

ISSUE 41 | MARCH 2015



for PHOTOGRAPHERS
AND AFICIONADOS

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ERIC BOUVET
Burning Man 2012

KIM WESTERSKOV
Oceans apart

THOMAS BUSBY
Under the mountain

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dji THE FUTURE OF POSSIBLE

A warm welcome to our March issue, in particular to the almost 300 new subscribers who have joined our ranks in the last month. Thanks to the photographers who reached out to us during February, particularly those responding to my last editorial about occasional disturbances in the creative force.

Thanks too, to those of you who have made submissions. Be assured that we're wading our way through these and we will be in touch. It's time consuming and we appreciate your patience.

In this issue, we feature three photographers – one Frenchman and two New Zealanders:

A New Zealander of Danish extraction, Kim Westerskov is a marine biologist, a scuba diver, an author and an award winning wildlife photographer. Specialising in natural history and with a strong focus on the Southern Ocean, the sub antarctic islands, the South Pacific and Antarctica, Kim has done much of his work in a brutally cold and unforgiving marine environment. His is a fascinating story, told in some degree of detail and demonstrating decades long commitment to his craft – read all about it on page 12.

Fellow Kiwi Thomas Busby combines work in photographic equipment retailing with his passion for photographing the landscape. The two activities complement each other well. Working equally powerfully in monochrome and colour, this series of images is an homage to the Taranaki region of New Zealand's North Island, a happy hunting ground for Thomas in his pursuit of the perfect landscape. Our coverage begins on page 56.

Finally, Parisian Eric Bouvet normally frequents the mean streets of warzones and the hotspots of regional conflicts. A former Gamma staffer, he's been an independent photojournalist since 1990, covering places few of us would wish to venture. Our feature, in total contrast, showcases his coverage of Burning Man in 2012, the annual event held in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada. 8 days of love, fun and sharing – the complete antithesis of the cruelty he's witnessed around the world. Eric shot this month's cover.

Enjoy this issue of *f11*, we're already working on the next one. ■

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



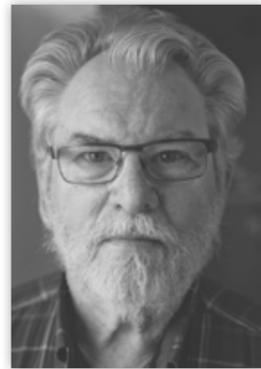
TONY BRIDGE is a fine artist, photographer, writer and photo educator... depending on which day you catch him. When not hosting seminars or workshops, this nomad is usually to be found somewhere in the beautiful landscape of the South Island, four wheel driving tirelessly up hill and down dale in search of new images and true meaning. Like any modern day guru, in Yoda fashion, he thinks way too much, constantly reinvents himself and often pontificates on one of his blogs, enriching us all in the process. 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 many 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 one of *f11* Magazine's ambassadors in Australia.



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 sheer bravado of professional photographers, he now frequents their studios, shooting locations and watering holes in search of his personal holy grail, great images to share with *f11* readers.



'A painter should begin every canvas with a wash of black, because all things in nature are dark except where exposed by the light.'
– Leonardo da Vinci

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 145** of this issue.



Kim WESTERSKOV

Oceans apart

© Kaylee Freeman

12



© Kim Westerskov

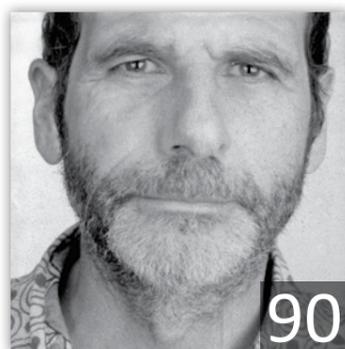


Thomas BUSBY

Under the mountain

© Thomas Busby

56



Eric BOUVET

Burning Man 2012

© Eric Bouvet

90



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Contents

Welcome	1
Meet the team	2
Contents	4
In plain sight	6
Editorial	8
Tony Bridge	10
Darran Leal	128
APS	132
PSNZ	133
Malcolm Somerville	134
ACMP	136
AIPP	138
AIPA	139
NZIPP	140
Gary Baidon	142
The Deep End	
Ian Poole	146

'For me, it's been the best job in the world. My favourite places are the wild unspoilt ones. If it's just me alone with nature somewhere, I'm happy.'

– Kim Westerskov

VINTERSAGA – MADE IN SWEDEN – VOLVO’S NEW TVC

In January, Volvo released the longest ad ever to be shown on Swedish TV. Vignettes of Swedish scenery and hardy Swedes are shown over the 4 minute track Vintersaga, by local singer Amanda Bergman. The commercial reflects the cold, dark melancholy of Sweden at her traditional worst every January. Director: Gustav Johansson; DOP: Niklas Johansson; Agency: Forsman & Bodenfors Stockholm.



Vimeo

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HYPERLAPSE – DUBAI FLOW MOTION

Rob Whitworth is among the most prominent timelapse artists working today. His previous hyperlapse work has featured urban explorations of Shanghai, Barcelona, and Pyongyang. His most recent project, however, is easily his most ambitious, technologically sophisticated, and jaw-dropping. Commissioned by Dubai Film, Dubai Flow Motion is a mesmerising tour of one of the most unique cityscapes in the world.

No Film School via Vimeo

[CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO](#)



THE DENTON CAMERA EXCHANGE

Armand Kohandani is the owner of Denton Camera Exchange, the only camera retail outlet in Denton, Texas. He buys and sells new, used, and vintage camera equipment for digital and film photography. He's also a big supporter of Denton's creative community. Who said photo retailing was a sunset business? Video shot by Wesley Kirk and Erin Summerlin, The Vision Beautiful.

The Vision Beautiful via Vimeo

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‘Photography has no rules, it is not a sport. It is the result which counts, no matter how it is achieved.’ – Bill Brandt



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Behind the curve

New models, any new models – cars, mobile phones, gaming consoles, cameras – you name it, new is better, new rocks. Right?

These things drive their respective markets and the first to jump on board the good ship Upgrade are the early adopters, the people who simply have to

be ahead of the curve. They're not only keen on the idea, they're usually up for it.

Recently, I've observed bargain prices on barely used Nikon D800 and D800E bodies as their owners jump on the D810 bandwagon. Yesterday's most desirable models quickly toppled by the new and a big chunk of their value sliced away as the first movers trade up, in the process accepting traditionally low retail trade-in values or direct sale opportunities from eagle eyed and equally canny private buyers.

Of course, this isn't unique to Nikon. Expect to see a flurry of availability of late model, low frame count Canon EOS 5D MkIII bodies on the pre-loved market as soon as their new 50 megapixel 5Ds starts to appear in store.

This is not limited to the big two, it's just more noticeable. Most brands will be similarly affected, depending on their model upgrade cycle and user base.

I have it on very good authority that the best of yesterday's playthings won't sit on the trade-in shelf for long. That's the domain of devices two generations back, those are the ones gathering dust.

At one generation behind the bleeding edge, a second wave of buyers will find these models

represent tremendous value, their first owners having taken the severe hit of depreciation in order to migrate to the shiny and new.

Now within reach, at circa half of their initial price tags, cameras one generation back from the latest model are still highly desirable objects – suddenly made affordable to a new segment of the market by progress and circumstance.

Basically, it's like an equipment food chain, it's a pecking order controlled by the hunter killers, the alpha users. Those early adopters drive the market, act as brand evangelists and product advocates if their new baby proves worthy and function as standard bearers for the technology.

But consider this, being behind the curve is no sad place to be. In the automotive world, astute buyers have been practicing this for years, watching carefully for quality brand, late model, low mileage, high spec, still-under-warranty automobiles as these come onto the used market at attractive prices simply because someone had to have this year's colour, the facelift model, or a couple of extra airbags.

Many photographers now recognise that being behind the curve is potentially one element of smart financial management. The previous model camera suddenly made affordable may represent a quantum leap forward from their current technology and thus a significant upgrade.

A party for the most affluent in the penthouse upstairs might well be the kick-starter for similar events all through the building, even on the lower floors...

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Finding meaning in the street

Not all of us have the freedom or opportunity to make grand landscape photographs. For many of us, this is a dream we will never fulfil. The city is the only environment to which we will have easy access, and we must find our inspiration there, amongst the towers and along the arteries of a manufactured landscape. In truth there is more than enough subject material, a rich vein ready to be mined. However we need to be prepared to change vehicles, to see through a different lens.

One of the things I love about making portraits of the grand landscape is being out there, alone and by myself, so I can listen to what the landscape has to say. Often this involves being off-road, in high, wild places where a slight miscalculation will have dire consequences for my health and welfare. I have learned that some of the moments of greatest clarity and perception of the metaphor of life come from being out on the edge, from being exposed.

The street, however, is different, and requires a different approach. It still requires an ability and

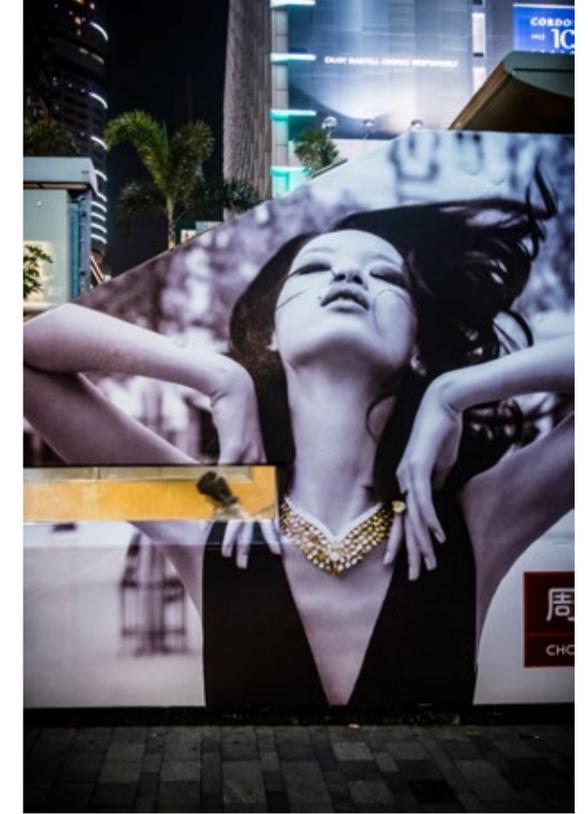
willingness to listen, to wait and observe. It still requires courage and persistence, because some of the most symbolic photographs can come from the places our mother warned us not to go near. The danger is there, although the circumstances and environment are different. It requires us to cultivate invisibility, to learn to be still within ourselves and just look. We must find the metaphor in what we see in a way which has significance for, and is unique to, us.

What then is a city? For me it has always been an artificial environment, a product of mind and geometry. Most buildings have 90 degree angles somewhere in them, as do streets and intersections. Windows are almost without exception a combination of four right-angles. Nature does not use right angles, although some things may appear to be so at first glance. A city is a combination of geography, ego, argument and compromise designed to fit a need and yet destined to not quite do so. Human beings create cities to serve themselves and end up being the servants to their sprawling

Frankenstein. And it is in the spaces between human intention and dweller response that truth will sometimes be found.

I have only ever visited Hong Kong once and I was excited to see what I would observe. A friend had told me about the heat and humidity and advised me that when it became too oppressive, I should head for the subway and its air-conditioning. This country boy from rural New Zealand was fascinated by the network of veins which ran under the city and I spent hours travelling on them, hopping off from time to time to see what I would see, or where I had surfaced. I saw surface glitz and materialism side-by-side with the dusty ennui of the apartments which crouched over the garishly-lit shop fronts beneath.

It began to dawn on me that there were two Hong Kongs, the one above ground and the one beneath, and that the subway entrances and exits were the connection points. Each had its own life and yet they complemented and joined each other. As the work of a photographer is to



point out these metaphors, I looked for an image which would say this. Since the light of day can obscure these metaphors, I took to walking the streets after dark, staying out until the city began to shut its eyes.

Then one night on Nathan Road, I saw it. Across the road from me was a subway entrance. A giant poster of a young woman, enraptured by the jewellery she was wearing, rose above me. To one side was a small window, which allowed me to see the people making the transition from one Hong Kong to the other. I watched them appear briefly and then abruptly vanish from sight as they made the descent into the underworld.

The rest was a matter of moment. ■

TB

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Kim WESTERSKOV

Oceans apart

Kim Westerskov could well be referred to as a Renaissance man. He's a marine biologist, a scuba diver, an author and a widely published multi-award winning freelance photojournalist specialising in natural history.

Kim has five times been awarded first prizes in the world's largest wildlife photography competition, the BBC/Natural History Museum 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' competition. Only two other photographers in the 50 year history of this competition, the world's largest and most prestigious nature photography competition, have won this many first prizes.

It has been a long and rewarding road. He hardly remembers life before his first camera, a Box Brownie.

Of Danish extraction, Kim was born in America and has lived most of his life in New Zealand where he gained his Ph.D. in Marine Sciences from the University of Otago in 1981. Today, he is based in Tauranga, in the North Island's bountiful Bay of Plenty. ▶



Kim Westerskov at minus 50 degrees Celsius in Antarctica. © Kim Macfarlane

A former surfer, with an abiding love of wilderness areas, and the sea in particular, most of his work has been done in, under or around marine environments. He's also an ardent conservationist, and most of his published works have been aimed at children, in an effort to engender the same appreciation for nature in a younger audience.

'Although I write for adults when I have to, I enjoy writing for children much more. I guess I'm still a kid at heart.'

Kim maintains a stock library of over 100,000 images and his work is represented by multiple stock libraries around the world. With a strong background in film photography, his library images are 35mm, medium format 6x7 and 6x17cm, and today, digitally originated. In big years his film costs ran to well over \$10,000.

In addition to comprehensively covering New Zealand's coastal and marine environments, Kim has shot in the Southern Ocean, the subantarctic Islands, the South Pacific and in Antarctica. These southern latitudes are his natural environment and he knows them well.

'For me it's been the best job in the world. My favourite places are the wild unspoilt ones. If it's just me alone with nature somewhere, I'm happy.'

As well as the usual suspects – hard work, knowledge of your equipment and techniques – Kim attributes a lot of his success to research, anticipation and careful observation:

'If you only react to what has happened, then you're going to miss a lot. If you're ready, you'll sometimes get some very special moments. My best photos, the ones which won competitions, were often such special moments. Fleeting. Easily missed.'

Kim's CV reads like a boy's own adventure. He has worked alongside a BBC film crew in the Chatham Islands – stuck on a wave-lashed rock with thousands of albatrosses during the worst

storm in 15 years; with film crews around New Zealand; undertaken assignments for New Zealand Geographic Magazine – White Island, Mayor Island, whales, mangroves; the Department of Conservation – underwater photography; and managed to transport himself to all five of New Zealand's subantarctic island groups getting underwater, wildlife and aerial photos from them.

Nearly a full year of his life has been spent in Antarctica, spread over five visits. In 1982-83 he was the official photojournalist (Information Officer) over summer, and he visited again in late winter and spring in 1988 as a freelance photojournalist.

A major commission to photograph for the Antarctic Visitor Centre in Christchurch necessitated three extended visits to Antarctica in 1991-92. Kim captured over 25,000 images – all on film, from 35mm to 6x17cm – above and below the ice, including aerials, wildlife and sealife. On those visits, he experienced diving with seals below the sea ice, endured (enjoyed he says, seriously I suspect) a Force 10 storm while on an icebreaker in the Ross Sea, and visited the emperor penguin colony at Cape Crozier. Many of the photographs taken now feature as large exhibits at the centre, or are used in marketing collateral such as brochures and their website. ▶

Emperor penguins bowing to each other on sea ice, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica. It's hard not to like Emperor Penguins. I love them – they make living at the very edge of what is possible look easy. And they do it with so much grace, through the bitter Antarctic winter where there is 4 months of darkness, made worse by raging blizzards. Canon F-1N with 300mm f4 L lens. © Kim Westerskov



It doesn't take long to realise that some of Kim's work involves considerable danger, but his equipment has a hard time too. In one 18 month period he sustained combined equipment losses and damage to the tune of \$20,000 and wrote off two cameras, both the result of flooded underwater housings. He's had two Nikonos cameras washed out to sea in a storm, accompanied by three lenses – including what he describes a 'heartbreakingly expensive 15mm lens' – never to be seen again.

On his third visit to Antarctica, at the coldest time of the year in late winter/spring, he had with him four professional film cameras including Canon New F-1s and a Linhof 6x17, all 'winterised' for the conditions, and two more Canon cameras as backup. By the end of that stint, all four main cameras had broken down in the cold, which plummeted to minus 55°C at times.

Reminiscing about the Canon New F-1s he used there, Kim notes:

'Down to about minus 30°C all three performed OK, but below that, down to minus 55°C, they struggled. So too, for the record, did my film (which shatters easily into tiny pieces at those temperatures), my flash, my fingers and my body in general. Sometimes even my enthusiasm. But Antarctica during late winter and spring is stunningly beautiful and my cameras worked often enough to record a great deal of this beauty.'

Friend and owner/skipper of motor ketch Gemini Galaxsea, Graeme Butler, writing about Kim for Waterline Magazine in 2010, said:

'Kim is passion-driven and always has been. He became a wildlife photographer by simply refusing to be anything else. I have been lucky enough to watch Kim dive with a Southern Right Whale and her calf and take pictures of an inquisitive in-your-face 5 tonne baby. Like many extremely talented people, Kim is an inspiration to enthusiastic photographers regardless of their level of expertise. I asked him, "how long does it take to be a great wildlife photographer?'

and his response at the time was, 'Fifty years so far!' Then I asked, 'How much does it cost?' and his reply was, 'Over a million dollars so far, and climbing daily...'

Kim now shares his experience, artistic vision and techniques with photographers at regular photo workshops, meetings and private tuition he runs from his home studio. His frequent email newsletters share his passion and enthusiasm with a large group of camp followers, mainly enthusiast photographers, and provide opportunities for networking and personal development in a relaxed environment.

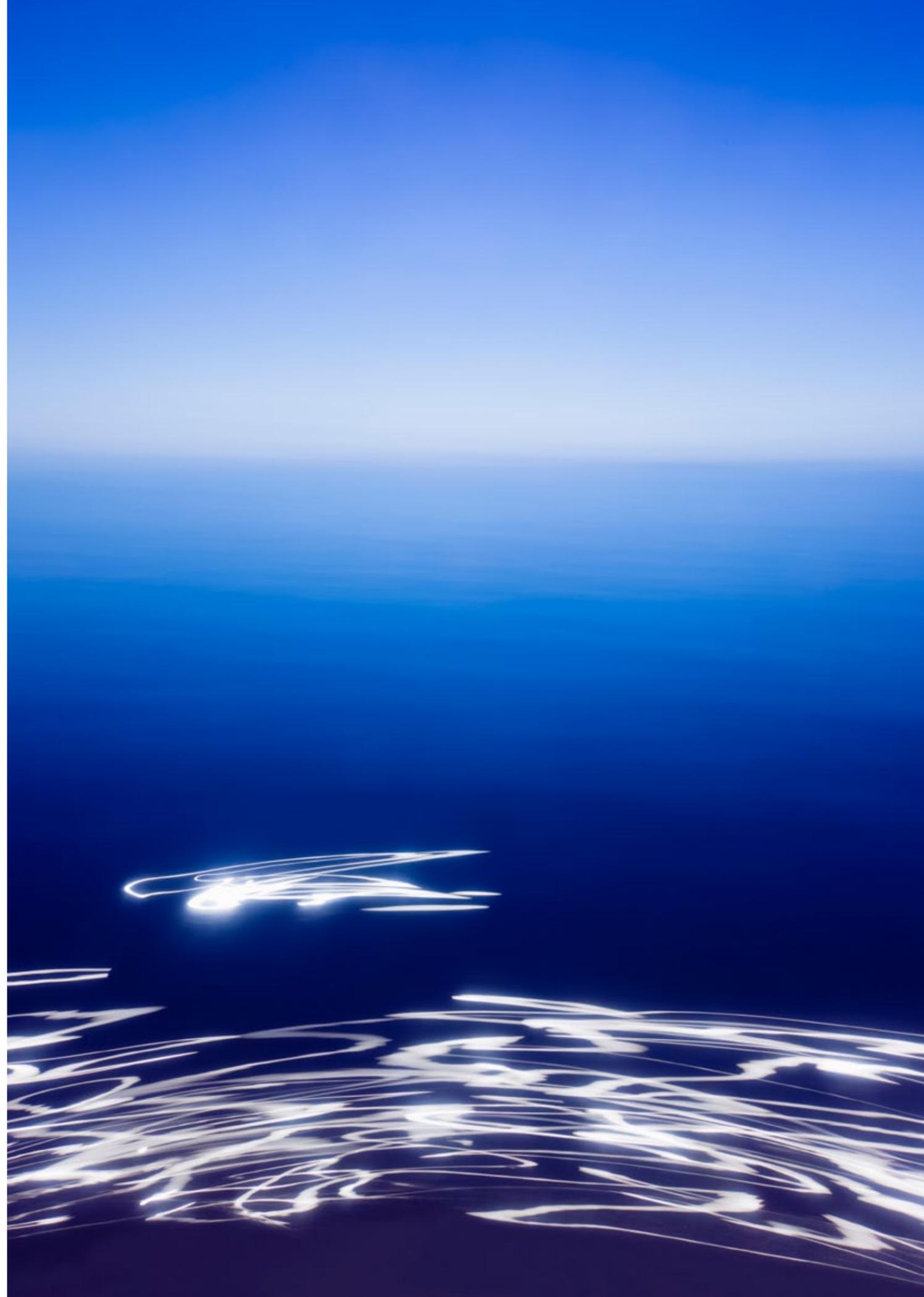
f11: Welcome to f11 Kim, great to have you here at last after what feels like a long courtship process!

KW: Thanks Tim, yes it's been a long time. Thanks for all the Velvia back in the old film days when you ran Fujifilm Professional. I remember teaming up with you and Fujifilm to present Bruno Troublé (former America's Cup skipper and for many years head of the Louis Vuitton Cup challenger selection series) with one of my Emperor Penguin photos after he took a shine to one in your boardroom!

f11: Ah the old days, I remember them well. What sort of doors did winning those BBC Wildlife Photography Competitions open for you? Were these valuable introductions at the time?

KW: Big doors, lots of doors, those doors opening really kick-started my career as a full-time professional nature photographer. If somebody significant overseas says, 'you're good' – whatever field you're in – then all of a sudden you have credibility in New Zealand. ▶

Sea, sunlight and sky, Bay of Plenty, NZ. Photo Impressionism from my Visual Poetry series. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 17-35 f2.8 L lens. © Kim Westerskov



f11: Tell us about your first serious camera, the one that started the bug?

KW: Every camera was serious at the time: the Box Brownie, the Yashica twin lens reflex, the Exacta 35mm, the Pentax Spotmatic, and then the Canon New F-1s in the mid 1980s when I became full time professional. The Spotmatic died when a rogue wave washed us both off the cliffs on the exposed west coast of the Auckland Islands. I grabbed hold of the very last bull kelp stalk on the way down, and hung on tightly. I was wet and shaken, but the Spotmatic never functioned again. I was a bit more careful on rocky coastlines after that.

f11: What's the main workhorse today, and do you have to frequently replace gear because of the harsh lives you subject your stuff to?

KW: Above water I love my Canon EOS 5D MkII. Its backup is another 5D which has had a hard life and isn't feeling too well. Underwater, I've been a Nikonos man for most of my career, using Nikonos 5s and the standard-setting Nikonos 15mm and 20mm wide-angle lenses.

Many of my dives have been in hard-to-get-to places and the Nikonos is ideal there – it's small and rugged – and takes wonderful photos. I used a Canon F-1 in a housing for a while too. I try not to damage or lose too much gear, but for me the photo is everything. If the camera has to go somewhere unsafe then, well, that's its job.

I've been a fan of Irish singer Van Morrison for a long time. Many years ago I remember thinking: 'Van Morrison takes his voice to places where voices shouldn't go, normally can't go ... but the results are amazing. Is there something I can learn here?' ▶



This young humpback whale appeared like a ghostly apparition in the deep blue water – I saw the whiteness before I saw the whale. Closer and closer it came, surfacing next to me and passing so close that I could have touched the tip of its long pectoral flipper. Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga. Canon F-1 with 20mm f2.8 lens in housing. © Kim Westerskov

The answer was obvious: to take my cameras into places where cameras shouldn't go – as far as their safety is concerned. So for many years, I took my cameras onto wild remote islands or to rugged dive sites, poked them into crevasses in Antarctica, into storms or into minus 50°C air or along wave-battered coastlines. If the rest of the ship's crew was inside, I'd be tucked away somewhere outside with my camera. The force 10/11 storm in the Ross Sea was great. I'd been hoping for a storm, and it lived up to expectations. I stayed up all night (in Antarctica in summer it's light all night) out on the quarterdeck of the icebreaker, photographing the big wind-ripped swells as they thundered past – sometimes higher than where I was standing. When the captain finally ordered everybody inside, I spent the rest of the storm on the bridge, photographing the sea and bow of the icebreaker as it plunged into big swells. 'Why do you all duck when a big wave comes?' I asked the watch on the bridge, 'that's reinforced glass in front of us, and we're 55 feet above waterline.' 'On a recent trip a big wave came in through the reinforced glass. We had a guy killed on the bridge too – the ship has no keel (a keel is no good for icebreaking) and so it rolls badly...' was the reply.

f11: What's in your bag today, the main working kit? Or perhaps you have 2 kits – one for above water and the other for below?

KW: Above water: the Canon EOS 5D MkII, five lenses, all Canon, mostly pro 'L' lenses: 15mm fisheye (not an 'L' lens, but I love what it can do), 16-35mm, 24-105mm, 70-200mm, 300mm, and a 1.4x extender. I have a 2x extender too, but almost never use it. Gitzo Mountaineer tripod. Lots of bits and pieces. Flash – but almost never use it unless I really have to. I'm a natural light boy.

Underwater: Nikonos 5 camera bodies, 15mm lenses from Nikon and Sea & Sea, Sea & Sea strobes. I have got an Ikelite housing and dome port for the Canon EOS 5D MkII with 15mm fisheye, but have not yet got it going.

f11: What's on the shopping list right now, anything you're lusting after gear wise?

KW: Photographers all have wish lists, don't they? It's part of being a photographer. I've always made do with less than many other professionals – there was always so much gear I couldn't afford – so I make do with whatever I have. I've never had a big 500-800mm telephoto lens like every real wildlife photographer has. I could never afford one, so I'd use a good quality Canon 300mm lens with extenders, and just get closer. I love wide angle, the wider the better, so I'd love a Canon 14mm or the Canon fisheye zoom. I did have a 14mm Canon lens once, but it was stolen from my van. And the insurance company just said 'Sorry. Your problem'. I never had enough money that wasn't already committed elsewhere to replace it.

f11: Do you remember the last roll of film you exposed? What was on it?

KW: It was a roll of Fujichrome Provia in my Nikonos, with photos of fur seals I was swimming with at Mayor Island. Good photos too. ▶

▶ *Sculpted by sunlight and wind, this piece of broken sea ice rests on the sea's frozen surface in the Ross Sea. By summer it will be gone. Wind shapes everything in Antarctica: the snow, ice, rocks (rocks shaped by wind-blown sand and gravel are called ventifacts), and the lives of the people there. McMurdo Sound, Antarctica. Canon F-1N with 28mm f2 lens.*
© Kim Westerskov

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Giant kelp [Macrocystis pyrifera] washed up on boulder beach, Carnley Harbour, Auckland Islands. Two limpets. Another drizzly overcast day in the subantarctic. I call this photo 'Aroha'. Canon F-1N, with 28-85mm f4 lens.*
© Kim Westerskov





f11: Do you miss anything about silver halide photography?

KW: Not really, other than the knowledge in hindsight that I was part of a much smaller, more exclusive club of photographers. Now everyone is a photographer, which makes many aspects of being a professional much harder, though it also means there's the opportunity to teach and share my knowledge and passion with other keen photographers. But do I miss film? Nope. Much of my photography has been in less than ideal light – storms, heavily overcast, murky dark water, or of fast moving subjects, or from fast moving boats, planes or helicopters. Or a combination of some of the above. Digital handles these situations so much better than film. I'm still delighted at how 'clean' my digital captures look.

f11: What was your first experience with a digital camera like?

KW: In exchange for \$50 the late Brian Curtis spent a couple of hours showing me how to get started. The best \$50 I've ever spent. That was in 2006. Underwater, I kept shooting film, but above water I only ever took one – yes, one – more shot on film. There's an awful lot of Fujichrome Velvia and Provia film in my freezer, 35mm, 120, 220. Well out of date now, but probably still good. I can't bring myself to get rid of it.

f11: What's your digital workflow, and what's a typical post production process for you?

KW: For Peter Jackson there is no post production. Even after the actors have gone home and the sets have been dismantled, his work to get the film completed goes on. It's all part of production. I work like that too. The bit where I'm holding the camera is just the middle bit of the process, and often the shortest bit. Before I'm even holding the camera I'm typically researching, or thinking, or dreaming about photographic possibilities. Then I organise the shoot – be it far afield, close to home or maybe even in my studio – and do the camera bit. After I've downloaded

the files onto my computer, the production rolls on, typically for a lot longer than the camera bit. Some photographers get home, download their photos and then ruthlessly throw away all the rejects before even seeing what magic Photoshop might be able to achieve. I can't work like that. That RAW file on my computer is just a starting point. Even if I shot JPEGs, that JPEG would be just the starting point. From there on, magic can happen – and often does, but it's not quick magic or one-size-fits-all magic or Preset #27 magic. Rather, it's 'What magic can I create from this file?' Each file is a new adventure.

I have calculated that the number of possible variations on a single photo in Photoshop, or Lightroom in the Develop Module, using just the basic tools, is greater than the total number of atoms in the known universe. So if you're ever lost or confused in Photoshop or Lightroom – that's one possible reason. Now most of those variations will not be any good, but several trillion probably are. And millions will be great. As well as one single photo sometimes having many possible equally-good final versions, there are also different ways of getting more or less the same end result. So I swim happily inside Photoshop to see what I can create. I'm typically heading towards one of two end points. My career as a professional nature photographer has been built upon real photos – documentary photos – real places or animals or people or situations. Here I'm trying to be truthful but ▶

For a short magical time on cloudless days, sunlight pours into Swallow's Cave, Kapa Island, Vava'u group, Tonga. It took several attempts (spread over four visits to Tonga) to get this photo. A cloudless day was needed, as well as a boat and willing dive partners. And a torch! Canon F-1 with 15mm f2.8 fisheye lens in housing. © Kim Westerskov



I also want people looking at my photos to go 'Wow!' So there's a line in the sand that I generally don't cross. I want my documentary photos to have integrity, to be real (although 'real' can be a slippery term for many reasons) but I also want them to have maximum impact within the boundaries of integrity.

However, part of me is also an artist, always has been. I call this second strand to my photography visual poetry or photo impressionism. These photos – created both in camera and Photoshop – are more about feelings and emotions and ideas and colour and movement than the normal or real photos we're used to. All but one (the image on page 17) of the photos here in *f11* are my real ones – the visual poetry will have to wait until another time.

***f11*: You have a massive library, how many of the film images have you digitised and how are you backing everything up?**

KW: I've lost count. All of my hero images and many thousands of my quite good photos have now been scanned and reside in digital form in my computer system. The main computer for photos is in my studio – the same place I run my workshops from. When all is running as it should – which happens often but not always – everything on the main computer backs up automatically at 3.00am every Monday to a DROBO (an external storage device, typically with several hard drives in it) in the same room. Then at 3.00am every Wednesday, everything backs up automatically to another DROBO in the house we live in, and at 3.00am on Friday everything backs up to a third DROBO down in another office in a third building. And finally, every now and then, everything is backed up manually to a fourth DROBO which is taken away and stored elsewhere in town.

***f11*: Let's talk about mentors and influences. Who did you look up to when you were starting out, and whose work do you admire today?**

KW: I never really felt I had any photographic mentors or obvious influences. I mostly just

made it up as I went along. The mentors I did have were not photographers, but people who helped me get through university in one piece (like Dr John Jillett at Otago University) or found me meaningful employment as a real photographer (like Dr Bill Ballantine at the Leigh Marine Laboratory) or supported my photography by getting me out to sea again and again and again – like my good friend – and boat owner – Graeme Butler. Also, as with many other nature photographers, I never received any formal training in photography. I was passionate about it, so I read about it, experimented and just did it.

Interestingly, the five first prizes in the BBC/Natural History Museum 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' Competition – and four trips to London to accept the prizes (I was in Antarctica during the fifth awards ceremony) – allowed me to meet many of the very best nature photographers in the world at the time. Looking at the backgrounds of four of the most successful I noticed two slightly unusual things. What did these four have in common, other than the obvious things like passion and knowledge of their equipment and photography? All four had university degrees in biology, so they knew their subjects, and all four also had a Fine Arts background – some were practicing artists as well as photographers, or at least had studied art at tertiary level. ▶

Portrait of a Southern Buller's Albatross (Mollymawk) on its nest on Solander Island, south of Fiordland and west of Stewart Island, New Zealand. What the photo doesn't show is how steep the slope we were on was. More of a cliff than a slope really. Canon EOS 5D with 300mm f4 L IS lens. © Kim Westerskov



Whose work do I admire today? Any photographer who gets, or creates, great photos. The ones that make me go 'Wow!', or that make me choke up. The ones who remind me what a precious gift life is, who reinforce what a strange species we humans are (so much good and so much not good), and who remind me what really matters in life. And photography, good photography, can do these things better than most other forms of communication.

f11: Amongst the 100,000 images in your library, which 2 or 3 are your true favourites, the best of the best in your opinion? And why?

KW: I usually finish my talks with either the photo of three Orca spyhopping (it always gets a good reception) or the Blue Whale with Mount Maunganui in the background. The Orca photo has a long story that goes with it, and the photo itself is probably genuinely unique. There are many photos of Orca spyhopping, but I've never seen another photo where there are three Orca all at exactly the same height. Spyhopping is their way of seeing what's up on the ice. The Blue Whale is the largest animal ever to have lived on earth as far as we know, heavier than any known dinosaur, so to have seen one feeding so close to where I live is a real privilege.

f11: If you had to choose just one image from your memory banks, someone else's image, what do you think is the single most important still photograph captured in your lifetime?

KW: I've given some public talks recently on the importance of photography, so I've had time to ponder that question. The ones that affect me emotionally are mostly people photos: an 8-year old boy holding back tears as he's presented with the flag from his father's coffin (his father was killed while serving in Iraq), a widowed wife leaning distraught against the grave of her soldier husband, and many more heart-breaking images. But maybe the most significant photo of all is Steve McCurry's Afghan Girl. Her haunting and haunted eyes confront us, asking many uncomfortable questions. It has become such

a well known photo that National Geographic ran it twice on its cover, once in 1985, and again recently.

f11: Diving demands discipline and concentration. What happens when you add photography equipment and a mission objective to that mix of priorities?

KW: For me it's always been about getting the photo. That has always mattered more than most other considerations. Much of my diving has been in cold water, but I was never cold until I ran out of film. Then all of a sudden I was freezing, and just wanted to be somewhere warm. I'm definitely guilty of putting the image ahead of safety considerations. Generally I didn't do really silly stuff – though that depends on how you define really silly stuff I guess – but I have pushed the envelope, pushed the safety margins, used up that last bit of air in my tank for the last photo rather than keeping it for some later possible emergency as I should have done. But I was always so scared of getting the bends that I usually gave myself good safety margins.

f11: You also dive in some very technically-challenging environments, tell us about some of the complications involved?

KW: Diving under the Antarctic sea ice was technically the most challenging. If you fast forward to the question about my scariest dive moment further on in the article – that lists some of the challenges. Two of the most ▶

*White-capped albatrosses nesting on the tussocky slopes at South West Cape, Auckland Island. In the background are Carnley Harbour and Victoria Passage separating Adams Island at right with the main Auckland Island at left. With a wide or semi-wide angle lens it is often possible to tell a whole story in a single photo. Canon F-1N with 28-85mm f4 lens.
© Kim Westerskov*





Beacon Valley, one of the unique and hauntingly beautiful ice-free valleys in Antarctica's Transantarctic Mountains. If I was allowed to revisit just one of the many wonderful places I've been to, I'd choose these valleys. I can't really explain why. There is a deep silence here, almost sacredness. A light dusting of snow highlights the form of these rock glaciers at the head of the valley. Rock glaciers are ice-poor glaciers, similar to alpine glaciers but composed mostly of rock with some ice holding the rock together. They move very slowly. The layered, light-coloured rocks are Beacon Supergroup sandstones. The dark rocks are Ferrar Dolerite sills, where basalt magma was forced sideways between layers of Beacon sandstone as thick horizontal sheets. Linhof Technorama 617 camera. © Kim Westerskov

'If you only react to what has happened, then you're going to miss a lot. If you're ready, you'll sometimes get some very special moments. My best photos, the ones which won competitions, were often such special moments. Fleeting. Easily missed.'

obvious challenges about diving under Antarctic fast ice are the cold – it's minus 1.8°C all the time, the freezing point of seawater, and the fact that the only way of getting back to the surface was through the small hole I entered by. If I couldn't get back to that hole, I was in big trouble.

Sometimes when diving, it felt that getting any photo at all was a real achievement, let alone a good photo. Challenges included the limited time underwater (a tank of air typically lasts less than an hour – except for shallow dives), only 36 photos on a roll of film (so I often took down two cameras), impaired thinking at depth, the cold, the poor visibility, the flash bouncing off particles in the water, the darkness, the currents (dragging me away from where I wanted to be), the difficulty of staying in exactly the one spot long enough to get all the technical stuff right for a good photo, the safety considerations (making sure I got back to the surface without the bends or an air embolism or whatever), or simply getting back to the boat or shore. Let alone getting to these places in the first place.

Yes, sometimes the dive boat wasn't there any more, or the current had pulled us out away from the cliffs so we couldn't get back to our entry point, but that's another series of stories, a rather long list. All true, and I'm glad I survived. Then again like most young males, I was bulletproof. I felt bulletproof, so I was. Which is roughly how it works for young males. That's why many do such crazy stuff. And achieve good things as well as getting into trouble. For the record, I'm not bulletproof any more. I'm very careful now. I have to be. I have a family I have to come home to every time.

f11: Have underwater housings and specialist dive cameras improved dramatically over the years or are these still fraught with difficulty?

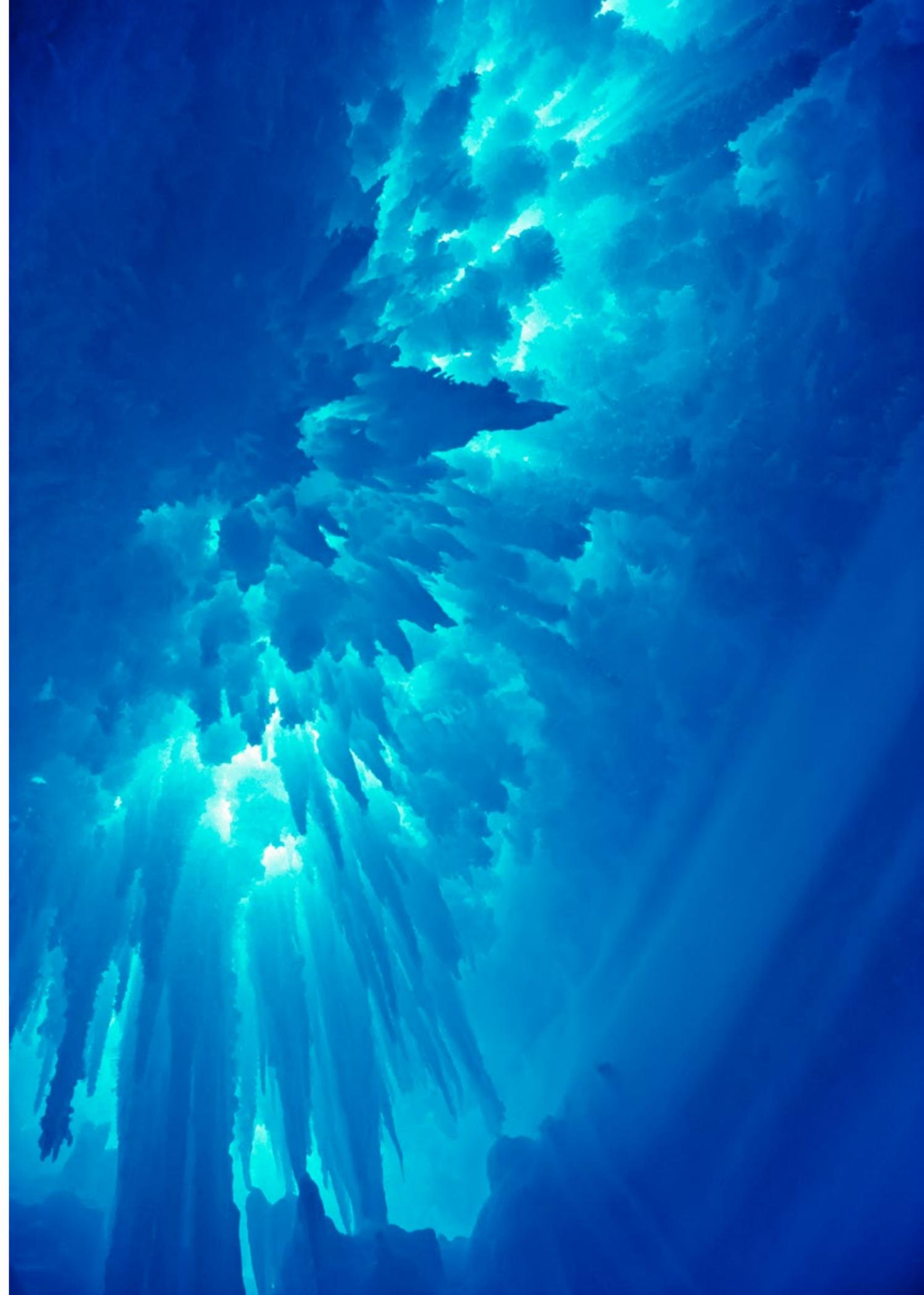
KW: Everything to do with photography has improved dramatically, and keeps improving. What used to be technically difficult and

expensive can now be done easily and cheaply. A little Go Pro can do amazing stuff. So the overall standard of underwater photography – as with above-water photography – continues to rise and rise and rise. So, technically it's much easier now. But a great composition is still a great composition and a great moment is still a great moment. These probably require as much skill as ever – though with lots of room on a digital memory card, it's easy for many photographers to just blast away and hope they get something good.

f11: What was your scariest dive photography moment?

KW: There have been many exciting moments – involving sharks, whales, Orca, currents, dive boats that had disappeared during the dive, being stuck inside shipwrecks, and so on – but most didn't seem scary at the time. Except for one. On my first dive under the Antarctic sea ice I had a potentially dangerous situation. Our dive team had arranged for a metre-wide hole to be drilled through the two-metre thick fast ice (the sea ice anchored to the shoreline) by some friendly Americans from nearby McMurdo Station. This hole was our entry point into the dark clear water underneath. We were diving next to the Erebus Glacier Tongue, a floating extension of the Erebus Glacier. Visibility under the sea ice in early summer was essentially limitless but the snow covering the ice made it dark. It was deep too – the bottom was somewhere below well out of diving range. As far as we were concerned it was bottomless. Diving regulations at the time said we had to ▶

Ice stalactites hanging from ceiling of ice cave in the Erebus Glacier Tongue, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica. Sunlight filtering down through glacier ice floods ice cave in the Erebus Glacier Tongue, the seaward extension of the Erebus Glacier that floats out into McMurdo Sound. Cold, still, blue, special. Olympus OM-1 with Zuiko 35mm f2.8 lens. © Kim Westerskov



be tethered by a rope to someone up on the sea ice. The theory went that if we got into trouble, we'd give the rope a few yanks and we'd be pulled in. Fine in theory, but highly impractical, so our support person just let out much more rope than we needed. The rope hung in a big loop from us, down into the depths, then back up and out again through the hole to our support person.

I sank through the hole and into the almost-black freezing water. The seawater under the ice is a constant minus 1.8°C. And I sank, and sank. In normal diving back in New Zealand we usually wear a buoyancy compensator (BCD) which we let air into, or expel air from, to control our buoyancy. In Antarctica we dived in dry suits which acted as both insulation and buoyancy control. If I was a bit heavy and was sinking, I would press the valve on the front of my drysuit and air from the tank would flow in, making me more buoyant. But at minus 1.8°C, there are sometimes problems. My problem that day was that the vital valve froze and I couldn't get any more air into my dry suit. I was sinking. As I sank deeper and deeper the water pressure compressed the air in my suit, so I was effectively heavier. So I sank faster. I looked at my safety line. From my waist it hung down into the darkness, forming such a big loop that I could hardly see the bottom of the loop and where it started its ascent to the surface and the life-giving hole in the ice, already a long way away. I couldn't swim across to the ascending part of the safety line in time, and I knew that if the safety line ever became taut I'd be so deep that I'd be in real trouble. Or worse.

What to do? The same as a mother does if a car runs over her toddler. She lifts the car off the toddler. Then wonders later 'How could I possibly have lifted a car?' When we really, really, need to, we sometimes find extra strength or resources that we don't normally have. Swimming as hard as I could upwards in normal swimming mode I was still sinking. I couldn't

swim fast enough. However in 'let's go into lift car off my toddler mode' I found the extra strength needed to swim back to the surface. Except there wasn't a surface. There was just the underside of the sea ice, and the entry/exit hole. If I went up through the hole, that would probably be the end of that dive. So I just floated there under the ice, gathering my wits, relaxing, getting my breathing back to normal. And then got back to the business of diving – photographing the underside of the sea ice, the vertical underwater cliff of frozen glacier tongue, and occasional Weddell seals. Whew!

f11: And your hairiest above water photography moment?

KW: Hairiest? Scariest? Hundreds of 'whew, glad that worked out well' moments, but nothing that frightened me at the time – only when I think about them now. Drifting out to sea in the direction of Chile, dangling off cliffs or being accidentally dragged off cliffs by rogue waves or chased by roaring sealions just seemed to be part of the job, part of the adventure. Even finding – twice – that the harness attaching me to the helicopter I was photographing from, while leaning out of the open door, had accidentally disengaged.

f11: Now to the workshops and seminars you run in Tauranga, what sort of people are you attracting and what are their expectations of you?

KW: Some of the people I teach, or mentor, are already professional, or semi-professional, photographers, others are just starting out – and there is every colour of ability in-between. ▶

US Coastguard icebreaker Polar Sea opening a channel through the fast ice (sea ice still anchored to the shore) for the annual resupply of the Italian Antarctic research station at Terra Nova Bay, Ross Sea, Antarctica. I shot this from the icebreaker's helicopter. Canon F-1N with 28-85mm f4 lens. © Kim Westerskov



All are equally welcome. As far as expectations go, every person is different, and this is the challenge. If there are six photographers coming to a workshop, all six will have different equipment, different levels of technical or creative abilities, and different expectations. I prepare for this by sending out detailed questionnaires before every workshop, and fine-tune each workshop according to the replies, as well as fine-tuning each workshop as it goes. If any photographer has more questions, I encourage them to keep in touch – and many do.

f11: Do you personally gain anything from these seminars, creatively?

KW: Every photographer I meet brings something to the table, and I feel I get as much from the teaching as they do. It's a two-way thing, even when I do much of the talking. Some of the photographers I've taught are very skilled or creative in certain areas, and this can't help but rub off. Sometimes they let me borrow a special lens for a while. I'm finding a surprising amount of satisfaction from seeing 'my' photographers doing well, enjoying their photography and getting better and better every day. One of them recently held an exhibition and sold 11 framed photos – I was as pleased and excited about it as she was.

f11: What are some of the photography locations that have eluded you so far?

KW: Too many to list. What I've always done is make the best of whatever opportunities I've had, rather than worrying too much about places I couldn't get to. I did get to the places that I most wanted to get to – the subantarctic islands ▶



Dusky dolphins swim in synchrony in clear blue sea off the Kaikoura coastline of the South Island, New Zealand. I had a month-long contract with the Department of Conservation to photograph the whales, dolphins and other wildlife of the Kaikoura coastline. The dusky dolphins there are often found near the shore in normally murky coastal waters – great for dolphin swim ecotourism operators but not good for underwater photography. So we spent a day well offshore in clear blue waters looking for, and eventually photographing, the dolphins. Nikonos 5 with Nikonos 15mm f2.8 lens.

© Kim Westerskov

and Antarctica itself. I never made it to South Georgia or Alaska, or lots of other places, but that's fine. I'm happy.

f11: What professional goals still exist for you?

KW: I'd really, really love my best photos, from Antarctica to the tropics, to be showcased in a single big book. 'Southern Ocean Wilderness' it's called – in my head. Plus some other books. Since the age of four I've wanted to write books, and now have – 18 to date – plus contributing to many others. I'd like to develop the teaching further, both face-to-face with real people and maybe through my website. It's often suggested that I turn my workshop handouts and/or the many adventures I've had into eBooks so I'd like to get that going too. It's also time to make available a few of my very best photos as Limited Edition prints too. I'm currently looking into that.

f11: If life as a photographer had eluded you, do you think that marine biology would have been your 'day job'?

KW: No, not as a scientist. I'm maybe a naturalist in the old-school sense of loving nature and getting to know a fair bit about it, but mostly by observation and simply by being there rather than by counting and measuring and poking. It took me a long time to figure out that although I loved nature and the sea especially, that I wasn't really cut out to be a scientist. What I've done instead, photography and writing about nature and the sea, is a much better fit for me.

f11: Thanks Kim, it's a pleasure.

KW: Thanks for the opportunity Tim. Much appreciated. ■

TS

<http://kimwesterskov.com>
<http://www.kimwphotography.com>



A magic moment in Antarctica. I'm standing at the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf in McMurdo Sound in late summer. For the previous 14 hours I've been taking aerial photos in the Transantarctic Mountains. After a long and tiring day, the helicopter pilot (Rob McPhail) and I were heading back from the Antarctic continent towards McMurdo Station on Ross Island. We saw Orca swimming along the ice edge. Rob dropped me off and then hovered – the ice was too rough to land. I waited and waited, keeping my 80-200mm lens manually focussed on where I felt the Orca might surface next. Fortune favours those who are ready. I was ready. Three Orca rose in perfect unison in the viewfinder. Click. No motor drive, no auto wind on. Canon F-1N with 80-200mm f4 L lens. © Kim Westerskov



Lone Adelle penguin in a field of jumbled ice, 'push ice' (ice floes driven ashore and piled upon each other during storms). It's midsummer and the adult Adelles are all running a shuttle service from the sea to shore, bringing food for their rapidly-growing chicks ashore. Linhof Technorama 617 camera © Kim Westerskov

'If somebody significant overseas says, 'you're good' – whatever field you're in – then all of a sudden you have credibility in New Zealand.'

►► *Following double page spread: Silhouetted by low sunlight, a lone Adelle penguin heads towards its colony at Cape Royds, the world's southernmost Adelle penguin colony. Close to the shoreline, the sea ice here is both warped and cracked, with a frozen melt pools in hollows. Adelle penguins do a lot of walking. In early spring they journey from the pack ice towards their colonies, navigating by the sun. The last stage of the journey is over the fast ice still clinging to the land. Often this means a walk of 50-100 kilometres, occasionally more. Canon F-1N with 80-200mm f4 L lens.*

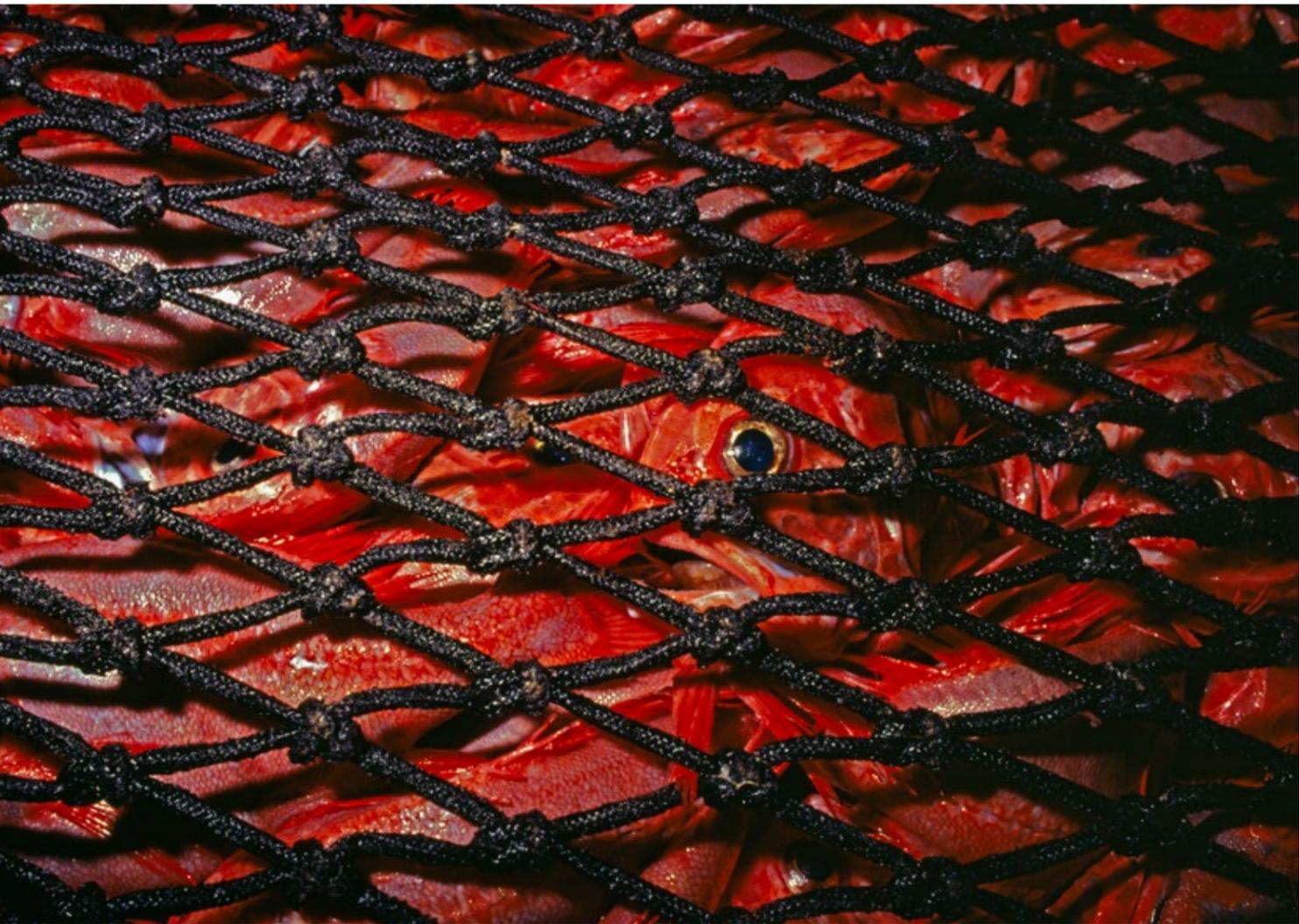
© Kim Westerskov





*Sperm whale diving at dusk with the Kaikoura Ranges in the background. This photo isn't cropped. This is the full frame.
Canon F-1N with 80-200mm f4 L lens. © Kim Westerskov*





Orange Roughy in net. A full net of 30 tonnes of Orange Roughy had been pulled up on the deck of the trawler. It was the middle of the night halfway between the Chatham Islands and the South Island of New Zealand. The wet deck rolled from side to side. I was on assignment for New Zealand Geographic, literally on deck every time the net was pulled in. Of the many photos I took on that trip, this is the most evocative. Canon F-1N with 28mm f2 lens, and Metz 45 CT-5 strobe. © Kim Westerskov

◀◀ *Previous double page spread: White-capped albatross soars over rough seas pounding the exposed west coast of subantarctic Auckland Island. Many ships perished against these cliffs during the age of sail, including the General Grant, but albatrosses are in their element here. The rougher the weather the more obvious their mastery of the air. It's hard not to smile. Canon F-1N with 80-200mm f4 L lens. © Kim Westerskov*



Close up of crinoid or feather star. These filter-feeding echinoderms have graced the seas for at least 450 million years. This was taken in the middle of night from Tobi's yacht in a sheltered bay in Vava'u, Tonga, at a depth of about 30-40 feet. It's not easy to photograph underwater at night. As well as all the usual things to think about, you can't see anything, other than whatever is in the beam of your torch. Nikonos 5 with 28mm lens with extension tubes plus Sea and Sea strobe. © Kim Westerskov

'The answer was obvious: to take my cameras into places where cameras shouldn't go – as far as their safety is concerned. So for many years, I took my cameras onto wild remote islands or to rugged dive sites, poked them into crevasses in Antarctica, into storms or into minus 50°C air or along wave-battered coastlines.'



Flukes of sperm whale underwater at Kaikoura. The sperm whales there were a real challenge to photograph underwater. They are big animals and the surface of coastal waters is normally murky, so even the few times I could get close to them, I could only see part of the whale, never the whole animal. Even after a lot of effort, the best I could do was one short lucky sequence of an approaching whale and some photos of the flukes as the whale swam on. Canon F-1 with 15mm fisheye lens in housing. © Kim Westerskov

‘It took me a long time to figure out that although I loved nature and the sea especially, that I wasn’t really cut out to be a scientist. What I’ve done instead – photography and writing about nature and the sea – is a much better fit for me.’



A blue shark swims gracefully through the wonderfully clear deep waters surrounding the Vava’u group of islands in the Kingdom of Tonga. Shafts of sunlight dance and flicker in the rich cobalt blueness. This shark swam straight at me, bounced off the dome port of my camera housing, swam around me once, and then went on its way. Canon F-1 with 20mm f2.8 lens in housing. © Kim Westerskov

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Campbell Island albatross (Campbell black-browed mollymawk) waking from a sleep on its nest at the Bull Rock colony on Campbell Island, southernmost of New Zealand’s five subantarctic island groups. Canon F-1N with 28-85mm f4 lens. © Kim Westerskov*



New Zealand sea lion in a tall underwater forest of giant kelp. Enderby Island, subantarctic Auckland Islands. These sea lions are great, well at least the females are – they shuffled off the beach just to come and play with me, zooming and weaving and playing games. The males play rougher – one came from above and held my head tight in its huge jaws. There are still four holes right through the hood of my wetsuit where four teeth held me tight. It was just playing but I hoped its idea of play didn't start overlapping with my idea of pain. It hung on and hung on finally another diver jumped into the water off the boat and the sea lion let go of me to go to check out its new playmate/victim. It was raining the whole time, but I got in three dives with the sea lions, one after the other, the boat being anchored nearby. Nikonos 5, with Nikonos 15mm f2.8 lens, and Sea and Sea strobe. © Kim Westerskov



'Much of my diving has been in cold water, but I was never cold until I ran out of film. Then all of a sudden I was freezing, and just wanted to be somewhere warm.'

Thomas BUSBY

Under the mountain

We've been quietly keeping an eye on Thomas Busby for a couple of years, noticing his lauded work in the NZIPP Iris Awards and adding him to our hit list of people to feature here.

While photography is his passion, it's not his full time occupation. Thomas combines this with a career in photographic retail, a field where he can stay close to the technology and at the same time offer others the benefit of his own mastery of it. His career started in television, and that stint was followed by a period where he studied photography.

Thomas was born in New Plymouth, a town on the west coast of the North Island of New Zealand. He still lives in the region, called ▶



Mt Taranaki Sunrise: Taranaki, NZ. My exposure was timed so the sunrise would be hitting the mountain, but had not yet burnt off my friend, the fog. Fujifilm X100s. © Thomas Busby

'I have briefly lived in a few different parts of the North Island, but always somewhere away from mountains. Those places were nice, but without mountains it always felt like something was missing...'

Taranaki, within striking distance of the mountain, Mt Taranaki, that features in some of the images we're showcasing. His affection for these natural landmarks is such that he wishes he lived even closer.

'I have briefly lived in a few different parts of the North Island, but always somewhere away from mountains. Those places were nice, but without mountains it always felt like something was missing, like space wasn't being correctly utilised. It sounds silly but that is the best way I can describe it.'

We had the opportunity to learn more in a virtual conversation:

f11: Welcome Thomas, being a photographer is not your day job – tell us about photo retailing and what keeps you there?

TB: After I finished my photography course it seemed very clear to me that to make a good living from photography as a profession required a lot of time spent not taking photos, and more time running a business. So I went into sales and it's honestly been very good. By selling cameras I get to talk to photographers all day and meet a lot of people with similar interests.

In return, having a few good images to share really helps to demonstrate the capabilities of what I'm selling. I've been doing this for 3 years now and things are slowly changing as I am getting more and more photographic work. Plus being involved in sales for a living has ▶

Concrete Factory: Masterton, NZ. While returning from a holiday with family, these amazing clouds started developing in front of us as we were driving home. Over the course of about 20 minutes, they were just getting better and better, and I was determined to find a nice foreground to shoot them with. Coming across this building seemed like the perfect combination, I love the way the clouds really seem to be drawn into the top of the building. Canon EOS 50D with 10-22mm lens. © Thomas Busby



certainly helped with selling my photographic work. It's one thing that I think a lot of photographers could really benefit from. Getting strangers to trust you and relax in a few short minutes can be very hard (with photography and sales) but doing it 50 times a day I am now very confident – maybe a little too much so.

f11: What's the silliest thing people say when they walk in to a photo store?

TB: When people say 'Surely most cellphones would be as good as this camera?' it fires me up inside a little, but I wouldn't call it a silly thing to say. I have had so many different types of people buy cameras from me that all of the silly questions just seem normal now. However I once had a very lovely older couple try to convince me that their photos were stored on the camera's battery – not the memory card – which became even more entertaining when they turned on each other trying to apportion blame as to just whose idea it had been.

f11: Given the enormous choice on offer today, how difficult – or easy, is it to match buyers with a camera?

TB: This is actually easier than you would think. Mirrorless cameras are the answer for most people: their small size, good quality and attractive price really tick a lot of the boxes. But asking the right questions and finding out if they have something in particular they want to shoot or if they just want an upgrade, really ▶

Back Alleys: Taranaki, NZ. Turning off the main highway in the town of Stratford, I looked down a service alley and saw this view, and got out for a play before the sun came up. That's me in the image (no composites now), I set my camera to a 10 second self timer, ran for eight seconds, walked for two seconds and it was over. I love all the leading lines and the arrow, plus the slight blue to orange contrast is very pleasing. Fujifilm X-M1 with 16-50mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Thomas Busby



narrows down the options. From a personal point of view, it's very clear to me that the camera is the last deciding factor in making a good image. Technique, location, timing, light, subject and a good idea are all far more important than the camera – but when all those things come together it's nice to have a camera that won't let you down. I try to get that across.

f11: How do you combine the two activities, time wise, and what advantages does your day job bring to your photography?

TB: I was very fortunate that when I signed up for my job I had a boss who was happy to give me the time off for photographic work when I needed it. Now, as I have become a more integral part of the team, it has become harder to balance this with photography. This is changing though. The biggest advantage of my day job would easily be the amount of gear I get to try, it really helped me find what best suited my needs; instead of reading a ton of reviews and buying an item that I 'hoped' was as good as people say, I get to try all the options then get the one I 'know' is best for me. The other big advantage is the development of my people skills, which seems odd for someone whose work is mostly remote landscapes, but the confidence to talk to anyone, about anything, at any time, is a very useful skill.

f11: How much time can you effectively devote to your photography?

TB: Never enough, and my hours in sales are reducing. Don't get me wrong, I love my job and I'm good at it. It's just that at the moment making more money isn't as high on the list as it once was. Looking back, working as much as I have been has only made me spend more on 'things', when what really makes me happy is having more time to do the things I love – like photography. I shouldn't say this as someone who works in sales, but I have never bought an item (aside from my wife's wedding ring) that has brought me as much joy as the moment I capture an amazing image.

f11: Have you travelled much, and how did this affect your photography?

TB: I haven't travelled enough, I actually have a few trips booked for this year to locations that I need to cross off the list, but I have never felt that location has ever limited my landscape work. It might be because of where I live, but keeping an open mind and treating an inability to travel as a challenge rather than a limitation has only made doing what I do more fun. I hope I never get into a mind set that there is nothing else around me to shoot, no matter where I have lived the only thing that slows me down is a negative mind set, if I stay positive and keep hunting I'll keep finding great photos, I know that for a fact.

f11: What was your earliest experience with, or memories of, photography?

TB: Mum was a photographer, and is now a picture framer for a living, so I guess good art of all types has been around me for a while. My earliest experience with photography however, is the reason my parents say I'm adopted – although I'm not. When my mother was starting out in photography with film, she would leave just the smallest part of the film roll sticking out of the canister so the lab could pull the film out (not knowing they could just pop the end of the canister off). So after shooting all my baby photos and, I am guessing, leaving the film in the canister for far too long; one day young Thomas gets his hands on the canister and to my parents' horror, pulls the whole roll right out, fogging and destroying the lot. Hence no baby photos of myself anywhere, no evidence that I am my parents' child, and why the adopted title as never left me. We all laugh about it now... well, I think Mum laughs.

f11: At what point did the bug really bite?

TB: From the very first moment I held my own camera, I liked it. There hasn't been one photo or a single moment that I would call the turning point in my photographic career. It's been ▶



I Walk Alone: Taranaki, NZ. This location is about a 15 minute walk from my house, and I come back to it every now and then, just because the road leading up to the mountain makes for such a timeless image. As with most of my work however, I like to add story to my photos and just shooting the location on its own always seemed a bit staid. I had been experimenting with slow shutter speeds for a few different photos and really enjoyed the effect of a slight pan or tilt, over less than a second exposure, to create a lot of drama in the image. This image contains my brother standing on the road (no composite this time) at sunrise. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby

more of a build up, like a growing addiction that I can't seem to shake. To the point where honestly I don't know what I would do with my time if I didn't have photography as a creative outlet.

f11: Did you do any photography at school, and have you done any formal training in this?

TB: I don't think I ever touched a camera right through primary or high school, and looking back now I have no idea what made me want to study it. I did start out studying and then working in film and television, but after a few years it didn't give me the thrill that it once did so I decided to do one half of a photography course (just the papers I liked the sound of) and spent the rest of my time shooting and developing my photography. I came out of it without a certificate to my name but with a pretty good portfolio.

f11: How did you become involved with the NZIPP and what keeps you involved?

TB: My tutor Chris Hill introduced me to the NZIPP very early on in my study, and he mentioned that if our work was good enough at the end of the year, we would be able to enter their IRIS Awards. That gave me a lot of drive throughout my first year. Moving from study to sales in the following years, the IRIS awards were always there as a goal to work towards, something to gauge my work against and to keep pushing me in the right direction. Sitting in on print judging is a very educational experience and for me it really helped me work out the difference between what looks good to me, and what looks good to everyone else.

f11: Apart from the NZIPP, do you belong to any photo clubs or associations?

TB: I do have what I describe as a 'fun' relationship with the camera clubs in Taranaki, and I can't stress enough how being around like-minded, friendly people encourages my work. I think trying to keep the motivation for photography going for this long without these clubs would have been a lot harder than it has been.

f11: Do you plan a full time career in photography?

TB: Sometimes! I have a mental list of photographic projects I want to do, and maybe half of them are conceived with the plan to make money from them. The other half I want to complete simply because I know that I will love doing it. Having half a career doesn't sound very profitable, so I think sales might always be a part of my life. However if I start making money from the projects I love then I'll be living the dream. So that's the plan, with my sales job there as a solid backup.

f11: We're concentrating on your landscape photography here, what other genres do you enjoy?

TB: I love a challenge, being given an odd or random description or subject then trying to create a photo of it, is great fun. I like the challenge of a topic, like the colour green or a ping-pong ball. It sounds odd but these are a great mental exercise in creativity and I still really enjoy them. I do a bit of creative portraiture as well and finding the perfect light for a portrait, just like with landscape photography, is very rewarding.

f11: Did you begin with film, or start with digital?

TB: When I studied, one of the papers I chose was 'film and darkroom'. It might seem a little redundant now in this digital age, and a few people on the course mentioned that, but looking back now, the skills taken from working with film were fantastic. Learning to slow down, to try and get a single perfect image rather than spray and hope, plus understanding the development process, are all skills I am thankful for every time I shoot. However, my first camera was digital and I loved it.

f11: What equipment did you begin with, move through and end up with now?

TB: I started out with the Canon EOS 50D. I look back now at the photos I took with that ▶



Power: Taranaki, NZ. I have returned to this power pylon a few times over the years, it is oddly placed on the top of a small hill in the middle of a very flat paddock. I parked just down the road with plans to jump the gate to get a photo, but as I approached, the framing of the hedge plus the light made for an image I had missed every other time due to being too close. Fujifilm X-T1 with 10-24mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby

camera and I still love a great deal of them. Upgrading to the 5D MkIII felt amazing, like I was literally holding potential in my hands – but the camera doesn't create the picture, I do. I found more and more that I was leaving my DSLR gear at home because of the size and weight and missing amazing sunsets and magical moments with family, all because I didn't have the camera on me. So I researched for close to a year, borrowing all the mirrorless options before deciding on a Fujifilm X-M1. At the time it was the cheapest camera I could get that felt like it had full frame quality. And it's been great, I took it with me everywhere and after 6 months, I had shot more great photos on my little X-M1 than I had with my DSLR since owning it – purely because I had it with me so much more. So I decided to sell my entire Canon kit, and purchased all of the equivalent Fujinon lenses and I've never looked back.

f11: So what's your current kit?

TB: A Fujifilm X-T1 and an X-M1, 35mm f1.4, 10-24mm f4, a 10 stop ND filter, a polarizer. I have been playing with the 56mm f1.2 and the new 40-150mm f2.8 and these are both amazing lenses, but I am trying to keep my kit as light as possible as I do hike and explore a lot, so I only want one more in the bag. I love being able to climb a mountain and take a full camera kit, time-lapse gear, tripod and lunch – all in one bag.

f11: Is there anything exotic you aspire to, gear wise, something you're working towards?

TB: I would love to dabble with some of the medium format gear that is around at the moment just to see what it could unlock. But honestly, no, my current kit is nearly perfect. Working in retail for so long, I was constantly convincing myself that I needed another ▶

Holding the Roof Down: Taranaki, NZ. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby





Factory: Ngairi Dairy Factory at dawn, Taranaki, NZ. What really makes this image for me is the sign. The implied connection between the building and the text of the sign (firewood for sale) adds that extra element that can be hard to find in most landscapes; that little X factor. Canon EOS 50D with 10-22mm lens. © Thomas Busby

'I like to give a bit of a post apocalyptic feel to my images; not as in death and destruction, but more in the feel of nature starting to take back control. Having a run down structure really helps with this feel.'

item before I could do a shoot. I would work hard towards it, get it, then repeat the cycle. When really, what I really needed was more time.

f11: Is photography a solitary pursuit for you, or something you do with friends, family or colleagues?

TB: With a large part of my day involving talking to people and being very friendly, escaping to the middle of nowhere on my own has become very therapeutic for me. I do also enjoy long hikes with friends so maybe it's the wilderness I love rather than the solitude, but I enjoy trying to keep a nice balance between the two. My daughter, on the other hand, is my constant test subject for new ideas and lighting, and a large portion of my landscapes include her as the small figure in them.

f11: Tell us about your post-processing – what's your way of working and do you enjoy this as much as the capture process?

TB: I am extremely bi-polar in my editing process, generally doing one of two things. A simple RAW conversion just to enhance an image I tried to perfect 'in camera' – or I'll go to the other extreme and spend hours, if not days working on a composite. It really comes down to what my initial plan was for the image. I always start out in Lightroom and then transition into Photoshop if this is required. I do try different software now and then, to see if it can help speed up my workflow, but I normally like to keep my workflow simple and creative rather than too complicated.

f11: Have you enjoyed a mentor style relationship with any other photographers?

TB: I have quite a few photographic friends, but none that I would say I have specifically been mentored by. Having said that, people like Chris Hill, Tony Carter and Adam Buckle have all had a hand in pushing me in the right direction, with a bit of extra spice here and there from Margaret Bake.

f11: Where do you find inspiration?

TB: I find myself influenced more by locations and artwork than by people. The web is a constant, sites like Fstoppers and PHLEARN are regularly visited, and not to sound like a sycophant, but I constantly find *f11* a fresh source of inspiration, you guys always seem to find a photographic style or two that I really like, so thank you for that. Fantasy artwork from games, movies and novels also lend inspiration.

f11: If you could spend a week with any photographer in the world, who would it be – and why?

TB: Alexandre Deschaumes has been my idol for a few years now, I love his work and process. His film, 'La Quete D-Inspiration' (The Quest for Inspiration) is very honest and motivational. He is French and doesn't speak a great deal of English from what I understand, so a week with him might be a little tricky, but if the opportunity came up I would drop everything and go!

f11: What's the holy grail for you in terms of a destination that you would love to travel to and photograph? Where and why?

TB: Iceland. Ask my wife and friends, I talk about it a lot. Of just about all the photographic landscape images I enjoy, most were shot in Iceland. The mountains, coast, waterfalls and, from what I have been told, the 4 seasons in one day weather, all sound like heaven for me. I still have nearer destinations that I need to get done first, but I will get there one day.

f11: Landscape photography has a lot to do with reactions to place, what are the places that draw you back again and again?

TB: I live in a pretty rural area, and constantly when I am out and about I can feel that there are great images around me. Images that aren't completely obvious at the time, but I know with a bit of hunting and the right light could be great. I don't write these locations down as much as

I should, but I do like to travel around the back roads over and over at a pretty slow speed just waiting to see what I missed last time. As long as I stop the car and get out – things work out; it can be so easy to just keep driving, but getting out of the car for a few minutes almost always reveals a shot I couldn't see from the drivers seat. There are also a few valleys in inland Taranaki that are filled with fog at sunrise. For landscape work, these sometimes feel like shooting fish in a barrel; if I am ever out of ideas for a location or if I have been doing too much composite work, travelling out to one of these valleys for a sunrise is a perfect solution. Fog adds a lot of mystery and mood to my work, and it's also a great way of removing distracting elements from the landscape, kind of like nature's selective depth of field.

f11: Structures feature in some of your landscapes, tell us about their importance and attraction?

TB: I like to give a bit of a post apocalyptic feel to my images; not as in death and destruction, but more in the feel of nature starting to take back control. Having a run down structure really helps with this feel. I find the right building can hold a huge amount of character and help add just the right amount of story and emotion to a landscape. I get quite attached to them as I'm working on the image, I start to make up stories, give the buildings personalities and think of them like the last run down old tavern on the long road to nowhere. I wonder what's inside and what they were like in their prime. Reading this back to myself, my head really is in the clouds sometimes, but if it's creative and I get an image that works, that's all that matters, I guess.

f11: Absolutely. With your background in television, does video interest you?

TB: I have been getting into more and more time-lapse work. After I made the transition from video to photo, I couldn't imagine ever going back. However as I'm always looking for

new challenges and projects, I have been playing with video again. Time spent on one always helps the other, but at the moment, photography still has the biggest appeal; I'll just have to wait and see what happens.

f11: What's the best thing about being a photographer in 2015?

TB: A creative outlet for people in need of one. To me, photography seems a bit like playing the guitar; it's one of those things everyone would like to be good at. A lot of people can play a song or two, but when you meet someone who is truly in love with creating you realise how much more there is to it, and how much more there is to learn. It's worth keeping in mind though, that you'll never get to a point where you feel like you have learnt everything. That drive to learn as much as possible, to experience all flavours of photography, will hopefully keep me hunting eternally for something different and new.

f11: What are your hobbies or interests outside of photography?

TB: Outside of photography? I don't think I understand the question... Seriously, I enjoy reading, music, hiking, mountain biking, ► airsoft (it's a bit like paint ball) and eating good food with good friends, but photography is such a big part of my life that they all seem like such small parts in comparison.

f11: Thanks Thomas, go well, we will be watching. ■

TS

<http://www.tb-photography.co.nz>





On The Road: Taranaki, NZ. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby

'I find the right building can hold a huge amount of character and help add just the right amount of story and emotion to a landscape.'

◀◀ *Previous double page spread: Heart of the Mountain: Taranaki, NZ. We got up at 3am, hiked for 3 hours, then watched the sun rise while I fired off a few shots. It wasn't until I returned home and looked at this image that I realised the mountain made a heart in the reflection of the water. Fujifilm X-M1 with 10-24mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby*

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Seat: Taranaki, NZ. Fujifilm X-M1 with 10-24mm f4 lens, a 6.5 second exposure with 10 stop ND filter. © Thomas Busby*





Eyebrow: Taranaki, NZ. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby



Fog Hills: Taranaki, NZ. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby

'To me, photography seems a bit like playing the guitar; it's one of those things everyone would like to be good at. A lot of people can play a song or two, but when you meet someone who is truly in love with creating you realise how much more there is to it, and how much more there is to learn.'



The Road To: Taranaki, NZ. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby



Hillary: Taranaki, NZ. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby

‘My daughter is my constant test subject for new ideas and lighting, and a large portion of my landscapes include her as the small figure in them.’

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Impending: New Plymouth foreshore, Taranaki, NZ. It is my daughter in the photo and I had woken her up at sunrise to be my figure in the landscape. She was only 7 at the time, and still very sleepy by the time we arrived at this location, it was also very cold. But growing up as a photographer’s daughter this was all done without complaint. She sat dead still while I played with settings and angles for about 15 minutes. Along with the strong graphical nature of this image, every time I see it, it makes me think of what must have been going through her head at that time. For her to sit so still and quiet for so long, maybe there was something out there that I couldn’t see no matter how hard I looked. Fujifilm X-M1 with 10-24mm f4 lens. © Thomas Busby*





Tree Fog: Bell Block, Taranaki, NZ. I try to get up for a few sunrises every month. It's the best time for landscape photography. When I was just starting out, if I woke to a foggy morning I always went out shooting. Fog removes so much clutter and distraction from landscapes, simplifying in a very natural way and creating striking images of what is otherwise a mediocre landscape. Canon EOS 50D with 70-200mm f2.8 lens. © Thomas Busby

'It's worth keeping in mind though, that you'll never get to a point where you feel like you have learnt everything. That drive to learn as much as possible, to experience all flavours of photography, will hopefully keep me hunting eternally for something different and new.'

Eric BOUVET

Burning Man 2012

French photographer Eric Bouvet has covered wars, regional conflicts and civil emergencies for over three decades. He's travelled the globe documenting the best and worst aspects of humanity, some of its major highlights and more than a few lowlights.

He joined the prestigious Gamma photo agency in 1980 as a photolab worker, and became a staff photographer in 1983. Since 1990 Eric has been an independent photojournalist.

As an 8 year old in Paris, in 1969, Eric was woken from sleep by his parents to watch the first steps of man on the moon, a televised event I will remember myself. Those images, etched forever in his memory, would inspire in him a desire, a need, to document and bear live witness to many more tumultuous and memorable events in the coming years.

Eric's work has been published in most of the major international magazines: Time, LIFE, Newsweek, Paris Match, The Sunday Times Magazine, Stern, The New York Times, Der Spiegel and Le Figaro – to name only the most prestigious in a very long line up of publications. His work has also been widely exhibited. ▶



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

A slew of awards would follow, from World Press, Paris Match, Visa d'Or News, The Front Line Club and the Audience Award Bayeux Gold Medal on the 150th Anniversary of Photography.

Still resident in Paris, with a commitment to sharing and education, he has run photography workshops at Les Rencontres d'Arles, at his studio in Paris, and at French and foreign photography festivals – including those in Croatia, Switzerland, Turkey and Spain.

One look at the images on his website demonstrates clearly that he has witnessed time and time again the horror of man's inhumanity to his fellow man. There are images from Gadhafi's fall in Tripoli, from Chechnya, documenting 20 years of wars in Afghanistan, refugees in Tunisia, and more recently, from the current conflict in Ukraine.

Little wonder really, that in 2012, Eric's busman's holiday was to take himself off to the famous week-long Burning Man event in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada. It takes its name from the ritual burning of a large wooden effigy, which is set alight on Saturday evening. The event is described as an experiment in community, art, radical self-expression, and radical self-reliance, and no doubt made a welcome respite from the regular horror and inherent danger of Eric's professional life. The event's theme for 2012 was 'Fertility 2.0' and with only 40,000 tickets available the event was massively oversubscribed – over 120,000 people seeking attendance, most disappointed. Burning Man attendees are referred to as 'Burners'. Learn more about this fascinating event [here](#). ▶



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

We chose to focus on this lighter and more uplifting work, rather than the stuff of nightmares in his portfolio, and very likely, in his dreams.

Eric on that Apollo landing in 1969:

I don't want to say it was that precise moment when I decided to become a photographer, but I remember well this amazing piece of history and the power of the images I saw.

Eric on Paris:

Paris was the capital of photojournalism from the 60's to 2002. At this time digital cameras and the internet arrived and changed everything in the photographic market.

Eric on photography as art:

Of course photography is an art, it's a medium, it's a way of journalism, photography is powerful and there are so many different ways to use it, to look at it, to understand it.

On his first camera:

1977, a Nikon FM which I bought myself with money I earned working as a waiter in a restaurant. I started on film as digital had not been born...

On his early days in photography:

I made little stories and tried to sell them to different agencies. I worked for the Keystone agency, and became a black and white laboratory processor at the Gamma agency in 1980, and became a staff photographer in 1983. ▶



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

On formal photographic training:

I am an autodidact, I learnt about the arts and graphic industries but nothing about photography in this famous school. I learned all this by myself. But I know much more now, after reading for the last three decades!

On early mentors and influences:

So many different moments, so many different ways to see and to understand the world. Of course, as a younger man, I was inspired by the work of Robert Capa, Gilles Caron, and Henri Cartier Bresson.

On today's influences:

I am still inspired by Richard Avedon, and Irving Penn, because they use mostly one flash light or natural light. And it was about people, I love the simplicity, it's powerful. There are a lot of good young photographers, but, I am little bit old myself so I learn from everywhere...

On the message in his photography:

I have had the chance to see history in the making, and to witness wars. I am pretty sure now that my pictures will change nothing, but they stay for history. Every year I have pictures in school history books, that's as good recompense as an award.

On the current state of newspapers and magazines:

There is no more way for me with the press, I am very sad about how the market is in such a bad way. So I must try to find other outlets for my photography again and again, new stories, new documentaries... ▶



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

On the stress and pressure of photography in war zones:

Of course my body and my mind are tired of violence but I have never given up, I'm still here and continuing to go to the bitter end...

On the dangers of being there:

I am never blasé, in fact, I am increasingly fearful. Young photographers have no idea how, after 34 years of drama and horror, you can manage this in your brain and your stomach. I just try to stay safe first, pictures after... I am not a hot head, I have two great kids and I love my family.

On his scariest experience:

Too many to list in so many different countries. Fear and horror is everywhere, I don't know why I still believe in mankind.

On Burning Man, and the experience:

No friends with me, just myself on a bicycle and with a smile! 8 days of love, fun, sharing, artistic performances everywhere. Just magic! People there are very cool and wonderful, and happy to be photographed. Sharing is one of the ten commandments of the event.

On his camera preferences:

I have 20 cameras. I use a Fujifilm XT1 for news in digital, but for magazine stories I work with film. I have Leica M, Hasselblad, and large format cameras in 4x5, 5x7 and 8x10. I love large format!

On lighting preferences:

I use Profoto lights for the portraits, but I never use flash on my classical 35mm camera. ▶



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

On his passions outside of photography:

Climbing high mountains, nature, music – and photography :-)

On what he's doing right now:

I am in Paris shooting portraits for Geo magazine about people who were kids in the Nazi camps during the Second World War. I had planned to go to Burma in Asia, where I have an exhibition of my pictures about love with Burning Man and the Rainbow Family being shown, but sadly, work here in Paris has prevented this.

On the future:

I will never reach the end of photography, I will never arrive at the summit, I still have a lot of things to understand, to learn, to be better everyday.

I've been dreaming for decades about coming to New Zealand. I want to walk around the country with my camera, meeting people who looks so cool and so far away from the crazy world we live in here in Europe. ■

TS

www.ericbouvet.com



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

'Of course photography is an art, it's a medium, it's a way of journalism, photography is powerful and there are so many different ways to use it, to look at it, to understand it.'



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

▶▶ *Following 3 double page spreads: Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet*







'No friends with me, just myself on a bicycle and with a smile! 8 days of love, fun, sharing, artistic performances everywhere. Just magic! People there are vey cool and wonderful, and happy to be photographed.'



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

▶▶ *Following 2 double page spreads: Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet*







Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet*



'I have 20 cameras. I use a Fujifilm XT1 for news in digital, but for magazine stories I work with film. I have Leica M, Hasselblad, and large format cameras in 4x5, 5x7 and 8x10. I love large format!'



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet*





Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet



Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet

'I will never reach the end of photography, I will be never arrive at the summit, I still have a lot of things to understand, to learn, to be better everyday.'

▶▶ *Following double page spread: Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA, 2012. © Eric Bouvet*



Quiver trees are unique subjects to shoot in the Namibian desert. Aperture Priority, 400 ISO, f8 at 1/1500 sec, 24-105mm lens. © Darran Leal

On location

LANDSCAPES OF NAMIBIA

An incredible photo adventure

I remember hearing about Namibia in Southern West Africa in the early 1990's, after it gained its independence from South Africa. Namibia is a desert country with few people and wide-open spaces. What I did not realise until my first visit, was that this incredible land has the most outstanding landscapes. 13 trips later, I still can't wait to return and shoot new images.

Most visitors will start their adventures from the capital Windhoek, which is around 1600m above sea level, and dry. It has changed dramatically in the last two decades from having basic third world facilities to the bustling modern small city it is today. In fact most of Namibia has changed in this way to be one of Africa's safest and most progressive countries. No matter in which direction you leave Windhoek, it is an arid and a tough environment. We usually start our tours by travelling south, targeting the famous sand dunes of Sossusvlei and the Namib Coast. Further south is Fish River Canyon. It is the second largest canyon in the world and for most, a great place to visit, but with a low volume photographic return. However, nearby are old diamond mines and unique quiver trees. These two are great subjects to shoot and explore. Both require targeted timing, and for the mines you need permits. Southwest of

Windhoek you find some of the largest sand dunes in the world. About 60km down a dead end road is an area offering some of the best landscape photography in the world.

NAMIB-NUKLUF NATIONAL PARK

This massive park is so rugged and dry that it offers huge areas that have seen few human visitors. It still has the odd leopard and a small oasis that allow gemsbok, springbok and even baboons to survive and roam. Sesriem offers accommodation from basic camping to 5-star lodges. From the Sesriem camp ground, you can shoot amazing sunset light on facets of the ragged mountain range. If you have time, you can explore several angles from the main road that runs parallel to the peaks – spectacular!

After more than 40 visits with groups of all sizes, including TV crews, I can say that I have not had one person who was not amazed with the surreal beauty of the Sossusvlei region. The name means a dead end marsh. I say region because most people use the name Sossusvlei to cover everything, when in fact Sossusvlei is just one part of the park. Deadvlei, (dead marsh) and Hiddenvlei, the least visited of the marshes, and more, make up the unique landscapes of the region. The sand dunes, some up to 400 ▶



meters high, are only one facet. I love the cracked clay patterns in the floor of the marsh.

Top tip, you need to camp or to stay at the lodge in the Park. If you don't, you're locked out until sunrise and you will miss the best light of the day. We always arrive in the dark and wait for that beautiful early light.

NAMIB COAST

It is very hard to find locations where sand dunes roll into the ocean. The Namib Coast is one – and worth exploring. A great way to see the extent of this ancient land is by air. The dunes rolling into the sea are a photographer's El Dorado. Unfortunately, it is very hard to find a plane that will take off its door for clear shooting, but fortunately, many an award winning image has been taken through the windows – which are generally clean and unscratched. However, I prefer to drive through the region. This had been nearly impossible in some places until recent special permits were allowed. Few operators have such permits and a lot of planning is generally required. It was an outstanding experience last September for me to explore and drive up and down sand dunes over 60 meters high, without a blade of grass. I shot loads of images while driving at 40-60km per hour, out the 4WD window as it was too hard to stop when at a 50 degree angle. We required 'run up' space to make it up the next dune. A lot of fun! Modern technology made it possible to shoot unique images, even while we were on the move. Of course we stopped regularly as well, and this gave us more traditional shooting options. I can't wait to go back next year and shoot a ship in the middle of sand dunes – high and dry, plus unique sand ripples that I have never seen before. Time waits for no one here...

SKELETON COAST

This is a flat desert-like stretch of coast starting north of the small town of Swakopmund. I took the family up this coast in 2013 and we all questioned, '...how does anything live here?'

There are shipwrecks, and further north and a short drive inland on the Skeleton Coast, outstanding dry and rugged mountain ranges. There are few roads here. A key to all of Namibia is good planning. If you self drive, be aware of dangerous gravel corners. Water and supplies can be an issue, you're on your own here, so always be prepared for the unexpected and travel with lots of water. There is so much texture and fine detail on offer here, Namibia loves high megapixel full frame cameras! Having said this, I also use my iPhone to shoot panoramas. So any kit will do a good job in the right hands. Don't forget your long telephoto lens. Yes, some game can be shot, but it also works well for landscapes in the dunes and for the mountain ranges. Top tip – add time for the big game of Etosha National Park and/or the culture of the Himba or San People for outstanding photo opportunities. As it is a desert, you need to be very wary of sand getting into your gear. We have experienced full-blown sand storms, through to heavy (water dripping) fog. Keep your gear up and away from the sand and don't put your bag on the sand. What I can guarantee is that the landscapes of Namibia will stay with you forever. Haunting, colourful, rugged, spectacular – the list of adjectives and descriptions is endless. Enjoy your photography ... ■

Darran Leal

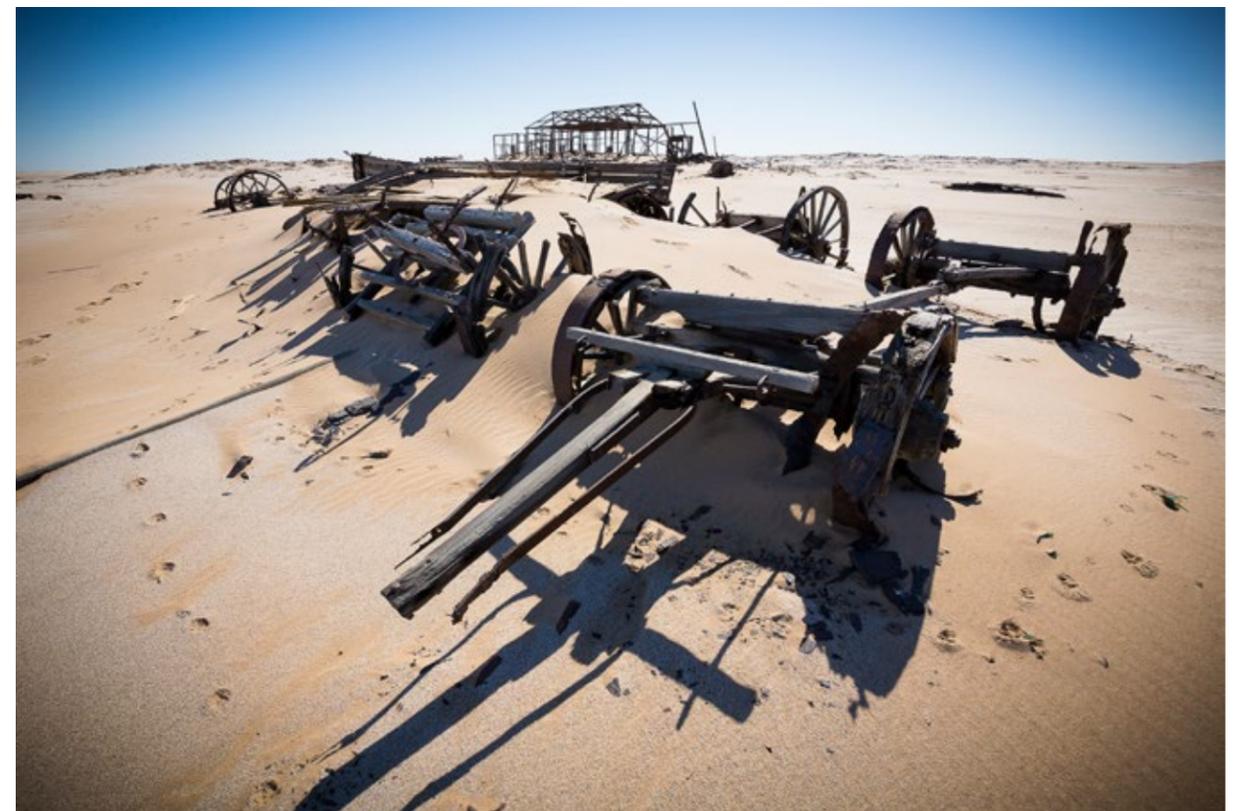
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Darran is the owner of World Photo Adventures, a professional tour company that started offering adventures to photographers in 1989. From local workshops and tours, to extended expeditions on every continent, they are famous for offering unique travel and photography experiences. For more information visit – www.worldphotoadventures.com.au

► *Amazing wilderness, sand dunes and diamond ghost towns 'Sperrgebiet', the Forbidden Zone, offers new and outstanding photo opportunities. Aperture Priority, 400 ISO, f11 at 1/500 sec, 16-35mm lens. © Darran Leal*



▲ *The mix of clay patterns and sand near Sossusvlei is so exciting for the creative photographer. Aperture Priority, 400 ISO, f11 at 1/500 sec, EV minus 1, 16-35mm lens. © Darran Leal*





APSCON 2015

The program for APSCON 2015, this year's annual convention of the Australian Photographic Society (APS), to be held at Tweed Heads on the NSW/Queensland border, includes some top presenters.

One keynote speaker, Wendy Roche, is an impressionist photographer who uses in-camera techniques to produce images that provoke a deep sense of mystery and mood. Her images, often intertwined with human form, incorporate the use of movement, colour and light to mesmerise, move and magnetise the viewer. Her mystic images haunt as well as inspire. Wendy will give two presentations; one about creative photography using Lensbaby and the other about the use of slow shutter photography to achieve painterly images with mood and mystery.

The other keynote speaker, Graeme Guy, has won over 1200 awards in International exhibitions. Graeme does only nature photography and specialises in high-speed photography. His first presentation will discuss his basic 'rules' for nature images that you must get right then move on to what gives your images an edge over others. Graeme lives near an amazing outdoor studio where two species of Bee-eaters nest as well as Kingfishers and Lapwings. He has targeted all four species to better understand their life history and to appreciate when it is best to get action shots. In three seasons he has visited 120 times, shot 150,000 images, used 5 different cameras,

written 12 blogs and had several dozen award-winning images. In his second talk, Graeme will put the case for 'targeted' nature photography.

Other speakers include Pele Leung, a commercial photographer specialising in architectural and landscape photography; Mark Rayner, a professional photographer whose work is as diverse as it is creative; and the Canadian-born street photographer Robert Walker (author of *New York Inside Out*). Roger Skinner has exhibited in numerous Australian and overseas galleries, staged three solo exhibitions and won numerous awards. In celebration of forty years as a photographer, Roger is producing a book. His talk at APSCON 2015 will share his experience of doing that. Valerie Martin has worked as a press photographer in London, a freelancer in the United States and a senior staff photographer at Australian Consolidated Press. She is passionate about travel and sharing her photography knowledge and will talk about her photography in Ethiopia.

Mark Rayner, Graeme Guy, Pele Leung, Robert Walker and portraiture expert John Lomas will each offer workshops. There will be three tours to nearby places of photographic interest, a trade display, two dinners and more. This event is one not to be missed. The Society's website will provide details about APSCON 2015 early this month, as well as a link to online registration. Don't prevaricate. Register now.

Brian Rope OAM, AFIAP, FAPS, ESFIAP, HonFAPS Chair, PSA Liaison Sub-Committee

Drifting. © Julieanne Kost

Adobe's principal digital imaging expert bound for New Zealand

It's not everyday you hear a photographer branded as an 'Evangelist' but that is how Adobe Systems' Principal Digital Imaging expert, Julieanne Kost refers to herself.

She spends most of her time travelling on the road in the USA and around the world, speaking at numerous photography and design conferences and tradeshows. She is in high demand and teaches Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Photoshop Lightroom at distinguished photography workshops and fine art schools around the world.

The Photographic Society of New Zealand (PSNZ) is delighted that Julieanne accepted its invitation to be one of the keynote speakers at the PSNZ National Convention being held in Tauranga, New Zealand next month from April 29 – May 3, 2015.

She will present several keynote addresses throughout the programme as well as host two workshops – one on digital compositing – where multiple images captured at different times, are layered together to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

In the second workshop Julieanne will show her 'Ten Minute Techniques' – for creating extraordinary images in Lightroom.

Two other international photographers – Guy Edwardes from England and Christian Fletcher from Australia as well as several outstanding New Zealand photographers will support Julieanne in the convention's programme.

There is still time to register for the national convention – Exploring Pixels, and for more information [click here](#).

Moira Blincoe LPSNZ is the PSNZ Councillor for Publicity

The clarity of vision

Postproduction tools and techniques are wonderful to behold as they help drive our stories, hide what we don't want to show and enhance what we do want to show. Sometimes I wonder if I am just confused or maybe being set up.

Other times I salute the intentions and honesty of purpose. Recently I listened to an 'artists floor talk' as he explained purpose and process. In preparation, I had read the curator's writing and that seemed to be the usual litany of phrases and jargon that had that universal utility – it could apply to almost anything, practically anyone.

The artist, Paul McLachlan was explaining his portraits for his show 'Home Ground' at Porirua's Pataka Art Museum.

Conceptually it was an intriguing idea for presenting an aspect of WW1 history in a novel way. In simple terms there were a number of war monument statues hand carved in Italy from marble after the war and shipped to many towns and cities in New Zealand and Australia.

This exhibition is based on some of those memorials in the South Island of New Zealand. All very normal. What I found interesting was that a full cycle of photography was involved – perhaps even a double cycle?

For accuracy of representation, the New Zealand Government sent photographs of soldiers to ensure that the Italian stone artist could make likenesses that would ring true.

Now, almost 100 years latter, Paul McLachlan has headed out and with a camera and ladder photographing these same statues and sort of reverse engineered to finish with a set of head and shoulder portraits that possibly resemble the original portraits supplied to the Italian stone artists.

Paul's process was interesting as from his photographs of statues he created 3D digital files and worked on those – even adding textures to each soldiers uniforms that 'spoke' of the environment where they were located – fields, foliage, mountains.



Bob. © Chuck Close

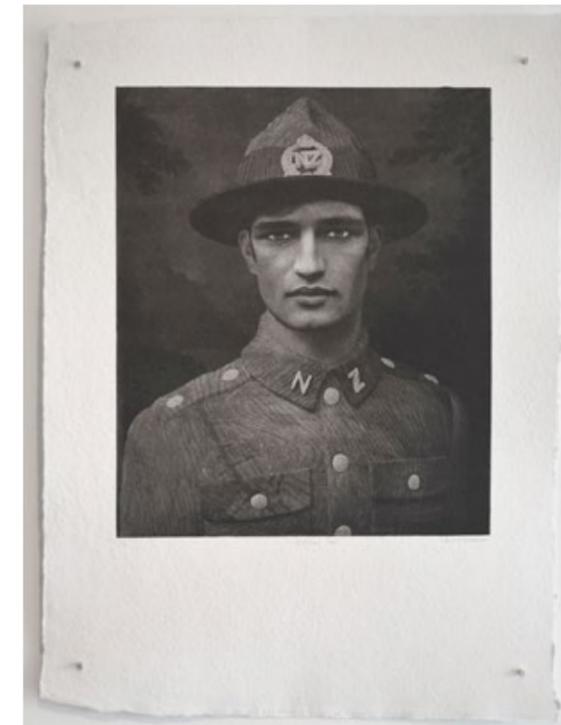
These were then output to film, contacted to a limited run silicon printing plate and printed onto a 'high physicality' Indian cotton paper. You may recognise the process as Photo-Intaglio printing.

Nice prints, great process. I guess an even further step would be to retain the images as fully worked solid objects and print them using a 3D printer. Maybe a step too far?

Technology has once again enabled, and probably driven, new experiences.

In January I visited the Chuck Close exhibition at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art. Here, in the form of photography, printmaking, presentation and explanation, Chuck Close's portraits of people were a powerful, innovative and in the end, heroic testament to a vision of an artist who has broken through against huge handicap.

Technology became his enabler but also his tool to explore with, and to confront with. A fantastic story, body of work and exhibition.



Home Ground. © Paul McLachlan

With both these artists the printmaking is driven by process and innovation and ideas. Not just romantic or pretty, but the result of deep experimentation and innovation.

Paul is just beginning his body of work, Chuck has decades of innovation, decades of boundary pushing to reflect on.

Neither is finished by any means, their work continues. ■

MS

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Success – luck or skill?

Last week I spoke to a photographer who is doing very well indeed. He graduated with a business degree but always wanted to be a photographer, and today has a studio that is the envy of many. He had a clear mission and plan from the start, carefully choosing his niche market and developing a suite of products and services that supported it. It has paid off handsomely over the years.

He laughs now when his colleagues tell him how ‘lucky’ he is to have achieved this success. Luck, he says has had nothing to do with it!

Success, in a way, has much to do with personality, which means those with a particular personality profile are more likely to succeed than others. Does that mean then that only certain photographers are going to succeed and the rest might as well give up? Certainly not! Anyone can succeed – the question is how?

Like the quest for eternal youth, everyone wants success. Bookshops have shelves of self-help books each postulating a unique magical formula. Surely only one of these books can contain the true magic formula, and all the others must by default be frauds?

A few of these books may indeed provide false hope, but many are well researched and have genuine testimonials of success. They each approach the topic from a different perspective,

one of which will resonate with your personality as a magic formula.

There is only a weak causative relationship between planning and success. We are unlikely to achieve the success we want if we don’t plan at all, yet on the other end of the scale, many well thought out plans end dismally.

It’s no coincidence that success in business and weight loss share a common secret. Both need a workable plan that suits your personality, and both require the same technique to managing it.

A Dominican University study bears this out. The study showed that your odds of success in any field of endeavour are better if you commit your plan to writing. Whatever those odds are, they improve considerably if you discuss your plan with a third party, like a trusted friend or mentor. But your odds of success are greatest when that third party monitors your progress on a regular basis as well.

Your trusted financial advisor can assist you in developing a plan that makes good business sense and is right for you and your personal goals. It then takes discipline and drive to commit to a regular routine of monitoring your progress, but it’s this extra step that’s going to be your secret to achieving your success!

Brian Katzen is the CEO of the Association of Commercial & Media Photographers (ACMP)

Foto Frenzy Pty Ltd is the Brisbane home of all things photographic. Founded by long term members of the Australian Institute of Professional Photography (AIPP), the passionate and dedicated people on site offer many services to the industry.

Gallery Frenzy

- With over twenty-six exhibitions shown over the past two years, the gallery space has a sound track record. Print sales have been achieved from all shows. Onsite printing, matting, framing & frame hire is offered, as is skilled curatorial assistance for first time exhibitors.

Living Image Fine Art Printing

- Print is our passion. We believe a photograph isn’t complete until it’s reproduced on paper. Only then is it a truly tangible expression of the photographer’s vision.

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- has the largest range of Canon and Nikon hire gear in Queensland. (+tripods, +flash +backgrounds, +friendly service)

Film Frenzy

- Onsite B&W and C41 process and scan.

Elite Studio Photography Workshops

- Workshops and mentoring to develop your photography, lighting and business.

Holden Imaging Solutions

- Offering a consultancy service for new and current photographers wanting assistance in managing their Digital Asset Management systems. As well as offering a colour calibration service, the Personal Concierge will facilitate research prior to new equipment purchase.

IAN POOLE does PHOTOGRAPHY

- writes about photography, offers assistance on portfolio selection, and curates exhibitions.

Visit our website www.fotofrenzy.com.au or email info@fotofrenzy.com.au for more information.

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TONY BRIDGE

ARTIST, WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER,
TEACHER, MENTOR

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

Bridge on teaching photography:

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

Bridge on his Hurunui Experience tours:

‘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 workshops, 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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Reflections

An AIPP Community Service Project Honouring Our WW11 Veterans

The AIPP is proud to announce that in 2015 we will undertake one of the most ambitious photography projects ever undertaken in Australia, photographing as many remaining veterans of WW11 as possible.

The project will provide a unique pictorial record of returned servicemen and women for the purpose of creating a national archive.

We realise the ANZAC veterans from World War I are no longer with us, but many of their sons and daughters, those who served in World War II, are still in the community and immensely proud of their service.

By documenting our veteran population in their elderly years, knowing that in future years our WWII veterans will no longer

be with us, we hope to create a sensitive portrayal of their lives that will provide a pictorial comparison to wartime footage of young, active men and women.

The project will be managed by the AIPP and will involve suitable AIPP members creating on a pro bono basis a comprehensive body of work to be ultimately gifted to the nation via the RSL and hopefully the Australian War Memorial.

The AIPP believes that the professional image has a permanent and relevant place in society, and this project is a powerful way to demonstrate that value to society.

More details of this project can be found on the AIPP website at www.aipp.com.au

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Reflections
Honouring our WWII Veterans

AIPA

Professional Photographers always use Terms and Conditions

When you drop your car in for a service you accept the terms of trade set by the garage. This is because the garage understands the importance of having terms and conditions in place to protect their business.

When you purchase a ticket for a flight you accept the terms of trade set by the airline. This is because the airline understands the importance of having terms and conditions in place to protect their business.

When you book a rental car you accept the terms of trade set by the rental car company. This is because the rental car company understands the importance of having terms and conditions in place to protect their business.

When you hire an architect to design your new home you accept the terms of trade set by the architect. This is because the architect understands the importance of having terms and conditions in place to protect their business.

When you open a phone or internet account you accept the terms of trade set by the telecommunications company. This is because the telecommunications company understands the importance of having terms and conditions in place to protect their business.

When you install a new software application on your computer or smart phone you accept the terms of trade set by the software developer. This is because the software developer understands the importance of having terms and conditions in place to protect their business.

When you hire a studio space for a photo shoot you accept the terms of trade set by the photographic studio. This is because the photographic studio understands the importance of having terms and conditions in place to protect their business.

I could go on, but hopefully you can see the pattern here: Professional service providers always set their terms of trade before they supply their services. This is essential as all business owners need to protect themselves from dishonest clients and unforeseen or uncontrollable circumstances.

So why is it that so many working photographers supply their services without first setting in place their own terms and conditions? Or worse, some photographers actually let their clients determine their terms of trade.

Over the years I've heard a wide variety of excuses from photographers who don't use any terms of trade – many of whom are very talented and intelligent people who should know better. But I have yet to hear a single excuse that's even remotely valid, and none of them are worth repeating here. Because at the end of the day, when the sh#t hits the proverbial fan, excuses won't protect your business, your rights, or your reputation.

Bottom line: professional photographers always give every client a copy of their terms and conditions up front, before they shoot a single frame. If you're not doing this then you're not a professional.

Aaron K
AIPA Executive Director

New challenges, new ideas

Hard to believe we're fully two months into a new year, and if you are like many of our members who are portrait and wedding focused, that year may have started off with a 'hiss and a roar'.

It's always a challenge at the beginning of a year to remember to make sure you move forward with new ideas and not rehash or fall back on old ones.

As an organisation, the NZIPP this year is concentrating on an underlying performance theme of Evolution. While in itself it doesn't sound like a 'wow' statement it does however presuppose that things are always changing and that we must too. Members join for many reasons but the access to, and the use of, the latest information is a big one.

We will be working hard this year to put in front of you all a variety of sources demonstrating what it takes to be a successful and professional business operator. Traditionally a lot of our resources would have been allocated to overseas

'Rockstars' who pretty much showed their images, added some anecdotal stories, and we were all momentarily inspired. However for most of us, as we drove away from such experiences our determination to action what we had seen diminished slowly as the miles flew by on the journey home.

This year, our national 'Infocus' conference will be held in Queenstown. It will be an example of our new philosophy where we will not only have overseas talent (which those attending will really appreciate) but also many other presenters who are 'doing it' in the real world and who have the brief that members want high quality information that they can apply in their own businesses.

A variety of information in bite size formats will be a change of experience from the past and we are listening to what is being asked for.

Stay tuned for the details.

Russell Hamlet
President NZIPP

Queenstown Centre for Creative Photography



New Zealand Photographic Workshop Specialists – 2015

Jackie Ranken and Mike Langford, both internationally award winning photographers, judges and lecturers based in Queenstown, New Zealand.

Mike Langford Canon Master, Grand Master NZIPP, Australian Travel Photographer of the Year 2013, NZ Travel Photographer of the Year 2012.

Jackie Ranken Canon Master, Grand Master NZIPP, NZ Landscape Photographer of the Year 2013 & 2014, NZ Professional Photographer of the Year 2012, NZ Creative Portrait Photographer of the Year 2012, Australian Landscape Photographer of the Year 2012.



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Our 2015 event schedule:

- March 19 - 23 Landscape Otago-Gold fields, NZ
- April 17 - 20 Autumn Colours I Queenstown, NZ
- April 24 - 27 Autumn Colours 2 Queenstown, NZ
- May 16 - 19 Landscape Kinloch Queenstown, NZ
- July 16-20 Landscape Mount Cook, NZ
- August 3 -5 NZIPP Awards Queenstown, NZ
- August 20-24 Landscape Mt Cook, NZ
- September 17 - 21 Landscape West Coast, NZ
- October 9-12 Landscape Fiordland, NZ
- October 16 - 25 Glapagos Islands (Mike & Ignacio Palacios)

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Droning on about drones

Has the bandwagon already pulled out?

Some of you may have read the article our publisher and I collaborated on in issue 39 regarding my first hands on experience with a DJI Phantom Vision Plus, a camera-toting-personal-drone. The NZ distributor for DJI, Lacklands Ltd, kindly provided nearly 2K worth of kit for me to make my maiden drone flight and it went well. By definition, 'went well' meant that the craft was returned to them on time and in one piece exactly as provided. I'm willing to wager that demonstration flying machines don't always fare that well.

The whole experience ignited my interest, or rather confirmed the notion I had that I would hugely enjoy using one of these things as a camera platform, and maybe even make some money with it for good measure.

So after a bit of research I now find myself the proud owner of a mid-range six rotor machine capable of carrying a GoPro 4K camera into the heavens for ten to fifteen minutes at a time. Test flights and calibrations have been completed, test footage and stills scrutinised in house and then hopefully and optimistically placed before selected clients in order to gauge their interest.

Aerial photography assignments are a scarce commodity in these days of ever-tightening budgets and it doesn't help that the cost of getting a photographer and his/her kit aloft even for a short time has gone through the roof.

Enter the humble drone...

Coming in at a fraction of the cost of traditional aerial photography, the drone has certain advantages over a plane or helicopter, the main one being that it can get a lot closer to the subject and operate at comparatively low levels, allowing the use of wide angle lenses for endless depth of field and dramatic perspectives.

However, there is a lot more to these little aerial camera platforms than meets the eye. You see, although they are hugely popular – in fact bordering on ubiquitous at this point – from what I've seen, heard and read ninety-something percent of them appear to be either merely toys or being used as such.

In fact, and sadly, a large percentage of them are rather unfortunately being used irresponsibly, downright dangerously even. This year it seems as if there hasn't been a week pass without a report of an incident of some sort ranging from simple mischief to espionage and endangerment of public safety.

Introducing the role of common sense, or the complete lack of it, I even saw one complete muppet (that's Kiwi speak for blithering idiot) on the TV news who had begun using a drone to deliver hot cups of coffee to the hands of his customers – across the street, up the road or simply 20 metres from his place of business



© Gary Baildon

to the furthest flung tables. I can't help but speculate that misguided folk like this, looking for a gimmick or a Darwin Award, are going to ruin the entire drone party for people like us who might fancy using this technology for more creative endeavours. Surely it does not require the intellect of a rocket scientist to deduce that the combination of almost boiling water in paper cups surrounded by small spinning rotors flying towards human beings at six to ten feet off the ground might be an accident looking for a suitable place to occur?

Higher profile incidents ranging from a small drone making it into the grounds of the White House undetected to one crashing into a Queenstown NZ hotel (with the owner being spotted running from the scene) are fast bringing scrutiny down on the drone and there are already moves underway to regulate their use for the greater good.

Here in New Zealand, the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) has a set of guidelines available on their website for any interested drone owner to access. It makes for interesting reading as there are strict height and distance restrictions in place that include the fact that an operator may NOT let the device out of their sight even if they are using a FPV (first person view) system to place the craft or compose a shot.

In addition to this there are strict restrictions regarding their use near airports and military locations which you'd think would be common sense. From the news reports I've seen, and dozens of YouTube videos I've watched, it seems that many people are either blissfully unaware or simply playing dumb! Here's a link to the [CAA drone and model FAQ](#).

A excited as I am about using the wee craft to flesh out my client offerings I realise I'm very late to this particular party and there is an awful lot of competition out there for the plum jobs. So for now I'll be content with slipping my aerial drone operations quietly in to the services I offer my existing clients and see where it leads.

I'm more than happy to take my place in the pecking order when it comes to my modest equipment and fledgling skills in this area but I really do hope a few (ok probably way more than a few) dickheads don't spoil things by forcing the authorities to bring in draconian legislation that will make it so difficult that it won't be worth it.

Fly safe fellow drone pilots, for all of our sakes – and café boy, give it a bloody rest! ■

Buzz

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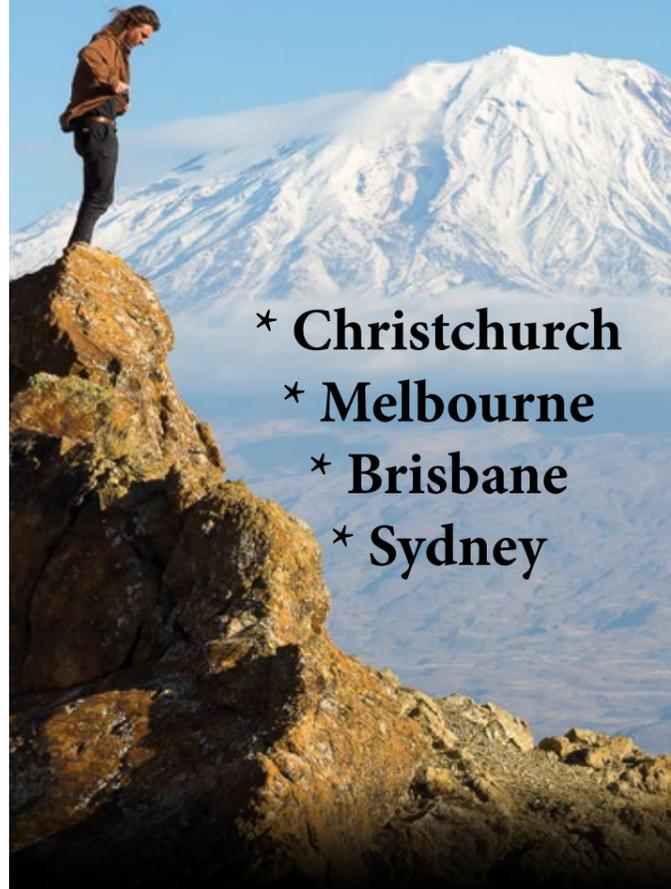
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Anywhere you see an image of a computer screen contains a link, usually to video content.

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.

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▶▶ Continued from page 146...

Eventually I made a quantum leap to Swiss Broncolor – thanks to a kind and understanding bank manager.

You have probably noticed that I have completely skirted around marques like Leica and Sinar and Graflex and Toyoview; let alone Cambo and Arca-Swiss. These all had, or still have, zealous devotees.

I'm about to run foul of the dark lord, this piece straying perilously close to pandering to ideas of brand zealotry and away from the process, brand and technology agnosticism this magazine has always stood for.

The winds of change are again redrawing the imaging technology landscape, making new, revived or outlier brands seductive and alluring, encouraging not only debate and comparison – but conversion, adoption and loyalties.

How much passion will be retained for the brands of old, and will these become generational rather than technological divides?

Old debates revived, but with new players holding new positions.■

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Old debates, new players...

Sitting hunched over a computer keyboard on Saint Valentine's Day speaks volumes about my underlying fear of the dreaded publisher of this august journal, a looming deadline interfering with any romantic notions I might have of proffering undying love to my nearest and dearest. (Dear Louise, we really need to talk... – ED)

As a noted, experienced and well-documented procrastinator, I am frequently under the whip of the ringmaster of this magazine. The dark lord, as we refer to him, has patiently explained to me time and again that the lash is entirely optional, and that if I submit copy on time I will never hear its crack again. I am not the silver tongued writer who regularly gets double page spreads (with a photograph and text littered with literary gems), nor the teacher's favourite who is consistently two articles ahead at any given time, nor even one of the other golden haired correspondents who file their copy on-time, typo-free and without the need for constant editorial harassment. (Who the hell are these people? – ED)

As visions of rose petals and champagne flutes floated in my head I was reminded of the passion that photographers have traditionally shown towards their cameras and equipment.

Sometimes blind beyond all reason.

Going back 40 or 50 years the bulk of professional photographers worked with medium format cameras. I have personally owned both of the most preferred brands, being Hasselblad and Mamiya; with my bias leaning towards the Swedish camera. Mind you, the 6x7cm format of the Mamiya RB outfit helped produce an

uncropped 10x8" (25x20cm) print with great ease. As small format 35mm cameras started to produce great results from lighter and less obtrusive equipment some of the most passionate debates were then staged. I have strong memories of workshops and conventions dividing into Nikon and Canon camps with an intensity that was palpable. The idea of ignoring great manufacturers like Olympus, Minolta, Pentax or even Contax always intrigued and puzzled me.

As we moved into the digital age, we were left with the two great brands of Nikon and Canon to garner passionate interaction from photographers. Having very recently moved to one of the smaller competitors of these marques, I am now in the middle of this very lively debate amongst my personal circle of photo friends. Editing some files for possible award entries, I have been amazed at the detail being manifested from my insignificantly small Fujifilm X series cropped sensor camera. (You're a late arrival at this party as well, more tardiness... – ED)

The debate continues.

Other items of equipment have brought similar passions to the fore. Let's talk electronic flash for instance. In my case, early passions were pragmatically driven by finance – hence an initial happy relationship with British Bowens equipment, but then I was seduced by the small size and huge output of the French Balcar. Never mind the somewhat Gallic devil-may-care attitude to Australia's considerably higher electric current compared to that of France.

◀◀ **Continued on page 145...**



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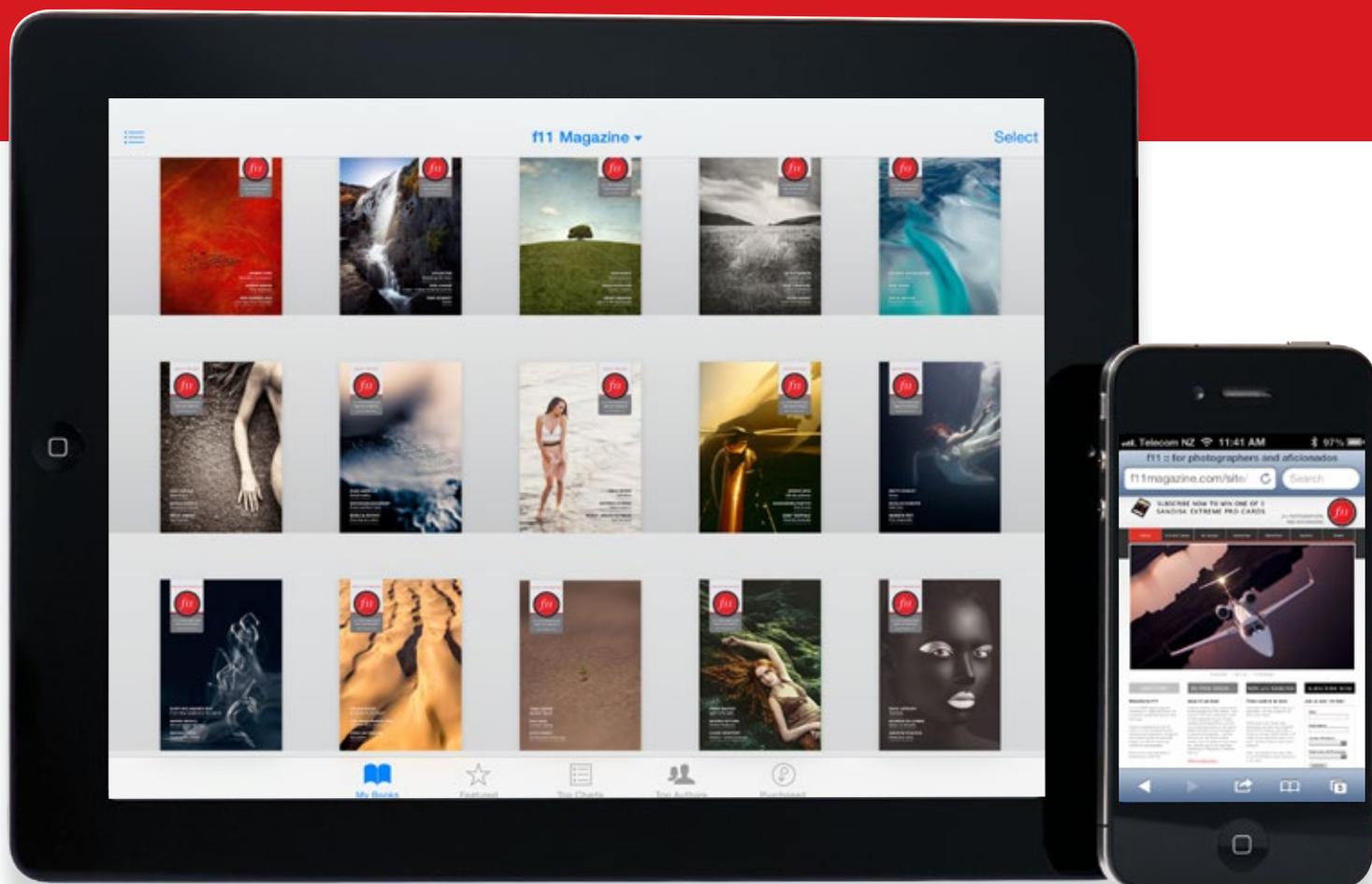
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