

## **Upcoming DIG events**

Details of all DIG events are available on the Group's website at www.rps.org/special-interest-groups/digital-imaging/events







**EASTERN CENTRE** 

Peter Warne

CLOSE-UP & MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY

Saturday 10 August 2019 - Copped Hall, Essex





SOUTH EAST CENTRE

Joan Blease
Bad Start-Great Finish
Photographer and Digital Artist
Joan enjoys blurring the lines between
conventional art and photography

Sunday 1st September 2019 ~ Maidstone





WESTERN CENTRE

Victoria Hillman Creative Macro Photography In The Field





Janet Haines

**INSIDE MY HEAD** 

Sunday 8 September 2019 - Foxton, Cambridgeshire





THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Guy Edwardes SEEING THE LIGHT 25 years of landscape & nature photography

Sunday 15 September 2019 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire

Sunday 1st September 2019 Ilton Village Hall, TA9 9HG





SOUTHERN CENTRE

Ross McKelvey MPAGB, EFIAP/P
Photoshop
Hint and Tips

Lecture Demonstration

Saturday 28 September 2019 - Ringwood, BH24 1DW





SOUTHERN CENTRE
ROSS McKelvey MPAGB, EFIAP/p

Photoshop The McKelvey Way

Hands on Workshop

Sunday 29 September 2019 - Ringwood, BH24 1DW





THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

lain McGowan FRPS
YET MORE FROM
THE GARDEN SHED!
& Millennium Cup
Print Competition

Sunday 20 October 2019 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire



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Cover image: Georg-Brauchle Ring U Bahn Munich by Les Forrester

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## From the chair

## Janet Haines ARPS



Participation - is a word that keeps swimming around in my head. It is a fact that humans are better if they do not isolate themselves from others, but interact and engage. Even the shyest and less confident individuals benefit greatly, and to that end your DIG Committee continually endeavour to find ways for all members to engage with the group.

As individuals we like the acclaim of others for our photography, so by submitting work for DIG News or DIGIT you can control what we see and how you present yourself and

your work. If you participate in the RPS Distinctions and are successful, then your work is showcased in DIG Accolade. We offer two opportunities each year for members to show their work, a Projected Image competition and a Print Exhibition, so yet another way you can engage quietly. With the Projected Image Competition in September we will be offering three entry classes so without doubt your work will fit one of them, so start thinking now what you will submit. None of these require you to leave your house to achieve them but we also offer more opportunities at the various DIG Centres around the UK where you can actively participate in workshops and meetings that will enlighten, inspire and where you can meet with other likeminded members. We are also looking for new ways for overseas members to engage, so watch for the announcements about that shortly.

Because DIG is not genre-specific, everyone's work is fine by us. Our aim is to help you understand the technology we use and how to improve your photography. Whatever we are doing I think of it as 'quiet' education. DIG started in the late 1990s, as a self-help group when digital was new and there was little knowledge, with an aim of supporting and helping each other. That philosophy still prevails and is demonstrated when members post on our Facebook Group asking for some help. Quickly those with the knowledge step in to offer support. In this way we educate each other.

So far we have covered 'participation' with regard to DIG and how individuals benefit from engaging. But take that one step further and consider how by participating in the RPS AGM and voting for the Trustees your preferences can be reflected on who ultimately sits on the Society's Council. With the addition of online voting this year it is now extremely easy to read about the candidates, make your choice according to whom you feel most closely aligns to how you feel the RPS should be directed, and vote accordingly. Don't waste your vote participate.

## **Editorial**

## **Gary Beaton**



I am delighted to bring to you this latest issue of DIGIT. As ever, it has been fascinating to see the range of knowledge and interests that exists amongst our members and friends, and a pleasure to learn something new from each of our contributors.

Amongst these pages you will find an introduction to an image processing workflow that might offer a way to improve our images, a piece about planning and photographing architecture whilst out and about during city visits and, for those less adventurous, an article

describing how to capture great and creative images at home with just a fish tank and a few accessories!

We congratulate one of our members, Michael Berkeley, who has recently been awarded a distinction by the Society of International Events Photographers and he shares with us a little bit about some other photographic societies and the distinctions available from them. We also see how images can be appreciated and analysed by a non-photographer, possibly opening up a whole new way of viewing a subject before we decide to press the shutter release. Finally, in our 'Challenge' pages, we have a selection of images from members and descriptions of how they were created.

Please enjoy!



# Splash and flash



SADIQ NORAT takes the plunge and combines 'dropjects' and water to create stunning images.

My father was a part time wedding photographer, and although I was brought up around Bolexes and Nikons from an early age, I personally came to photography relatively recently. The stimulus was the birth of my daughter and my desire to catch some priceless images of her growth and development. I rapidly became obsessed with all aspects of photography, and routinely dip in and out of multiple genres from landscape, street,

travel and sport.

However, it was a particular interest in portraiture that eventually got me exploring off-camera flash. As part of the learning process I started experimenting with splash photos and my initial experiments involving dropping items into a flute glass full of coloured water. These initial experiments were somewhat trial and error but



were sufficient to verify the base principles.

Buoyed by the success of my initial efforts, and a desire to go bigger and better, I borrowed a fish tank from a work colleague and attempted a more advanced approach.

By this stage I had developed a standard setup as follows...

- **DSLR** camera, with ability to control offcamera flashes (or via hot shoe trigger) set in Manual mode. All my shots were taken on a Canon EOS 6D.
- Lens: I recommend using a lens with focal length of 50mm or greater (or an equivalent if not using a full frame camera); this allows you to locate the camera a safe distance away from splash zone. The majority of the shots shown here taken with 50mm f/1.8 (the 'nifty fifty') positioned about 2ft in front of the glass.
- Two Speedlights: Any speedlights with a means to trigger them remotely will work. I happen to have a Canon 430EX and a Yongnuo 685. I use these in combination with a Yongnuo hotshoe mounted wireless flash trigger on the camera and a compatible receiver under the Canon.
- An optional reflector: for fill.



- A fish tank: or a similar large glass receptacle with clear sides.
- A squeegee: to wipe away the water droplets from the inside of the glass tank.
- Objects to drop (or as I call them 'dropjects'). From experience the optimum size/shape depends on the size of the tank. For my current setup (17" wide tank), objects no bigger than 5 inches work well. It is also important to consider the weight of the object; heavier items will fall through faster making it harder to catch the splash, and may bounce off the bottom of the tank. Shape also affects the final image; hollow objects (a cup, for example) will create flatter wider splashes whilst solid heavy objects tend to give you taller narrow splashes.
- Towels and wipes: this is going to get wet!
- **Setup:** The fish tank is setup on a low table with the camera mounted on the tripod at a level height. The backdrop is hung behind the tank ensuring it fills the frame. It needs to be far enough from the tank to avoid getting splashes on it.

## **Camera Settings**

• **Aperture** - Aim for aperture around f/8 to f/11. You want to maximize depth of field to maintain

focus from front to the rear of the tank, thus keeping the complete splash radius in full focus.

- **Shutter** Shutter speed will be linked to maximum sync speed for your camera. For the Canon EOS 6D, it's quite low at around 1/200s.
- **ISO** 100 or 200 is fine. The lower the better to minimize noise.
- White Balance Set to 'Flash'
- Focus Set to manual. The subjects will be fast moving and the camera will struggle to autofocus, hence the use of pre-focusing. Do this by placing an object in the tank in roughly the same location where you expect to splash, and manually focus.
- Framing Ensure you can see the whole Tank in your viewfinder. You can always crop out the edges of the tank later.
- Drive Mode Set it to 'Continuous'.

## Lighting setup

Speedlight 1 is placed behind the tank, pointing directly onto the rear of the backdrop. This creates a glow behind the tank with a natural vignette. You might need to adjust the zoom setting to ensure you get a pleasing vignette.

The texture of the background paper I use is rough. This creates a textured dappled look in the final image and is also ideal for spot healing brush later in Photoshop.

Power is set to 1/64. Check the flash is pointed to the centre point of the tank and ideally just above the waterline.

Speedlight 2 is placed left of the tank, and is used to light the dropped item. Power set to 1/64

A reflector is placed right of tank, providing fill on the opposite side of the object.



## A little bit of theory

Now, we need to discuss some theory...taking a shot with the above settings but with the flashes disabled should result in a completely underexposed image. This is intentional, we want no ambient light falling on the target, the only incident light on the subject will be for the short duration of the flash firing. This enables us to very effectively control the 'effective exposure time' to very short durations.

The camera's shutter speed setting will be long enough to cover the total duration of the speedlight flash. Most speedlights will flash for up to ~1/200 of a second when set to their maximum output power. A lower power setting will be far shorter - down to 1/20,000 at its lowest setting.

The table below shows the flash duration times of the speedlights that I use. The data is sourced from *speedlights.net*. You can see with the Canon set to 1/64, it will have the shortest duration, which a total exposure time of 1/6500 of a second which should easily freeze any movement. As mentioned earlier, the shutter speed setting on the DSLR is largely irrelevant.

Output	Flash duration (s)		
level	Canon 430EX II	Yongnuo 685	
1/1	1/350	1/325	
1/2	1/1630	1/935	
1/4	1/3000	1/2150	
1/8	1/4300	1/3500	
1/16	1/5250	1/4900	
1/32	1/5600	<1/18000	
1/64	1/6500	1/20000 (spec)	

The output level setting on the flashes can be adjusted depending on how far they are placed away from the tank, or how strong the lighting is in your images. Take a few test shots to ensure the tank is well lit.

## Get shooting

Now you're set up, one final step in preparation is to grab focus. Place a floating object on the water roughly in the centre of the tank and turn the focus ring until the object is pin sharp.

That's it. Start dropping and shooting. My initial attempts involved one hand hovering over the camera shutter button while the other hand held my *dropject* suspended over the tank. Overall, this is something of a numbers game; the more

## SPLASH AND FLASH

shots you take the more chance of getting the timing just right.

You'll need to wipe the inside glass as this will now be covered with multiple water droplets which will, in the worst case ruin the images, or at best will create far more work in post-processing cleanup. It pays to make the effort to wipe clean as many as water droplets as possible, from both the front and the rear glass, between every take. A good squeegee comes in handy for this.

The eggcup shot was one of my first takes, with the fish tank setup. Over time, I utilized several techniques to improve my success rate. First off, I employed my daughter to release the dropject while I concentrated on hitting the shutter button. However, I soon discovered how unreliable it was to get a small child to synchronize optimally with your three second countdown. In the end I tried pressing the shutter button at same time as releasing the dropject, and keeping it pressed. The continuous shooting mode will ensure you grab shots at the maximum frame rate of your camera, allowing you to choose the optimum frame. The first frame should be at point of release and then continue through to impact. This is no guarantee of catching the precise moment, indeed you will often catch the moment before and the moment after, but it will increase your chances.

The next improvement is to employ a cheap handheld external remote shutter release. This enables you to take more controlled stance over the fish tank, rather than having to stretch arms out between camera and tank.

At this point, I had started building a collection of images and used them for club competitions. I offered to run a series of workshops for other club members potentially interested in Flash and Splash. However, I needed a more advanced technique for easily reproducible results. A fellow



The trigger unit

member happened to have an electronic infrared triggering system. There are various on the market, and the one I use is called Triggersmart (sabre-switch.co.uk).

The Trigger-smart system consists of a two-part sensor unit (Tx and Rx) and one control unit. The sensor system can be configured for light intensity, or sound and is used in infra-red light mode for this purpose. The sensor units need to be placed above and either side of the tank. The Tx and Rx units need to be very carefully aligned to ensure consistent triggering.

One hint is to locate the Tx/Rx so that you can drop the objects within the rear half of the tank, as this results in less water smearing the front glass, and a cleaner shot.

The Tx and Rx units are cabled to the control box, which in turn is cabled to the remote shutter release socket of the camera. The control is very configurable and the settings below seem to work well.

Sensitivity Dial	Increase until the trigger fires, light goes YELLOW, then dial back slightly and leave it.	
- Auto/Manual	Set this to 'Auto' – continuous trigger mode.	
- Active/Inhibit	Make sure the 'button' is green before each take.	
Trigger Time Dial	Adjust this so that the camera takes around 3 shots per trigger.	
- Auto/Manual	Set to 'Manual'.	
Trigger Delay Dial	This is the trickiest one. Adjust as needed depending in the speed/shape of object. Some work better with a longer delay, others with shorter delay.	
- Long/Short	Set to 'Short' – this is a multiplier for the Trigger Delay.	
Trigger	Used to test the connection between control unit and camera. Will cause the camera to take a shot.	
Focus	Set to 'Manual' - only used when remote autofocus required.	

Despite Galileo's Law of free falling objects travelling at the same speed, I find that weight and shape affect the impact, splash and bounce significantly, hence it does take some experimenting and settings will need to be optimized for different types of object.

Wipe the inside glass as this will now be covered with multiple water droplets which will ruin your images.

## **Post-processing**

Some post-processing will be required on captured images. This is very personal thing, and you'll develop your own style. I'll describe my personal approach, but note this changes every time I do it!

## Stage 1: Lightroom/Camera RAW

- Crop to frame the key part of the *dropject* and the splash.
- Add a 'Graduated Dodge Adjustment Filter' from the bottom to brighten water, and improve the balance of exposure from top and bottom halves of the image.
- Basic Panel
  - Increase contrast (+40 to 75)
- Increase the shadows, as the contrast will darken underwater objects

- Clarity (+15)
- Adjust Colour temp to personal preference, I favour cool blue.. (-15)..
- Detail Panel
  - Sharpening: Masking (+85)
- Sharpening: Amount (+100) but check any introduced noise...
  - Noise Reduction: Luminance (+35)
  - Noise Reduction: Colour (+40)
  - Split Toning
- One alternative to adjusting the Colour temp is to use Split Toning to adjust the colours of the highlights and shadows...feel free to experiment.

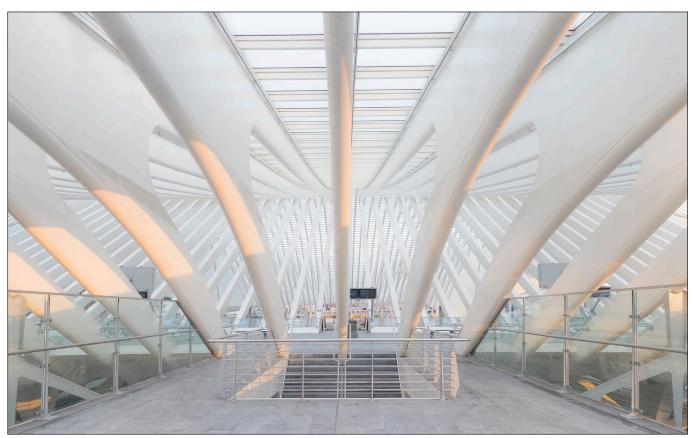
## Stage 2: Photoshop

- Go through with the spot removal tool to clear out any water droplets on the glass that you missed, or that appeared during the Splash.
- Also remove any distracting or unattractive flying droplets this is an artistic/aesthetic process

## Stage 3: Lightroom

• Have another look at your image, and make any additional adjustments.





Railway Station, Liege

## European city photography



LES FORRESTER ARPS takes advantage of low-cost airlines to travel around Europe and focuses his camera on the architecture around him.

As I shoot architecture, this article is intended as a guide to help you get the best out of your photography during a city break to one of our European cities. More people are taking short city breaks due to the advent of low-cost airlines, so during your next city break I hope I may inspire you to try architectural photography.

I have a BA First Class Honours Degree in Photography and my other awards include ARPS, DPAGB, EFIAP and BPE3\*. Recently I was invited to become a member of The London Salon of Photography, which is a great honour, and something I am really thrilled about.

Architecture has always been of great interest to me; the modern buildings with the various structures, shapes and symmetry are what really intrigue me but I have an interest in older buildings as well. It wasn't until about 2016 that I decided to concentrate my photography toward architecture and what I call 'The Art in Architecture'

Having a passion for travel coupled with retiring from the world of nine to five, I decided to combine short city breaks with my architectural photography, giving me the best of both worlds. Recent trips have taken me to Liege, Munich, Stuttgart, Berlin, Valencia, Lisbon and, more recently, Venice. Some cities have been visited a couple times and I have a list of other cities to visit over the next few years.

Photographing these types of locations for either architecture or general pleasure can be frustrating



City of Arts and Science, Valenica

and a little daunting at times so my insight with this article should make your photography a little easier but it's not without some input from you beforehand.

I have not used any fancy cameras, tilt and shift lens or any other equipment you see architectural photographers using. Most of the images you see in this article are shot with the Fujifilm XT1 or XT2 and the Fujifilm lens like the XF 10-24mm f/4 OIS or the Fuji 16-55mm f/2.8 R LM WR. Besides a tripod (travel size) and a few filters that is my kit; travel and photography is about travelling light, minimal kit and enjoying yourself without lugging bags of massive kit around with you.

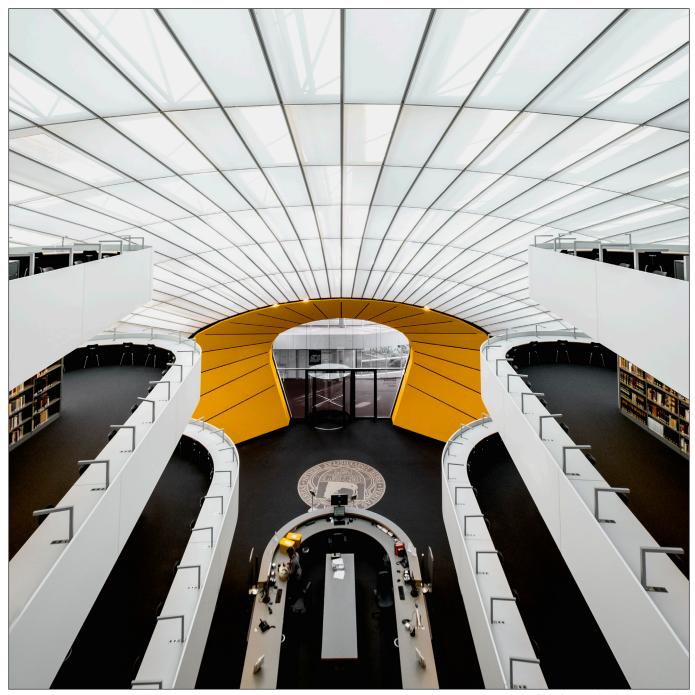
Research prior to any trip is where it all starts and I can't emphasise this too much. I research all my locations thoroughly as it benefits me greatly in getting the most out of my trip and the photography. Most of my trips to European cities are normally around four days and I condense the locations I intend to shoot into three days so you may ask why go for four days. We can't plan months in advance what the weather conditions will actually be like once at our chosen destination, hence I add an extra day into my itinerary as a contingency so if it rains or the light is bad, I can revisit a location if necessary. Things

don't always go smoothly or trouble free so an extra day can help, and you may want to revisit a location or two.

Initially when planning a city break, I undertake research to see what the city has to offer in terms of architecture, both in its classic locations and those less well known, aiming to undertake three full days of photography with around four or five different locations per day. Hold that thought.

So how do I find locations to photograph in my chosen city. I use various internet reference sites to look for locations as well as liaising with photography friends who shoot architecture. It's similar to landscape photographers but we all see, create and put our own style on a location, so it's extremely rare we capture images that are anywhere near similar. Consulting with like minded photographers is also a good way to exchange information about a location, anything from gaining access, to how to get to a particular location; it all helps make my trip easier and obtain the images I want.

Below are some of the sites I looked at for my research into Berlin. There is a lot of information on the Internet, it is just a matter of drilling down until you find what you require.

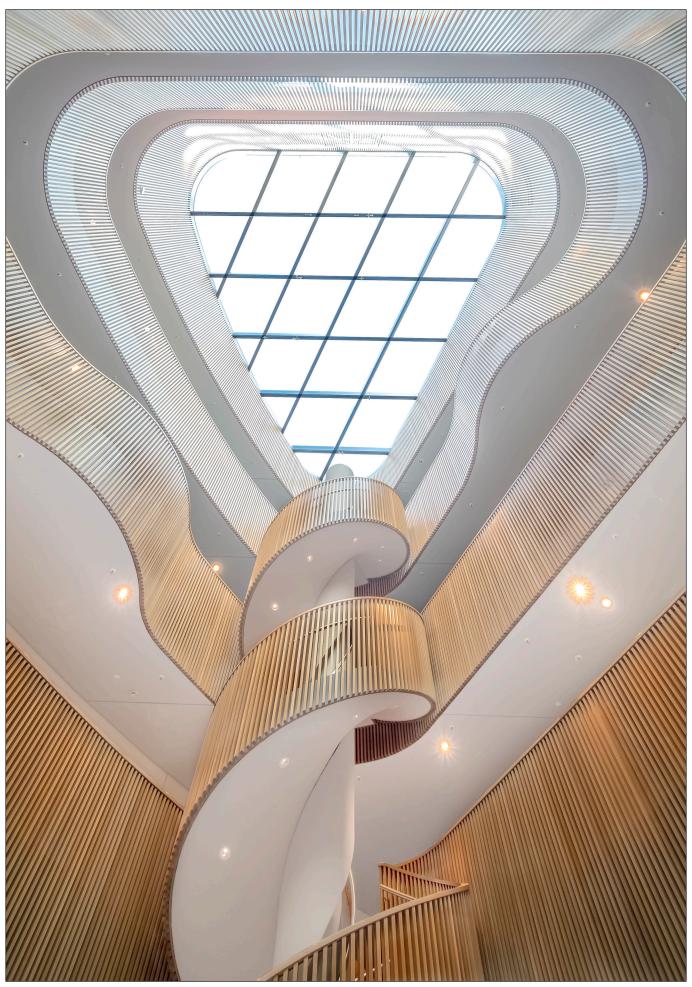


Philological Library, Berlin

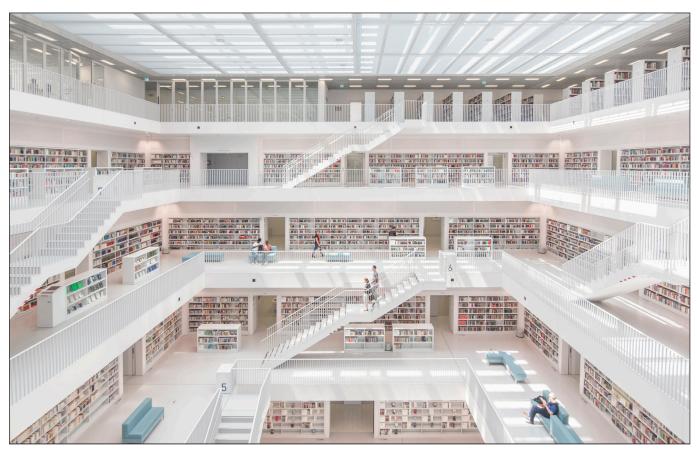
- Visit Berlin Architecture, is a good start you won't get everything from this or the other sites but it is about looking for snippets that are of interest to you (www.visitberlin.de/en/architecture).
- Arch Daily, this is a site that looks at lots of cities but the link below features the city of Berlin (www.archdaily.com/153731/architecture-city-guide-berlin).
- Dezeen is another great source of inspiration, the site is all about architecture and design and I frequently visit this site, again the link is for Berlin (www.dezeen.com/tag/berlin).

Once I have my list of locations I check if they

have their own websites. These will give me valuable information as to whether I need permission to photograph there, opening times and lots more. This is particularly important in respect of interiors as in my experience unless it's a public place, you normally need to obtain permission which can be done a couple of weeks prior to your visit. With public places it's obviously a lot easier as you don't need permission and I have found in most of the cities I've visited they were a lot more relaxed about the use of tripods in comparison to the United Kingdom, but it's worth noting that public places can be busy so patience is the name of the game if you want a particular shot. That applies also to interiors and



Curls and Swirls, Hamburg



The Library, Stuttgart

possibly more so.

Whilst working on location scouting and research, I usually have a printed map of the city to hand allowing me to mark them down as I go along. If I am shooting several locations a day, these add up rapidly and I need a plan. With my map having dots and marks all over it and working on the theory that I am shooting for three days with another spare day - remember the previous thought I asked you to hold - prioritising and grouping is my next stage.

Shooting a city like Berlin or any other city, needs to be broken down into bite size chunks. I normally break the city into three areas by looking at which locations are in the same vicinity, I list these down as day one, two and three for example, which means I am only concentrating on one section of the city per day.

Next, I break those locations for each of the days into morning and afternoon sessions. One of the reasons behind this is the position of the sun/light at each location. Some are better shot in the morning, others in the afternoon and I acquire this information using 'The Photographers Ephemeris' app as it shows you the direction of the sun during the course of the day. I also try to work by doing the furthest locations away first so you

need to be mindful how you list your locations.

Another helpful tip is that I try and find a hotel that is fairly central to the majority of the locations, which helps in cutting down your public transport time. In the case of Berlin I like to be based around the Potsdamer Platz area as I can walk to several locations within 30 minutes and it has several U-Bahn and S-Bahn lines giving me a good easy access to the rest of the city.

I usually download the transport link map and have my locations marked so I can work out the most convenient way of travelling to a stop near each of the locations. I pick up the last section to a location once outside the metro stop by using my mobile phone map to help guide me straight to it which is a massive time saving.

Ultimately a short city break is to be enjoyed, if you can't get a shot don't worry there's always the next location or the next day. Taking regular breaks is also important as days can be long if the weather is favourable. There is always the opportunity to capture any missing images on the final day or alternatively enjoy the city and what it has to offer.

I hope this insight has been helpful, enjoy your next city break and enjoy your photography.



## L\*a\*b\* - An Alternative Workflow



REX WAYGOOD delves into the L\*a\*b\* colourspace and discovers a workflow with some useful characteristics.

The following article is only of use to those with Photoshop as Elements and Lightroom cannot be set up to use this workflow. Although the article is based on a book and the author suggests using this method for virtually all processing, I have found its main use in landscapes and that is what I shall describe.

I was lent a book called Photoshop Lab Color written by Dan Margulis and it is subtitled 'The Canyon Conundrum (and Other Adventures in the Most Powerful Colorspace)'. I read a lot of the book and it had quite an impact, so I decided to buy my own copy. My wife designated it a Christmas present so I had to wait and we then found it was Edition 2 so I had to start reading again! Please note the book is over 400 pages,

this article covers one small part of the book.

A colourspace is a co-ordinate system that allows colours to be described and L\*a\*b\* is another colourspace alongside RGB and CMYK.

L\*a\*b\* is a colourspace that encompasses all possible colours (and some impossible). The unique part of L\*a\*b\* is that the  $\bf L$  term describes the Lightness of the colour whilst  $\bf a$   $\bf b$  values describe the hue and the saturation.  $\bf L$  = 0 is Black and  $\bf L$  = 100 is white (D50 for the technically pedantic). L,0,0 is a shade of grey dependent upon the value of  $\bf L$ .

Green = -a, Magenta = +a
Blue = -b, Yellow = +b
a & b take values from -128 to 127

## L\*A\*B\* - AN ALTERNATIVE WORKFLOW

The bigger the numbers the more saturated the colour.

Unlike many colourspaces L\*a\*b\* is related to human vision (perceptual). This is significant in this workflow. Do not get too concerned about the words used to describe the colours, they are illustrative.

Dan has a hero, Michel Eugène Chevreul (1786-1889) and he is often quoted in the book, in fact Dan claims Michel as a reviewer! The book is based upon this comment by Chevreul:

Correct, but exaggerated colouring is almost always more attractive than absolute coloring; we also cannot hide the fact that many who experience pleasure in seeing how colours have been modified and exaggerated in a picture, would not feel the same pleasure from the sight of the real thing, because the actual variations in colour that the artist exaggerates would not be prominent enough to make themselves felt.<sup>1</sup>

Chevreul was not a photographer and colour photography was not invented until the 1890s. He was interested in colour and for background reading have a look at his Wikipedia page.

The point that Chevreul makes is that we, as viewers, like realistic but exaggerated colours and if you look at the work of many artists you will see that this is an artistic tool. The workflow that Dan espouses allows this exaggeration to be done in a believable way and to be done very simply.

Here are two images of White Canyon, courtesy of Dan Margulis<sup>2</sup>. In the original image, below, the colours are as the image comes from the camera. The exact treatment or lack of treatment is unknown to me.



A few minutes later using Dan's workflow and it looks like this.



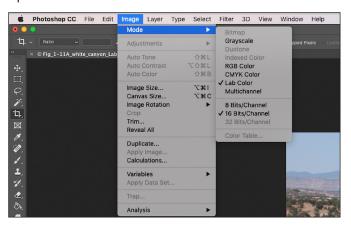
I know that my landscapes often look weak, like this, and not at all as I remember them, or intended them.

The workflow has achieved an increase in colour contrast in a believable way. Colours that were similar have been separated to improve colour contrast, as per Chevreul.

Using this example, I will take you step by step through the process to achieve this.

As with all things in Photoshop you can adjust the layers and masks to produce the artistic effect you desire.

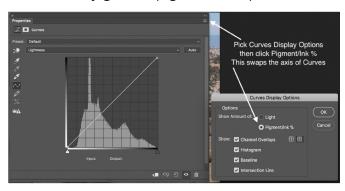
This modification is achieved using Lab Mode. With your image in Photoshop and in your chosen RGB working space you must now select Lab Mode. Another workflow is to set ACR to Color Space: Lab Color.



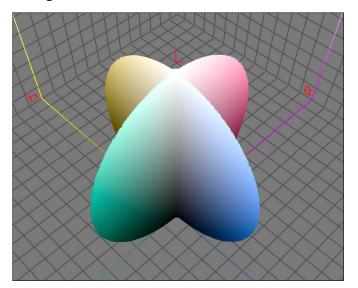
The book works in Pigment/Ink so in order to follow the book instructions I have converted to Pigment/Ink (see image at the top of the next page).

Making this pigment change whilst in Lab mode will mean you get your normal (Light) curves in

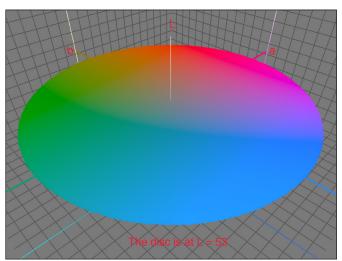
RGB and only get this pigment/ink option in Lab.



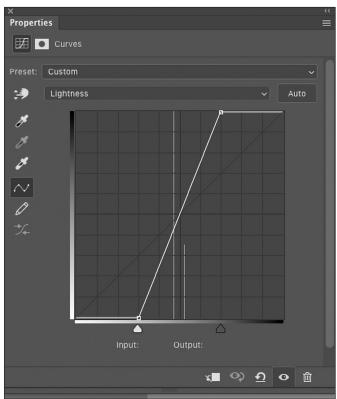
The following graphics show how the 3 coordinates affect colour in 3D Lab colourspace. This graphic shows the effect of L, as L increases, the lightness increases from black to white.



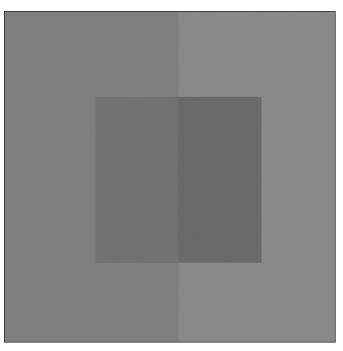
As **a** or **b** get larger the saturation increases. The relative sizes of **a** & **b** alter the hue of the colour as shown below.



If we create a 'strong' curve on a B&W image we expect the greys to be 'pulled apart' with the lighter greys getting lighter and the darker greys getting darker.



This curve produces the following effect on a B&W image and should be what the reader expects to see. In the graphic below the original is on the left and the effect of the curve being applied is shown on the right



This also works in RGB although the curve shown is in Lab, L Lightness.

This shape of curve will also pull the hues and saturations apart and exaggerate their differences in Lab mode. The special property of Lab is that the hues are pulled apart and saturation increased in a believable way.

## L\*A\*B\* - AN ALTERNATIVE WORKFLOW

This is what happens with colours using curves in **a** and **b**.

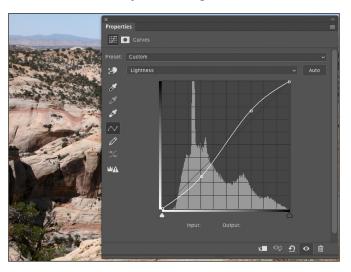
Lab Values of Original Colours	Lab Values with both <b>a</b> & <b>b</b> curves applied	Only <b>a</b> curve applied	Only <b>b</b> curve applied
53,14,-14	53,27,-29		
53,11,-11	53,21,-23		
53,0,-20	53,0,-41		
53,0,-15	53,0,-31		
53,-14,-14	53,-28,-29		
53,-11,-11	53,-22,-23		
53,-20,0	53,-40,0		
53,-15,0	53,-30,0		
53,-14,14	53,-28,28		
53,-11,11	53,-22,22		
53,0,20	53,0,40		
53,0,15	53,0,30		
53,14,14	53,27,28		
53,11,11	53,21,21		
53,20,0	53,39,0		
53,15,0	53,29,0		

The **a,b** curves column shows the effect of pulling the hues apart and increasing their saturation using curves in both **a** & **b**. In the **a,b** column the hue is the same as the original.

For those of a technical nature you can see that the **a** curve column has no effect on **b** axis hues and vice versa. Those colours at the 45° rotation have hue and saturation changed by both the **a** & **b** curves. Using both the **a** & **b** curves puts the 45° hue back to the original. The table has been carefully constructed to demonstrate the effect and

remain within the colour gamut of the Lings<sup>3</sup> print process. The slope of the curves is greater than would normally be used. Note the demonstration does not use a curve in **L** hence **L** remains constant.

Returning to the example image, it is processed in Lab mode the following way. Create a Curves adjustment layer and select L (Lightness). An S curve in L gives an increase in mid-range contrast. You may choose any other curve here to suit your artistic intent, it only affects Lightness.



When you start experimenting with this workflow, I would recommend creating three curves adjustment layers, one for each of **L**, **a** & **b**. This allows you to 'overdo' the adjustment curve and then bring back the adjustment using opacity in each layer. It also allows the use of a mask on each of the layers. It can all be done in one adjustment layer but lacks some flexibility.

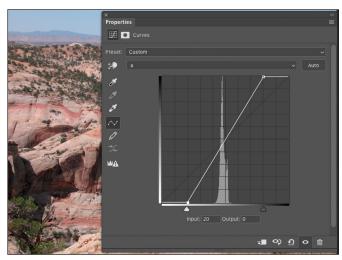
In the following curves you will notice that the pull in from either side is symmetrical such that the curve goes through the midpoint. Failure to achieve that will produce a dramatic colour shift. Clicking on the little up arrows brings in the numbers which can then be typed in if you find it difficult to adjust the curve by pulling in the up arrows.

The Curves adjustment layer for **a** and **b** are shown at the top of the next page. The amount by which you pull in the curve(s) is an artistic choice.

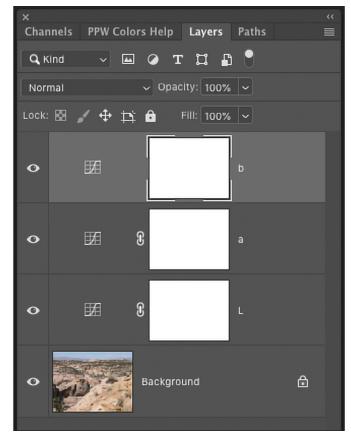
If all three curves are turned on the you get the enhanced image from the original, very quickly.

Note you do not have to have identical curves in a & b however the difference in the curves will produce a hue shift in off axis colours. It is an artistic choice.

Your three layers should appear as shown below.

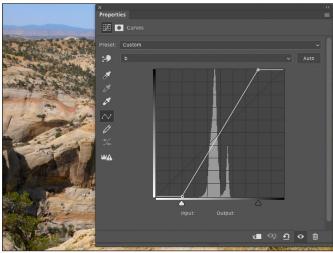


Curves adjustment layer for a



A word of warning, if you start experimenting L,a,b is a very large colourspace and it is very easy to exceed the gamut of your output device (printer) and therefore Gamut warning and Soft Proofing become very important.

Having produced your masterpiece, you will have a problem saving it. This is because your image is in Lab mode and not all file formats support Lab. I save the interim file as Filename\_Lab.psd as I like to preserve my workflow layers, and then convert to mode RGB and either carry on in Photoshop or save as a JPEG for the web, whilst ensuring that the Lab image gamut and my Photoshop workingspace are as required for my output. When you convert back to RGB Photoshop will 'invite' you to flatten



Curves adjustment layer for **b** 

the image, hence the interim file, or you could follow Dan's advice and use Lab throughout, but then you will need to buy the book!

I hope you have a go with this workflow within Photoshop and enjoy the improvements in your images. You can make them as you remember them not as the camera captured them.

This is a quick description of one of the tools within Lab from Dan's book. There are many more, some of which I have tried. If your interest has been whetted, then the book has a wealth of other techniques and I would encourage you to purchase the book. If you do so then each chapter is accompanied by an on-line resource which can be downloaded to take you through his various workflows. There is also a plug-in which makes working in Lab simpler. But one quick warning, it is not a book for novice Photoshop users!

## Footnotes and thanks

- 1 From a talk by Dr Alan Hodgson ASIS FRPS FInstP RPS Trustee at ISG Good Picture 2018:
- "In general people don't want accurate colour, they want preferred reproduction of memory colours" Tony Kaye from the teachings of Prof. Robert Hunt Hon
- 2 Thanks to Dan Margulis for granting permission for his image of White Canyon to be used in this article. Photoshop LAB Color Second Edition ISBN 978-0-13-417610-9
- 3 Thanks to Iain Robinson of Lings for assistance in ensuring that the table showing the effects of adjusting a and b curves would work.
- 3D Lab plots created with ColorThink Pro

Thanks to Dr Tony Kaye ASIS FRPS and Barry Senior Hon FRPS APAGB for checking the technical side of this article.



Heading for a fall by Eric Leeson LRPS

# Seeing the picture

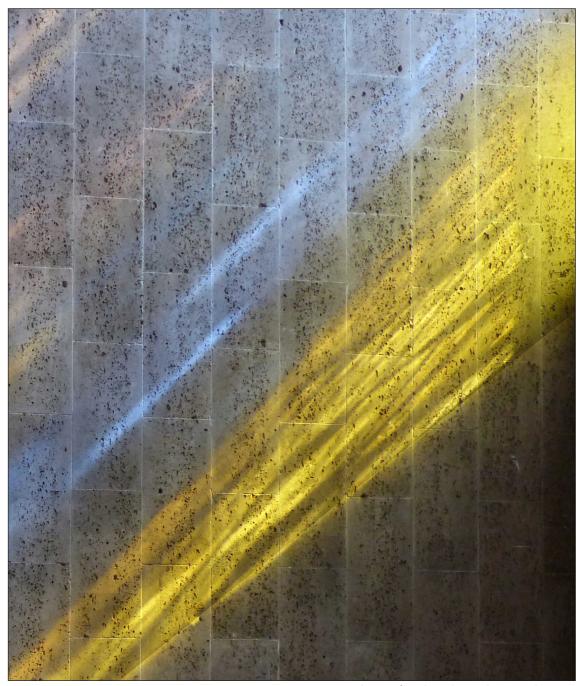


DR JACK WOTHERSPOON is not a photographer, but he knows a good picture when he sees one. Here he describes the way he analyses four images, and does so in a way that might help a photographer to see the picture in a different way.

When the French painter Eugene Delacroix saw his first photographic images in the 1850s he declared rather theatrically that '... from today painting is dead'. Whilst his viewpoint was overstated it is however understandable. At a time when painting dominated the documenting of subject matter what was emerging in photography was a young, vibrant and skilled competitor. However, over the intervening 165 years or so, painting and photography have learned to co-operate, to play to their strengths, to appreciate and learn from each other so that today both stand simply as comparable art forms

practised by artists and principally differentiated by their production media.

Images fundamentally exist to communicate with viewers who live through a daily avalanche of images and have become skilled at interpreting them, whilst largely disinterested regarding their production. However, in the community of image makers the tendency, and most noticeably in photography, is to view, discuss and critique images with a focus on their production. If images exist to communicate with viewers then image makers could possibly improve in this regard

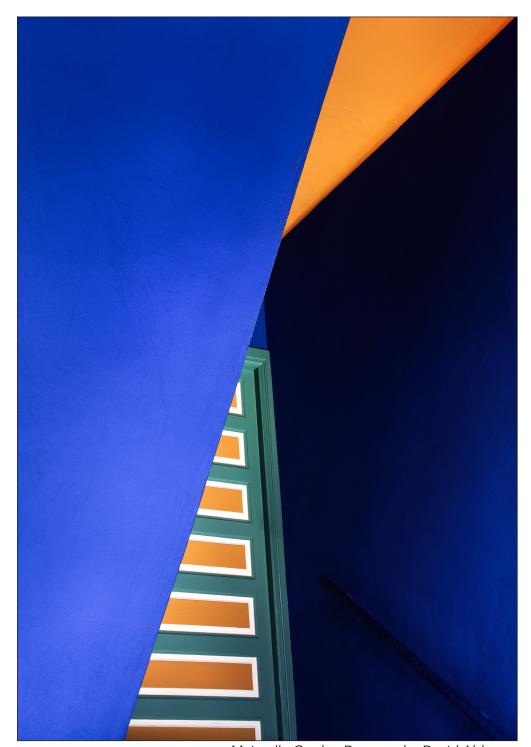


Blaze of Colour by Mike Reed ARPS

by building up a repertoire of communicative techniques by practising as viewers, by assessing the work of others and by studying alternative media. The discussion below considers a variety of photographic images to explore this premise.

The documentary function of images is one that has remained a durable and popular genre. One image that falls into this category is 'Heading for a Fall' (see page 20) by Eric Leeson. In this landscape format image, four cyclists are lit by light from behind their right shoulders that casts strong shadows to their left. As a group they are positioned just towards the left of the image space. They are dressed in what looks like competition clothing and numbering, and

the rider on the right is posed at a precarious angle. However, whilst the group almost fills the space vertically overall it occupies only half of the total image space, thus indicating to the viewer that the space either side of the group is also important. Consequently the viewer is also informed that the cyclists are negotiating a tight bend on a track that appears to be made of semicompacted material and where the inside of that track is bound by a relatively high kerb. Due to the space visible around the riders we observe a reference to a corporate sponsor and also spectators on a stepped terraced are visible. Our viewpoint is slightly from above with the riders coming straight at us thereby putting the viewer



Majorelle Garden Doorway by David Alderson

in the role of a spectator. When these factors are aggregated this image is elevated from representing a group of cyclists to documenting a cycling event.

In some images, as exemplified here, the documentary element appears to be the primary intention. However, all images additionally contain an element of the subjective or expressive, of varying concentrations, whereby elements of the form project other messages to the viewer. For example, in this image the angle of the riders to the vertical, the wide berth they have given

the corner and their left legs braced towards the ground for balance all express an element of their speed in taking the corner. Also the body angle of the rider on the far right, referenced in the title, is such that we engage emotionally with the image. In his unbalanced state he searches for the ground unconvincingly with his left foot as the strong shadow lines that anchor him to the ground actually appear to be pulling him ever more downwards. If he does fall, will it be painful given his head and shoulders appear to be heading towards a solid high kerb?



Inside Out Building by Derek Holliday

Whilst 'Heading for a Fall' communicates with the viewer through both documentary and expressive elements it very much concentrates on the documentary element. However, Mike Reed's 'Blaze of Colour' is an example where the expressive elements now dominate the image. In this portrait format image there is no apparent documentary content and indeed the title itself reinforces that initial impression. Here, along the diagonal axis from the bottom right to the top left corners the sepia hues are progressively weakened in tone and bands of blue and particularly yellow streak across the image perpendicular to this axis.

In essence, 'Blaze of Colour' takes the image back to its ultimate fundamentals of colour and shape. Unsurpassed exemplars of this approach can be seen in the work of the 1950s Abstract Expressionists such as Rothko, Barnett Newman and Yves Klein, and moreover it has stylistic echoes of the British abstract painter Howard Hodgkin. In such works, devoid of any documentary content, no physical matter is represented and it is for the colours and shapes themselves to transmit an aesthetic to the viewer emotionally to the image. It is noticeable in Mike Reed's image that the colours are all harmonious and subdued to give the work an air of calm and

## **SEEING THE PICTURE**

quiet, although the yellow flash also adds a tone of optimism to the work. Added to this the white grid-like lattice just resolvable beneath these colour effects draws in the eye to encourage contemplation of this peaceful image.

However, the use of colours, shapes and their combinations to create emotions and moods in images is not limited to generating peace and calm as is demonstrated in David Alderson's 'Majorelle Garden Doorway'. This montage of irregular and brightly coloured polygons in a portrait format immediately creates a sense of energy and has strong predecessors in painted collections such as Frank Stella's 1966 work 'Irregular Polygon Series'. Additionally the adjacent complementary colours of the almost Yves Klein blue and orange clash to add a sense of action. It is only though the title that the viewer begins to resolve that this image also documents a doorway albeit at an oblique angle and so is camouflaged as an abstract form. Here again the contrast of cold turquoise and warm orange hues act to maintain a sense of energy. However, whilst the glimpse of the doorway adds an item of physical reality to the image, it is swathed in the uniform of abstract forms, and consequently this documented aspect only marginally dilutes the expressive nature of the image. Moreover, doorways are also a motif of intrigue as they ask the viewer what lies behind them and specifically in this case what form of garden it will reveal?

The images discussed so far have been at the extremes of the documentary/expressive spectrum and where the expressive content was largely represented through colour. However, in Derek Holliday's square-format and monochrome image 'Inside Out Building' the documentary and expressive elements are more balanced with the latter being projected through the physical forms within the image.

The building in question occupies the centre ground and the structural components, normally hidden within a building are now visible on the outside. Not only does this make the title of the image understandable it also signals the avantgarde architectural credentials of this structure. It is clearly a building of the modern world and the monochrome format amplifies the crisp, clean and sleek lines of today's architecture. Additionally the low viewpoint, the fact that the inside-out building fills a large proportion of the vertical space and that it also occupies the foreground

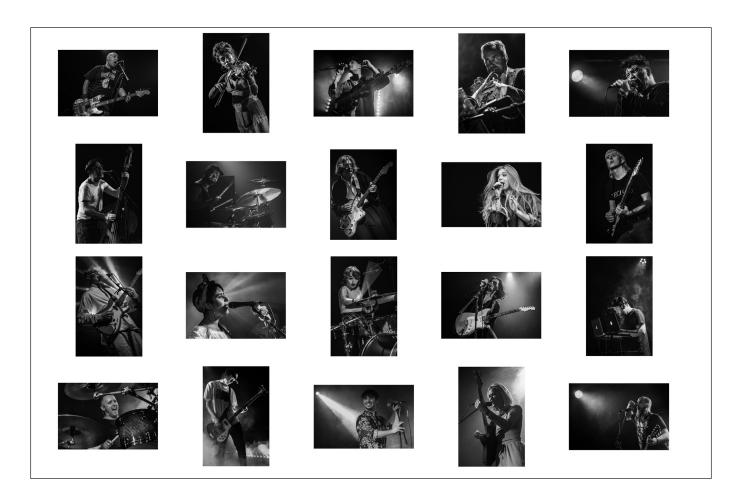
space gives it a sense of monumentality and stature.

However, the inside-out building fills just under half of the total image space to indicate that its two neighbouring buildings have a role to play. Their more conventional forms act as a framing device but also they re-enforce the novel architecture of our subject. Moreover, they are curved inwards almost bowing in an act of homage to this novel building.

Additionally, this folding inwards of buildings might also express another facet of modernity. It was Einstein who postulated that as the modern world speeded up it would start to fold in on itself. Indeed the inwardly folded building as a motif of a modern Einsteinian world has been used by image makers since the first quarter of the twentieth century as exemplified for example in 1911 painting 'The Street Enters the House' by the Italian Futurist Umberto Boccioni.

In summary, this discussion has considered in total but four photographic images to show how the documentary and expressive effects they utilise, in varying concentrations, can be consolidated into the beginnings a repertoire of technique to aid communication with the viewer. Moreover, the same form of analysis could be applied across all the images from the 2018 Digital Imaging Group catalogues, or to other photographic or indeed painted images, that would grow that repertoire. Overall we have seen for example how the choice of format, image-space management, documentary content, titling, motifs and expressive effects (both in colour and physical form), are important factors that can be tuned to communicate with the viewer.

Jack Wotherspoon studied Physics at the University of Leicester during the 1970s, being awarded a B.Sc. (Hons.1st) and a Ph.D., and subsequently practiced and managed science and technology within the electronics and aerospace sectors. In parallel he has studied Art History at a number of levels including being awarded a B.A. (Hons.1st) and his area of interest is 15th century Tuscan wedding chests. Jack is also a lifelong watercolourist and is currently the chairman of a New Forest-based painting group.



## The Societies of Photographers



MICHAEL BERKELEY ASISEP LRPS LSISLP has recently been awarded Associateship of the Society of International Events Photographers, one of the Societies of Photographers. He tells us more about the Societies and their work.

Some members of the Digital Imaging Group may not be aware of an organisation called The Societies of Photographers. Its origins date back to the late 1980s when the Society of Wedding and Portrait Photographers was created but this has since been expanded to eight Societies covering all aspects of photography.

There are many similarities to the RPS: for example, they have an identical hierarchy of Distinctions (Licentiate, Associate and Fellow) and they share a quest for artistic perfection. They also have excellent periodicals and monthly competitions, with certificates awarded for the best images. Although I did not attend myself,

there is a large annual Convention at a hotel in London, with guest speakers, print competitions,



award ceremonies, trade stands etc.

But there are also important differences from the RPS. The most significant of these is that they provide a platform for professional photographers to market their businesses, although the Societies are equally open to what they term the 'serious

## THE SOCIETIES OF PHOTOGRAPHERS

enthusiast'. Their website therefore includes directories of members so that the public can search for, say, a wedding photographer in a particular area.

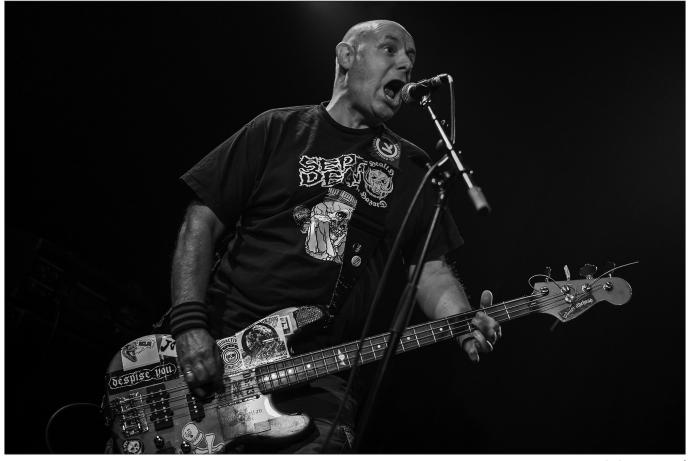
There are 2 aspects of belonging to the Societies that I particularly like: you can submit Distinction applications online and they have an excellent mentoring scheme.

• For both the L and A, you have to submit 20 images. This is as simple as uploading the 20 digital files with a contact sheet. When I submitted the images for my Licentiate, I received a letter (very old fashioned...) within about 10 days saying that I had been successful. This included an assessment by each of the 4 people who had judged the images, as well as helpful and constructive advice on what I needed to do to 'raise my game' to attain my Associateship. So, no printing was required and the whole process was completely stress-free. Importantly, they are not interested in the coherence and presentation of 'The Hanging Plan' - the contact sheet is merely for ease of reference so that it is easy to match comments to the right picture. They are therefore simply judging the quality of the images

as standalone photographs.

• Depending on which type of membership you hold, you can submit draft Distinction panels to their Mentoring Team for advice as many times as you wish. When I was preparing for my Associateship submission and, having little or no idea of the standard required, I sent in (again online) my first stab at a panel. Within a couple of weeks, I had had a response from the Mentoring Team with detailed comments on each of the images. The upshot was that 13 of the images were of the standard required; 4 needed more work; and 3 were best forgotten. I replaced the 7 less good images and submitted the panel for assessment.

Although some RPS members may not be comfortable with the commercially-focussed element of The Societies, there is plenty to gain from being a member of one or more of The Societies – particularly if you enjoy collecting letters after your name! I have certainly found that I have had to improve my photography to attain the standards expected. To explore further, visit The Societies' website: https://thesocieties.net.



An image from Michael's successful ASISEP panel



## **BEACH HUT RAINBOW**

## **Rob Kershaw ARPS**

Some of the things I miss about the UK are the coast and the sea. Whilst there are plenty of lakes and magnificent mountains in Switzerland there is just something wonderful about walking on the sand, listening to the waves and observing some of the idiosyncratic features of English beach resorts.

Fortunately, my brother lives near Clacton, so when we go to visit, a trip to the sea is always on the cards. The East coast has some great locations but probably my favourite is Southwold, which is where I took the pictures for this project.



The original 13 beach hut images

A feature of the seaside I find particularly interesting is the beach huts with their interesting colours, patterns, textures and differences, despite being of a relatively simple and similar design.

They actually cost a fortune to buy these days!

During several visits, beach huts, amongst other subjects, were on my list of things to photograph. However, it was not until I got home that the idea for 'Beach Hut Rainbow' came to me as I looked through the many shots from the trip. It seemed to me that I had all the colours of the rainbow in the pictures I had taken, this article is about how I turned that vision into a reality.

Actually, I had quite a lot of images but getting the right seven colours was not as easy as I thought. I eventually found 13 images that had, in theory, the colours I needed.

The actual images chosen were the last seven, which had a range of styles and were close to the right colours, though selection of parts and hue adjustments would be necessary. Indigo and violet were perhaps the most difficult colours. So now to the creation of the final image:

The first step was to create a new canvas, 42cm x 42cm. Then, in the View menu I set up Guides to create a template to make the 49 boxes, having first worked out the required dimensions and spacing (figure 1). I made sure Snap to Guides was ticked ready for the next steps.

The next action was to create a black box in the top left-hand square using the shape tool with a black fill and no stroke. Once done, this 'box was copied across the top row to each position (figure 2).

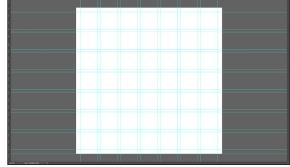


Figure 1

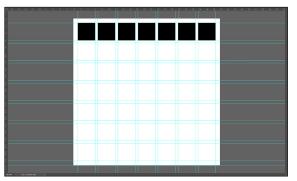


Figure 2

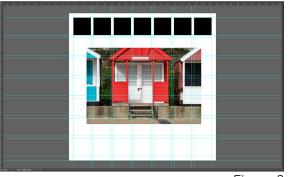


Figure 3

## DIGIT CHALLENGE

I then created a folder named 'Originals' and added each image at full size on a separate layer within it. They were then adjusted to the appropriate size, to allow positioning over the box, using Free Transform (figures 3 and 4).

With the first image selected, I created a layer mask by control clicking on the appropriate box in the layer panel, and then choosing Add Vector Mask. To adjust the image position within the box, the link between the image and mask was temporarily removed. I then restored the link between mask and image and repeated this step for the remaining six images along the top row.

The hue of some of the images was not as close to a rainbow colour as I would have liked so several Hue/ Saturation adjustment layers were 'clipped' to the appropriate image layers before making the necessary improvements. Having finished with these preparations, I moved on to considering placement.

I created two new folders, one called 'Square Images' and one within it called 'A'. ALL the images in the 'Originals' folder were then copied into 'A', together with their adjustment layers. The 'Originals' folder was kept as a back up to allow for further adjustments if required. However, it could have been discarded had disc space been at a premium.

The images were then rasterised and had their layer mask applied. The image layers with adjustment layers were simply merged, this both rasterises and applies the layer mask (figure 5). This procedure is very important to ensure proper alignments for the next steps. Each layer was also renamed for clarity.

The folder containing the top row was then copied down to the next six, creating an individual folder for each row in the process (figure 6).

Finally, the images in each folder were moved to the correct place, according to my original design, to create the rainbow (figure 7).

And there you have it, the complete workflow for the creation of 'Beach Hut Rainbow' (figure 8).

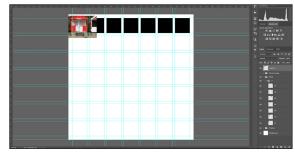


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Whilst I am relatively adept with Photoshop I did actually have my son's assistance with the workflow for this image. As with almost anything you want to achieve in Photoshop, there are usually several ways it can be done. I am sure others will have their own approach for this process. Indeed, since this image was made, Adobe have added a Frame Tool which I assume could make the whole procedure easier; something else to learn!



## **SILVER BIRCH**

## Michael Spurway LRPS

It was a pleasant late autumn day when we visited Angelsey Abbey, a National Trust property near Cambridge. They were preparing for their annual evening light show, due to commence that evening.

On the leisurely walk through the gardens I suddenly became aware of this marvellous sight of Silver Birches. They were fairly young trees that had been planted closely together in an area where the path separated. With the preparations for the evening going on around us, time was of the essence. I decided on producing an image with ICM (intentional camera movement), as this had been an avenue of interest I had been following for the past two years. Getting a good composition was not made easy by the way the path split. A compromise had to be made, with a realization that depending on the ICM image a certain amount of retouching might be needed.

The important thing in taking a picture of this kind is the position you take. You are not a tripod, but you must act like one. So on choosing the spot you wish to shoot from, you need to anchor your feet, making sure you are comfortable as you cant afford to move until you have completed your series of shots.

At this stage you might well ask, why not use a tripod with a ballhead? Answer – I found it doesn't work - the result always seems to appear one dimensional, just as it is if you use one of Photoshop's blur filters. For me, the delight of handheld ICM is the freedom of movement it allows.

I commenced by shooting the ICM images, taking my time to get a good idea on what exposure I felt worked best with the subject. Here I usually start in ½ to ½th second range. Having already made my choice of subject and focal point, allowance had to be made for the extra area required for the movement I would be making with the camera. With ISO set as low as possible, the use of ND would need to be considered for the required shutter speed.

I usually shoot about 12 - 20 images in the ICM format, varying the motion, the starting point of motion and the speed of which I move. Without moving from the spot or changing the focal length of the lens, I immediately shot the in-focus images, making sure I picked out the points I want people to focus on in the picture. I again shot about 12 images, most at full aperture, varying the composition slightly so as to cover the area of my ICM images. Now I can move.

## Image Preparation (Photoshop and Nik Colour FX)

As well as the intended movement the essence I wanted of the picture was a subtle silver/blue tone for the silver birches enhanced by the colour coming through from the detail.

Careful image selection is important, especially in this case. Just one ICM image gave me the composition I wanted and fortunately I had an in-focus image that was a fairly close match.

- 1) In Photoshop, I set the file up with ICM image as Layer 1 and with my sharp image above as Layer 2. The first job was to align the two images. Using the Edit>Transform>Warp tool I performed the majority of manipulation on Layer 2. Final details that I was not happy with were altered using Edit> Puppet Warp.
- 2) With the images aligned, the next job was the colour and retouching of the background ICM image. Layer 1 was duplicated and taken into Nik Color FX. Here the colour was altered to the Silver Blue effect I was after. At the same time a light corner vignette was added to help reduce the strength of the paths. On bringing the layer back into Photoshop, detail retouching was done to remove other unwanted distractions.
- 3) Layer 2, the sharp image, was duplicated and a black Layer Mask added. Using a soft white brush, the detail areas I required to be seen were exposed carefully.

When completed, I felt the colour of the detail was too strong, so a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer was added to bring the image to its final state.







Component layers of the final image

## **DIGIT CHALLENGE**



## **DECAYING TULIP**

## **Dee Wareham**

I have taken many photos of tulips in various states of decay as well as in perfect condition as I am attracted by their distinctive forms and varied colours.

I had of a bunch of yellow tulips in a blue vase near the fireplace and was planning to photograph these when I realised that the brushed steel frame of the fireplace would make a good picture frame. I then had the idea to create a single image which incorporated several versions of just one tulip taken over time to give the idea of time lapse photography and that I could use the fire surround to frame various stages of the tulip's decay (figure 1).



Figure 1

This involved planning as I needed to keep the camera and tripod in the same place for several days. I also had to take the photos at the same time each day as I was only using natural light. I was fortunate that the weather conditions each day were similar so that exposures and colour temperature were not affected. Taking photos daily meant that I would get a sequence showing the gradual change as the tulip decayed and from which I could use some images to show the passing of time.

Once all the photos were taken I downloaded them into Lightroom to review them and to decide which ones to use. Having made my selection I started with the image showing the final stage of decay as this would be the main picture and would represent the last stage of the sequence (figure 2).

Working in Photoshop I made a few minor adjustments and it was then that I realised that the aspect ratio of the fire surround differed from that of my images. I therefore



Figure 2

needed to narrow the width for my photos to fit. I selected the area on the right hand side from the edge of the image to the inside edge of the frame and moved this selection to the right making sure that the corners were still lined up correctly. The light background was not a problem and was easily blended in using the healing brush.

I then selected an image with one fallen petal. I cut out the petal and the head of the tulip and dragged each into a copy of the main picture to replace just the head and petals. This was so that the rest of the image was unchanged.

I flattened the image, dragged a copy layer into the original picture and transformed the scale (Edit-Transform-Scale) to fit the frame (figure 3). I used the same method to add the other tulips transforming each one to fit into the smaller frame



Figure 3

until the smallest image was of the fresh tulip without a drooping leaf.

I was satisfied that in my final image I had managed to convey the idea of the passage of time from the fresh flower until the petals were falling off and to show how the fresh tulip had by then become a distant memory.

## Members Annual Projected Image Competition



## Free to enter - Group members only

Three classes - Open Colour, Open Mono and Altered Reality You can enter up to 6 images - max 3 in any one class.

Open for entries - August 1st 2019
Closing date - September 7th at midnight (GMT)
Selection date - September 14th
Report card by email within 48 hours.

Awards Presentation(s) on the day at RPS House, Bristol or at DIG Centres around the UK if winner not present.

A printed catalogue will be sent to all DIG Members.

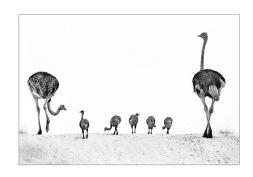
For the first time we will be able to offer max 50 seats to those wishing to attend the selection day. Free for members or £5 nonMembers.

For information about the competition and how to book your seat go to

## www.rps.org/DIGPlcomp







A searchable, cumulative contents list of previous issues is available from the Digital Imaging Group magazine page of the Group's website at: www.rps.org/DIGIT



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THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Hugh Milsom FRPS MFIAP EFIAP/D1
& Pat Broad ARPS EFIAP/B
THE CREATIVE LANDSCAPE
Peter Milsom EFIAP/S BPE3\*
THE POWER OF SPORT

Sunday 17 November 2019 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire





WESTERN CENTRE

Anne Sutcliffe FRPS EFIAP
Anne will be presenting her
"Vision of Photography
in Prints"

Sunday 1 December 2019 - Ilton Village Hall, TA9 9HG

