

ISSUE 58 | SEPTEMBER 2016



*for* PHOTOGRAPHERS  
AND AFICIONADOS

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**DAVID ZAPATKA**  
Loving the lights

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**CHRISTINE WILSON**  
Going coastal

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**MARK GEE**  
Night moves

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At the heart of the image

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WELCOME TO *f11* MAGAZINE

Welcome to issue 58!

The three photographers featured in this issue have much in common. For a start, they're all shooting images in coastal regions, albeit at the wet and slippery edges of three different countries. And two of these shooters are doing their work after dark, in the cool of the evening or the middle of the night. All thanks to the amazing light gathering capabilities of modern digital sensors, and of course, flawless techniques.

First up, by day American photographer David Zapatka is a cameraman for US television networks. By night, he's making quite a name for himself capturing a comprehensive collection of images of the lighthouses on the Eastern seaboard of the USA. These images are the result of research, meticulous planning and careful execution by an accomplished lighting cameraman well accustomed to overcoming technical obstacles.

Australian photographer Christine Wilson is a nurse who finds her relaxation camera-in-hand on the coastline of Victoria. Monochrome is her chosen medium and although she claims not to be technically inclined, viewing the camera only as a basic tool, we think her images reflect a real sense of place.

Finally, another Australian photographer Mark Gee shares some of his incredible astrophotography, all shot here in New Zealand. Mark works as a digital effects supervisor at Peter Jackson's VFX company, Weta Digital, in Wellington. Without realising it, you've probably seen his work in King Kong, or iRobot, or one of a number of other high profile and Oscar award winning feature films. In this issue, here's your chance to enjoy the images which are the result of his stargazing and learn about the process behind these works.

Tony Bridge asserts that none of us will ever achieve mastery of the medium, and explains why this may not be a bad thing.

Plus, Gary Baidon addresses an important issue for commercial photographers, asking, once the party's over do you have anything to sell?

Enjoy this issue of *f11*, see you next month! ■

**Tim**

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Mark Gee

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**GARY BAILDON** 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 – sometimes performing all of these minor miracles on the same day. When not hosting seminars or workshops or messing with someone's mind, this wandering nomad is usually to be found somewhere around New Zealand, four wheel driving up hill and down dale in search of new images and true meaning. Like any modern day guru, 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 that he has now constructed the 'ultimate PC' – poor deluded man. As far as we can tell, this is his only flaw...



**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.



*'One doesn't stop seeing. One doesn't stop framing. It doesn't turn off and on. It's on all the time.'* – Annie Leibovitz

**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 almost 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, 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, outstanding images to share with *f11* readers.



#### FAREWELL TO DARRAN LEAL

Darran has written for this magazine since March 2012 (issue 8) and his last piece was in June 2016 (issue 55). That's a remarkable run by any measure, and a feat exceeded only by Gary Baildon who has been with us for the entire run of 58 issues - not out! Darran's innings only came to an end when we felt that he had thoroughly exhausted the story potential of his list of fabulous photography destinations. His well deserved break comes with our sincere thanks for a job well done, and as he remains a firm friend of the magazine don't be surprised to see him resurface on these pages at some point in the future! Until then, cheers Darran!



#### 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 136** of this issue.



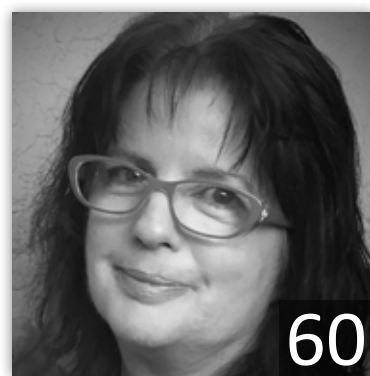
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© David Zapatka



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© Mark Gee



COVER IMAGE  
© David Zapatka  
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*'I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.'*  
— Sarah Williams



## NOCTILUCENT CLOUDS IN 4K

Ever noticed bright and glowing clouds in the clear summer night when all other clouds are dark? This phenomenon is called noctilucent clouds and happens exclusively in the summer twilight between latitudes 45 and 65 degrees North or South when the sun is not so low on the horizon. Shot in Odsherred, Sjælland, Denmark in the summer of 2016 by Adrien Mauduit with Sony and Canon cameras.

Adrien Mauduit Via Vimeo

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO



## LOFOTEN LANDSCAPES IN 4K

Filmed over one week in June 2016, across the beautiful Lofoten Islands, where the sun never sets and 24 hour daylight illuminates the landscape. All shot on the DJI Phantom 4 in 4K 25fps D-log. Filmed and edited by film maker Theo Gove-Humphries.

Theo Gove-Humphries via YouTube

CLICK ON THE SCREEN IMAGE TO VIEW THIS VIDEO



## MEMORIES OF PAINTINGS

One moment appearing interstellar, seemingly organic the next – are these distant worlds or life in extreme macro? None of the above, these visual compositions have been created out of paint, oil, oat milk and soap liquid. An experimental dreamlike video by director Thomas Blanchard. See how it all came together here.

Thomas Blanchard via Vimeo

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### Energy, passion and creativity

These are three vital ingredients that all of the photographers we feature pour into their chosen profession or leisure pastime. Of course this magazine has recognised this for a very long time, exposed as we are to people utterly committed to their chosen creative path. As our readers, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You've seen it, time and again and I think it keeps you coming back for more.

But every now and then some exemplars rock up into my world and I'm a novice again, dumbstruck by the degree to which some fellow humans will devote themselves to a creative endeavor for nothing more than the satisfaction of visually documenting some aspect of their lives, times or surroundings. This is often accompanied by a selfless desire to share their creations with an appreciative wider world.

Time, money and dedication are also key ingredients that are generously applied by the creators of the projects we feature. Without doubt these do not come without some sacrifice elsewhere in their lives, by them and by the people who love them.

The photographers featured in this issue all have demanding real world careers that involve gruelling schedules and long hours. They all work in fields unforgiving of errors or inattention and I surmise that they must often complete their typical work days with a sense of nothing left to

give, tanks on empty. So what motivates these people to commit as fully as they do to unrewarded creative endeavors?

Why does a nurse spend her off-duty hours driving for hours to explore her coastline and make images essentially about tranquility? Is it the contrast with a career in a life or death work environment? Why would a network TV cameraman and a VFX expert both relish working outdoors late into the night in the cold darkness to capture lighthouses, or the wonders of the night sky? Again, I can only speculate, so I will.

Maybe for one, it's a sense of urgency to record something evocative against the night sky before it passes into the obscurity of history; and for the other, a sense of wonder at the ability we now have to capture the beauty of small amounts of light which originated while our planet was still in the stone age. Small pinpricks of light which took 27,000 years to reach us – now surely that's a reason in itself?

Whatever their reasons, let's applaud the stunning results. ■

**TS**

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# The impossibility of mastery and looking for answers in the past

One thing is for certain.

We will never master our medium, and that is a good thing.

Occasionally I meet fellow photographers who seem determined to convince me that they have it all sorted, and that they know all that there is to know. I am sure you have met a few as well.

They are easy to spot; they are the ones who are very keen to share their expertise and make sure you have the correct advice and learn the 'right' way to do it. Post-production experts are particularly helpful. Well, this is the way I do it, they say, with the implication being that this is the only way to do it. I thank them for showing me a new way of doing it, add that knowledge to my armoury and move on, as quickly as possible.

Here is the thing.

Whatever aspect of our craft or art we are discussing, mastery is only ever a journey, never a destination. And that is a good thing.

If we are open to all aspects of the medium, and willing to observe the journeys others have made, then we have a toolbox which can never be filled, only ever added to. And because the

range of our journeys is almost limitless, then, of necessity, our toolbox becomes a unique and customised repository.

I consider myself fortunate to have come up through silver halide/chemical based photography and grateful for the lessons I learned from trying to master something far more difficult than digital photography. Compared to digital photography, working in film is rather like trying to play a concert piano wearing gardening gloves.

The apprenticeship is long and involved, and the possibilities of failure lurk in every safelit corner of the darkroom. Fine black-and-white photography is even more difficult to master to a degree where an assured performance is possible. How much harder then must it have been for the early pioneers of the medium, people like Timothy O' Sullivan, with their portable darkrooms and the glass plates which they had to coat and develop in the field.

However, a study of their techniques and the materials they used can offer us approaches and aesthetics we can employ in the images we make, use to reference the archaeology of the medium and imbue a sense of history into our own work. ▶



*Both images © Tony Bridge*





At the time I was working in film and, because I used to wonder why early photographs of New Zealand always looked like it rained 24/7/365 days a year in those times, I did some research and discovered that early emulsions were orthochromatic in nature, more sensitive towards the blue/green end of the visible spectrum and less so to the red end, the consequence being that reds rendered as darker tones and blues as much lighter tonal values.

Little wonder then, that early landscape photographers of New Zealand had that rains-all-the-time effect. Of course nobody at the time would have worried, since that is just the way it was. I filed the knowledge away for future use and left it to gather dust.

Then a few months ago, I was travelling with a fellow photographer in a remote part of the country. It was a foul, rainy day, when we drove around a corner and onto a bridge. As I looked up the river, I wondered how it must have felt to the early pioneers of this country, who would have been exploring this area at about the same time as photography came into being. I wondered how photographers of the time would have documented it and what their aesthetic might have been.

Then the dust fell off the forgotten catalogue card on orthochromatic film in the library of photographic knowledge I thought I would never use again. ■

TB

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# David ZAPATKA

## Loving the lights

Many years ago, in a small New England town, a thirteen-year-old boy opened a catalogue from a Chicago mail-order house. His father was a letter carrier and his mother sold a utilitarian-style clothing line at house parties. They had a comfortable middle-class life in their seaside town, but buying their son a camera wasn't in the budget. Looking at the Hanimex Praktica Super TL single lens reflex with two lenses and carrying cases was too much of a draw for the boy so he pleaded with his parents. 'If you want it...' they offered, '...you must pay for it yourself.' And so he did, over the course of 12 monthly payments of \$10, money collected from his job cleaning kennels and assisting the neighborhood veterinarian. When the camera arrived, the boy leaned on a smart classmate who knew a lot about everything and the two of them developed his first roll of film in an upstairs bathroom. He was forever hooked.

That boy was David Zapatka, by day a veteran cameraman who shoots news and sports for US television networks. In his spare time, ►



*Sankaty Lighthouse in Nantucket, Massachusetts, USA under the Milky Way. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*



such as it is, and by night, David is a passionate still photographer pursuing his personal project, *American lighthouses*, with gusto.

‘That’s how my love of photography began over four decades ago. It was further boosted when an astute young high school English teacher, also the yearbook advisor, saw me carrying the camera in school and offered a permanent hall pass if I’d take pictures around the school. With that came free film, free developing, the chance to be in print, plus my first press pass. It was the beginning of a career that has taken me around the world. I went off to college where I first discovered motion-picture film, and then to local television in Providence, Rhode Island for ten years until I advanced to the US national network level where I still shoot to this day.

Along the way came marriage (still strong after 34 years), three kids, dogs (no cats, they make me sneeze), and a multitude of great television experiences. We moved to our present home in the coastal Rhode Island town of North Kingstown in 1993. It’s about twenty miles south of Providence and in light traffic about an hour’s drive from Boston. In the town was a sad-looking and decaying old lighthouse that had sat abandoned for decades. I’d taken to photographing the Plum Beach Lighthouse many times and in 2001 it was announced that it was soon to be renovated. I volunteered my television production experience to the project that was completed in the summer of 2003. The documentary was aired the following year and was nominated for a New England Emmy award - but didn’t win. While working on the documentary, the Lighthouse Board saw my enthusiasm and asked me to become their next president. It was in 2004, and it’s important for the narrative of this project because it brought me closer to the New England Coast Guard command staff, contacts that would later prove to be invaluable.

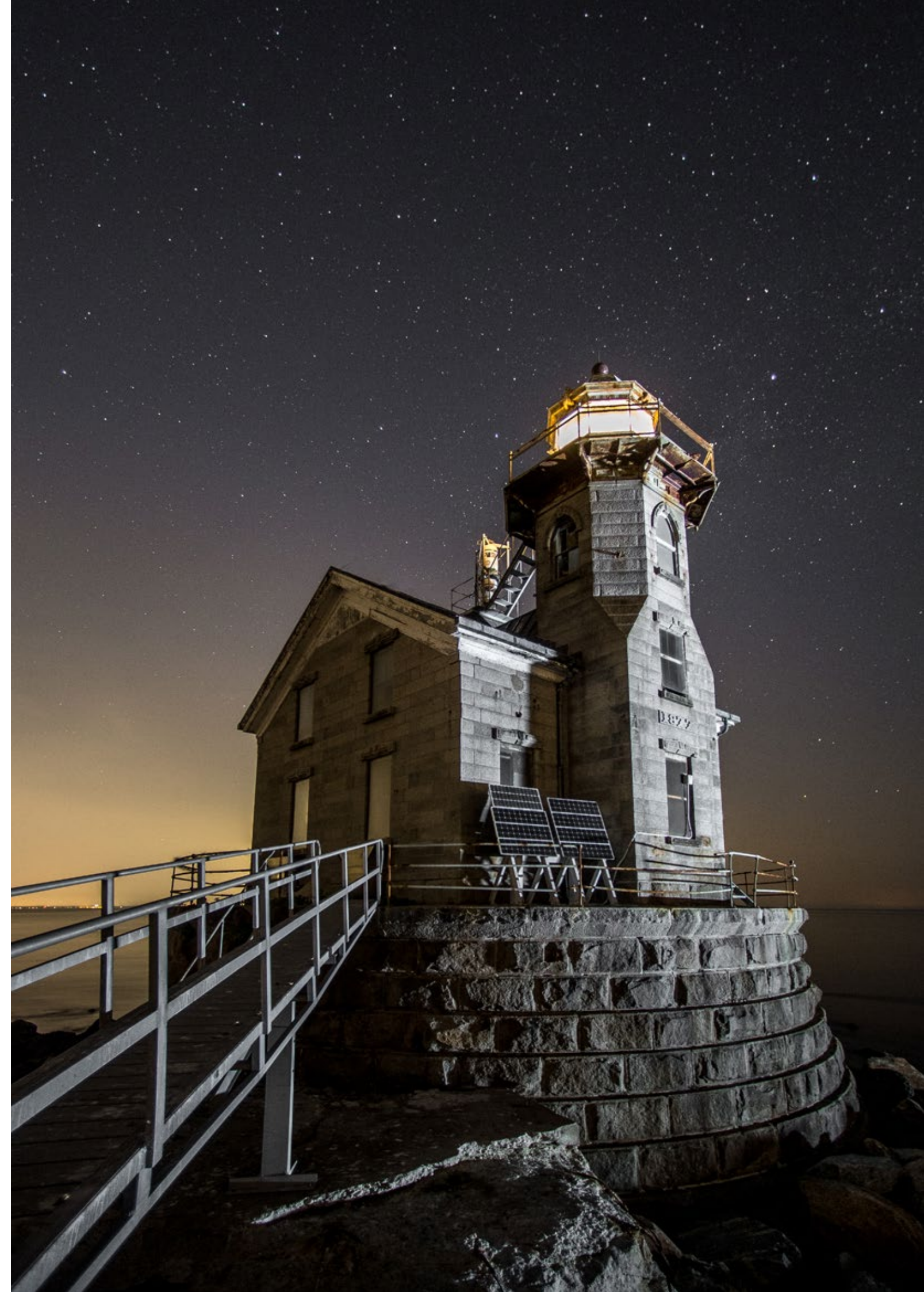
Living in Rhode Island, a state that is nicknamed “The Ocean State”, means there is water

everywhere. Narragansett Bay practically splits the state in two and is a short walk from our home. Living so close to such beauty also means getting involved with water activities and we’ve been through three or four boats over the years. With this abundant coastline also comes other New England lighthouses and within a two-hour drive there are more than seventy. Add another hour and there are well over a hundred.

Combining the historical perspective with the Coast Guard contacts, adding the familiarity and comfort around the water plus over forty years of visual medium experience, one might get the sense that this project, for me, was simply meant to be.

One of our family’s favorite Narragansett Bay spots to anchor is near Dutch Island and as the crow flies it’s pretty close to Newport. On the island is a historical lighthouse that had also recently been renovated. For some of my video projects I’d bought a Nikon D4 and at the time it was heralded as the new flagship of the brand, and it has lived up to its hype and my expectations. I started thinking about what Dutch Light might look like and if it were at all possible to capture it in a photograph at night and under the stars. In early October 2013 I headed out alone to the island on a beautiful early fall evening during the new moon phase. I anchored the boat and rowed an inflatable dinghy ashore, climbing the rocks to the lighthouse. It had gotten pretty dark by the time I set the tripod and camera and I began ▶

*The Stratford Shoal Lighthouse, Long Island Sound, Stratford, Connecticut, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*





shooting the scene. I also carried an LED flashlight that was used to light-paint the lighthouse and foreground. It was my first serious attempt at light painting and as I reviewed the images on the LCD their clarity blew me away. In the television world, capturing this kind of an image was, until recently, impossible to do. I'd read about the emerging nighttime photography genre but little did I know that those first images were going to set me on a new life course that would last for years to come.

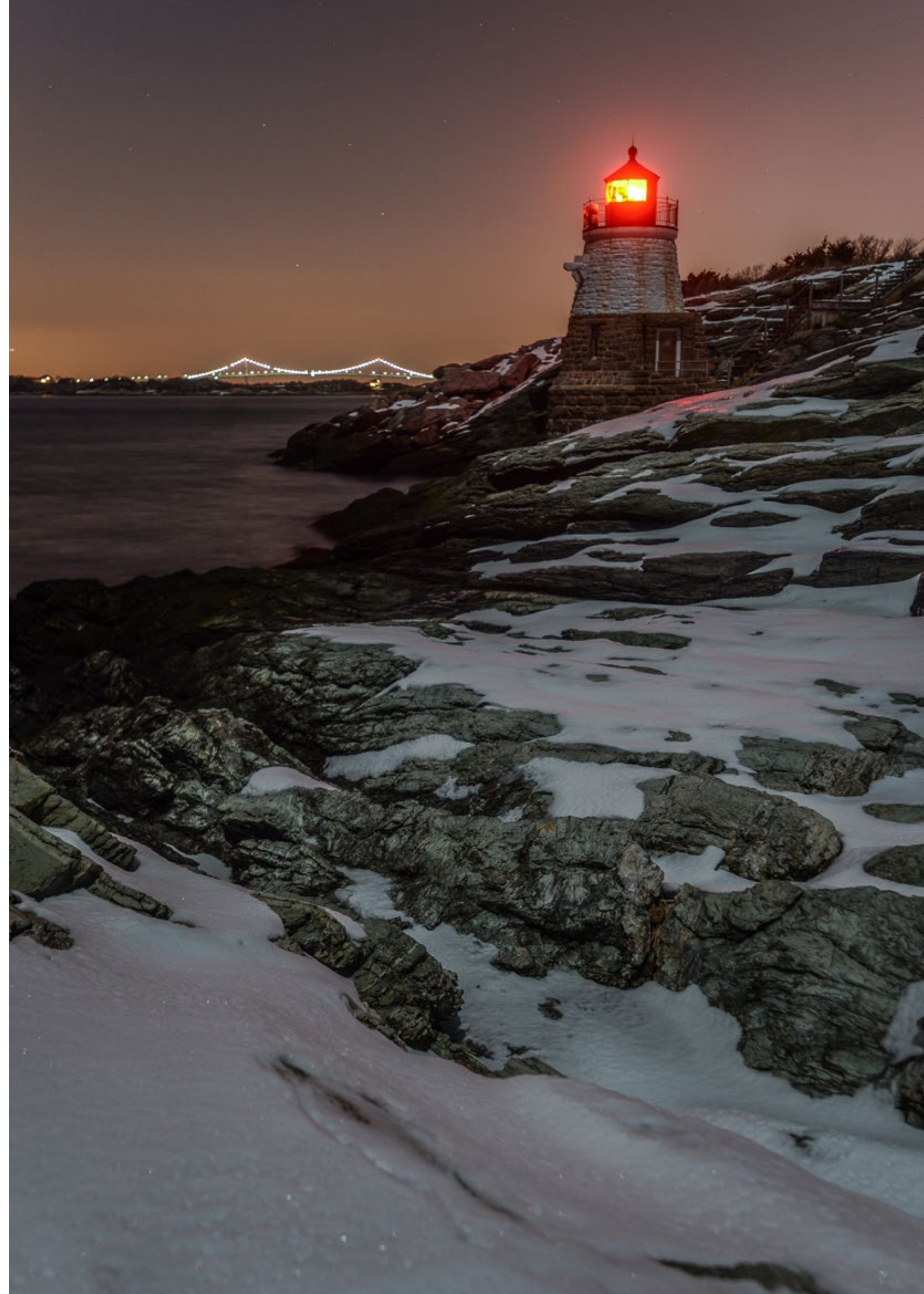
There were some mistakes made that night on Dutch Island. For one, the LED light was more of a daylight-balanced 5600° temperature and I'd initially set the camera for 3200°. I corrected it in the field, but on first edits found the overall temperature was far too warm. The sky has a tendency to lose its blacks as they were shifted to a warmer color. Secondly, I only shot from one angle though this was pretty much a trial shoot. For much of the hour-long shoot I was also concerned the boat anchor might slip from the strong current just off the island. Prior to rowing ashore I had to set it three times before it finally caught. I was greatly impressed with the photo results and the stars above were pretty amazing for the first attempt. I shared the image on social media and with some Coast Guard friends. Everyone loved the shot and I was buoyed by the response. I made plans to shoot during the new moon phase for the next couple of months but scheduling and weather prevented me from getting out to other lighthouses. There are sixteen active ones in Rhode Island with several near my town.

A few months later on a very cold night in February 2014 I got permission from the Coast Guard to visit the Point Judith Lighthouse in Narragansett. This is one of the more historical lights in the state and has been pictured on one of our national stamps. It's also on an active base and at night is restricted because it has housing on the property for rescue boat crewmen. I got buzzed in through the gate by

the night watch command and went about my work. Not only was it a cold 8°F temperature but there was a twenty mile-an-hour wind coming off the ocean. The lighthouse sits on a peninsula along the state's southern shore and it was brutally cold while shooting on a night after we'd just had a snowstorm. I could only spend a few minutes outside of the truck that I kept running and warm so I could jump in to escape the frigid conditions. What I captured amazed me once again and I had never before seen any photographs of Point Judith that even remotely resembled what I was looking at on the screen. The stars were spectacular and the camera maintained incredible contrast latitude between the bright light of the lighthouse and the darkness of the sky. I was equally impressed with the camera's performance as I was with how much the excitement of the photography lessened the brutally cold conditions. Only once I finally jumped back into the truck did I realise how numb my fingers and toes were. As they painfully thawed I reviewed the night's work and grew excited by the results.

I visited another lighthouse in Newport ten days later. The Castle Hill Lighthouse sits at the entrance to the Bay and is famous for seeing off America's Cup Yacht races for about a century. I arrived after another snowstorm and while the moon was in its first quarter. I quickly learned how bright the moon is long before it is full. Fewer stars were visible than the week before at Point Judith and the sky took on more of a blue daylight color. I didn't know it at ►

*Medieval Castle Hill, Newport Rhode Island, USA.  
Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens.  
© David Zapatka*





that time but I was discovering the parameters for shooting the stars and lights. The project has now become completely self-limiting with the following criteria: new moon, clear skies, calm winds, and for some - calm seas and low tide.

As I lay awake in bed a few months later it struck me that it might not be possible for me to shoot the one lighthouse I was involved with so intimately. The Plum Beach Lighthouse sits in fourteen feet of water about three hundred feet from the Jamestown Bridge, one of the major thoroughfares to Newport. There is no other land area within a half-mile of the lighthouse and shooting from the bridge is too dangerous as there are no sidewalks or breakdown lanes. Having the bridge in the shot is an important juxtaposition because the lighthouse was abandoned sixty years ago after the opening of the bridge. I had one of those eureka moments that night. The next morning I first had to confirm that the tripod could actually be put to work near the lighthouse. Most lighthouses are placed near shallow water to keep ships away from shoals or dangerous rocks, and I started researching the Bay nautical chart. There it was, about 150 feet from the lighthouse: fourteen feet at mean low tide.

Our town is an old fishing village that still maintains its rustic charm. It also still caters to the needs of local fishermen and marine tradesmen. One of my friends, a guy who worked on the Plum Beach Lighthouse renovation, is a welder. I went to him with a crazy design idea: let's build a twenty-foot tripod. My idea was to lower it off the side of the boat, settle it on the bottom, and place the camera on top. Not just any camera, my Nikon D4 with a 17-35 f2.8 Nikkor lens attached. Full disclosure: the first use of the tripod was done with a backup D3. I might be crazy but I'm not dumb! I've since used the D4 exclusively for this series and the only photograph without it is the tripod shot of Plum Beach. Seven other tripod shots have been with the D4.

The first time out with the tripod was certainly an adventure. Along with three friends—one to pilot the boat and the other two were fellow photographers interested in the project and intrigued by the new tripod. With the use of an electronic depth-gauge, we located the shallow water. We then did a sounding by placing a lead-weighted measuring string over the side to more accurately measure the depth. As we placed the tripod in the water several different dynamic factors were in play and it first looked as though it was jumping around under the surface. To begin with, we were all on a bobbing boat though we had secured it with two anchors. Next, there was a 4-knot current passing by plus a 10-15 mile per hour wind. It was dark and all of this visual stimulation made our brains believe the tripod was moving in the water. We had two safety lines on the beast in case something went awry plus it was never more than a foot away from our hands, but to our confused brains it looks as though it were dancing in front of us. We all yelled to grab it, but once I placed my hand on top, we were amazed to find it was rock steady and still. I very carefully attached the D3 on a metal bar and placed that into a bracket on top of the tripod. This essentially allows the camera to be positioned over the boat while secured on the tripod four feet outside of the boat. I shot several frames in landscape format before adjusting the angle for some portrait ones. We pulled the camera off the rig to review the LCD and we were all elated with the results. We were able to capture a hint of the Milky Way despite an abundance of direct and ambient light from streetlights across the bridge. It was a fantastic and magical night and the tripod proved a success. I would later learn through other failed attempts that the bottom must be smooth and sandy, rocky or hard bottoms don't work well because it's sometimes impossible to properly set the tripod on those terrains. You can actually feel what the bottom is made of by the vibrations of the lead weight coming up the string into your hands above the surface.

While the tripod has made it easier to shoot some of the water-based lighthouses, the bulk of those captured thus far have been land-based. Most have taken time in researching ownership, accessibility, tide and navigation charts, as well as reaching out to Coast Guard and local harbor masters for advice or permission to visit late at night. Most are intrigued by the photography and the project and I've enjoyed great cooperation from many organizations and private lighthouse owners.

One lighthouse comes to mind that demonstrates the importance of communicating with an owner. The Cape Elizabeth Lighthouse is located in a town just south of Portland, Maine and, by all written accounts, access to the lighthouse is restricted as it sits in an exclusive waterfront neighborhood. Online town tax records showed it to be owned by a New York City couple and cross-referencing those with phone records and the society pages, I found their address and phone number. I called the number and got a housekeeper who confirmed their address. I then wrote an extensive letter asking permission to visit at night during the next new moon phase, and in the letter included the link to the online gallery. I also told them I'd be calling the following week, and when I did, the first thing the owner did was to thank me for asking permission. I'd heard this before with similar requests to other property owners. It seems that many simply trespass to get the better shot and this is counter to my ideals, ethics and philosophy. We had a wonderful conversation and I was allowed access to the lighthouse. On the night of the visit I called the local police and told them of the planned visit. The last thing I needed was someone thinking I was a late-night burglar casing the neighborhood. I later sent the owners few of the frames and they were thrilled with the results.

Through Coast Guard contacts I've gotten great access to lighthouses near my home, but as I got deeper into the project the travel distance also increased. Plus I was now going into

different Coast Guard regions and the permission I'd been granted wouldn't necessarily work the further I traveled from Rhode Island. In Beverly, Massachusetts, a town north of Boston is a beautiful lighthouse that is also the home of the New England Coast Guard Admiral. My local contacts thought I'd never get permission to shoot on the property because the Admiral lives with her family and was said to be a very private person. I sent an email request that worked its way up the chain of command until I was surprised by an invitation from the Admiral. She'd viewed the online gallery and decided the organization would assist. On the night I was to shoot clouds covered the point as I rang the house doorbell. The Admiral invited me in and offered a tour of the house and lighthouse. We had a wonderful 45-minute conversation at the top of the light and at the end I asked for permission to visit any of the Coast Guard lighthouses throughout New England. To my surprise the permission was granted. I returned to the Hospital Point Lighthouse on a clear night three weeks later and shot some nice images though there were limited stars visible due to light pollution.

When dealing with non-profit groups or those lighthouses struggling with their properties I will usually share one or two of the files. Coming from a non-profit background, I'm in an unusual position to understand what it's like to trying to raise funds for a historic property. At the Plum Beach Lighthouse we struggled for years trying to raise funds for the next paint job and found that selling hats and tee shirts simply isn't enough. A number of years ago we were able to convince the state to allow us to sell lighthouse license plates in a program from which we've raised almost \$200,000. We are a rarity among lighthouse groups and most have difficulty raising funds. With this in mind, sharing an image or two makes sense especially if those in charge have been helpful with the project. As of this writing 80 lights have been captured, many more have given permission to shoot, and only one has outright denied access. That ►



lighthouse unfortunately won't be part of the book I hope to soon have published.

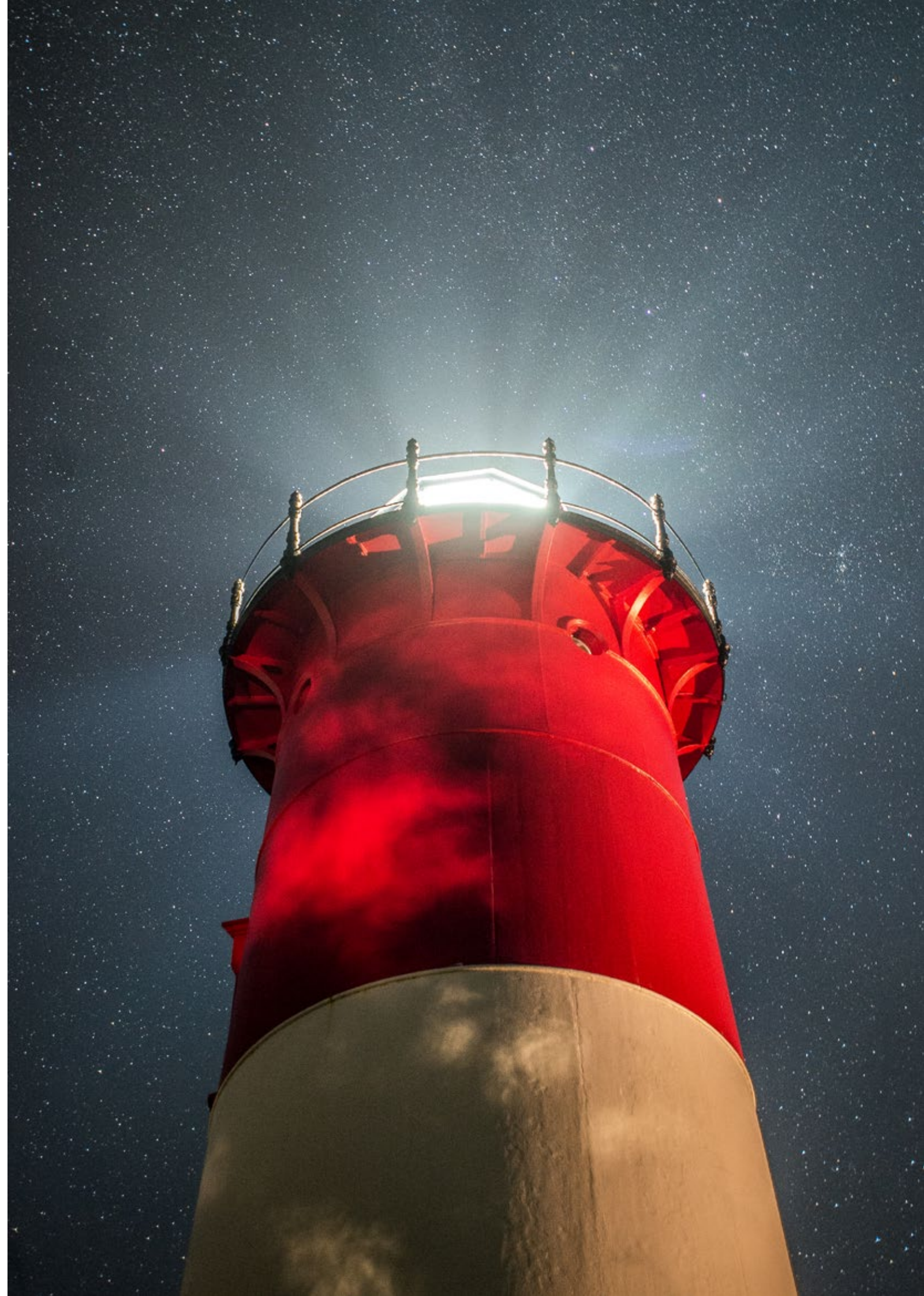
Over the course of the three-year project the photography has remained technically consistent though about a year into it my lighting style changed. Before heading out I'll typically preset the D4 and 14mm Nikkor at ISO 2000, the lens is set wide open at f2.8 and shutter is set to 25 seconds. Anything longer and the stars get blurred from earth's rotation and anything shorter and the stars don't get enough exposure. There are times I'll notice some slight blur on the outer fringes of the frame and have started using a 20 second shutter more often. Once I get on location I'll fire off a quick test exposure and will then adjust only the ISO as the variable. The settings are predicated by two factors: the brightness of the lighthouse beacon and the effect ambient light has on the sensor. Shooting lighthouses far from people is preferable and those usually offer the best star and Milky Way results. As you get closer to cities and their bright light sources the number of visible stars greatly diminishes. It often amazes me how many stars the camera is able to capture when being close to light sources, but it saddens me that most city people simply can't see stars. Even people I talk with who live in the country have never bothered to look up at the sky to see the Milky Way. When I shoot, many times I'll frame the lighthouse at the bottom and have an expanse of negative space above. However, when you think of it from a philosophical point of view, is it really negative space? Or is it filled with life from the distant past, filled with life we don't even know actually exists?

Lighting the lighthouse structures has evolved over the course of the project as well. From that first photograph on Dutch Island where the scene was lit with a simple flashlight, about a year into the project the lighting changed. In television production I'll often use Light Panel 1x1 Bi-Color LED lights for my interviews. These battery-powered lights are not only dimmable but are also color-temperature correctable.

I now typically arrive on location with two of the heads with stands and batteries. I'll evaluate the scene to determine the best location for the lights. Often I'll use two and then supplement them with the hand-held flashlight to light paint the remaining dark areas. The Lite Panels are usually dimmed to the point where they shut off and to look at the fixtures it's hard to imagine that anything would be lit. With the long exposures there is often too much light coming from them. It is vitally important to separate the lights from the camera and the further apart the two are, the more dramatic the resulting photographs will be. The flashlight is nothing special, just a simple Halogen battery-powered Maglite. Most of today's LED flashlights are daylight balanced and need color-correction with CTO before shooting. The Halogen ones are preset to 3200°K and are perfect for night shooting. Positioning the flashlight is equally important as locating the stand lights and one should never light from near the camera.

Once I've decided on which lighthouse to shoot, and once the permission has been obtained, the next job is to study the terrain and how to get to the site. For land-based lights, dealing with the owner to learn of potential obstacles is important. For instance, is there a gate one needs to access and is that locked late at night, if ever? Do I run the risk of getting stuck within the gates if it is locked late at night? Is the lighthouse in its natural state or is it currently being painted or renovated? Last summer I'd made plans to visit another Beverly, Massachusetts location only to learn on the ►

*The Nauset Lighthouse in Eastham, Massachusetts, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens.  
© David Zapatka*





day of the shoot that the lighthouse was currently shrouded with scaffolding as it was being repainted. Last summer a lighthouse on Martha's Vineyard was being moved 150 feet away from the eroding cliffs and was closed for most of the season.

Water-based lighthouses have become particularly challenging for obvious reasons. One must study tide and navigation charts, look over existing daytime photographs to determine the safety of the shoot, then contact local officials and captains for important information that doesn't usually appear on charts. Things like boat ramp accessibility at low tide; possible dangerous currents near and around the lighthouse; how winds affect boating near the structures; and can the lighthouse be accessed at low tide? The latter concern happened recently at the Cleveland Ledge Lighthouse in the middle of Buzzards Bay in Massachusetts. Since it sits in 35-feet of water, the lighthouse can't be photographed using the 20-foot tripod. I'd received permission from the private owner to visit the structure and was scheduled to head there in September 2015. Necessary to access the lighthouse is a special ladder that only the owner and the Coast Guard possess. I'd also been given permission from the Coast Guard to use their ladder that has hooks on one end. On the day of the shoot and at the last minute I decided to call the station chief asking about accessibility at low tide. It was scheduled to be dead low at the time of our arrival. I was told the lighthouse should only be approached during high tide as the ladder on the light would be too high to clip their ladder for the access should the tide be too low. We then had to cancel the shoot and eventually, eight months later and just last month we finally shot at Cleveland Ledge with our arrival timed for high tide.

For many of the land-based lights I've traveled to the location alone and gone about the work. All the lighthouses are located in beautiful seaside locations and the quiet and solitude is

often mesmerising. This beauty can easily be deceiving as most are located near dangerous and slippery rocks and quite often the best shot is close to the water's edge. With this proximity to slick rocks, and carrying heavy equipment, one could easily slip and get hurt so safety equipment is vital. Wearing a helmet with an attached LED light can make me look pretty geeky, but I'd rather be alive at the end of the shoot instead of injured or worse. I also have studded ice-cleats that attach to my boots and I almost always wear a personal flotation device often referred to as a PFD. Attached to this is a personal global positioning device that, should I fall and get hurt, could be activated to summon rescue personnel. Should I fall into the water the device will automatically send out a signal. In my opinion, these items are all necessary for safe shooting.

For the water-based lighthouses all of the above equipment is utilised and I'm very lucky to have two boats at my disposal. My wife and I own a 28-foot Sea Ray powerboat and most of the Rhode Island lights and a small number of nearby Massachusetts ones were shot using it. For lighthouses further away I've used my son's trailered 15-foot Boston Whaler. Off of both boats a 7-foot inflatable has been used, often with the Mercury 3.3 outboard engine. The inflatable is nice and small and can be easily transported either off the stern of the Sea Ray or tied down to the bow of the Whaler. All three boats have been vital to the project. For several of the more demanding and dangerous shoots, local captains and their boats have been hired to access nearby lighthouses. ▶

*The Plum Beach Lighthouse in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, USA under bright starry skies. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*





For over 30 years I've been traveling extensively shooting television stories for the American networks. While this travel has been great, and exciting, it has left little time to learn still photography editing programs like Photoshop. Many people see these lighthouse images and often comment that they can't be real, that they must be 'Photoshopped'. I feel this is somewhat insulting to my work, but I fully understand how some might believe them fake. I sometimes have a hard time believing that they are real. Out in the quiet of the middle of the night and once my eyes are adjusted to the darkness, the stars and Milky Way truly look unbelievable. Having a terrific camera like the D4 that can oftentimes see much more than our own eyes adds to the mystique. I don't use Photoshop for two simple reasons: I don't own it and I don't know how to use it. The first year-and-a half of the project editing was done with Aperture, but shortly after learning of Apple's discontinuation of its support, a switch to Lightroom was in order. I immediately wished it had happened sooner as I quickly learned the power of the program. I went back and re-edited the entire gallery that had previously been edited in Aperture and the difference was striking.

The first edit almost always involves exposure sliders and Highlights is moved all the way left. Immediately the extreme brightness of most beacons are diminished allowing for greater detail of the lantern room to be seen. Shadows will then be adjusted up to bring out the darker areas, then whites are brightened and blacks are adjusted. It's very rare for me to use exposure or contrast corrections. I then adjust for lens distortion through vertical correction. While in the field I'm now mindful to be wide enough to compensate for the loss of picture when using lens correction. I'll remove airplane strobes should they be present in the frame, but never have I manipulated an image to add more stars or place the Milky Way where it wasn't. Coming from a journalistic background I consider doing so to be unethical and ►



*Plymouth Buglight, Plymouth Massachusetts, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*



wrong. I belong to several photo groups and this argument takes place ad nauseum. Some people create their art in the field, some do so on their computers. I strive to capture things as they are in the field with well placed lights and with minimal post alterations. This is my art.

Another aspect of my return to still photography has been learning the nuances of art gallery “calls to artists” and selling framed works. While the television work has been great, for that entire career there has never been something tangible to show for all the effort. The television visuals are here and then they are gone. I’ve never had something to hang on the wall from all those years of shooting. Now, for the first time in years, I’ve got a physical product rather than a visceral one.

Working with a printer and framer has been a learning experience, and submitting the works for shows has often proven to be both rewarding and frustrating. All photographers believe in their art and being constantly judged against the work of others is at times difficult. In television work, the saying is “you’re only as good as your last story.” With this project, submitting to galleries and art shows is a constant progression of acceptances and rejections and I’ve come to learn not to take either one too personally.

My hope is to continue capturing these icons as no one has before. As the nighttime photography genre grows in popularity more lighthouse photographs will start appearing, I’ve already seen it happening. Many of the more popular lighthouses located closer to population centers are now showing up in print and I welcome these images. It’s the lighthouses on faraway islands and locations that we run the risk of never capturing before they are turned off. My intention is to continue shooting and capturing them before too many American lighthouses disappear forever.’

A worthwhile mission indeed, and we’re certain that with David’s commitment and enthusiasm for that task he will soon see that dream realised. We look forward to the book that will eventually bring all of these images together in one place.

This feature is just a tasting plate, no more. To follow the project and to enjoy a far wider collection of these images, visit his website. ■

**TS**

<http://www.starsandlighthouses.com>

*Block Island’s North Light under a spectacular Milky Way. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*

►► *Following double page spread: The Squirrel Point Lighthouse, Arrowsic, Maine, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*









*The Castle Hill Lighthouse in Newport, Rhode Island, USA. This was my third trip to shoot the Castle Hill lighthouse at night. It's a very accessible and open property as well as very picturesque. The red light is quite bright and it casts quite a glow. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*

*‘Shooting lighthouses far from people is preferable and those usually offer the best star and Milky Way results. As you get closer to cities and their bright light sources the number of visible stars greatly diminishes.’*



►► Following double page spread: The Cape Elizabeth Lighthouse, Cape Elizabeth, Maine, USA.  
Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka







*The Pemaquid Lighthouse in Bristol, Maine, USA.  
Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens.  
© David Zapatka*



►► *Following double page spread: Bakers Island Lighthouse in Beverly, Massachusetts, USA. I lit the scene with one dimmed LED light on a stand for the tower, a second one for the house, and the rest by light painting with a handheld LED flashlight. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*

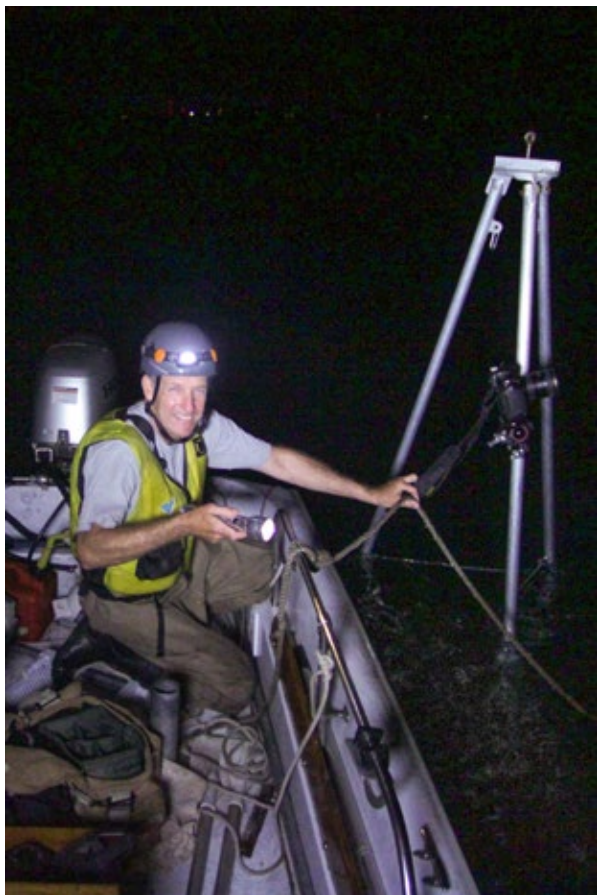








*‘One of my friends is a welder. I went to him with a crazy design idea: let’s build a twenty-foot tripod. My idea was to lower it off the side of the boat, settle it on the bottom, and place the camera on top.’*



◀ Here I am doing several things at once to capture the Plymouth Buglight in Massachusetts. There is a really strong current sweeping by the lighthouse and we had to stabilize the boat with three anchors. In this shot I can be seen holding the camera strap in case something were to go terribly wrong, plus the anchor line to keep us from drifting too far away from the water-based tripod. The tripod’s lowest point is ten feet and on this night we were in about five feet of water. I placed the camera on a Cartellini clamp attached to one of the legs and light painted with the flashlight while shooting. It’s not the best way to light, but given the extremes of the situation it would have to do. © David Zapatka

► The Race Rock Lighthouse off Fishers Island, New York, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka





*The Beavertail Lighthouse in Jamestown, Rhode Island, USA. A favorite spot of ours in our home state of Rhode Island. It sits in a state park at the end of a peninsula and leads boaters into the mouth of Narragansett Bay. I'd shot here several times for this project with mixed results and a return trip was needed. The scene was light painted with a handheld LED flashlight. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*

*'It often amazes me how many stars the camera is able to capture when being close to light sources, but it saddens me that most city people simply can't see stars. Even people I talk with who live in the country have never bothered to look up at the sky to see the Milky Way.'*



►► Following double page spread: The Race Point Lighthouse in Provincetown, Massachusetts, USA.  
Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka









*The Watch Hill Lighthouse in Westerly, Rhode Island, USA on a clear early summer night with a setting crescent moon. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*

► *Southeast Lighthouse, Block Island, Rhode Island, USA and the Milky Way. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*

►► *Following double page spread: Rose Island Lighthouse, Newport Harbor, Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*









*The Burnt Coat Harbor Lighthouse, Swans Island, Maine, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*







*Twin Thacher Island Lighthouses and the Milky Way, Rockport, Massachusetts, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*

► *The Dutch Island Lighthouse near Saunderstown, Rhode Island, USA. This was a ‘Hail Mary’ shot and I held the camera to the rocks while the shutter was open and had a buddy light paint the rocks and tower as the image was burned onto the sensor. I didn’t even notice the great red reflections until doing the post production editing. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*

►► *Following double page spread: Great Point Lighthouse in Nantucket, Massachusetts, USA with the Milky Way. Once it got dark, we set a dimmed LED light about a hundred feet from the lighthouse and I had my buddy light paint the sand in the foreground with a handheld LED flashlight. Once I reviewed the image on the LCD I immediately knew we had a beautiful image of the wonderful Milky Way. I jokingly said we were done for the night after taking only two images, but we spent another two hours shooting other angles. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 17-35mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka*









Latimer Shoal off Stonington, Connecticut, USA with the Milky Way. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka

*‘It’s the lighthouses on faraway islands and locations that we run the risk of never capturing before they are turned off. My intention is to continue shooting and capturing them before too many American lighthouses disappear forever.’*



►► Following double page spread: Following double page spread: Ten Pound Island, Gloucester, Massachusetts, USA. Nikon D4 with AF-S Nikkor 14mm f2.8 lens. © David Zapatka







# Christine WILSON

## Going coastal

A self-taught photographer, Christine Wilson is a nurse based in Melbourne Australia.

Her father, a keen photographer and an artist, was an early influence. Christine recalls that on weekend family drives he would stop the car and get out to photograph an old barn, or a boat lying on its side at low tide. He was a travelling salesman and would return from his long trips with new collections of images. Her interest began there.

‘I started taking photography seriously in the 1990’s when I bought my first SLR, a Pentax P30N. I still have that camera. A friend taught me to work in the darkroom and although I did this for a while, with a growing family and short of both money and spare time, the darkroom work took a back seat for a number of years.’

As we’ve discovered was the case for many temporarily dormant film photographers, the advent of digital cameras was a turning point for Christine’s return to the process. ▶



*The Pinnacles, Mornington, Peninsula, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D40X with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson*



‘Digital made a lot of things so much easier, I was given a point and shoot one Christmas and the rest is history. I progressed to a DSLR as these came to the market and now, on my days off, my camera and I are out on road trips! So many photographers have influenced me, people like Clyde Butcher , Ansel Adams, Cole Thompson, Sebastiao Salgado and Edward Weston - and many others too numerous to mention.’

Both town and country appeal to her, providing a variety of subjects depending on circumstances and the mood she finds herself in.

‘Every now and then I go into the city to take street shots of people, and landscape shots of Melbourne city. I’ve been involved in a number of street photography exhibitions with SITHOM (Shot in the Heart of Melbourne ) which has resulted in an exhibition which I’ve been a part of every year since 2012. More typically though, I will either go out on my own or with another photographer or two or possibly a group. Often I will drive anywhere up 2-3 hours away to take photos, sharing the driving with friends . It could be an historic town, taking photos of old farm buildings along the way, waterfalls or the coastline is one of my favorites , especially the surf coast. The wilder the better. On the Victorian coast, the Great Ocean Rd and the Mornington Peninsula, are two of my favourite places to take photos. Sometimes I go into places that are a bit dangerous to get the shot, but always being careful as safety is always first. I will often go back to a place in a different season to see what else it has to offer, with different light and weather offering me a composition that I hadn’t seen before.’

We’ve made our selection from those coastal images, and we asked Christine to tell us a bit about the shots we chose to feature.

‘The scale of my photos ranges from the biggest vista to the smallest thing, from a sweeping landscape shot of the beach, right down to a

single shell. I also like to show man's influence on the coast scape as well, in the forms of the piers and other structures such as beach houses in Brighton. I love the natural rock formations, and the whole idea of the power behind the landscape and sea and the fact that we are subservient to it. I enjoy finding relics and artifacts from a wreck. I particularly love the ocean and its beaches and the wild untamed environment and the feeling of vulnerability when I’m there.’

Christine chooses to work in monochrome for much of her photography:

‘I decided to go completely black and white with my post-processing about 5 years ago. I've always loved black and white and really wanted to master it. So it was a challenge to process completely in black and white and attempt to get really good at it. I enjoy the stillness of black and white, where form, shape, line, contrast and mood, are all highlighted by the very absence of colour . Sometimes colour can be a distraction and I find that when it's absent the textures of the landscape really stand out and the lighting in the frame can be more emphatic.’

That seemed like a strong lead in to talk about matters technical, and the techniques she employs in her craft.

‘I’m not technically inclined, I view the camera as a basic tool necessary to capture as much information as possible from the scene I’m looking at. Hopefully, the photographer is always the best bit of equipment there at the ▶

*Tenby Point, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D40X with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson*





moment of exposure. The real shot, the final work - or what I think I will make out of it - is in my head. What I felt when I saw the scene is always captured in my head - not in the camera. That can't be photographed. This is what makes each photographer's work unique. My gear is very modest and I don't believe in upgrading just for the sake of it. I tend to sit on one camera for a very long time, lenses seem to make more of a difference for me. So I enjoy the challenge of trying to produce good work with modest equipment. In the past, I often used ND filters. I prefer the screw on type, my most frequently used ones are the ND8 and the Hoya ND400 as this slows down the exposure a lot, with the shutter being open for minutes in some cases. This gives that effect of smooth clouds and silky water due to the long exposure. I started this in 2011 but just lately I have been doing it less and less, often just preferring the natural cloud formations which are spectacular on a good day with a wide lens like my Tokina 11-16mm. This is my favourite lens at the moment.

I use Adobe Lightroom for 90% of my processing and Photoshop for the rest. Once my photos have been transferred to the computer I then import them into Lightroom. This is probably not the most efficient use of the software but it's how I like to do it. I then convert to black and white, then use the basic panel to work on the adjustments I feel are necessary. Typically I will adjust contrast, highlights, and shadows. I use the grayscale filter adjustments and lots of dodging and burning as this is what I love the most, playing around with the light in the shot. I always use the histogram so that when I print an image the details are not lost. It's a creative process building the shot and getting back to the feeling I had when I was there. I'm constantly striving to do better, to improve my compositions, and to gain better processing skills.'

With a nod back to the coast that she finds so compelling, Christine describes her constant love affair with the subject:

'What keeps me coming back as a photographer? It's not always easy, the weather, the tides, equipment, there are a lot of things to consider, can I go alone? Should I be with someone else? Is it dangerous? Frequently the weather is bad but I still stick to my plans as much as possible because you never know what you're going to get. Some of the best shots can be achieved in the worst weather. Tides are important especially if you're going coastal, you don't want to get stuck on a beach or miss your exit point because the tides have come in. Deciding what to take depending on what I'm photographing, can I carry it all, how far will I be walking, what's the terrain like? This is where researching the area before I go is essential. I try to do this as much as possible.'

Christine's online portfolio shows other collections captured with equal zeal, and serves to reinforce that her love of monochrome is certainly not limited to the coastal work we are showing here. ■

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<http://christinewilson.zenfolio.com>

*Corinella, the old pier, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D40X with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson*





*Princes Pier, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D40X with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson*









Montfort's Beach, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D40X with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson

*'I love the natural rock formations, and the whole idea of the power behind the landscape and sea and the fact that we are subservient to it. I enjoy finding relics and artifacts from a wreck. I particularly love the ocean and its beaches and the wild untamed environment and the feeling of vulnerability when I'm there.'*





*Gibson Steps, Great Ocean Road, Victoria, Australia.*  
*Nikon D5100 with Tokina 11-16mm lens.*  
© Christine Wilson





*Pinnacles , Victoria, Australia. Nikon D40X with  
18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson*

*'I decided to go completely  
black and white with my post-  
processing about 5 years ago.  
I've always loved black and white  
and really wanted to master it.'*





*Daveys Bay, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia.*  
*Nikon D5100 with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens.*  
*© Christine Wilson*





*Princes Pier, sunset , Victoria, Australia. Nikon D40X  
with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson*





*Quiet displacement. Nikon D40X with 55-200mm lens.  
© Christine Wilson*

*‘The real shot, the final work - or what I think I will make out if it - is in my head. What I felt when I saw the scene is always captured in my head - not in the camera. That can't be photographed. This is what makes each photographer's work unique.’*





Mornington Pier, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria,  
Australia. Nikon D5100 with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens.  
© Christine Wilson





*Corinella, the old pier, Western Port Bay, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D5100 with Tokina 11-16mm lens.  
© Christine Wilson*





Bright Beach huts, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D5100  
with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson





Watkins Bay, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D5100 with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson





*Portsea pier, long exposure, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D40X with 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 lens. © Christine Wilson*





St Paul's Beach, Victoria, Australia. Nikon D5100 with Tokina 11-16 mm lens. © Christine Wilson

*'It's a creative process building the shot and getting back to the feeling I had when I was there. I'm constantly striving to do better, to improve my compositions, and to gain better processing skills.'*





# Mark GEE

## Night moves

Mark Gee grew up in northern New South Wales, Australia and now lives in Wellington, New Zealand where he works for Peter Jackson's Weta Digital as a digital visual effects supervisor. Without realising it, you've probably seen his work in King Kong, or iRobot, or one of a number of other high profile and Oscar award winning feature films.

'My career started in graphic design, but I loved film and was inspired by the visual effects, so I took a year out and learnt the ins and out of 3d animation, created a showreel and knocked on doors. Finally a company on the Gold Coast in Australia gave me a chance, and the rest is history. I do enjoy watching the films I work on, but I find it hard to watch them just after I've finished working on them, as I find myself being critical of the work rather than just sitting back and enjoying them.'

His interest in photography began as a young boy, when an uncle took him to an auction to buy his first camera, a film based SLR with ▶



*Winning image of the People and Space Category of the Astronomy Photographer of the Year 2013. Following on from my 'Full Moon Silhouettes' video, I wanted to see if I could capture a similar shot, except this time as a photographic still. Amazingly I had perfect weather again, and the location to shoot from was almost as perfect as the one from the video. Canon EOS 1D X with focal length of 1120mm. © Mark Gee*



a 20-35mm lens. He recalls taking photography at school, reading magazines and books and later, with the advent of the internet, this went on to become a real source of learning.

‘I’ve been shooting photographs in one way or another since school. I processed the film and developed the prints in the photography darkroom at school. Later on I set up my own simple darkroom consisting of a developing tank and an enlarger in my grandmother’s laundry.

I grew up at the beach in Australia, so a lot of my early work was surf lifestyle photography. When I came to Wellington, I quickly realised it was a different kind of lifestyle here, so that’s when I discovered landscape photography. Astrophotography didn’t come too long after that - I remember going out to Castlepoint for the first time and looking up at the night sky and being totally blown away by the amount of stars that I could see. It was so dark there with no light pollution, and when I looked up at the night sky and saw the glow from the galactic center of the Milky Way with the naked eye for the first time, that’s when I got bitten by the astrophotography bug.’

Mark often ventures out to the darkest, most remote skies all around the country, enjoying the challenge of combining New Zealand’s striking landscapes with the ethereal beauty of the night sky in new, creative ways. This has led to international success with Mark being short-listed in the Astronomy Photographer of the Year every year from 2012 onwards, a finalist in the 2012 World Open of Photography, and 4th place in the 2014 International Earth and Sky Photo Competition, as well as having images published in various books and magazines.

Mark's short film, ‘Full Moon Silhouettes’ also gained him international acclaim after going viral online, and has been broadcast all over the world by the likes of CNN, The BBC, NASA and various other mainstream media. At the time we featured this in the In Plain Sight section of this magazine.

‘Full Moon Silhouettes’ was definitely my most challenging assignment. I had this idea to shoot a video of people silhouetted by a rising moon. I had the perfect location in mind for the people, but the difficult part was finding a location to film from where I had a clear view of the lookout over 2km away.

I spent just over a year trying to pull it off. So many things had to be just right for me to capture the video. I only had a period of two days each month when I could possibly shoot it, but the weather had to be absolutely perfect with no wind at all during that time. I was relying on total strangers for the video, and they had no idea they were being filmed, so they were the oblivious - but all important - performers. And the calculations for my position from which to capture the rising moon behind the people had to be quite accurate - if I was just one metre off I could have missed the shot, and that’s not an easy thing to get right when you’re 2.1km away from your subjects...’

In 2013, Mark won the prestigious Astronomy Photographer of the Year. Not only did he win it overall, but Mark also won the Earth and Space category, and the People and Space category which had never been done before in the competition's history. Since then, Mark has gone onto to sharing his passion and knowledge on the public speaking circuit. One of the highlights of that was his well received TEDx talk in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2014. ▶

*The Milky Way towers above a remote road on the southern most point of the North Island of New Zealand. The light on the hill is the Cape Palliser Lighthouse, which was built in 1897 and includes a climb of 250 steps from the road to the lighthouse on the hilltop. This image is a stitch of 8 individual images all shot at 24mm and stitched together in Autopan.*  
© Mark Gee





‘The organisers of TEDx Christchurch approached me to do a talk about the Full Moon Silhouettes video I shot over Mount Victoria in Wellington. I spoke mostly about the response the video got, and how the simple moonrise unexpectedly touched the hearts of people around the world. I also talked about astrophotography in general, and what it means to me.’

**Astrophotography is both an art and a science, as Mark explains:**

‘There are various forms of astrophotography, which cover anything from deep space to wide field. I am mostly interested in wide field astrophotography, which usually refers to images that include a starry sky above a landscape. These photos are taken with a DSLR camera and wide angled lens, and it’s the most accessible form of astrophotography since you don’t have to invest in a telescope or super expensive camera gear.

The reality is that it can be very frustrating work as there are numerous factors which need to come together to get an image that I’m satisfied with. It involves planning and luck, and if you don’t manage to get the particular composition with the night sky and the landscape that you had planned due to say bad weather, then it may be another year until all things align again and you can have another go at that shot. I always plan my astrophotography shots well in advance and do the location scouting in the day time. When I get to my location at night, I allow plenty of time to set up and frame the shot. I usually arrive at least an hour before I plan to start shooting. I’m dealing with long exposure times, so a sturdy tripod is required and I weigh this down with a bag of sand to prevent any camera shake. I either shoot with a cable release or use the camera’s self timer to open the shutter.

Then there are the ever-changing weather conditions to take into account, not to mention the technical side of capturing the image with

the sharpest focus and best exposure. Focusing is one of the hardest things to get right in astrophotography. I use the live view function of my camera. Then I find the brightest star in the night sky and try to get it towards the centre of the LCD screen. Once I’ve done that I switch to manual focus. I magnify the live view screen as large as it goes, about 10x, and rotate the focus ring until the star looks sharp. Next I take a photo and then zoom in on the image to check the sharpness.

And finally knowing the correct way to process the image, giving you the best result with as little noise as possible is as important and challenging as taking a great image in the first place. After the shoot I’ll usually wait until the next morning and begin the all important processing of the image on the computer. This can take anywhere from two minutes to 30 minutes, depending on the complexity of the shot, and sometimes, when I’m putting a large panoramic night sky image together, it takes days. I try not to over process an image as I like to keep it as natural looking as possible, conveying the way I perceived the scene on the night.’

**Mark shoots stills and video, which presents its own set of challenges:**

‘My videos consist of real time video footage as well as time-lapse, which requires me to spend many hours under the stars just to capture a few seconds of video footage. One of my recent videos, which I shot for International Dark Sky Week, took over three months to complete. I not only had to capture all the footage, but also had to write a script for the narration, and do my own voice overs in a makeshift recording studio in my wardrobe!

Time-lapse photography is the process of taking many photographs of a subject over a long period of time, and then putting all the photos together as frames of a film. Once played back, the motion of that subject is sped up considerably.

Time-lapse is great for capturing the night sky, because when played back at the normal film speed rate of 24 frames per second, you can see the night sky rotate (although it’s actually us here on earth doing the rotating), which would normally be undetectable if you were just standing there looking up at the stars.

When time-lapsing the night sky, I have to shoot for an hour just to get 5 seconds of footage. I capture one exposure (or frame) every 30 seconds, and after an hour I end up with 120 frames. I use an intervalometer to trigger my camera shutter, so I can just let the camera run automatically over the period of the time-lapse.

A lot of my images tend to have a cinematic feel about them, and those influences come from working in VFX and the film industry. Everything from composition and lighting, to camera moves for the time-lapses, and attention to detail in the processing of my images are all related to my experiences at Weta.’

**On a constantly rotating planet in a constantly moving universe, timing is everything, as Mark explains.**

‘Our own planet is rotating at 1600 kilometres per hour and is also hurtling through space at 108,000 kilometres per hour! So as you can imagine, the night sky is constantly moving, with the position of the stars and The Milky Way changing throughout the night. For astrophotography, it’s important that you know where the Milky Way is going to be in the night sky at a certain time to get the shot you want. I use various smartphone apps to work out both the position and timing, and it is critical that I am ready to shoot at that precise point in time, otherwise I may miss out on the shot I had planned. The Milky Way is some 120,000 light years in diameter. This means that if you could travel at the speed of light, it would take you 120,000 years to travel around the entire Milky Way. And here’s something else to get your head around - the centre of The Milky Way is

approximately 27,000 light years away. Which means the light my camera captures of the Milky Way's galactic center is approximately 27,000 years old. That means this light would have left the galactic center of the Milky Way during the late stone age period here on Earth.

My favorite time of day is as day turns to night, and the first stars come out - I just love that transition of time as the sun disappears below the horizon lighting up a brand new day somewhere else on earth.

The new moon is the best time to shoot astrophotography, so this would have to be my favorite time of month.

And March would have to be my favorite time of year, as it’s the first full month of the year where the center of the Milky Way is visible again in the Southern Hemisphere.’

**It might look like a lonely pursuit under the night sky, but Mark has discovered that the landscape is not as empty as he might have first imagined:**

‘I head out to a lot of remote coastal locations to shoot the night sky, as I want as little light pollution as possible. And with these locations there is usually some form of wildlife.

You get seals and penguins around the coast of New Zealand, and penguins have this mating call, which sounds like someone screeching, which is a little unsettling for the nerves when you’re alone in the dark. The seals aren’t much better either, with a cough sounding just like a human cough, so you can imagine how freaked out you can get when you hear the sound right next to you with no one else around!

I had this one instance when I was shooting a time-lapse, I jumped in the back of the car to have a rest while waiting for it to finish. When I came back out to check on my camera, a rather large New Zealand fur seal had climbed up and laid right down on top of some of my gear. There was no way he was going to move that ▶



night, so I had to wait until the next morning, and retrieve my gear when he returned to the ocean to hunt for his breakfast.’

On the topic of gear, he catalogues his current equipment choices and places them in the context of what came before.

‘For my photography, I shoot with Canon EOS gear, although I've recently acquired a Zeiss 15mm f2.8 lens which was a fair investment, but it is a super sharp lens and I use that for 90% of my astrophotography now. Sensor technology has come a fair way since I first started shooting astro. I began on a Canon EOS 40D, then went to the 5D MkII and MkIII, but I have now settled on the Canon 6D which has the fantastic high ISO performance required for landscape astrophotography. I also use a Gigapan, which is a robotic head for panoramas. I shoot up to 360 degree panoramas with the Gigapan and depending on which lens I'm using - either a Canon 24mm or 50mm - each panorama can consist of up to 48 images.

I also shoot a lot of astro time-lapses, and to get camera motion into my shots, I use the Syrp Genie and Genie Mini motion control gear on the Syrp magic carpet slider. To my mind, having camera motion in my time-lapses really adds production value.’

Waxing philosophically, Mark sees more than pretty vistas in the night skies:

‘Stars can teach us many things - they can teach us about the beginnings of our universe. They can teach us about our own planet Earth, which wouldn't exist without our own star, the Sun. And stars can even teach us about ourselves - after all we are all made up of star matter.

Personally, stars teach me about humanity, and just how small we are in the grand scheme of things. In a world where technology usually keeps us company, I think everyone should at least once in their life head out to the darkest location they can find, and spend the night

looking up at the stars. For me it certainly puts life in perspective - so look up and enjoy, and learn and be inspired by the stars.’

Advice we should all take on board, with or without our cameras. ■

## TS

<http://theartofnight.com>

## Mark's filmography

► *This image is shot only 15 minutes from the CBD in Wellington, New Zealand. The south coast of Wellington is dark and remote, but easily accessible, and it's a place I spend a lot of time at night taking photos and watching the stars. I was shooting a timelapse this night and decided to climb up the rocks and stand there watching and admiring the sky above. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 14mm f2.8 L II USM lens. © Mark Gee*

►► *Following double page spread: The Church of the Good Shepherd on the shores of Lake Tekapo in New Zealand, is one of the most photographed churches in the world. It's surrounded by spectacular natural beauty, and on a clear night the stars and the Milky Way shine brightly above. It's certainly not the easiest church to get a clear shot of, especially at night due to the hordes of photographers who jostle for position to get that iconic photo. Fortunately for me this night, I was shooting for a tourist campaign, and was able to get at least part of the view clear for the shoot. Canon EOS 6D with EF 14mm f2.8 L II USM lens. © Mark Gee*









Everyone loves a sunset photo, but this one is a little different to the regular sunset photos you see. I shot this one evening as the sun was setting to the west over Wellington, New Zealand. It was shot with a solar filter mounted to my super telephoto lens, which allows me to capture some of the detail on the sun's surface. The black smudges seen on the disc of the sun towards the top are sunspots, and are caused by intense magnetic activity on the surface. Canon EOS 1D MkIV with EF 600mm f4 L II USM lens and 1.4x converter. © Mark Gee











*Nusfjord is a quaint village on the Lofoten Islands of Norway. It was 2.19pm during the seemingly endless twilight of the arctic winter, and the light was amazing! I had to climb an icy ladder up a tower to get this shot and it was totally worth it! Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 24mm lens. © Mark Gee*

◀◀ *Previous double page spread: Africa has very little light pollution, and because of this, the night sky is insanely beautiful. But photographing here at night isn't straight forward, as standing out in the middle of the bush in the dark by yourself with a camera isn't really advisable. Thankfully for me, I have a 4WD vehicle and a couple of Masai warriors escorting me. These guys are armed and know the bush and the behaviour of the animals better than anyone, so I do feel quite safe out there at night. In the afternoons we usually get a storm, but then it clears up perfectly in the evening and the sky comes alive with millions of shining stars, so we head out into the darkness amongst the wild animals to see what we can find to photograph. We found this beautiful tree not far from the Mara Bushtops Camp, and when I first took a shot of it against the night sky, the silhouette looked very much like a mouse, so we called it Milky Mouse! Canon EOS 6D with Zeiss Distagon ZE 15mm f2.8 T\* lens. © Mark Gee*

***'My favorite time of day is as day turns to night, and the first stars come out - I just love that transition of time as the sun disappears below the horizon lighting up a brand new day somewhere else on earth.'***





*This image was shot at Princess Bay on Wellington's South Coast, and you can see the Milky Way arching above Island Bay to the right of frame, and the faint glow of the Aurora Australis can be seen in the left of frame. The Large Magellanic Cloud can also be seen high in the night sky frame left. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 14mm f2.8 L II USM lens. © Mark Gee*

***‘These photos are taken with a DSLR camera and wide angled lens, and it’s the most accessible form of astrophotography since you don’t have to invest in a telescope or super expensive camera gear.’***

►► *Following double page spread: The Galactic Core of the Milky Way rises to the east, silhouetting an old fishing boat that ran aground in a storm. The boat has been abandoned and makes for an interesting subject to photograph. I climbed up onto the boat that night and illuminated the cabin with a simple headlamp. This image is a single exposure. Canon EOS 6D with EF 14mm f2.8 L II USM lens. © Mark Gee*













*The Milky Way above Wellington, New Zealand. © Mark Gee*

◀◀ *Previous double page spread: Island Bay light trails, Wellington, New Zealand. © Mark Gee*









◀◀ Previous double page spread: These freedom campers are parked at Red Rocks on the south coast of Wellington and if they were awake, they probably would have been quite amazed to see the clarity in the sky above so close to the capital city. Canon EOS 5D MkII with EF 14mm f2.8 L II USM lens. © Mark Gee

*I had a French film crew in town who were shooting a doco with me, so I invited one of them out with me that night. We arrived at the location just above a place called Breaker Bay, and could see the Milky Way spanning right across the sky from the east to the west. I set up a 220 degree panorama which I shooting on a Gigapan Epic Pro. The whole pano took around 20 minutes to shoot, so we just stood back to the right of frame and enjoyed the night sky above. Canon EOS 6D with EF 24mm lens. © Mark Gee*



One of my favourite times of day is after the sun has set, and the first stars appear. They commonly call this the blue hour, but I like to think of it as the changing of the guard - the moment day becomes night. I was in the South Island of New Zealand, and managed to witness this amazing moment as the sun went down to the west, and the after glow lit up the tops of New Zealand's highest mountain, Mount Cook, and the lenticular clouds above. This image is a frame from a day to night time-lapse which I began as the sun was going down and shot right through until complete darkness. Canon EOS 6D with EF 24-105mm f4 L IS USM lens. © Mark Gee



►► Following double page spread: Twilight at the Hole in the Rock, Waverly, on the North Island of New Zealand. Unfortunately, this iconic rock was destroyed by rough seas in 2013. Canon EOS 5D MkII with EF 24mm lens. © Mark Gee







*A lone tree stands in silhouette against the night sky with the Milky Way rising overhead on the south east coast of the north island of New Zealand. Canon EOS 5D MkII with EF 14mm f2.8 L II USM lens. © Mark Gee*

*‘I remember going out to Castlepoint for the first time and looking up at the night sky and being totally blown away by the amount of stars that I could see. It was so dark there with no light pollution, and when I looked up at the night sky and saw the glow from the galactic center of the Milky Way with the naked eye for the first time, that’s when I got bitten by the astrophotography bug.’*







*In this photo you won't see me standing in one of my heroic poses with the beam of my torch light pointing into the night sky, nor will you see towering mountains with an incredibly over processed Milky Way above. All you'll see in this photo is a beautiful southern hemisphere night sky taken from a field near the coastal town of Kaikoura in the South Island of New Zealand. Canon EOS 6D with EF 24-70mm f2.8 L USM lens. © Mark Gee*





*The Tasman Valley in the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand, is an amazing place to visit by day, but once night falls, I can honestly say it's one of the most amazing night skies you will ever see. I recently spent a night under the stars there above the glacier lake. It was a spectacular view looking down the valley, especially when the Aurora Australis lit up the sky to the south. The bright band of the Milky Way spanned overhead from east to west, and there were so many shooting stars that night, I lost count - it was certainly one incredible night under the stars to remember! This 305 megapixel panoramic image is made up of 42 photos stitched together to create the final image. Canon EOS 6D with EF 24-70mm f2.8 L USM lens. © Mark Gee*

***‘Personally, stars teach me about humanity, and just how small we are in the grand scheme of things. In a world where technology usually keeps us company, I think everyone should at least once in their life head out to the darkest location they can find, and spend the night looking up at the stars.’***





## Contemporary Division

The Australian Photographic Society has five Divisions which cater to specific photographic interests. Contemporary Division provides for those photographers who have developed their own unique style of photography and those who are in the process of doing so. There are no hard and fast rules as to what constitutes a 'good' photograph, and all media are accepted.

Each year Contemporary Division presents a public face by exhibiting at the Australian Photographic Society convention (APSCON) which will be in Adelaide this year. Recent exhibition themes have been 'Paper', 'Close to Home' and 'Found'.

Generally the works are created in accordance with the vision of the artist as photographer, without the constraint of rules and definitions. The resulting works stretch the boundaries of photography and create a distinctive vibe when compared with traditional photographic exhibitions. Frequently the works include mixed media and even installation art.

Group exhibitions are curated and non-competitive. High standards of presentation are aimed for and a catalogue is produced including artist statements for all works. The exhibitions have several aims. Firstly, to showcase the style of work to the other APS members and, whenever possible, to members of the public. Secondly it provides the opportunity for members to learn about exhibiting in a gallery environment.

I have been privileged to preview members' work on the theme of 'Traces' which will be shown in the "CDiv presents" section of the Adelaide APSCON. Unusually for Contemporary Division 'Traces' is an audio visual presentation especially prepared for the conference. As might be expected, each of the 15 contributors has a distinctive style.

Members can also take part in one or more of the postal or on-line folios that the Division runs. Currently there is one on-line and two postal folios. These provide a vehicle for the sharing of images, ideas and opinions with those working within the whole gamut of contemporary styles.

Membership of the Contemporary Division of APS is open to all with an interest in pursuing their own style of photography. There is a wide range of members: some with tertiary qualifications in fine art, some with wide experience in solo and/or small group exhibitions, and others who are just setting out to find their own directions with their photography.

Kay Mack is the division chair. She would love to hear from you if you are interested in exploring your individual creative style of photography. Catalogues and installation views of Contemporary Division exhibitions are posted on-line.

**Robert Dettman AFIAP**  
**APS Management Committee Councillor**  
**Digital Division Chair**

## Education, adventure and outdoor photography . . . under Southern Skies

Spectacular scenery, diverse wildlife and famous West Coast hospitality will make the Photographic Society of New Zealand's Southern Regional convention a truly memorable event for all from 7-9 October, 2016.

'Top of the Coast' will be hosted by the Buller Camera Club, who have put together a programme guaranteed to educate, inspire and allow delegates to explore and experience some of the outstanding scenery and historical aspects in and around Westport.

Keynote presenter, Bay of Plenty photographer Andy Belcher has spent many years behind the camera and can boast a myriad of top photographic awards, including British Wildlife Photographer of the year, Australasian Underwater Photographer of the Year and Nikon Photo Contest International, to name a few. He is completely self taught and proud of the fact he has 'no qualifications' and he says his 'open minded approach to learning has enabled him to break photographic boundaries - simply because he never knew they existed'. Andy can't wait to share his knowledge with convention photographers.

West Coast local and outdoor enthusiast Phil Rossiter is Chairman of the 'Old Ghost Road' - the longest continuous single track, purpose-built for mountain bikers and trampers alike.

At 85km long, the Old Ghost Road provides access to wilderness so epic, so dramatic and

varied, that even those most familiar with its realm still have to pinch themselves. As a member of the group responsible for its conception, planning, construction and ultimate completion, Phil will share his intimate experiences of being so closely involved over the eight year journey to completion.

Two field trips complete the programme and will take delegates to two of the Coast's most spectacular scenic destinations. North of Westport is the Denniston Plateau, home to one of the richest, high quality coal seams in New Zealand. Although no longer in operation, there is much to see and explore. In the opposite direction is Mitchells Gully, Charleston and Cape Foulwind - all offering spectacular scenery, historical relics to explore and wildlife to observe on the seal colony at the Cape.

Regional Conventions are a key component on the annual PSNZ calendar and are a time for photographers to come together with old and new friends to learn and expand their technical skills in a relaxed, fun and friendly environment.

Registration is open to all photographers - you don't have to be a PSNZ member - and starts at \$180.00, with additional costs for elective activities on the field trips. For more information and registration go to <http://www.bullersouthernregional.com>

**Moira Blincoe LPSNZ**  
**PSNZ Vice President & Councillor**  
**for Communications**





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# IT'S TIME TO BECOME AN AIPP **ACMP**

## WHAT IS AN ACMP?

An ACMP is an Accredited Commercial and Media Photographer who has already achieved APP (Accredited Professional Photographer) status and wants to use the ACMP logo and recognition as a point of difference in the commercial realm.

## WHY SHOULD I BECOME AN ACMP?

As commercial photographers we are faced with a constantly changing business environment. Increasingly, photographers are working directly with clients who have little experience in buying photography.

Being an ACMP allows you to clearly identify yourself as an Accredited Professional Photographer who specialises in commercial work. This ensures that photography buyers can be confident that they are working with a professional who is qualified to meet the needs of their business. By working together, we can ensure the professional standards of commercial photography remain high and are clearly identifiable by the market.

## HOW ARE COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS REPRESENTED WITHIN AIPP?

The AIPP represents professional photographers from all genres and specialities. It is also the only industry organisation that can accredit professional photographers.

The ACMP chapter council has been formed with a clear mandate to deliver events, resources and activities that specifically meet the needs of ACMP chapter members. This council is made up of commercial photographers who volunteer their time.

## WHAT SORT OF MEMBER ADVANTAGES ARE AVAILABLE?

### SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING AN ACMP INCLUDE:

- Online listing on the National "Search For A Pro"
- Access to online resources and contracts
- Access to 100 hours of video tutorials
- Access to the National Assistant register
- Access to the Better Business Bible
- Discounted rates to workshops and seminars
- Entry into APPA and State awards
- Trade Discounts and Sponsor offers
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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 Hokianga Experience tours:

*'Learn about the history and culture of Hokianga from one whose roots are in this area, while discovering places only a local with Māori ancestry will know.'*

### Bridge on his photography workshops:

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

### Come and visit Bridge's new gallery in the Hokianga:

Bridge Gallery  
1 Clendon Esplanade, Rawene - on the Twin Coast Discovery Highway, Northland, NZ.

View and purchase Tony's evocative images. Plus there's often a chance to meet the artist when he's in residence.

Tony's workshops are always 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.

[www.thistonybridge.com](http://www.thistonybridge.com)  
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**BUT WAIT –  
THERE'S MORE...**



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### HOW TO USE THE LINKS

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

**ONLINE** readers will note that these links open in a new tab, or window, in your web browser, so you won't lose your place in f11, as this stays open in its own tab or window.

If you're reading our **PDF** on your computer, Acrobat/Adobe Reader will open the link in your browser while holding the f11 page open for you to return to.

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Enjoy.

# AIPA

FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

[www.aipa.org.nz](http://www.aipa.org.nz)



*"Workshops, seminars, business resources, online forums, exclusive promo opportunities and industry discounts – these are just a few of the benefits of being an AIPA member. But the main reason I joined was to have the help, support and guidance of my peers, who also happen to be some of New Zealand's best photographers. My only regret is that I didn't join sooner."*

**Lee Howell**  
[www.leehowell.com](http://www.leehowell.com)

This AIPA page is sponsored by f11 Magazine.





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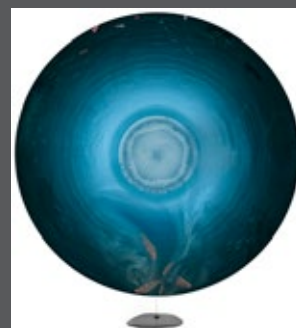
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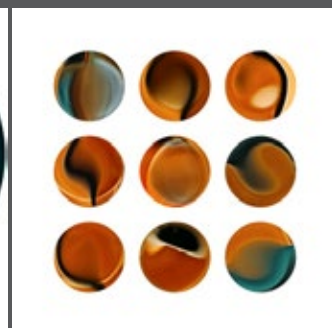
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MARAMA SHEARER  
PORTRAIT CREATIVE

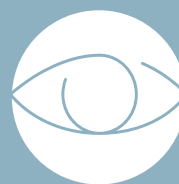


HARRY JANSSEN  
ILLUSTRATIVE



CATHERINE CATTANACH  
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“

Joining the NZIPP was the best thing I ever did for my photography, not just from a business perspective in terms of client confidence and referrals, but also for my own personal development. The knowledge I've gained from attending conferences and workshops and entering the Iris Awards has been priceless, and I love that there's such a culture of sharing and support. It feeds my soul to feel so connected with a network of like-minded, awesome people!

”

Catherine Cattnach FNZIPP II

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# FOR SALE...

## Photographer's Eye – Excellent Condition

The ad copy would read on, 'Perfected over more than 3 decades of staring through a viewfinder, it just gets better with age.'

A friend recently sold his business, a creative agency, for a tidy sum. I was happy for him of course, at least until I started reflecting on how I might get on if I tried to sell mine.

With a few notable exceptions most photography businesses in this country are relatively small and would have little real value once the founder/photographer is finally 'out of the picture' - pun intended.

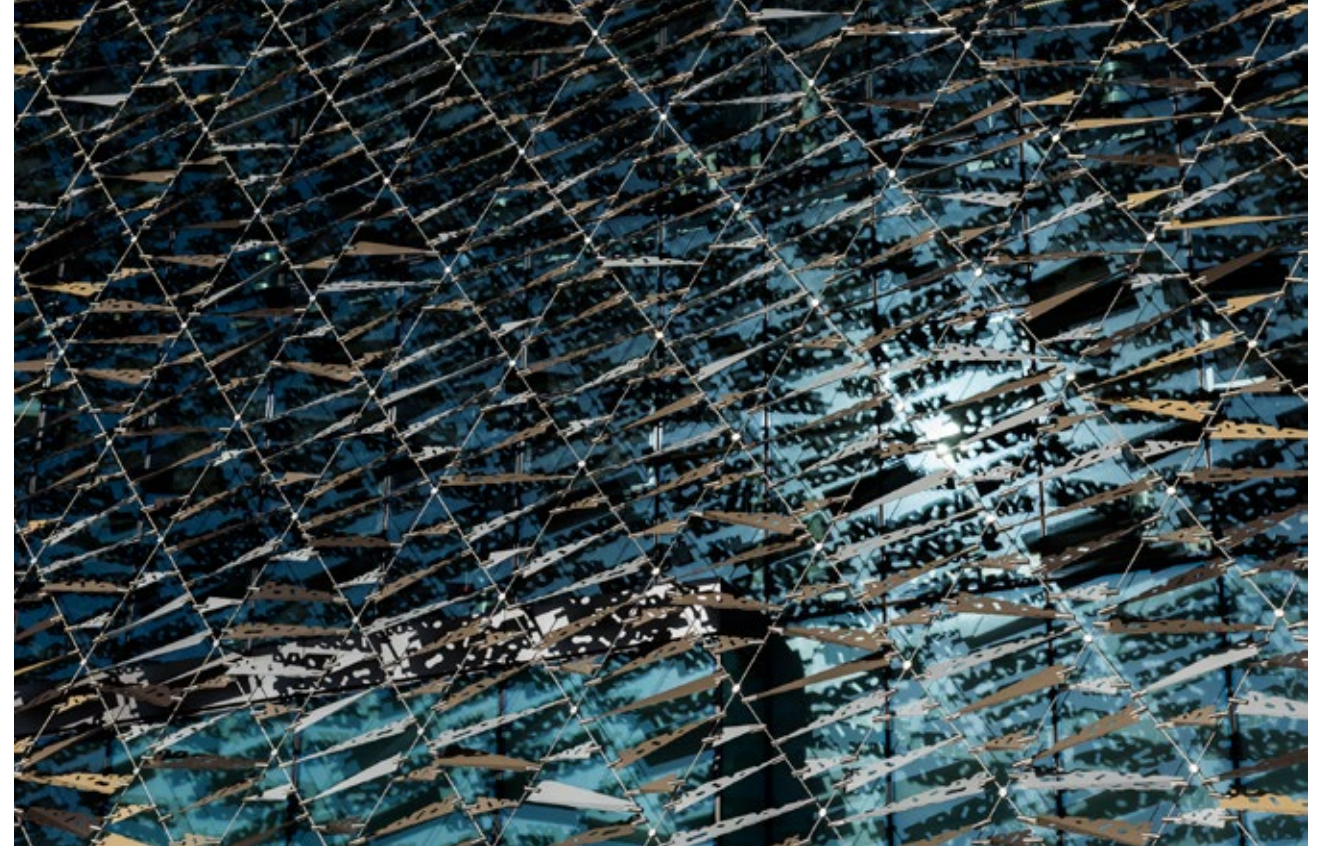
Assets? Well all of that once lusted after equipment which has been used unrelentingly to provide an income is mostly at, or near, write off point on the books, so not worth much to sell. Don't even start on computers or digital cameras more than a handful of years old, the number of these languishing in cupboards easily outnumbers boats currently requiring an anchor.

My client list? Worthless! It's the personal relationship and reputation I've built up over the years that keeps people on my list, I doubt many of them would readily accept an unknown shooter suddenly stepping up in my place. There have been a few cases where a photographer has managed to coin it, selling

his/her business as a 'going concern' but none that I know of then lasted very long under new management.

So, my chances of being presented with an offer I simply couldn't refuse are slim. Correction, highly bloody unlikely. This could be slightly depressing if reflected on for too long so I decided to take an inventory of my wider assets. With most of the excruciatingly expensive kit either rapidly depreciating, or already depreciated to zero, I came to the realisation that in simple terms the only thing I have of value is my eye.

When I say 'eye' I guess I mean both of them as I don't have monocular vision, but if I had to choose I'd say my left is the most valuable as that's the one I use to look through the viewfinder. Why do I value this gelatinous body part over everything else? Well it's the only thing that separates me from a random person rocking up off the street clutching the same camera as me. Tasked with recording images worthy of being used for the purpose of visually communicating an idea, a concept or accurately (or otherwise) depicting something either animal, mineral or vegetable to a professional level, I would hopefully have an advantage over the aforementioned randomly self-selected individual.



© Gary Baildon, *The Shooter*

I'd like to think that the years spent looking at life through a lens and the thousands of images I've recorded in return for financial reward during that time would provide me with something intangible to draw on in order to deliver something more compelling, more pretty, more stylish, more striking or maybe more real than the camera toting stranger with the untrained eye.

I don't want to sound too cocky about my abilities but the vision I've developed has been hard earned, often through making mistakes, learning from them, and then using that experience to perfect a particular technique. The whole process has demanded years of hard work and dedication to reach what I, and hopefully all of my clients, now consider a professional standard.

Of course a client's needs can't be satisfied with style and execution alone, the ability to articulate their raw ideas into compelling visual images and the experience to manage a shoot with a cast of several, often under less than ideal circumstances has always been a pre-requisite.

So yes, there is more to it than just the human eye but at the end of the day without that leading and guiding eye all that's left between me and the shot is just a pile of dumb equipment, virtually useless until someone who knows what they're doing picks it up and presses buttons in all the right places.

However when the day comes where that equipment is no longer dumb, when cameras arrive with artificial intelligence referencing a database of styles, drawing on a library of lighting expertise and boasting the combined problem solving abilities of all the notable photographers in history – then I, and all of my colleagues will be well and truly scuppered. Feel free to substitute an expletive of your own choosing there, my first choice was firmly vetoed by the publisher.

How soon that scary sounding prospect becomes a reality will very likely determine my retirement age. ■

### Buzz

gary@f11magazine.com



# Queenstown Centre for Creative Photography



## IAN POOLE does PHOTOGRAPHY



*With an active and long-term membership of the Australian Institute of Professional Photography (AIPP); a lifetime of photographic experience; an extensive role in judging photographs in Australia and New Zealand; and a post-graduate degree in visual arts; Ian Poole is well placed to assist you with your photographic images. Ian's previous teaching experience at university level, as well as strong industry activity, gives him powerful skills in passing on photographic knowledge.*

### Are you looking for assistance in any of the following?

- Portfolio construction and development
- Initial advice for a photographic exhibition
- Curatorial assistance with an exhibition (opening night details – even choice of wine)
- Re-assess your photographic output – weddings/portraits
- Writing a strong artist's statement
- Choosing strong photographs for competition entry

Ian works from Teneriffe, an inner city Brisbane suburb, but there are many ways to contact and speak to him.

SKYPE | EMAIL | SNAIL MAIL | FACE-TO-FACE

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Blog [poolefoto.wordpress.com](http://poolefoto.wordpress.com)  
Skype [poolefoto](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/voice/poolefoto)



### ►► Continued from page 144...

Since my earliest days as a working photographer (dare I say professional) I have always had a grudging admiration for the self-proclaimed amateur. Someone who chooses to embark on a journey to create photographs without the constraints of client demands and direction, cost, budget or time commitment. One or more of these parameters has always been attached to my professional assignments. The wedding that is being held on a pre-determined date; the portrait that is to be given as a birthday present; the ship that will enter harbour with the next high tide; the visit by the Governor to open the next sitting of parliament - these definite and precise directions can not be ignored by a professional photographer. Whereas an amateur may choose to attend and document, or not attend at all, at their whim.

Elliot Erwitt commented that he did not set out to photograph a book of dog photographs - it just so happened that one day he had finally created such a volume of images that Phaidon offered to publish his book Dog Dogs. Calling Erwitt an amateur would be misinterpreting, maybe even misrepresenting, a lengthy career as an image maker. In an interview with Erwitt when he was last in Australia he recalled that his 'hobby' of photographing dogs had become a job – suggesting that his keen canine interest was interfering with his 'real' job.

That line, the one separating amateur from professional is tenuous at best, and poorly defined most of the time. Sometimes it's pretty hard to even see where the line is.

Personally, I am more than happy to continue to blur the already soft line between my trade and my vocation. It's a movable barrier, so why not? ■

### Ian Poole

[Poolefoto.wordpress.com](http://Poolefoto.wordpress.com)  
[ian@f11magazine.com](mailto:ian@f11magazine.com)



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**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 2016/2017 event schedule:

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October 6-10 - 2016 Fiordland  
October 28 - Nov 11 - 2016 Tibet - China (2 places left)  
November 12 - 22 - 2016 Japan Autumn Colours (fully booked)  
December 16 - 18 - 2016 Portrait

March 16 - 20 - 2017 Central Otago  
April 14 - 17 & 21 - 24 - 2017 Autumn Colours  
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October 25 - Nov 8 - 2017 Myanmar  
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*‘I am a professional photographer by trade and an amateur photographer by vocation.’*

– Elliot Erwitt

Two moments over the past week or so brought this Elliot Erwitt quote into sharp focus for me.

My current major working task is to unbundle my life’s output of negatives into the local library. In doing so I was struck by the sheer banality of some of the jobs that I have completed over the years. Then I reviewed, with some delight, the portfolio of photographs that this worthy journal published in the last edition showcasing some of my far more recent images.

The concept of professional work versus amateur output was starting to take shape in my head.

Whilst there are many descriptors to illustrate the concept of professional photography, they mostly revolve around the concept of creating images in return for money. There are great professional photographers who are not necessarily great photographers; and there are great photographers who are not necessarily great professionals.

Good professional photographers are often expert at orchestrating a large number of different skilled operations towards the required goal of photographically illustrating a product or concept to the satisfaction of a fee-paying client. This was the description behind some of the negative files that I was putting into the library’s database last week. Photographs that had, in their day, totally satisfied the demands

and requirements of a client who had then happily paid for that service. Looking at the images with the 20/20 wisdom of hindsight, they will never be used again in any creative sense, despite totally satisfying the client’s brief when they were created.

On the other hand, surveying my portfolio of photographs in last month’s issue of this magazine, I was just as happy with their publication as I was when I created many of the images. So using Erwitt’s formula, had I become an amateur photographer? An amateur photographer is typically seen as someone who takes photos for fun and passion. The subject, constraint or motivation of money is not a factor.

We are straying into a discussion which parallels an age old question, that being, what is the main distinction between a chef and a cook? The chef, being the trained and practising professional (there’s that word again), is someone who prepares food in return for monetary recompense. On the other hand, the cook, often an amateur, usually prepares food simply for the love of working with good ingredients and enjoying the compliments of satisfied diners, usually family and friends – rather than paying patrons of their kitchen.

◀ Continued on page 143 ...





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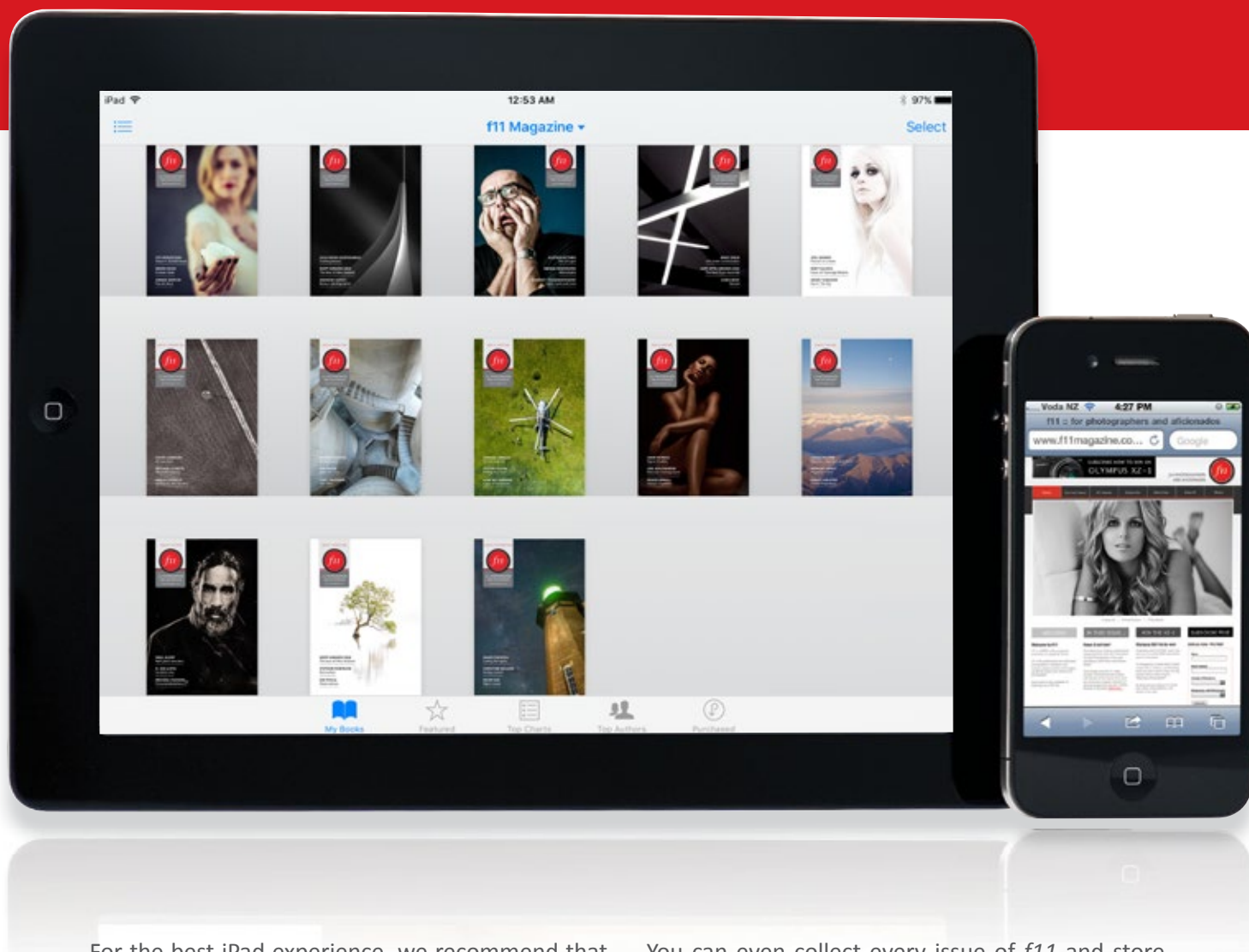
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