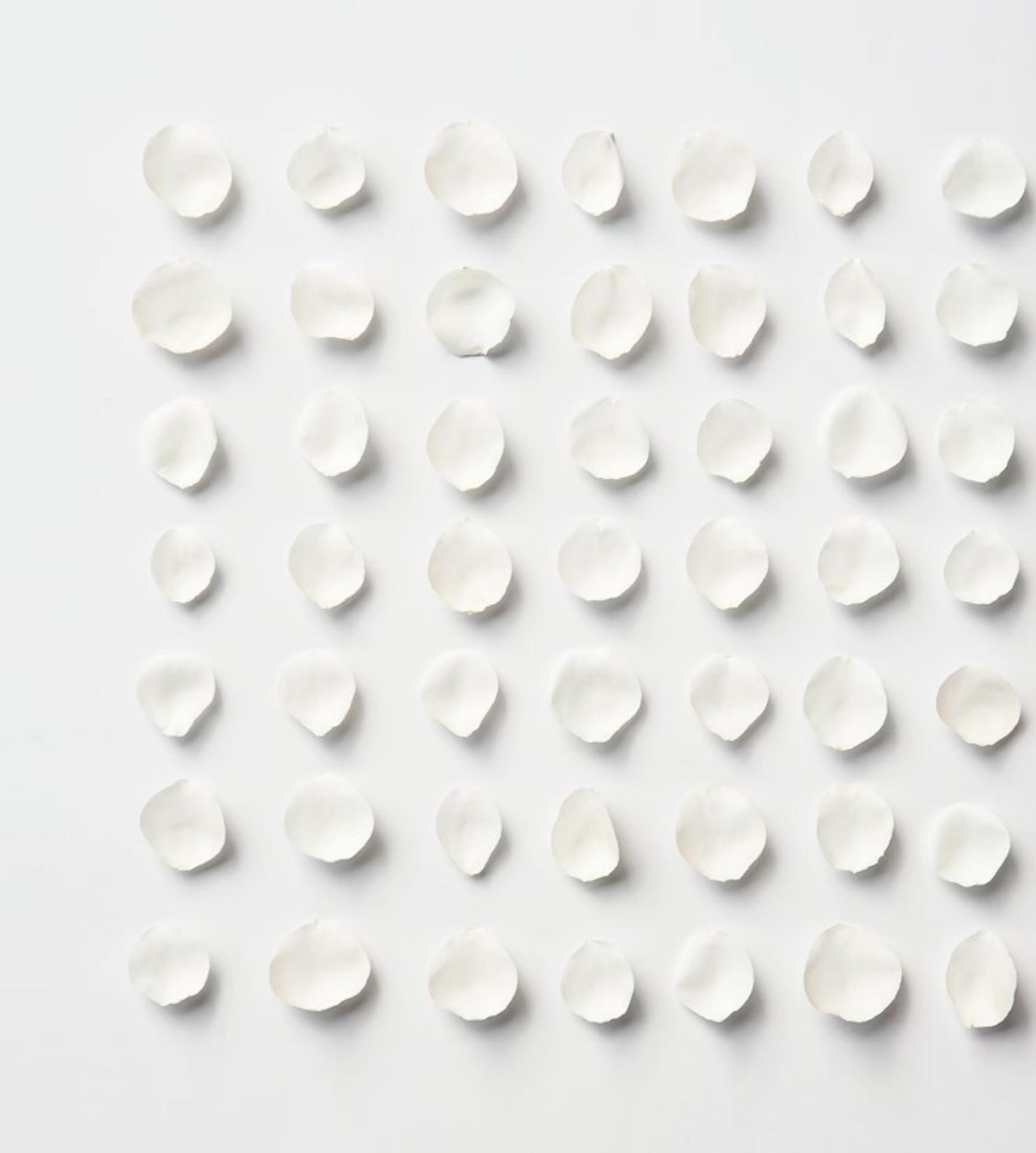
www.matchphotographers.com

► Shot for Draft FCB, Client: Bonus Bonds. Canon 1DS MkIII with 24-70mm f2.8 L lens. © Vanessa Wu





Dice. Shot for Artbeatz Exhibition. Hasselblad with P45 and 80mm lens.
© Vanessa Wu

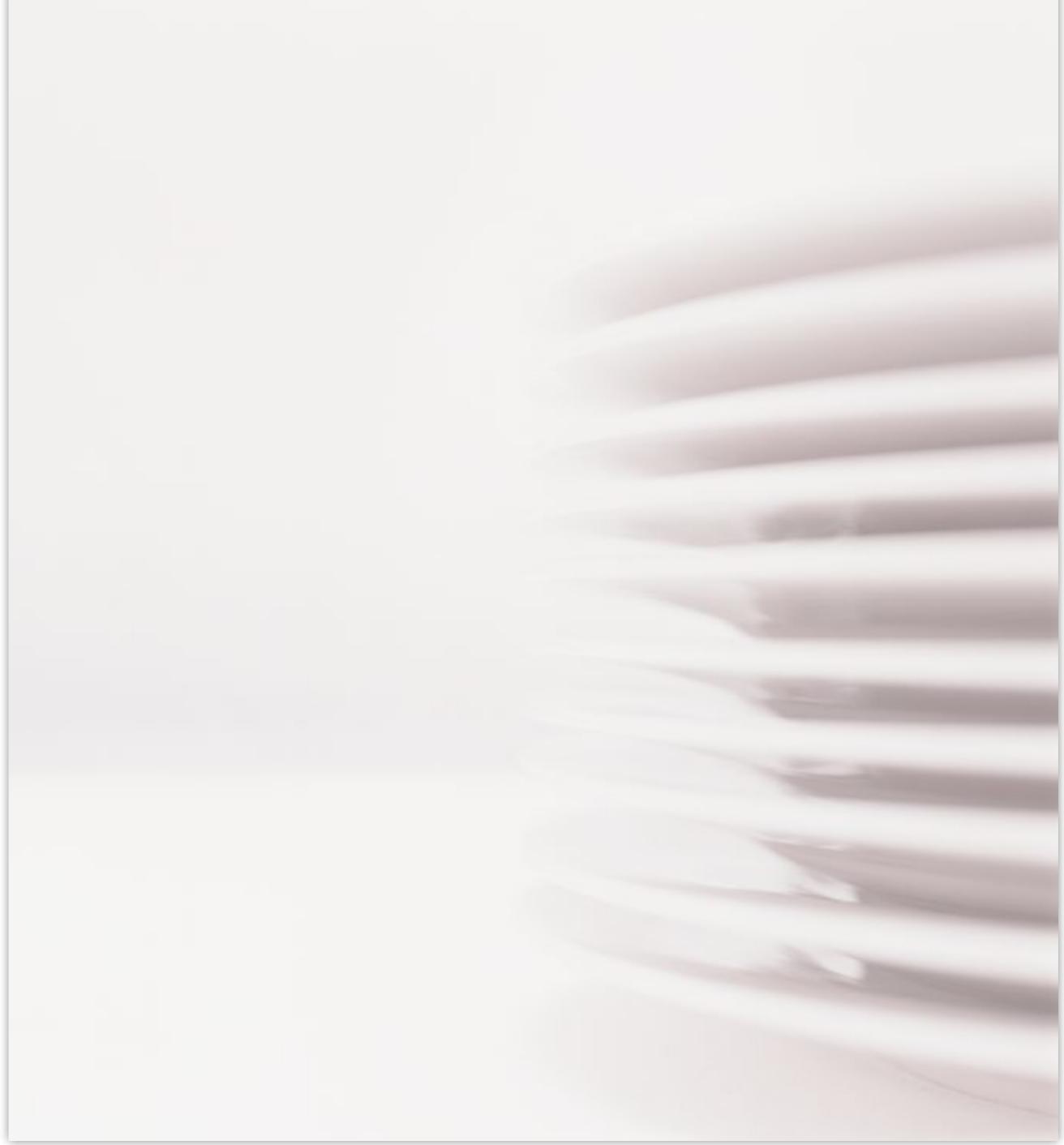


White Petals, Petal series exhibition. Canon 1DS MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L lens.
© Vanessa Wu



Both images: Shot for Draft FCB, Client: New World. Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8 lens on Kodak Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu





*Shot for White series exhibition. Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8 lens
on Kodak Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu*

◀ Personal work. Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8 lens on
Kodak Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu



◀◀ Previous double page spread: Personal work.
Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8 lens on Kodak
Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu

►► Following double page spread: Shot for Draft FCB,
Client: New World. Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8
lens on Kodak Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu



◀ Shot for Draft FCB, Client: New World.
Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8 lens on
Kodak Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu





Shot for Bauer Media, Taste Magazine. Canon 1DS MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L lens. © Vanessa Wu



Shot for Bauer Media, Taste Magazine. Canon 1DS MkII with 24-70mm f2.8 L lens. © Vanessa Wu



Shot for Dish Magazine. Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8 lens on Kodak Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu



Personal work. Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8 lens on Kodak Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu



Personal work. Canon 1DS MkIII with 24-70mm f2.8 L lens. © Vanessa Wu



Personal work. Hasselblad 501C with 80mm f2.8 lens on Kodak Ektachrome E100 film © Vanessa Wu

PSNZ NATEX

Eyecatchers

We're celebrating the success of the Photographic Society of New Zealand's annual National Exhibition – Natex – by showcasing a very small selection of some of the award-winning images which particularly caught our eye.

Natex is open to any photographer in New Zealand and being a member of PSNZ is not a prerequisite for entry.

Three expert selectors were challenged with the task of selecting photographs from four separate categories to form the exhibition being held as part of the PSNZ National Convention, happening in Wellington 1-5 May.

While the selectors consider technical competence in selecting a winning image, they also consider the composition and execution of an image, as well as the creativity, character and illustration to suit the specific category in which it was entered.

We congratulate all of the winners and participants in PSNZ Natex 2013.

You can learn more on page 114 of this issue.■

TS



*The Jetty © Meg Lipscombe FPSNZ. (Rotorua Camera Club)
Best Landscape Print – H.S. James Landscape Award & PSNZ Gold Medal*



Salvin's Mollymawk (Thalassarche salvini) © John Reid LPSNZ ANPSNZ AFIAP. (Greymouth Camera Club)
PSNZ Silver Medal Natural History Prints

Australasian Gannet (*Morus serrator*) with nesting material © Bob McCree FPSNZ. (Howick Camera Club)
PSNZ Silver Medal Natural History Projected Images





The glow as a new day begins © Bevan Tulett FPSNZ.
(Christchurch Photographic Society and Nature Photographic Society of NZ)
Best Landscape Projected Image – Eric Young Trophy & PSNZ Gold Medal.



Moeraki Boulder Flora © Anita Kirkpatrick.
(Christchurch Photographic Society and Focus Aorangi Photographic Society)
Champion Projected Image – Robinson Cup & PSNZ Gold Medal



Bathers © Brian Cudby FPSNZ EFIAP ESIAP
(Auckland Photographic Society and North Shore Photographic Society)
PSNZ Honours Ribbon Open Prints



Haastia sinclairii © Dawn Radcliffe-Taylor APSNZ
PSNZ Honours Ribbon Natural History Prints



Golden Wreck © Annie Carmichael. Southland Photographic Society
Best Maritime Image – Richard Ratcliff Marine Award & PSNZ Silver Medal

► *Gordes is just one of many spectacular villages that are found around the limestone hilltops of Provence. Nikon D800E with 16-35mm lens f11 1/180 sec, handheld, 400 ISO. © Darran Leal*

On location

France

It is amazing how many people want to visit France, or have done so over the years. Initially I had little interest in visiting, as many other destinations were greater priorities on my own personal bucket list.

However, this changed in late 2012 with my first visit. You guessed it, I wish I had visited years earlier! The world has so much to offer us and France is definitely a treasure trove for photographers.

Unlike the stories, I found and my fellow travellers all observed, how lovely, helpful and professional the French people were. That is, from help on the street with directions, to the hotel staff and tourist services. Another myth debunked?

Like any location, timing is important. Try to miss the busy peak summer period around June and July. Some locations will literally have thousands of people, packed into your shoot area. The result, images that are nice – but way too touristy. We visited in October and enjoyed the fact that we were amongst far fewer travellers. The weather was changeable, from sunny days to the odd shower, these changes served to offer fantastic mixed lighting.

Let's talk about better shoot locations, with Paris last. We caught the TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse, meaning high-speed train) from Paris to Provence in the south. What a great experience and an amazingly super efficient way to travel. The Provence region is famous for many things French. Beautiful ancient buildings, unique street scenes, wineries and everything else we mentally associate with the country.

We targeted the older towns like Aix En Provence (to the locals 'X'), Montpellier and a very special shoot, the horses of the legendary Camargue, the region south of Arles. In a few days, we had an amazing mix of images and experiences.

While we all enjoyed the wineries and ancient buildings, the horses stood out as a truly remarkable shoot. We shot far more than simply, 'here's a horse' style of images. We shot the horses running out of crashing waves on a beach, running through their traditional shallow lake and swamp environments and, my favourite, the interaction of some handlers and their horses. Did they come close to us? Ask my fellow travellers, Ray Funnell and Bill Madden, they ►



enjoyed a couple of muddy souvenirs. None of us were laughing at the results though, quite beautiful!

TVG back to Paris and then west, by coach, to Rouen. What a beautiful old city. In fact we had dinner in a restaurant that was over 600 years old. This base offered us access to several iconic locations with the harbor of Honfleur placed in my mind as one of the most amazing man made experiences I have ever had. Heavy cloud gave way, literally, as we walked up to the harbor to stunning light and a magic scene.

We moved on to be based at Bayeux with two locations to shoot, the D-Day Beaches of Normandy, and the famous Mont St Michel. We arrived in late light at the war memorial to shoot and experience the lowering of the US flag. It was handed to a family, whose father had died fighting at the nearby beach. I found this memorial very moving and shot a couple of unique images, outside my normal sphere of work.

Without doubt, the big attraction was Mont St Michel. What an amazing place! We walked the streets, enjoyed a late lunch and waited for sunset. The rain rolled in and it was not looking good for a result. What a great group of Aussies and Kiwis I was travelling with, umbrellas up, they joined me in the rain. With rain comes reflections and small pools of water were used to our advantage. A late dinner was rewarded with a quick final few images on the way out. We all agreed, these were even better, with low cloud adding 'atmosphere' to the towering island.

A standard outfit will work fine in this part of the world. Super wide lenses are definitely important, whereas the longer telephoto lenses, while handy, are used less. A 70-200mm lens and maybe a 2X converter, proving quite long enough. As you can see from the hero image used here, a tripod is an important travel companion, hopefully lightweight but sturdy.

Returning to Paris, what can I say except it is a very easy city to explore with excellent public

transport – our hotel was close to a Metro Rail stop. This city offers a photo on every street. My companions enjoyed our group shoots, as well as the free time to explore the Louvre, Arc de Triomphe, and a daily lengthening list of French visual icons.

Of course we took special interest in the Eiffel Tower. Our hotel was just 500m from this point, so we shot it from several angles and at different times. If you are keen to go up the tower, buy your ticket online first. You then limit your time waiting in a huge line up, at the base of the tower.

Am I going back? Oh yes, and it is a shame that I can't fit in another visit for a couple of years. Still, that provides the luxury of time to sort logistics and plan another great photo adventure. Maybe I should add in the famous lavender fields next time?

Enjoy shooting ... ■

Darran Leal

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



▲ Mont St Michel. Nikon D800E with 16-35mm lens f8 with 6 second exposure on tripod, 400 ISO and EV set to minus 1. © Darran Leal



► These horses can only be found in the Camargue region. Nikon D600 Sigma with 50-500mm lens f5.6 1/3000 sec, 560 ISO. © Darran Leal



Shadows © Taliah Morrison of Wellington, winner of the Ronald Woolf Award for photographers under 25.

World-class images in the PSNZ National Exhibition

Every year, hundreds of photographers from New Zealand and Australia submit their best images for selection in the National Exhibition competition (NateX).

Any image awarded a trophy, a gold, silver or bronze medal or Honours ribbon is automatically included in this prestigious exhibition held in conjunction with the annual PSNZ National Convention.

2013 has seen some records being set: a record number of photographs, over 1700, were entered by a record number of photographers – 255.

According to the expert panel of selectors, the standard of photography increases every year, with this year being no exception – resulting in over 500 world-class images making up this year's National Exhibition – 150 more images than were exhibited in 2012.

Four categories comprise NateX: Natural History Projected Images, Natural History Prints, Open Projected Images and Open Prints.

'If a photographer's image meets the standard and is selected then they know their work will stand up against any image in the world,' said Murry Cave, PSNZ Councillor for NateX.

The Kapiti Coast Photographic Society hosted this year's competition with selection taking place over a weekend in March. The selection process is demanding, with volunteers ensuring the selectors stick to a tight timeframe in order



to complete the process fairly. Selection requires expertise covering many technical areas, particularly for Natural History, as New Zealand has only a few experts to call upon, explained Murry.

'With hundreds of photographs to get through in a day, a photograph has to have an instant WOW factor – something that will make the selector want to look at it again, and again,' said Murry.

Naturally there's great anticipation and excitement as photographers wait for the results to be notified. Then come the highs and lows, depending on the result.

In the end, only a few hundred of the thousands of many great images are selected for the final awards, which is what makes it so difficult for the photographers who submitted, and such a buzz for those who will travel to Wellington to see their photographs on display.

You can view the winning images as a slide show [here](#).

The PSNZ National Exhibition will be open to the public from Thursday through Saturday, 2-4 May from 9 to 5 pm at the Wellington Town Hall.

For more information about PSNZ or to become a member go to:
<http://www.photography.org.nz>

Moira Blincoe is the PSNZ Councillor for Publicity

BUT WAIT – THERE'S MORE...



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HOW TO USE THE LINKS

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

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Enjoy.

TONY BRIDGE

ARTIST, WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER,
TEACHER, MENTOR

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

Bridge on teaching photography:

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

Bridge on his Hurunui Experience tours:

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

Bridge on his photography workshops:

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

Bridge on mentoring photographers:

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

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

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The new frameworks of the imaging business

Not many years ago, most pro photographers were completely unaware of an event called NAB or even one called InfoComm. The key events that were on their radar were Photokina every second year, PMA each year, plus regular conferences and trade shows in their own country. But it all changed.

The new events that should be on our radar reflect our new interests and influences. They reflect our potential capacity to make broadcast television, feature films and create moving signage. Look on it as finding new entities that need content, in a way that we can supply.

These new events and trade shows are where much new demand is festering and providing clues to new opportunities, as well as clearly signposting what is now redundant.

Importantly, it is where the new 'frameworks' of business are demonstrated. I remember attending an InfoComm show in Las Vegas in 2008. Along with about 30,000 other attendees and 9,000 exhibit staff, there were not a lot of photographers present as vital cohesive opportunities were not yet obvious.

New business opportunities were emerging at what traditionally was an audiovisual trade show for producers, engineers, educators and facility managers. It was suddenly being swamped by electronic displays and content management developers with an array of signage that was dynamic, immediate, moving and powerfully stepping into the realm where printed and distributed media used to be. An opportunity for photographers to shift their product and refocus their skill set, a signpost of opportunity to traditional signage people to reset what they did and how they did it. Their advantage was that they knew the clients, the sites and distribution; but they were out in the cold unless they changed.

The show was also a wakeup to cinema and theatrical designers with the demonstration of high end digital projectors – competitive in specification and price with, at that time, a rush to be on board with 3D.

So, if you want to know more about where it is going for photography, then go outside 'photo-only' web sites, events and trade-shows.

Pretty pictures, gritty pictures, award winning pictures are all very nice – good for the soul, reinforce ability, celebrate ideas, dedication and skill.

But it moves very fast. Now you know that before you return home from the trade fair all the new stuff is known, demonstrated, reviewed and almost in peoples hands. No longer waiting for the magazines to be written, designed, printed and distributed.

There is a difference though between new gear being specified, and understanding the implications of changing commercial practice and changing human practice.

In 2008 the iPhone was just a year old, and the iPad was two years away. Both were to dramatically alter daily human practice and create commercial opportunity.

In order to connect the dots of change, and correctly read the potential implications both positive and negative, you need a vision that you can stand back from and measure against, weighing and gauging the strategies that might work for you.

Knowing what to hold, what to discard and what to acquire is critical.

My challenge to photographers is to get to an event, conference or trade show that is outside your normal realm of comfort. Not just the photographic ones, try the digital publishing ones, the documentary producer ones, the graphic design ones. Or maybe venture further afield to the gatherings of museum curators, educators, sales and marketing communicators?

Subscribe to the various online news sites for these sectors to help spot trends and technology changes. I daily receive about two dozen updates and news feeds that help me sense emerging trends and emerging capacities. Many are easily discarded, some I note as possibly emerging into something that is an opportunity – others are a warning to abandon a sinking ship.

An unrealised masterpiece makes us a hobbyist.

Noble, gratifying, but largely irrelevant. ■

MS

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ACMP celebrates 21 years!

This year, the Australian Commercial and Media Photographers (ACMP) celebrates 21 years in the photo industry supporting photographers, creating networks and acting as a united voice for working Australian professional photographers.

The ACMP's commitment to the development and promotion of professional photography is key to our existence. We provide members, and the wider industry, with an understanding of the more complex issues of professional photography such as copyright re-usage, contracts, sales tax, legal protection, digital imaging, insurance, and standard terms and conditions. We achieve this through seminars and publications like the 'Better Business Bible', as well as actively marketing our members' talents.

To celebrate, ACMP members are being asked to submit images to 'ACMP 21st Century', a show that will explore what it means to be a photographer in the 21st century. Submissions can be made [here](#).

The final show will be exhibited as part of HeadOn and Vivid at the Overseas Passenger Terminal in Sydney from May 31st, before being toured to the Ballarat Biennale and The Digital Show in Melbourne in September. Get your submissions in early, as only 35 places are available.

The ACMP Achievement Awards 2013 will be held at Quay Restaurant in Sydney on May 31st 2013 to honour those who work within the industry, and those who create the images of this industry, to support and drive the photographic industry forward. This celebrated event shines a spotlight on the best professional

and emergent photographers in a prestigious gathering on the foreshore of Sydney Harbour as part of Vivid. Come and join us at the best harbour in the world, at the best restaurant in Australia for the third year running to celebrate the best of the Australian Photographic industry.

Situated in the dress circle of the harbour, Quay has some of Sydney's most spectacular views, sweeping from the Opera House to the Harbour Bridge. The food created by world class chef Peter Gilmore is equally awe-inspiring*, a perfect match for Australia's best Advertising and commercial Photographers to exhibit their work and be celebrated. You'll enjoy a three course meal and drinks as part of the ACMP Achievement Awards ceremony.

Three awards will be announced on the night, and nominations can be made at www.acmp.com.au from April 28.

Tickets will be available from early May at:
www.acmp.com.au/events

*Quay Restaurant held the coveted '3 Hat' rating in The Sydney Morning Herald's Good Food Guide, and the '3 Star' rating in Australian Gourmet Traveller Restaurant Guide for 11 consecutive years.



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

The Leica S delivers perfect images, but that's not all – the data are immediately ready for processing in all professional imaging workflows. Reduced to the max – and plenty of good reasons why the extremely rugged and reliable Leica S can give you a truly decisive competitive edge. If everything it can do were visible, it would probably be twice the size.

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



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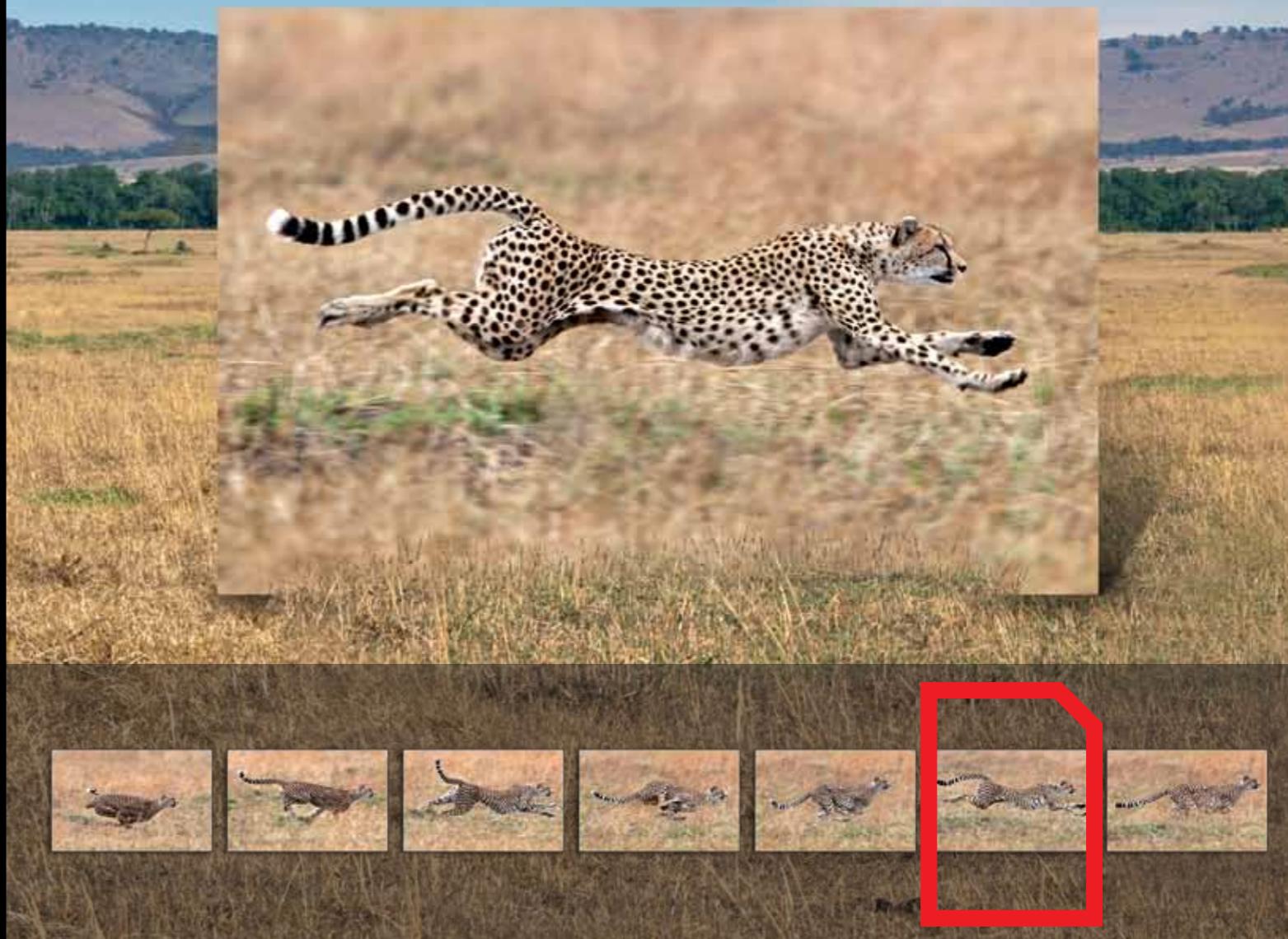
www.aipptheevent.com.au 16th-19th June 2013, Hobart TAS

Images from the top: Grant Matthews, Jennifer B Hudson, Bella West, Yervant Zanazanian, Todd Hunter McGaw, Barb Uil, Rocco Ancora, Russell Shakespeare.

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The Epson/NZIPP Iris Professional Photography Awards, this year, are being held at the Pullman Auckland Hotel between 1 and 3 August.

2013 is a very exciting year for the NZIPP Institute as it celebrates its 75th Jubilee, and the Iris Awards form part of what we see as a special and significant landmark for the organisation.

With the awards several months away, there is still plenty of time to get some award winning prints together. Whether a member of the institute or not, this is an opportunity to for you to benchmark your work with other professional photographers in New Zealand by taking the time to select and prepare a few of your favorite images and enter.

There are a number of very good reasons to do this, here are a few.

- Reviewing the work you have done with the awards in mind will make you more aware of your strengths and weaknesses. An excuse to critique your work means that you are paying more attention to the good and not so good aspects, alongside finding ways to overcome some of the weaknesses.

- Valuing your best work and measuring it against the work of others brings a great deal of satisfaction, not to mention the act of learning as well.
- It offers an opportunity to develop, showcase and celebrate your own unique style and selling point within your work – this is what differentiates you from all your competitors in the market.

- The judging criteria for the 2013 Epson/NZIPP Iris Awards has changed slightly, with the scoring ranges now having greater alignment to the Q's (NZIPP qualification), Professional Standard/Non-professional Standard, process. So these awards will be a great way of establishing where your work sits with other professionals.

- Gaining a 'Professional Standard', or higher, also means an NZIPP member earns points towards the ten needed (within a four year period) to remain a fully qualified. This forms part of the CPD requirements and is potentially an easier route than undertaking another Q submission.
- As a bonus, gaining a Bronze, Silver or Gold award will certainly help not only your business confidence, but also be valuable in marketing your business.
- It's all about learning through participation.

Have a go this year, you won't regret it!

For full details on entering the awards go to the NZIPP website and download the 'Call for Entries' document: www.nzipp.org.nz

TERRY WREFORD HANN

Commercial director New Zealand Institute of Professional Photography



TOP LEFT & ABOVE 2 Images by Rachael Hale McKenna © TOP RIGHT & ABOVE 4 Images by Trey Ratcliff © ABOVE 1,3,5 Images by Greg Heisler ©

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Know when to hold 'em...

How I keep my gear current

This month I'm ranting about the pros and cons of keeping, binning, upgrading and replacing cameras and lenses without letting sentimentality intrude.

There was a time when buying cameras and lenses was a long-term deal. In the golden days, film equipment was built to last, and it did. It was regularly serviced and lovingly cared for – as much as one can in the rough and tumble world of commercial photography – and wasn't retired until it had almost completely expired.

Sure, new and shiny things came by from time to time, but the old kit often wasn't sold off to make way for it, as it was still only as good as the constantly improving film you put in it, and the pristine lens you attached to the front! Ah film cameras, they had a 'built-in-consumable-driven-cost-free' upgrade path thanks to the chemists, boffins and emulsion technologists beavering away in the cold basements of Rochester NY and the deeply unattractive sprawling factories in the land of the rising sun.

The pro level Nikons that make up the front line of my current kit are also built to last – their beautiful die-cast bodies and dust and

waterproof buttons have a long life ahead of them. The problem is the technology inside them will be rendered useless long before all 300,000 + of their shutter actuations are used up. Today's uber-sensor is tomorrow's clunker, right? This forces a new way of thinking – or not, if you were born too late to experience film – about the gear we use in the pursuit of making a crust/fabulous living/fortune. Pick one...

This new way of thinking has no place for sentimentality as today's old faithful may be tomorrow's Trade Me or E-Bay bargain for someone, or more likely another studio paperweight – one can never have too many of those, eh Tim? (Indeed not, grasshopper – ED)

Even the lens collection is no longer sacred, I'm sure I've complained before in these pages that all of my lenses are less than five years old due to the relentless march of increasingly high resolution 'chips' that can show up the flaws in what used to be the finest optics two or three years ago.

So how do I manage my way through this? It's both simple and frustrating in equal measures. The lenses are easy, they must be the top of

the range for the camera body and they must be 100% up to speed with the sensor's capabilities. Now on my second set of 'digital' lenses in a handful of years, I probably will see a third or fourth set before my eyes pack up or my clients all turn to haters and I quit photography and go busking in our fair city, unleashing my musical abilities and displaying my instrument to an unsuspecting and frankly, woefully unprepared world.

The bodies are slightly trickier, as at the current stage of development the newest camera on the radar is not necessarily the best for the job. My trusty D3X has not been directly replaced at this stage, as although there are newer models in the lineup offering a more impressive pixel count, IMHO they don't have the pro build quality I'm used to. I'm also questioning whether or not the extra pixels would make a jot of difference to any of my clients, as I rent bigger guns for shoots where very large files are required. Another downside to huge pixel counts on DSLR's is the load they place on your storage and processing resources. Any good conspiracy theorist will quickly tell you that hard drive manufacturers are behind the mega-mega pixel



trend. The new D12, brought to you by Western Digital, and the new 9DS MkXIV – from Seagate!

At the end of the day, I simply ask myself – in all honesty – whether I need something based on this probing question in search of an insightful answer:

'Will this shiny new widget either markedly increase my output quality or manifestly decrease my workload?'

If a bit of kit can't satisfy either of those criteria I simply choose to 'skip a generation' and vow to take a serious look at the replacement's replacement, in the fullness of time – or the 129,600 earth minutes now seemingly the norm between new camera releases...

Buzz

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Continued from page 130...

Further to having a database of photographic and art based references at one's finger tips, it is now essential that the judge has the ability to defend their opinion and position by vocal debate rather than visual knowledge. The 'I like what I see' statement is not only irrelevant, but useless in this style of assessment. A knowledge of debating technique is called for, as is an understanding of contemporary visual language, in order to eloquently describe, explain or defend a given assessment. It is at this point that many judges fall by the wayside; not having spent any time, in an educative way, learning more than the use of f-stops or weighing up the pros and cons of purchasing Nikon over Canon.

Most experienced photographers are capable of placing a qualitative number against an exhibited print – but far fewer skilled photographers can convincingly defend their assessment of an image when placed in the position of judge in front of their peers.

They need also do this, ever mindful of an audience of highly involved, subjective, emotionally invested and, dare I say it, keenly judgemental viewers at the back of the room, even though their silence is a given during the deliberations.

This is where the judge is judged. ■

Ian Poole

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Judge or be judged

Having just completed a round of presentations to photographers on the process of preparing images for submission to various professional institutes' annual print awards, I was struck by the need for the judges to have done their own homework as well.

Both the Australian (AIPP) and the New Zealand (NZIPP) Institutes have been organising and conducting professional photography awards at a high level of excellence, for in excess of thirty years. Indeed it may well be said that both these awards are benchmarks for how such events should be conducted. Whist a lot has been written and discussed about how one should prepare images for entry to these awards, little discussion has been had regarding the conduct of judges – other than the ‘I was robbed – the judges did not understand my work’ type of rant immediately following the publication of results.

Disclaimer – I have been a Judge at the AIPP Awards for in excess of twenty-five years and at the NZIPP Awards for eight years. Further, as a product of a post-graduate visual arts degree as a mature age student, I also have some understanding of the background to both art and photography. And the two do overlap, even in the area of domestic and commercial photography.

Whilst many judges would argue that an extensive broad knowledge of their particular genre of expertise (wedding, portrait or commercial for example) is all that is required to fulfill the role of judge. I would beg to differ. Bringing a wider frame of reference to the judging table also brings with it, a wider and more intuitive set of observations. These are the observations that enable an experienced judge to read and interpret a ‘sophisticated’ image. Such skills do not come

easily, nor do they come by commercial practice alone. A working knowledge of a broad range of photographic genres is useful; as is an understanding of the work of photographic practitioners from abroad; and let us not forget the visual influences and references from the more traditional modes of fine art. Fine art gives us the basis on which portraiture is constructed, as well as the nuances that are woven into many areas of contemporary photography.

These Awards use a similar process of five judges working as a panel to assess work, item by item. It is the construction of the panel that is the secret to a truly fair assessment. Judges bring with them to the judging table the sum total of their industry expertise as well as their ‘found’ knowledge achieved through research. This can be by way of technical awareness of process, a deep knowledge of historic styles, an extensive study of broad art practice or a familiarity with overseas trends and styles. It is the combination of practitioners bringing these skills to bear that brings together the best of judging panels. Their ability to share their skills across the panel is the sum total of valuable knowledge.

Of course possessing this knowledge is the first step to using it in the role of a judge.

The Awards under review utilise a debating style of assessment where, after Judges have entered a score via a keypad, they may choose to challenge the averaged amount; either in a negative or a positive manner. It is at this point that the judge's ability to succinctly mount an argument is crucial to the process.

◀ Continued on page 129...

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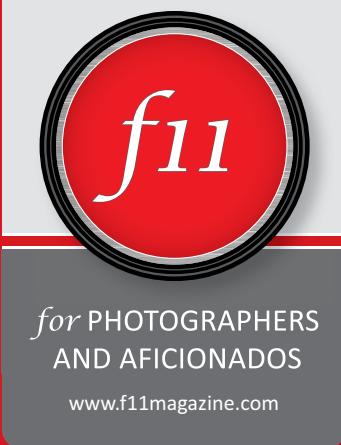


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