

# exposure

MELBOURNE CAMERA CLUB MAGAZINE



President's Report **2** • Out and About **3** • Alan Elliott Tribute **4** • Lesley Bretherton profile **6** •  
Marg Huxtable profile **8** • James Mexias profile **12** • Matt Smith profile **14** • Travellers' tales -  
Richard Faris **16** • Travellers' tales - Charles Wyatt **18** • Travellers' tales - Sue Rocco **20** •  
In a digital world **21** • Tricks of the trade - Jim O'Donnell **22** • My gear - Andy Rails **24** •  
Putting it on film - Sam Amar **26** • August winners **28** • September winners **32** •  
October winners **34** •



# President’s Report Spring 2020



We continue to live in a virtual world, however we can see some light at the end of this long isolation tunnel.

We Victorians have done really well in bringing down our case numbers whereas we are seeing an increase in pandemic numbers

across the world hence we need to pat ourselves on our collective backs for our efforts.

Since my last report in the Winter 2020 edition of Exposure, not much has changed in terms of face to face meetings, however we are continuing to meet in a virtual world.

The building continues to be in lockdown for the moment, however we are reviewing when we can open up the darkroom and studio. The opening up of the darkroom for a single person use is imminent. This will be followed with the opening up of the studio based on the installation of the cupboards and government regulations.

It seems unlikely that we will have face to face meetings any time soon and my assumption is that this will not happen until the new year when the Government will, we hope, allow larger groups to congregate indoors.

Since my last report we have had an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kadri Elcoat for her services to the MCC Board. I would like to welcome our newest Board member Nicole Andrews to the Board for a 2 - year term.

As I write this report our twice monthly PDI competitions have come to an end for 2020. I must take this opportunity to thank our competition committee for their excellent scheduling of the set-

subjects and organising the judges this year. Special thanks to Paul Palcsek who works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that the PDI competitions run smoothly. Paul is looking to automate the process of creating all the slides for PDI competitions so that the competitions can be run by the team. Our next big event is our traditional End of Year competition and exhibition.

This isolation period has brought another first for the club. Our Analogue Group is running its 20th Analogue exhibition in a virtual environment where analogue images are scanned and displayed on our website as we are not able to have a physical exhibition at our clubrooms.

This last quarter has brought some sad news, with the passing of a couple of lifetime members. Our sincere condolences go out to the family of the Late Alan Elliott and Tony Taylor. Alan was a long- standing, committed member of the club. Alan was also archivist for our print collection for many years. Barry McFarlane, a long-term member also passed away and our sincere condolences also goes to his extended family.

This isolation has not been easy for many of our members however we are endeavouring to keep up our engagement with everybody. It is great that we are seeing continuous and consistent membership engagement at our virtual meetings and we do hope that you are growing in your photography. Hopefully when I write to you next, we will have commenced some of face to face meetings and activities.

Thank you for your understanding, and most importantly, please take every precaution to protect yourselves and your loved ones during this time.

Stay Safe!!

Mark Devaraj President MCC

# Out and About

## OUT AND ABOUT IN THE SECOND COVID LOCKDOWN

The MCC Out and About, Sunday walks, Nature rambles and social Tuesday chats and snaps have become legendary.

But this is the year of Covid 19 and we’re all home alone, or nearly alone.

John Godfrey, Rick Lang and Sue Rocco have risen to the occasion and put together the work they have done in lockdown.

To view John Godfrey’s *Out and About* slide show click [here](#).

To view Rick Lang’s *Out and About* slide show click [here](#).

Download a PDF about [DarkTable](#)

To view Sue Rocco’s *Out and About* slide show click [here](#)



John Godfrey



Rick Lang



Sue Rocco

## Melbourne Camera Club Magazine

### Editors

Sue Rocco

Greg Branson

Ralph Domino

Elizabeth Jackson

Charles Wyatt

Marg Huxtable

mcc-exposure@melbournephoto.org.au

### The Melbourne Camera Club

ACN 004 344 549 ABN 79 004 344 549

### Clubrooms

Cnr of Ferrars and Dorcas Sts, Sth Melbourne

PO Box 1180, Sth Melbourne 3205

www.melbournephoto.org.au



Cover image

Zen Contemplation Alan Elliott



# Alan Elliott

A TRIBUTE

Our Cover picture this issue is to remember our dear friend Alan Elliott who died recently at the age of 99. A complete obituary by his friend John Spring is on our website and here are some comments by his friends.

The link will send you to an MP4 with photographs of Alan from childhood. Those of us who knew him will enjoy the opportunity to see him as he lived his remarkable, gentle life. The Life and Times of Alan Elliott video.

## ALAN

An idle chat and  
It turned out  
We shared our birth date  
Albeit 20 years apart  
After that and, for me,  
A birthday card each year  
Addressed to his “twin”  
  
A gentle soul  
Who bravely climbed  
Those stairs to keep on  
Keeping on  
  
**Barb Butler**

Dear Alan, a very special person. I first met him when I joined the club in order to pursue my interest in making Audio-Visual presentations. As a pair of Seniors, we shared many interests, ideas and knowledge. He always ‘got’ my references and themes. A fond memory is being his ‘assistant’ at Analogue presentations when his eyesight was beyond reading aloud or identifying his remarkable collection of photographic plates and images. It was a privilege to spend time with him. His small, compact home, Dorcasland, opposite the club in South Melbourne, was full of books and treasured objects; memories of a life which covered so many interests. A life of quiet determination which we saw as he climbed the stairs at the club for every Thursday night meeting.

Rest easy dear Alan  
**Sue Rocco**



**Above** Alan takes the Analogue group through his collection of images from alternative processes.  
**Left:** Alan with Sue Brunialti winner of The Alan Elliott Photojournalism prize.  
**Below:** Alan with Daryl Groves, Ralph Domino and Graeme Diggle, winners of The Alan Elliott Photojournalism prize.



## Alan Elliot was many things to many people.

When I first met Alan after joining the Melbourne Camera Club, we found many areas of common interest. Both had a high opinion of Nikon cameras and optics, and the history of this iconic Japanese company. We also came from a research background both focussing on chemistry. These common interests provided the seeds for many rewarding conversations that even covered politics and religion. As Alan’s eyesight deteriorated, my obsession with “gadgets” was able to assist him in small ways, something I will always be thankful for.

I was always surprised at the diversity of Alan’s interests. As a keen Amateur radio operator, he had many friends across the world and was very proud of his further education pursuits resulting in an appreciation of several cultures beyond our shores. In particular Alan had an interest in Japan and after many visits wrote papers on elements of Japanese History and Fine Arts. It is impossible to know how many people’s lives have been enriched by knowing Alan. This is Alan’s significant legacy.

## Peter Tredrea



Alan loved Japan and he loved Melbourne. These images reflect these loves. The grace of a Japanese fan; the liveliness of Speakers’ Corner on Sunday afternoon on the banks of the Yarra; the oarsmen training for the Head of the River and his beloved South Melbourne charm.

## A fond memory.

At my first end of year function, I attended at MCC, Alan tasted the Lemon Tart I had brought for supper. It was like a taste ‘discovery’ for him. He absolutely devoured it. Before going home, he asked if I could see if there were any ‘left-overs’. I managed to get a few pieces for him to take home. Consequently, each year BEFORE the EOY function, Alan would ask me if I was bringing a Lemon Tart. I did ... but I brought two ... one for supper, and one for Alan to take home and have all to himself. I continued to do this every year.

## Jane Barnes





# Photoshop: a COVID antedote

LESLEY BRETHERTON



**A LOCKDOWN PROJECT.**  
**Twenty-twenty has been an unusual year for everybody. Because of Covid 19 there has been no travel and very little opportunity for landscape photography.**

So, this made me think about what I could do to learn more about interior photography using artificial light, and to extend my post processing skills. Up until now I have only used Lightroom so I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn to edit using photoshop.

Being very restricted in terms of what was available to photograph I decided that flowers and still life could be interesting subject matter. Being able to walk each day, and also shop at the market, meant I had access to a range of blooms so I began collecting and arranging. I really admire the work of Kathleen Clemons who shoots flowers with a lens baby in the open air. However, because it was winter and windy, and time outside was restricted because of the pandemic lockdown restrictions, I researched further. I came across Harold Davis, an American photographer who uses a light pad to produce a delicate translucent look to his floral work. There is a lot of information on the Internet about using a light pad and they are relatively inexpensive so I sent away to Amazon, received my light pad, and started work. I also watched Adam Williams' great series on photoshop and began to feel slightly more confident in opening the photoshop app.

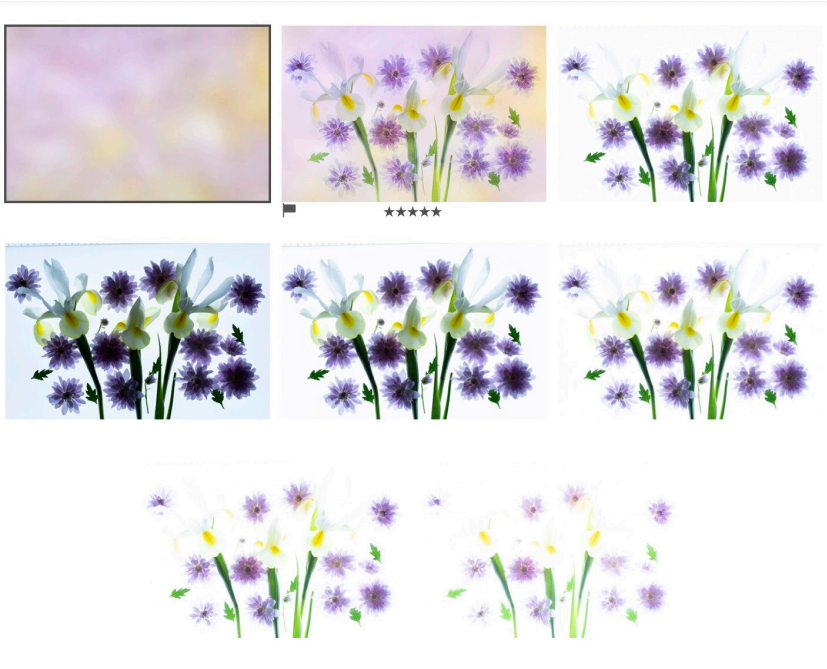


Because of my interest in Japan and things Japanese, I also came across a beautiful little book called 'Wabi Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers', by Leonard Koren (2008), an American architect who never practiced, apart from designing a strange Japanese Tea House. From reading this book and considering the floral photography I had been working on, I developed a concept for a book which I called 'Wabi Sabi Floral'. Briefly, Wabi Sabi is the Japanese art of finding beauty in imperfection, impermanence and incompleteness. It is an old Japanese philosophy that focuses on the transient nature of life. It has its roots in Zen Buddhism and flourished during the Japanese tea ceremonies, where equipment was handmade, irregular and defective.

I was really inspired by this philosophy, and the floral photography book transpired. The flowers I used were not always perfect; they were sourced locally from private gardens [Camellia image, Wisteria], the street [Street Flowers], markets, [Freesias and Tulips] and parks, [Australian Natives]; for the most part they are every-day, modest and humble blooms. To compose the flowers, I tried to incorporate the Zen philosophy of the 'seven aesthetic principles' to try and achieve Wabi Sabi: simplicity, asymmetry

or irregularity, beauty in the understated, naturalness without pretence, subtle grace, freeness, and tranquility.

The technique to produce delicate translucency involves setting up your composition of flowers on the light pad and then using exposure bracketing of 6-7 images beginning with a 'normal' exposure, and increasing by 1 EV until you get a very over-exposed image often up to 8 seconds long. This is done using a tripod and either a micro 105mm lens or a 50 mm lens (depending on the size of the arrangement of flowers) at F16 and ISO 64. The images are then processed first in light room to produce an HDR and then in photoshop as layers. Using layer masks and painting in detail requires patience and precision. Finally, the image is finished and on a white background. But for a lot of the compositions I also added a coloured background. These were images I had taken of hand-coloured Washi paper [Washi Paper image]. This required layering the images and then using 'blending' mode to achieve the look I wanted - you can see the process in this bottom left image. I really enjoyed the experience and learnt a lot about photoshop. Nevertheless, I can't see myself using photoshop in place of Lightroom for my landscapes!



**Facing page**  
**Top left:** Australian Natives (no background).  
**Top right:** Wisteria with background.  
**Bottom left:** Freesias and Tulips with background.  
**Bottom right:** Camellia with background.  
**Above**  
**Top left:** Hand coloured washi paper for background.  
**Top right:** Red and white geraniums, campanula, fuchsia and yellow daisy from a median strip.  
**Bottom:** Background, finished image: HDR image, exposure bracketed images - 1/6 sec 1/3 sec, 1/1.5 sec, 3sec, 6 sec.



# Marg Huxtable

PROFILE



**My photographic journey started much like other photographers. As a child, I was given a camera and would take B&W snaps of family, friends and holidays.**

I remember putting Mum's old photos into albums and being intrigued when images emerged from the Kodak hobby developing kit of the boy down the road.

I wanted to do that too. But that would come many years later.

After starting work, I purchased a Kodak Instamatic. I began to take more photos, this time in colour. But they were still happy snaps. Then, in 1984 I was given a Minolta SLR after my sister and brother-in-law's overseas trip. Unfortunately the manual had been lost so I asked what the dials were for. "Put it on 125 or 250 and you'll be right" I was instructed. So I did. And that was how I took photos for many years. It was well before googling the internet.

It was not until 1998 when I did the Introduction to Photography Course at the Melbourne Camera Club (MCC) that I found out about the dials. What an eye opening experience it was. And after attending, as a provisional member of MCC, a presentation by Bruce Postle, an ex-Age Press Photographer, his passion for photography and stories behind his images inspired me into joining that night.

Since then, I've had a few cameras of various makes and models. When the weight of my DSLR became too much, I switched to a mirrorless Olympus camera.

So, what do I like to photograph? Where do my interests lie? The fewer decisions I have to make regarding my camera gear, the more I can concentrate on my photographic interests and storytelling imagery.

Photojournalism and Photo Travel have always appealed to me. Lately I have developed an interest in Nature and now I have lenses to pursue this interest with a macro for bugs and flowers, and a zoom for birds.

To me, every photo I take has a story. There's the snow monkeys in Japan. Staying near Jigokudani Monkey Park, we were able to visit a couple of times which was fortunate. The first day it was snowing heavily and I tried to use a long lens. Wrong. The macaques were too close. The cold conditions deterred me from changing lenses. The next time I was better prepared. I used a more appropriate lens to capture their grooming behaviour while they soaked in the hot springs. Lesson learnt. Know your gear and do some research. (FIAP Blue Ribbon, Egypt; Merit, India)

Then there's the three firetail finches perching on a branch. I captured this at my cousin's sheep property in central NSW. During a previous visit I had seen them nesting near the house so I was aware that they could be in the vicinity again. A bird feeder was hanging from a tree that the firetails visited but I didn't want the finches there so I stood next to it and the birds obliged by landing on a nearby branch. I watched them for a while and selected an uncluttered background. After many shots, patience rewarded me as I managed to get three perching together. (FIAP Gold Medal, India; Merit Australia)



**Above left:** Heavy.

**Above right:** Looking to the Future.

**Facing page bottom:** Fungi in the Otways.

My travel photography concentrates mainly on people. I believe the people and their culture make a country, not just the landscape.

There's the Japanese bride having her wedding photos taken in a charming old area of Kyoto and capturing the moment when an old lady hobbled past using a walking frame, maybe predicting her future. (FIAP Gold Medal, Australia; 2nd Warragul)

Or the chap in the Pettah Market in Colombo, Sri Lanka just after a monsoonal downpour. His load was so heavy that he had trouble lifting and manoeuvring the cart through the muddy laneways of the crowded market. The strain on his face tells his story. (PSA Gold Medal, Australia; FIAP Silver Medal, England; 1st Pakenham; 1st Warragul)

Or the young child at the rodeo at Laura, FNQ trying to stay on a poddy calf and being ready to capture the decisive moment. (1st Pakenham; 2nd Ballarat)

Or the elderly chap looking at the Prisoner of War Memorial in Ballarat. The image 'Me & My Mates' shows his shadow and reflection, suggestive of a couple of mates who may not have returned to grow old as he had. (1st, Tasmania; 1st Pakenham; 2nd Warragul)

Knowing the strengths and limitations of your equipment and yourself can help to produce award winning images. 'Fungi in the Otways' was taken with a zoom lens. I'd been using it to photograph a bird. Just before heading home I photographed some *Mycenae Nargan*. I didn't own a true macro lens at the time, but was able to capture an award winning image by using a zoom lens on a tripod at a reasonable distance from the subject. The lens handled it beautifully with the depth of field making the background

unobtrusive. (FIAP Gold Medal, India; CAPA Gold Medal, Canada & others)

All these images bring back great memories. They also helped me to gain acceptances and awards in many national and international photographic salons. These enabled me to achieve Australian photographic Society's (APS) honours, including Grand Master Australian Photographic Society (GMAPS). After entering these salons, my photography really improved. I was able to view top photographers' award winning images from around the world (pre Internet overload). How inspiring these images were! They covered every genre of photography and I looked forward to receiving the catalogues. Gradually some of my images started to be printed in the catalogues, even the front cover.

Another way I was able to improve my photography was by judging. It was very daunting at first. I mean "What Did I Know?" Did I know enough to critique someone else's work? What advice could I give to help another photographer improve the way they made an image? It made me more critical of my own work and helped immensely to improve my own imagery. It made me think about what makes a great photo – it's not just about the technical side of photography – composition, focus, lighting etc. What captures the eye? Is the image interesting? Does it tell a good story or leave you guessing?

Even though travel is now limited due to Covid 19, my interest in Nature Photography has ensured that I continue taking photos. I have been exploring my backyard and the local wetlands with my macro for fungi or bugs. I truly value the friendships that have nurtured me at MCC and in the broader photographic community and feel that photography has enriched my life. So my photographic journey continues today.





# Marg Huxtable

PROFILE



**Facing page:**  
**Top:** Me & My Mates.  
**Bottom:** Hydrotherapy in the Snow.  
**Above:** Perching Order.  
**Right:** They Start'em Young.





# James Mexias

PROFILE



My passion for photography begins with the first camera that my mother bought me on our trip from Australia to Greece in 1968. She was keen to have some photos taken during our trip while visiting family in Corinth.

As I had always asked for a camera, she purchased one for me at the port of Gibraltar. Once I started using it, I fell in love. I have since lost this camera and do not remember the name, but I have kept a lot of the photos and memories from that trip. Once I completed high school, I was given an opportunity to start an apprenticeship as a camera-man at Channel 9 in the mid-70s. However, I decided to stay in school a little bit longer.

Afterwards, I wasn't sure what to pursue, but then an opportunity arose to work at Her Majesty's Theatre in the wardrobe department. Here, I developed an interest in hairdressing. I looked after a lot of actors and actresses, including Derek Nimmo, by assisting the head hairdresser in between their performances. After the theatre, I pursued a career in hairdressing, which I continued for nearly 40 years. During these years, my wife and I were busy raising three boys but I found opportunities to ignite my passion with family snapshots.

My sons, to this day, constantly tease me about the continuous video and photographic recording of their lives growing up!

After I semi-retired in 2016, I wanted to explore photography in more depth in my free time, but I was unsure of how to go about this. My wife suggested I join a camera club so that I could learn more about the craft of photography alongside other keen photographers. I am so grateful that I have found a community like the Melbourne Camera Club that offers so many opportunities to develop and nurture my love for photography. This year was particularly difficult for me, having tragically lost my sister unexpectedly. My participation in the club has given me the strength and inspiration to cope with this loss and to continue to follow my passion. I have had an exciting year sharing my images with the club, and I have loved seeing all the amazing images created by other club members throughout each PDI competition.

My interest in photography covers many genres, such as street photography, macro-photography, portraits (many featuring my youngest son Kristian) and, in particular, black-and-white. I enjoy experimenting with different methods and tools, including fish-eye lens and lighting. I hope to continue a life long association with the Melbourne Camera Club and continue to be inspired by the people that I have met and the photographic adventures ahead!



**Above left:** Prayer.  
**Above bottom:** Play it Again...  
**Right:** Alien Flower.  
**Facing page:**  
**Top:** Stage 4.  
**Bottom:** Gotham.





# Matt Smith

PROFILE



I have my late father to thank for my lifelong love affair with photography.

I was around 8 years old when he gave me, and my siblings, a Kodak 126 Instamatic camera each. I still have the oh-so-blurry photos that, despite the incompetent use and technical imperfection, can magically bring back the times, the people and places.

My father taught me many technical skills including how to develop and print film and handhold a camera for an insanely slow exposure. (He also taught me a few other 'best ways to photograph things' that took me a long time to shake off, but that's another story!)

As I grew up so did my cameras, moving up to a Russian Zenit before upgrading to a Pentax K1000 with a hand-me-down Tamron zoom, a brief dalliance with a Yashica Twin Lens Reflex and many 35mm compacts.

My inspiration was drawn from the stylish black and white world of fashion and street photographers - David Bailey, John French, Robert Doisneau and Henri Cartier-Bresson. And the equally black

and white world of French new wave cinematographer Francois Truffaut and the grungy British 'kitchen sink' dramas of the 1950s and 60s.

But enough of the past.

It was my Instagram friend Kajal Krishna who introduced me to the club a couple of years ago and particular to the Lighting group. I owe David Gilliver a beer. He taught me at least 90% of what I know about lighting! Also, Sam and David P at the Portrait group for an introduction to working with models.

My experience with these groups has set me on an exciting new path of portraiture and has been the catalyst for a fundamental mind shift from taking photos to creating images.

As part of this more creative and individualistic approach, I increasingly find myself shunning the 'latest and greatest' options in gear for the outdated and imperfect – my old Fuji Xpro1 camera and a collection of 50-year-old, adapted film camera lenses are my tools of choice. A combination that has earned me a few “could be sharper” comments from PDI competition judges!

As for the future, my portraiture journey will keep me focused for the foreseeable future. I'm conscious of building on my image manipulation skills and I'm tempted to dip my toe back into video (I made a couple of Super 8 films way back) which combines well with my other long-term love of music composition. There's more to come!



**Above left:** Too cool for school.

**Above Right:** Porcelain princess.

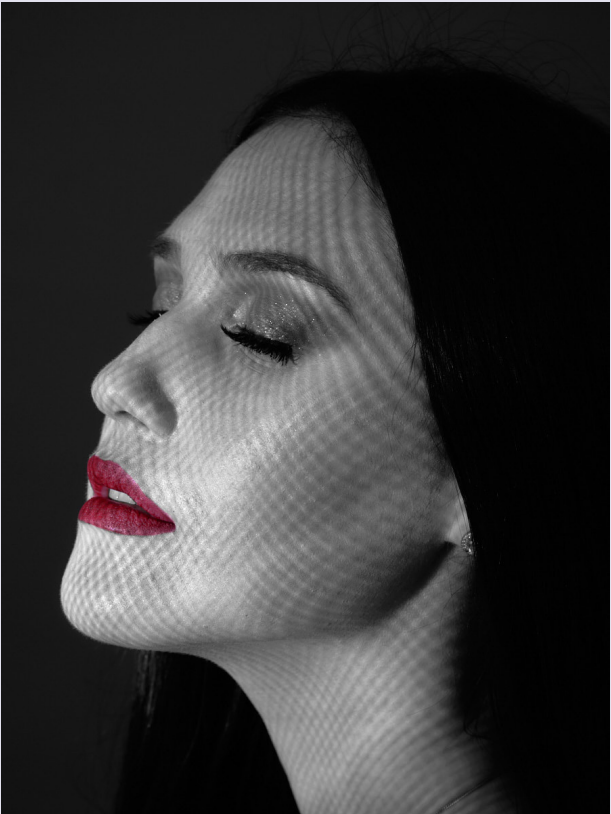
**Facing page:**

**Top:** Serenity.

**Bottom left:** Levi.

**Bottom middle:** Other Worldly Blooms.

**Bottom right:** Neon Wonderland.





# Travellers' tales

RICHARD FARIS

## The Rainbow Mountains of China



**In November - December 2019, I participated in a tour based on the Chinese portion of the historical Silk Road. There were twelve in the group and it was led by two Canon ambassadors who are also experienced APPA judges.**

One of the places visited was the Gansu Zhangye Danxia National Geopark, a UNESCO World Heritage Site commonly referred to as the Rainbow Mountains. A Chinese tourism internet site places it in the ten most beautiful places in China - “ignored by ordinary travelers, but deeply loved by photographers.” Internet searches reveal many images where the mountains look like the contents of a box of crayons. So, what is the area really like?

Access to the area is controlled. There is a large information centre with a few shops and the ticket office. As at many Chinese sites, visitors are photographed passing through the turnstiles. A fleet of buses then circulate through the scenic area on a regular basis and there are four set stops along the way. At each, there are designated walkways and viewing platforms.

There is no opportunity to wander “free range” through the terrain. This is clearly designed to protect the environment. The viewing area at the third stop is very extensive, but it is not suitable for the disabled. Another in the group who wore an activity tracker said that it indicated the equivalent of 55 flights of stairs that day compared with 46 the day before when climbing the western end of the Great Wall.

The location is relatively remote. We travelled about three hours each way from Jiayuguan, the city at the western end of the Great Wall. We were therefore limited to seeing the mountains with high overhead sun.

The area has become very popular with the Chinese. In the peak summer holiday season up to 30,000 people visit the area daily. There were probably no more than 200 on the day of our visit. Indeed, when we arrived it took some time to attract the attention of the KFC staff for those desperate for a caffeine fix.

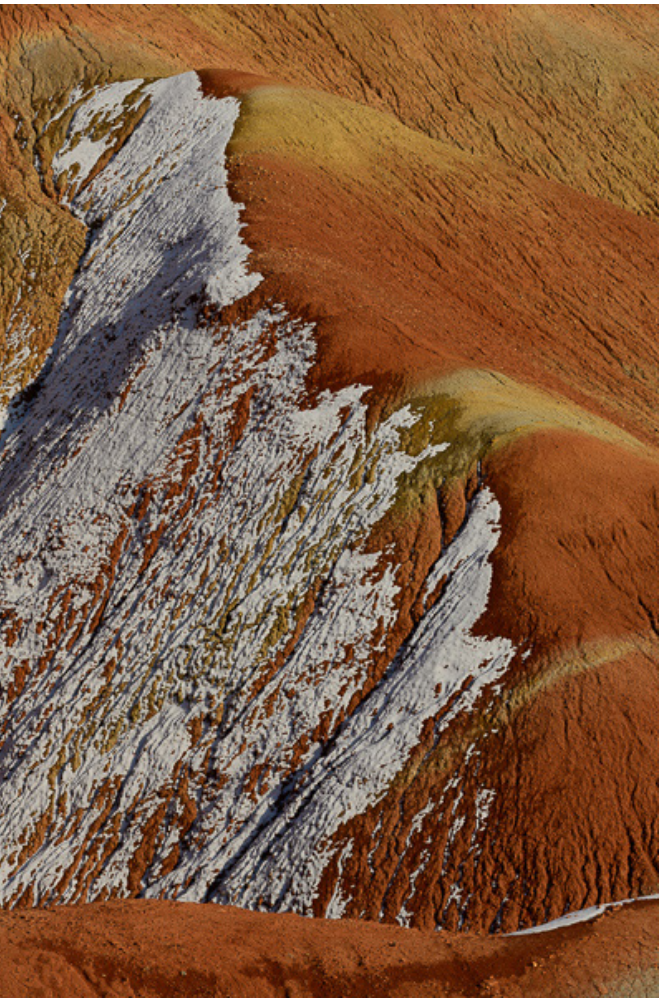
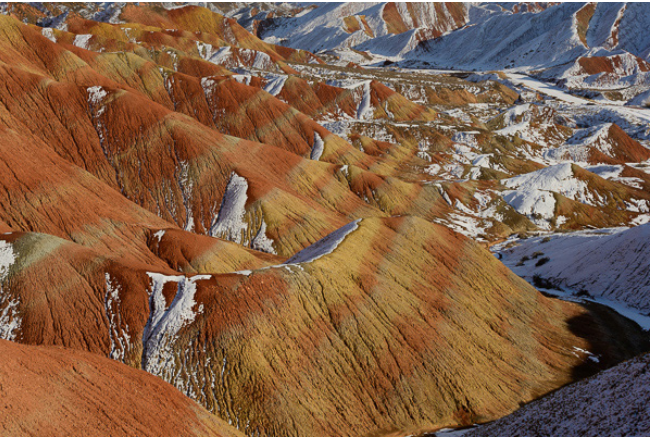
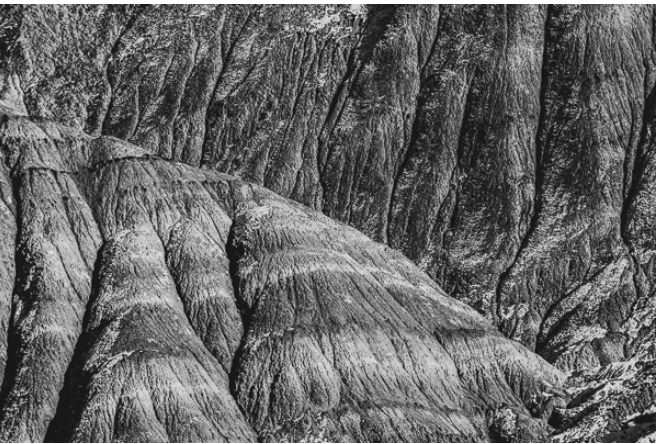
For the photographer, the Rainbow Mountains present challenges. The spectrum of colours seen in some internet images is not present. There is however distinct banding in the rock in colours of ochre, mustard yellow and khaki. This is certainly unusual and quite striking with the colour intensity most marked at the final stop. We were fortunate to also have a significant amount of snow present on the shady aspects to contribute to the palette.



Almost as interesting as the colour striations is the morphology of the clusters of small paraboloid peaks seen in some areas. It would be interesting to see the area at dawn and dusk to see the effects of the golden hour and elongated shadows, however I doubt this is possible.

Image composition posed a major challenge. It was very difficult finding leading lines in the natural terrain and there was a reliance on man-made features such as the serpentine road and viewing platforms. The colours alone did not supply these. It is significant that in our group, all of whom were at least moderately experienced, almost half had independently resorted to monochrome for image review sessions. This seems ironic when the title of the area implies colour should be the key feature.

In summary, the Rainbow Mountains are an interesting area to visit especially for those with an interest in geology and landforms. From purely photographic perspective, there are limitations, and in view of the remoteness, other areas in China may offer better opportunities for those with limited time. If you are going, please consider also seasonal issues.





# Travellers' tales

CHARLES WYATT

## The auto rickshaw



The auto rickshaw (also known as a tuk-tuk, baby taxi and chand gari) is ubiquitous throughout the developing world. You can't travel in most Asian countries without seeing the door-less yellow coloured body on three wheels careening through crowded and chaotic streets.

They're often filled with children making their way between their homes and school or packed overflowing with boxes and bags of food. And if you're crossing a street you pray one doesn't hit you. They're always available. Rickshaw drivers wait at your hotel or stop you on the street to get your fare. You can take part in a cross India rickshaw race, or do an adventure with meals by rickshaw. For the visitor, the auto rickshaw reveals at ground level, the intense life of pollution, noise and smells that the majority of people live with. And we all know the stories about being overcharged for rides and drivers who take you to their friend's store.

Aside from being overcharged, taken to the wrong place, or having an accident, the auto rickshaw is an amazing mode of travel. Last year, I was travelling in India – home to millions of auto rickshaws – and I took a side trip by rickshaw in Chennai to photograph the people who keep these unique vehicles operating. Here are some of those photographs:





# Travellers' tales

SUE ROCCO

## Sunday afternoon SFO



**A while ago I spent three days with a friend who has lived in San Francisco all her life..**

I spent a wonderful time seeing where she grew up, where she lived when the last big earthquake ate up her block of flats as well as all the places I wanted to see. I had coffee every morning with her friends who were there when Haight Ashbury was the place to be. Had a meal with her cousin who has a restaurant at Fisherman's wharf, took a lot of pictures of the Golden Gate Bridge, it was just wonderful.

On my last day, a beautiful autumn Sunday, we walked along the bay. This is the image which reminds me every time I see it of the whole experience. On Sunday the bay is full of life including a group of young people having their sailing lesson in small boats.

Just love the boats, the young people, and the great contrast of Alcatraz in the background. Fun and Freedom set against a symbol of misery and incarceration.



# In a digital world

DIGITAL EDITING GROUP

Ever look at your images straight out of the camera and wonder why they don't look like the way you thought they should? Every digital image can be improved to reveal the true intent of the photographer through post processing, no matter how the image is captured.

The objective of the Digital Editing Group is to help members improve their digital editing skills by using a mix of speakers, demonstrations and videos. We aim to provide information for members regardless of whether their skill level is basic, intermediate or advanced. Digital Editing meets once a month on the third Monday from February to November. Every meeting is designed to provide take home ideas regardless of skill level. The meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss editing techniques with like-minded people.

2020 has not been the year we envisaged for Digital Editing Group. After the February meeting, everything was migrated to online and it was necessary to adjust the forms of presentation used. We have been fortunate to have some of Australia's best photographers give presentations: Peter Eastway, Tony Hewitt, Les Walkling, Christian Fletcher, Rocco Ancora and Ian van der Wolde. The emphasis has been on explaining why they edit their images the way they do, rather than technical how to lessons. If you don't know

what outcome you are looking for with an image, no matter how skilled you are, the resultant output is likely to be unsatisfying. We were also able to tie in with international presenters Matt Kloskowski and Blake Rudis for more in depth editing tutorials. Although many of these speakers are known for their expertise in the landscape genre, each speaker gave us a completely different view of the editing process which was aligned to their style.

The Digital Editing Group is no substitute for an editing course but designed to enhance any skills that you have learnt elsewhere. Rather than have an annual syllabus, at each meeting we react to what is new (particularly in Lightroom and Photoshop) and what members indicate they want to hear about. Meeting content is advised in the Digital Editing Group newsletter and in What's On. After the success of the lockdown speakers program, we plan to have at least one meeting with a guest speaker in 2021, while also utilizing the skills of members. If there are any topics you would like us to cover or any speakers you feel appropriate, your ideas are most welcome.

### Digital Editing Group team:

**Gail Morgan, Gary Richardson and Bob Warfield**



The image was correctly exposed in camera but looks flat. With some creative editing the capture comes alive.

(Image credit: Gary Richardson)



# Tricks of the trade

JIM O'DONNELL

## MAKING A DIGITAL PHOTO BACKDROP.

I had a number of family photos taken under less than ideal conditions, where the backdrop intruded on the image. Being stuck at home, I thought it would be a useful project to make some new backgrounds. Here are the steps taken.

The first was to decide the color of the background, which had to be complimentary to the image in terms of color, lighting and temperature. To identify a potential color scheme, I looked at a color wheel sourced online. A color wheel shows a color's complimentary colors, which can be used to harmonize the planned backdrop with the original image.

Next open Photoshop, (these instructions should also work in any photo processing software that has a paintbrush tool) and create a new document. The resolution of the default document is 72 dpi which is quite low. I have settled on creating a new document at 300dpi which provides a high resolution image.

Having created the new document, the next step is to apply the selected color scheme. There are 3 approaches that I settled on:

### Number one:

1. The first and perhaps easiest is to select a large paintbrush and simply dab color onto the background. The paint brush tool is on the left-hand tool bar and the size of the brush and its opacity are controlled from the control panel on the second line under the top tool

bar. Increase the brush size to 700+ pixels and set the opacity quite low, say around 30% to begin with. A large soft brush works well but experiment with any of the texture brushes that are available.

2. Next select the color of the background from the color swatch panel and begin dabbing color around the edges of the document. Work from the edge inwards. If the color is too intense, undo the work, lower the opacity and start again. This is a trial and error process and the idea is to slowly build up the color base to get the desired effect.

3. Having established the base layer, select a contrasting color from the swatch panel and repeat the process. Vary the brush opacity to create a mottled pattern using more than one color if necessary. Apply more paint to the edges to create a vignette effect. If the color pattern on the background is too intense, use a white brush to dab white over the color to soften the result. Alternatively, use a shade of grey or black to darken the effect.

### Number two:

The second approach is a variation of the first, in that this time color dabs of paint are applied to a color background. Create a new document as before and then select the paint bucket tool from the left- hand tool bar. Next pick a color from the swatch panel and click on the new document to fill the document with the selected color. Once the background color is established, select the paint brush tool and repeat the steps outlined previously.

### Number three:

The third approach is where it is desirable to replace the background on a full-length portrait. Often in these images, there is a fall off in light from top to bottom and simply replacing the backdrop with a uniformly lit backdrop looks false. This is where a gradient color backdrop can be helpful.

To make a gradient backdrop, create a new document as described previously. Then select the "Gradient Tool" by right clicking on the "bucket fill tool" used previously. Next select a color from the swatch panel and drag a line from either top to bottom or left to right on the document. This will give a solid color at one end, tapering to a lighter color at the opposite end. Sometimes, this leaves a gradient that is too short for the intended purpose. To get around this, I simply made the new document longer than I would normally use and then cropped to get the desired effect. In one case, I made the new document 75mm longer than normal and then cropped out the lighter end.

Once the gradient has been created, the paint brush tool can be used to add color patterns if needed.

### Adding texture

If desired, a texture can be added to any background. The simplest methods are to either add digital noise by using the Filter add noise command, or by using the clouds filter (Filter, render, clouds). Open the selected background, create a new layer and then apply the filter. The final effect can be controlled by varying the blend opacity and the blending option for that layer.

Texture can also be added by combining the background with another image. Textures can be made by taking a photo of any surface and saving that image as a jpeg. Potential surfaces include concrete paths, crumpled paper, clean textured paper, tree bark and brick walls. Really, there is no limit to potential surfaces.

In use, the intensity of the backdrop can be adjusted by using a curves adjustment layer and then experimenting with a curves adjustment, the blend mode and blend opacity. The dodge and burn tools can also be used to lighten or darken parts of the background. The dodge tool is useful for lightening the centre of a backdrop if needed.

The color temperature of the backdrop can be matched to the original image by using the color temperature filters.

Here are examples of backgrounds made using these procedures.



#### Left

**Top:** Blue Grey.

**Bottom:** PSPro Earth Standard Palletes Autumn Backdrop.

#### Facing page left

**Top:** Leia Original.

**Bottom:** Leia Warm Red.

#### Facing page right

**Top:** Leia Mottled Grey.

**Bottom:** Leia Warm Brown.





# My gear

ANDY RAILS



As a professional photographer, I'm going to imagine that many of you will probably guess that I have quite a bit of gear, and you would be correct. But it may not necessarily be exactly what you're thinking.

I have recently made some changes to my gear since the Covid19 threat first made its presence felt. But as yet, I have not had an opportunity to put some of that new gear to use, because of the work restrictions in Melbourne. I've certainly not yet been able to use this new gear for its intended purposes. Only a few technical tests in our basement carpark thus far.

### A Nikon guy

Anyway, here's a brief run-down of my current kit bag, starting with cameras. I have used Nikons professionally for about 16 years. I still own a D4, along with a solid complement of lenses including the 14-24, 24-70 and 70-200, also the Nikkor 24mm, 45m, and 85 mm perspective correction lenses. To make way for the recent purchase of my large/medium format hybrid digital camera system, I recently sold my D810, D3, as well as the Nikkor 300mm PF and Nikkor 600 ED F4 lenses. I expect I'll get another new Nikon body soon, and make the D4 the back-up body, but I'm waiting to see what happens with the professional industry and new camera releases. The D4 is still a strong unit with plenty of life in it yet.

### Sigma DP series

I also have a couple of the APS-C foveon [Sigma DP series cameras](#). The DP0, which is the equivalent of a 21mm lens on a 135 gate, and the DP2, which is the equivalent of a 45mm on a 135 gate. I really love the colours these little cameras produce. I would love to add a DP3 to the stable. It comes with a 50mm lens, which gives an equivalent angle of view as a 75mm on a 135 gate. I mostly use these cameras for personal fun and family photos. However, I have used them on a couple of occasions on commercial assignments. Their leaf shutter which goes up to 1/2000th of a second makes them a super handy tool when working outside with flash. They may be very small and funny looking things, but the images files they make

are nothing short of amazing. They punch well above their weight in terms of image quality, but come with a few caveats: you have to be disciplined with your lighting and exposure. If you become a little too relaxed, these little cameras can quickly drop the heaviest photographers to the floor with one punch.

### Large format

My most recent camera acquisition is a hybrid large format system. The base platform is a Cambo Ultima 45D, in fact the camera body I have is a hybrid of the Cambo 23D and the 45D. Essentially, it's a 4x5 view camera. It was made for use with film, but at the time when Digital was emerging as a strong contender to replace large format film as the king of image quality for the commercial photographer. So, all of the movements, and most importantly the focus adjustment, feature very finely geared controls, which digital sensors demand. I have made a manual focus calibration jig, so that I can achieve repeatable manual focus adjustments on location, and can easily adjust the focal plane of the digital sensor in the field as I switch between the ground glass to the sensor. The Ultima also comes with the option to use it with a 35mm digital camera body or a medium format digital back. The beauty of the camera body that I have is the ability to use the 4x5 ground glass to frame up my image, then just replace the ground glass with a sliding adapter and the digital back to make the capture of the frame that I composed. The sliding adapter, in combination with the rise and fall of the rear standard, allows me to take several images or plates as it were. I can later stitch those images together in photoshop to make one large image file. This does take some patience as Lens Colour Cast (LCC) files need to be created for each of the 9 or 15 plate shots; but ultimately it is worth the effort. This process renders a virtual sensor/film gate that is almost the full size of a 4x5 film gate. It makes for a stunningly large image file, and one which also renders a narrow depth of field, with incredibly detailed sharps on the focus plane. While this system, and the process of shooting either 9 or 15 plates, does present some limitations to the type and style of photography one can successfully execute, it works perfectly well for the style of tableaux images which have become the primary focus of my personal works of late. The reason for purchasing this kit was purely for making more large format tableaux images.

### Lighting

Moving on from cameras, my most prized piece of photographic kit, is my lighting gear. It has taken me years to assemble this sizeable kit. I have used Elinchrom strobes for my lighting since about 2005. My kit currently includes two Quadra ranger packs at 400WS each; six Quadra ranger heads, and a ring flash head. Two Ranger packs and head at 1100 WS each. Two 500 W/S mono-block lights, and the pride of the fleet, three Elinchrom 404 packs with Elinchrom Zoom Pro HD heads. Each pack and flash head, is able to deliver a whopping 4000w/s of power. These babies are my secret weapon for making my large exterior tableaux images. Essentially, they pack an equivalent punch in terms of lighting power as a 20,000 watt tungsten globe, maybe more. They truly are the back-bone of my large exterior lighting setups. Along with dozens of Elinchrom reflectors, dishes, soft-boxes, spot attachments, thousands of dollars-worth of stands, C-stands, magic arms, clamps, grips,

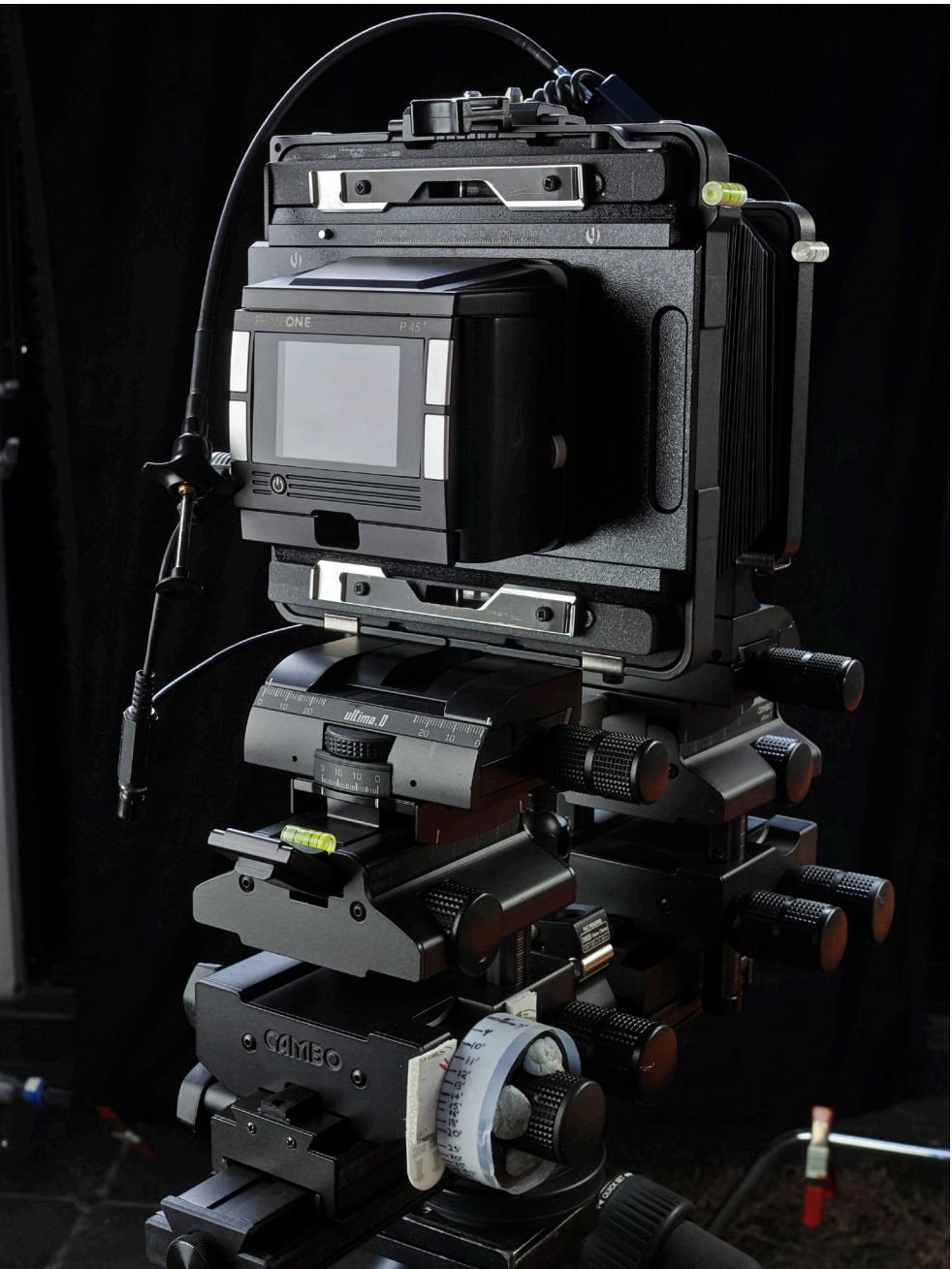
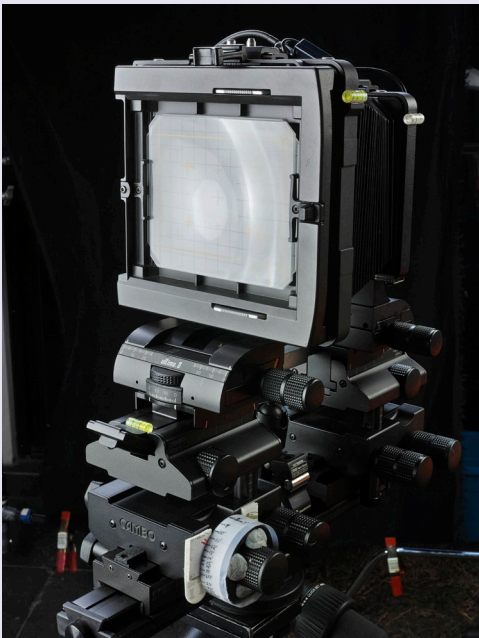
cables, generators, smoke machines, hazers, radio flash triggers, various speedlights, gels, frames, blacks, diffusers, butterfly frames, light meters, carts, trolleys, 2 way radios, you name it. The list goes on.

While I haven't yet had the opportunity to take the large format digital kit out in public to conduct a large-scale shoot because of the lock down restrictions, I have conducted plenty of camera tests in my basement and backyard. I have been developing a few ideas for some new images to make, now that we are allowed out again, and I'm certainly looking forward to getting this kit out to go make some more beautiful tableaux images. So, if you're interested in joining in on any of my shoots to assist in any of the numerous roles that need to be filled in order to achieve such a large photographic setup, I would be delighted to hear from you.

[Contact Andy.](#)



**Left :** Cambo Ultima 45D monorail  
**Right:** Ground glass screen on Cambo Ultima 45D monorail.  
**Facing page:**  
Digital back on Cambo Ultima 45D monorail





# Putting it on film

SAM AMAR

## What’s important in photography



**The golden age of photojournalism is considered by many to be from the 1930’s through to the 50’s and 60’s, made possible by the production of compact & durable 35mm Leica cameras.**

In 2020, although still much cheaper than their digital counterparts, Leica film cameras are a prized possession of collectors, hipsters and nostalgic photographers who place value on the unique aesthetics that film stocks and Leica M lenses provide. In addition to aesthetic, I personally almost exclusively shoot film because it forces you to use your brain, and will continue to remind you of what’s important in photography.

### It’s all about the story

This rationale for shooting film is important on a personal level, but it is a conversation that is irrelevant outside of amateur photography groups. The subject matter & the story you want to tell is all that should be conveyed through your images, you shouldn’t have to sidle up to someone looking at a print of yours and whisper ‘I shot in on a Leica and developed it myself’ in their ear to justify its existence. Given I’ve been asked to write about the analogue process, I’m more than happy to give you all the gory details. But rest assured, it doesn’t matter.

### Documenting a protest

With this in mind, during the Black Lives Matter protests in early June 2020 I walked to a train station with a group of friends, freshly out of lockdown, to show support and document the alarming need for a renewed demand for civil rights in Australia.

Slung across my body was a Leica M3 loaded with Ilford HP5 & a Voigtlander 21mm f4. If you’re not familiar with rangefinder cameras, you compose and focus through a window in the camera, as opposed to a SLR or TLR where you look through a lens via

mirrors. An M3’s rangefinder displays as wide as a 50mm, so I was using an external finder to compose for the full 21mm frame. Focusing is still done through the 50mm window. It’s a little trippy, but you get used to it. I was originally intending to shoot the film at box speed (400 ASA) and took a couple of shots around the station, but given it was late and overcast I decided on the train I would push the film a stop and rated it at 800 ASA (ISO).

I was actually extremely grateful I was shooting film throughout the protest- with the sensory and emotional overwhelm, it was great to not have much to think about in terms of the camera. I took a couple of meter readings as I exited the station (pictured) and I wouldn’t have to think about exposure until my film or the light changed. My second roll of film was Kodak TMAX 3200, a 1250(ish) speed film designed to be pushed to 3200 ASA. I did so and shot a Summicron 50mm as narrow as the light would allow- the last half the roll is all wide open at f2, and even then a lot of it is underexposed.

### The film/developer equation

For the uninitiated, developing film plays a huge role in how the final images look. It doesn’t really have a digital equivalent - different developers will give different looks, and leaving the film in the developer for longer or shorter than recommended will alter exposure. If you underexpose all your shots by 1 stop, you can ‘push’ the film 1 stop so that comes out at the correct exposure. Likewise, you can ‘pull’ if you overexpose, but this isn’t as common. For developer, I usually use Kodak D76 and dilute it 1:1 to stretch it further, which also increases grain - a nice bonus.

Developing times were a combination of past experience and looking at other people’s results online. Kodak and Ilford supply suggested developing times, but not at all speeds. I hadn’t developed TMAX 3200 before, and left it in a little bit too long. This, combined with under exposed shots, left it looking very flat and murky. I actually quite like how it turned out - I love low contrast and high grain (perhaps not quite to this extent), but it’s unlikely to be usable for publication.



## Digital workflow

The images you see here are scans using a Prime Film XA & scanned through SilverFast. I don’t love the digital workflow so I don’t do much to the images. I’ve made some contrast and highlights adjustments and dodged and burned a little bit, but it’s done very quickly to give a rough simulation of what the gelatin silver print looks like. Most of the prints themselves are up there with the hardest I’ve had to make - not because they need to be, but probably because I’ve impressed on myself the importance of really trying to make the best print possible for the first time since I entered a darkroom.

## The Bowness Prize

The reason I’ve been asked to write this article is one of these images is being exhibited as part of Monash Gallery of Arts Bowness Prize - an honor and a privilege that I was not expecting. I was equally surprised to hear that this year the gallery chose 60 finalists from 2478 images received from 1003 entries, which is the most submissions in the prize’s history. MGA is currently marking the exhibition as running from 31 October 2020 to 7 February 2021, with judges and people’s choice winners being announced January 2021. Regardless of whether you can make the exhibition, I can’t recommend the gallery highly enough. It’s a beautiful building, property and space, with curation that deeply explores our national identity.





# August winners

SET SUBJECT



**AUGUST WINNERS - SET SUBJECT**

**Above**

**Top: A Grade** Paul Dodd *Egg, after Sudek*

**Bottom: B Grade** Paul Fraser *Tea time*

**Facing page:**

**Top: B Grade** James Mexias *Stage 4*

**Bottom: A Grade** Kadri Elcoat *Noel Coward Suite*



# August winners

OPEN



**AUGUST WINNERS - OPEN**

**Above: A Grade** Kyffin Lewis *Blue Wren*

**Left: B Grade** Ralph Domino *What Spectacle*

**Facing page:**

**Top: B Grade** James Mexias *Camping in Bulleen*

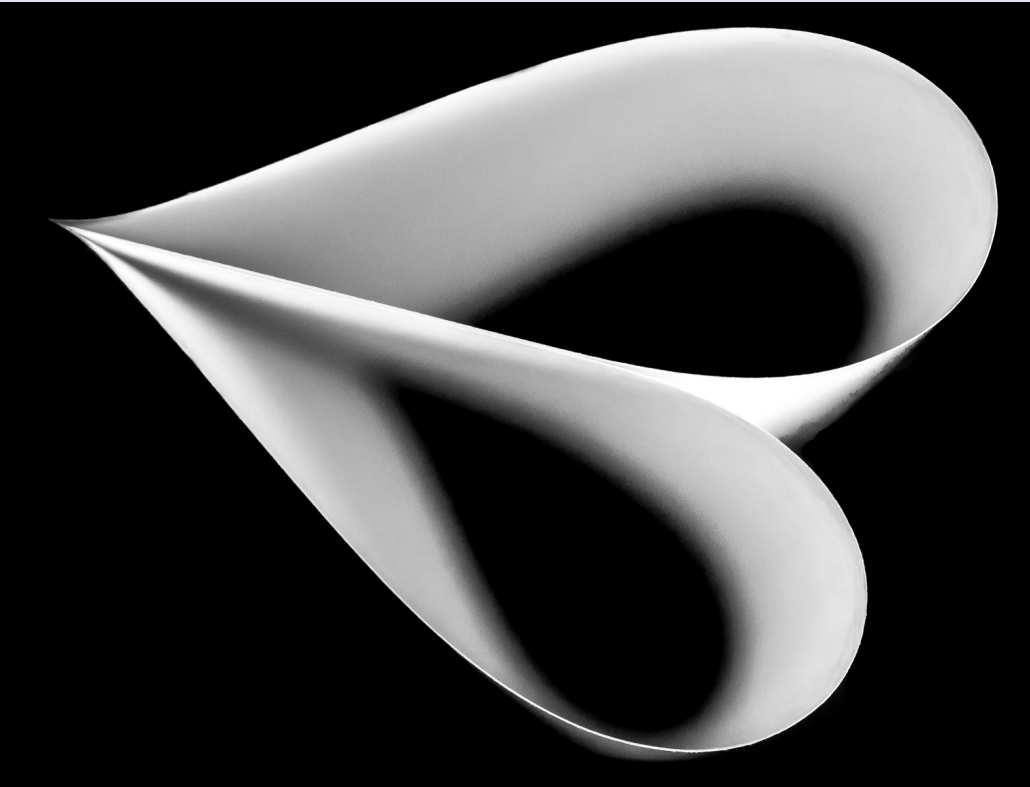
**Bottom: A Grade** Kyffin Lewis *Welcome Swallow*





September winners

SET SUBJECT



September winners

OPEN



SEPTEMBER WINNERS - SET SUBJECT

Facing page

Top: A Grade Annette Donald  
Black & White abstract

Bottom: B Grade Doug Jackson  
Zipper Highway

SEPTEMBER WINNERS - OPEN

Left: B Grade Richard Lang  
Life under Lockdown

Right bottom: A Grade Mark Devaraj  
Kids with Pony





# October winners

OPEN



## OCTOBER WINNERS - OPEN

### Facing page

**Top: B Grade** David Sherwood *From under*

**Bottom: A Grade** Lesley Bretherton *Iris and Tulips*

### Above and right

**Above: A Grade** Paul Fraser *Lockdown Swimming Pool*

**Right: B Grade** Paul Dodd *Australis, Melbourne*





# October winners

OPEN



# October winners

SET SUBJECT



**OCTOBER WINNERS - OPEN**

Facing page

Top: **B Grade** Ralph Domino *The passerby*

Bottom: **A Grade** Alan Donald *Swans*

**OCTOBER WINNERS - SET SUBJECT**

Above and right

Above: **A Grade** Ruth Woodrow *Paul Reading*

Right: **B Grade** Matt Smith *Too cool for school*



# October winners

SET SUBJECT



**OCTOBER WINNERS - SET SUBJECT**

**Facing page**

**Top: A Grade** Mark Devaraj *Glasses*

**Bottom: B Grade** Paul Dodd *Wave*

**Above and following page**

**Above: A Grade** John Godfrey *Braving the winter water*

**Following page: B Grade** Ralph Domino *Raise your Glass*



# October winners

SET SUBJECT

