

Darkroom **Pro**

M A G A Z I N E



Feature Interview:
Kelby Training Instructor
Frank Doorhof

**Dawn
of the
DSLR
New Pro Bodies**

Adobe Lightroom 4
Travel Photography Tips
Understanding Histograms
Nikon's V1... Best of Both Worlds?

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D7000

Enthusiasts are buzzing about the Nikon D7000 DSLR, and no wonder. Offering yet more creative flexibility, along with enhanced video capability (including full 1080p HD with stereo sound* plus full-time autofocus), this camera gives you the tools to create stunning results in the most challenging situations. The D7000 boasts best-in-class features, such as 39-point AF and Nikon's exclusive 2,016-segment RGB II metering. Plus you'll enjoy 6 FPS continuous shooting, and a native ISO range up to 6400, to hold crisp detail even in low light. And it all comes with an impressive two-year Canadian warranty**. Check out the Nikon D7000 at nikon.ca or your Authorized Nikon Dealer. You owe it to yourself.



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*With optional external microphone. **The Nikon D7000 is backed by Nikon's 2-year Canadian warranty when purchased from an Authorized Nikon Canada Dealer.

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X
SERIES

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X-Pro1



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Check out our 2012 Gift Guide for great holiday suggestions on any budget.

Santa will be very impressed!

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Going on vacation this winter? Wondering what photographic gear to bring? Well, you could tote a ton of gear and be prepared for every contingency; *or* you could read this article and do it right!

Going on vacation is definitely an awesome experience and getting away to relax is just what you need. But at the same time, it's also a great opportunity to get your camera gear ready for the trip. You don't want to be stuck with a camera that won't work when you're in a remote location. So, before you head out, make sure you have everything you need to get the most out of your trip. This includes things like extra batteries, memory cards, and a backup plan for your gear. It's also a good idea to do a test run of your camera before you go, so you can make sure everything is working properly. And, of course, don't forget to bring a tripod if you're planning on taking any long-exposure shots. With a little preparation, you can make sure your vacation is a truly memorable one.



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EDITOR'S FOREWORD



Welcome to the latest instalment of DarkroomPro Magazine! We've had a bit of a hiatus since the last issue in order that we had the opportunity to put in place the mechanisms that will allow us to make the following announcement:

DarkroomPro Magazine will continue to be released 100% free!

That's right, no introductory issues, teaser content, in-app purchase requests... just free, as in beer.

In order for us to pull this off however, we are going to ask you, our reader, for a little assistance: we need you to help spread the word. In order that we remain attractive to our advertisers, we need to have as wide a distribution as possible, and your help will prove invaluable.

Now we're not asking you to wear a DarkroomPro placard on the street corner (though that would be lovely, and please feel free to do so!), just 'Like' us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter, and if you know a fellow photography enthusiast that might be interested, tell them about the magazine. You'll find buttons below to help out.

Ok, so on to what's inside!

This time around we've brought you in-depth reviews of both Nikon and Canon's flagship camera bodies: the D4 and 1DX, a look at

Adobe's Lightroom 4, a great interview with photographer & Kelby Training instructor Frank Doorhof, our Gift Guide for the holiday season, Understanding Histograms and much more!

As always, please feel free to send us your comments and suggestions — we're always happy to hear from you and your input helps us put together a stronger publication for everyone.

From all of us to all of you, Happy Holidays!

Ray Richards
Editor

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Focal length: 50mm Exposure: F/4 1/160sec ISO400



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¹ For high-speed standard zoom lens compatible with full-frame SLR cameras. Current as of February 2012. (Source: Tamron)

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DarkroomPro

M A G A Z I N E



Holiday Gift Guide

Looking for the perfect holiday gift for that family shutterbug? Or, perhaps you're searching for a little something for yourself? Look no further! DarkroomPro Magazine has combed the manufacturers for all kinds of great gear on any budget. Read on...

P O C K E T W I Z A R D P L U S I I I

For the ultimate in remote strobe management, you can't beat PocketWizard's new Plus III. Featuring 32 channels, and quad zone control, you won't be spending time running back and forth between your camera and lights. Set up your lights in any of 4 discrete groups and activate any combination of them from up to 500 metres (1600 ft)! Also excellent for remote camera triggering, the PocketWizard features two stage activation that works just like your camera's shutter: depress half way, to focus and meter, and then all the way down to capture the image. A great buy at twice the price, the PocketWizard III retails for around \$149.00.



LENSBABY SCOUT

Fisheye lenses are very expensive considering how infrequently they are used; however, the effect is so fun and distinctive, it seems a shame to forego the option due to the costs normally associated with them. Lensbaby has the answer! The affordable Scout features two modes for creative expression: excellent flare when pointed towards a bright light source, and extremely close focus, allowing capture of truly unique fisheye compositions. At a budget-conscious \$250 MSRP, this excellent little lens will be a welcome addition to any photographer's camera bag.



AF-S NIKKOR 70-200 F/4G ED VR

Hate lugging around huge zooms on holiday or the street? Unsatisfied with the quality of super-zooms? Nikon's answer to both questions is its new constant $f/4$ through the range 70-200mm (705-300mm on DX format cameras) in a compact 7x3" and 30oz (850g) form factor that won't break your neck strap. Featuring Nikon's exceptional third generation vibration reduction which boasts up to 5 stops of image stabilization, pro grade glass, and a compact package, it's a bound to become essential gear for the photographer looking to travel light. MSRP \$1449.95.





DOMKE PHOTOGS JACKET

As any photographer knows, one can never have too many pockets! The Domke PhoTOGS jacket is a stylish garment that includes 16... *and* converts to a vest! Additionally, every pocket is protected by either a zipper, hook, loop, or weather flap closure and. Cargo pockets include water-resistant nylon lining and special hand-warmer pockets directly beneath them. Made from 100% pre-washed cotton, this attractive jacket has a soft feel and a weathered look. Sizes range from small through extra large. While not the least expensive garment in this category, it is certainly one of the best. MSRP \$259.

DarkroomPro
MAGAZINE



iDC SYSTEM ZERO

iDC SYSTEM ZERO turns your HD SLR into a movie-making machine.



ARCA-SWISS monoball® p0



The leader of tripod head design for over 45 years creates a new revolutionary **K** nobless ballhead. It's called **K** nobless because the traditional locking knobs have been removed. Equipped with the patented (planetary) p-system, the ARCA-SWISS p0 is a unique tripod head design due to its precision, ease of use and has a powerful, concentric and uniform locking force. It features the patented gravitational force compensation, thus preventing sudden camera movement. The ARCA-SWISS p0 is precise, stylish, strong and weights under 10 ounces. A hand of steel in a velvet glove!

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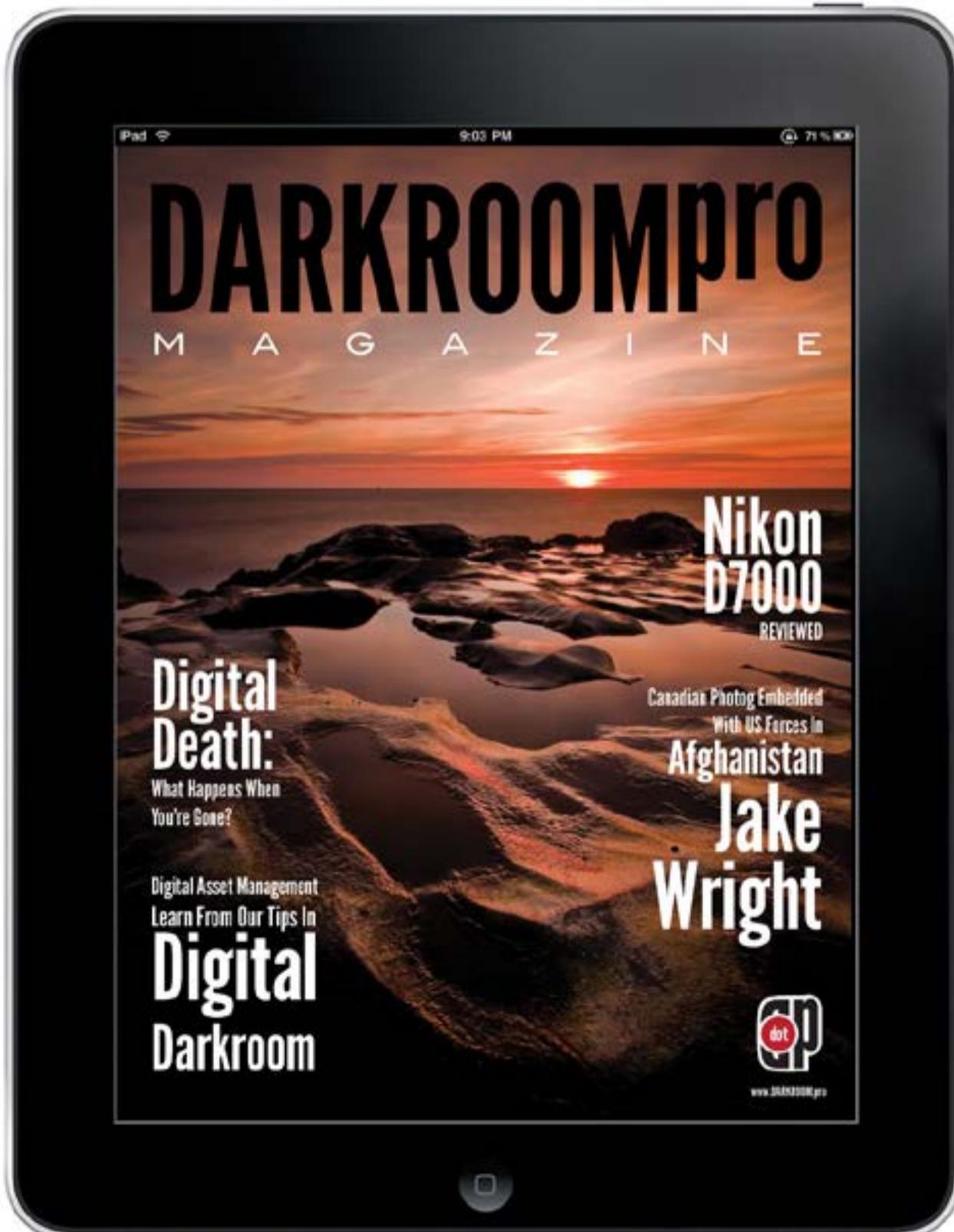


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EXTREME PRO UDMA 7

Every photographer needs more memory cards; and you can't beat Sandisk's Extreme Pro for performance. Featuring write speeds of up to 100MB per second (for the 128GB model, 90MB/s for the 64 and 32GB), you won't miss that crucial shot at the end of a burst again! Designed for extreme conditions and backed by a limited lifetime warranty, these compact flash cards won't let you down... though at \$649 for the 128GB card, your wallet might be a little lighter!



MISS OUR FIRST ISSUE?

DarkroomPro Magazine has certainly undergone some changes over its lifetime: new iPad support, new logo, updated design, and of course the transition from being a paid publication to one you may access for free anytime!

Not only this, but we totally changed the technology we used to create the new issues, enabling us to support horizontal and vertical orientations as well as pinch and zoom operations on all of the content inside!

As a result, the first issue isn't available in the issue kiosk; however, you may still download it for free as a PDF at Darkroom.pro!

FRESH FACES

Antoneta Wotringer



Fresh Faces



38 year old Antoneta Wotringer picked up photography after being inspired by watching his brother undertake the same activity. Having cut his teeth in the analogue age, Anonteta's creative

Anoneta Wotringer



world totally opened up with his discovery of the digital realm. Though a native German, Anoneta says his second language is Photography... and from what we can see, we'd say he's pretty fluent!

**Luc
Helie**

Urban Photographer



As a younger man, Luc's darkroom activities revolved around wet process silver halide; however, frustrated by the post-processing limitations placed upon him by the medium, he abandoned



photography for quite some time. With the advent of Photoshop and digital photography, Helie's interest was renewed and inspired him to dive into capturing the architecture that surrounds him



in the prosperous Parisian business district of La Defense. The towering glass and steel structures are infinitely variable depending on weather conditions, and make for an ideal subject.



Photography provides Luc with three principal pleasures: the joy of the capture, hours of creative tinkering in Photoshop, and the opportunity to enjoy the talents of so many others worldwide.

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SYSTEMATIC

Gitzo's top of the range modular Systematic tripods have been redesigned to provide exacting photographers with even higher levels of strength, stability, safety and ease of use.

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GUIDE

D4

GEAR

It's been busy in the photographic equipment manufacturing world! Nikon has been particularly active, releasing both the eagerly anticipated update to its flagship professional DSLR with the D4, and an equally strong contender in the pro/prosumer segment with the D800. Both of these cameras offer a stunning array of features designed to make even the most jaded reviewer drool.

For starters, Nikon's new top-dog finally supports full 1920x1080 video at either 30 or 24 frames per second, dramatically improving on its predecessor's 1280x720@24 fps spec. In addition, the inclusion of a stereo mic input further enhances this product's suitability

for producing broadcast quality video. There is a limit of 20 minutes recording time at the highest quality setting; however, in real-world video shoots, single takes seldom run anywhere close to that amount of time. If you do find yourself requiring more recording time, you can output via the integrated HDMI port to any external recording device.

While on the subject of frames per second, the D4 has improved this spec to a blistering 11 (with AE and EF locked - 10 otherwise), at up to 98 RAW files in a burst! This is achieved by way of Nikon's implementation of Sony's new XQD standard

for storage – which supports file transfer speeds of between 125 and 500 megabytes per second, and capacities over 2 terabytes. While, like its predecessors, the D4 comes equipped with 2 card slots, it now includes both a standard compact flash as well as the new XQD variety, and is the first camera on the planet to adopt the standard.

SMART STORAGE?

It remains to be seen whether this has been a prudent decision for the company, as no other card manufacturer has as yet announced intentions to produce XQD format products, and users may be limited to purchasing storage via the Sony monopoly. Not only this, but should photographers wish to utilize functions which take advantage of both slots (automatic backup, continue on to second card after first is filled etc.), they will have to own and carry both types of media – with vastly different storage characteristics.

While slightly larger than the D3 line, the D4 is lighter, and further improves on that former unit's already outstanding ISO performance: featuring native settings of between 100 and 12,800, with LO and HI options of 50 and 204,800 respectively. This is a vast improvement over the D3 and still significant when compared to the D3s – par-

ticularly for landscape photographers who often desire lower ISO range availability. At the high end, you should never have to worry about shooting in low-light again, especially as the manufacturer also promises accurate focusing in environments similar to moonlight alone, with the advent of the new MultiCAM 3500-FX autofocus sensor. With 15 cross type sensors out of the unit's 51 in total, the centre 11 are able to autofocus up to $f/8$ – besting its predecessor's performance by a full stop. Working in conjunction

with the Expeed 3 processing engine, the D4 offers several auto-focusing modes, including normal, wide area, subject tracking, and face detection capable of tracking up to 16 individual faces simultaneously.

The camera also features significantly more in-camera image processing options including colour

sketch, miniature, fisheye, red eye correction and the like. Not big fans of on-board effects, we feel that perhaps some may gain some utility from them, but they certainly aren't big selling features. Few willing to invest \$6000 on a professional camera are going to add canned, in-camera effects to their workflow – opting rather for the increased precision afforded by equally professional image processing applica-



tions viewed on a large, colour calibrated monitor in a controlled environment.

ERGONOMICS

Nikon has always been known for its outstanding ergonomics, and the D4 is no exception. The camera fits like a glove to anyone comfortable with larger, pro bodies. In addition to the usual excellent weather sealing with gaskets to ward off dirt and moisture, the unit also purports to guard against electromagnetic interference.

Not only has the company refined its button layout, it has added the option of illuminating them for shooters that work in near-dark conditions. Also new to the D4, a joystick control on the rear of the body enables users to select autofocus points with ease. The viewfinder is also typical of Nikon's pro line: bright, with comprehensive shooting information and 100% frame coverage.

DECISIONS DECISIONS...

So, now that you've been apprised of the the specs, how do you determine whether this camera is worth the upgrade price? Well, at \$6000 for the body alone, the tar-



get market is obviously the working professional photographer. As most pros write off their equipment over a few years from a tax perspective, the decision of when to upgrade is relatively straight-forward. For those with an original D3, the choice to move up is an easy yes; while for those with a D3s, it's a little tougher to make the call.

Less time has passed since the D3s' release, and so you might find you've not depreciated that equipment as yet.... and the upgrade is also less dramatic. ISO performance, while improved, isn't vastly different in most situations. Video specifications are definitely better; but the D3s was certainly no slouch – and how much video do you actually shoot anyway? Battery life is actually reduced due to new restrictions placed on manufacturers; and the memory card situation as outlined above may result in unforeseen difficulties for D4 owners should the industry fail to adopt the standard.

All in all, the camera seems more of an evolutionary upgrade from the D3s, rather than the revolutionary jump the D3 made from the D2xs; but for those that simply need the best of the best... look no further.



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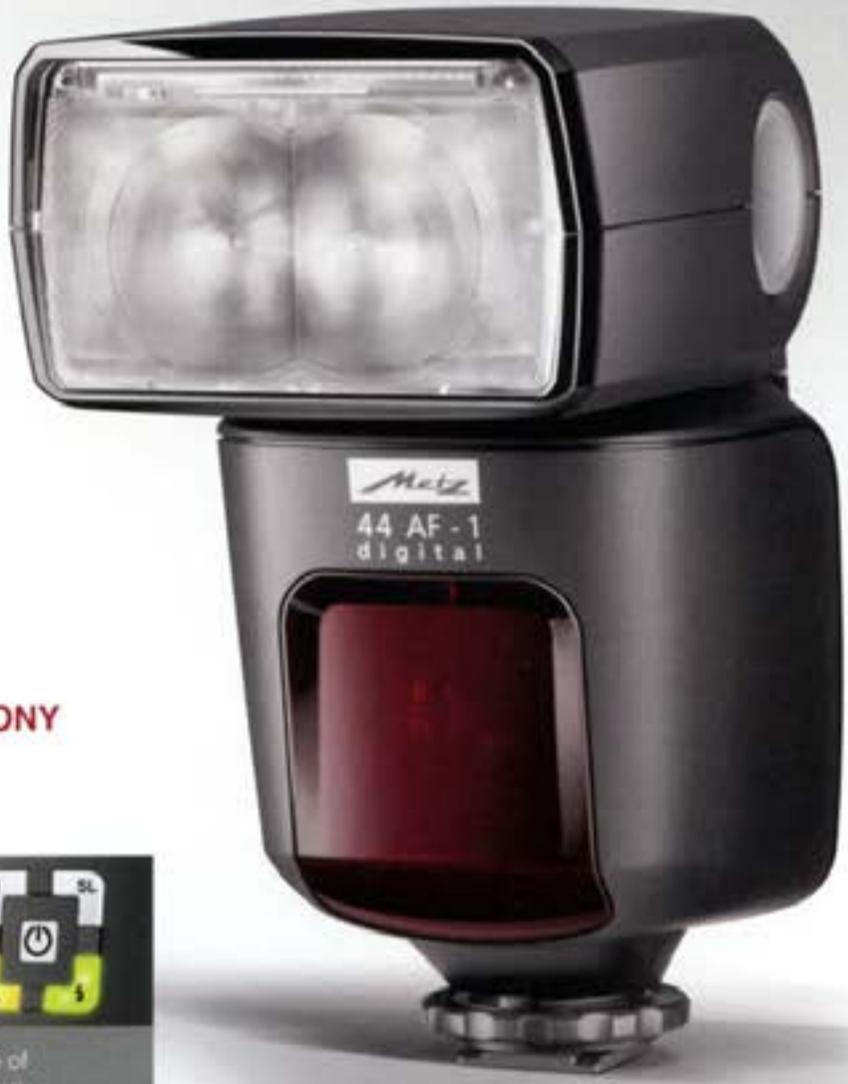
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Metz 44 AF-1 digital

The Metz mecablitz 44 AF-1 digital is the perfect choice for the ambitious amateur photographer with its high performance design (guide number of 44 for ISO 100/21° and 105 mm) and a variety of possibilities for creative lighting design -like the motor zoom function for 24 - 105 mm illumination and the wireless TTL flash operation. So easy to operate that producing beautifully lit photos becomes child's play.

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Swivel reflector	Flip-out reflector card	Guide number for ISO 100/21° (105 mm)	USB interface	Ease of operation

Digital Darkroom



With the recent release of its flagship image cataloguing and editing software, Photoshop Lightroom, Adobe has once again raised the bar to significant new heights. A plethora of novel features await those looking to upgrade or contemplating a switch from a competitive product; so, let's just dive right in!

VIDEO VERSATILITY

Lightroom has always been an outstanding non-destructive image editor, but until version 4, lacked all but the most rudimentary support for video – that's all changed! Not only does the software do an excellent job at cataloguing all your video clips, now you may also edit them using many of the same great tools you're used to employing on your photographs.

First of all, there's an intuitive interface for trimming your clips: simply drag to the desired locations on either end of the segment and you're done. Simply mousing over the video thumbnail (which you may also select by way of the 'select poster' menu function) allows you to scrub back and forth to give you a quick view of the content. The interface is clean and gets out of your way when you need more screen real estate for video edits... which is really where the software begins to shine.

You can use familiar controls to adjust exposure, contrast, white balance, vibrance, white and black levels, temperature, and tint for the entire file, all in a non-destructive manner, quickly and easily from the push-button interface. Additionally, just

as with images, you are able to make different versions of your videos using virtual copies... which don't take up a ton of extra space on your hard drive, as they are simply collections of metadata which refer back to the original file. This is a tremendous improvement from the previous version and will definitely be a welcome change for all the mixed media professionals and photojournalists out there who are increasingly required to shoot video as well as still imagery... not to mention everyone else!

Cataloguing video is a snap too. Not only are you able to use all the standard metadata filters to narrow down your selection, but if you're viewing a folder of both video and photographic content, you may view one or the other via a single button push in the attributes menu, or see all your videos by clicking on the Video smart collection – handy.

BLURB BOOKS

Thousands of photographers utilize Blurb's excellent self-publishing service for the creation of unique coffee table books featuring their own work. We've used the company many times and have been consistently pleased with the exceptional hardcover's we receive of our finished work.

Over the years, Blurb's custom book design software has steadily improved; however, in terms of workflow, has always been a bit of a hassle – given your means of selecting and organizing images for publication was within another application. Well, say goodbye to that tedious back and forth; Blurb's entire application, including templates, type control, and captions is now resident within Lightroom! You even get an automatic preview of the projected cost of your book which updates automatically as you make changes.



Once you're all finished with your design (or you can even have Lightroom do it for you), simply press the "Send Book to Blurb" button and you're off to the races.

Blurb integration is an outstanding addition; and we at Darkroom-Pro look forward to using it frequently.

GEO GOODNESS

Those of us with smart phones may not be aware of the fact that with GPS functionality enabled, the camera app geotags your images with the coordinates of the shot location; and you may subsequently use this data in support of organizing your photos by geographic criteria.

While GPS is ubiquitous in the smart phone world, it is significantly less so among DSLRs, and usually involves an add-on device which often occupies the hot shoe. Lightroom's 'Map' module not only allows you to locate your images in physical space using embedded coordinates, but in their absence, circumvents this difficulty by allowing you to manually add custom loca-

tions, and drag and drop collections of images directly to them. These custom map areas can be as broad or specific as you like... anywhere from let's say a country or city, to a single spot at an intersection.

Once organized in this manner, you may zoom into any section of the world map and click on the icon representing the photographs shot at that location. This action spawns a little window containing thumbnails of the associated images which you may quickly cycle through – double clicking to bring any to the foreground in the 'Library' module. You may also assign large numbers of images to a general location, and then drag and drop individual photos to specific spots one by one as you cycle through the preview thumbnails.

A great trick to use if you do have a smart phone which features GPS functionality, while a DSLR that doesn't: take a quick reference photo with your phone when you first move to a new location, and use that info in Lightroom to thereafter geotag your DSLR images. It will save you a lot of time!



Lightroom 4's new map module provides some excellent organizational functionality to this class-leading application

While we've only just scratched the surface of what can be done in the new 'Map' module, we think you'll agree that it's a fun and highly useful addition to Lightroom.

DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS

Of course, the heart of Photoshop Lightroom is the 'Develop' module; and it definitely hasn't been neglected in this comprehensive update. Utilizing Adobe's new RAW processing engine, Lightroom 4 enjoys significant improvements over its predecessors in image processing power and flexibility.

One of the first changes you'll notice is the absence of certain sliders and the addition of others. Also, you'll see that the order has been altered. While order may not seem important, you have to remember that Adobe recommends you make your adjustments from top to bottom to achieve the best image quality as an end result... so these changes aren't arbitrary. Gone are the Recovery and Fill Light sliders,

the former being replaced with Highlights while the latter with Shadows. In addition, you'll see the Brightness slider has been removed from its traditional placement next to Contrast, while a new slider named 'Whites' has been added to the Tone panel. These aren't just the same functions renamed, but affect the image differently as well.

Highlights, for instance affects a wider range of tones and allows you to enhance bright tones as well as adjust those that may be clipped downward (which was the sole purpose of Recovery). Similarly the new Shadows control moves in both positive and negative directions unlike its predecessor, Fill Light, and also corrects some of the artifact issues created by this control in Lightroom 3.

In addition to these alterations, Lightroom has dramatically improved the Clarity control. Unlike Lightroom 3's problematic clarity adjustments, which were prone to halos and other artifacts, 4 has completely overhauled the algorithm, all but eliminating these issues – even at maximum strength settings.



Another feature that photographers have been asking for since Lightroom's inception is channel specific tone curve adjustments. Having gotten used to these in Photoshop, many pros particularly missed their presence in Lightroom, and bemoaned the round-trip excursion required to make simple channel alterations. Well, apparently, ask and you shall receive! While their presence isn't immediately obvious, you merely have to click the box at bottom right in the Tone Curve dialogue to enable point curves, which allows you to subsequently change the channel from RGB to any of its constituents. This is an incredibly powerful and time saving addition to the application which, while a long time coming, is definitely welcome.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There are so many new features and improvements to existing ones, we could probably go on for quite a few more pages: emailing photos directly from Lightroom, huge improvements to chromatic aberration adjustments, all new graduated filter and adjustment brush functionality, wider dynamic range extraction from existing files, soft proofing, and much more... however, suffice it to say this is by far Adobe's best effort to date; and we'll be featuring many of these within our pages in future issues. Hat's off Adobe! We're not sure what you could possibly pack into your next version, but if it's anything like its latest (now version 4.2), we're prepared to be blown away.



Compose Yourself.

- Getting the most from your holiday photos



Going on vacation is definitely one occasion where you aren't going to want to leave your camera behind; as the opportunities for capturing new and interesting images abound, and looking back on these photos in future will hopefully spark fond memories.

On the other hand, selecting what gear to bring with you can make the difference between a pleasant excursion and an absolute nightmare.

RIGHTSIZING

There are a lot of factors that go into deciding what exactly to bring with you; and if you're like us, you have a ton of options at your disposal – each ultimately contributing to the bulk and weight you'll have to deal with at various stages of your journey.

Of course your first consideration involves how you're getting to your destination. If you're travelling in an RV, you obviously won't have the same constraints as would apply should you be flying aboard commercial aircraft. Airlines are becoming increasingly strict about what you can bring onboard as carry-on; and checked baggage has its own associated costs, to say nothing of risks.

If you are travelling via commercial jet, we'd recommend taking as little as you feel you can possibly get away with, and avoid checking your photography gear. Additionally, you'll want to bear in mind that despite what some bag manufacturers say about their products being the correct dimensions for carry-on, many regional jets have significantly smaller overhead luggage bins than their transcontinental counterparts; and maximum sized bags designed

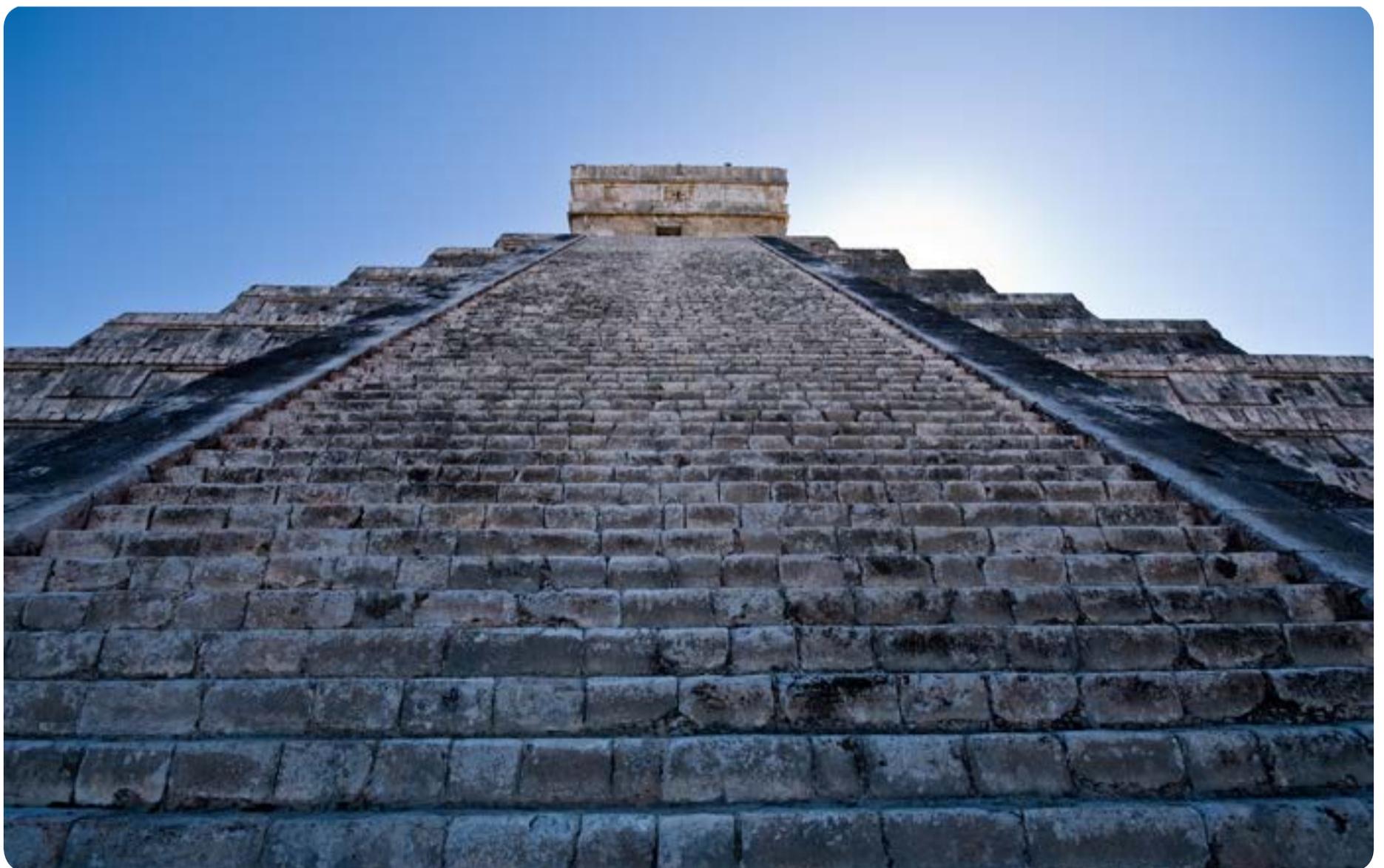
for the latter, definitely won't fit in the former... nor will they fit beneath the seat. So what to bring? Well, if you are traveling primarily with photographic pursuits the object of your excursion, you'll want to bring your best body, as well as a backup camera; however, if photography is secondary, you may wish to consider something lighter and more portable – with a smartphone for backup.

Ok, so let's assume you aren't off to do a location shoot for National Geographic, but rather to enjoy yourself and hopefully get some great shots along the way...

Generally, you'll be better off resisting the temptation to pack your long zooms. Sure, having that 70-200mm $f/2.8$ with you would be nice; but are you going to

use it often enough to justify its considerable bulk? You do want to cover the range from wide angle through telephoto however; so, how should you go about it?

We'd recommend opting for a few primes (non-zoom lenses) in conjunction with a single wide range zoom designed for portability. If you are in the Nikon world for example, you'd do very well by selecting the 50mm $f/1.4$, 85mm $f/1.4$, and the often overlooked 18-200mm $f/3.5-5.6$ compact super-zoom. This yields a very lightweight kit, and provides enough flexibility for nearly any photographic situation you may encounter. It allows for great shallow depth of field portraiture, quick snapshots, good wide angle coverage (where generally you'll be stopping the lens down anyway, so the $f/3.5$ limitation isn't an obstacle), and decent telephoto shots.



The background of the page is a photograph showing the dark silhouettes of trees and foliage against a vibrant, orange and red sunset sky. The sun is not visible, but the light from the setting sun creates a strong gradient from a deep red at the bottom to a bright orange at the top.

Leave your reflectors, tripods, extra flashes, diffusers, etc. at home. On the other hand, some accessories that you do want to bring include spare batteries, extra memory cards, your charger, cleaning kit, and a compact storage unit to offload your images to. Try to resist the temptation to bring your notebook computer. A smartphone will probably serve you well enough to accommodate your desire to stay in-touch with friends and family back home; while a tablet such as the iPad can also serve as a supplementary storage medium in addition to performing rudimentary edits on your images. For the most part you'll want to save your processing for when you get home however. You'll do a much better job in general, and you get the opportunity to relive your trip while doing so!

SUBJECT MATTERS

Ok, so you've arrived at your destination and have excitedly started snapping everything in sight... you might want to pause a

little and consider your audience. Certainly, travel photos are for your own enjoyment; however, most of us also plan on sharing them with family and friends. How many of you have been forced to sit through excruciating vacation snap presentations by others? Do you want to join their ranks?

I find the best way to think about what to shoot is to imagine you are creating a travel guidebook and select your subjects based on their ability to convey a sense of place. Capture what's different from your everyday experience in a way that would pique interest in your readers. In fact, we would recommend actually creating a printed book of your adventures using one of the many excellent online services such as Blurb – they're far more likely to be enjoyed on a regular basis, and allow you to provide text to illuminate each image.

So let's say you were taking a trip to Mexico's Yucatan peninsula; what kind of images would you aim to capture? Certainly you'd

want to get lots of photos of the ancient ruins; however, as interesting as they are, one pyramid after another can get pretty boring. You also need to mix it up and include images of modern Mexico, locals in traditional dress, photos featuring the native cuisine, juxtapositions of new and ancient, family scenes, street vendors, religious processions, Mexican cowboys, beach life, and so on.

When actually shooting the ruins, while you'll obviously be taking a lot of wide angle images, you'll also want to mix it up by capturing scenes from odd angles, creating images that stress geometry over detail, photos that include people to convey a sense of scale, detail shots from bas

reliefs, artifacts taken from the excavations, people working on restorations, hawkers in the parking lots, and the like. The key is to think of how this next image will propel the story you are trying to relay forward in advance of actually clicking the shutter.

One further hint would be to take photos of all plaques and signage around the sites which explain what it is you are looking at. You won't print these, but they'll serve to inform your text should you wish to create a coffee table book. No matter how good your memory is, you're bound to forget some interesting details; and these images will help remind you in order that you might better share your experiences.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Travel photography can quickly become a chore if you find yourself lugging around too much gear – especially in the hot sun. It can also become a bore for others if you don't take some time selecting your subject matter. 'Because it's there' may be reason enough to climb a mountain... this doesn't apply to photography.

If, on the other hand, you take some care in what you bring, and put some serious thought into what you shoot, the process of travel photography will enhance your experience of the place, and the product of that endeavour will be a source of enjoyment for family and friends alike.

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**The END
of History**

If you believe some interpretations of the Mayan calendar, 2012 is to be our last year on the planet. It's been a good run; but frankly, we at DarkroomPro Magazine aren't quite ready to pack it in just yet.

All this talk of our impending doom however, got us thinking about which elements of our current culture would be preserved for posterity in that event, (I suppose for curious aliens as they pick through the charred remains of our civilization).

DIGITAL DEMISE

When you think about how history has been recorded since the inception of the

art with Herodotus, you realize that many of the nuances that breathe life into the narrative come not from the broad strokes that describe events and major personalities, but from individual accounts and personal relics that much more ably confer upon the reader a true sense of zeitgeist.

Let's say for the sake of argument, the apocalypse, as some have suggested, comes at the hands of a technological meltdown generated due to the shifting of Earth's magnetic field. All computers and devices that have their base in magnetism (pretty much everything) cease to function, and mankind, unable to cope, is practically wiped out.

What will our hypothetical alien visitors find when going over tangible artifacts from the 'Information Age'?: ironically, a lack of information.

THE BLACK HOLE

Today, in the business world, while more paper is generated than ever in our so-called 'paperless' offices, it's typically a transitional medium, rapidly discarded and run through the shredder for recycling. Hard copies of documents are printed on-demand as they occupy significantly less space residing on a hard drive than filed away in a cabinet.

This strategy is also being increasingly adopted by the public sector where archivists are more frequently turning to the digital realm for solutions to their storage problems.

In the home on the other hand, the vast majority of letters, photographs, emails etc., are rarely, if ever printed. They reside, tucked away on a range of removable media, hard drives, digital picture frames, and even smart phones.

In our apocalyptic scenario, this vast trove of data would simply be inaccessible; and what *did* remain would provide a woefully inadequate picture of the past two decades.

WHO CARES?

Of course, as stated above, we don't subscribe to the theory that the Mayan cal-

endar contains symbols prophetic of our doom, and even if we did, we'll be gone, so who gives a rat's patootie? Why are we even talking about it?

Of course our concern doesn't stem from our desire to leave an accurate account for alien archaeologists to parse, but those of our future generations; and few mediums confer as much information in a format as compact and long-lived as the printed photograph.

HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW



Since the dawn of time, man has sought insulation from mortality by way of passing knowledge, experience, and tradition from one generation to the next. At first the oral record was all we had to work with; and as anyone who has played a

game of broken telephone knows, that's not exactly the best way to ensure information fidelity. Since the invention of the written word however, preservation of history has seen vast improvements.

Problems still plague historians today however. Besides the multitude of languages (some such as that of the Indus Valley still indecipherable) encountered, the medium upon which they were laid down also changed, and were subject to their own preservation challenges. We moved

from stone tablets, to clay, papyrus, vellum, and eventually mass dissemination of the written word was enabled by Gutenberg's masterpiece, the printing press: probably the most significant invention of all time.

This format shifting has always been the cause of significant data loss, but has been particularly prevalent over the past century. How many of you still have access to floppy drives... VCRs... cassette recorders... record players? Got any players for wax cylinders kicking around the basement? With each new format shift, a little bit of our culture is lost. Think the 'cloud' is going to preserve your digital contributions forever? Think again.

The advent of the digital age has been a harbinger of doom for many once highly profitable business models – though few markets have seen such substantial amounts of technology-driven flux as the photographic industry.

Scant years ago, there were over 4000 Fotomats in the United States alone, offering next-day film processing services and providing consumers with a retail channel for all their photography related consumables. These were relegated to the dustbin of history when 1 hour processing outlets became ubiquitous. Now, these are also in decline; as apparently 1 hour is far too long to wait when you could do just as well or *better* on your own printer.

The problem is, for the vast majority of folks, images now tend to be trapped within their PCs – typically located in the digital equivalent to an enormous shoe-box of disarray. Photos are seldom printed, and

as a result, are most likely to be consigned to the binary graveyard, given the usual state of affairs: lax attention to backup, equipment failures, disorganization, and lack of awareness of the collection's existence or location on the part of one's heirs.

WHY BOTHER?

Ok, so maybe you still don't care about your photographic legacy. Nonetheless, we definitely encourage our readers to take the time to properly process and print their best photographs. Not only does it enhance the chances for their preservation, but it actually helps people become better photographers. How? Well for starters, selecting images for printing makes you really stop and think about the relative quality of one photo over another – as obviously you aren't going to print them all.

In the digital age, clicking the shutter doesn't have a perceived up-front cost. However, the back-end costs in terms of time addressing the sheer volume which results from that initial perception lead to having to deal significant quantities of photographic drek, which, upon consideration of print-worthiness, would otherwise be deleted. As one's eye becomes more accustomed to identifying the gems amidst the refuse, they are more able to frame those types of images within the viewfinder in the first place.

So, do your decedents and yourself a favour: print out your best photos! Who knows; if the rantings of the lunatic fringe turn out to be correct, one of your images may eventually find itself hanging on a starship's wall!

SIGMA



Sunflower | CAMERA: SIGMA SD14 | ISO: 50, F8, 1/13sec | LENS: SIGMA 85mm F1.4 EX DG HSM | Sigma | Copyright © 2010 Paul Traccker

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Just Right? Nikon's V1



For many photography novices, DSLRs are too large, cumbersome and complicated. While point-and-shoots are designed to have none of these issues, they often lack the picture quality, responsiveness, and flexibility afforded by their larger cousins.

The flip side of the coin is represented by DSLR lovers who wish to have the high degree of portability afforded by the point-and-shoots, but also retain image quality, flexibility, and control they have grown accustomed to.

With these desires in mind, Nikon launched its '1' series, whose two models include the J1 aimed at the consumer, and the V1 at the

pro and prosumer markets. So is the '1' series the best of both worlds that Nikon hoped it would be seen as? Is it the porridge that Goldilocks would have selected? Let's find out!

METHODOLOGY

Upon our request, the company was kind enough to send us the V1 in addition to all the lenses that are currently available for the unit: a 10-30mm $f/3.5-5.6$, 30-110mm $f/3.8-5.6$, and a 10mm $f/2.8$ prime.

To evaluate the camera properly, we felt we should review it from both perspectives as detailed above: the point-and-shoot consumer that wants better image quality, and the DSLR user wishing for more portability. To this end, we engaged the services of an individual from outside our team who volunteered

to test the V1 from the consumer angle.

Ann currently owns an older model Canon (Powershot SD700 IS) point-and-shoot; and is becoming increasingly disappointed with the results it yields when compared images of the same scenes produced from the DSLRs her friends own. She isn't interested in bulky, complicated equipment however; she just wants better images from the camera she brings with her to family events and on holiday.

We loaned the V1 to Ann for a week, asking her to give it a whirl to see how it would fit into her lifestyle and photographic requirements. She was delighted to do so, as she had actually been contemplating purchasing the unit in advance of our request, and would now have a thorough try-before-you-buy experience.

ANN'S IMPRESSIONS

As Nikon hadn't included the manual or quick-start guide in their shipment to us, Ann found herself at a bit of a loss at the outset. She managed to power up the unit, but couldn't get it to focus on anything, as she was unaware the zoom lenses require you to press the button and extend the lens from



its retracted position in order to function.

We subsequently found a PDF manual online and downloaded it to an iPad to get her up and running. She studiously read the entire (quite lengthy and comprehensive) file, and was thereafter in a much better position to give the unit a proper evaluation.

She spent the week shooting images of her grandchildren, activity at the harbour, wildlife and so on, as well as short video clips of the same. We received the camera back, examined the contents of the SD card, and asked Ann for her thoughts:

DP: So, Ann, you've had a week to evaluate the V1. What were your initial thoughts regarding the unit?

Ann: Well, there were some things I liked and some things I didn't...

DP: What did you think about the image quality of the photographs you produced?

Ann: I thought it was good; I didn't think it was that much better than what I already have. You know, for the increased bulk and the lack of flexibility with having to carry around the lenses, I just didn't think it was worth the improvement in photo quality. One thing I really did like was the rapid shutter where you can get a whole bunch of pictures at once. You know one of them is going to be a great picture. I really liked that. That's the one thing that I don't have on my camera that I really would like to have but it still really wasn't worth the difference in price – but it really wasn't

the price, it was the bulk of the camera.

DP: Well speaking about that, how about the responsiveness? Were you able to get the shots you wanted fairly quickly and easily?

Ann: No. It seemed the lens that I needed was never on the camera in that moment. I'd see something off the balcony, like an eagle going by, and I'd want to take a shot. You know, with my old camera it may not be as good a picture but I can just pick up the camera and click. I can zoom quickly, and can quickly have a flash or no flash. I couldn't do that with the V1. The response time just wasn't as good for me.

DP: How do you feel about the ergonomics of the camera?

Ann: A little bulky.

There's another thing too – and I don't know if I just wasn't doing it right – the on/off switch was confusing. The light didn't stay on and so I didn't quite know sometimes whether the camera was on or off.

DP: How did it feel in your hands?

Ann: A little clunky. You had to be careful where you put your fingers – not to put them in front of this, or touch that – it just wasn't great.

DP: Were there any particular features you thought were quite useful?

Ann: Yep, I liked the fact that it focuses on faces, the quick shutter speed was a big thing for me. The other thing I liked was that it did take much better pictures in low light. That was a big deal. I really liked that. There was

an obvious and significant improvement there.

DP: Any features or aspects of the camera that you could do without?

Ann: I didn't like the tips flashing up in front of your face (although I know you can turn that off), I didn't find that useful at all. I didn't find that the zoom – I know it's better than my camera – but there wasn't enough of a difference to make me want to switch. I could also do without having to switch the lenses all the time. I would like it if you had the

“The other thing I liked was that it did take much better pictures in low light.”

option to you know even have a minimal flash there when you need it without having to put one on. I wasn't even work-

ing with a flash attachment – I didn't have one – but that would just be one more thing to be carrying around and fumbling with.

DP: Well the J1 does have a built-in flash, but there again, it doesn't have the viewfinder which is something that you had wanted as well...



Ann: Yeah, I wouldn't want to do without the viewfinder. The viewfinder was good.

DP: What about the form factor – do you find this camera would fit into your lifestyle in terms of portability and versatility?

Ann: There were several times that we went out on hikes, and I was going to take pictures. I had that camera, and I actually thought of taking it, but I just didn't want to lug it along with all the lenses and everything – and on a hike I don't want to be worried about dropping lenses, you know?

DP: How does it compare to your Canon overall?

Ann: Not enough of a difference to make me want to buy it.

DP: And how old is your Canon?

Ann: I think it's about about 5 or 6 years old?

DP: Did you learn anything about yourself as a photographer while using this camera?

Ann: Yes, I did. I learned that pictures aren't as important to me as I thought they were. I do want to take nicer pictures; and I do like taking pictures; but for me, I realized that taking pictures is more a part of the experience, it's not *the* experience. I'm not going out to produce great pictures; I'm going out to have a good time and capture memories on the camera – I realized that. If I was a photographer, or even if it was more of a hobby than it is now, I might want to take that camera to go out specifically to take pictures; but I realized that's not what I use my camera for. I use it to capture memories; and what I have does that pretty well.



You know what? In that case, the camera would be the experience, not the event that you're trying to capture. That's how I felt.

DP: Ok, so I suppose the last question would have been “would you purchase one?”, but I guess you've already answered that for us.

Ann: No I wouldn't, which is really great because I probably would have gone out and purchased that camera if I hadn't had the opportunity to try it. So it was a learning experience for me actually. I learned what I need is a point-and-shoot, or something that was in-between those two where I didn't have to switch lenses all the time... where I had a basic option that did most of the things that I need to do, and if I wanted to take special pictures, then I could put on the odd lens. But with that one, without having all the lenses along with you, you're really held back too much.

THE FLIP SIDE

Ok, well that wasn't exactly a ringing endorsement. To provide a counterpoint to Ann's perspective, I decided to give the V1



a whirl myself. As Editor of DarkroomPro Magazine, I get to try a lot of photographic equipment, and felt my view would likely be significantly different from that of the average consumer, given my exposure and familiarity with all the gear on offer.

Normally I shoot a Nikon D3; though I do have several other bodies ranging all the way down to a little D50 which I use when portability is paramount. Still, the D50 can be bulky at times, so my interest in the V1 and its promise to provide DSLR comparable imagery in a small form factor was pretty high. Unlike Ann, I don't have issues changing lenses, though I am also often seen using two camera bodies equipped with lenses of differing focal lengths when I need a speedy response to whatever is unfolding before me.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I'd read all the specs in advance of receiving the camera; but specifications often don't inform as to the experience one is likely to have with a new piece of equipment. I found this definitely the case with the V1. Everything seemed unfamiliar, with the exception of the menuing system, and I even spent over 5 minutes (having no manual at the time) trying to figure out where exactly to insert the memory card (the slot is in the battery chamber).

I too was confused by the focusing system, but got used to it in fairly short order. So after working with the camera for a week, here's what I found...

WHAT'S HOT

The camera packs a ton of interesting features into its operating system, one of the best being the ability to select between mechanical and electronic shutter – enabling 5 frames per second in the former mode, while providing access to 10, 30, and even 60 fps in the latter! This is fantastic for action shots involving sports or erratically moving subjects like children.

Another use of this high frame rate is built into one of the camera's primary modes: Smart Photo Selector. This setting takes a short burst of images and automatically selects the best among them (in the camera's opinion of course) to display for your approval. You may elect to choose another image from the stack if you wish; however, I found the camera was pretty good at selecting the best of the bunch. This is a great feature for those moments when you're trying to capture a fleeting expression, or avoiding blinking etc.

Movie mode is where this camera stands out from the rest. Featuring full 1080p video capture and a built-in stereo microphone, the V1 has some other tricks up its sleeve utilizing the electronic shutter: slow motion at either 400 or 1200 frames per second! Of course, at these speeds, resolution has been reduced to 640x240 and 320x120 respectively; however, the effects are quite dramatic and a lot of fun to play with!

The display is bright and crisp, sporting 921,000 dots and the viewfinder is actually another LCD display which is automatically activated upon proximity to your face. For shooting video outdoors in bright conditions, this is definitely a welcome advantage, as DSLR video is typically only available for viewing on the rear screen, while the viewfinder itself is disabled.

WHAT'S NOT

Obviously, from an ergonomic perspective, the camera takes some getting used to – given my experience is primarily with

SLOW MOTION VIDEO

In slow motion mode, though resolution has been reduced to 320x120 in this example as a result of the 1200 frames per second capture rate; the effects are quite dramatic and a lot of fun to play with!





full-sized bodies. Still, the V1 felt uncomfortable in my hands, having too many tiny controls for me to deal with in the week I was working with it. I found I was constantly looking away from the viewfinder to adjust this or that, and that many of the functions I wished to access were buried in the (quite well thought out and designed) menu system. I'm sure I'd eventually become accustomed to the controls; but I don't feel I should to have to work at something that should become second nature to a seasoned photographer after a week of use.

Ergonomics aside, I was prepared to be dazzled by the image quality Nikon purports the camera to be capable of. Taking a few test shots in a variety of lighting conditions, I was surprised to see that even at ISO 100, there was frequently noise in the shadowed areas of the photograph. I wasn't expecting this. Certainly the noise was typical of Nikon: not unpleasant and rather film-like; however, this is not what I would be hoping for from a camera body in this price range. The

tiny sensor is clearly to blame here. Packing 10 megapixels onto a 13.2x8.8mm sensor is quite impressive; but if it yields unsatisfactory results, it's rather a wasted effort. Other compact cameras in this category feature significantly larger sensors and thus are less prone to this difficulty. On the other hand, white balance was very good, and the colour accuracy equally so... thus, not an entire loss.

CONCLUSION

So, is the Nikon V1 a panacea for the problems it seeks to address in its two target markets? It's a good effort, but sadly no. We feel it's a great start and look forward to the next iteration, but here Nikon seems to fall short of the mark in too many areas for us to give it a whole-hearted recommendation. Certainly the camera has its strengths, and for many, its shortcomings will not prove as problematic as they were for our testers. While not able to give this particular version a thumbs-up, we applaud Nikon's first endeavour here, and expect great things from the company in future.

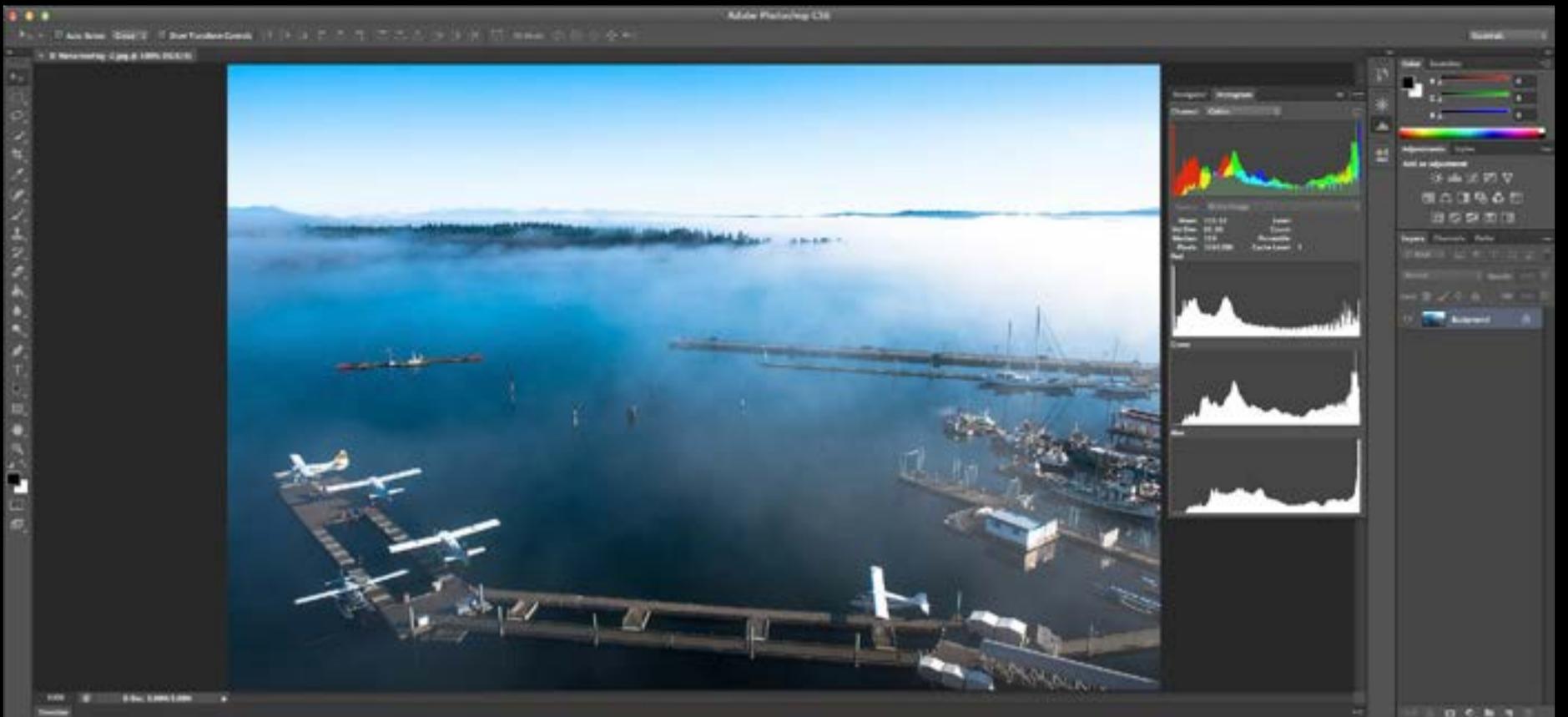


PHOTO FUNDAMENTALS

Understanding The Histogram

One of the most useful, yet least understood features of your digital camera has got to be the histogram. That daunting looking bar graph, or series of charts in the case of channel-specific histograms, has baffled more than a few upon first encounter. So what's it all about?

IT'S SIMPLE.

First off, all your histogram does is measure the number of pixels at a specific level of luminosity* within your image. That's it. The x axis (or horizontal scale) represents the luminosity level ranging from 0-255, while the y axis (or vertical) measures the relative number of pixels at that particular luminosity. Values at left along the x axis are dark

and move right to bright. So if you have a lot of amplitude at the right side of your histogram (represented by a hump in the graph) your image will contain a lot of bright values; while if your image has a lot more amplitude on the left, it will typically be darker.

Your camera may have a combined RGB histogram which is less precise about where clipping (channel information loss due to under or overexposure) is occurring, given it adds the individual channel histograms together and discards colour information – presenting one unified graph; or you may have histogram of each channel which provides for a more accurate representation. Ideally, you'll have both.

* Yes, we know this term isn't entirely scientifically accurate, but we're talking within the context of digital imaging parlance here... and if it's good enough for Adobe Photoshop, it's good enough for us.

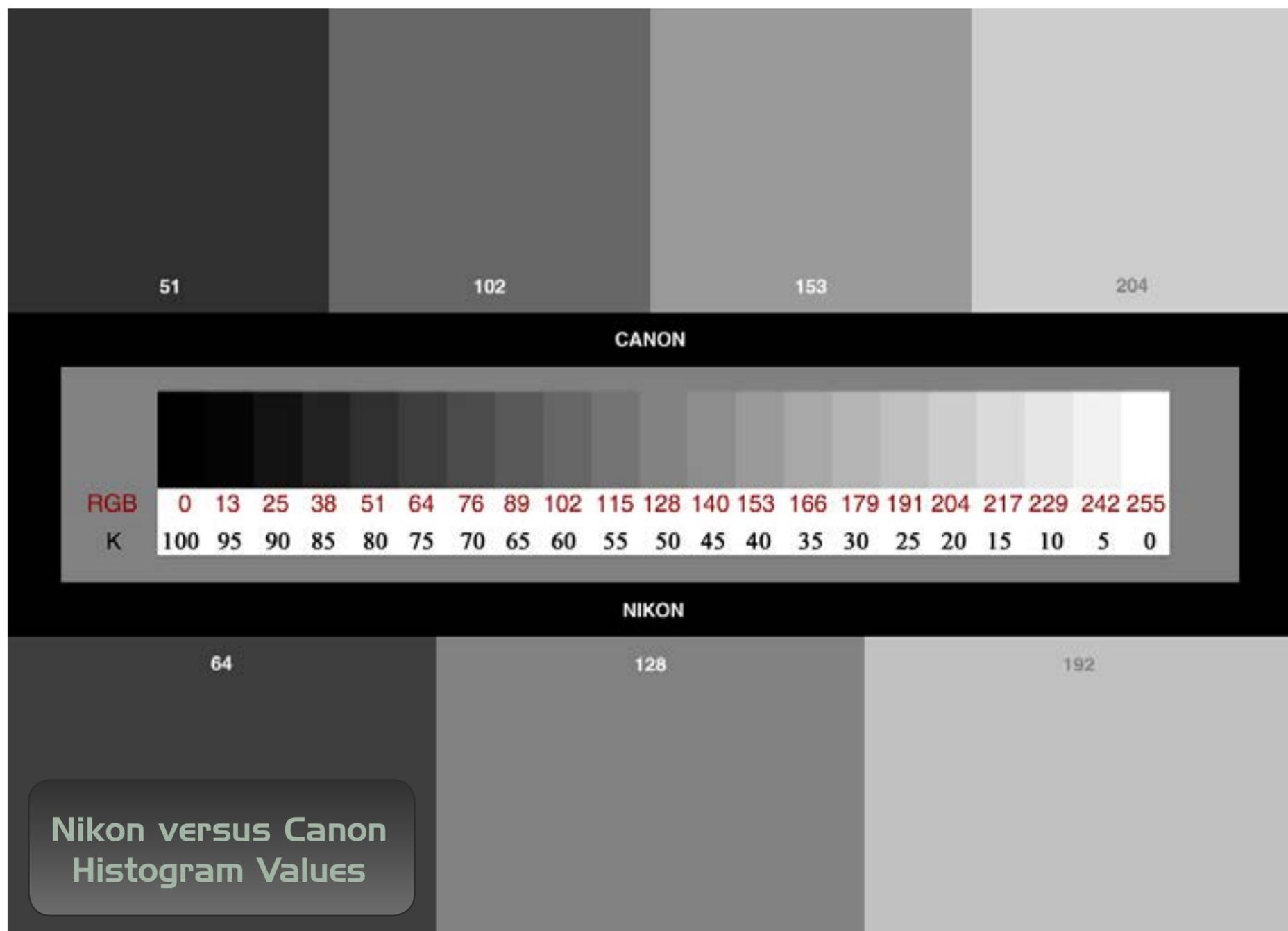
WELL THAT'S EXCITING... WHAT'S IT GOOD FOR?

Most folks will tell you, the histogram's only use is providing very rudimentary information on your exposure. If you have a spike at the extreme of either end, it's an indication that you've blown out your highlights or shadows and may wish to adjust your exposure. These same folks will tell you they almost never look at the histogram, as they use 'blinkies' (the option which causes overexposed highlights to blink on and off when viewing an image) to inform them of overexposure, and the image display itself to judge exposure in general.

What happens however, when you're out-

doors in bright sunlight? Can you accurately assess exposure based on the barely visible LCD screen? The display is actually a pretty lousy way to judge whether you've nailed your exposure or not under the best of conditions. How many times have you viewed an image on the back panel which looked great, only to find it was less than optimal when you downloaded it to your computer for processing? We find the photo review function good for examining composition details... and that's about it.

Histograms, on the other hand, provide information on your image which is accurate under all viewing conditions. The trick is knowing what you're looking at, and what to do with it.



First off, as mentioned above, the histogram can certainly inform you as to whether you've blown out your highlights or shadows, but channel-specific ones also let you know where that clipping is occurring. This enables you to make a decision on whether that is important given the context of your image. Sometimes you may decide that having one channel slightly blown will yield a better image overall as it may push another channel further to the right which allows for more information being captured within it. Generally, this isn't the case, as you don't want to lose any information in your image; however, having this knowledge empowers the photographer in a way that 'blinkies' simply do not.

The above example also points to another important fact about digital photography which may only be fully taken advantage of by utilization of the histogram: your camera's sensor records more information at the higher end of the luminosity scale. Nikon's sensors for example, typically record 75% of their available data points in the range between luminosity values at the midpoint of 128, and the top of the range at 255. This leads many a savvy shooter to expose their images with a bias towards the higher end of the histogram range in order to maximize preserved details, with a mind to balance exposure out in post.

LEARNING LUMINOSITY

One further advantage of the histogram is that it actually allows you, with time and

practice, to accurately judge exposure. Many people poo-poo this idea; however, they generally aren't aware of the prerequisite skills needed to be able to pull it off.

In order to use a histogram to gauge exposure, you first need to be able to look at a scene with your eyes and judge the dominant luminosity values. Then, after shooting that same scene, look at the histogram to see if you notice the preponderance of pixels around that value. If so, you nailed it. If not, adjust. This takes less practice than you might think. We actually built a luminosity game that we'll be releasing for iPhone shortly in order to test ourselves. People improved quite rapidly, and within a week or so, were able to thereafter apply what they learned to their photography.

One proponent of this technique is world class photographer and instructor Ron Reznick. His 'SureShot System' of instructional videos strongly advocates careful use of the histogram, and learning how to manually evaluate luminosity values.

HISTOGRAM

DIFFERENCES

While the principles behind histograms are essentially the same, different camera manufacturers display their information in a variety of ways. Nikon for example utilizes the most common histogram format which divides the chart up into four segments with the line in the centre representing the midpoint of luminosity of 128. Values at each line are 0, 64, 128, 192, and 255... which

makes a lot of sense. This format is also used by Adobe in its Photoshop line of products.

Canon on the other hand employs a 5 segment histogram with the lines representing

the somewhat strange values of 0, 51, 102, 153, 204, 255. Canon's design obviously gives you more reference points, but we generally prefer Nikon's due to its format being duplicated in Photoshop.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Well, hopefully the histogram is a little less of a mystery to you now and won't inspire fear or consternation when it makes its appearance on your display. Perhaps you'll become a convert like me and select a default photo review mode containing a small image of the shot, accompanied by both a combined RGB, and separate channel-specific histograms in the same view. It certainly serves me well. If you have any questions or thoughts on the above, please feel to submit your comments to editor@darkroom.pro. We'd love to hear from you!



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MARVELOUS MACROS

This time around, DarkroomPro Magazine interviews Sharon Johnstone, professional macro photographer and digital artist, on her techniques and inspiration for creating stunning images.

DP: Hi Sharon. Thanks for agreeing to speak to us today! Maybe you can start us off by filling us in on how long it is that you've been a photographer?

Sharon: Well actually I studied art at college – I did a fine art degree. I specialized in print making, but even back then I was into photography and that's how I got my inspiration and starting point for my prints. It really took off four or five years ago when I got my first macro lens.

DP: Ok, so is photography your primary vocation?

Sharon: It is now. Obviously I studied art originally, but after I got the macro lens, that just completely took over.

DP: So what got you interested in macro photography?

Sharon: Even when I was back at college, I didn't use a macro lens then, but I was always looking for details in nature and abstract compositions – whether it was tree bark, or I these amazing boulders I found on the beach this one time which were blue and orange with these black veins running through them. Stuff like that has always excited me.

With the macro lens it's amazing because you can literally find things that people don't usually notice. I found with the macro lens I could achieve all the things I wanted to do that I wasn't perhaps getting with the art stuff.

DP: Your macro photography diverges from the traditional subject matter – which for most people seems to be insects – what made you select water droplets as your primary focus?

Sharon: They're just beautiful. Bugs haven't really ever done it for me... I'm not a creepy crawly person!

DP: So it's just something you noticed initially in nature and then...

Sharon: It was. You know I'd go out in the morning and the grass would be covered with sparkling dewdrops. Or I'd be photographing moss and it's so beautiful when it's ripping with dewdrops. Most people wouldn't give moss a second glance, but I like finding these little things that people don't normally notice.

DP: Ok, well that's great. So, what kind of gear do you use to capture your images.

Sharon: The gear? Well, I use a Canon 7D body – I do have a professional camera as well, but I tend not to use that so much for the macro because it's heavy. Once I've added the macro lens, the macro flash, and the extension tubes as well, it all gets quite heavy. I use an EF 60mm lens, and I do use up to three tubes as well now: the EF 25. The one thing I can't live without is the macro flash.

DP: So, how beneficial is the macro flash?

Sharon: I use the two light – so you've got the twin heads – and you can position it

exactly where you want the light... especially using tubes. Obviously with tubes there's quite a distance between the camera and the end of the lens, so when you need the light to fall exactly where you want it with this setup, the macro flash is essential. The flash was the best investment for me.

DP: Yeah, they're not exactly cheap those dual flashes – how much was yours?

Sharon: I think when I bought it a couple of years ago it was £800 (aprox. \$1280 USD) – a scary amount of money.

DP: That is a lot! So, how much of a difference did it make? I mean you were obviously shooting macro in advance of your acquisition of that flash...

Sharon: Yeah I started off initially using the built-in flash; but obviously it was hit and miss. Sometimes it just wouldn't light the way you needed it to. So the macro flash really has made a massive difference.

DP: So, wise investment obviously.

Sharon: Absolutely.

DP: Now, do you use a tripod?

Sharon: I don't like tripods with my macro stuff because I'm often crawling around on the ground and I'm getting into awkward positions. I find it too fiddly. So I do most of it handheld... and hold my breath a lot!

DP: I notice that you seem to manufacture some of your scenes...

Sharon: I do bring stuff indoors sometimes, yeah. I like playing with different backgrounds and experimenting with lighting





gels. I think with the dandelions especially, with the slightest breeze they're a nightmare to photograph outside. When you bring them indoors you can play with different backgrounds, and I spray them as well with an old cleaning bottle. It produces a lovely fine mist; so I get really pretty little droplets. If it rains on a dandelion, it gets a little mushy; but I can control it with a fine mist – so yeah, I do bring stuff indoors to play with as well.

DP: Ok, and you were saying that you use different backdrops and gels... how is it that you go about using those?

Sharon: I've got this box full of all sorts of wrapping paper, and coloured cards, and colourful feathers. I raided the kids' toy-box one day and pulled out all the bright coloured feathers. You don't need big pieces to do the

macro work, so I've just got a box full of A4 sheets and different materials I can use as backdrops. The lighting gels sit on your flash heads & allow you to create different colours.

DP: Another subject I've seen you tackle is oil and water abstractions. What gave you the idea to do that?

Sharon: Um, I think I was actually in a magazine. I saw an article about it in a magazine and I gave it a go! It's amazing fun. I love playing with oil and water.

DP: So what's your process for creating those? Are you just dumping some oil in water and seeing what happens or...?!

Sharon: Well often the oil and water does what it wants to do but it's literally just a glass, and whatever colours I want to

use I'll just put beneath the glass from my feathers or backgrounds. I do put in some washing-up liquid [dish detergent] in as well because it separates all the bubbles. I don't know if you've noticed that if you put oil in water it just spreads right out; but I find with the washing-up liquid, it gives me lots of little bubbles in each glass.

DP: Now do you use two plates of glass, or just one or...

Sharon: It's just a glass of water because...

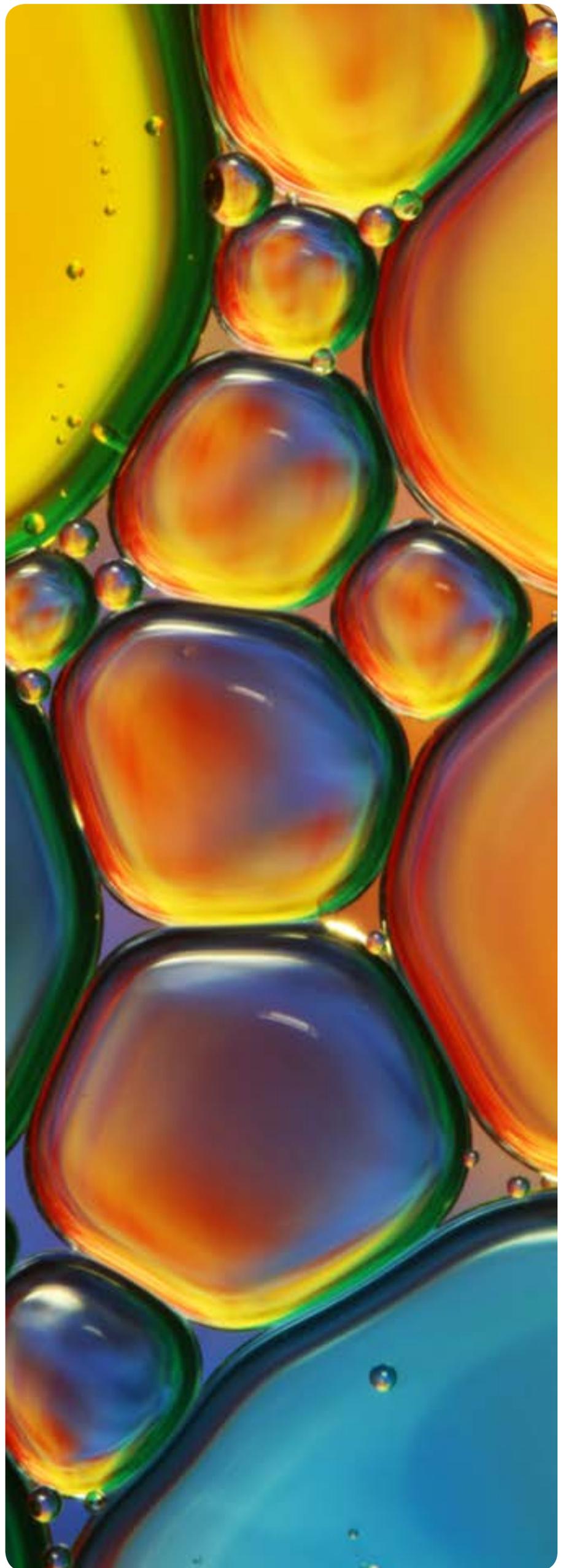
DP: Oh! An actual drinking glass?

Sharon: Yes, because I'm using the macro lens and tubes, I don't need a wide surface area of water, so I can get away with a glass.

DP: Very cool! So, I understand, as you were saying earlier, that you have a background in printing, and that you do your own printing and framing. What drives you to do that versus using a commercial service?

Sharon: Well I'm actually nuts about paper, and I love experimenting with different papers. But really I just like being in control of the colours and the process from start to finish. I do print a lot of my stuff out because if it's on the computer, it just sits there, but I actually enjoy the finished product – having it printed out. I guess I'm just old fashioned.

DP: Well we're big advocates of printing here. I mean what happens if you have some sort of electronic catastrophe and heaven forbid you lose all your stuff digitally, at least you have your finished prints. So I certainly appreciate your sentiments there. Now do you sell your homemade prints?



Sharon: I do, though I tend to to sell most of my stuff through artist's websites at the moment.

DP: We saw that – you use a variety of them. So how does that process work with these sites?

Sharon: Well I originally joined the sites because of the artist community aspect. It was just a way to see what other photographers were doing, and you could ask each other questions about equipment or techniques; and it just went from there really.

DP: Ok, and if you had to choose, which of the services that you utilize do you prefer?

Sharon: Well I've been with RedBubble the longest – they're an Australian site – but I've just started using recently Society6.

DP: And you're leaning toward them now?

Sharon: I am, yeah.

DP: So, what's the advantage of one versus another?

Sharon: Well you get to know other photographers through these sites and catch up with people that you sort of get to know. So there isn't a great deal of difference between those sites, but I find myself leaning towards Society6.

DP: Ok, well moving on to another subject, let's say you were talking to an aspiring photographer who was interested in macro, but just getting started. What advice would you give them?

Sharon: Just experiment a lot. A lot of the macro stuff that I've learned to do has just

been experimenting. Just give it a go and keep playing. It's the best way to learn.

DP: Any particular gear you'd suggest they invest in sooner rather than later?

Sharon: Well to be honest, my macro lens – the 60mm – that isn't the most expensive macro lens out there, but I really rate it as a lens. It's a beautiful lens. You can probably pick it up for perhaps £300. But I have used my tubes with a 50mm, a lens that most photographers have, and it works brilliantly. So there are a lot of options than going down the expensive gear route. I've even got a Lensbaby that I play with from time to time and a macro lens for that.

DP: How do you find the Lensbaby actually?

Sharon: It's quite hard, but it's loads of fun!

DP: What's tricky about it?

Sharon: Well depending on what aperture disc you use... have you ever used one?

DP: Yes I have a couple of the lenses...

Sharon: Well, if you use the wider aperture discs it's quite difficult to find the little bit that you want to be in focus... especially when you start tilting the lens around!

DP: Any final thoughts on macro photography, what keeps you passionate about it?

Sharon: There's always something new to photograph. I don't have to travel hundreds of miles to find some beautiful scene. I just step outside the back door first thing in the morning and find something. I'm constantly experimenting and trying new things so I'm never going to get bored!



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PHOTOPRENEUR

an interview with Frank Doorhof

Today we have a conversation with world-class Dutch photographer and Kelby instructor Frank Doorhof. Join us as we explore his

unique vision and delve into the strategies the brought him the success so many aspiring photographers crave....



Hi Frank, maybe you can start this conversation off by telling us how you got into the photography business, and what kind of work you do.

Frank: I got started in photography at a very early age. My parents and grandparents were all into photography and video. So you could say I grew up in the darkroom with all the analogue techniques. I just love making images — especially the creative part. So I first did a little sidestep into video, but I found I didn't like that very much, so I eventually turned to digital photography. To be 100% correct, it was actually September 11, 2001...

At that time we were in Indianapolis, and I was there only with a video camera. My main problem was — and of course that everybody knows what happened then, and I really wanted to capture that — but I was unable to capture stills which I thought would be much more powerful. So as soon as I got back home, I delved into digital photography. Up until that time, I had only shot analogue. With digital I eventually ended up with the Canon 10D, and it grew from there into shooting medium format, as well as with the Canon 5D mark III.

So, what is my business? I started out as a sports and nature photographer; but that wasn't really a business; it was more of a hobby. When I decided to go into business, I understood that with photography, it's very hard to earn money. Even when you're in the semi-high-end, it's still very difficult to

do what you want and earn an honest living with it. So, I started a computer company.

Then in about 2003 or 2004, I got a big client for photography— a famous Dutch piano player. He was a personal friend and asked me to do some portraits. I was like “Oh no problem at all, I can do portraits...” Then I hung up the phone and thought “Oh my God, what did I just do?” I'd never really shot portraits before. I'd done a little bit of model photography, but nothing like a famous person. So I just went for it, shot some portraits and everybody just loved the images. After that, we got a lot of emails from people saying “Well if you can shoot something like that, you can certainly shoot us; so, can you give us some quotes?”

So before I knew it, my wife took over the computer company, and our studio grew and grew.

For a time I was shooting for a monthly magazine, but I was never 100% satisfied with the way they printed my images: the staples were in the wrong place, the colours were wrong, they cropped it differently than I would have liked it etc. I told them specifically not to use a particular image for a cover, and as you can imagine, there it was in the stores on the cover. So, when that magazine stopped [production], I also got a lot of questions asking “Do you teach?”

So I was at a crossroads: do I go to other magazines and offer myself as a photographer and see if I can make some money doing that, or should I just try teaching one or two workshops? Well I decided to do



the workshops and they were totally sold out! After that I did four or five more with the same result, and I never looked back.

At the moment I still do fashion work of course and we do a lot of artists, actors, singers — whatever, and I love both. But because I teach, that's my main focus at the moment, and I have the opportunity to just choose my assignments. So when I have the opportunity to shoot a famous person, I can just do it — but I don't have to work for a magazine which I am not content with how they publish the images.

As you can see from my work, I'm very perfectionistic; I love to see my work the way it's intended

to be. So no changes in the crop, no changes in the colour... I'm really very picky about that. When you work for a magazine, the publication very often determines how your images come out; and that really frustrates me.

So with what I do now, I make my own images and I see the whole world. I teach my workshops everywhere people want me to, so we travel a lot. Of course when I'm on location teaching, I'm always trying to get good models and great locations, so my own portfolio is growing every time. I think I am in the best part of the business — especially for me; I love what I'm doing. And what I see from the response is that a lot of people like the way I approach the business, so, yeah, I think that's our business in a nutshell.

DP: That's great! I see you do quite a variety

of things in your business including doing instructional videos for Scott Kelby's, Kelby Training... how'd you get involved with that?

Frank: That's a really nice story actually. You know Scott saw an advertisement from Elinchrom about the D-Lites, and I had done that advertisement for them. The only thing I asked for from Elinchrom was to please put my website in the advertisement. Ever since, Scott has been following my work, and a few years ago there was an exhibition in the Netherlands called Professional Imaging, and he was the guest speaker there. Like for many photographers, Scott Kelby was my absolute hero. I owned a lot of his books; and I knew Kelby Training and hung

out at that website to see all the people I admire in one place. During the exhibition, I got a message on my blog that said “Frank, I'm a huge fan of your work. I see you will be attending Professional Imaging — I will be there and hope to meet up.” and it was signed Scott Kelby. The first time I read it, I wanted to delete it because I thought it was some kind of prank. I know that a lot of people that I know understand that I like Scott's work, so I thought “somebody's pulling my leg”, you know? But somehow a little voice in my head said “leave it there.” So, I left the message there (and it's still there on my blog if you search for it), and when I arrived at Professional Imaging, I saw Scott and approached him, and indeed it was very clear that he had posted that message on my blog.

We started talking and he saw some of the demos I had done for Elinchrom; and



though he didn't speak any Dutch, I think he got something out of it that he was looking for. So the next thing I saw from him was a segment on channeling light, the way I teach it — and this is why I love Scott Kelby by the way — he immediately said he had been to the Netherlands, seen a photographer named Frank Doorhof, and this is his technique. Any other photographer of his stature might think, “Well, you know, Frank Doorhof, he's a guy in the Netherlands, he will never find out... I'm just going to sell this as my own technique.” Not

Scott Kelby. Now that I know him a little bit more (having done Photoshop World, the Light It, Shoot It, Retouch It tour in Amsterdam), I see he's a real honest guy — one of the best in the business I think. So when they asked me to join Kelby Training I was totally blown away, and of course I said yes. Ever since it's been a roller-coaster for us!

DP: That sounds fantastic. I see that you also sell your own DVDs; what are these all about?

Frank: Oh, yeah. One day we started one of the workshops and a friend of mine video-

taped it. It was still shot in SD at the time. The only reason I taped it was to see what I was telling people and to see how I can improve. Some people will just go in front of the group, do the workshop and that's it; but as I told you before, I'm a perfectionist, so I wanted to see how my performance was, and if it all made sense... you know, if there was a structure to it so that people wouldn't lose track. I edited it down and sent it to my Elenchrom agent in Amsterdam, and they saw it and said "Frank, you have to release this!" I said "It's just a simple recording that wasn't intended to be released". But of course the little voice in my head again convinced me that maybe I should release it. So I showed it first to 10 or 20 people to see their response... which were very positive. So I decided to release it, and to be honest, after about three or four months I already grew tired of it because it was a live recording and we were getting a lot of questions from the States about whether we were going to teach workshops there — this was way before the Kelby stuff by the way. So I decided to make a DVD called "A Guide to Model Photography", and we filmed that in HD on location in both English and Dutch. That has been a huge success for us. After that, we released An Inside Look I&II which are live DVDs shot on location and in the studio in which I explain stuff about lighting, metering, styling of the models, why we choose certain makeup and so on. We always try to keep it 50% on location and 50% in the studio. After making Inside Look II, I wanted to stop making the DVDs because at that moment I was a little bit burned out

and wanted to focus on the workshops. Then my grandmother passed away two weeks before we went to Los Angeles to teach. We didn't have time to mourn so what we did was fly to LA, and my wife took over the cameras and filmed the workshops. When you come back after something like that, you know, nothing interests you. So what I did was sit down and edit a new video called Light I, then Light II, Light III... then I joined Kelby. Last year we released Live in Boston and that's the whole workshop. Then we filmed two days of workshops live, including live voice and we did Dutch subtitles this time. That has been a real best seller and at the moment, it's selling like hotcakes... so that's what's forced us to do downloads for the DVDs.

DP: Well that's interesting as I was actually going to ask you what kind of traction you were getting these days for DVDs given the push for online video. Are you looking at transitioning it to the online sphere?

Frank: Yeah, at the moment you can download all the DVDs. So on our web store, you can order the DVDs now by download.

DP: That's great! So we've been talking a lot about your live seminars, can you tell us a little about the "Why Fake It When You Can Create It?" tour?

Frank: Sure. It's an ongoing tour, and what we do is explore my motto, which is "Why fake it when you can create it?" So it sounds a little bit funny; but for me it's reality. Of course I still do a lot of Photoshop though...



After meeting up with Matt Klowski and reading his great book by the way (Compositing Secrets), you can't ignore compositing anymore. It's actually quite hilarious because I was totally against compositing; and after hanging out with Matt for some time I was totally addicted to it.

DP: If I can just interject here, some of our readers are not necessarily going to be aware of what compositing is, so maybe you could explain that.

Frank: Oh yeah, of course! Compositing is when you shoot a model against a background... in the early days you'd use a green or blue background, but nowadays it's better to use light grey. Then you cut your model out and place him or her onto another background. So in fact, you are creating the whole scene. You're shooting in the studio, and you're adding elements from other shoots into one art piece. So that's the real distinction — it's not a photograph anymore, it's an art piece. So while I do a lot of compositing and Photoshop work, the 'why fake it when you can create it' model comes from a belief that when you shoot, and you understand what you're doing, you know how to manipulate your lighting, and you know how to meter your light, and in fact if you see the light and how it falls upon your subject, then you shouldn't have to fake it in Photoshop. There are way too many photographers out there at the moment and its one of the most heard remarks on-set "Oh, we'll fix it in Photoshop". That's something on my team that will get you fired, because there is nothing that will really get 'fixed'

in Photoshop [that will produce the same results as doing it right in the first place]. Only things that I 'fix' in Photoshop would be something like removing a light pole if necessary — because if I cut it down I'd go to jail! But only if its necessary, because if it's possible to choose another angle, the pole will be out of the images. We won't fix anything in Photoshop that we can fix on-set.

So what we do on the tour is small seminars or large workshops and it all fits under the same tour.

DP: Ok, well we spoke a little bit about metering, and I understand you're a big advocate of using light meters... can you explain to our readers why you feel strongly about this when so many other photographers forego their use?

Frank: Yeah, well to be totally honest, I really don't understand why anyone shouldn't meter. I also read the forums and I read the magazines that say with digital you don't need to meter anymore. That's like saying "Well you know, since we've got digital, and we've got Photoshop, we don't need to photograph anymore." During the seminars I will always pick out one person — and you always know that guy... he's the one with the biggest mouth — and he's also the one that doesn't use a light meter. I will ask him why and he will say "Well, I look at the histogram". Then I say "Well, can you give me the numbers for your skin?" Then he will be quiet and look at me as if to say what do you mean? Then I say "Well if you want to have an accurate image of your model, and you are only bias-



ing this on the histogram, you should know what the model's skin numbers are". He'll say "Well it should be in the middle". I'll respond "Well what if he has very dark skin?" He'll say "It should be a little to the left then".

"What if his brother comes in and he's even darker than that? And his other brother who is lighter?..."

He'll say "Oh, well I can see where you're going with this — you need a light meter."

So that's what I try to tell people. You know using a light meter won't slow you down; in fact, it will speed you up incredibly.

What if you have a client, let's say it's Beyoncé, and she's giving you 5 minutes (and that's a

lot of time for her), and you shoot — then you have to go to your computer and check to see if the skin tones are ok and if your lighting is ok. Well, it's not ok. You go back. In the mean time, Beyoncé is giving you way way too much time already. If you make sure that when you meet her — before the talent comes on-set — you've got your exposure, let's say $f/11$ or $f/8$, and you set your camera, and the first image you make is already perfect, your customer will look at the monitor and say, "ok, this is a professional photographer". The thing is they're used to people fooling around at the moment. They don't even look strangely anymore when you screw up the first six or seven images... and that's

ridiculous. A photographer should take his first image, and the exposure should be ok; that's what you can do with a light meter.

Imagine that Beyoncé comes back the next day; and you deliver the images to her press agency, and on one image she looks like Beyoncé after a tanning salon, and on the other ones she looks like she's been very sick. You can't deliver that stuff. So when you use a light meter, every day she comes in, she will have exactly the same exposure. It's not about being an advocate for using light meters, or being against people that use histograms, it's just about common sense. You want proper exposure, and there's one tool for it — and that's the light meter.

DP: Well that's some excellent advice. Now you've been talking about all the things you've been doing with your business; how much of your time is actually devoted to photography these days?

Frank: Actually shooting? I think I teach 60% and shoot 40%.

DP: Ah, that's a better ratio than I had expected given how much additional stuff you're doing!

Frank: Well we have very long days in the Netherlands. Don't know about you guys over in America, but here we have 40 hours a day!

DP: Well, we're in Canada actually, but I think our days are generally 24...

Frank: Ah, you're still on the old timetable!

DP: Well speaking of shooting, you guys are over there in your studio pretty much using

medium format cameras; is that correct?

Frank: Yeah. I want to add something to that also... you'll find this funny. You know at the moment I am more and more telling my students that photography is simple: it's about a nail that has to go into that wall. I need a hammer for that; and it doesn't matter if your hammer is from brand x or brand y, as long as the nail goes into the wall. From the nail, that's where your image is going to hang, and that's the story you are going to tell as a photographer. Even in the old days, it didn't matter if you wrote your novel on a typewriter, a Macbook Pro, or using a pen and paper. If the novel is good, it will be read and it will be a best-seller. You can write a lousy novel on the newest Macbook Pro with an ergonomic keyboard, but the only thing that will come out will still be a crappy novel. Of course, you can write the most beautiful poems or whatever you want to write on the oldest typewriter you can find, and that's the same with cameras.

A while ago I made a pact with one of my students. I said "You know what, for the next three workshops I am going to shoot some images, and I am going to limit myself to a maximum of four images, with a Canon G9". Now that's a really small point-and-shoot camera — I believe it's now 5 or 6 years old. So I posted them online next to the medium format files, and the only thing I said was "Testing a different camera". You don't want to know how many emails I got from people asking whether I was testing the new MK 3 from Canon, or the new Nikon... or "no, it has to be a medium format; look at



those skin tones — it's amazing!" So I kept it up for about two weeks and then I posted online that it was all shot with the G9. I hoped that people would open their eyes and just see that it's about the guy pressing the shutter and it's not about the camera.

So, Frank, why are you using medium format cameras? Well, it's very simple. I strongly believe that when you are progressing in your art or in your photography, there will be a point when you reach the borders of the technical capabilities of your gear. And for me, with the DSLR in the studio, I was running into problems because I wanted very shallow depth of fields in certain locations. So, even with the full frame Canon and with $f/1.2$ lenses, I wanted to use strobes outside and I couldn't do it!

So what I did was change to medium format; because with Leaf shutter lenses we can sync at 1/1600th of a second, and of course we can lower the ISO to 25. So I may be shooting at $f/11$, but because the sensor is twice as big as a full-frame sensor, my depth of field will be approximately 2 stops lower. So now I have a camera with which first, I can shoot at 1/1600th of a second — which is huge for strobes outside — and I have a bigger sensor and smaller depth of field. Also the pixels are better. You can push them around in Photoshop more... the lens quality is better... but in the end, for me it's the story. When I can tell the story with medium format and I think I can't tell the story with a DSLR, I will switch; but that's the only reason.

DP: Back to the business end of the photog-

raphy world, I'm wondering, over the years the industry has changed fairly dramatically I think you'd agree. What would you say were the major effects on your business, and what were the most striking differences for you?

Frank: I think the funny thing is that, for the business I am in, teaching, will flourish from the downfall of photography. I'm really negative about that. I don't know if I put a lot of people off from doing photography because I think it's the best job in the world; but recently I got an offer from a company and don't laugh: they wanted me to shoot 26 dresses, four models, on two separate locations, and two studio setups... including makeup artists, and stylists. They wanted to licence the images for use in four countries. I made an offer for them for four days of studio time and kept it really low... incredibly low. I think it was €5000 including licensing. That's a crazy price, but because the dresses were really nice I wanted to do it; so decided to do it for almost cost.

They called me back and said "Well Frank, we really want you to do this assignment; but you have to do something with the pricing". So I was like "Well, ok I do have some space, but what do you want?" They replied "We have an offer for €250." So I said "I am paying my models more than 250 euros; you want four different models... I have to pay my makeup for four days more than 250 euros..." He says "Yeah but we have 6 or 7 quotes" and he also told me (which almost made me cry) "We also have about 10 people that want to do it for free, but we don't take them seriously."

That's where photography is going now. People can go online and buy stock images for one dollar. The magazines... let's be honest, if you look at the images in magazines (and I don't want to say Vogue, because I love those images), but in most normal fashion magazines, for the Netherlands anyway, it's been many many years since I was really impressed by a fashion spread. When I see the images in let's say the TV Guide over here, I'm just frustrated because half of my students can shoot images that are 10 times better... and those are the guys that are getting paid, but probably not enough to do full-time photography. They have to

be at Burger King or MacDonald's flipping hamburgers to do photography — and that's totally wrong. Photography is being downsized to the point where it's 'just give him some money and he'll go away' and we'll keep the images. And after that the images are worthless [ed: no licensing arrangement].

That's where the market is going to. People buy a camera and they're 'photographers'. When you buy a violin, you are just somebody who owns a violin — you are not a violinist. That's something that people should realize. Photography is art; and people should hire you for your art and not because you can take an image.



For me that's great though, because a lot of photographers starting out need workshops because they can't shoot, and I am teaching them. So, in one way I am also benefiting from the decline of photography, but I think that's normal. If I don't do it, somebody else will.

DP: What do you think in terms of the quality of photographs that are being offered commercially these days — do you think digital has been the death of the real artist as far as the working photographer goes?

Frank: No, of course not. Digital is great. The death of the real artist is not about the photographer, it's that magazines are run by people at the moment that don't want to spend money on photography. I've heard stories (and I don't know if they're true), that a lot of photographers shooting for really great names in fashion are often investing their own money just to get the cover of a magazine. In other words, they don't earn money from it; but they have they have the cover of a big brand magazine. That's totally wrong I think. When you go back to the '70s or '80s, of course there was no digital, so photographers were really into the technical stuff of photography; because they didn't have the big polaroid on the back of their cameras. So they would be meter the light, make 100% certain the image was there, and then they would develop it. When they got the prints back they'd have to be sure they were 100% perfect, otherwise they'd be out of a job. Nowadays, people just look at the back of the camera: "Oh yeah I got it" or otherwise, "I'll

fix it in Photoshop". That's somehow seeped through to the magazines, and the magazines will say "Ok, well we'll just go one quality level below because we don't have money for this, as we have to stay alive in the struggling digital environment." So they don't pay photographers anymore. That I think is the main downfall. It's not due to digital; it's due to the whole economic situation of magazines.

DP: Ok, but do you not think that that's been dramatically affected by the advent of digital, given the fact that you can look at your image on the back of your camera, make a few corrections, and have something that's kind of 'good enough'... versus art?

Frank: Yeah! Without a doubt, you're 100% right. But I think it's wrong to say that digital is the downfall of great photography. A lot of great photographers are still there. When you look at guys like Jay Maisel, for me one of the greatest street photographers, and he's shooting digital. He's still an artist, and he's still earning money from it. However, where you are right — and I think you point to that — there's a lot of people out there who simply own cameras and call themselves photographers. That's 100% due to digital.

DP: I would agree with you there too. The other thing is, given the state of the industry, there's so many people that have to — like yourself — spend so many hours outside of shooting, that it might be difficult to attain the level of artistry that you might. Let's say back in the 1600s, as a composer for the court, where you know, all you're doing every day is that one thing, and honing your craft.



Now you have to be all over the place doing this and that if you're going to be a working photographer. How do you think that affects the overall quality of art in the field.

Frank: My friend, it's a timing issue. As I told you, we have 40 hours a day here, and that was a joke of course, but what I do is I always plan at least every two weeks one shoot that's my shoot. I will not let anything get in the way of that shoot; not even if there's an assignment — that will be my day of shooting. During that day I will try new light setups, new concepts etc. That will be my day where I can be creative. Of course, because I teach workshops, I can create my own themes. So when I do work-

shops in Boston for instance, I could do one of two things. I could say "Ok, people want to learn? No problem. We'll hire a studio, we'll get two models, and we'll just do everything we normally do in the Netherlands. I'll show light setups 1,2,3,4 - 10, I'll explain some stuff, and after that I will be done." I will let my assistant do the retouching while I fly back to the Netherlands and keep on working. Instead, I have a friend living in Boston who is scouting locations — ones that I really like. I choose the models myself, and I choose the models that I think are edgy... that I think are fashionable, or weird, or just plain different... models that attract me. I have a great makeup artist that also does the styling, and the only assignment I give my



team is: “Awesome. It has to be awesome — a real addition to both your and my portfolio.”

The funny thing is that normally, you would pay your models to do the workshop for you, and you pay a lot of money. Now I can get my models much cheaper, especially from agencies as they love the stuff I am doing with the workshops. So they will give me models for like 50% off because they know the images will rock. So when I come home, I have some great additions to my portfolio. So that’s my creativity.

I agree with you: when you are a working photographer and you are doing seniors, and you are doing weddings, it’s hard to be creative when you are doing the same thing

over and over again with people that are not models. But as a wedding photographer for instance, you could just hire models... do a whole fake wedding and let that be the shoot you use to promote your work. When you are doing seniors, you see so many potential models. Just pick one out and say “Ok, you’ve now just paid for your senior images, I would love to invite you back, but we have to do something completely different. So I’ll give you an assignment. You can’t come back in normal clothes. You have to think of something that’s really extreme — that’s pushing the envelope.” That way you’re making your model be creative for you. Then you shoot that senior for free. At that moment, you have some great additions to your portfolio which

will enable you to attract more customers.

On the business side, a while ago I had a meeting with two female photographers who were both running studios in an 'A' location. I don't know if you know what that is, but that's in a shopping centre. One of them said "Well, I'm going to close shop very soon". I looked at her and asked why. She said "To be totally honest, I haven't had any clients in the past few weeks". The other one said "Well I'm in a more difficult town and I'm so busy I don't even have time to do stuff for myself". After speaking with them, it was very clear that one of them bought a posing stool for let's say \$300... that's it. The other one went to junk stores where she bought a little wagon for let's say \$5. Then she got an old chair for \$10.... and then another one... and then other props. Every time she renewed the images in her display window they were constantly changing. So she drew the old clients back in as well as new clients.

The other photographer had the same images over and over. The only thing that changed was the model. So there is a huge difference in investing \$300 for a posing stool upon which you can do nothing more than pose your model, and being creative and designing your own backgrounds... using an old chair you bought for \$5 or maybe got from the trash. In the end you will earn a lot more money and spend a lot less. So by being creative you can grow your business.

DP: That's some great advice. Now, what excites you about being a photographer these days? We've talked a little bit about

some of the problems in the industry; but what makes you get up and get excited about what you're doing every day?

Frank: What's not to get excited about? We have the most beautiful women who are in front of my camera, we have some famous people who are choosing you for your work. I love to teach, and soon I'll be back teaching at Photoshop World. Man, it's all one big Disneyland for me! It's like whatever you dream of, and then even more. When you are working in photography, always remember that you are working with people and you are very privileged because you can do [for a job] what other people do as a hobby. I think people should cherish this.

The only thing I think I teach my students is that if you really want to do photography, be prepared to work long hours and earn little money. But if you are prepared to do that, you will not go to work one day in your life... you will just practice what you love. Let's be honest: we are in this world for let's say 80 or 90 years at maximum — 50 years of that you are probably active (though with the way the economy is going now, probably 60.)

You can go to work every day and hate your job, being in your cubical and earn like let's say \$10,000 a month... and you can have a big house with rooms that you do nothing with, and no time for your hobbies. Or you can just live in a normal house, have a nice family, and go to your work, loving every day that you are there. You may drive a Ford versus a Mercedes, but what's the difference if you love what you do? I don't think a lot of people

realize that. With photography, you can be creative, you work with nice people, and every day is different, so, what's not to love?

DP: Well that's great! You've been giving a little bit of advice to aspiring photographers; what would you think would be the main things to bear in mind for someone who's thinking about making the transition from an enthusiastic amateur to actually starting their own business?

Frank: Ok. Be prepared to take risks. Don't give up your day job yet. If you could get 6 months off paid leave, take it and try to build things up, but don't burn your bridges behind you. Be different. That's one of the main things that I always say to people because you'll be hired if your style is unique. If you

visit forums, you'll see a lot of people asking how to achieve a certain look, and of course it's fun to know how to do it, but you want to create your own look. Make sure people hire you for who you are, and not because you have a low price. That's what you see a lot of now... you know the whole Dave Hill look (and I love that look). There are a lot of people who can emulate that style and as soon as they do they can get hired... but after that look becomes less popular, they won't be able to get work anymore. Or if they will go for the next copycat style. The only one who is really making money is Dave Hill; because he's the guy who has all the creative knowledge, and he can change. Because he created this look, he can create another one. I think that's important. Be different; be yourself.

FRANK DOORHOF ON LIGHT METERING



Canon

Contender

So we've covered Nikon's pro body, the D4; what has Canon got as a response? Why, the EOS 1DX of course. How does it stack up?

Well for starters, while both cameras feature a full-frame sensor, the 1DX trumps the D4 in terms of effective pixels: 18.1 million versus 16.2 million respectively. Not only this, but the autofocus system sports 61 autofocus points compared to Nikon's 51. For many this won't be a huge difference; however it does afford the photographer some extra flexibility and speed in selecting a focus point — avoiding the need to focus and recompose as often. On the other hand, the D4 does offer DX mode which allows the shooter to take advantage of the crop factor — useful in wildlife and other telephoto photographic pursuits.

The real difference in the autofocus capability however lies in the fact that the D4 can focus down to $f/8$, whereas the 1DX is constrained to $f/5.6$... meaning that you'll lose autofocus functionality when using a teleconverter on a number of long lenses. For some this isn't an issue, while for others it's a clear advantage for the D4.

While in past battles have been fought



over ISO capability, both companies seem to have pretty much nailed it over the last couple of years. With a range of from 50 to 204,800, both bodies are extremely capable in this area, and provide low noise imagery across a wide band of that range.

So who wins in the battle for sensor and autofocus capabilities? It really depends on your needs: 10 more focus points and an extra couple of megapixels will tip the scales in favour of Canon for some, while DX mode and autofocus functionality at $f/8$ is a definite win for others. We'll call it a draw.

MEMORY

Canon's 1DX supports high speed UDMA 7 Compact Flash cards, but unlike the D4, has refrained from including XDC compatibility, instead, providing two CF slots. As discussed in the D4 review, until this technology has proven itself in the marketplace, we aren't cer-

tain as to how good a decision it is to have included it within Nikon's flagship DSLR body; however, we'd be happy to be proven wrong. For us, here it's advantage Canon.

VIDEO

While once the province of point-and-shoot and dedicated video cameras, the ability to capture professional grade video on a DSLR was introduced by Nikon with its revolutionary D90, and Canon has been scrambling to match feature for feature ever since. So how does it fare this time around? The 1DX is certainly a very capable video capture platform supporting up to 1080p at 29.97fps as well as a number of other modes. What is interesting is that it automatically starts a new recording after 4GB of video has been captured (about 1/2 an hour). While this is a 'nice to have', most production video shoots don't go anywhere near this long for a single sequence. It may well be appealing to the

more casual video shooter however, filming a school play or sporting event, and so is well worth mentioning. The powerful Digic 5 processor on-board the 1DX is also helpful in reducing video noise Canon claims.

Nikon's multi-area mode on the other hand provides three different crop formats: full-frame FX format at 16.2MP, DX mode for long range crop shots, and 1920x1080 crop mode for when you just need to get in a little tighter on an extra long shot. Of course all convert to full 1080p video. These formats produce not only different crops, but depth of field effects as well. For the extra flexibility afforded by Nikon's offering, we give the nod to them in this category.

SHOOTING SPEED

Sports photographers will definitely appreciate Canon's snappy (excuse the pun) performance! At up to 12 frames per second in normal mode and 14 in Super High Speed mode,



the 1DX will satisfy even the most demanding photog's requirements for lightning fast image capture. Compared to Nikon's max of 11fps, Canon clearly comes out on top here. Note however that in order to achieve these speeds, you'll need to use a UDMA 7 compact flash card that can handle these bursts.

ERGONOMICS

The body of the 1DX hasn't changed much over its predecessors — some things have been shifted slightly to accommodate a new mini joystick, and Canon have redesigned their menu system to be more user-friendly, but essentially it's the same rock-solid design one expects to see for the company's flagship camera. Nikon on the other hand has added two mini joysticks and ensured that the control layout is exactly the same whether the camera is in portrait or landscape orientation — a huge plus for us. Not only that, but button illumination in low light is an excellent addition to the D4 feature lineup. While we think Canon's design is excellent, we've always preferred the attention to ergonomic details that Nikon is famous for. Advantage Nikon.

PRICING

While price at these thresholds isn't a primary concern, the difference between the two is frankly

fairly startling. At a street price of \$6799 for the 1DX, it's a full \$800 more expensive than its rival. That's a 12% price differential, and certainly not insignificant. Obviously we feel the Nikon comes out the clear winner here.

CONCLUSION

While we could go on all day comparing feature for feature, if you're really in the market for a pro-grade DSLR, you most likely already have a significant investment in gear from one or the other manufacturer. So whether you are buying a D4 or 1DX is a decision that has already been made for you. The question here should rather be "is the 1DX a worthy successor to the 1D and the rest of Canon's pro line?" The answer is a resounding yes! This is by far Canon's best effort to date, and we look forward to even more fantastic offerings from this photography titan in future!



NEXT TIME...

Be sure to join us next issue when we will continue to explore the world of photography in what we hope you will find an informative and engaging discussion, both highlighting what is new, and rediscovering techniques of the past which are still so relevant in today's digital realm.

Highlights include:

- Adobe Premiere Pro in review
- How to use reflectors to maximum effect
- Lens Lore – what lens lineup is right for you?
- iPhoneography – the mobile revolution
- Effective use of light modifiers
- Working with models – what & what *not* to do!
- More composition techniques
- Great interviews
- Much more!

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