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JULY 2022



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easy to work with!
Thank you!
”

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easy to work with.
”

- Maris E

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nice turnaround time.
Easy interface. Will
use y'all again.
”

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quality work, flat
rate pricing.
”

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inexpensive, and
done correctly.
”

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“
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consistent.
”

- Vinnie

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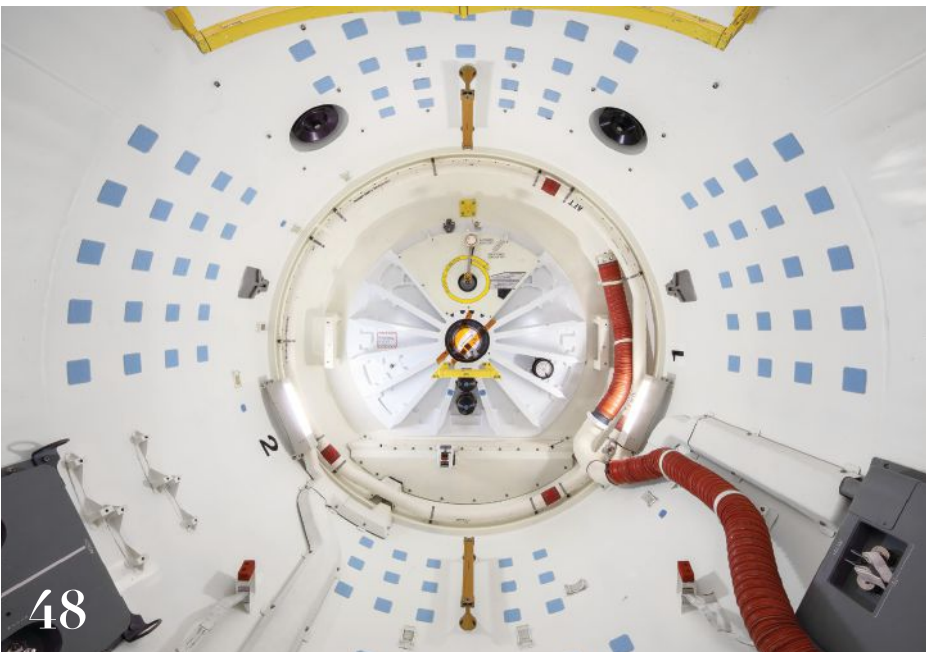
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Ready for Opportunity

LUCK IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD

Clearly, this young person was disappointed. And a bit bewildered. It was a friend's child who'd earned his college diploma and was well into his first professional job search several years ago. The opportunities he was finding were far below the level of responsibility and income he thought he'd be a contender for. The work offered was neither interesting nor promising the challenges he'd imagined. He couldn't understand. He had, after all, completed four years of college at great expense and considerable work. All those nights studying when he could have been bingeing Netflix. All those weekends meeting with study groups when he'd rather have been camping with friends. The papers he'd labored over. The tests he'd prepped for. Had all that work and worry accounted for so little?

What he didn't understand at the time was that all those hours and semesters and years it took to earn that degree were just his ticket to apply for entry-level positions. While that educational journey was in some ways arduous, it was also the bare minimum he needed to get a job where he could earn the real-world education and experience he needed. Getting the diploma felt like a huge achievement—and it was. But it was also just the first hurdle he had to clear on his way to having a long and satisfying career.

He knows this now, years later. He understands there is no alternative to doing the work, putting in the time, and gaining the life experience that no one can transfer to you.

There's a good bit of luck in this issue. Or so it would seem. Michael Yamashita invokes it several times in our profile of this longtime *National Geographic* photographer ("World Explorer," page 56). And U.S. space program photographer Roland Miller shares that his mother believed luck was an essential part of his character ("The Great Beyond," page 50).

But if these photographers can attribute some of their success to luck, it's because they'd made themselves ready to receive it. They had done the work, put in the time, clocked the hours. Yamashita has been working for Nat Geo for some 40 years, and during that time he learned a language, built a huge portfolio of images, embodied patience, exhibited chutzpah, and kept doing all the hard work that became the ticket to leveraging whatever "luck" came his way.

Miller, too, has made a career of readying himself for the synchronicities that opened up before him. What he says about the habit of mindful work resonates: "I look at photography as being a concert pianist: You practice for hours and hours and hours for every hour you perform on stage."

We're all treated to a lucky break now and then—being in a serendipitous place, getting an introduction to the right person, turning left instead of right. What matters is that we've made ourselves ready to accept those fortuitous opportunities when they present themselves. •

Jane Gaboury
Director of Publications

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FOREGROUND

By Amanda Arnold

Beacon

MOOD QUEST

San Francisco's summer fog is local photographer Joshua Singh's muse.

This street scene was captured in the Twin Peaks neighborhood, which is often drenched in summer fog, he says. "I'd been trying to shoot the Tower, which is a supermarket, in the fog, but was never able to find an interesting enough subject." That is, until this mother-daughter duo came along. "I really love how the fog adds to the atmosphere in this shot, illuminating the tower and the subjects and really giving a sense of scale in the frame." It's one of his all-time favorites, he says.

Singh photographs foggy scenes with a Sony Alpha 7R IV and a Sony FE 50mm F1.2 GM lens at night, almost always in aperture priority mode using a single point of focus to capture sharp objects. "With fog, especially when it's very dense, it can be challenging to autofocus. I usually shoot on a low aperture, down to f/1.2 or f/1.4 and multi-burst to capture a street scene. Fog makes light do interesting things as well, so I would advise anyone shooting to look for the light source and frame subjects in and around it," he explains. Singh carries a clean cloth to continually wipe moisture from his camera.

"Fog really gives an ordinary image a sense of mystery," he says. "It can also enhance the mood of a specific scene." He loves the chase, too. Sometimes there's heavy fog but no interesting scene; other days there's something very interesting to capture. "The uncertainty is exciting." •



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FROM THE ARCHIVE

PPA Enables a Family's Journey

Barbara Cardinali MacFerrin, M.Photog., has been a PPA member for just three years. But her family's connection to the organization precedes her birth.

MacFerrin's grandfather, Americo Cardinali, was an artist and photographer whose family emigrated from Italy to Argentina after World War I. There, Cardinali ran a photography studio, Foto Cardinali, which became a family business when MacFerrin's father and uncles joined it. The economy wasn't great in Argentina at the time, explains MacFerrin, and her father and uncles dreamed of moving to the United States. In the 1950s, her father and one uncle spent stints working for photographers in New York, only to return each time their visas expired.

Looking to forge a path to permanent residency, MacFerrin's uncle Vincent Cardinali had an idea: Reach out to PPA's magazine, which their studio received each month. In November 1967, he wrote a letter to the editors of *The Professional Photographer* requesting an ad be

placed in the magazine citing his qualifications and asking for employment at a photography studio in the United States. The editors replied with an offer to run the ad in the classifieds section of the January 1968 edition at no cost.

The ad was a success: Photographer Walter Fredericks of Wallace Studio in Louisville, Kentucky, responded to Vincent, and a series of cross-continent letters led Fredericks to hire Vincent, which enabled Vincent's move to the United States. Shortly after, MacFerrin's father, Albert, and his brother, Sergio, joined the Louisville studio as well. Sergio eventually started his own lab, Masterprint Color Lab, which Albert and Vincent later joined. It was in business for 33 years.

MacFerrin grew up in Louisville until her family relocated to Colorado. For her 17th birthday, her father gave her a camera. "Ever since then, I've loved photography," she says. After working in information technology for years, MacFerrin pivoted to her passion and

is now a successful fine art portrait photographer in Boulder, Colorado. The photos she submitted into International Photographic Competition earned her PPA Diamond Photographer status in 2020 and 2021.

Recently, MacFerrin's uncle mentioned that he'd never personally thanked PPA for placing that ad and wanted to extend his gratitude. "In a nutshell, if it weren't for PPA, our family would probably not be here in the United States today," she says. All three Cardinali brothers started their families in Louisville, and today there are nine children, 16 grand-children, and seven great-grandchildren among them, MacFerrin says. "It came full circle," she adds, as she is a PPA member and a professional photographer. "It just means a lot to me that PPA has been around for so long and did that for us," she says. Its actions unknowingly shaped the lives of an entire immigrant family and two generations of photographers. "On behalf of the Cardinali family, we want to extend our sincere thanks." •

COURTESY BARBARA MACFERRIN

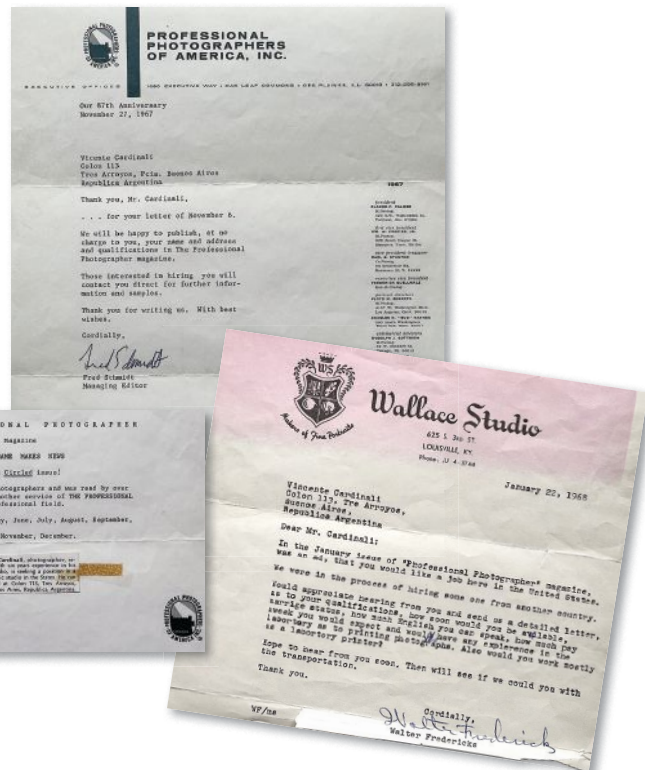


Sergio Cardinali (from left), Vincent Cardinali, and Albert Cardinali at their Masterprint Color Lab in Louisville, Kentucky, c. 1970s.



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Need for Speed

FOCUSED ENDURANCE

Car enthusiast and commercial photographer David Masemore fell in love with the speed, emotion, and drama of motorsports in college, honing his photography skills at events in Daytona, Florida, and Atlanta, Georgia. Now he gets paid to make photos for car manufacturers at those and other events.

His tips for motorsports photography:

CONVEY SPEED. He might use a higher shutter speed as a driver makes a turn, catching the car in mid-air, or a slower shutter speed with a wide plane to capture the feeling of an entire scene.

STAY IN SHAPE. Races can run as long as 24 hours, and if he's working for a manufacturer, there are additional hours of press photos before the start. To keep his energy up during a 36-hour shift, Masemore fuels himself with Clif Bars and Gatorade. Playing tennis and going to the gym regularly boosts his stamina and makes it easy for him to break into a sprint for a pivotal shot.

TRACK FAVORITE IMAGES ON THE FLY. Manufacturers often expect a one-day turnaround, so he star-rates his best photos on his Canon as he goes. He can easily drop them into Lightroom and send them off to the client when he's finished with a session.

PREPARE FOR WEATHER. Races take place rain or shine, so he always brings rain gear and an equipment cover.

RENTING IS A GOOD OPTION. The lenses in Masemore's advertising kit usually don't cover all the focal lengths needed for race day photography, so he rents the appropriate gear, plus a rain cover. "It's a great way to not break the bank and still get the shots you need."

LEARN FROM THE BEST. Like sports photography, motorsports photography mastery is experienced-based, he says. He networks with seasoned photographers at the races to get tips and learn from their experience. •





Here's the winning car at a Petit Le Mans race at Road Atlanta during the last driver change. It's the final 90 minutes of the eight-hour race. The composition works because it captures "everything that is motorsports," Masemore says—cars going by at 130 miles per hour, refueling, tire change, the engineers and pit crew at work. Masemore added the dust effect in post-production, giving the image a cinematic look.

The Great American Road Trip

PHOTO BOOK ROUNDUP

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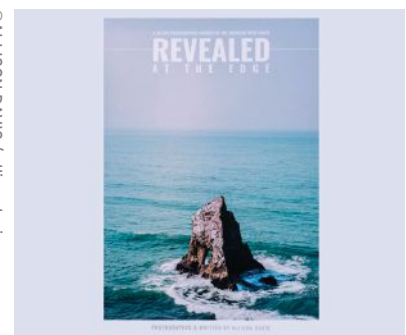
1. "A Prairie State of Mind," by Larry Kanfer
Kanfer's book celebrates the American Midwest with grand landscape photos of plowed farmland, dense cornfields, old barns, and autumn leaves. Photos chronicle the cycling of the seasons and the serenity of prairie life.

©ALEC SOTH / alecsoth.com



2. "A Pound of Pictures," by Alec Soth
Soth's book is an eclectic and poetic compilation of photographs made during a series of American road trips between 2018 and 2021. It documents an array of ordinary yet intriguing scenes—a butterfly on an orange slice, a bedspread littered with old photographs, a boy standing in overgrowth cupping a live wildflower in his hand. Each book includes five loose photographs inserted within the pages.

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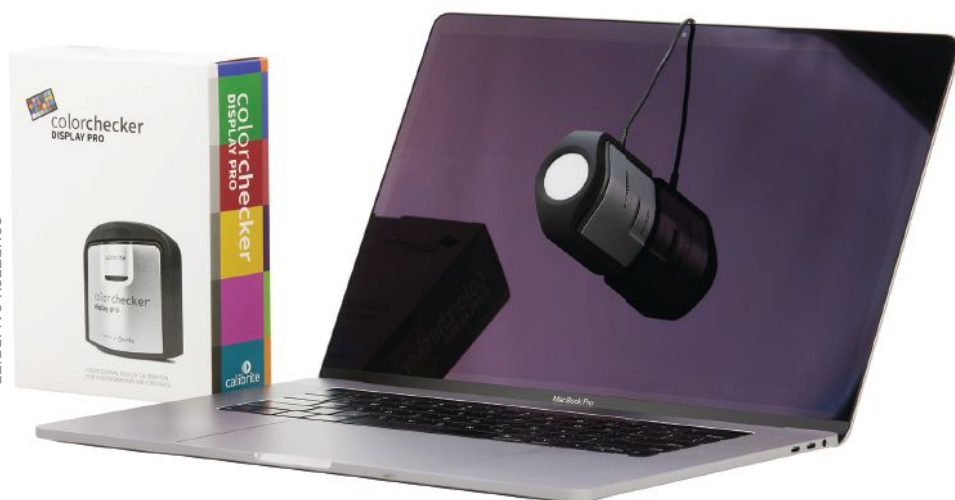


3. "Revealed at the Edge: A 30-Day Photographic Journey of the American West Coast," by Allison Davis
During the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, Davis' wedding photography work dried up, and her turn toward real estate photography proved soul-sucking. She hatched a plan to car-camp for 30 days up the American West Coast from San Diego, California, to Blaine, Washington, making dramatic photos of the coastal landscape along the way. Her coffee table book, funded by a Kickstarter campaign that grossed \$38,000, chronicles that journey, with photos as well as essays giving insights into her inspiration. •

GIVEAWAY

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Chart Your Journey

THEN RECALCULATE AS NECESSARY

By Jeffrey Dachowski, M.Photog.Cr., CPP



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I love a map. When I stopped being a passenger in my parents' car and took control as a driver, maps became interesting to me. I kept an oversized U.S. atlas tucked into the map pocket of my 1981 Pontiac LeMans, consulting it when I didn't know which road to take or how to navigate to a destination. At that age, I'd look through various state maps just to wander through them. Moving east to west, I could tell that the roads in the Midwest were straight and changed little in elevation until they hit the Continental Divide, where the roads looked more like rollercoasters. I dreamed of exploring those twists and turns and photographing the terrain I'd find there.

Throughout history, maps have played vital roles in the advancement of society. Mariners used sea charts and the stars to find faster ways to deliver their cargo. Henry Hudson used a map, although incorrectly, and found what would later become New York City. Voyagers in the Lewis and Clark expedition believed their maps were the secret to a river passage leading to the Columbia River Gorge. Their maps were wrong. Although maps have often proved inaccurate or been used incorrectly, they have served humanity as an efficient tool to help us achieve goals, save lives, and see the world.

Early in my photography business, my wife and I didn't use a map. In fact, we didn't know we needed one, how it would benefit us, or where we could even find one. We had a destination in mind: a business that allowed us to balance our family time and our checkbook and not be overdrawn in either. But we were lost.

PPA and the education it curated through articles in this magazine and educational offerings at Imaging USA helped us craft our own map to success over the years.

This year at Imaging USA, PPA unveiled its achievement map (ppa.com/achieve), which lets you see some of the places your member-

ship can take you and how to get there. There are so many routes to a healthy photography business, and here's where you can learn some of the paths to your own success based on your specific goals.

Think about your business journey and decide right now where it will take you. Many years ago, I volunteered to provide transportation for one of the judges at the New Hampshire PPA annual conference. I thought the long drive would be an opportunity to connect with a seasoned professional. I was not wrong. For two hours, Sarah Johnston, M.Photog.Cr., and I chatted about image competition and the business of photography. At one point we were discussing the future of my studio and she said, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will do."

That was eye opening to me for two reasons. First, it means that it's important to get going with confidence that you know where you're headed. And second, it means that once you've pointed yourself in the right direction, you know you'll get where you want to go even if the road is a long one.

The lesson: Don't wait for perfection to get going. A body in motion stays in motion, so get moving. Do something, anything, to help your studio become what you think it should be.

To me it also says it's OK to take a wrong turn or choose a destination that you later decide isn't right for you. You don't have to go all the way back to the beginning; you just need to get moving in your new direction.

Today, we have access to a map of the world at our fingertips, but even with all this information at hand, we still need to first decide where we want to go. Your yesterdays don't determine your tomorrows. Find the road you want to travel, get going, and be OK with recalculating your destination once in a while. •

Jeffrey Dachowski operates a photography studio in Bedford, New Hampshire, with his wife, Carolle.

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The House that Paul Built

Based in the Berry Hill neighborhood of Nashville, TN, Paul's legacy lives on in the work family chosen by Paul and his beloved wife Debbie, who still runs the company today!

To maintain the sense of family and community, Paul C. Buff, Incorporated has stayed true to Paul and Debbie's ideals of a workplace that is equal parts business and home. By resisting trends of handing over distribution to big box stores and online retailers, the company has not been forced to make changes that would diminish the human touch. With a staff of fewer than thirty employees, Buff is a place where everyone knows your name!

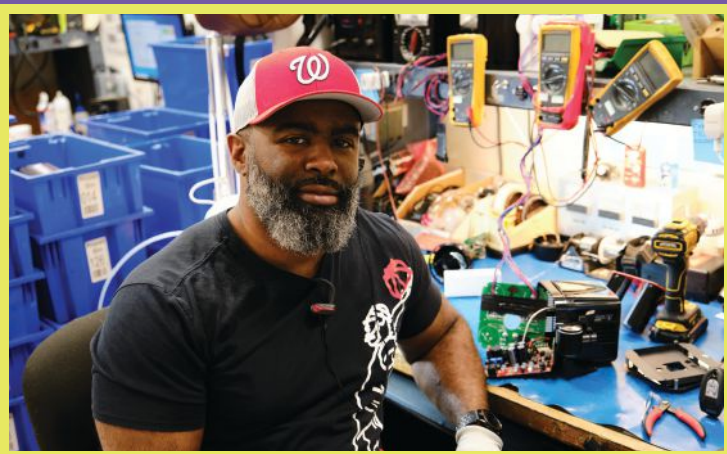


It Starts with Service...

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The Classics

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These techs and the units they build are a huge part of the company's DNA and will be for years to come!



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ON THE COVER

Blue Sky Ride

Jessica Lozoya, M.Photog.M.Artist.Cr., CPP

Lozoya Studios

Albuquerque, New Mexico

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS 5DS, Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L II USM lens

EXPOSURE: 1/15 second at f/22, ISO 100

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: In Adobe Photoshop, Jessica Lozoya extracted the hot air balloon for placement within the composition and dodged and burned.



© JESSICA LOZOYA / lozoya.com

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NOTE: Lighting diagrams shown here are not to scale.

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Looking to the Next Chapter

Carrie Reneau Spivey, CPP

Fox & Vine Weddings
Fort Worth, Texas

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L II USM lens
EXPOSURE: 1/200 second at f/4.5, ISO 100
LIGHTING: A 26-inch MoLight octabox on a stand was positioned camera left with a Godox AD200.
POST-CAPTURE: Carrie Reneau Spivey imported the photo into Adobe Lightroom for basic editing and then into Photoshop for minor touchups. She created a new canvas to extend the wall and floor to the left and add height to the wall so the subject would be positioned in the lower right of the image. She converted the image to black-and-white to enhance the textures of the gown, clouds, and trees without distracting from the subject's expression and profile.



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SUCCESS

Good Health is Good Business

Sure, you're taking care of business, but are you taking care of yourself? There's plenty of evidence that greater well-being leads to greater productivity. But being an entrepreneur can be exhausting, and you might not always make time to take care of yourself. Here are five wellness moves to make right now. •



TAKE A BREAK

More than 90% of workers say taking a break gives them a chance to get a fresh perspective, and 91% indicate it's an important part of maintaining their mental focus. Breaks can also increase your creativity.



APPRECIATE PLANT LIFE

People with plants in their work area benefit from having more creativity and less stress. In addition, people with a view of nature are more productive, alert, attentive, and in better moods than those without.



STRETCH IT OUT

Your body was not built to sit in a chair for hours on end. When you're working at your desk, stop now and then to flex your wrists, take an easy spinal twist, stretch your hip flexors, stand, or walk around.



SOCIALIZE A LITTLE

When they're not working with clients, many photographers spend a lot of time alone. But socializing is good for both body and mind. Plan an occasional lunch date or pick up the phone to touch base with a colleague.



LISTEN UP

Music releases dopamine in the reward center of the brain, which may be why 85% of workers say their productivity is higher when they listen to it. But if it's creativity and concentration you want, ambient noise is best.

For the Fun of It

RECAPTURING YOUR CREATIVE MOJO

By Jeff Kent

If you're feeling stuck in a rut or frustrated by what seems like a stagnant career, maybe you need to play around a bit.

Seriously. Think back to why you became a photographer. You experienced the pure joy of creating images. You experimented and found inspiration all around you. You were having fun.

Somewhere along the line, you stopped playing. You started building a career, making clients happy, managing numbers, and worrying about all those real-world concerns that go into establishing a sustainable business.

Maybe it's time to start playing again. Jeff Harry, a consultant recognized in 2020 as one of America's top human resources influencers, says that entrepreneurs can address some of their biggest challenges with a play-based approach to work. Harry, who has worked with organizations including Google, Microsoft, Southwest Airlines, Adobe, the NFL, Amazon, and Facebook, points out that we're all more productive when we reach a state of mental flow by embracing play and by taking creative risks to tap into our fundamental sources of inspiration.

"It's time to challenge ourselves about the risks we're willing to take to not only stay relevant but to rise above the competition because the status quo doesn't cut it anymore," he says.

To establish this play-based approach, Harry suggests creating a psychological playground where you can have fun and are free to make

mistakes. In many cases, people have an idea they want to act on, but they need a figurative space where they can pursue it without feeling overwhelmed. He recommends a set of steps to create that space and to take advantage of the benefits it provides.

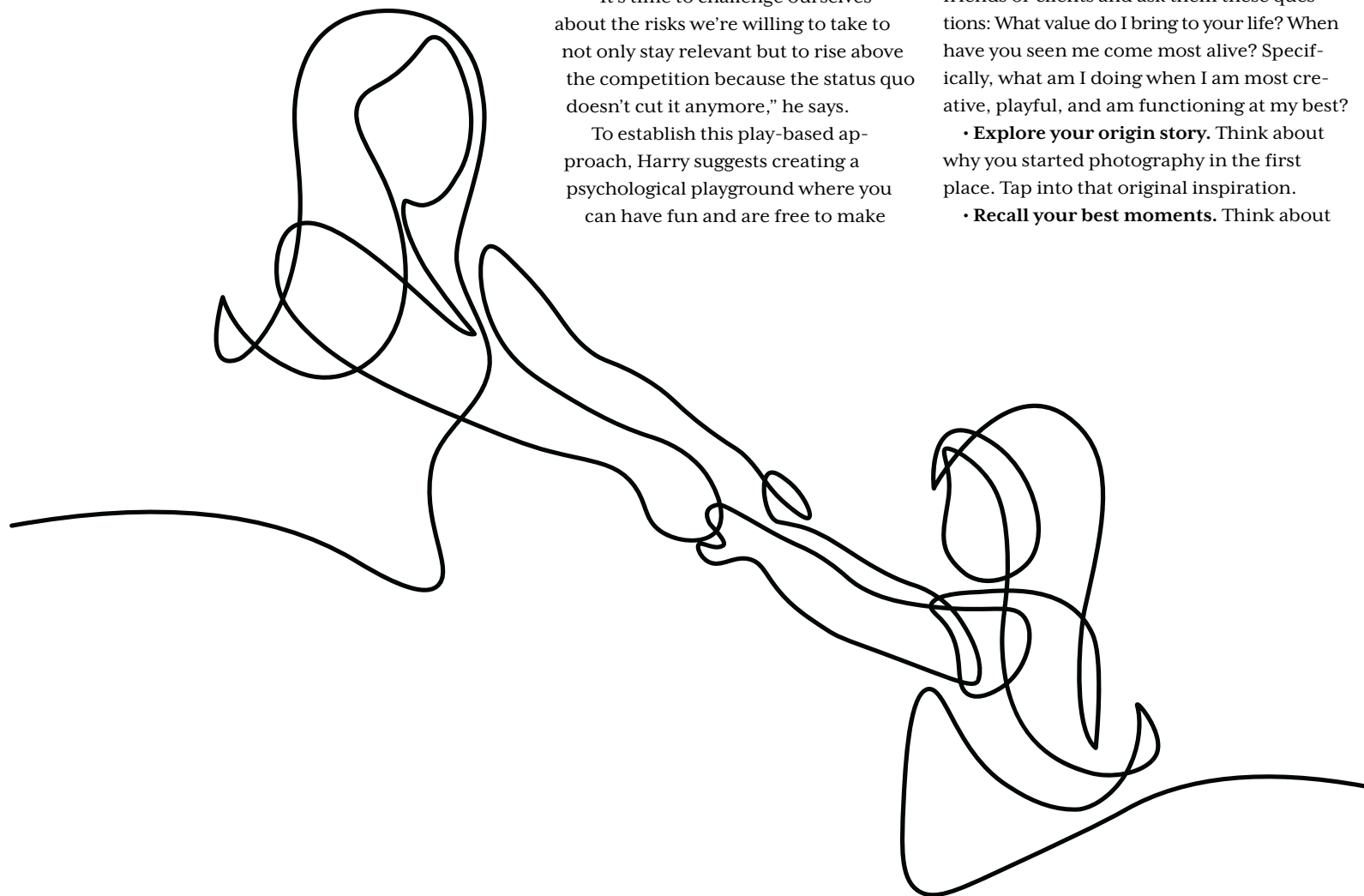
- **Relax.** Give yourself time to feel at ease. It's important to calm yourself because you can't play when you're angry, stressed, or anxious.

- **Get bored.** No, really. Turn everything off, stop filling your consciousness with tasks and stimuli. You need space in your mind to create.

- **Reach out.** Contact three to five close friends or clients and ask them these questions: What value do I bring to your life? When have you seen me come most alive? Specifically, what am I doing when I am most creative, playful, and am functioning at my best?

- **Explore your origin story.** Think about why you started photography in the first place. Tap into that original inspiration.

- **Recall your best moments.** Think about





your last phenomenal photography experience. What were the aspects that made it amazing?

- **Assess your state of play.** Consider how you played with photography when you began. Do those same aspects still exist now in what you're doing? You could be functioning efficiently but not allowing yourself to play and experiment, which can lead to dissatisfaction and creative stagnation.

- **Get back to your roots.** Often, finding a place for productive play means reconnecting to values of the past, to a time when you pursued your craft purely for the joy of it. That doesn't mean you have to go backward in your career. Sometimes finding a new direction can spark fresh inspiration. Recapture the feeling you once experienced when you made images for the love of creation.

- **Look at it as an experiment.** Photography was an experiment when you first started. Tap back into that feeling. Try new things. See what works and what doesn't. Allow yourself to fail. Be messy. Recognize it's a slow process to reconnect with your love for the art.

- **Keep moving forward.** You don't need to drop everything, go broke, and start over. Keep your business going. Continue the work that pays the bills while you give yourself time and space to experiment with other things

International Photographic Competition



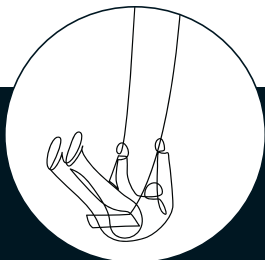
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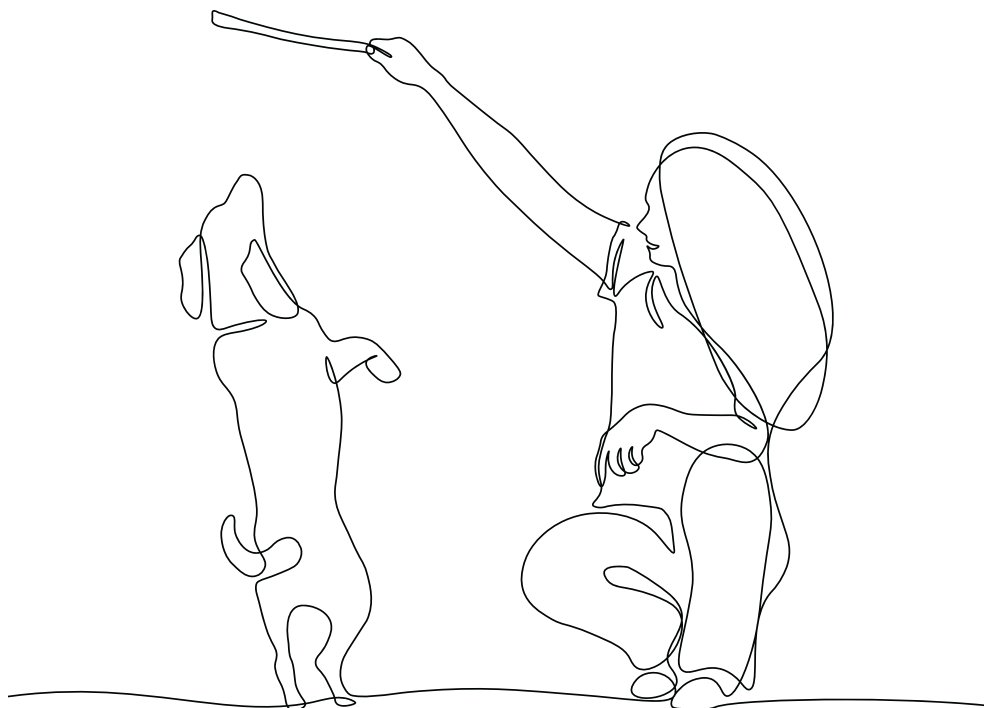
WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF PLAY

COMFORT. If you're making a good living doing what you're doing, it's hard to break out. There's nothing wrong with being comfortable if you're happy. But if you're not happy, try something new.

INNER CRITIC. The critical voice in your head often overshadows your inner child. The critic's job is to keep you safe, but it also prevents you from taking risks. Taking risks is important for creative play and experimentation.

LIMITING BELIEFS. Limiting beliefs are those internal stories you tell yourself that prevent you from doing what you really want to do. These are the ideas perpetuated by your inner critic that stymie your potential.

FEAR. "You can't pursue something new and expect it to be clean and perfect. It's going to be messy. You're going to fail. And that's OK," says Harry. "If you want to embrace something that brings you joy and inspiration, then you have to embrace the risk of failure."



that invigorate you. "The story people tell themselves is that if they start experimenting, they'll love it, and they won't be able to go back to the comfort they'd previously experienced," says Harry. Push past that fear and go beyond your comfort zone to move forward.

• **Be yourself.** "Depression comes from trying to be someone else," says Harry. "You're playing a role. That's why play is so important—because you're being yourself." When you're playing, you're tapping into who you really are, and you're more engaged and productive as a result.

WHY PLAY MATTERS

Why is the freedom to play important? It goes well beyond being more successful in your job. Photographers take on the responsibility of sharing people's most significant life events. "When you think about it, you are portraying the essence of who someone is with your photography," says Harry. "You're capturing them in their best moments, and when you can do that, people are truly grateful for what you've done for them."

To understand the value of play, ask those grateful clients what your photography means to them. Hearing the impact your art has on people helps remind you that this work is important. It reminds you why you do what you do.

"We see our work as so much about us and not always about the ripple effect it can have on other people and even other generations," says Harry. "This is so true for photographers. You're catching magic and history. And if that doesn't create a joyous, childlike essence, then I don't know what will." •



Learn more from Jeff Harry
rediscoveryourplay.com

1972-2022
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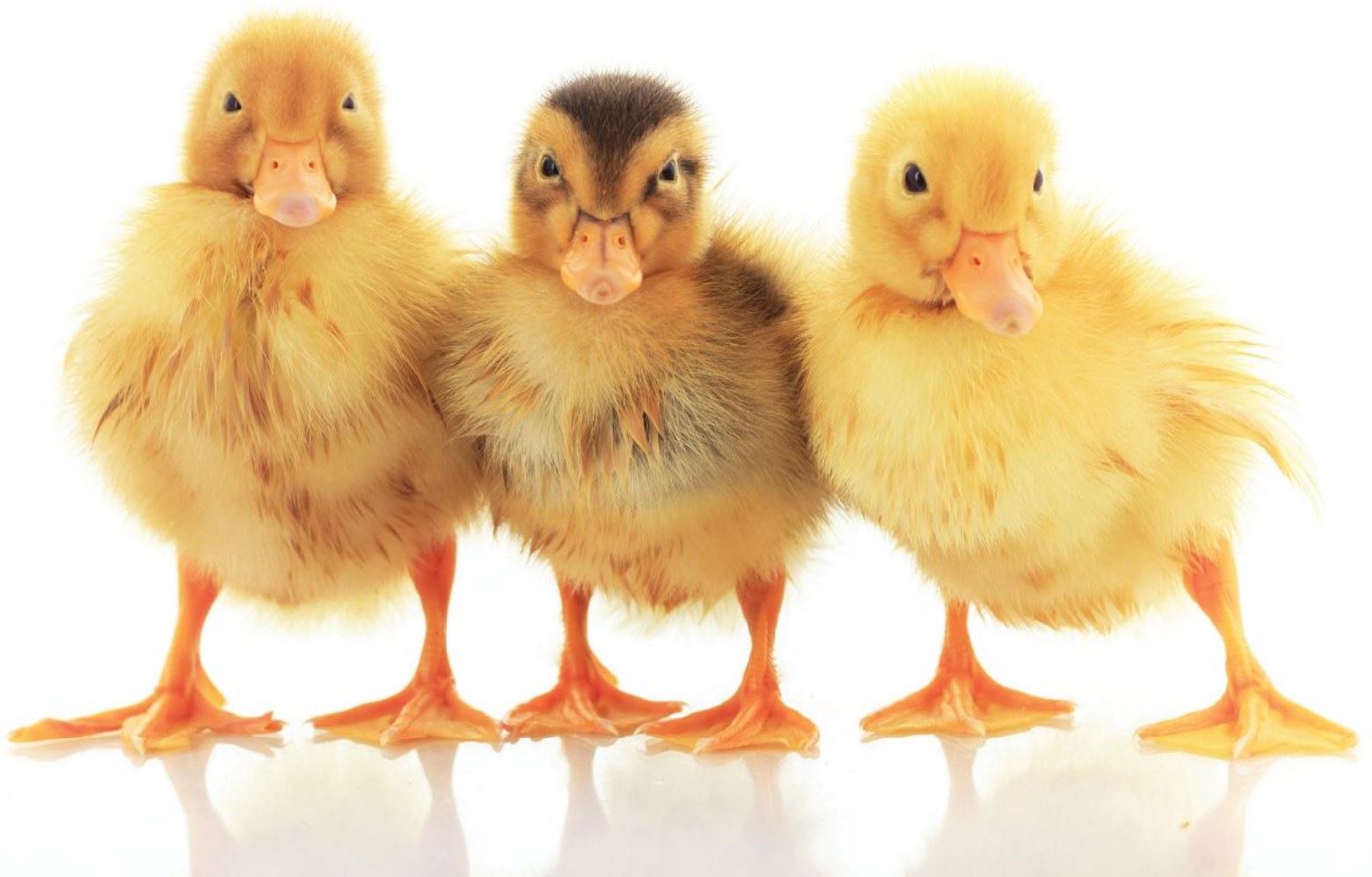
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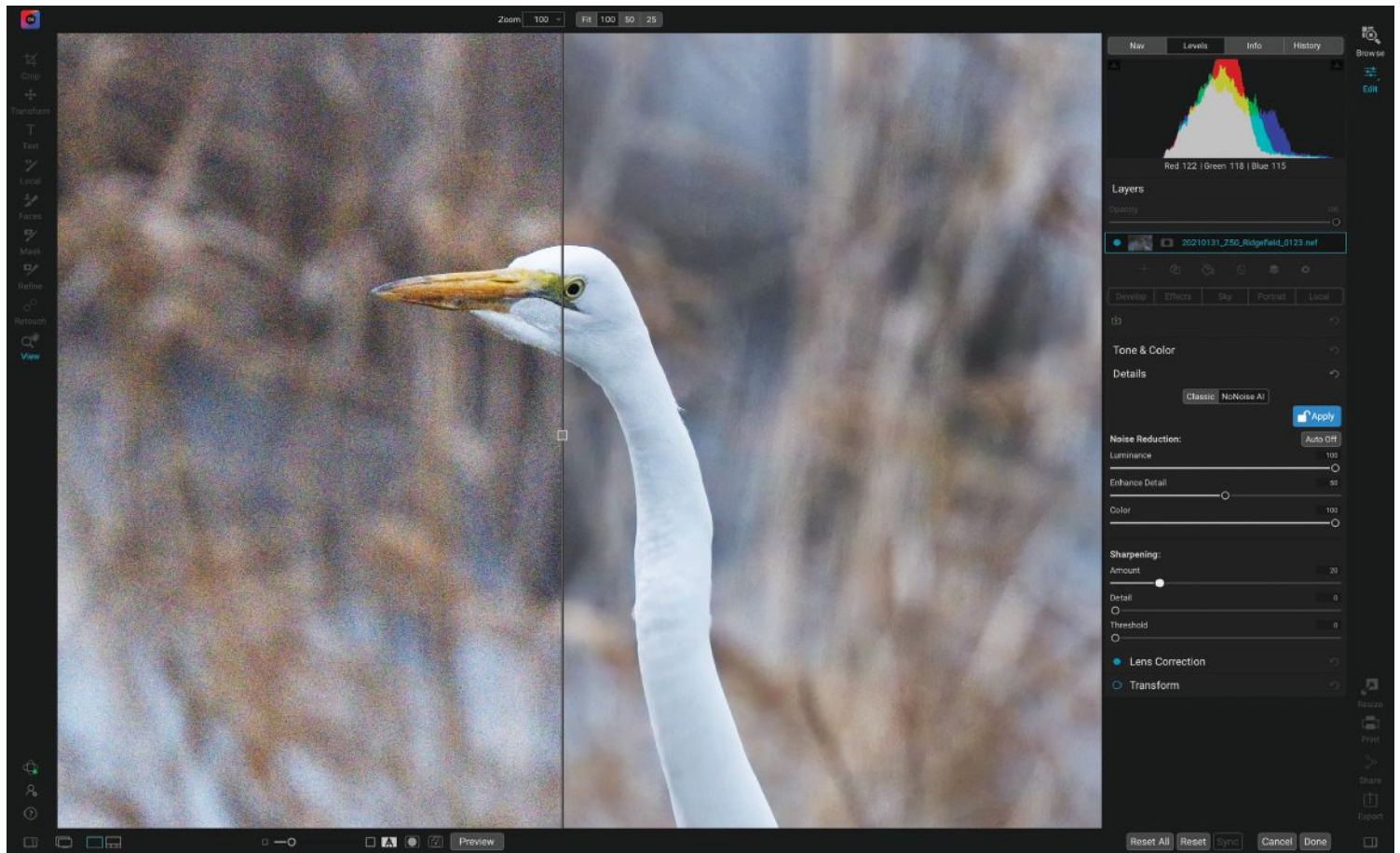
Souped-up Editing

In this new update, On1 Photo Raw 2022.5 amps up its editing capabilities and delivers a complete desktop and mobile workflow ecosystem with mobile and cloud integration. On1 Photo Raw is a photo organizer, raw processor, layered editor, and photo effects app. New to this update are the full integration of Resize AI photo enlargement software (right), batch upscaling, print preparation and soft proofing, enhanced NoNoise AI (below) on non-raw files, LensMatch automatic lens correction, and better masks in Sky Swap AI. It adds support for new cameras from Canon, Panasonic, OM System, Leica, Fujifilm, and Nikon.

On1 Photo Raw 2022.5 is a free update for owners of Photo Raw 2022. The perpetual license for Photo Raw 2022 is \$99.99. Subscription plans are also available. •



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How to Shoot Video

USE THE CAMERA YOU ALREADY HAVE

By Tyler Rickenbach

IMAGES © TYLER RICKENBACH / tylerickenbach.com



You don't have to have a gimbal, microphone, and stabilizer to get started taking video. Begin exploring and learning with what you already have.

If you're looking for ways to increase your social game or give clients something extra, video is a great place to start. And it doesn't require big upfront costs to get into. In fact, by the end of this article, you'll have a better understanding of what camera settings to use and, more important, the confidence to pick up the camera—one you already have—and start creating videos.

In my first job as a photojournalist for *USA Today*, video was the primary focus of storytelling; stills were secondary. That was 2016, and look how far we've come in digital video technology since then.

When it comes to shooting video on your mirrorless or DSLR camera, the three most important settings are frames per second, shutter speed, and color profile.

FRAMES PER SECOND

You've heard the term *cinematic*, as in, having the qualities or characteristics of motion pictures. Another way to describe it is as a feeling. When you watch a motion picture, you feel something. You fall in love with characters or despise them because, among many other elements, the sound and motion were designed to create these emotions in you. Something that's cinematic simply means it was created with a purpose



Practice slowly moving the camera as you record to get engaging clips.

to draw out specific emotions in the viewer.

Here's how shooting cinematically applies to frame rates:

- 24 fps: A typical frame rate used in films, hence the term cinematic (because it carries film-like characteristics).
- 30 fps: The standard for broadcast television.
- 60 fps: 60 fps or above is used for slow-motion capture. However, videos made at this frame rate are usually edited or viewed at 24 fps to produce a more natural look.

I typically capture video at either 24 fps or 60 fps and above, depending on what I'm doing and what kind of result I envision.

Let's say you want to take some video while you're photographing an elopement or an engagement session. The sun is setting, back-lighting the couple and giving you nice flare. If your camera is equipped with presets, this would be a great time to switch over to your video preset and grab a few seconds of the couple kissing as the sun sets behind them.

In this case, I would capture at 60 fps, especially if I'm handholding the camera. A 60 fps frame rate will allow you slow down the footage in post-production, giving your video a smooth, polished look. If that's more post-production than you want to commit to, you can take the video at 24 fps, and it will still look great. The goal is to just start making video. The more you do it, the more comfortable it becomes.

With fps in mind, let's determine the corresponding shutter speed for each frame rate.

VIDEO PRESETS

Pro and advanced level cameras give you the option to create fast-access custom presets. For example, on the Canon EOS R5 you can make custom presets for both photo and video (C1, C2, C3). Presets allow you to quickly switch to video capture settings that you've already predetermined for color profile, shutter speed, frame rate, and resolution. This allows you to instantly switch back and forth between stills and video.

SHUTTER SPEED

On some cameras, you'll need to switch to manual settings so you can control both the aperture and shutter speed. The table at left is a quick guide to using the correct shutter speed when shooting video.

A helpful reminder is that the shutter speed is double the fps you select.

Keep in mind that if you're filming in the middle of a sunny day and you want to be at

FPS	SHUTTER SPEED
24	1/50
30	1/60
60	1/120
120	1/250



24 fps, chances are your f-stop will be somewhere around f/11 or more so that you can maintain the proper shutter speed. If you're like me and want to shoot at f/2 in the middle of the day, you'll need a neutral density filter to shoot wide open.

To maintain proper exposure, adjust the aperture and ISO, but keep in mind that your shutter speed is dictated by the frame.

COLOR PROFILE

Let's talk about color profiles built into your mirrorless or DSLR camera. This is a lesson I learned the hard way.

I was sitting in the back of a Black Hawk helicopter during a military training exercise, and one of the crew members was looking out the open back door. The moment couldn't have been better. Being young, and understanding very little about video at the time, I decided to capture some video using a black-and-white color profile on my DSLR. It played back great on my camera's LCD, and I even thought, *If I don't like it in black-and-white, I can just change it in post just like I do my raw images.* I couldn't have been more wrong. To this day I still look at that video clip and ask myself, What was I thinking?

If you intend to color grade your footage, please, please, please, learn from my mistake and capture in the flattest color profile



You can do a lot with the same subject by taking video at different distances, high and low angles, and various positions around the subject. Find ways to let the light help make the shot even better.



available on your camera. You'll thank yourself later. Remember, the color profile you select for capture is going to stay with your footage just like it does with stills. To determine which color profile is best for you, use this chart as a quick reference.

Technicolor CineStyle is a flat color profile (for Canon users if your camera doesn't have Canon Log) that you can download and install on your camera (technicolor.com/cinestyle).

TWO TIPS

Two things to keep in mind when you switch over from stills to video: Motion evokes emotion, and hold the shot for at least 10 seconds.

Whether it's panning left to right or starting downward and panning up, use motion to evoke emotion. If you're photographing a high school senior, capture the subject getting into the pose by incorporating a little bit of camera movement. Try capturing the in-between moments that lead to the hero shot.

When it comes to recording time, give yourself some wiggle room by capturing clips that are at least 10 seconds long. A 10-second clip—minimum—will give you something to work with in post-production. •

Tyler Rickenbach is a filmmaker and photographer based in Idaho.

CAMERA BRAND COLOR PROFILE

Canon	Canon Log 2 or Canon Log 3 or CineStyle*
Nikon	N-Log or Flat
Sony	S-Log 2 or S-Log 3
Fujifilm	F-Log or Eterna

*Available for download at technicolor.com/cinestyle

YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

Start with a place or activity that's meaningful to you. Maybe it's a park nearby or a hobby that holds a special place in your heart. Whatever you choose, give yourself an assignment to tell a story revolving around something you love. If you can be moved, you will be able to move someone else.

The goal is to capture enough clips—from wide angle to close up—to tell a story in 90 seconds or less. You'll be amazed at what you can do with 90 seconds.



See Tyler Rickenbach's sample assignment
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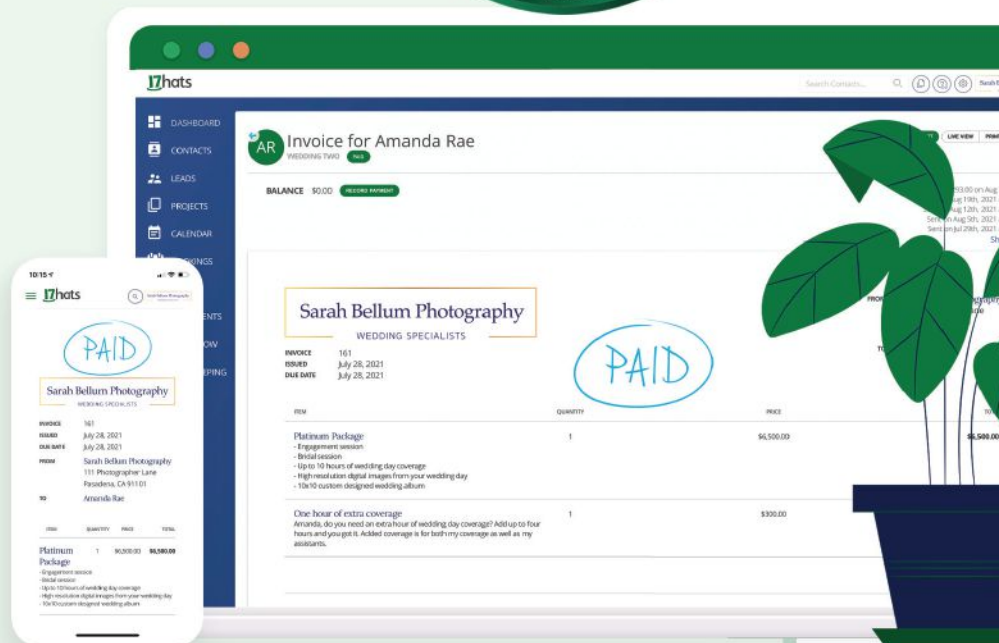
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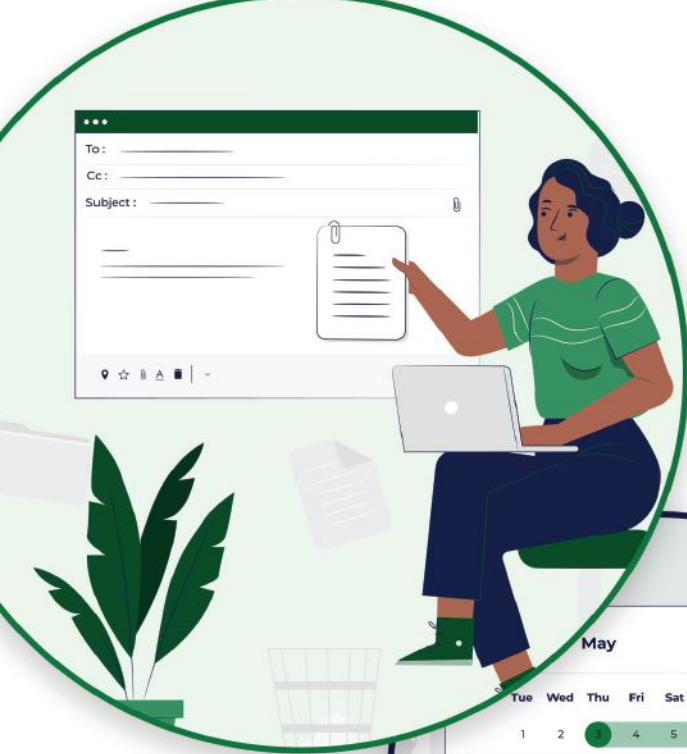


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Great Mid-Range Performer

REVIEW: NIKKOR Z 28-75MM F/2.8

By Stan Sholik



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Pros

- Reasonable price
- Lightweight and compact
- Very good image quality
- Close focusing capability
- Versatile

Cons

- Some uncorrected flare
- Not parfocal
- No dedicated manual focusing ring

Due to the increasing popularity of Nikon mirrorless cameras among professionals and enthusiasts alike, Nikon has added another mid-range zoom lens to its lineup that will appeal to both groups. The new Nikkor Z 28-75mm f/2.8 resides between the Z 24-70mm f/4 kit lens and the Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S lens both in features and price. With an MSRP of \$1,199.95, the new lens is much closer to the f/4 option in size and price but matches the professional f/2.8 in maximum aperture. With a focal length range suitable for portrait, wedding, landscape, travel, and street photography as well as videography, it was a great lens to leave mounted on my camera no matter what I was doing.

Weighing 1.2 pounds, and measuring 3 inches in diameter and 4.8 inches long at 28mm, the lens is comfortable enough to carry for an all-day event, long hike, or walking the streets, while being relatively unobtrusive. I found it much better balanced on my Nikon Z 6 than the heavier and larger 24-70mm lens. The filter diameter is a common and affordable 67mm. The f/2.8 aperture remains constant throughout its focal range.

At a list price that's less than half that of the Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S lens, the new Z 28-75mm sacrifices only a little in terms of image quality. At maximum aperture, image quality of the new lens is slightly soft at the edges, but only when compared to the excellent quality in its center. I don't photograph test patterns, so I never found the corner image quality objectionable. There is possibly some vignetting at the edges and barrel distortion at the wider focal lengths, but the automatic lens corrections afforded by the Z cameras serve to eliminate these issues. The lens does not incorporate a vibration reduction option, but the vibration reduction in the Z series cameras is more than adequate at these focal lengths.

An additional advantage I found over the



The 28-75mm focal length range is suitable for portrait, wedding, landscape, travel, and street photography as well as videography.

Z 24-70mm cousins that particularly appeals to me is its close focusing ability. At 28mm, the minimum focusing distance is about 7.5 inches, giving a reproduction ratio of 0.34X versus 0.22X for the other lenses. The reproduction ratio decreases slightly at longer focal lengths, but this versatility adds to its appeal as you wander around taking photos for fun or profit. Minimum focusing distance of the Z 24-70mm f/4 is about a foot at all focal lengths, while that of the Z 24-70 f/2.8 is 1.25 feet.

The Z 28-75mm gives up nothing in terms

of autofocus speed compared to its other family members. This speed and virtually silent operation coupled with its other advantages should make the new lens especially appealing to videographers, although there's no option for linear gearing of the manual focus.

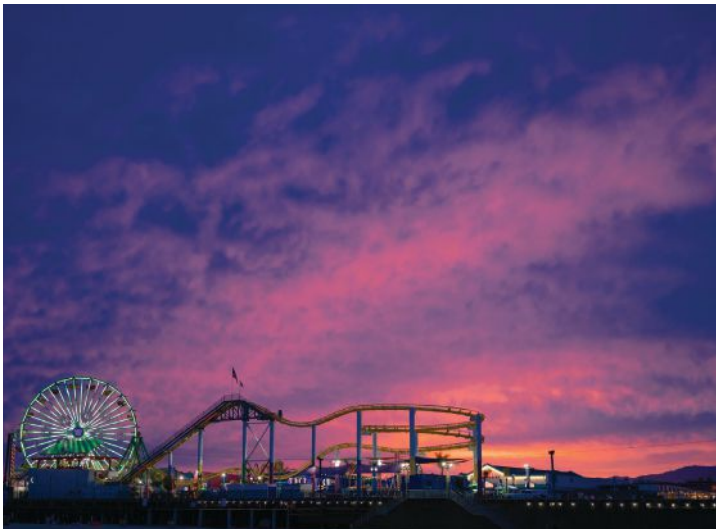
For professionals used to having 24mm as the wide zoom focal length, using a lens that goes only to 28mm takes some adjustment. But this turned out to be less of a reorientation for me than I originally thought it would

THE GOODS

IMAGES © STAN SHOLIK / stanholik.com



The versatile Nikkor Z 28-75mm f/2.8 lens is as appropriate for concert photography as it is for general location photography.



With full dust and weather sealing, the lens is safe to take anywhere you would take a Z body. The f/2.8 aperture gives you the ability to capture photos under difficult lighting conditions at 1/60 second, ISO 100.



In combination with a Nikon Z body, the lens is comfortable and versatile enough to carry all day no matter what you are doing.

be. The greater reproduction ratio at the widest position may be the reason, as you can move in closer to maximize the wide-angle effect.

The Nikkor 28-75mm f/2.8 is not in the Nikkor professional S series for the Z-line bodies, so there are some sacrifices. Their importance may or may not be a deciding factor in your buying decision, depending on your planned use for the lens.

Weather and dust sealing seem to be up to the level of the S lenses, and the front element is coated to resist dirt and fingerprints. Lacking are Nikon's Nano Crystal Coat for eliminating incidental light from a diagonal direction and new Arneo Coat for eliminating incidental light from a vertical direction. The result is greater flare than you would find in an S-series lens. This is particularly noticeable with bright sources near the center of the image.

Also missing is an information panel that S-series lenses provide to display aperture, depth-of-field, and focus distance information, along with a display and a lens function button. In fact, the lens is devoid of any extraneous switches or buttons, including the A/M switch found on the Z 24-70mm f/4. Many users may find these omissions well worth the cleaner lens exterior, lighter weight, more compact size, simplicity, and cost savings.

What I missed most was a dedicated manual focus ring. The new lens does have a control ring close to its base, which automatically functions as a manual focus ring when the body is switched to manual focus. Using the camera's standard settings it cannot be used to touch up focus with the camera set to autofocus. However, custom settings can get you there. Go into the controls panel of the custom setting menu, navigate to the lens control ring submenu, and select the M/A Focus (M/A) option to have the control ring adjust focus with the camera set to autofocus. Using the thinner control ring for this was

a little more troublesome and fussier than a dedicated focus ring, but it works well enough. Of course, if you are accustomed to using the lens control ring on your other Z lenses for another purpose (I prefer Aperture), you lose that function on the Z 28-75mm until you reset it.

The zoom ring is well positioned and requires only about a 70-degree rotation through its range. The lens consists of 12 groups of 15 elements, of which there are three aspherical elements and one each of ED and Super ED glass. Also contained within the lens is a nine-blade diaphragm that produces smoothly rounded highlights in out-of-focus areas.

Overall, Nikon has produced another excellent piece of glass for a mid-range zoom. This makes determining your best option more difficult. The kit Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/4 S is compact with superb sharpness but one stop slower than the similarly-priced Nikkor Z 28-75mm f/2.8. If you can't live without the wider f/2.8 aperture and need that 24mm focal length, then you require the deep pockets for the optically and in every other way superb Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S. Not an easy decision. •

Stan Sholik is a writer and photographer in San Clemente, California.



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ROLAND MILLER'S
PERSEVERANCE TOOK
HIM ALL THE WAY
TO SPACE

BY ERIC MINTON

THE GREAT

B
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Roland Miller

In 1999, Roland Miller was away at a conference when Cady Coleman called his office at Florida's then Brevard Community College. Miller was teaching photography at the college; Coleman was training at the Kennedy Space Center for her second flight on the Space Shuttle Columbia. Miller's photographs of abandoned space launch sites adorned the astronaut crew quarters where Coleman was staying, images that packed as much emotional resonance as historical relevance. Coleman, whose husband, Josh Simpson, is a glass artist, called Miller to say how much she appreciated his work.

"This was the first time—and I'm figuring the only time—an astronaut would ever call me, and I missed the call," Miller says. He called back to the center, but Coleman had already returned to Houston. It would be 14 years before they connected, when he was photographing the 2014 initial test launch of the uncrewed Orion capsule and she was serving as a NASA spokesperson to the press. She not only remembered Miller's work when he approached her, she had an idea for him. Having spent six months on the International Space Station in 2010, she said, "I wish there was a way we could get your photographic vision to the astronauts up on the Station. Think about how you do that."

"When an astronaut tells you something, I'm going to try it," Miller says. The result is Miller's 2020 book with Italian astronaut Paolo Nespoli, "Interior Space: A Visual Exploration of the International Space Station," Miller's third NASA-related project. In addition to documenting eras of space flight, Miller has indulged in a career-long photographic fascination with another frontier, juxtaposing American West iconography with the reality of the region. His approach to photographing both frontiers leads to his identification as a documentary and fine art photographer.

"My photography is a weird hybrid of documentary and abstract imagery," he says. When he

started marketing his first project, “Abandoned in Place” with images of disused launch facilities, he was advised to do either documentary or abstract style images. “But I felt I needed to do both, so I persevered and pushed through.” His instincts proved right: Contextual images had the recognition value to draw audiences into the more intriguing abstract images. Miller discovered the value of a dual documentary/abstract aesthetic when he assigned his students to photograph the same subject from both a concrete and abstract point of view. “I did it on a whim, and it really clicked with the students.”

CREATING BY TEACHING

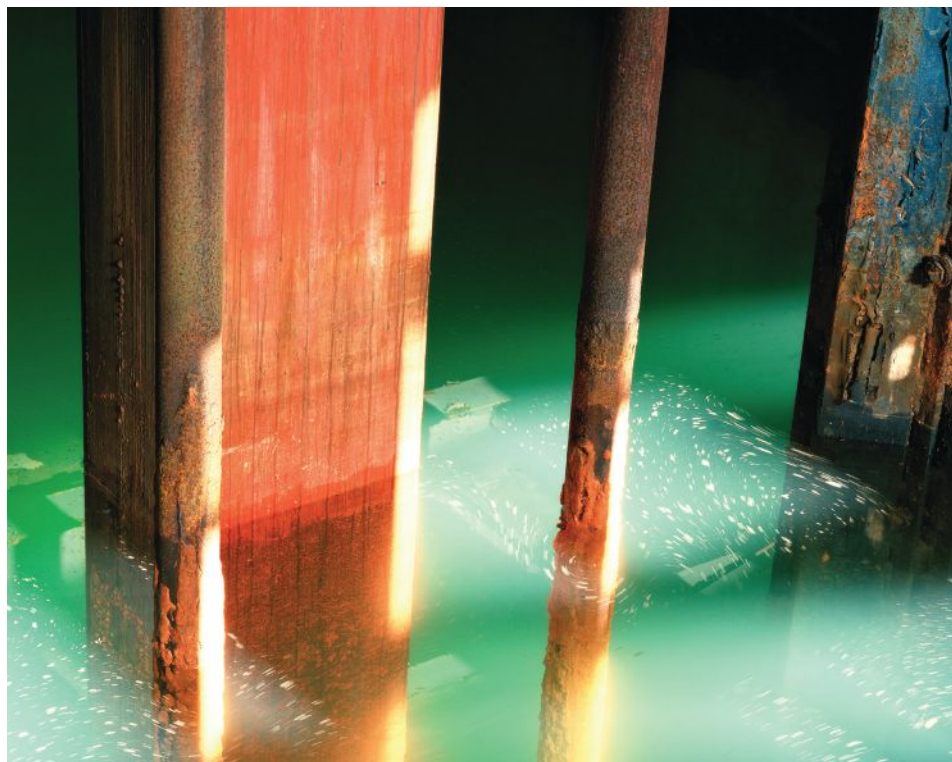
With bachelor’s and master’s degrees in fine arts from Utah State University, Miller built his photography career through 32 years teaching at Brevard Community College (now called Eastern Florida State College) and the College of Lake County, Illinois, where he became dean of the communication arts, humanities, and fine arts division. He taught everything from photography history to techniques, but since retiring from academia in 2018, he most misses teaching basic photography. “The learning curve is the best,” he says. “Students get it, and they just accelerate.” Plus, teaching the basics for two semesters year after year helped his own photography.

“I need to remind myself of that more,” he says in a Zoom call from his home in Ogden, Utah. “Don’t get so involved in trying to make great photographs. Think about the basics: light, color, composition. The basic stuff is what gets you to the better stuff, and if you try to leapfrog, that’s when you struggle.” He also believes in constant practice with no end use in mind for the images. “I look at photography as being a concert pianist: You practice for hours and hours and hours for every hour you perform on stage.”

He first connected with NASA when Cape Canaveral Air Force Station called him while he was teaching at Brevard. A previously unknown darkroom had been discovered during renovation of an old office building. Miller had extensive darkroom experience and was asked to help identify and dispose of the chemicals. Miller also had a childhood love of all things NASA, so he quickly accepted an invitation to see some of the old launch pads. At Gemini’s famous Launch Complex 19, Miller saw the hinged gantry still lying on the ground



REMAINDER OF IMAGES IN THIS STORY ©ROLAND MILLER / www.abandonedinplace.com



after Gemini XII's liftoff concluded the program in 1966. "I got out of the car and said, 'This is so cool. I've got to photograph this.'"

Miller's subsequent path to his first book, "Abandoned in Place," hit snags. It was difficult to gain access to classified areas, and his 8x10 view camera required more time than escort availability allowed. A haircut made the difference: His barber was dating a woman working in NASA's public affairs office. The barber set up a meeting. "She got it," Miller says of the public affairs employee. After she took him to the old launch pads a couple of times, Miller showed the results to Chuck Hollinshead, chief of NASA's Public Information Office and the narrator for Apollo missions. "And he got it," Miller says. This opened access to Cape Canaveral and other NASA and U.S. Air Force space facilities around the country.

"Through all of this, perseverance is so critical," Miller says. "My mother would always lovingly say to me [that] I have more luck than sense, which has been the case, but that comes with a big dollop of perseverance and being able to perform when you get the opportunity."

With the success of "Abandoned in Place," Miller began chronicling the Space Shuttle program, which was then scheduled to end in four years. "Orbital Planes: A Personal Vision of the Space Shuttle," published in June, again combines documentary and abstract qualities but conceptually flipped. "I can comprehend what this little piece is and what it does, but when I look at the whole machine, it blows my mind."

THE ULTIMATE REMOTE WORK

Juxtaposing details with the whole machine in the larger context of space flight is what Coleman envisioned Miller could do with the Space Station. Previous images were views of the earth or closeups of what the crew were doing. Most of that photography used flash, lighting the people but leaving the background dark. Miller wanted to document the station's full interior.

But how to do it? He certainly wasn't going to be launched to the station anytime soon. He devised an elaborate method of working through Mission Control to rig a proxy camera, but "astronaut time is crazy busy," he says. While Coleman was on the Space Station, she played flute duets with rock musician Ian Anderson. She encouraged Miller to connect with an astronaut for a similar collaboration.



She suggested Nespoli, a former photographer with the Italian Army who had been on the station with Coleman and was scheduled for a return.

“Paulo called me—second astronaut to ever call me—and said, ‘Do you have time to Skype this afternoon?’ And I said, ‘I will clear my schedule.’” They talked for 45 minutes, and “He got what the project was about.” In fact, Nespoli expressed a desire to have artists, poets, theologians, and philosophers taken into space to share the experience to the rest of mankind “in a proper way.” The astronaut believed Miller’s proposal was a step in that direction and offered to do the photography in his spare time and work with Miller via email.

Miller was provided early access to a Google Street View of the Space Station that NASA was about to release. He used the virtual tour and screen capture to select his desired images and sent them to Nespoli with visual instructions on camera placement, cropping, and eyeline. “He did it amazingly close





to what I wanted him to do, so much so that when I look at those photographs, to me they really do feel like I was there taking the pictures,” Miller says. Yet he’s quick to give Nespoli his due. “The method I wanted to use for this could not have been more difficult for him.” Miller allowed no flash except for balancing the interior with views out the window. However, he also knew Nespoli couldn’t use a tripod because it would float away, and the Station moves so fast it vibrates. Miller normally shoots at 100 ISO, but his initial proposal was for Nespoli to shoot at 3200 ISO to get enough depth of field. The astronaut instead figured out how to cobble two articulated Manfrotto arms to attach the camera to the station’s handrails for maximum stability. He’d set the self-timer and get out of the image’s scope as fast as possible. “Technically and aesthetically, he did a really good job interpreting my instructions.”

BACK ON EARTH

Since moving back to Utah, Miller resumed his Western iconography project, “Real West,” that emerged from one of his practice, practice, practice cycles years ago. The images juxtapose manifestations of Old West mythology—cowboys, American Indians, horses, buffalo, wood board towns, prairie schooners—with contemporary trappings of the West.

“There’s an overly romanticized view of what the West was like when it was the Old West and what the West is like even today,” he says. What started as a cultural commentary has blossomed to include contemporary issues of water usage, sources of power, and the environment. “Through the images I’m making, I’ve found a way to pull those things into the visual discussion of where the American West is at right now.”

He’s not looking for drugstore Indians or cowboy signs but images like costumed cowboys entering a Bank of America in Tombstone, Arizona, or a dog in the back of a pickup truck ignoring a faded and chipped wall mural of a Native American chief in a feathered headdress. “It’s easy to find Western themed things, but having them actually say something and mean something and point something out, that’s where the challenge is. You’ve got to find the right juxtaposition.” •

Eric Minton is a writer and editor in Washington, D.C.



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WORLD EXPLORER

MICHAEL YAMASHITA MAKES THE FARAWAY FAMILIAR

BY ROBERT KIENER

As we tuck into our pad thai lunches at Chester, New Jersey's Thai Kitchen restaurant, longtime National Geographic photographer Michael Yamashita warns me, "You may not believe my answer."

I've just asked Yamashita, 73, who's made photos for the brand's famous magazine for some 40 years and produced 16 books of his work, how he went from being an unknown, self-taught photographer in his early 20s to becoming one of the world's most famous, well-traveled photographers today.

"Simple. I have been very lucky," he says with a smile. He takes a quick sip of scalding tea and adds, "Ouch! ... But there's more. Somebody up there likes me!"

As I will learn over the next few hours, the answer is classic Yamashita. For someone so successful, he's remarkably modest, self-deprecating, and even a bit shy. However, as we continue chatting over lunch at one of his favorite restaurants, it's clear the award-winning photographer owes his career as much to his eye for what he calls "page-stopper" images and for hard work as he does to luck.

Take, for example, the way he landed his first National Geographic assignment.

After graduating from Wesleyan University, this third-generation Japanese-American went to Japan on what he calls his "roots tour." Over several years there he learned the language, bought his first camera, and fell in love with both the country and photography. He moved around Asia for a few more years, working some editorial and commercial assignments before landing a career-changing gig as a contract photographer for Singapore Airlines.

"This allowed me to travel all over Asia, and I eventually built up a varied portfolio of Asia-related images," he remembers. "I hoped to make photography my career, but there was a major problem: All the big weekly picture magazines such as *Life* and *Look* had folded. There was really only one left, *National Geographic*. But I thought my chances of landing an assignment with them was next to impossible."

Nevertheless, armed with his portfolio, he wangled an appointment with legendary *National Geographic* director of photography Bob Gilka in Washington, D.C. Gilka was known to be as demanding as he was tough. *National Geographic* veteran photographer Steve





IMAGES ©MICHAEL YAMASHITA / michaelyamashita.com

"Thanks largely to *National Geographic* assignments over the last 40 years, I've amassed more images on Asia than anyone else in the world."

McCurry once compared meeting Gilka to coping with Judgment Day. “I had some nerve, huh?” jokes Yamashita.

Remembers Yamashita, “He was intimidating, that’s for sure. But he eventually said, ‘Hmm, you do good work with a camera. Here’s 100 rolls; go shoot this assignment [on skier Jean-Claude Killy in France] for *National Geographic for Kids*.’ Apparently, he liked what I eventually shot because several months later I landed my first assignment, on Hokkaido, for *National Geographic* magazine itself. The staff photographer who was supposed to take the assignment had fallen ill. I couldn’t believe my luck. I was on cloud nine. And I’ve never looked back.”

After lunch, as we sit in Yamashita’s home studio, he shows me a wall of 35mm slide folders and digital files containing the images he’s made over 40-plus years. He’s traveled throughout nearly every Asian country on assignment and onto six continents, producing articles as well as feature documentaries on a host of subjects ranging from Marco Polo to The Great Wall to the Chinese explorer Zheng He.

“You’re looking at my legacy,” says Yamashita as he points to the slides and images that fill his neat-as-a-pin studio. “Thanks largely to *National Geographic* assignments over the last 40 years, I’ve amassed more images on Asia than anyone else in the world. For example, I started going to China before most other photographers were allowed in and I’ve been back on countless assignments. I have so many images of sights that are no longer in existence; China especially has changed so quickly.”

Says fellow *National Geographic* veteran photographer and longtime friend Steve McCurry,

“In addition to having an excellent eye for composition, Mike has an incredible capability to blend in and put his subjects at ease. He’s also a self-starter who doesn’t wait for the phone

to ring but comes up with his own great ideas.”

Yamashita’s most famous work was also, he admits, his most fulfilling.

He remembers the day he was reading about the 1995 book “Did Marco Polo Go to China?” He explains, “That blew my mind. I’d come across [the name] Marco Polo

countless times in my Asian and European travels. I’d stayed at the Marco Polo hotel in Singapore, eaten at a Venice restaurant named after him, and even smoked Marco Polo cigarettes in Indonesia. But the author was claiming he never left his home, that he was a fake.”

Intrigued, he sent a proposal to *National Geographic* offering to follow the fabled explorer’s journey from Venice through the Middle East and into China. “Again, the gods were smiling on me, and I got the assignment,” he says. The four-month assignment turned into a four-year-long obsession. “I had a severe case of what one writer has called Marco Polo fever,” he explains.

The hard work paid off. *National Geographic* ran his piece, in which he traced the footsteps of the famous explorer over three consecutive issues. He followed the magazine piece with an award-winning documentary and a book that has sold more than 250,000 copies.

Yamashita, who has also lectured, run photo workshops, and exhibited his work around the world, has been generous in giving back to less experienced photographers. In that spirit, he offers these insights along with images that illustrate them.



Michael Yamashita



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BE ORIGINAL. DON'T COPY.

"How do you shoot an iconic scene that has been photographed a gazillion times before by both amateurs and professionals? My assignment was to highlight the two columns on the quay in Venice from where, legend has it, Marco Polo embarked on his travels in the 13th century. I chose to be there on a day in September when my research told me the Grand Princess, then the world's largest cruise ship, was to pass by at 10 a.m. Just as I envisioned, the ship arrived (though a little late), sailing into view, dwarfing the two columns. As an added bonus, the ship blew its horn, and the pigeons took to the air as I emptied my entire roll of 36."



THE BEST CAMERA IS THE ONE IN YOUR HAND.

"It's not all about equipment. In Manhattan I walked by these two buses stopped at a traffic light and noticed this juxtaposition of advertisements on their sides. I moved quickly down the middle between the two and composed this photograph with my cell phone, the only camera I was carrying. I made it back to the sidewalk just before the light turned green. The best camera is the one you have with you."



SERENDIPITY ALWAYS HELPS.

"Luck is good. In this region near the Persian Gulf, the women wear a distinctive form of hijab, red face masks, which I thought would make a great cover for my NG [*National Geographic*] story. I spent an entire morning shooting portraits of women in the village against a variety of backgrounds—windows, doorways, and adobe mud walls. I packed up my gear and was walking back to my car thinking I had a good cover candidate among the 10 rolls of 36 I had shot, when I saw this woman washing clothes in a stream. She glanced up for maybe just two seconds. I managed to fire off three frames before she went back to her work, and this completely unplanned moment became the cover. Right subject, right light, right angle and gesture, and a lot of photographers' luck. ABS: Always be shooting!"



I AM A ONE-PICTURE, TELL-IT-ALL PERSON.

"I am a storyteller and am always looking for a page-stopper, a single stunning picture that grabs your attention and makes you stop and want to read the caption and sucks you into the story. This photograph of tourists on a camel trek around a 1,000-foot mountain of sand became the signature frame for a *National Geographic* magazine story on Marco Polo. It summed up Marco's arduous crossing of one of the most inhospitable environments on earth. By searching out an unusual angle far from the crowds of tourists, using backlight and under-exposing, you cannot see the numbers on the sides of the camels and the tourists in their modern sportswear. The viewer is taken back to the 13th century and Marco's journey along the Silk Road."

SHOOT LIKE I'M STILL A FILM GUY.

"I don't look at the back of the camera while shooting because I am afraid I may miss the moment. In my workshops I always tell students to turn off their camera's preview button and stop continually peeping at the LDC screen to see if they got the picture. While there is a time to be looking at pictures, it's not generally in the field. If I had been peeping when I took this picture, I would have missed this moment and never known that yaks have gray tongues."





LOOK FOR THE REAL MOMENT, NOT A SETUP.

"I still cannot set up a picture and feel good about that. I won't ask anyone to repeat an action or 'walk there again.' For example, normally kids at this age would be making faces at the photographer. But I shot without attracting the kids' attention by standing at a distance with the sun rising directly behind me so they were blinded by the early morning light and could only see me in silhouette."



BE INCOGNITO.

"I try to be unobtrusive; I don't like putting a large camera and lens in someone's face. I leave a small footprint and don't often talk to engage my subjects because that will change the equation. In fact, I prefer the person may be a little uncomfortable. Shooting monks in most monasteries is forbidden. But it's my job to get that picture. I invest the time hanging out and just waiting doing email till my subjects get comfortable enough to ignore my presence. To look less like a pro, I carried one small camera, a Sony point-and-shoot, to take this photograph."

I AM A TRADITIONALIST.

"I don't like curved lines or distortions. Rather, I am a linear, clean graphic kind of guy I often say a photo should be 'lensless' and I like shooting either very wide or very long and not much in between. By careful subject placement and a low angle, I was able to shoot this 24mm scene with minimal distortion. •

Robert Kiener is a writer in Vermont.





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GRACE CHON TURNS 360 DEGREES TO BUILD HER IDEAL CAREER

By Jeff Kent

Some things come full circle in interesting ways. Grace Chon's career began in the advertising industry, where she became an award-winning art director. It was fast-paced. It was exciting. But it was a grind. The work did involve creative elements, but more often than not, it was creativity at the discretion of revenue-minded executives. The demanding schedule and the unrelenting pace of the work wore on Chon and she realized she wasn't happy.

She needed a creative outlet that was under her own control. She started photographing dogs for a local animal rescue group, which they used to showcase adoptable animals on their website and in other materials. Dog adoptions increased notably, and people even started traveling from out of town to adopt some of the animals Chon had photographed.

Chon knew she was on to something. She launched a pet photography business as a side gig before ultimately leaving her ad agency job to go all in on pet photography. That was in 2008, at the height of the Great Recession when unemployment was soaring and ad agencies in particular were being gutted. But Chon knew she needed to make a change if she

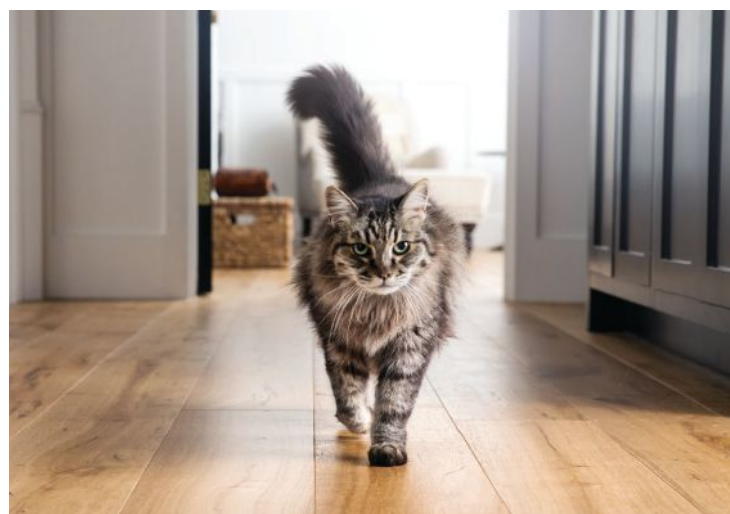
was ever going to be happy.

She dove into the work and developed a reputation for insightful pet portraits. A significant shift came when she started photographing people with their pets—something that was relatively uncommon in retail pet photography at the time. The images immediately resonated with her audience. “I was just shooting the pictures I wanted to shoot,” she recalls. “I was connecting with the types of images that inspired me. Calling on my art director background, I styled the rooms, styled the shoots, and ended up with really polished pictures of people with their pets.”



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The images also resonated with people in her prior industry. The stylized photographs of people and pets were perfect for pet-related ad needs, and within a year and a half of going full time in pet photography, Chon started getting calls from ad agencies and commercial clients. Her first big break came in the form of an advertising shoot for Purina, and additional opportunities followed from there. By 2014, she had a steady flow of commercial photography clients. Spurred forward by a mixture of terror and excitement, she closed the retail side of her business and jumped back into the advertising world—only this time she maintained the creative control to do the work that inspired her. Since then, Chon has continued to grow her commercial business, becoming one of the most recognized animal photographers in the industry.

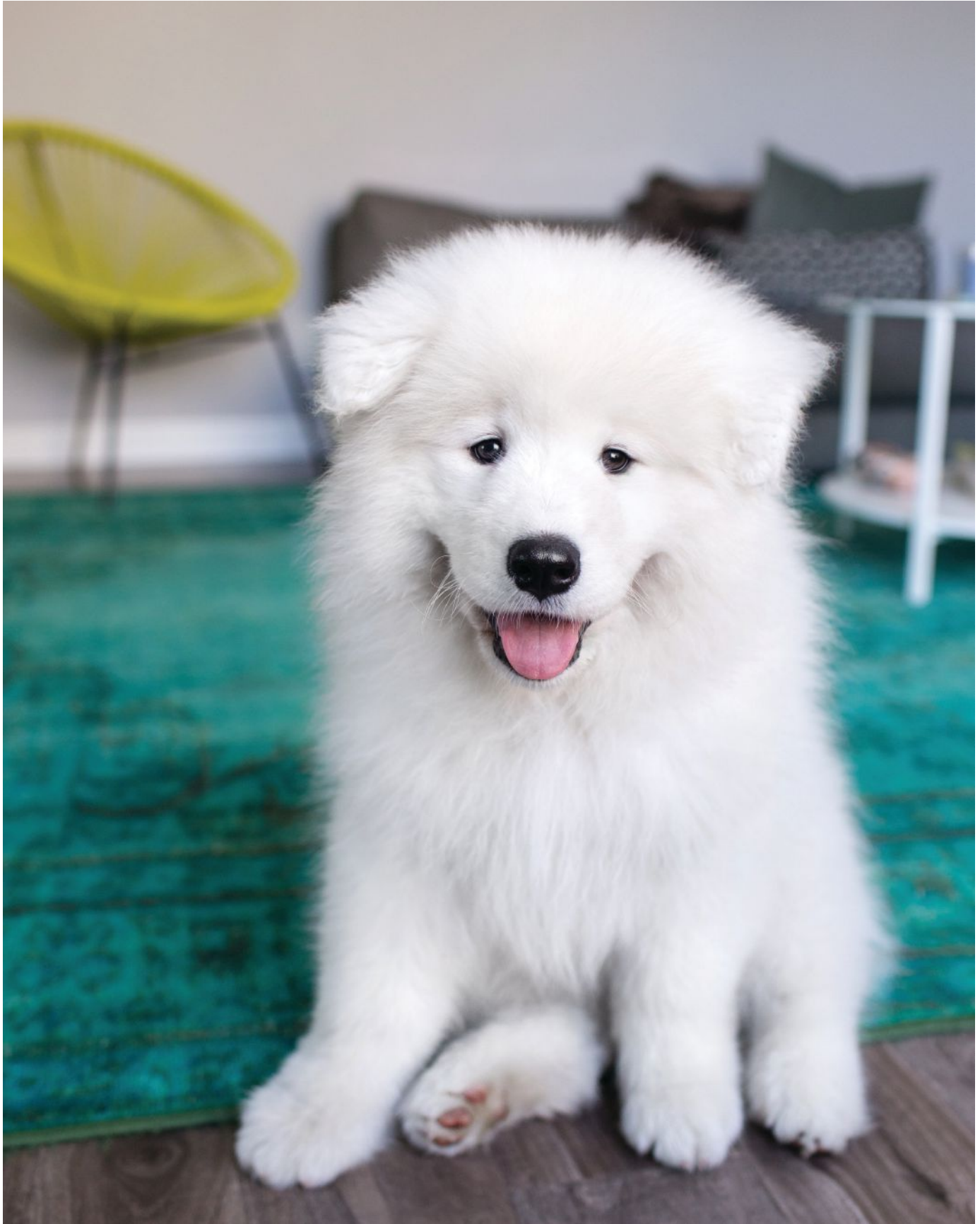
TRANSITIONING

Chon suggests that photographers interested in making the

transition from the retail to the commercial market work with a commercial photography consultant. “It’s worth every penny,” she says. “Even though I worked in the industry as an art director, I didn’t know anything about the back end, the pricing, the marketing, the positioning. Working with a consultant helped me get an understanding of how the industry works from that side and also how my skills could be positioned as most valuable for commercial clients.”

Collaborating on image selection for a commercial portfolio was particularly eye opening. Simply having someone else bring in a different perspective, especially one that is oriented toward the market you want to enter, can be invaluable, says Chon. “Seeing someone else look at my work through that lens showed me the types of images I needed to create to attract clients in this space.”

Chon also sought the advice of producers and other pros from the commercial world to gain a better understanding of the bidding process, the questions to ask prospective clients about their projects, and how to build out a commercial shoot. She often offered to pay for people’s time if





Grace Chon

they were willing to jump on a call and share insights. That offer helped open doors to conversations with marketing and advertising pros while making them feel appreciated for their expertise.

STORYTELLING

“At the end of the day, when you’re a photographer, you’re a storyteller,” says Chon. “You have an opportunity to tell a really strong, emotional story in one frame. If you understand how to do that, you can photograph almost anything.”

That storytelling skill is what photographers should lean on when pivoting from one market to the next or from one subject matter to the next. “For example, I photograph pets and people,

but what am I really capturing?” asks Chon. “It’s the emotional connection. If you understand that and you can demonstrate your proficiency at capturing that type of connection, you can pivot to something else.”

Client education is important in this process. Explain to the client that you’re capturing a story, including the emotions that accompany that narrative. Describe how you plan to tell the story and draw out the most engaging elements. “But here’s the thing: Most clients are very literal,” says Chon. “You could explain until the cows come home, but they need to see it. So go shoot it. Do some self-produced, portfolio-building work. Personal projects are so important. If you’re feeling stuck in the grind, your personal work is your opportunity to channel all of your creativity without a client telling you what to do.”

MARKETING

In the past couple of years, the pandemic-induced move to more at-home work changed the traditional outreach approach that Chon used to connect with commercial clients. Previously, she sent out print promos, set in-person appointments, and attended industry events. While some of that is coming back, many of her interactions have moved online. She now regularly sends emails to industry lists, stays active on social media, and corresponds with various contacts through professional organizations and photography groups.

Still, the goal remains the same: build relationships. Chon suggests emailing contacts periodically to share recent work, communicate updates about what you've been up to, and keep yourself top of mind when a need arises. "Don't look at these kinds of interactions as something you do just so you can cash in on it someday," says Chon. "Be sincere and build real friendships. Connect as a human not just looking to make a sale. You never know how these relationships will develop. Your contacts will grow their careers as you do, and those relationships can evolve in exciting ways."

ADVANCING

Chon says that elevating the quality of your images or the success of your career starts with understanding what you love to photograph. Then it's a matter of finding opportunities to get your foot in the door. Keep putting yourself out there and do it consistently. Over time, the results build on each other.

As part of this process, consider your greatest gift as a photographer. It's not how you set up your lights or what gear you use. It's the emotional connection you make through your photographs. Chon's differentiator is that she forms deep connections with the animals to bring out something in the photographs that the client or owner often hadn't even seen.

"Bringing that love and empathy is going to take your work so far," she says. "It's not about just clicking the shutter and getting a picture of an animal. What are you sensing, feeling, seeing? It's so much about capturing subtlety. When you can find that unique element to your work that sets you apart, lean into it, because that will take you to the next level as a photographer." •





Hiding in Plain Sight

CARLA RHODES IS ON A WILDLIFE CONSERVATION MISSION

BY AMANDA ARNOLD



Sometimes you choose a career, and sometimes a career chooses you. In 2015, comedic ventriloquist Carla Rhodes bought a DSLR camera to make short films of her puppets as well as her friends in the New York City comedy scene. But when she and her husband began spending time in the Catskill Mountains of New York, she trained her lens on a completely different subject matter: nature and wildlife.

"It was something I was doing for myself that really made me deeply happy on a level I've never felt," she says of her newfound hobby. She'd never experienced the sense of purpose and presence that nature photography provided her. "It's hard to explain. It's like when something finds you that you were not looking for and takes you by complete surprise."

In late 2018, still working in show business, Rhodes traveled to India to film a reality TV pilot. On a drive to Guwahati, a city in the northeastern Indian state of Assam, she spotted a bird by the side of the road that took her breath away. "I love prehistoric creatures," she says, "and this bird is over five feet tall with a wingspan of eight feet, and it was standing by the road. It looks kind of like a pterodactyl." The driver explained that it was a greater adjutant bird, an endangered stork, and offered to drive her to the birds' primary habitat. "I thought we were going to a really natural area, but he took me to an apocalyptic scenario where trash was piled up," she says. Atop the mounds of refuse in the massive landfill stood a multitude of giant, blue-eyed storks.



Carla Rhodes

©CHARLES CHESLER



PEARLS OF WISDOM

Carla Rhodes offers tips to wildlife conservation photographers in the making:

- Follow your curiosity. Be excited about your work.
- Blaze your own trail. Throw out the rule book and create your own style.
- Put the welfare of the wildlife subject first. Your job is to elevate wildlife, not disturb it.
- Don't be afraid to fail. There is no better teacher than failure.
- Jump in and make tons of mistakes.



“That bird—it sounds very cliché and mystical—but that bird changed my whole life,” she says. Before that trip, she’d been casually making photos of local wildlife—a beaver swimming in a creek at the local park, for example. “I wasn’t really thinking about it impact-wise and storytelling-wise,” she says. But she couldn’t get the greater adjutant out of her mind. “I became obsessed. I can’t explain it. It changed something within me, and that is the moment that I decided to dedicate myself to the art form of wildlife conservation photography,” putting a pause on her career as a comedian.

Through online research, Rhodes discovered that biologist Purnima Devi Barman was working to save the greater adjutants, locally called “hargilas,” and educating the community about the bird. Over email, Rhodes introduced herself and asked if she could travel to India

to make photographs of the birds, assuring Barman she would donate her images to Barman’s nonprofit, The Hargila Army, and pitch the story to media outlets.

“I had never shot a story in my life,” Rhodes says. But in early 2020, she spent 30 days doing just that. “That was the scariest thing I have ever done,” traveling solo to a remote area of India to make photographs with no documentary photography experience under her belt. But the work was life changing, she says. “It was an example of me literally not knowing what I’m doing but believing so much in something to go do it. ... I just urge anyone reading this to follow your gut.”

After the trip came the hard work of pitching the story to editors in the media so she could share the greater adjutant’s plight. “The majority of them completely ignored or rejected me,” she says. “But I knew in my gut

that I loved that bird and I loved Purnima's work." She kept at it. After six months' of rejections, she broke through to the cream of the crop: *The New York Times*. The paper ran a full-page spread of the story, which they asked her to write. "I never in my life thought that I would have something in *The New York Times* that I wrote," she says. So many photographers give up too soon when pitching images to the media, she says. "They forget that it's subjective." It just takes one editor to say yes, and after that, a story can snowball.

Since then, her images of the greater adjutants have been featured in many other prominent publications. "I like to think that helped the greater adjutants and Purnima's mission," she says.

ORDINARY CREATURES

After Rhodes returned from India, the COVID-19 pandemic was hitting the United States, and she and her husband were locked down at their house in the Catskills. Wanting to learn how to camera trap small creatures, she spent four months in late 2020 and early 2021 working on a series called "Beneath the Bird Feeder," using a camera trap system to capture images of the common birds and rodents that appeared at the base of her backyard feeder. "I love the art form of camera trapping," she says, and she loves small creatures—mice, voles, shrews, birds. "And we were all stuck at home, so it gave me something challenging to work on every day."

"Camera trapping is extremely difficult," she found. "You're guessing everything ahead of time." Birds and rodents can be as diminutive as three inches tall and move lighting fast, so it can be difficult to catch a photo of them at all, not to mention with the correct lighting and exposure. Because her trap was steps from her door, she was able to check the camera regularly to monitor results and experiment with sensor placement. She uses the Cognisys system, whose sensors trigger the camera to snap a photo when an animal crosses a beam. For ethical reasons, Rhodes is careful to place the flash above the eye level of the animals. And since she was capturing images primarily during the daytime, the flash was dialed back to 1/64th or lower.

Rather than set up her system on the bird feeder, she set it up below the bird feeder. As the birds eat at the feeder, they drop seeds to





the ground, where ground-feeding birds and rodents scoop up seeds, “creating this whole little ecosystem,” she explains. Her goal was to share the photos to educate the public about bird feeder best practices, such as cleaning feeders and raking the soil beneath feeders, as well as share rare closeup images of the common birds and rodents that frequent feeders. Once her images appeared in *The Guardian* newspaper, *Audubon* magazine, and other outlets, Rhodes received so much traffic to her website that it broke. “I have never gotten so many messages,” she says; people gushed about how happy the images made them feel and how much they enjoyed seeing these everyday birds’ faces. “It was so many emails that I couldn’t even keep up.”

INTO THE WOODS

Rhodes also sets camera traps deep in the woods of the Catskills, a completely different camera trapping ball game. She believes strongly in responsible camera trapping, making sure her equipment doesn’t disturb animals and blends into the habitat. To find the right spot for her camera she uses track and sign techniques—evaluating the environment for scat, footprints, and other signals. For example, flying squirrels open nuts in a certain way, so when she found remnants of nuts on a log, she knew it was a good spot to place her camera system. She also sets up trail cameras to watch for potential subjects and decide on the right placement for her camera.

Her backyard feeder system captured up to 1,000 photos in a day; in fact, her shutter snapped so much it had to be replaced. But camera trapping in the woods is a different process. She leaves the camera system in place for months (her Cognysis system is rain proof and its batteries can last a full month). To make sure it fully blends into the environment, she purposely doesn’t check it for a couple weeks at a time, going at midday when the animals are less active. But even after two weeks, she may find zero photos on the camera.

If she does have photos, the subjects are often a surprise—for example, she captured an excellent image of bear in an area she was scoping for bobcats. And then there was the porcupine that loved giving her “perfectly composed, tack sharp, lit well, butt shots,” she laughs. “Animals love trolling me that

way.” She turned the camera around to try to capture the creature’s face but wound up with more images of its behind. “It’s constant surprise and disappointment,” she says. “So, when you do get something that works, it’s the best feeling in the world.”

PHOTOGRAPHING WITH PURPOSE

Although Rhodes enjoys the photographic process, “the real impact happens after you take the photos,” she says. “My images are meaningless unless they feed the greater good.” As such, she keeps storytelling and the ideal of furthering conservation in mind. Even something as simple as an endearing image of a Catskills deer mouse can have an impact, she says. “A lot of people are not fans of rodents, but they look at my mice photos and say, ‘Wow, that is really cute,’” she says. Perhaps because of that photo, they won’t poison a mouse that then poisons the owl that feeds on it. They might be a little kinder to wildlife.

Right now, Rhodes self-produces her projects and pitches them to the media. “A lot of people are sent on assignment, but until that happens, I will just continue to self-fund, which is getting harder and harder,” she admits. But she doesn’t have time to wait for someone to find her work. “I am ready for a seat at the table.”

Like many wildlife conservation photographers, Rhodes dreams of traveling the world with her camera. But she’s come to see perhaps even more value in the stories one finds in their own backyard, “the places that are hiding in plain sight,” she says.

Currently she’s environmental artist in residence for the Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest in Kentucky, where she grew up. Her work will highlight the wildlife and natural spaces threatened by a proposed gas pipeline that would cut through the forest.

Photographers think they have to travel to a remote area in another part of the world to find compelling conservation stories. And Rhodes certainly understands that attraction—after all, it was a stork on a remote road in northeastern India that inspired her wildlife conservation photography journey. But she took to heart a lesson Barman taught her while she was photographing the greater adjutants in India: “Take care of your own backyard and it will take care of you.” •

TERESA HUNT

PPA MEMBER
SINCE 2019

Teresa Hunt Photography
Wilsonville, OR
TeresaHuntPhotography.com

Becoming a photographer wasn't a decision; it's part of who I am. I love creating images that leave a legacy and connect generations.

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buttons can be added to a website or Facebook page and linked to the information.

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Photographers guide to communicating with clients highlights how language impacts your business. Learn the connotations behind common photography terms and find the right words for your brand.

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Pinterest for business guide provides ideas about leveraging the 320 million active users of Pinterest. Pinterest's image-centric nature makes it ideal for photographers to present their skills and images to a large audience. • ppa.com/seethedifference

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