

# DIGIT

THE RPS  
ROYAL  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP



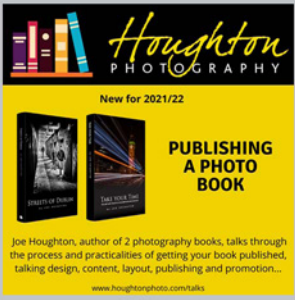



Number 92 2022 Issue 1



# UPCOMING DIGITAL IMAGING EVENTS

Details of DI events are available on its web pages at: [tinyurl.com/sxzl487](https://tinyurl.com/sxzl487)



<p><b>Digital Imaging: South East</b> Fridays 11 Mar, 25 Mar, 8 Apr 2022 Online Workshop</p>  <p><b>Joe Houghton</b> <b>'Presenting your Work'</b> Another chance to develop your skills creating panels</p> <p><a href="https://rps.org/SEONLINE822">rps.org/SEONLINE822</a></p>	<p><b>Digital Imaging: Online</b> Saturday 9 April 2022 Online</p>  <p><b>Sharon Prenton Jones</b> Portraits, Myths &amp; Fairy Tales</p> <p><a href="https://www.rps.org/DIGONLINE31">www.rps.org/DIGONLINE31</a></p>	<p><b>Digital Imaging: South East</b> Friday 22 April 2022 Online</p>  <p><b>Joe Houghton</b> <b>Publishing a Photo Book</b></p> <p><a href="https://rps.org/SEONLINE922">rps.org/SEONLINE922</a></p>
<p><b>Digital Imaging: Online</b> Saturday 7 May 2022 Online</p>  <p><b>Levon Biss</b> Exploring Macro ... Revealing Nature's Hidden Secrets</p> <p><a href="https://www.rps.org/DIGONLINE32">www.rps.org/DIGONLINE32</a></p>	<p><b>Digital Imaging: Online</b> Saturday 4 June 2022 Online</p>  <p><b>David duChemin</b> The Heart of the Photograph</p> <p><a href="https://www.rps.org/DIGONLINE33">www.rps.org/DIGONLINE33</a></p>	<p><b>Digital Imaging: Online</b> Saturday 2 July 2022 Online</p>  <p><b>Ross McKelvey</b> Photoshop Processing Tips &amp; Tricks</p> <p><a href="https://www.rps.org/DIGONLINE34">www.rps.org/DIGONLINE34</a></p>

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Event programmes continue to be disrupted as a result of the COVID pandemic, please check on the RPS website or with the Centre Organiser for the latest status of any event.

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Cover image:

**Land of Sin-esthesia** by Jerad Armijo

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## EXPLORING MACRO ... REVEALING NATURE'S HIDDEN SECRETS WITH LEVON BISS



**Saturday 7 May 2022  
16:00 BST**

**Online via Zoom**

**Register here: [rps.org/digonline32](https://rps.org/digonline32)**

Levon Biss in discussion with RPS President Simon Hill about his fascination with extreme macro photography and the challenges of photographing at high magnification.

Levon's multi-award winning project *Microsculpture*, a unique 3-year photographic study of insects in mind-blowing magnification, took the genre of macro photography to an entirely new level. He adapted traditional techniques to create a photographic process that revealed the minute details of insects in a resolution and scale never seen before. The project has been viewed by millions and has been described as a beautiful marriage between art and science.

In this talk, Levon will explain the technical and creative process of his work and discuss selected images from the *Microsculpture* and *Amber* projects, plus his latest body of work *The Hidden Beauty of Seeds & Fruits*.

## EDITORIAL

### STEVE VARMAN LRPS

I have edited the Creative Eye Group's magazine since 2018, and was pleased when asked to help Janet Haines produce a couple of issues of DIGIT (91 and 92). Gary Beaton, your usual editor, was kind enough to send me the design files before heading out for his sabbatical. This helped me hit the ground running, and from there, Janet, Deborah Loth, Rex Waygood and the DIGIT team have made it a very pleasurable experience.

Janet has done a remarkable job of sourcing a great variety of high quality content, making the design side of things a lot of fun to do - and of course, where would we be without our contributors?

In this issue, Jerad Armijo, uses music and his synesthesia to produce beautifully minimalist imagery, with accompanying poetry. Alex Hare's photo book making is an inspiring way to display your work. You can find Alex's online workshops, and learn the art for yourself by following the link

in the article. Now that pandemic restrictions are easing, print exhibitions will be making a welcome return - so it's timely that we have Andy Golding giving advice on planning and exhibiting prints. Flower photography and Photoshop expert, Celia Henderson will help unlock your creative side. Celia runs regular workshops for the RPS (links in the article). Our next contributor, Mike Martin shows us the extraordinary world of the Droste Effect, and how you too can bend reality! We also get to meet the DI's newly elected Chair, Avijit Datta. With a Fellowship awarded in scientific imaging and a background in education and communication, the DI is in safe hands.

Finally, it's time to get your hands dirty with our DIGIT challenges - why not use Barry Badcock's and José Closs's ideas to springboard your next project.

If you are a Creative Eye Group member, I'll see you for the May edition of the CE magazine.



The Void



## SYNESTHESIA, POETRY AND PHOTOGRAPHY

JERAD ARMIJO

**From New Mexico, Jerad expresses himself by blending his synesthesia, music, poetry and photography to give the viewer a unique experience.**

**A**s a child, I would scribble shapes onto a blank sheet of white paper. Music would play in the background, rich colors with wild shapes would fill my brain and I'd start coloring these oddly drawn forms with colors from my crayon box. They would replicate odd forms of traditional shapes, that sometimes

had gradients, or solid color. In high school, the album *Pure Heroin* by Lorde, came out which completely altered the way I saw music. I had never seen so many vivid colors in my life, and it was in this moment I knew something was "different" about me, I just didn't know what. I then started photography. I started to photograph

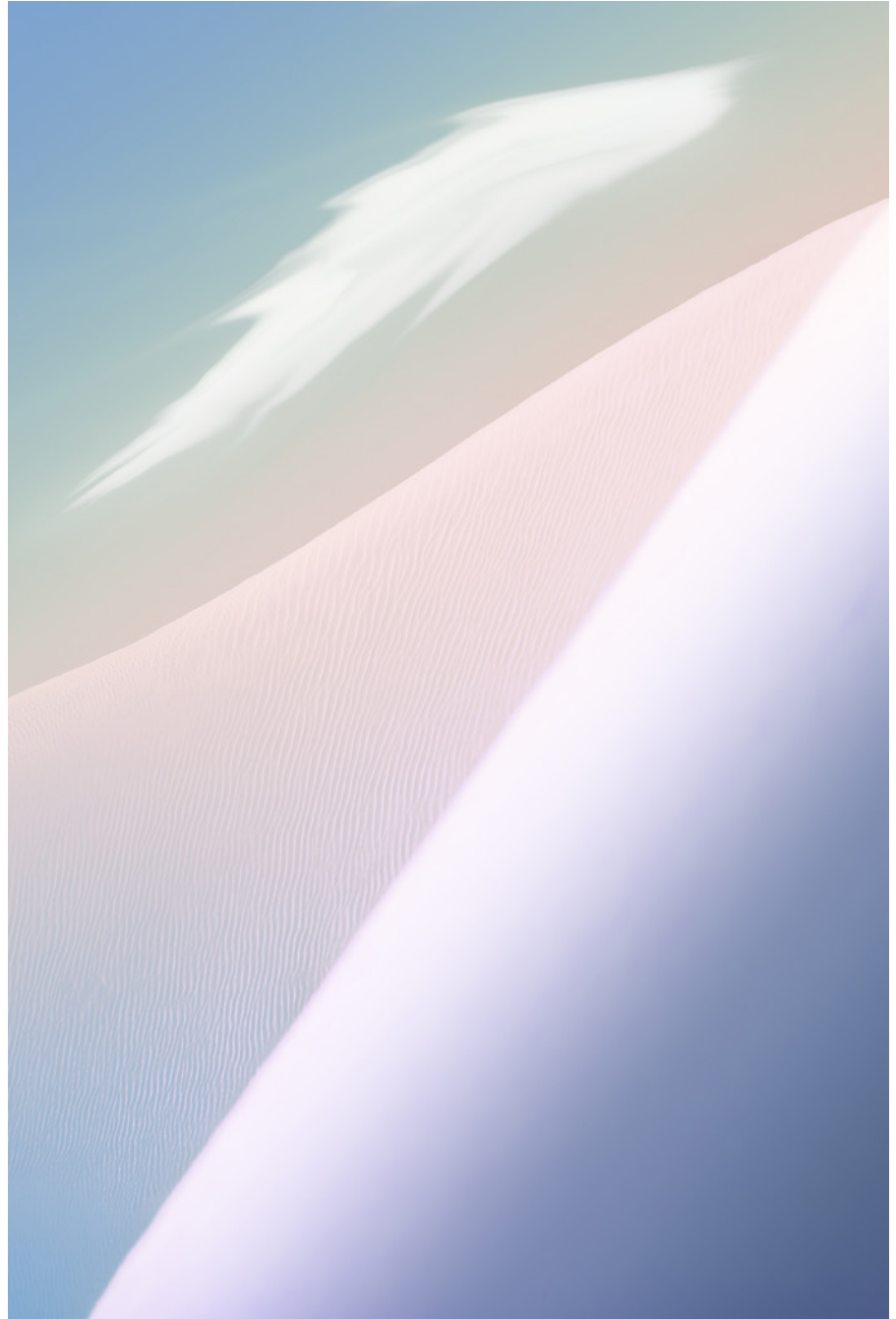
and add colors to my photographs with oil paints while Lorde was playing in the background. Truthfully, it wasn't until about 5 years ago when I understood what was occurring: I had synesthesia, a neurological condition, in which information meant to stimulate one sense, instead stimulates other senses. In my case when I

listen to music, I see shape and color. The colors and shapes I saw when I listened to music was in fact not a shared experience, but something unique to a minority of people.

I revisited some of my earlier work, that I created in high school to find inspiration. I feel that our creative spirit is unbiased when we are younger, and I wanted to see what caught my eye at that age. Children are not afraid of failure and do not experience the hesitation of exploration that comes with maturity, and, in some cases, they even embrace it. Children tend to take more risks with creativity and stay truer to what they find beautiful in the world. I then wondered what creative outlet I may have abandoned that I could pick up and revisit?

When I revisited my old work, there are common themes throughout my photographic portfolio. Minimalism always appeared in some form within my work, as well as always looking for that slightly surreal, yet peculiar, moment that piqued my interest, but could also serve as a blank canvas for me to impress my synesthesia onto. To showcase my colors in various ways, I thought to myself, "Can I use my synesthesia in my photography? How do I show my *third eye*? What does my synesthesia look like in photographic form? How can I evolve? Could I utilize landscape in such a way to form depth?" I explored these thoughts, with many trials and errors, until years later it finally clicked.

My first attempt to photograph my synesthesia was in White Sands, New Mexico years back. The White Sands dunes are pearly white from the gypsum with the blue Organ mountains that lend to its surreal presence. I trekked into the gypsum dunes, trying to figure out how to translate synesthesia into my art. It was then that a lone cloud appeared just above the horizon. I wanted to compose this cloud in such a way that my synesthesia would frame it beautifully. I ran through the snow-white sand wonder land, latching onto the side of a giant dune to photograph the sharp angles and



Swimming

shapes that I saw in a song. I aptly named this piece *Aloof* (p.8). My early twenties were rough and filled with traumatic events. I felt at the time, the older I was getting the more aloof I was becoming, and ultimately the more alone I felt. I wanted to translate this painful thought through poetry. These two entities intertwined and gave meaning to my art. This blending of two art mediums marked the start of an era of creativity

Self-discovery happens during the dreary pacific northwest winters for me. I try to find inspiration to occupy my mind, so I started to read poetry. How can I, through introspection,

relate colorful landscapes to me? I started to write down events in my life. I wrote about my past, the good and the bad. The topics had quite a range. I wrote about my childhood, being able to live all around the US and world, a family member becoming addicted to pills, finding my soul mate, and even about my suicidal past. Through this self-reflection I realized I myself am full of inspiration to work from, in terms of stories, I just needed to get these ideas translated into poetry. My vision for my digital artistry and social media presence, is to have my audience read poetry in context of the corresponding image, and



Broken Glass

artwork with the realism of landscape photography? I worried my peers thought less of me for branching out into digital photography, but I also had a unique artistic vision that I did not want to abandon. I didn't know where I fit in. I was lost.

It was not until I had a long thoughtful conversation with a fellow colleague, Tara Workman, who told me to "Own who I am. Do what you want to do and ignore the others. You are you for a reason." I am me, and this is who I am, a mold breaker, a creative wanting to show my peculiar view to the world.

So, I stepped forward, and continued my journey, in the eyes of an artist. I needed to learn how to integrate and balance the colors of my synesthesia into my work. I started to research my favorite painters, and animators to better understand color. When I was younger, I grew up in Japan. This is where I first started to watch Studio Ghibli films. I've absolutely loved the simplistic magic Hayao Miyazaki was able to bring to everyday life. Miyazaki made some of the most common day scenes feel alive through color, and I draw a lot of inspiration from his color work. He has such an eye for minimal surrealism that I strive for with my photography. There are many moments in his films, where you can sit and stare, and feel at peace. The evocation of emotions shines throughout his films, and I wanted that sense of peace in my art pieces. Hayao Miyazaki's use of color, magical surrealism, minimalism, and composition, was monumental in the way I present color combinations and shapes through my art, to create evocative photography.

Blending colors is one of my steps in managing my colors from my synesthesia. I however needed to learn how to balance my saturation, tonalities, and learn how to present my colors in the light of daytime. One of my favorite painters, Georgia O'Keefe, who lived and died in my home state of New Mexico, was a guru of leveled tonalities. I wanted to learn to balance my synesthesia-influenced color ▶

come up with their interpretation that fits the lens of their own life through introspection and self-reflection. My creative process begins with finding words that feel powerful, and at times magical, and then tie them back into the meaning I presented with my photograph. This process gives and takes, as the emotion I am trying to capture in my poetry influences how I develop a given photograph. What begins as a sophomore prose becomes more refined as I explore the depths of emotion that dictates my artistic direction, and that vision becomes fully realized and adaptive, as I get lost in the details of a dream-

like landscape. Through trial and error, creative writing started to slowly become second nature to me. This discovery of a new format and approach to exploring my artistic ability excited me, and I became restless thinking of the potential opportunities that awaited.

I only used the shapes from my synesthesia at this point of my journey, but very little of the color alteration in an attempt to maintain a more "natural" look to the images, since I wanted my work to still be grounded in reality. My journey however, led me to a crossroad: how do I reconcile my ephemeral, fantasy inspired



Aloof



## IMAGE EXPLANATION WITH CORRESPONDING POEM

**The Land of Sin-esthesia**

I drink the elixir of melodies

Colors Fill my lungs, my heart, my mind, my body, and soul

Letting the Enigma of spectrums lift my wings higher and higher

Illuminating my eyes full of boundless tonalities

Until I start to fall, dive, and sink back into the blank canvas

Unleashing my rainbows left and right

Raining down my secret hues on the gradient filled wonder land of sin-esthesia

The land of my third eye

A piece dedicated to my third eye. I'm thankful for my synesthesia, and I'm learning to embrace it more. This piece is a tipping point into a new art direction for me, a utilization of multiple musicians to achieve new colors with vibrant gradients throughout. Synesthesia colors inspired by *Realiti* by Grimes, *One Last Kiss* by Hikaru Utada, and *Dog Days Are Over* by Florence + The Machine. Image on the cover of this magazine.

**Broken Glass**

I love the colorful people

The people with broken parts

The people with difficult pasts that shaped them oddly and beautifully

The real people

The people with soul

Dedicated to my fellow broken humans. I understand you. I hear you. I love you. Perfect is boring and no one understands you. Synesthesia colors inspired by *Orinoco Flow* by Enya. Image on p.7.

**The Void**

I'm the empty shell in the sky you'll never escape

I'll suckle on your light till it runs dry

Forever aflame in your heart of dejected seas

I am a parasite

I am the void

This piece is about my depression. It's always there in my heart. It wrecks my heart and leaves it barren. This

is me coming to terms with knowing that I will never make it go away. A way for me to find the beauty of what depression is, to make it a positive experience for myself. Just because I have depression, doesn't mean it has to define my life. This is me accepting me for who I am and being okay with not being perfect. Synesthesia colors inspired by *My Name is Dark* by Grimes. Image on p.5.

**Swimming**

The sky owns my mind

It's always been

So it shall remain

Wandering

Thoughtless

Flowing

Transcending

It's always been

So it shall remain

Swimming in the opal skies

I often daydream. I love going on walks, staring into the skies, and watching the clouds. My head is lost in thought, and often absent. A practice of escapism, to float through my days soundly. I'm a feather swimming in the wind. Synesthesia colors inspired by *Shinigami Eyes* by Grimes, and *Halley's Comet* by Billie Eilish. Image on p.6.

**My Holy Trinity**

I want my vision to transcend time

I want it to permeate the abyss of your mind

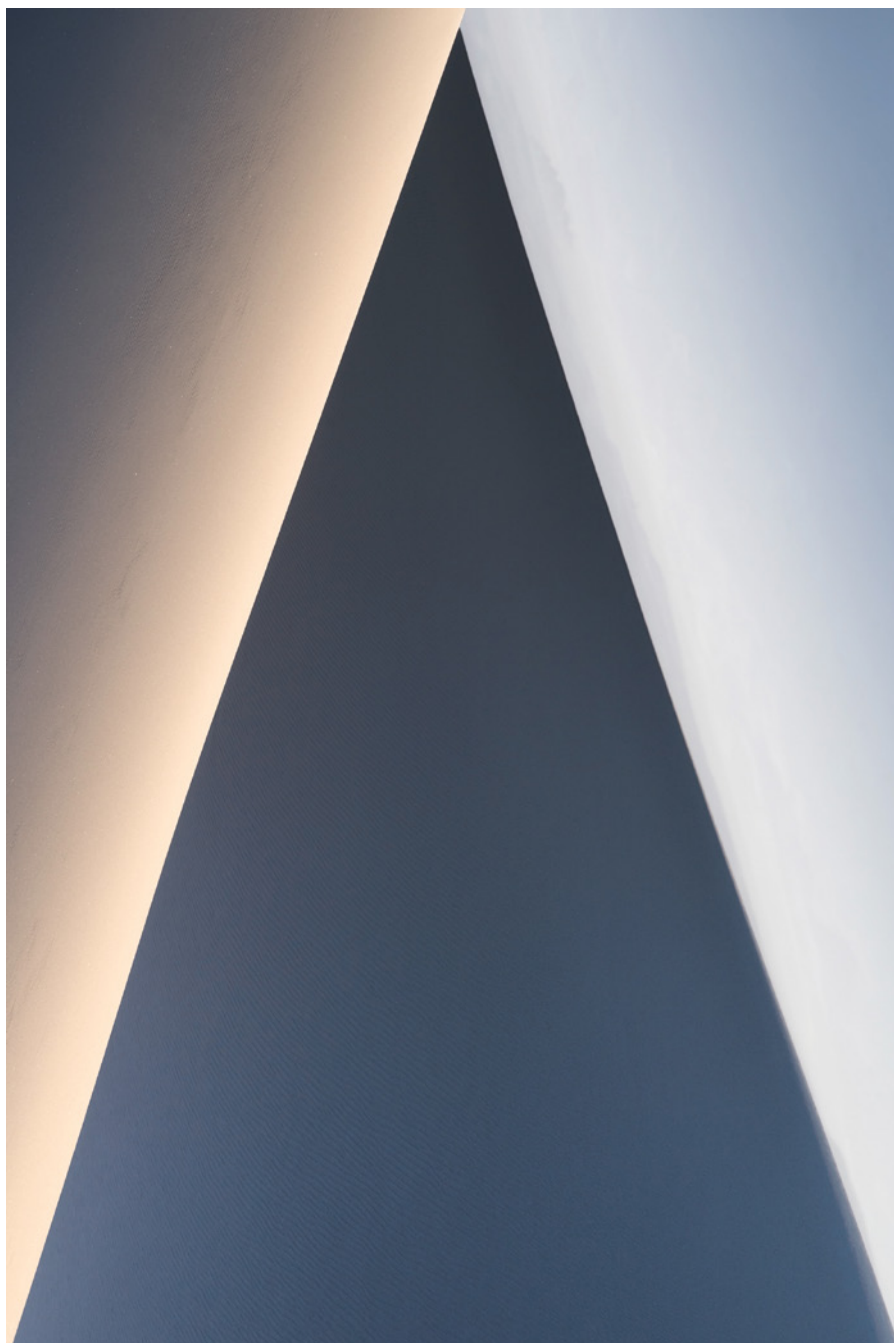
A constant flow of my hues of divine golds, blacks, and blues of my body, mind, and soul

A permeance of my holy trinity so I will not be forgotten

A photograph of modern abstract desert magic, depicting the three pieces of a completed version of "me", something I strive for, but will never obtain. I don't want to be forgotten. I want to leave a permanent mark in this world before I leave it. This might be unrealistic for myself, but I still try. The gold triangle represents my body, soft and malleable just like gold, the black triangle representing the abyss of my mind, and blue to represent the soul which is free and light. These three combined form a complete version of what I strive to become. Synesthesia colors inspired by *Echoes in Rain* by Enya. Image on p.10.

blending by learning from one of the masters, Georgia O'Keefe. Her colors were always in equilibrium which highlighted a surreal balance that I wanted to achieve with my artwork. I wished to pick her brain and see what inspired her landscape paintings, so I traveled to Ghost Ranch where she lived. I hiked around the whole area studying the colors that shone in the sediments. The vast spectrum of the landscapes' colors contrasted with the deep sky blues so naturally, creating a symbiotic relationship that radiated a perfect balance. All day I studied how the light changed the colors of the landscape, watching them meld together seamlessly, teaching me how to utilize color. This trip helped me better understand what I wanted with my colors, and how to present them through daylight, to help create tonal balance with my synesthesia. This realization would forever alter my aesthetic, adding an additional layer of my synesthesia and colorwork.

These pieces of my journey gave me the tools I needed to harness the beauty of my synesthesia. As I continued my progression, I needed to combine these tools with music. I needed to listen to see more colors, more gradients, and shapes. I went through several musicians to find colors that I loved, to help utilize my synesthesia to show its beauty to the world, in an elegant way that seamlessly interacted with the landscape. I often use Florence + The Machine, Lorde, Grimes, Lana Del Rey, Enya, Fleetwood Mac, Billie Eilish, Purity Ring, Sigur Ros, and many more for my color inspiration. I always bring my headphones with me on any photography trip. I skip through songs to see what inspires me. The landscape provides the blank canvas for my work, and the music paints the landscape in a flow of colors and shapes. When I am making my composition, the colors and shapes are always in flux, and I am constantly shifting and altering my shot as these visions come to me. After I take my shot, I make sure to note what song I was listening to during that time, so I



The Holy Trinity

can recreate that exact combination when I begin my post-processing. Other times, I let my playlist run on random and see what song best fits with the image. I often re-listen to songs, dozens to hundreds of times, to make sure I pull out the finer tonalities that fills my head when I'm processing my images. This allows me to understand the colors presented in my head in a clearer way to create a concise coloring in my photography.

All these experiences have helped me develop my own unique aesthetic and artistic vision. This cohesion of techniques helped me blend my synesthesia, poetry, and

photography to give the viewer a unique experience. A cohesive visual experience into my mind. I hope you enjoy these moments I'm presenting to you. These moments in my life vary from bright, dark, mundane, happy, and ephemeral. I think vulnerability is key to bringing us together, and as an artist I can display these moments in an eloquent visual way. These are my experiences that I share with you, and I hope to show that you're not alone ●

**DISCOVER MORE**  
[awayiflew.com](http://awayiflew.com)



## HANDMADE PHOTO BOOKS: THE PERFECT WAY TO DISPLAY

ALEX HARE

**Alex is a professional commercial and landscape photographer, and shows us how making your own photo books is a creative and hugely rewarding way to transfer your digital files into the real world.**

I don't know about you, but since I 'went digital' the range and variety of images I can make has increased dramatically and I've created an awful lot of images.

However, there is an unintended consequence to all this; with an increase in production and quality (I think I've got better over the years...) much of my work lies buried deep within folders on my hard drives where it sits, unseen and collecting cyber dust.

I often promise myself I'll find time to process this backlog but somehow, life and enjoying new photography experiences take precedence, and the untouched resource grows larger and larger with every passing year.

Part of the problem lies in how we display our work. We shoot a lot of images but don't always have a thought as to how we can make them available for people to see them.

Making large prints for the wall is

one option; it means selecting one or two belters, and going to the cost and effort of framing them. However, there's only so much wall space available and/or inclination to change them over at semi regular intervals to freshen things up.

Websites are an obvious alternative—here we can post lots of photos to carefully curated galleries but, somehow, the use of websites as a format for enjoying photography has waned as social media use has risen. I also sense we are growing tired of yet more digital display and screen time that this entails.

So framed prints still leave most of our work unseen, and websites and social media in particular, offer only a fleeting experience of our work that is rather unsatisfactory.

Which brings me to handmade books. When it comes to having a lifelong, tactile, enduring and uniquely personal way to display our work,

nothing beats a hand made photo book, and it's a lot simpler to do than you might think.

Holding a book you've made yourself, feeling the paper you've chosen for the pages, enjoying the printing of your work, the captions you've written, and seeing your work as a connected sequence is a wonderful outcome for the photography you've gone to the trouble of making.

It's also a thoroughly enjoyable and creative process in itself which hands control to you, as the artist, on how your work is presented and 'hangs' together as a collective whole.

I have found that my photo books make for a new way to share and enjoy my photography with people. Photo books, such as a concertina, can sit open on a mantelpiece or table, positively drawing people to them as they hint at the images available to see inside.

I also thoroughly enjoy the simple

## HANDMADE PHOTO BOOKS: THE PERFECT WAY TO DISPLAY?

craftsmanship that goes into making the book as a hobby that sits alongside my main work as a landscape photographer.

### MAKING A BOOK

Making a handmade book is fairly simple; all we need is some inexpensive crafting kit and some easy to learn bookbinding skills. I have a kit list available where, for circa £85, you will have a full set of kit including paper, tools and some items (like a cutting mat) which might last a lifetime.



In terms of learning to make a book, rest assured, it's definitely not hard! Some confidence cutting paper and card with a scalpel or Stanley Knife, making simple measurements, folding paper and applying glue here or there is all that's typically involved.

There are lots of book making courses out there to choose from but, along with my friend Lizzie Shepherd, we've developed perhaps the only workshop based specifically around making one for displaying photography and adapting the functionality in Lightroom or Photoshop to print images as pages for a book. The courses we run are listed on the workshops section of our website .

### TYPES OF BOOK

There are lots of fun and innovative ways to make a set of pages and covers for your book.

A simple but beautiful book is the concertina book. This opens out into a lovely panel of images, whilst the Japanese stab bound book, with all its elegant stitching, looks stunning and allows double sided pages to be included in your book.



The design options are virtually unlimited; part of the joy of bookmaking is how it's a unique creation, born of our own taste for design and layout, where we can tailor the choice of cover paper to suit the images we'd like to display inside. In this sense, the book and the photography become connected as a form of presentation and unique to our personal vision and style.

### PLANNING A BOOK

I always think there's two types of content; the photos you've already produced and the ones you might shoot specifically with a book in mind. Similarly there are two main phases to the book; the design and construction of the book (pages and covers) and the selection and ordering (sequencing) of the photo content.

In terms of the images we've all got massed on our hard drives, I like to think this opens up a lot of possibilities. It offers us ways to knit together various images from your back catalogue into a coherent set for a book based on the theme, concept or subject matter you have in mind.



For example, I might now think that a book exploring the beauty of mountains in winter snow might be a nice, tight, theme for a series of 10-12 of my images. With that in mind, I can go into my archives and pull together photos from all around the world, of the various snow capped peaks I've enjoyed capturing, and pull them together into a well constructed set for my new book.

I'll then think about the book design. Will I use a nice, white material or go for a soft, thick paper? Perhaps I might use a granite coloured piece of paper to match the colour of the rock in my images, and a white title piece and cover image of my personal favourite, easily printed off on my photo printer.

After that I'll think about whether I wish to include words with my images; this might be some simple captions under each photo and a short paragraph or two for an introduction page. This all makes good use of our photo printer and it's all possible through Photoshop, Lightroom, a combination of the two, or indeed Microsoft Word.

After I've sketched out my book design with some dimensions, chosen whether it'll be a concertina, Japanese stab bound book or any of the other page types at our

disposal, next comes the really tricky part; sequencing our images.

**SEQUENCING**

Sequencing is where we are considering what order our work should go in. It's a fun and often very engaging process. No longer are we thinking of just how good an image looks alone, but how it relates and moves the reader on to the next image. Without a sequence to our photos, we run the risk of presenting seemingly unrelated photos in a random order.



There's various sequencing methods we cover on the book making workshops and, whilst there's no real science to it, we look at a combination of skills from graphic design, intuition, personal taste and clear (perhaps ruthless!) editing of work to fit the subject of the book.

Another aspect to touch on is photo paper. Making a book out of pages with photos we've printed on some gorgeous paper, is part of the fun and contributes to the overall, tactile beauty of the books we make.

Matt papers, such as the Matt DUO 240 from Fotospeed offer smooth, bright white paper with a matt finish that's great for accentuating detail in landscape photos. It's also single or double sided ('duo') so also ideal for Japanese stab bound books. Another excellent paper is the High White Smooth Light. This paper folds very well without being too thick for a bunch of pages, or without 'breaking' the coating on the fold lines.

If you're interested in exploring different papers, it's worth trying out Fotospeed's Test Packs which allow you to experiment with various different types of paper. However, I'd definitely recommend sticking to the matte papers as the gloss ones are not conducive to being folded!

Hopefully this has given you a sense of the fun bookmaking can be and how it provides a 'final outcome' for our photography. It's a wonderfully simple, practical and creative process and a brilliant way to display multiple images in a thoughtful and aesthetic format ●



To see more of Alex's photography, and book for the next online workshop on 8th April 2022, go to:

[alexharephotography.com/photography-workshops/view/photo-book-making](http://alexharephotography.com/photography-workshops/view/photo-book-making)



Lisianthus on Gravestone



## CREATIVE FLOWER PROJECTS

CELIA HENDERSON LRPS

**Celia specialises in flower photography, is an experienced Photoshop user, and runs workshops for all levels through through RPS Southeast Region and Digital Imaging. Here, Celia takes us through three flower projects.**

I have always had a love and fascination for close up flower photography, but for many years I felt my images looked like those you see on the front of seed catalogues and packets – technically good, botanically OK, but no real WOW! factor. So I immersed myself in image processing and really learned what Photoshop could do.

Once I had discovered the world of creative tools for blending layers, applying filters, creating and working with brushes and patterns I was totally hooked.

When asked to write this article, I questioned why image making is so satisfying and rewarding. There are so many stages that we go through from conception and visualisation to

that final cracking image. I liken the process of image making to that of the Project Manager managing the project. Like all successful projects there is a project lifecycle – the **planning and visualisation**; where are we going, what is the subject, what are the success criteria, what could cause the project to fail? When I look through the view finder is this what I want the finished shot to actually look like? Then comes the **control and execution**; what camera settings should I use, can I control the background, and by how much can I control the lighting. The final stage is **review and evaluation**; checking each image for its suitability for the purpose. Does it meet my visualisation?

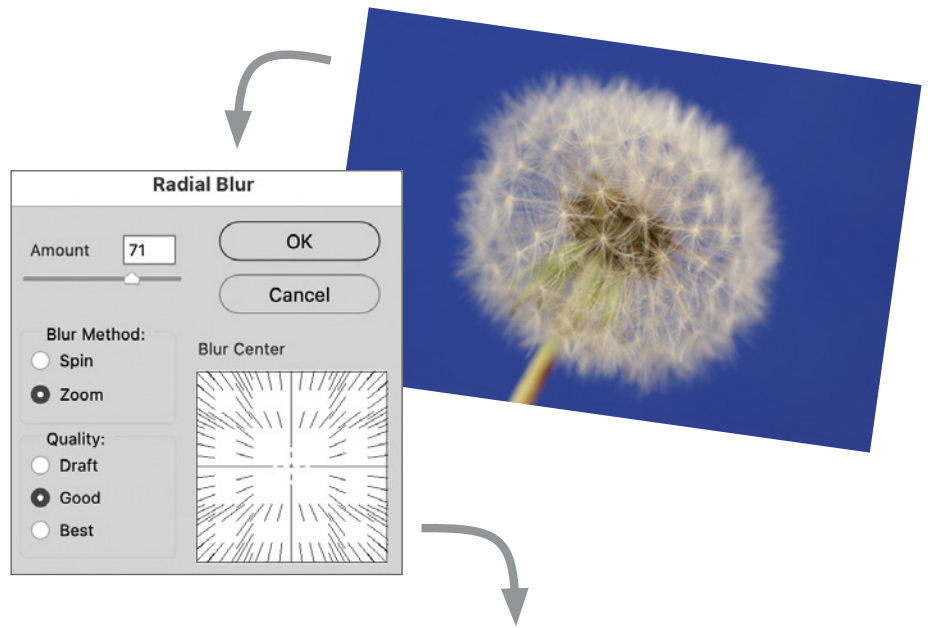
Technically, is the image up to standard and what improvements and enhancements could be applied? This brings me back to the phase that I probably love the most – *what improvements and enhancements can be applied?* Let me repeat, what improvements and enhancements can I apply?

Post processing is not about turning a poorly composed and badly captured image into a great image, it is about adding something that will enhance the viewer's experience (and mine).

Take this simple shot of a dandelion. As soon as I saw the seedhead I could visualise what a child sees when they blow the seeds from the dandelion head and *make*

a wish, the magic, the starburst that will make their wish come true. To create my visualisation, I placed the dandelion inside a light tent in front of a sheet of blue card. I placed continuous lights around the light tent and using a macro lens captured the close up. The magic takes place in Photoshop.

I used the crop tool with **Content Aware Fill** activated to create a square canvas. Using best practice to ensure I was working non-destructively, I converted the layer to a **Smart Object**. Smart Objects are so useful for ensuring a



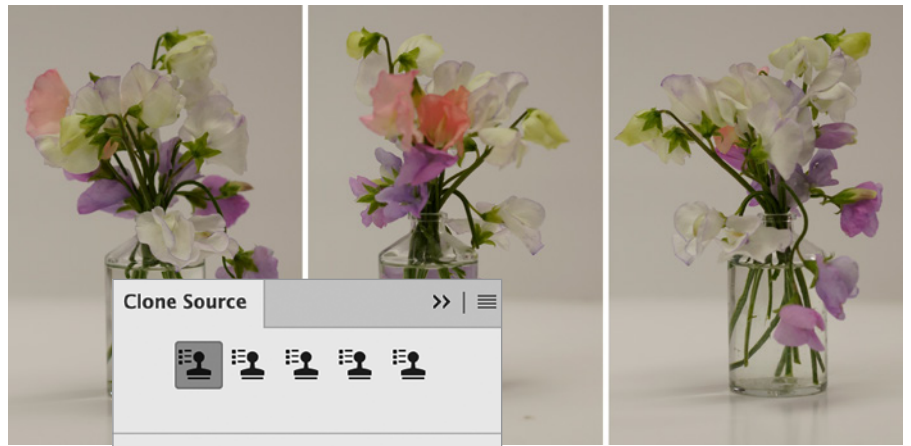
layer is given a level of protection as well as enabling filters and adjustments to be applied which can then be edited. Smart Objects automatically add a layer mask for any applied filter – thus maintaining the non-destructive workflow.

Next using the **Elliptical Marquee** selection tool with a heavily feathered edge, I selected the centre of the dandelion, inverted the selection and applied a **Radial Blur** filter. You can find this filter under the [Filter menu > Blur > Radial Blur]. This blur filter can both 'spin' selected pixels or 'zoom' them out. I chose the zoom option. This is where the Smart Object is so useful, because if the zoom setting needed to be adjusted, I would be able to re-enter the blur settings and tweak the values until I was satisfied. A final levels adjustment to brighten and lift the highlights and I had achieved my visualisation.

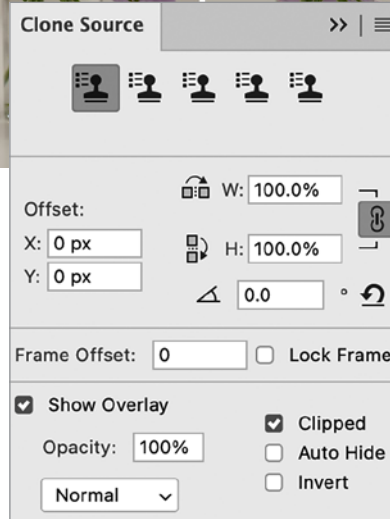


Like many photographers I go through periods of enthusiasm for certain styles and techniques, until I've exhausted the possibilities and ready to move on to something else. However, one style stays a firm favourite – a combination of the **Pep Ventosa** technique, together with one or more layer blends and a hefty dollop of Photoshop masking. Pep Ventosa (I am reliably informed by Google) is a Catalan artist who shoots his subject (often a tree) by walking around a 360 degree circle and capturing many shots and then layering all the shots together on separate layers, blending the layers together with decreasing levels of opacity.

One of the reasons I am a flower photographer is that I can do my photography indoors in the warm with a large mug of tea. Unlike all you clever and dedicated landscapers, I don't even need to do much walking. I can place my subject (often a single or bunch of flowers) into a vase, placed on a cake icing stand. The camera is on a tripod and the focal point will be



The original source images



Go to [Window > Clone Source] to see how creative the clone tool can be.

fixed on the flower(s). By rotating the cake icing stand a few degrees at a time and taking a series of images, I can create something similar. Above, are three of the images from the original set.

Just to elaborate on the process for creating this – load all the individual files as separate layers into Photoshop. I then align all the layers so that the vase is in the same position on all images. It is still important to apply the normal workflow practice of removing dust spots, marks and blemishes on the petals. Then, working from the top layer down I reduce the opacity of each layer revealing the pixels of the layer below.

Apply a layer mask to each layer so that the vase is not duplicated on every layer. I also use layer **blend modes** between some of the layers (**Screen** or **Lighten**) to lighten a layer, or **Soft Light** or **Overlay** to increase the contrast between the layers.

When I am finally satisfied that I have created a pleasing composition, I create a new *stamp* layer (this is just a layer that is a combination of all visible layers) so that I can continue editing just

one layer.

This will often require adding a few more sweet pea flowers dotted around in the gaps. For this I use the **Clone Tool**. Even the Clone Tool is creative! Set it to flip horizontally your source pixels or to increase the size of the destination brush. All this can be found in the **Clone Source Panel** – just open up the Clone Panel to explore the possibilities of using this repair and healing tool, and watch it create new pixels as you Alt + Click (Option on a Mac). The final image is on the page opposite.



Finally, I can't tell you about creative flower photography without mentioning textures – so how do you describe a texture? I think when an image makes you want to touch it, to feel the delicate edges of the flower petals or the silkiness of the fabric or the roughness of the rust or concrete, then the image has texture. But does the touchy-feely texture really improve the original image? If the addition of a texture has brought life and vibrancy or additional light and shadow to an image, or added a background that



Hydrangeas (using textures)



Straw Flower (Pep Ventosa technique)



Sweetpea In The Round Vase (Pep Ventosa technique)



sets off the subject, then the answer is yes.

I spent a few happy hours photographing a variety of white *Lisianthus* flowers on an A3 light pad. I had previously been out walking and photographed a set of gravestone images. Whenever I am out with the camera I seek suitable candidates for use as textures. I could visualise the white flowers against the roughness of the headstones.

I cleaned up the gravestone images, using curves to flatten any highlights and dark shadows and applied a colour balance adjustment layer.

To combine all the images, I started with the gravestone as

the background layer, used the [File > Place Embedded] option to place a selection of the *Lisianthus* images. Using Place Embedded is also a method for ensuring each layer is automatically converted to a Smart Object, this also helps when resizing layers, maintaining the original resolution so you don't end up with pixelated layers.

Layer blend modes were applied to blend the flowers with the grittiness of the stone. I liked the grittiness on the stems and petals and chose not to remove it. Lots of masks and soft brushes at low opacity and flow settings helped to build up blending.

I finally applied layer style effects to create the triptych effect using

small values of drop shadow and beveling. I also used **Dodge** and **Burn** brushes to enhance darker areas around the top left and lighten areas in the centre of the image. The final results are at the head of this article.

I use my images for two main purposes, exhibitions and teaching. Prior to pandemic times I exhibited my work in various art exhibitions and Open Houses art trails. I have my work printed on everything and anything from brushed aluminium panels, acrylic or glass panes, stretched canvas, even deckchair canvases as well as standard fine art paper for mounting and framing. People who are looking to purchase contemporary wall art like to have a choice of medium and are not always looking for the conventional framed print. So printing the same image to a selection of these mediums is fun for me to see how each material also changes the final image. For example, aluminium creates lovely light reflections and mirrors, whereas canvas is softer and overall more gentle. Although this printing experiment is expensive, it is very rewarding to explore these different formats and materials.

The second purpose for my images and love of Photoshop is the opportunity I have to teach and share these skills with others. I am currently offering a range of Photoshop workshops through RPS Southeast Region and DIG. Workshops are offered at all levels for the beginner through to the experienced user with a slant on the arty creative tools, as well as the essential clean, retouch and repair tools to enhance your masterpieces ●

**FIND A WORKSHOP:**

**South East Region:**

[rps.org/regions/south-east](https://rps.org/regions/south-east)

**DI South East region:**

[rps.org/groups/digital-imaging/digital-imaging-south-east/](https://rps.org/groups/digital-imaging/digital-imaging-south-east/)



Images from the series *Possessive and Possessed*, 2015 by Rakesh Mohindra  
Courtesy of the artist



## CURATING AND EXHIBITING PHOTOGRAPHS

### ANDY GOLDING ASICI FRPS

**Andy has lectured and exhibited internationally, and has been an advisor for the RPS since the 1990's. This article provides guidance and thoughts for curating and exhibiting photographic print exhibitions.**

**E**xhibiting photographs is one of the highlights of the creative process, providing the opportunity to show off work to audiences - to entertain, inform and inspire.

Selecting and presenting the images to the best possible effect is a fascinating process which will maximise the impact and influence of the exhibition.

#### **Curating, selecting, and judging**

As the curator, you play the key role in formulating a rationale for the exhibition and coordinating the images into a persuasive and coherent whole.

Think very carefully about who your audience is and what you

want them to take away from the exhibition: ideas, information, a sense of wonder, a desire to change the world, join your club, organisation, institution, or to buy your photographs.

For a club, group, or students, you may have to invite all participants. On the other hand, you might be responsible for inviting, selecting and judging entries for the exhibition. The selection must provide for equal opportunities, so you will need to formulate clear criteria. The more inclusive and diverse your selection, the more stimulating and inspirational the exhibition will be (examples of how to invite entries to an open call for artists can be found at: [tinyurl.com/write-a-cfa](https://tinyurl.com/write-a-cfa))

If there is to be a catalogue, a system will be needed for enquiring contributors' images, their written statements and contact details. You will need to write (or commission) an overarching introduction. You might also be involved in an opening speech and in-gallery talks to support the exhibition.

The catalogue might include your print sales and pricing methodology. There are many practicalities to sort out, such as the constraints of the venue, available wall space, lighting, and in turn, the quantity and sizes that participants can show. Also, dates for submission, hanging, opening, supervision and demounting at the end of the exhibition.

### Access, health and safety

You may be responsible for ensuring accessibility to the show, both conceptually (at the selection stage) and physical access to the exhibition, with due consideration of protected characteristics (further information for human rights equality at [tinyurl.com/equality-HR](https://tinyurl.com/equality-HR)).

Check that health and safety aspects of the event are in place; a risk assessment is undertaken, there is public liability insurance for the venue, and arrangements are made for security.

Hopefully, the pandemic will be far behind us, but if not, then any restrictions will need to be considered.

### Title of the exhibition

A title acts as a focus and a rallying call. It may be your organisation's annual or graduating exhibition, but a distinctive title will provide a clear identity and marketing hook for this year's event – perhaps something relating to the arts and issues of the year in question (tips on titling at: [tinyurl.com/exhibition-titling](https://tinyurl.com/exhibition-titling))

### Displaying and ordering print groups

Galleries in the western world tend to flow from left to right, with introductory texts leading to the prints, in order, in a clockwise direction.

Audiences will appreciate a logical methodology for how the exhibition is ordered. The default system is to group by genre (landscape, portrait, documentary, nature etc.). A more challenging approach is to group sections by theme and topic, across different genres - for example, by issues of the day such as the environment and sustainability, the pandemic and public health or identity and multiculturalism. Another approach is to order work chronologically (for an historical overview, for example).

Once you have gathered images from your exhibitors you can design how they will be displayed (free



Exhibition eyeline 150cm

virtual exhibition design tools are available to help with this). Share the design with your exhibitors so they know their space within the show. If participants are to hang their own work, provide them with hanging guidance and criteria, such as the eyeline height (normally 150cm above the floor).

### Planning and producing work for an individual exhibition

When planning for a new photographic series think about how it will look when exhibited before you start to shoot. Think forward to the end of the process to plan most effectively. Break down your plan into pre-production, production and postproduction and work as methodically as you can towards a realisation of a proposal or statement of intent.

If you have made all or some of your work already, then your task is to tailor it to the criteria and space of the exhibition - to edit, design and mount the best selection of your work.

Postproduction is as important as production and preparation, it provides the context and influences the meaning and quality of the work.

### Scheduling your production process

Beware of simply shooting, followed by printing then mounting. Instead, shoot, print, shoot the next, print (matching it to your first), then

shoot and print again. This way you gradually accumulate your project rather than leaving printing and mounting to the last minute. For video production: script, shoot, sound edit, edit, screen.

### Where is the work to be shown?

Seek information on the venue, such as space allocation and lighting, then design your submission accordingly.

### How will you show the work?

Are there options other than mounted prints? For example, a computer or video monitor, projector, or vitrine (a glass case).

### Design

Ideally, design the final presentation and shoot it to a planned format - all landscape, all portrait - only mix landscape and portrait formats in a logical combination. For some projects it is good practice to shoot each photograph in both formats so you have a version that you can show or publish accordingly.

The height of your work should be centred on a predetermined eyeline, arranged above and below the eyeline, scatter hung, or grouped in diptychs, triptychs, or grids.

### Framing & Mounting

Make the mounting appropriate ►

## FRAME TYPES



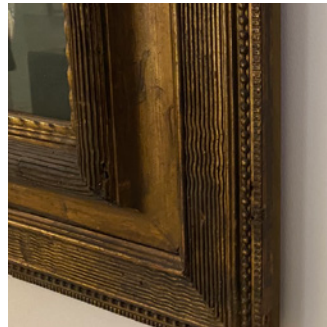
White box frame with floated mounted print



Contemporary white frame with edge to edge print



White frame with double mount window



Classic frame moulding



Contemporary wooden frame with printing paper revealed



Contemporary wood frame with wide margin

A vitrine



**Box Frame:** a wooden frame, often natural wood or white, where the image is set to the rear of a frame, or floated within it, the glass or perspex is then mounted 5 to 10 cm in front. The effect has the connotations of a display case.

**Window mount** (passepartout): a traditional method of a mitre cut thick card framing the photograph within the frame, for the presentation of art works - not normally suited to social documentary photography.

**Flush or block mounting:** the image is mounted to the very edge of the mount and trimmed together. Best done professionally and with split battens or strips of the same material on the back to space them away from the wall.

Aluminium expensive, contemporary but beware dropping it on a corner.

**Aluminium and Diasec:** the print is sandwiched between acrylic and aluminium.

**Acrylic:** the print is back mounted print so adds a high glaze.

**Foamex** is an alternative to aluminium yet lighter, cheaper, good for subsequent storage and transportation.

**Foam board** is a cheap alternative to Foamex but lacks gravitas, edges are often ragged, and corners are very fragile.

**MDF** (wood), high quality MDF with a print flush mounted and cut to the edges can look wonderful but is heavy to transport.

**Split Batten**, often of MDF. The batten is split with a 45-degree mitre. Half affixed to the back of the frame half to the wall. The frame is mounted by bringing the two halves together. An excellent system for repeated showings of the work.

**Prints directly adhered to wall** for a cost-effective no-nonsense approach inkjet print can be stuck directly to the gallery wall with double sided tape or film.

to the project - there are quite different considerations for fine art, documentary, landscape, and portrait.

Beware of producing arbitrary sized prints, as frames may not be available in that size. The cost for a printed and framed image is dependent on scale, so budget accordingly. If you plan to use an off-the-shelf frame, make sure there is one on the shelf! High Street and online frame stores offer made-to-measure frames, but for affordability, try fixed sized frames from John Lewis, Ikea, Tyger or Ebay.

The frame's material is significant in relation to the meaning of your work, contextualising it as an artwork or for a documentary purpose.

Visiting other exhibitions will help you to determine the ideal way to present your work. Consider the framing methods and materials used (wood, aluminum, acrylic) and colours (white, black, natural wood).

**Text**

Write an introduction to contextualise your work for your audience. Very often, an initial proposal or statement of intent will provide the basis for an introduction or artist statement.

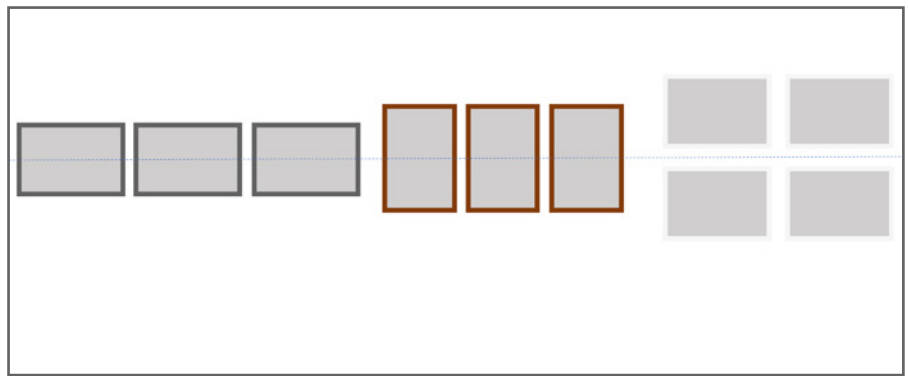
Design the texts as an integral part of the work not as an afterthought. Use text panels for information which informs beyond the literal description of the image.

Write in lines which are easy to read - no more than 60 characters including spaces.

Aligned left is easiest to read, but consider justifying or aligned right if appropriate. This column is aligned left, it has a straight margin on the left side of each column with a 'ragged' end to each line. A 'justified' column has parallel sides which can lead to unfortunate spaces between words, or words broken by hyphens. Check spelling and grammar and ask someone to read it over before mounting it.

**Titles and captions**

All significant artworks have titles



Single row format (landscape, portrait), and 'scatter hang' with the centre at a 150cm eye line

- carefully composed and crafted. They often allude to, but do not define the intended significance of the work - they 'relay' rather than 'anchor' meaning. At the very least, a title gives a reference for audiences and buyers to refer to (if in doubt use (untitled #1, untitled #2...). Beware of jokey or ironic titles, they will diminish your work. Using verses from poets or lines from literature risks the authors' words being more significant than your photograph – write your own!

Documentary work requires captions to provide insight into the social circumstances, people and regions represented. Natural history images often need the specific names of flora and fauna.

Titles and text should provide ideas or information which goes beyond that contained in the image, yet do not state that which is visually obvious.

**Font**

Fonts have a longer history of meaning attached to them than photographs.

To give an overall identity to the exhibition the curator should determine a consistent font and size for the whole exhibition, usually a sans serif font (Arial, Helvetica, or Futura). For your own purposes consider the connotations and legibility of a font. Serif fonts are flanged, and are not as legible as sans serif fonts, (without flanges). Times (serif) is an authoritative font, while Helvetica (sans serif) was designed to be elegant and functional. For legibility, 18 point size

is recommended for a range of eye sights.

**Tool kit**

If you are hanging the work, you will need a spirit level (a laser level is best), tape measure, pencils, scissors, craft knife, mounting screws, mirror plates, velcro, sticky fixers or double sided tape (risky option), drill and screw drivers (ideally electric, cordless, and powerful), a bradawl (for making starter hole for screws or drill), a calculator (if you are bad at maths) to divide up the space, and a good friend prepared to assist and be supportive.

**Hanging**

The eyeline of the exhibition will normally be set at 150cm (5 feet). This brings a consistency to the exhibition across a range of sizes and types of work exhibited. Work will be hung with the centre of the pieces at 150cm from the floor.

Eyeline guides can be drawn with soft pencil on the wall or panels then erased later, or better still, use a projecting laser level.

**Conclusion**

Looking back over this article you will see how much thought and effort goes into curating, editing, and exhibiting. The tasks seem endless, but a well-planned production process and a well-designed exhibition will provide its own reward; the thrill of the private view, opportunities for publication, further shows, and the delight in displaying your work for friends, family, and the gallery-going public ●



Everlasting Tulips



## HOW DOES MY MIND WORK: THE DROSTE EFFECT

MIKE MARTIN

A keen enthusiast photographer and competitor, Mike has led Bristol PS to a number of successes and finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the Amateur Photographer of the Year 2021. Mike is a Fotospeed Ambassador and regular club speaker, sharing tips and techniques from portrait, street and architecture, but all with a creative twist.

**H**ow does my mind work?  
Where does the creativity  
come from?

The answer to the second question is easier than the first – we are bombarded daily with images through multiple channels. You just have to recognise that and see the opportunities some of those images present. As to the first question, who knows?

Let's focus on one narrow genre that I have been looking at during the pandemic.

I've been a lifelong fan of the drawings by MC Escher. As a younger self I, along with many others, had a poster of that never-ending staircase on my



Eternal Search For Meaning

wall. I also had posters of work by Dali, Magritte and other surrealists. I love optical illusions too.

I watched Adobe introduce then withdraw their Pixel Bender feature and Droste filter for Photoshop CS4 and CS5 and then 'forgot it' until the Pandemic, when once again I started looking at the potential of the Droste effect (or picture in picture effect).

*Everlasting Tulips* (at the head of this article) is an early image created in 1998, pre-digital, from a slide scanned and modified in Photoshop. This uses simple recursion using a plug-in for Photoshop.

The same effect can be achieved using the Transform, Again feature as in *Eternal Search for Meaning* (previous page) created during lockdown. There is a step by step video guide to producing this on my website.

Developing this idea, I started exploring online tools that enable the Droste effect to be applied to images. Photospiralisis is one such tool – it's easy to use but requires you to render the image and output.

The first image that I produced was the cliché spiral clock, just to understand how the tool worked.

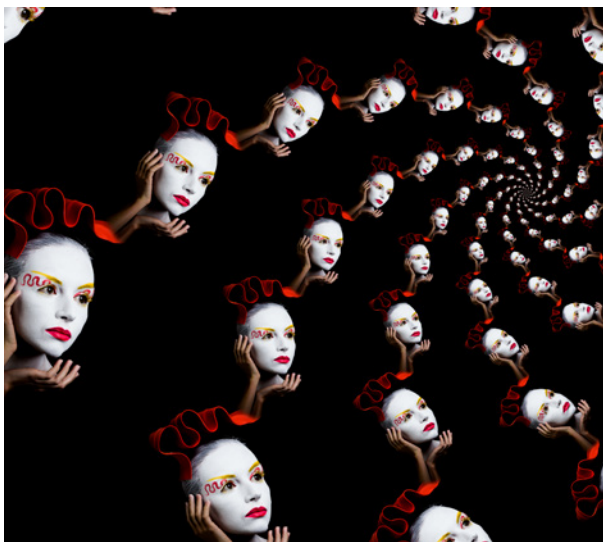
This was closely followed by an exploration of what can happen if applied to pictures of people, then moving into just hands!

## What is the Droste Effect?

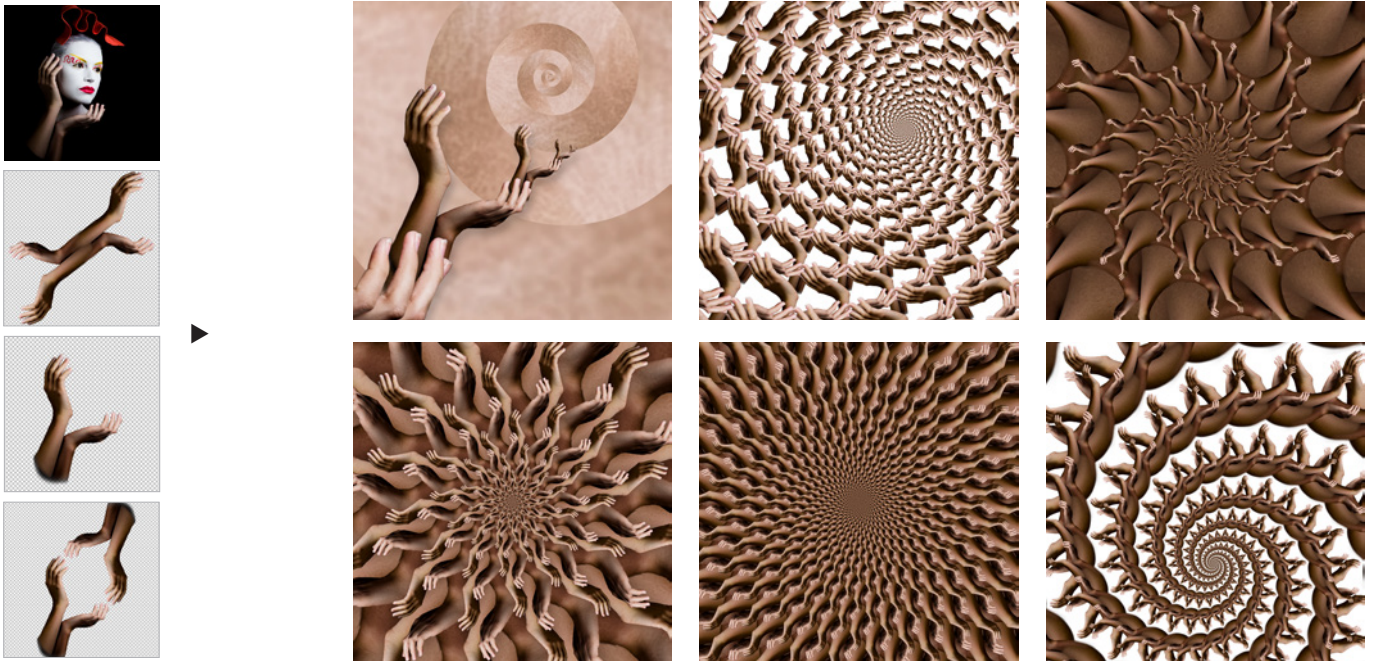
It is named after a Dutch confectionary company and an advert created by Johannes Musset around 1900. Musset created an image of a nurse representing the wholesomeness of their product, carrying a cup of the beverage on a tray, accompanied by a tin of the Cocoa, itself bearing an illustration of the same nurse holding the tray establishing a recursive visual effect now known as the Droste Effect, notwithstanding examples of the same effect predating this by more than 500 years! [Giotto painted an altarpiece in the 14th century comprising a triptych, in the centre panel of which St Peter is seen offering the triptych altarpiece to Cardinal Stefaneschi].

Throughout the 20th Century the Droste Effect has featured in a variety of media including the obvious adverts, illustrations such as the album art for Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma*, music videos such as Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*, TV such as *Doctor Who* title sequences and even into Model Village tourist attractions: the model village in Bourton-on-the-Water contains a model of the village, itself containing a model village and so on!

One of the most famous uses of the Droste Effect was by MC Escher in his 1956 lithograph, the *Print Gallery*. This shows a gallery displaying a print depicting the gallery reduced by a scaling factor, but also rotated. Whilst the original had a void in the middle where Escher signed the print, later mathematicians worked out how to fill this with further iterations of the recursion. There's a fascinating 'fly through' video included in this lecture available on YouTube. Oxford Mathematics Public Lectures: M. C. Escher - Artist, Mathematician, Man - Roger Penrose and Jon Chapman (first half of the lecture!): [tinyurl.com/youtube-escher](https://tinyurl.com/youtube-escher)







Hands with a transparent background

Whilst I quite like *Cactus Hands* (top-right), many viewers may struggle to recognise what they are looking at! As to the debate of whether these are photos or digital art, these are possibly at the cusp – you can still see recognisable photographic elements within the image; the hands. Personally, I draw the line at the *Twirl* images that were so popular at the beginning of the pandemic.

However, this playing with the tools was key, enabling me to conceptualise how I could build into some of my image making. One thing I noticed early on is that if you use PNG files with transparent backgrounds it's possible to avoid the tell tale sharp edges, or to control the shape of the repeating element. Another critical point is where the 'repeat' or 'vanishing point' is centred. This is illustrated in the adjacent images.



Changing the vanishing point

**Echoes of Consciousness**

*Model: Anna Randall*

Pulling these elements together and combining them, allowed me to create this image. The repeating elements of the fabric seem to produce a 'guard of honour' in an infinite corridor, in front of which I have placed the single figure from which the image is derived.



**Watching the Passage of Time**

Here I have used the receding eyes to form an arched passageway or corridor of eyes, under whose watchful gaze my wife and son walk. I've re-introduced the element of time by placing the un-ending spiral of the clock as the floor.



**Final Journey**

Drawing upon my relationship with London Underground, I've extended/repeated the passageway such that it goes on into infinity, then placed a masked out figure front centre and adjusted the opacity to provide a commuter reflecting upon the futility of the ceaseless tedium of commuting!

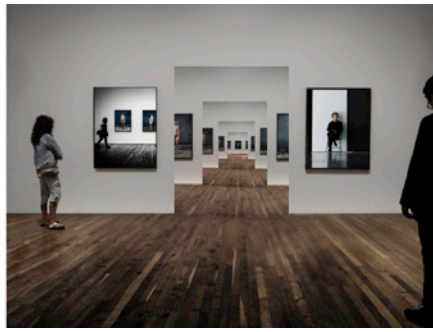
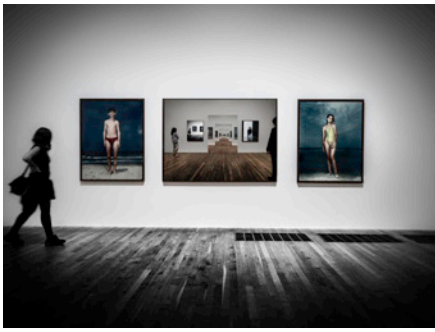




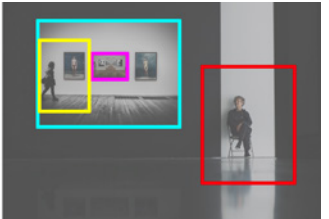
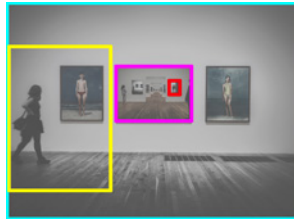
## **Vertigo**

*Model: Azadeh*

Here, I've taken an already complex image of the magnificent staircase at Margam Castle, Port Talbot, partially erased the edges to give some transparency then used Photospiralysis to introduce the spiral and recursive repetition. The shape was carefully adjusted to allow the stairs to merge with columns. This was finished in Photoshop to blend the tones and remove the repeated figure to leave just one on the thirds.



...we are bombarded daily with images through multiple channels. You just have to see that and recognise the opportunities some of those images present.



Returning to where we started, with a 'simple' picture in picture concept, for those with a bit of patience you can produce a triptych with each image containing the others, nested one inside the next.

If anyone has worked out the answer to "how does my mind work?" please let me know. However, I hope this has given a tiny insight into how I draw upon different sources of inspiration, mix in a few ideas, but above all have a play and just see where it takes me ●

## FIND OUT MORE

Visit Mike's website at: [mikemartinphotography.co.uk](http://mikemartinphotography.co.uk)

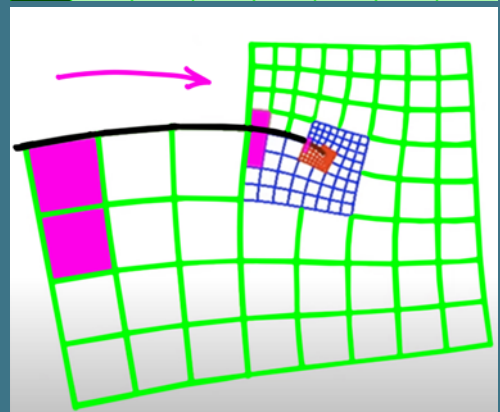
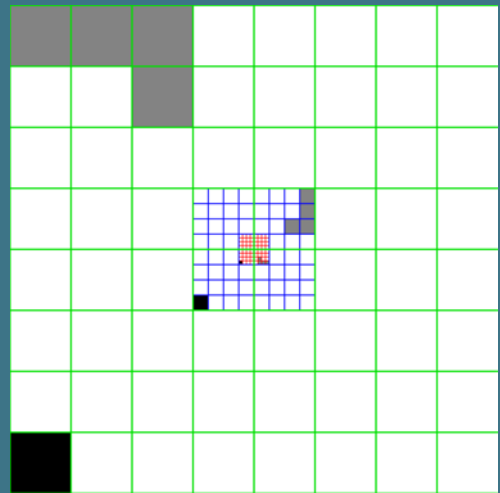
### The maths and geometry behind the effect

In this illustration you can see a grid (green) that is reduced (scaling factor x4) to give the blue grid, which in turn is further reduced to produce the red grid.

Taking the black square, bottom right, this is repeated in both the blue and red grids in a simple reduction basis.

However, if you take the four grey squares starting top left, and reduce AND rotate 90 degrees clockwise, its easy to see how you can establish a rotational element too.

Whilst this can produce a spiralling effect, there is a discontinuity. However, if you distort the grid as below, you can get a true spiral / infinite recursive effect.



Instead of shrinking the entire green grid, it is slit from one edge and distorted so in the above, the top of three pink squares is displaced to the right to align with the repeated and reduced copy of the two pink squares, so as to be indistinguishable from the original three squares had they simply been reduced in size. Any image distorted in this manner will spiral on into infinity, completely seamlessly. It is this transformation that forms the basis of all Droste type filters, actions or tools.



## LEARN AND DEVELOP TOGETHER, HAVING FUN

**Dr. AVIJIT DATTA ASIS FRPS FRSA FLS FTPS**

**Meet our newly elected Chair of the Digital Imaging Group. With both a scientific and educational background, Avijit tells about his background and vision for the DI.**

**D**ear RPS Digital Imaging members, I am pleased to be elected your Chair at last month's AGM. I endeavour to work hard, to be approachable and open to your ideas, questions and issues thereby repaying your mandate. I was equally pleased when co-opted to the DI committee last year.

On the DI committee, I have been privileged to learn from a stellar team of friendly volunteers of one of the largest RPS groups who collaborate cohesively and tirelessly on your behalf under the excellent leadership of Deborah Loth and Rex Waygood, co-chairs who stepped in selflessly when Ian Race vacated the chair. We owe a debt of gratitude to them. I share their member-centric ethos and that of Janet Haines, past long serving DI chair; we both served on RPS Council and Board of Trustees last year.

Both Deborah and Rex will continue to harness their experience and expertise for you; I am thus an addition to your team, not

**Above:** *Durbak Dance of Death*

**Below:** *Our former Zendo*

**Next page, top:** *Eva Isolde Balzer performs 'Abhinaya'*

**Next page:** *Three-dimensional map of the brain*





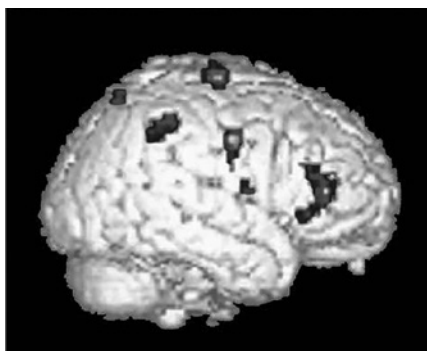
a substitution. I will continue the best of existing DI activity while expanding to new areas, guided by your feedback. Above all, I want us to have fun together while learning and developing our photography together – a sociable, open and worldwide digital club.

The recent DI survey exemplifies your DI committee ethos of reflective practice to proactively seek, learn from and respond to who we are, where we are, what we experience, feel and want. I have similarly engaged with other professional, educational, Arts and membership organisations including the RPS Contemporary Group (vice-Chair 2019-2021) to enhance 'member' experience and published findings for over 12 years. I am a Board member of a successful theatre founded in 1744, York Theatre Royal and of York St John University - so I've been involved with delivering education and entertainment to a diverse audience during the pandemic, at which DI excels.

DI is a multi-genre group – a microcosm of the entire RPS and therefore well positioned to embrace developments in computational imaging, including artificial intelligence which is now available to us in commercial software. I have a background in computational imaging, cognition research, applied psychology and the Arts about which I communicate via talks ([tinyurl.com/Avijit-discussion](https://tinyurl.com/Avijit-discussion)) and articles which I edit/write (40 articles on COVID-19 including a focus on mental health and wellbeing: [tinyurl.com/RPS-article-pandemic](https://tinyurl.com/RPS-article-pandemic)). My Fellowship was awarded for scientific imaging. Techniques I have used, with fellow collaborators at Cambridge, the Wellcome Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience and Trinity College Dublin, is the use of antimatter (positrons), generated by a Cambridge cyclotron to generate a three-dimensional map of the brain to understand how and why we make mistakes. A title of one

publication was called *Coffee in the Cornflakes* – a lighthearted reference to a shared common experience after disturbed sleep.

The image below is a composite brain of seven subjects making errors while presented with unpredictable visual cues. The test used was exhibited in the Science Museum. The use of related techniques have helped our understanding of how images convey messages i.e. pictorial semiotics and may help us to create better photographs in the future!



I'm therefore delighted to continue to work with the DI (Zoom) talks subgroup to deliver to you a future series of online and potential face-to-face (pandemic willing) interactive events with leading world photographers embracing modern technical developments, aesthetics and philosophy of photography applicable to us, embracing the 1853 RPS mission: *To promote the Art and Science of Photography*.

My accompanying photographs reflect my interests and who I am, a committed internationalist. I see digital photography as a glue linking people of all ages and backgrounds around the world. More pictures are on Instagram, so let's meet on the 'gram!

Eva Isolde Balzer is a Berlin-based dancer who performs classical ancient Indian dance theatre (Kuchipudi/ Bharatanatyam) internationally since 2006 with a focus on Transcultural Movement Studies. I've captured her

expressive dance postures (Abhinaya) using studio lighting and an f/1.2 lens for subject isolation in the style of Eadweard Muybridge who pioneered chronophotography between 1877 and 1886. To test studio lighting, I took my 'selfie' – a rare image as I prefer to take photographs of others.

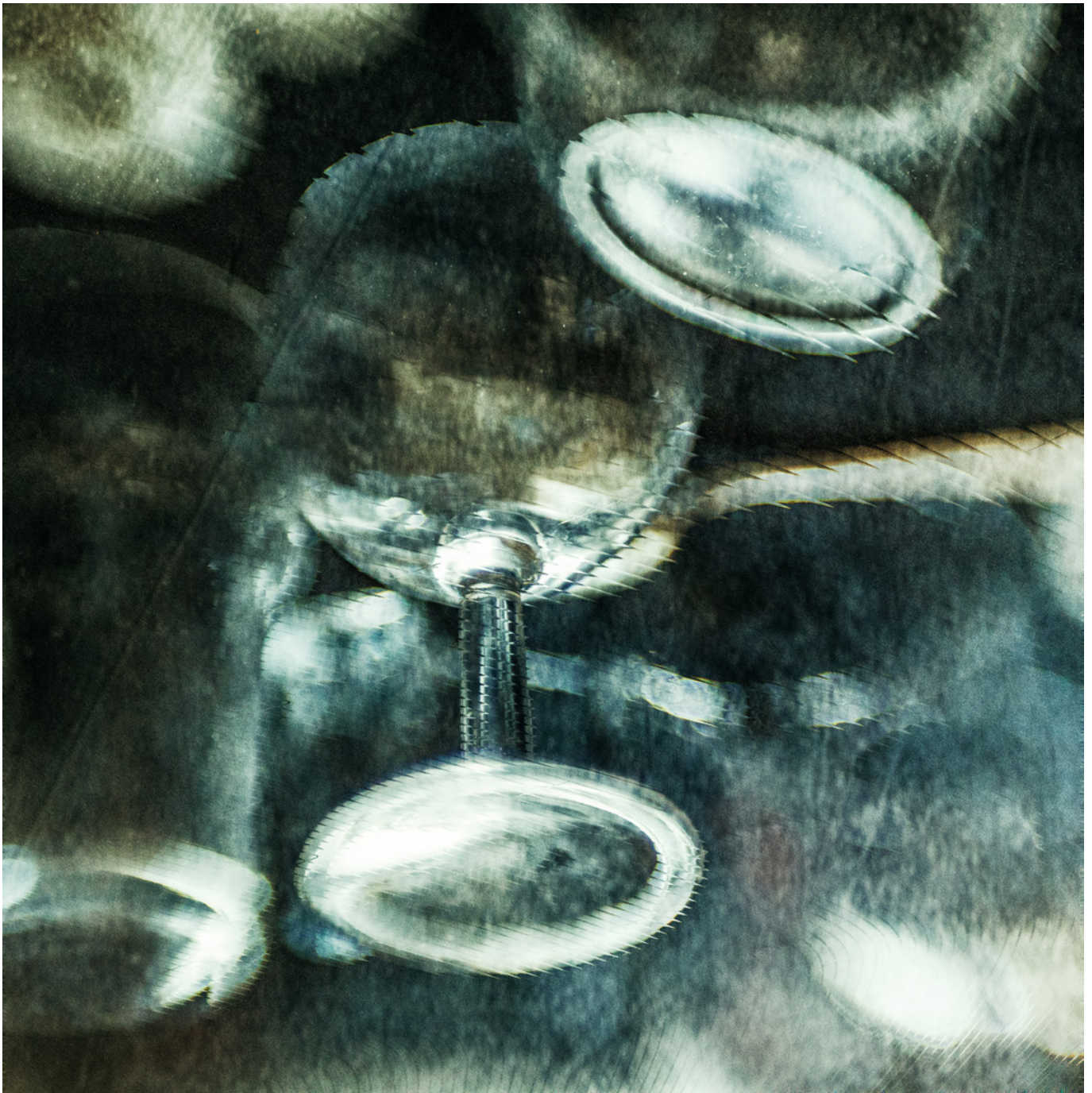
The Durdak *Dance of Death* by the Tashi Lhunpo monks of Shigatse, Tibet reminds us of the evanescence of life. Nicholas Vareeland is the grandson of fashion doyenne and Vogue editor Diana Vreeland; he apprenticed in photography under Richard Avedon HonFRPS and Irving Penn. Nicholas is now Abbot of Rato Dratsang, one of a few important Tibetan Government monasteries under the patronage of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Martine Franck, Cartier-Bresson's widow, visited his mountain monastery and encouraged Nicholas the monk to continue photography. On Buddha's birthday I sent my Durdak photograph to Nicholas, the abbot; in return he kindly wrote and illustrated *A Buddhist Perspective on the Pandemic* from the Himalayas, mountains close to my heart for scientific, artistic and spiritual reasons. You can read Nicholas' article at: [tinyurl.com/RPS-article-pandemic-buddhist](https://tinyurl.com/RPS-article-pandemic-buddhist)

I've been lucky to train as a (Japanese) Zen *unsui* (novice); it's influenced my photography. Our former *zendo* (opposite) was built in the 13th century as a palace; it was designated a world heritage site in 1954. The photograph involved taking multiple exposures with a tilt shift lens which were then combined in Photoshop.

At weekends I enjoy cycling and yoga; Hyde Park is a favourite with a coffee stop by the Serpentine – please join me to chat about photography... and DI! ●

**CONNECT WITH ME**

[instagram.com/aumnamahshiva](https://www.instagram.com/aumnamahshiva)



Have a Drink on Me

## HAVE A DRINK ON ME

**BARRY BADCOCK ARPS**

**M**y interest in photography started when I was about 10 years old, looking at old photos with my Nana and playing around with my mother's folding bellows camera. My early photos were of friends and family with the occasional household item where the light was 'nice'.

In my teens I progressed to a 35mm Halina and shot mainly using slide film but also

monochrome. Fast forward to my late 20's I bought my first SLR, a Russian Zenith and my interest in darkroom processing became very important.

I experimented with normal darkroom techniques like dodging and burning but also made use of Lith Paper from my Father-in-law. Plus, I played with photograms.

I started experimenting

with home setups quite often involving my children as either props or assistants.

I joined my companies Camera Club and found like minded people to broaden my horizons.

By the time I was in my 40's work took over and photography became a tool to record family life. Computers were introduced at work at this time and very soon I have a home computer.

Moving onto the early 2000's I bought a KodacDC240 Digital camera with a 1.3megapixel sensor and a friend of mine gave me Photoshop 6 to try. The two hobbies came together, and I was hooked on the ability to experiment and develop pictures.

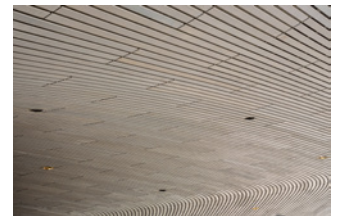
I was not until about 2007 when I joined the Cambridge Camera Club and met up with Ian Wilson that my Digital Techniques really took off.

Today I see my photography falling into three categories.

1. Straight Photography, still important in many different genres: nature, macro, portraiture, family etc.
2. Abstract Imagery through in-camera multiple exposure and photoshop where you cannot really tell what the image was to start with and
3. Abstract Imagery where a certain amount of the original item / detail can still be seen. This can be by either in-camera multiple exposure, ICM or by the use of creative lenses such as the Lensbaby range of creative lenses.

The image here *Have a Drink on Me* is from that category. Taken early morning, I was making a cup of tea and noticed the light on the glasses on the draining board. I decided to take a photo with my Canon R full frame mirrorless camera with the Lensbaby Composer Lens and Sweet 50 optic. The exposure ended up at f/4 at 1/160th sec at 2500 ISO

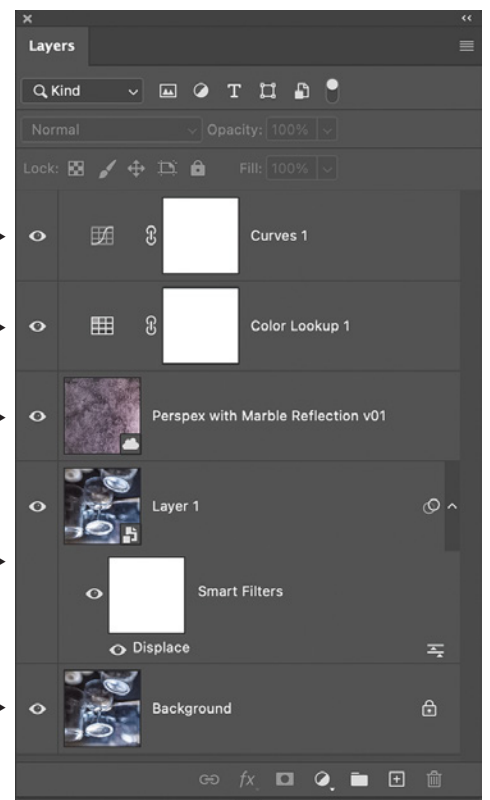
Imported into Lightroom, I hit the 'Auto' button as a starting point. Texture increased to +59; Clarity +38; Vibrance +32; Saturation -36. I Played with white balance but ended up using 'as shot'. I then cropped to square format which I really love ●



Source images, clockwise:

1. Main image, flipped vertically and opened in Photoshop.
2. Roof detail - at the Olympic Park, I think.
3. Perspex with marble reflection.

- Curves layer for final adjustments
- Colour Lookup: Tension Green at 42% opacity
- Use image 3 as texture layer **Overlay** blend mode at 80% opacity
- Duplicate layer, Convert to smart object, Use image 2 as displacement map
- Open main image in Photoshop







## REBUILDING A BUILDING

JOSÉ CLOSS

For me, the most important part of making a picture is what happens in my head. There may (or may not) be a clear initial idea; if there is one it may change radically when dealing with the real world and then again when processing an image. Many of my images simply evolve in the making.

I bought a Fujifilm XT-4 last year, partly in order to have access to its in-camera multiple exposure function. I had a lot of fun exploring the possibilities of these multiple exposures and was intrigued at how the different blending modes (average, light or dark) melded the images together. In particular, the light mode produced pleasing results when used with buildings and sky. Once I got into the swing of this, I remembered some old images of unusual buildings sitting on my hard disk which I felt might

be cajoled into something more interesting, using Photoshop layers to produce the equivalent of multiple exposures.

The picture shown above was derived from a rather poor grab

shot taken a few years ago after visiting Tate Britain and emerging onto the Embankment to see this building (*figure 1*). The mixture of straight lines and curves on a city high-rise building is fairly unusual.



Figure 1

However, at the time I wasn't sure how to capture a worthwhile image and ended up doing the same old 'looking straight up' thing. Having rescued this sad and rather elderly image, I processed it in a similar way to my recent in-camera multiple exposures, but using computer software instead.

My workflow starts in Lightroom, then I tend to jump between Lightroom, Photoshop and Nik. At each step I ask myself "what does this picture need?", then try to make appropriate changes. So – first I decided that the sky would complicate the idea I had in my mind for a simplified, clean look. I selected the sky and turned it completely white and used the liquify tool to remove the distortion from the lamp. I increased the brightness, contrast and saturation. Once brightened up the image was a little noisy, which was reduced with Nik Define 2. The canvas size was increased to allow space for manipulation in the next step (*figure 2*).

I duplicated the image in layers, and tried a range of different configurations. The top layer was moved around, rotated and flipped vertically and horizontally while in the lighten blend mode. This mode takes a look at the colour on the bottom layer and the colour on the top layer and it keeps whichever one of the two is the lightest. There were several configurations that were pleasing, (*e.g. figure 3*) but I preferred the final image. It still needed more oomph, so I increased tonal contrast and saturation again. It was finished off in Lightroom, with reduced luminance in the orange and increased blue saturation and luminance and a little extra texture.

Ideas have legs - learning new techniques can prompt new ideas and (for me) allow the reviving of old previously ignored images. We all borrow ideas from all over the place, but our own ideas can also be tweaked and developed to take our work in new directions ●

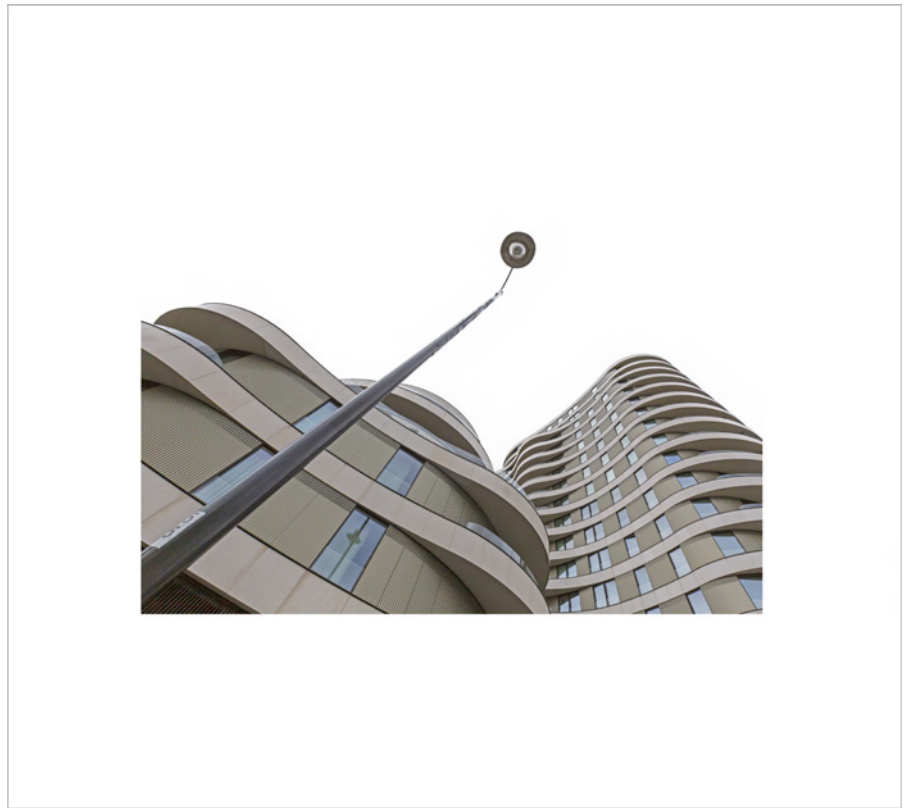


Figure 2

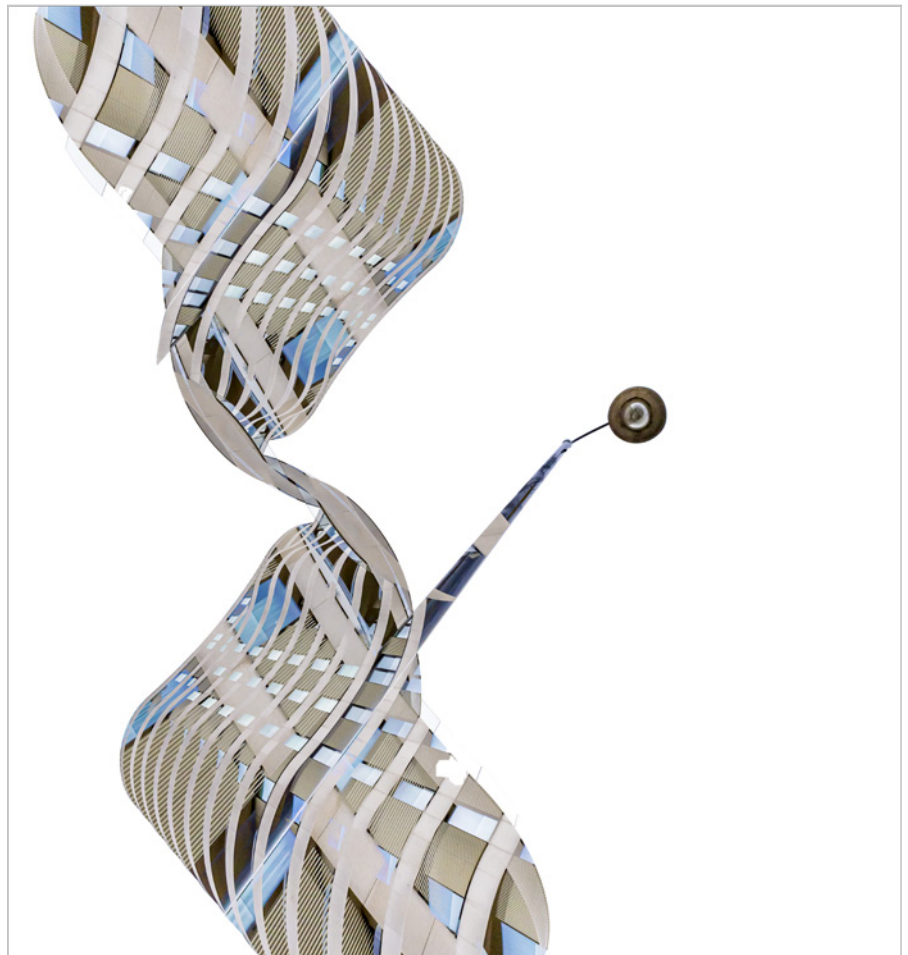


Figure 3

# IN PREVIOUS ISSUES

All previous issues are available from the RPS Digital Imaging web pages at: [rps.org/digitarchive](http://rps.org/digitarchive)



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## The Land of Sin-esthesia

I drink the elixir of melodies

Colors Fill my lungs, my heart, my mind, my  
body, and soul

Letting the Enigma of spectrums lift my wings  
higher and higher

Illuminating my eyes full of boundless tonalities

Until I start to fall, dive, and sink back into the  
blank canvas

Unleashing my rainbows left and right

Raining down my secret hues on the gradient  
filled wonder land of sin-esthesia

The land of my third eye

*Jerad Armijo (away I flew)*