IS THE NEW INSTAGRAM WORTH THE HYPE? • MAKE DRAMATIC LIGHTNING PHOTOS

INDIA'S #1 PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE

August 2014 • Rs. 150
(Total 172 pages)

INSIDE
AN EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO CELLPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

www.betterphotography.in

Better Photography

Better Techni... ...unes



CONTEST ALERT
OVER RS. 1,00,000 WORTH OF PRIZES TO BE WON WITH AMAZON AND BP'S 'INDIA THROUGH MY LENS' CONTEST!

15 easy tips to make fabulous bird pictures

The ethical dos and don'ts of photographing in the wild

GETTING CREATIVE WITH WILDLIFE

Go beyond conventional wildlife imagery by mixing technique, vision, emotion and soul

EXCLUSIVE TESTS
Sony Alpha 77 II
Sigma DP3 Merrill
Nissin i40

GREAT MASTERS
Ganesh Shankar's lyrical view of nature and the animal world

VISUAL MUSINGS
Shahidul Alam on promises, intentions & one's priorities

ON ASSIGNMENT
Giacomo Brunelli's dark and spooky look at street animals

PROFILE
Karen Glaser photographs the breathtaking underwater world

Network 18

Better Photography

Better Technique. Better Insight. Better Pictures

VOLUME 18 • ISSUE 3 • AUGUST 2014

TIPA TECHNICAL IMAGE PRESS ASSOCIATION

Network 18 Publishing

Founder & Editor, Network18
Raghav Bahl

President & Editorial Director, TV18
Senthil Chengalvarayan

Editor-in-chief, Web & Publishing, Network18
R Jagannathan

EDITORIAL
Chief Editor
K Madhavan Pillai

Deputy Editor – Technical
Shridhar Kunte

Features Editor
Raj Lalwani

Senior Features Writers
Ambarin Afsar, Supriya Joshi, Aditya Nair

Features Writers
Conchita Fernandes, Natasha Desai

DESIGN & PRODUCTION
Assistant Art Director
Santosh D Kamble
Mahesh A Jadhav

Chief Photographer
Mexy Xavier

Photographer
Joshua Navalkar

MARKETING & SALES
Vice President Sales & Marketing
Amit Seth

National Sales Head
Badri Narayan: 9845045008

New Delhi
Harshvardhan Verma: 9899555090
Rajat Chauhan: 9868103422

Mumbai
Jyoti Kapoor: 9820056212

Senior Sales Support Executive
Umesh Desai

Group CEO, Network18
B Sai Kumar

CEO–Network18 Publishing
Sandeep Khosla

EVP–Human Reasources
Sanjeev Kumar Singh

NEWSSTAND & SUBSCRIPTION
General Manager
Manoj Palsay

Assistant General Managers
Kripanand S (South)

Senior Manager Subscriptions
Sheetal Kotawdekar

Coordinators
Kamlesh Mathakar, Vaibhav Ghavale,

Logistics Team
Anant Shirke

PRINTING
Manager
Dnyaneshwar Goythale

Production Team
Ravikumar Potdar, Ravi Salian

NEWSSTAND & SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
For newsstand and trade queries, please write to Manoj at manoj.palsay@network18publishing.com

For any subscription queries, please write to Sheetal at customercare@network18publishing.com

To subscribe to Better Photography online, visit http://eshop.infomedia18.in

ADVERTISING SERVICES
For advertising and sales queries, please write to umesh.desai@network18publishing.com

HEAD OFFICE
Network18 Media & Investments Ltd,
New Era House, Opp Shamrao Vithal Bank,
Mogul Lane, Matunga-West,
Mumbai-400 016,
Maharashtra, India.
Customercare No - 43484760
Email: customercare@network18publishing.com

GET PUBLISHED IN BETTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Participate in online contests, share your best tips and techniques to get your work noticed. Follow these simple guidelines:

For Your Pictures, Reader's Gallery and Reader's Tip:

- Visit http://betterphotography.in/contests and register yourself on the website
- Participate in the relavant contests on the page. There will always be a contest open for you to take part in!
- For Reader's Gallery contests, make sure the images have been made using a cellphone
- For Reader's Tip and Your Pictures contests, include a 100-word note on how and why you shot the image
- Winners of all the contests get featured on our website and can be featured in the magazine too. They will also receive special prizes!

Send in a synopsis, with low-resolution images for viewing, to contribute articles to the following sections:

On Assignment, Step-by-Step, Photofeature, Tips & Tricks, Shooting Technique, History, Story Behind the Picture

Get in Touch with us:

- To have your images reviewed by our panel of experts: photocritique@betterphotography.in
- To showcase your best photographs: entries@betterphotography.in
- To contribute articles and for questions on photography: editor@betterphotography.in
- For your suggestions, appreciation and criticism on the magazine: feedback@betterphotography.in

Views and opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of Network18 Media & Investments Ltd (Network18), its publisher and/or editors. We at Network18 do our best to verify the information published but do not take any responsibility for the absolute accuracy of the information. Network18 does not accept the responsibility for any investment or other decision taken by readers on the basis of information provided herein. Network18 does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited material sent without due postal stamps for return postage. No part of this magazine can be reproduced without the prior written permission of the publisher. Network18 reserves the right to use the information published herein in any manner whatsoever.*

Published and Printed by Sandeep Khosla on behalf of Network18 Media & Investments Ltd. Editor: K Madhavan Pillai Printed at Indigo Press (India) Pvt. Ltd., Plot # 1 C/716, Off Dadoji Konddeo Cross Road Between Sussex & Retiwala Indl., Estate, Byculla, Mumbai - 400027, & published at Network 18 Media & Investments Ltd., Empire Complex, 1st Floor, 414, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400013.

Better Photography is registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India under No. 69122. Network18 does not take any responsibility for loss or damage incurred or suffered by any subscriber of this magazine as a result of his/her accepting any invitation/offer published in this edition.

** Ownership of this magazine stands transferred from Infomedia18 Limited (Infomedia18) to Network18 Media & Investments Limited (Network18) in pursuance of the scheme of arrangement between Network18 and Infomedia18 and their respective shareholders and creditors, as approved by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi and the necessary approval of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is being obtained.*



EDITORIAL

"Crows just look forlorn, lost and without any purpose, for a change."



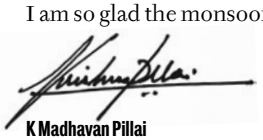
Those Photographic Monsoon Joys

The monsoons have always been my favourite season of the year. Bright, harsh summer skies become heavy, brooding and overcast, sometimes a soft, featureless white. In frantic cities like Mumbai, things slow down, and yet, become strangely eventful. Brilliant reflections appear on the outside of wet windshields. From the inside of taxicabs, supplementary lenses form by the thousands. Streaming rivulets adorn windowpanes, distorting the world outside, mixing up colours and shapes into fascinating, convulsing forms. Coconut palms standing in lines on empty, undulating coastal roads bend and whip in synchronicity, as though in an ethereal, rapturous, otherworldly dance. Some colours deepen. Others turn into magical pastel hues.

People seem to get more introspective, possibly because the rain Gods are a convenient excuse for all things wrong and right. Other Gods sit below dark, dripping *peepal* trees, appearing more content than usual, with no devotees running around in circles, asking for undue favours. At the exits of railway stations, travellers heading home wonder briefly, before reluctantly stepping into the rain with open umbrellas, and get drenched nevertheless. Somehow, street kids always know how to enjoy the rain the most... splashing with abandon into puddles of muddy water, laughing and yelling with glee. Crows just look forlorn, lost and without any purpose, for a change.

I thoroughly enjoy walking on the streets of the city with earphones on, when it rains. The music somehow blends with the rhythms of the falling drops, the odd bicycle messenger, black wires mosaicing 18 percent grey skies, a man with water dripping off his earlobes furiously fanning the embers within his umbrella covered *sigri*, roasting cobs of corn... definitive visuals, through spray-bejewelled lenses, with brilliant bokeh blurs, and impeccably timed, frozen moments, consummately captured, with the perfect background score to match. Could there be a better way to experience a movie than living in it?

I am so glad the monsoons are here. It changes everything.



K Madhavan Pillai
editor@betterphotography.in



Departure

by Ganesh Shankar

Moving away from factual documentation and developing an eye for subjective reality in wildlife photography was a long, evolutionary process for Ganesh Shankar, and one that has influenced many young photographers in recent years. For some time now, Ganesh's photography has been all about lending intangible concepts and complex emotions to his wildlife images. "Someday, I would like to associate twigs or blades of grass with nine different emotions," he says.

To know more about Ganesh's quest to combine art and wildlife photography
Turn to page 116

August 2014





SnapShots

26 **Book Review**
'Dharkan The Heart of a Nation' by Mobeen Ansari

30 **Look Who's Shooting**
Selvaprakash L

34 **Visual Musings**
by Shahidul Alam

35 **Visual Musings**
by Madhaviah Krishnan

ON THE COVER



PHOTOGRAPH: **RAJENDRA DHAGE**
DESIGN: **SANTOSH D KAMBLE**

GearGuide

38 TEST
Sony Alpha 77 II
How fast is the company's new APS-C flagship?



44 **Sigma DP3 Merrill**
Fantastic Foveon detail at a portrait focal length



50 **Pentax 16–50mm f/2.8**
Fast and weathersealed, but at a heavy cost

52 **Nissin i40 Flash**
The tiny flash with big performance



54 **Light Blaster**
Bizarrely creative slide projector

CellphonePhotography

58 TEST
Oppo Joy
How does this budget phone stack up?

60 **Instagram**
Is this the only photo app you will ever need?

63 CELLPHONE DIARIES
Amit Mehra on editing, associations and cinema

64 CELLPHONE TECHNIQUE
In Nature's Lap
How your cellphone can shoot nature's glory

66 CELLPHONE PROFILE
Prince Sarmah
A 19-year-old's evocative images from Assam



InFocus





BetterPictures

74 SHOOTING TECHNIQUE
Learning to Observe the Code of the Jungle
How to stick to the rules of wildlife photography

76 **Capturing Winged Beauties**
15 essential tips on bird photography

84 **All of Creation**
Go beyond the obvious & see wildlife differently

94 ON ASSIGNMENT
Street Prowl
Unusual portraits of animals

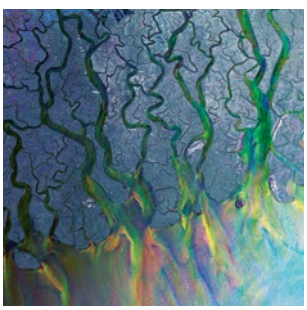
98 SPECIAL FEATURE
Starstruck in the Abode of the Gods

ShowCase

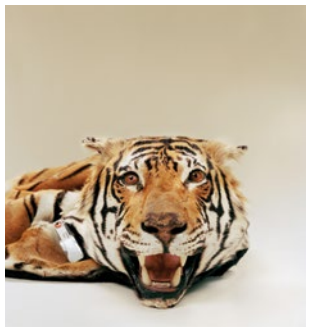
110 PROFILE
Karen Glaser
The beauty of swamps and springs

116 GREAT MASTERS
Ganesh Shankar
On nature as art

124 SPECIAL FEATURE
Our Beautiful Earth
A breathtaking view of Earth from outer space



130 PHOTOFEATURE
Stop and Look
The brutality behind the trade of rare animals



Regulars

FEEDBACK 12
READERS GALLERY 72
TIPS & TRICKS 104
Q & A 108
1000 WORDS 122
YOUR PICTURES 134
STORY BEHIND THE PICTURE 170

SONY
CAPTURE EVERY FRAME
With Sony Ultra High Speed SD Memory Cards Series



Feedback

Send your feedback to
New Era House, Opp Shamrao Vithal Bank, Mogul Lane,
Matunga (W), Mumbai-400 016,
Maharashtra, India.
Email: feedback@betterphotography.in


SHOOTING TECHNIQUE

A great food shot depends as much on the styling and composition as the lighting. Think of the surface as a sketchpad. Here, the raisins in the cup have served as soil, and the sprig of the herb looks like a sapling.

The Secret Ingredient

Your kitchen can help you cook up sumptuous and stimulating still life images. Ambarin Afsar tells you how to explore this box of goodies.

How often have you considered your kitchen as a location to shoot still life? You may want to hone your skills by doing something completely new and challenging. Or, you might simply have a passion for food. Your own kitchen can provide you with a wonderful training ground that keeps evolving. It's got raw material, delicious cooked things, utensils and spices. Here's how you can make the most of all these things.

Summon the Spices

In most traditional Indian kitchens, the spices are stored in a round box with several cups for each spice. You can arrange these on a textured wooden surface and keep a few raw condiments such as coriander, lemons, or even onions to add more context, and shoot a top-angle shot, with directional window light.

Remember that your choice of background will be based on the nature of your subject. Spices are earthy and exotic. This is why wooden surfaces or warm, earthy colours and fabrics embellish the nature of spices really well.

Style the Utensils and Kitchen Accessories

While the blanket term 'utensils' can sound clinical and boring, the kitchen houses many interesting implements—from apple corers to knives, whisks and beaters. If you are shooting more than one, then you can group them based on their function, nature (whether plastic, steel or wood), or even as per the recipe they are used in.

Backgrounds can vary from plain, solid colours and surfaces to textured ones or you could shoot them hanging on a nail rack against a wall.

Combine the Accessory with Its Use

An egg beater can be placed in a clear bowl with egg yolk and eggshells kept right beside it against a plain white background. A rolling pin can be styled with a round roti on the patra or platform, with sprinkles of flour.

Before it is Cooked

Usually, food is photographed after it is cooked. But the raw materials that go into

A simple collage of the cooking process can also make for a delicious-looking image. You can even arrange the pictures so that they follow the recipe.

Bounce an external flashgun off a white wall or the ceiling for to get soft, diffused light on the dish.

Window light is your best friend and makes food look natural. You don't need studio flash units. Just use the window as a giant light source.

BETTER PHOTOGRAPHY JULY 2014

'The Secret Ingredient' was a Shooting Technique that appeared in the July 2014 issue of the magazine. It featured tips on creatively photographing food items.

My Relationship with Food

Food and I share a very close connection. I guess it had its beginnings in the tiny bakery owned by my family. I remember spending my Sunday mornings with my grandparents, uncles and aunts, watching them cook and bake. Food also allowed me to entertain family and friends and helped me discover qualities about myself that I was previously unaware of.

So you can imagine how thrilled I was when I saw 'The Secret Ingredient' article in the July 2014 issue of *Better Photography*. My wife, who is a regular subscriber of the magazine, directed me to the feature.

For the longest time I have been contemplating about creating a food blog. But the process of making good-looking food photographs has kept me away from the dream. But I was quite inspired by the tips from the article, along with the vibrant photographs. However, I wish there were more suggestions focusing on the technical aspects of food photography. I would have liked to see more information about lighting.

Ankur Jain, *Bhopal, via email*

"Never before have I thought about using items around the house as subjects for my photograph. I have developed a new found respect for the mundane objects."

Rediscovering my Home

While most of the country is enjoying the rains, I find it to be a difficult time especially for photographers like me who enjoy shooting outdoors. I have never been able to enjoy photographing the monsoons because I find myself constantly worrying about keeping my gear dry. But thanks to the article in the July 2014 issue of *Better Photography*, 'Stuck At Home?' I have a great alternative that involves shooting subjects at home.

The article not only gave me new ideas for tabletop photography, but also revealed how we take common domestic articles for granted. It helped me view these everyday objects as beautiful subjects for my photographs.

Himanshu Sinha, *Mumbai, via email*

More Commercial Photography

I really appreciate that *Better Photography* is making an effort to feature photographic work belonging to genres across the spectrum. However, I feel that it has been quite a while since the magazine has featured any shooting technique or interview based on commercial photography.

There is so much that can be explored in this genre. Also there are several photographers who are in the pursuit of breaking into the fashion and advertising industry. Something as basic as the appropriate lighting setup or tips on creating a professional model portfolio, are articles that a lot of readers will be interested in.

Ranveer Singh, *Chandigarh, via email*

'A Portrait Affair' was published in the July 2014 issue. It was a Cellphone Shooting Technique on tips that you can employ to photograph conventional portraits.

Shooting Cellphone Portraits

Whenever I have used my cellphone to shoot portraits of friends, I never really paid attention to technicalities. Mostly because I never knew that there were things that needed to be considered.


CELLPHONE TECHNIQUE

Sometimes it's okay to move away from the traditional frame, both in terms of your subject and setting, as we do in the picture by Ria Jain.

A Portrait Affair

It is said that a person's portrait can give you a glimpse into his soul. Conchita Fernandes gives you a few tips to help you in this endeavour.

What was your first image? It would have probably been a photograph of a close friend or a dear family members, essentially a portrait. The cellphone has in fact made this experience even more easier and fun.

Moreover, it has reduced the still, posed quality that portraits are known for and have made them more personal.

Watch Out for the Background

Barring environmental portraits, it is advisable to keep the background of your subject plain and simple. You want to minimise the viewers being distracted by a colourful or patterned backdrop.

Ambient Light is Good Light

It is best that you stick to natural light as it is the easiest and the most non-fussy light that you can get your hands on. A window or a door will be your subject's best friend, where there is plenty of light streaming through.

How Close is too Close?

Owing to wide lenses in cameraphones, you have to be wary about how close you are to your subject. As a building block the phrase parallel to the person's face.

Look at what you have in the background and position your subject in a way that suits [illegible]

When you are out shooting, find interesting elements in the surroundings to put your subject in context. In a colourful urban city, frame your subject.

INSTAGRAM FROM INDIA

Twitter: twitter.com/betterphoto
Facebook: facebook.com/betterphotography
Youtube: youtube.com/betterphotoindia
Website: betterphotography.in
FIND US ONLINE!

Who is a Professional Photographer?

As part of my college assignment, I was asked to write about any topic of my interest, as long as it dealt with the subject of photography. This got me into thinking about something that I have often wondered about—the qualities that differentiates a photographer as a professional and as an amateur.

I did not want to answer this question on my own and decided to go around looking for it. I deliberately decided to stay away from anyone related to the photography industry. Instead, I chose to focus on people like my parents or neighbours, whose opinions I think largely go undocumented.

While I received a variety of answers, I couldn't help but notice the repetition of one singular thought—that a professional photographer is someone who can afford the latest and most expensive equipment, in addition to having his own studio. If you haven't reached this threshold, then apparently you haven't really achieved much in the photography industry.

I must admit that I wasn't entirely surprised with the answers. It just amazed me to think that a large number of people view photography as a money-making profession, and define it by the quantity and quality of equipment you possess.

With cameras and lenses getting even more accessible and affordable, does this mean that we will soon turn into a society filled with professionals? People also fail to recognise that the camera is not what makes you a good photographer. Anybody can make pictures and put them up on the internet or even have them published.

Vishal Kumar, *Mumbai, via email*

Letter of the Month

Write in to *Better Photography* with your feedback, and if your letter wins the Letter of the Month, you will get a Envie Speedster charger!



"I never knew that something as simple as the distance between the cameraphone and the subject can make a difference to the photograph."

'A Portrait Affair' which appeared in the July 2014 issue of *Better Photography* changed that. It surprised me that something as simple as the distance between the cameraphone and the subject can make a world of a difference to a photograph. I was also not aware of apps like AfterFocus that help in adding the most sought after depth-of-field effect to images. I am definitely going to make use of the tips!

Najma Haider, *Lucknow, via post*

Associating Beauty with Ruins

On October 2013, I came across a very interesting article on Dailymail's website. The feature was about an abandoned home dubbed the Red Dress Manor in the United Kingdom. The remnants of the house were left untouched since its owner passed away in the 1970s, and the article featured images that were hauntingly captivating.

The Cellphone Portrait 'Ruin Aesthetic' appeared in the July 2014 issue of the magazine. It showcased images of the interiors of abandoned structures.



Since then, I have been drawn to urban decay themed photographs.

The same feelings were evoked when I read Feyza Ceylan's Cellphone Profile 'Ruin Aesthetic', in the July 2014 issue of **BP**. I liked how she compared the abandoned buildings to watercolour paintings. I think that most of us have trained our minds to constantly improve and beautify things around us, when, in fact, these objects are best left alone.

Malini Nayar, *Chennai, via email*

Restarting Last Lecture Series?

It has been a long time since *Better Photography* conducted one of its Last Lecture meetups. I not only benefitted from learning about photographers who I did not know about, but it also gave me a chance to interact with them. Moreover, the lectures allowed me to connect with the **BP** team. I would request you to initiate the talks soon.

Sirish Gupta, *Mumbai, via post*

Has Suppu Vanished Forever?

What has happened to the cute curly-haired Suppu? It has being quite a while since she has made an appearance in the magazine or in a PocketGuide.

I used to look forward to reading her humourous take on photography, and I think that she even brought some comic relief to the magazine. Please reintroduce her or even better, feature her in a first of its kind photography comic book!

Vipul Hari, *Pune, via post*

SnapShots

WHAT'S NEW

Tamron 28–300mm f/3.5-6.3 Di VC PZD for Full Frame Cameras



The 28–300mm f/3.5-6.3 Di VC PZD is made for full-frame DSLRs. This lens comes equipped with their Piezo Drive for a quieter AF, and also with Vibration Compensation. The lens comes in a more compact body and is priced at Rs. 67,500.

Tamron Releases Two Lenses for Mirrorless Segment



The 14–150mm f/3.5-5.8 Di III is the company's first all-in-one zoom for Micro Four Thirds cameras. The lens gives a 28–300mm equivalent focal length and is priced at Rs. 48,000.

The 18–200mm f/3.5-6.3 Di III VC lens for Canon's M mount and offers a 29–320mm equivalent focal length and is priced at Rs. 34,500.

Xiaomi Mi 3 and Xiaomi 10400mAh and 5200mAh Power Banks



The Mi 3 features an 13MP, f/2.2 rear camera, a 2MP front camera and a 5-inch Full HD display. The phone comes with a 2.3GHz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 800 processor and is priced at Rs. 14,999. It will ship with their version of the Android 4.3 called the MIUI version 5. Their 10400mAh and 5200mAh power banks are also available for purchase.

Amazon Fire Phone



The phones has a 13MP, f/2 rear camera and a 2.1MP front camera. It features a dedicated camera button called Firefly and is priced at USD 649 (approx. Rs. 39,000). It features four LED camera on the front corners to display a 3D-like dynamic perspective interface. Fire has a heavily modified Android OS. Users will be limited to the apps available on Amazon and not all apps in the Google Play Store.

Sohrab Hura Joins Magnum Photos as a Nominee



Kosuke Okahara

Young Delhi-based photographer, Sohrab Hura, has been selected as a Nominee to Magnum Photos.

This makes the 32-year-old the first Indian photographer in 37 years to be nominated to the prestigious agency. Magnum officially announced the nomination after they held their Annual General Meeting from the 26–29 June.

Better Photography congratulates Sohrab for this remarkable achievement, considering that the last Indian to achieve the same was Raghu Rai.

This selection reflects the ongoing shift in Magnum from an editorial documentary aesthetic, to also including local, personal narratives.

When contacted, Sohrab seemed overwhelmed by the announcement. He said, "I was woken by Olivia (Arthur) who stepped out of the meeting to tell me about the nomination. I'm not sure what this means for me, as yet. It's nice and I guess I also feel a bit awkward, but I've switched off now to get back to my photos."

Sohrab has studied to be an economist at the Delhi School of Economics. He took up photography in 2001 and really began forging his identity in 2005.

Besides Sohrab's nomination, Moies Saman has been made a member, while Bieke Depoorter and Jérôme Sessini have been made Associates.



Sohrab Hura

> "I like to think of photographing as a two way act of respect. Respect for the medium by letting it do what it does best– describe. And respect for the subject by describing it as it is."

GARRY WINOGRAND (1928–1984)

Garry Winogrand was known for his manic shooting pace. The street photographer shot almost one and a half million photographs in his lifetime. In his own words, he described a good night as "thirty-five rolls." He was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship Award twice, to travel around America and explore media events and the effects it had on society. He died at the age of 56 and left behind 4,32,000 previously unseen images.



Image Source: www.washingtonpost.com

WHAT'S NEW

Adobe Brings Lightroom Mobile and Photoshop Mix to iOS

Adobe announced Lightroom Mobile for the iPhone ad iPad. This will allow users to edit and organise both DSLR and cellphone images on the devices. These images can be synced with Creative Cloud and be edited on Lightroom 5 on desktops.

Adobe Photoshop Mix is a free iOS app for iPad and offers non-destructive editing and offers Content Aware Fill, Shake Reduction and the Upright (perspetive correction) tools. To peform these hardware intensive tasks, the app uploads images to Cloud servers, where they are edited and sent back to your device.

Photoshop Express for Windows Phone

Adobe announced Photoshop Express for Windows Phone bringing the editing tools previously enjoyed only by Android and iOS users. The app offers basic compositional tools, as well as different kinds of filters.

Huawei Honor 6



The Huawei Honor 6 features a 13MP, f/2 rear camera with a 1/3-inch Sony IMX214 BSI sensor and a 5MP, f/2.4 front facing camera. The phone has a Full HD 5-inch display. It runs on Huawei's Kirin 920 octa-core chipset and offers 3GB RAM and users can choose from a 16 or 32GB storage with microSDupport.

Sony Xperia C3



The Xperia C3 has a 5MP front camera and a front-facing LED flash, targetted at selfie lovers. It also has an 8MP rear camera and 5.5-inch Full HD display and a quad-core processor.

Asim Rafiqui Joins Noor Photo Agency



Image Source: www.pdnonline.com

Noor, a photo collective based in Amsterdam, recently welcomed two new members—Asim Rafiqui and Spanish photographer Sebastian Liste.

48-year-old Asim Rafiqui is an independent photojournalist and has photographed several important projects around the world. He was a Fulbright Fellow to India where he explored themes like nationalism, secularism and confronts the ideas of ethnic, cultural and social identities in his project, *The Idea of India*. His recent work tackles the metting out of justice in Pakistan, through portraits and first person testimonies. He has also received a Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting grant to document the impact of Israel's closure on the Gaza strip on its residents.

Brazil based Sebastian Liste has been the recipient of numerous grants including the Magnum Emergency Fund grant.



Asim Rafiqui

Nikon Announces Speedier 36.3MP D810 Camera



Nikon has officially unveiled the D810 with a 36.3MP sensor. The camera is a successor to both the Nikon D800 and the D800E.

The D810 borrows the new Expeed 4 processing engine and has the same autofocus improvements that were seen in the D4S. The camera does not have a low-pass filter and the mirror mechanism has been redesigned. Also, to reduce any potential camera shake during Live View, there is an electronic first-curtain shutter option.

Other features include a faster burst rate of 7fps in the DX mode, 5fps overall, 1080/60p support, a Flat Picture Control mode and improved battery life. The camera is priced at Rs. 1,99,950 for the body only.

Amazon's Photo Contest for Independence Day

Amazon, in association with *Better Photography* are conducting a contest for Independence Day, *India Through My Lens*. The contest will run till 15 August and winners will be announced on 19 August—World Photography Day. The judge will be revealed via **BP**'s social media channels.

The first, second and third prize winners will receive Amazon Gift Cards worth Rs. 50,000, Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 20,000 respectively. Also, five consolation prize winners will receive Amazon Gift Cards worth Rs. 5000. You can submit your entries for the contest at *www.amazon.in/cameras*

Shannon Jensen Wins 2014 Inge Morath Award

American photographer Shannon Jensen has been awarded the 2014 Inge Morath Award. She received USD 5000 (approx. Rs. 3,00,000) for completing her project *A Long Walk*, which revolves around the refugees from the Blue Nile state in Sudan. Her photographs depict the shoes of these refugees, who have been driven from their homes due to conflict.



Shannon Jensen

Through her images she asks the viewers to place themselves in the shoes of these people, who left their homes with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. The accompanying text tells us their story and the distance they walked to get to safety.

Each year, the Inge Morath Foundation and Magnum Photos honours a woman photographer under the age of 30, to support a completed long-term documentary project. The foundation was created in the memory of the Austrian Magnum Photos member Inge Morath.

EVENTS

28 July–23 August

Renewable Pleasures: The India Chapter

Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai



Esther Brinkman

Jewellery designer Esther Brinkman's photographs of her ornate creations, explore the intricate relationships between an object and the body.

29 July–20 August

Volunteers Engagement Across the World

Café Zoé, Mumbai



Jérémie Lusseau

The exhibition organised by Alliance Française showcases the daily work of volunteers and workers across the world working for *France Volontaires*. The photographs are by Jérémie Lusseau, an international solidarity volunteer.

2 August–31 August

Art for Public

Connaught Place, New Delhi

Art for Public will feature Kulwant Roy's historical images of the Indian Freedom Movement. The exhibition will commemorate 67 years of India's independence.

6 August–11 August

German Cities and Landscapes

Max Mueller Bhavan, Bengaluru



German Cities and Landscapes is an exhibition that showcases the cities and the German countryside. The photographs depict the various aspects of life in Germany such as the leisure activities and the historical structures.

PRO TALK

Colour Calibration is a process where the image source, monitor and output (printer) are calibrated to use the same colour standard such as Adobe RGB, sRGB. This ensures the range of colours remain the same when viewed on a monitor and when printed.

Project 365 to Document Tiruvannamalai

Ekalokam Trust for Photography (EtP) is organsing a year long public art photography project, documenting the district of Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu.

Project 365, the brainchild of noted photographer Abul Kalam Azad, will see 25 young photographers, documenting the region and record the changing landscape. They will spend a year photographing concepts and themes of their own choice.

Eminent photographers like Sadanand Menon, Ram Rahman, Dinesh Khanna, Aditya Arya, Waswo X Waswo, Thiery Cardon, Ramu Aravindan, Alex Fernandes, P A Madhavan, Ramesh Varma and R R Srinivasan will be supporting the project.

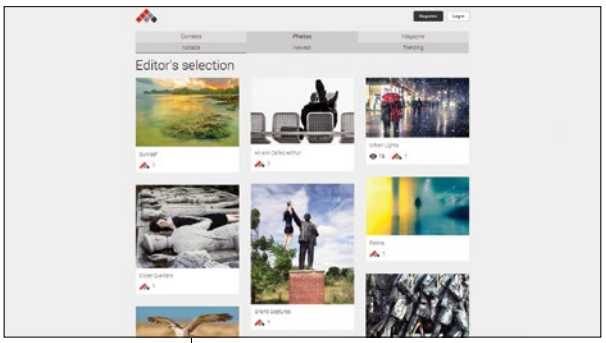
The aim of Project 365 is to document the historical town that is home to a diverse selection of cultures. "This is a social project, where we wish to critically map the culture of Thiruvananthamalai. Contemporary art needs to be owned and preserved by the public," says Azad.



Abul Kalam Azad/ EtP Archives

In the past, important photographers like P R S Mani, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Eliot Elisofon, G Govind Welling and others have photographed Tiruvannamalai. The project hopes to recreate the historical significance of those carefully preserved images.
To help the project you can contact EtP at *+919487956405* or email *ekalokam@gmail.com*

CALL FOR ENTRIES



The winning images from the Landscape Photo Contest will be displayed at the London Photo Festival in October 2014.

The Landscape Photo Contest

The Competition: The Landscape Photo Contest in and the London Photo Festival aim to showcase the best landscape photographs from around the world.
Prizes: The winner's images will be exhibited at the London Photo Festival, 2014.
Website: www.award.io/contest.php?id=38
Deadline: 22 August

Neel Dongre Awards/Grants for Excellence in Photography

The Competition: The Neel Dongre Awards in association with the India Photo Archive Foundation invites photographers to submit their photographs from an ongoing or finished body of work, in any genre of photography. The applicants are also required to submit a written proposal of their work along with their images.
Prizes: Winners will receive a grant from a corpus fund of Rs. 50 lakhs.
Website: www.indiaphotoarchive.org/-/home
Deadline: 31 August

Monochrome Awards

Competition: The awards encourages photographers to send in their best monochromatic pictures.
Category: Under the Professional and Amateur categories—Abstract, Advertising, Architecture, Fashion, Fine Art, Landscapes, Nude, People, Photojournalism, Photomanipulation, Portrait and Wildlife.
Prize: The winner of the Professional section will win USD 2000 (approx. Rs. 1,20,000) and the winner of Amateur section will receive USD 1000 (approx. Rs. 60,000).
Entry Free: USD 15 (approx. Rs. 900) for the Professional category and USD 10 (approx. Rs. 600) for the Amateur category.
Website: www.monoawards.com
Deadline: 31 August

The 2014 CGAP Photo Contest

The Competition: The contest is looking for photographs that depict how financial services improve the day-to-day lives of underprivileged people.
Prizes: The Grand Prize winner will receive a USD 2000 (approx. Rs. 1,20,000) gift certificate for camera equipment and their images will be displayed at Times Square, New York.
Website: www.photocontest.cgap.org/cgap
Deadline: 8 October

EVENTS

7 August–28 August

Sidhpur: Time Present Time Past

Tasveer Gallery, Bengaluru



Sebastian Cortés

Sidhpur: Time Present Time Past by Sebastian Cortés is a series on the Bohra Islamic community. It explores the traditional habitats and domestic spaces in the small town of Sidhpur, Gujarat.

9 August

Pixpective: Photo Courses

Mumbai



Anoushka Nazareth

Fashion photographer Sohil Lalani will teach students the basics of photography and Photoshop. The course will cover everything about a fashion shoot—from conception with a stylist to the execution of an actual shoot. The course fee is Rs. 15,000. *To register, visit www.pixpective.in*

12 August–25 August

Kaleidoscope

StoryLTD, Mumbai

Tasveer and Vacheron Constantin bring Kaleidoscope, a selection from Ram Shergill's body of fashion photography. His style combines fashion, theatre and performance in his contemporary images.

18 August–24 August

Commemoration of World War I

Max Muller Bhavan, Mumbai



Commemoration of World War I is curated by Alliance Française de Bombay. The photography exhibition will depict the involvement and the lives of Indian soldiers during World War I.

PRO TALK

Aspect Ratio refers to the different types of shapes or formats of the image produced by a camera. The formula is derived by dividing the width of the image by its height.

Adobe Updates for Photoshop CC and Lightroom

Adobe announced its latest version Photoshop CC (2014). One of Photoshop's new features is the much anticipated camera Shake Reduction tool, which was announced two years ago.

Additionally, tools like Path Blur and Spin Blur have been added too. Also added are the enhanced Content Aware technology and Perspective Warp.

Similarly, Lightroom has also received significant updates such as an Advanced Healing Brush tool to remove unwanted elements, and the Upright tool which automatically analyses whether the image is tilted or skewed.

Other features that have been added include Smart Previews and better Noise Reduction capability.

Bresson's The Decisive Moment to be Republished

Legendary photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson's *The Decisive Moment* was originally released in 1952 in French with the title *Images à la Sauvette*. The English translation of the book was published by Simon and Schuster.



The new edition is a verbatim recreation by publisher Steidl and will be published in October. The 10x14 photo book features Bresson's best work during the period of 1932–1952.

Earlier, obtaining a used copy of the book meant spending close to USD 500 (approx. Rs. 30,000). The only new addition is a booklet with an essay by curator Clément Chéroux, on the history of *The Decisive Moment*. The book is available for pre-order on *www.amazon.com* for USD 125 (approx. Rs. 7500).

THE MONTH THAT WAS

Photography Exhibition: Invisible Cities

Invisible Cities was a photography exhibition held on 23 June–12 July in Vadhera Art Gallery, New Delhi. The group exhibition featured five photographers Atul Bhalla, Gauri Gill, Sunil Gupta, Malini Kochupillai and Asim Waqif. The photographs were about the complicated relationships of individuals and their cities. Their stories are of spaces and people that are hidden underneath the hustle and bustle of the city, the worlds that lie in the shadows unnoticed.

The Cube Gallery's Opening Exhibition: Efface

The Cube Gallery held its opening exhibition on 28 June in Moira, Goa. The exhibition consisted of more than 30 portraits by Alok Johri. The photographs were an effort to question gender and identity and asks us to reposition and re-imagine the world we live in. *Efface* was Alok Johri's first solo exhibition. It was curated by Apurva Kulkarni and visualised by Satinder Bir Singh and Carolina Paez, the gallerists and owners of The Cube Gallery. The exhibition was open till 10 July.



Ritesh Uttamchandani

***Efface* also held an artist talk by Alok Johri in The Cube Gallery.**

Photography Exhibition: Rebuilding Uttarakhand

Oxfam India and Select Citywalk held a photography exhibition from 30 June–4 July. The images by Sharbendu De depicted the people in Uttarakhand, a year after the horrific landslides killed and displaced over 10,000 people. Oxfam India has been working with the people of the affected region to rebuild their lives. This exhibition was an effort to depict their stories. Sharbendu De has documented the crisis since it began last year.

Photography Exhibition: How Safe Am I?

On 12 July, girls from Vacha Trust exhibitied their photographs under the theme *How Safe Am I?* The exhibition was held at the All India Balkan Ji Bari, in Mumbai. The exhibition dealt with the issues that girls from impoverished families have to face every day like having to navigate unsafe spaces as they make their way to school or work. They have to confront threats from men, failing infrastructure and health concerns—threats that are both real and perceived. These photographs represent their voices and perspectives. The exhibition *How Safe Am I?* came after a set of photograph workshops that the girls had attended.

INDUSTRY VOICE

"We plan to continue all three models of the RX100 family."



Shigeki Ishizuka
SVP, Corporate Executive Deputy President, Sony Corporation

We recently announced the RX100 III after the success of both the RX100 and RX100 II. It is priced at Rs. 54,990. Our engineering division was faced with the challenge of keeping the size of RX100 III as small as its predecessors and including an in-built viewfinder, a feat that we successfully managed to accomplish. Additionally, the camera has an aperture of f/2.8 at the telephoto end and we have put in a tilting LCD as well... quite a design success! We will be selling all the three models of the RX100, to appeal to different kinds of users at different price points.

We have also released the Alpha 7S priced at Rs. 1,54,000. With the Alpha 7 and Alpha 7R, we were aiming to provide the best resolution possible at this point in time. However, with the 12MP Alpha 7S, we have concentrated our energy in making the low light sensitivity better. Considering how much full frame sensors have developed recently, our deliberate decision of keeping the resolution low, not only helps give the best possible quality in 4k video, but will also appeal to people who like to shoot in low light without flash.

For the E-mount line up of cameras and lenses go, we are working on enhancing the gear for the full frame cameras. While we launched five lenses last year, we plan to introduce five more lenses in the year of 2014. These will include lenses for video enthusiasts as well.

— As told to Siddhi Desai

Danube Revisted: The Inge Morath Truck Project

Nine women photographers are undertaking a travelling photography exhibition which will feature the work of Magnum photographer Inge Morath. *The Danube Revisited: The Inge Morath Truck Project* will trace a route along the river Danube in Europe, a region that was very dear to her.

The main objective of the project is to support and bring awareness about the under-represented female presence in the documentary photography field. The photographs will be exhibited inside a converted truck, along with artist talks. Photographers Olivia Arthur, Emily Schiffer, Lurdes R Basolí, Claire Martin, Claudia Guadarrama, Ami Vitale, Jessica Dimmock, Mimi Chakarova and Kathryn Cook are all former recipients of the Inge Morath Award.



Inge Morath



Image Source: www.facebook.com/danuberevisited

Fotohof Gallery will produce a book that will feature Inge Morath's work as well as the new photographs created on the road trip.

BBC Opens Visual Journalism Training Resources



Image Source: www.bbc.co.uk/academy

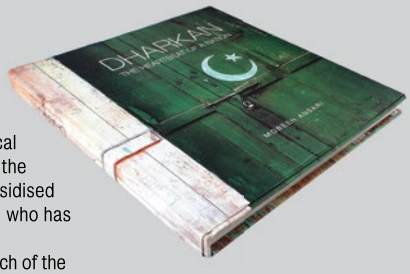
The BBC College of Journalism, a part of the BBC Academy, made their training resources available to the public.

The professional videos and guides have been created by the BBC team. Additionally, the website is available in 15 languages including Hindi and covers the essentials of visual reporting. You can access the resources at *www.bbc.co.uk/academy*

BOOK REVIEW

Title: Dharkan The Heart of a Nation
Authors: Mobeen Ansari
ISBN: 978-969-9843-00-6
Publisher: The Circuit
Price: PKR 4000 (approx Rs. 2435)

The Many Moods of a Nation



Photographer Mobeen Ansari strives to show us a different side of Pakistan, and succeeds for the most part. He has managed to photograph some of the most iconic people from Pakistan and has covered quite the spectrum. Right from former cricketer Wasim Akram to Sufi singer Abida Parveen and writer Bapsi Sidhwa to a local Parsi woman, the book is beautifully produced. There are moving stories of hope like the one of Parveen Saeed, whose organisation provides food for the poor at a highly subsidised rate, Bibi Kai from the Kalash Valley preserving ancient traditions and Salima Hashmi, who has shaped art in Pakistan in a major way.

That being said, there were moments in the book where the stories included too much of the photographer's personal account. He spoke of how and why he photographed them, rather than letting the personality of his subjects shine through. Some of the portraits themselves are lovely, like the ones of classical dancer, Sheema Kermani and hockey player Sohail Abbas.

By the end of the book I felt that the photographs could have been given some breathing space and the text could have been toned down. However, the photobook gives you a good insight into some of the most interesting Pakistani personalities today.

— Written by Natasha Desai

SNAPSHOTS

WEBSITE REVIEW



www.photonaturalist.net

The beauty of nature is often the most challenging to capture. PhotoNaturalist, established by Steve Berardi and Vic Berardi is a great source to help one appreciate nature photography.

With regular tips and updates and an article posted every week, this site is bound to enrich one's nature photography skills. It also provides information about postprocessing techniques and gear.

It even has widgets that offer sun and moon phase calendars, weather forecasts and precipitation analysis. These tools and more are meant to help photographers plan an outdoor shoot, enabling them to see how the light will fall on the land, in any weather and location on earth.

It has ebooks by the site creators and reviews of books on photography. They also like to share their philosophies about photographing and respecting nature. PhotoNaturalist is a comprehensive nature photography website tailor made for both photography and nature enthusiasts.

— Siddhi Desai

SOFTWARE OF THE MONTH



Chasys Draw IES

Chasys Draw IES is a suite of applications with a versatile range of tools and plug-ins developed by John Paul Chacha. It has an image viewer, image editor with animation, icon editor, file converter, CD label maker amongst other features. It is designed to take advantage of multi-core processors and touch-screens.

It is not a very heavy application as it takes very little of your computer space. It goes beyond regular screenshots and enables users to take videos of their desktop activity. It also has the feature of stacking images to generate HDR photographs.

Besides these additions, it has the usual features of cloning, painting, cropping, colour correcting, skewing and adding effects to images.

With the necessary adjustment and photo effects, it is on par with more renowned editing softwares. Keeping in mind the user feedback, it is also regularly updated every three to six weeks. It may not have a very attractive interface but it's a very resourceful photo editing software. You can find the software at *www.jpchacha.com/chasysdraw/*

—Siddhi Desai

Nazi's Ideal Aryan Photo Featured a Jewish Baby



Image Source:www.dailymail.co.uk

The picture of 'the perfect Aryan baby' published in 1935, in a Nazi propaganda magazine, was recently revealed to be of a Jewish baby—Hessy Taft.

At the time, Hessy 's family had her picture made by a photographer in Berlin. Unknown to them, the photographer submitted ten of his best baby photographs to a competition held by the Third Reich. Hessy's picture was selected by Josef Goebbels, the propaganda minister.

On discovering the picture on the front cover of he magazine, *Sonne in Haus* (Sun in House), the family lived in constant fear of being discovered.

However, they left Germany safely, taking their secret with them. Hessy revealed her story only recently, nearly 80 years later.

Android's Latest Update to Allow RAW Support

Google announced the latest major Android update, the Android L, which will be available to users later this year. This iteration offers a range of APIs for Camera 2, which will benefit serious cellphone photographers, like RAW support. This means that camera apps will be able to shoot DNG images, as well as JPEGs and PNGs.

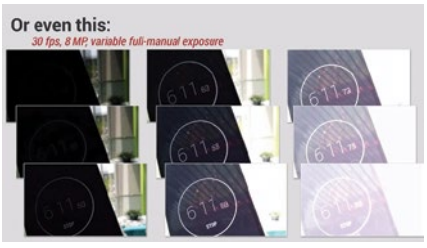


Image Source: Google I/O 2014

The Camera 2 update includes the burst mode option which will allow users to choose the frame per second.

Another feature of the Camera 2 API is the inclusion of the burst mode. Camera 2 is also set to be much faster. Images will be captured as per the hardware capability of the phone and not the limitation of the OS. Users will also have full manual control with tone map curves, metering modes, auto-exposure, pre-capture AE amongst other features.

Photoshop Blamed for Luis Suarez's Bite Marks



Image Source: www.time.com /Tom Gentile/Reuters

Italian player Giorgio Chiellini reacts after the bite.

During the recent FIFA World Cup match, controversial football player Luis Suarez from Uruguay, bit Italian player Giorgio Chiellini on the shoulder. Due to this, he was banned for nine games and four months from any football related activity.

In a bizarre twist, the Uruguay Football Association are defending him by claiming that the images of the bite marks were manipulated on Photoshop and spread over the media.

However, this is his third bite incident and the second time in a row that Luis Suarez has exited the World Cup disgracefully.

Apple Bids Goodbye to iPhoto and Aperture



With the upcoming update of the OSX Yosemite later this year, Apple is going to cease the development of two of its image editing softwares—Aperture and iPhoto.

The software that is going to take their place is Photos, which was introduced during the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference keynote speech on 2 June. Since there has been no update to Aperture since 2010, this may be a welcome change.

LOOK WHO'S SHOOTING

Selvaprakash Lakshmanan



"The protests are honest, but sadly the government doesn't listen."

Journeying Around India's Troubled Coasts

Selvaprakash Lakshmanan started his project in 2008 where he initially documented the clashes between the Indian fisherman and the Sri Lanka navy.

But this human rights issue transformed to one focusing on environmental issues. "*Life in Troubled Waters* was a transformation—the more places I visited, the more glimpses I caught of the problems of the fishermen," Lakshmanan says.

His project is mainly self funded. He journeys for hours to document the adversities of the fishermen. On one of his trips to Idinthakarai, Tamil Nadu, he photographed residents protesting outside a nuclear power facility being built on the shores. He recollects a fisherman telling him how either the radiation or the ignorance of the authorities would kill them. He mentions, "The protests are honest, but sadly the government doesn't listen."

Until now he has covered the coast from Chennai to Gokarna. He plans to cover all 4400 miles of India's coastline and produce a book highlighting the plight of the fishermen. You can follow the project on *www.facebook.com/LifeinTroubledWaters*

— Written by Siddhi Desai

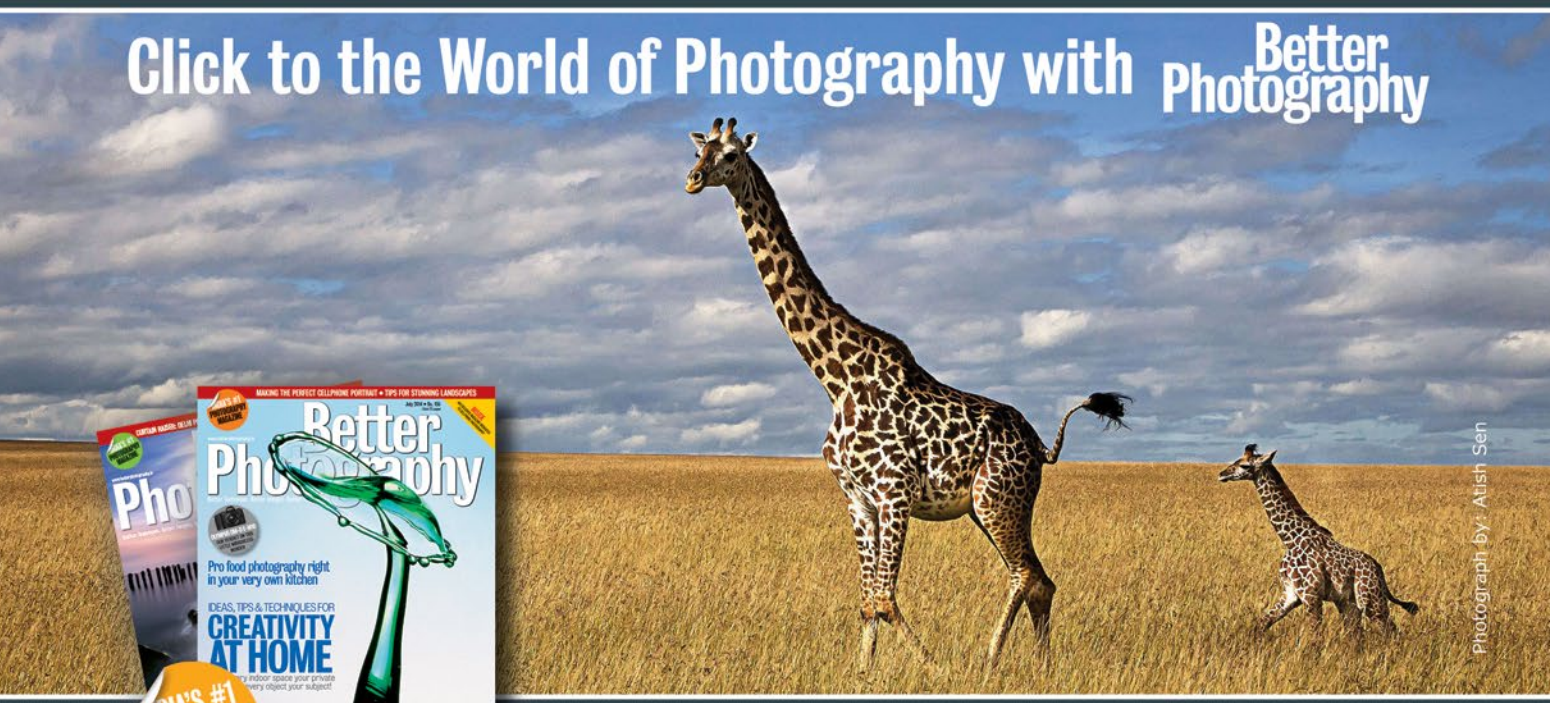


Selvaprakash Lakshmanani

He talks about how the unscientific constructions of industries is eating up the land across the shores and the resulting soil erosion is washing away the homes of the fishermen.

Network 18

Click to the World of Photography with Better Photography



Shooting stunning pictures is now so simple. Everything you ever wanted to know about photography is here. Tips, tricks, techniques, news, views, reviews, assignments, brilliant pictures... and more!

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

GIFT OFFER

1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION
Cover Price: ₹ 1,800
YOU PAY: ₹ **1,450**
YOU SAVE: ₹ **350**
YOU GET: **SLING CAMERA BAG**



3 YEARS SUBSCRIPTION
Cover Price: ₹ 5,400
YOU PAY: ₹ **4,100**
YOU SAVE: ₹ **1,300**
YOU GET: **BENRO TRIPOD**



TO SUBSCRIBE

To Subscribe Better Photography
SMS **BP** to **51818**

eshop
Magazine Subscription Made Simple
log on to
http://eshop.infomedia18.in

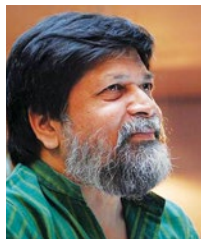
Digital Edition Now Available On MAGZTER
www.magzter.com

Subscription Department:
Network18 Media & Investments Ltd- Publishing,
New Era House, Mogul Lane, Matunga (W), Opp. Magnet Mall, Mumbai - 400016
Call : 022 43484760 / 43484562 • **Fax** : 022 24366718 • **Email** : customercare@network18publishing.com

Terms & Conditions: Your subscription will start from the next available issue. No cancellation will be entertained after commencement of the subscription. Network18 Media & Investments Limited reserves the right to extend, cancel or discontinue the offer. Though Network18 Media & Investments Limited. will take utmost care to dispatch the copies safely. Network18 Media & Investments Limited does not take the responsibility of any postal delays and damaged copies dispatched. Gifts will be dispatched 6-8 weeks after processing of your subscription. Gifts are subject to availability. Network18 Media & Investments Limited has got rights to change the gifts without prior information. The Image is for representation purposes only. Actual model, colors may vary. For more information contact Network18 Media & Investments Limited subscription department. The company at its absolute discretion and without further notice may discontinue, publication of the magazine and in the event of such discontinuation, we shall refund the subscription amount for the unexpired term only, without any interest, cause and consequence.

VISUAL MUSINGS

Happy's New Year



Shahidul Alam

She was baleful, half a tear welling on her eyes. "No one ever comes back," she said. I had no way of knowing when I might be back. I hugged her tight as she sat on my lap, but my words were not convincing. She had been promised many times before and knew not to be too wishful. The name 'Happy' seemed a difficult one to use to describe her. Yet minutes before Happy Akhter Nodi and I had been playing, laughing, teasing one another. She was probably around 10. She didn't really know, and I couldn't really tell.

Her mother had brought her over to the Sonar Bangla Children's home three years ago. Happy had wanted to come herself. She wanted to study. To become a doctor. To serve people. But parting had been sad. Her mother had come to see her on previous new year days, but this time she'd rung to say she couldn't make it. There was too much work over the holidays. Happy understood, but it didn't make it any easier. She wanted to go to the fair, to buy toys, to dress up in a new sari. She wanted her mum. Happy was spunky, bubbly, naughty, and dying to be loved. I tried to tell her that her mother might come another day. We both knew I was pretending.

She was being protective of me. Making sure the other kids didn't hassle me too much. She became my self appointed muse. The poem by Kazi Nazrul I was trying to sit and translate wasn't easy and they were all impatient. There was a children's poem in the book, which she remembered from school, but even that didn't hold her attention. We both knew I would be leaving soon. The sun was coming down and I was waiting for that sweet light when I would photograph Putul (an older girl in the home) in the green paddy fields. I was there on an assignment, and needed to get back to work. I would then go back to Dhaka, and perhaps out of her life for ever.

"You will ring tomorrow, or I'll never talk to you again." This had been the biggest threat we knew as children. "I'll never talk to you again." I nodded, not trusting myself to speak. It would be new year's day, and it gave me some chance to make amends. She snuggled up to me and said, "You have to give me a name. One just for us." Despite her sadness, the name Happy had seemed very apt. She was a happy child. They must have given her the name knowingly. Her mother's name Adori Begum, had also perhaps been a name she had been given. A woman who provided love. When I'd photographed Happy before, she was being her mischievous self. She'd put on a shawl around her head and looked much older than she was. Now she looked smaller than her age, and very fragile.

As the light went down, we went to the paddy fields together, holding hands all the way. Happy jealously warding off the other kids. The light was beautiful and Putul glowed in the green paddy. Then it was time to go. As we walked back she guided me through the bracken, protecting me from every thorn. As we came to a clearing, she looked me over and untangled a rubber band dangling from my pouch. It was a worn band, left over from an old baggage tag at some airport. "I'll keep this," she said. "Now, give me my name." I whispered back "Anmona". It was all I could think of. This wistful girl, with the bright eyes, full of sadness, suddenly seemed so far away.

We said our goodbyes and as all the children rushed to hug and kiss and wave goodbye, Happy stayed back. Silently, she repeated the word 'Anmona'. As the car moved out of the gate I could see her through the dust. She was holding on to a worn ragged baggage tag.

1st Baishakh 1414
Bangla New Year's Day



Shahidul Alam

The portrait of Putul never got used in the end as the book layout required a vertical frame. The close-up of Happy has stayed in my imaginary family album. Many a times, my thoughts have wandered back to Happy. Did she still have that little girl charm now that she was a young woman? Had the realities of life taken their toll on her? Did she still have that baggage tag? I remembered another little girl, Shanika, I had met after the tsunami in Sri Lanka. She would send me letters at Christmas. I had gone back to see her once, but though I'd tried to trace her, I had never written back. Eventually her letters, too, dried up. I remembered the mental patients at Hemayetpur who had hoped I would trace their relatives for them. As photojournalists we convince ourselves that we care. That we would visit, only if we had the time. But our priorities change and while their images might bring us awards and recognition, the Christmas cards generally flow in only one direction. BP

Photographer, curator, writer, activist, and one of the most influential opinion makers in the medium—Shahidul Alam is a man who dons many garbs. His work has singlehandedly transformed the photographic scene in Bangladesh. His writings, photographs and opinion pieces can be found at www.shahidulnews.com.

VISUAL MUSINGS

An Hour With a King



Madhaviah Krishnan

He was in the water when I saw him first, sitting on the river-bed with his head and shoulders alone showing above the surface, ten yards from the grassy bank. He got up and waded slowly to the land, and as he emerged from the water his gigantic bulk was progressively revealed. This was quite the biggest elephant I had ever seen, and one of the oldest.

Afterwards, by measuring his footprints on the firm soil (twice the circumference of the forefoot gives the height to within an inch or two), I computed his height at about nine and a half feet, but even then I knew that I had seen elephants that were taller, and those with far finer tusks. But for sheer mass and power of build, this tusker was supreme.

He was long and massively round in the barrel, and the muscles of his forelimbs had a biconvex bulge in profile; the trunk was almost as thick as a muckna's [tuskless elephant], and the head big; and on his face and ears and trunk there was a fine pink speckling, the very tip of his trunk being almost entirely pink. A true 'koomeriah' if ever there was one, the finest and most-prized type of elephant in the arbitrary, indigenous system of grading.

Quite obviously he was a patriarch, though his age did not manifest itself in any enfeebled, decadent feature—in fact, what was patently impressive about him was his magnificent might. But in spite of the mass and muscle, the almost fluid coordination of his movements and his easy, reachy stride, the marks of time were upon him unmistakably. The turn over of the top of the ears and their ragged edges, the strong wrinkling of the hide over the body and the callous roughness of the skin at the base of the trunk, the great hollows of the temples and the peaked crown, and the thickened surface veins, all told their own tale. There were ulcers on his front legs, but these signified nothing—I have known elephants develop such ulcers during the hot weather and then get cured of them. I thought he was somewhere between seventy and eighty years old and I do not think I was far out in that guess.

His blunt tusks projected a mere two feet from his lips, and a thick smear of mud clung to the tip of the left tusk, the dip in the river having failed to wash it off—apparently he had used his tusks to dig up clayey soil. As he climbed effortlessly up the bank he was black and gleaming from his recent immersions; on either side of the face, over the cheeks, there was the broad patch of a blacker oily stain, the tokens of musth. His eyes were half-closed, heavy-lidded as in drowsiness, though his stride was long and smooth. As soon as he was up the bank, he did what all elephants do when they get back to the land from water. He stamped down a mound of earth with a forefoot till it was soft and pulverised, picked up a ball of this loose soil in the curl of the tip of his trunk, and threw it over his wet back, the action being repeated till his back, and even his forehead, had particles of soil clinging to the skin.



Image Courtesy: The Estate of M Krishnan

Elephants throw earth and grass over their backs after a bath; sometimes they suck dry, powdery dust up their trunks and blow it out in a brown cloud over their bodies, and at times they squirt thick, muddy water all over themselves to acquire a thin coat of clay on the hide. It is thought that all this is done to protect the bare back from the heart of the sun and also to allay cutaneous irritations, and no doubt that is so. However, the throwing of loose earth over the back immediately after a bath may have a connected but somewhat different motive.

Once, when there was no one to look, I had the curiosity to take a long dip in a river, and then, on gaining the bank, to break up some soft earth with my heel and throw it over my bare back. It was about noon then, and there was a fierce sun, but the water was cold and when I climbed ashore I shivered as the wind lashed my wet skin. I still remember how gratifyingly warm the thrown up earth felt against my spine—as the sun dried me and I began to feel the heat, the moist earth on my back felt refreshingly cool. I realise that an elephant's hide is thicker than mine, but perhaps it is as sensitive to thermal sensations....

...Finally, he swung around and moved off, disappearing into the tree growth up the bank with that uncannily silent, flowing, space-consuming stride of an elephant still in possession of his full muscular power. For a second he was there, looming large against the tree trunks, then the cover had swallowed him up completely...

...A wild tusker in musth seems to be much given to wallows and baths, and at times wanders far from the sympathetic company of his own herd. Of course I do not know whether this great tusker was moving away from a herd or towards it, or even that his isolation was induced by his condition. All that I could sense from watching him narrowly was that he had walked far in the night, that his eyes were drowsy though his limbs were active enough, and that he seemed to find solace in the feel of cold water splashed against his hide. BP

Madhaviah Krishnan (1912–1996) was a pioneering wildlife photographer, writer and naturalist. This material on page 27-29 from the book 'Eye in the Jungle' by M. Krishnan is published by arrangement with Universities Press (India) Private Limited.'

HOW WE TEST

Product Categorisation
We first segregate products into categories for the purpose of equitability in testing. The DSLR is divided into entry-level, semi-professional and professional categories. For compacts, we distinguish between advanced and basic compact cameras. Similarly, we also test consumer and pro lenses, flashguns, printers, and other photographic accessories and gear.

The Process
We primarily test for features, performance, build, ergonomics, warranty and support. While this remains constant, the weightage we give to these parameter differs from category to category, because different types of consumers have diverse expectations from products.

Final Ratings
Under each main parameter, we list out hundreds of individual variables (for eg. colour accuracy for individual colours in different lighting, individual features, dynamic range, center-to-edge definition, light falloff, etc) against which we either give points or simply mark 'yes' or 'no'. Thus, we arrive at a score for that parameter, and then, the final score, denoted as a percentage. Additionally, based on the current pricing of a product, a star rating for 'Value for Money' is considered. Value for Money does not affect the final percentage, because prices for products change constantly.

Our Seals of Approval
Any product that scores 80% or higher in individual tests gets 'BP Recommended'—a seal of approval from our team. In comparison tests, we also tag products as 'BP Best Performer' and 'BP Best Value for Money'.

BP Excellence Awards
At the end of the calendar year, the highest rated products in each category automatically win the Better Photography Excellence Award. This is Better Photography's recognition of the very best products launched in the course of the year, and the companies that made them.

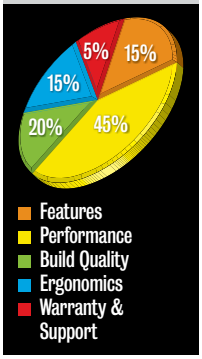


Sony Alpha 77 II

Focusing Superstar

Sony claims to have brought out the new APS-C king, the **Alpha 77 II**. **Ambarin Afsar** wonders whether it is really all that it promises to be.

WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



The Alpha 77 II has been launched after a two-year gap between the release of Sony's A-mount SLT cameras. A successor to 2011's Alpha 77, one expected this to be yet another reboot, albeit with a slightly different feature set. However, and refreshingly so, the Alpha 77 II is modelled entirely around its new AF module. AF speed was one thing that the older Alpha 77 couldn't deliver as well, and so, this seems like an intelligent move by Sony.

Features
This is the first time I'm not going to start my review by talking about the sensor. So, what's so great about a new AF module? Well, 79 AF points with 15 cross-type points, as opposed to the 19 AF points offered by the Alpha 77. The increased number of AF points is due to a phase detection AF module with a centre-weighted algorithm that is intuitive enough to aid precision tracking, and which can also be fine tuned in a number of ways by the user.

The Alpha 77 II gets the ability to shoot at 12fps till the buffer of 64 Fine JPEGs/25 RAW+JPEG images fills up, which is an impressively fast rate for this kind of a camera. Compared to this, the older camera's buffer capacity of 18 Fine JPEGs and 12 RAW+JPEGs doesn't seem impressive at all.

TEST
Sigma DP3 Merrill
Fantastic detail with a portrait focal length
44



TEST
Pentax 16–50mm
Disappointing for its price point
50



TEST
Nissin i40
The best small-sized flashgun you can find?
52



The A77 II has the same 24.3MP APS-C sensor as the older camera, but also features WiFi and NFC capabilities—it can be connected to Android and iOS smartphones and tablets through the PlayMemories app. Interestingly, the app allows you to use add-ons for timelapses and sequence shots.

There are two other advantages that Sony has over its competitors. The SLT technology ensures that autofocus is equally fast, even while using Live View or shooting video. Also, the camera has in-body image stabilisation, thus eliminating the need for stabilised lenses. In terms of video, the A77 II packs in a number of video features that are not available in its competitors. It cannot shoot 4k, but focus peaking, zebra masking and other professional video features make this a very serious tool.

In addition to the ability to access both continuous AF and manual focus during video, users can also change the selected AF area within the frame to easily create the professional 'rack focus' effect where the focus shifts between the subjects in the foreground and background.

You can change the shutterspeed and aperture while shooting video in the Program, Aperture-priority, Shutter-priority and Manual modes. All creative styles and picture effects, WB, metering and AF tracking are available in video as well.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX

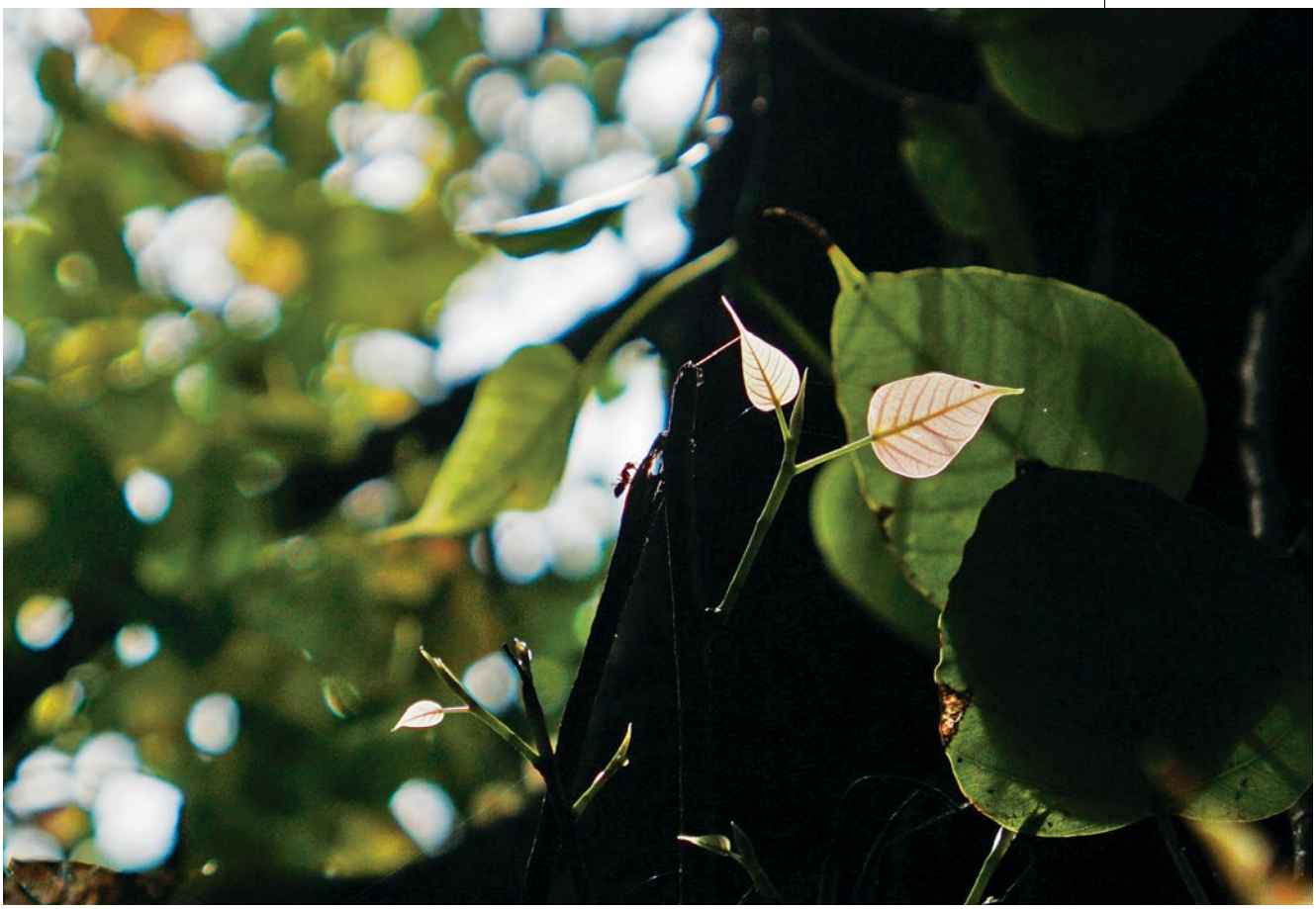
- Sony Alpha 77 II
- Sony 16–50mm f/2.8 lens
- Charger
- Battery
- Audio Video Cable
- Camera Strap
- Hot Shoe Cover
- Body Cap
- Warranty & manual
- Software CD-ROM



An Unusual LCD

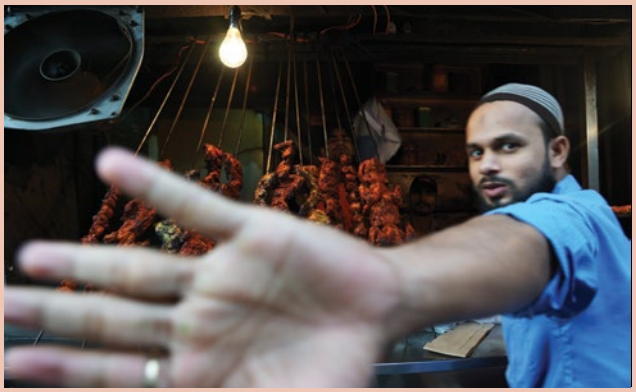
The Alpha 77 II features a tilting LCD that is bracketed in two places and can be tilted down, and then swivelled through 270° left and right. This feels quite sturdy and can also be flipped around to face the user for selfies and to protect the LCD from scratches and damage in storage.

Much needs to be said about the sharpness offered by the A77 II with the 16–50mm lens. My subject was the leaf, but the lens even got the ant sharp and turned serendipity into great fortune.



All photographs by Ambarin Afsar

Test Shots



Super-responsive Focusing
I almost thought I didn't manage to get this. I knew I had released the shutter, but I didn't know how quickly the camera had responded.



Intuitive Auto White Balance
In a mixed lighting situation like this one, it would have been easy for the AWB to get fooled, but it managed to achieve an admirable balance.

PLUS

- Weathersealing
- Tilting LCD
- Excellent overall image quality
- Sharp lens kit option

MINUS

- Menu system little too exhaustive
- Manoeuvring the LCD requires getting used to

Handling

The Alpha 77 II feels like a dream. After a long period of testing extremely slim cameraphones, it was comforting to heft a DSLR again. But, it wasn't simply my imagination, a solid magnesium alloy construction gives the Alpha 77 II an undeniable sturdiness. It isn't exactly a light camera, but that is not what I was looking for anyway. The best part is that it is weathersealed and resistant to moisture and dust, which is a boon for the kind of photographers it is bound to attract—wildlife and sports shooters, and people who spend a lot of time in the great outdoors.

The A77 II's EVF has a resolution of 2.3 million dots. It is nice and clear, but not as large as the one found in the X-T1. The refresh rate of the EVF has been greatly improved though, and this really facilitates low light shooting.

Like most recent Sony cameras, the camera has a Quick Navi Pro menu setup, which lets you assign certain functions for quick accessibility. Overall, you need to invest a little time in figuring your way around the menu system, but once you do, it is quite rewarding. Oddly enough, the camera takes a few seconds to start up, which is strange, given its speed in all other matters.

Performance

I could wax eloquent and poetic about the focusing speed and accuracy.

ALSO LOOK FOR

- Canon EOS 70D
- Nikon D7100
- Pentax K-3

ERGONOMICS

Front



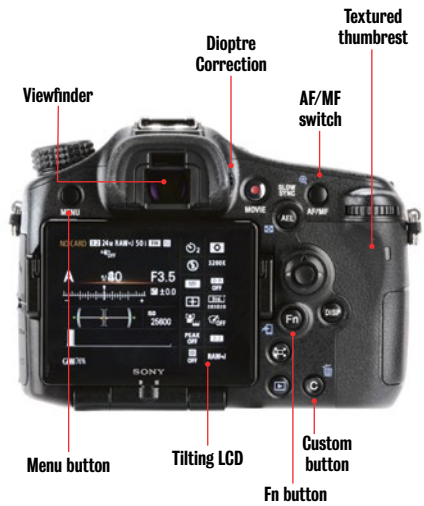
The design and styling of the Alpha 77 II remains quite similar to its predecessor, for the simple reason that the older design was quite good and needed little improvement.

Top



The only bone I have to pick with these new mode dials is the lockable button, now while this prevents accidental switching of modes, it is tough for me to access single-handedly, but this is just a personal opinion.

Rear



The Fn button houses the Quick Navi menu, while the Custom button gives you access to features like focus limiting, which is controlled by the front and rear dials, and an admirable inclusion by Sony.

SPECIFICATIONS



Model name	Sony Alpha 77 II
MRP	Rs. 84,990 (body only) Rs. 1,14,990 (with the 16–50mm f/2.8 lens)
Effective pixels	24.3 megapixels
Max. resolution	6000 x 4000
Sensor size, type	23.5 x 15.6mm, CMOS
Sensor cleaning	Yes
Focusing modes	Single-shot AF (AF-S), Continuous AF (AF-C), Automatic AF (AF-A), Direct Manual Focus selectable
AF type	79-point TTL Phase Detection
Metering	Multi-segment, Center-weighted, Spot
Shutterspeed range	30–1/8000 sec, Bulb
Exp. compensation	-5 to +5EV
Colour space	sRGB, Adobe RGB
ISO	100–25,600
White balance	Auto, Daylight, Shade, Cloudy, Incandescent, Fluorescent, Flash, Color temperature, color filter, Custom, Custom Set
Drive modes	Single Shooting, Continuous shooting, Self-timer (10/2sec delay selectable), Self-timer (Cont.) (with 10sec delay 3/5 exposures selectable), Bracket: Cont., Bracket: Single, White Balance bracket, DRO bracket
Built-in flash	Yes
External flash	Yes
Flash modes	Flash off, Autoflash, Fill-flash, Slow Sync, Red-eye reduction, Rear Sync, Wireless, Hi-speed sync
Flash sync speed	1/250sec
LCD size	3-inch, 12,28,800 dots
Viewfinder	Yes
File format	RAW, JPEG, MOV, H.264
Image stabilisation	Yes
Live View	Yes
Remote control	Yes
Self-timer	2, 10sec
Storage types	SD/SDHC/SDXC/Memory Stick
Timelapse recording	Yes
Movie clips	Yes
USB	USB 2.0
Environmentally sealed	Yes
HDMI	Yes
Dimensions (W X H X D)	132 x 105 x 77 mm
Weight	Approx. 455g (body only)

There were times that I simply forgot that I was changing focus points. I did not need to lift my eye from the viewfinder, and conversely, in certain situations, I did not need to look at the viewfinder or even the LCD in order to know what I was focusing on. Not once did the camera struggle to focus, and that's saying something.

The sheer attention paid by Sony to assisting auto and manual focus not only brings this camera at par with any of the other high-end APS-C cameras, it actually goes past them (until Canon and Nikon's long pending APS-C flagships get released, anyway).

The image quality is excellent, served rather well by the 16–50mm f/2.8 lens that I tested the camera with. The 24.3MP resolution brings this camera on par with the other APS-C leaders, the Pentax K-3 and Nikon D7100. The large resolution makes it easy to harvest close crops without compromising on quality—something that will be a boon to wildlife photographers who need additional reach.

The SLT mechanism leads to some light loss, around a third of a stop. So while it may not be the best low-light APS-C sensor around (Fujifilm and Pentax are better), it does an excellent job up to ISO 3200. When downsized to a respectable 16MP, ISO 6400 works decently well.

Conclusion

The Alpha 77 II makes a point that is hard to ignore. It has excellent image quality up to ISO 3200, it is built like a tank and its autofocus system is fantastic. In fact, the A77 II's autofocus system matches shoulder to shoulder with some cameras that are far more expensive, as well.

It is a true joy to review cameras that are designed to perform and deliver. This fine offering from Sony gets a huge thumbs up from me.

Priced at Rs. 84,990 (body only) and Rs. 1,14,990 (with the 16–50mm f/2.8 lens), the Sony Alpha 77 II gives you fantastic speed, good image quality and class-leading video control that will leave you very, very satisfied, regardless of the kind of photography or videography that you wish to do. BP

Noise Test



At ISO, images are perfectly noise-free, but by ISO 400, you can notice a hint of luminance noise, which is never bad, in my book. By ISO 800, some colour noise is noticeable, but mostly in the shadow areas, and definitely won't show up in a medium-sized print. I'd say that the images are usable upto 6400. At ISO values beyond that, there is a great deal of luminance noise, with sprinkles and in some parts, large clumps of colour noise.

FINAL RATINGS

Features Full HD video with full-time AF, ISO up to 25,600, 79 AF points with 15 cross-type	14/15
Performance Battery life can be better, excellent AF, very good image quality up to ISO 3200	41/45
Build Quality Magnesium alloy body, weathersealed	19/20
Ergonomics Great handling, awkwardly stiff LCD	12/15
Warranty & Support Two years warranty with a wide service network	3/5

OVERALL 89%

Who should buy it? Wildlife, sports and action photographers looking.

Why? For blazing fast AF that can further be customised and fine tuned, and a versatile sensor for both stills and video.

Value for Money ★★★★☆



Sigma DP3 Merrill

Strange Love

The Sigma DP3 Merrill or: How Aditya Nair stopped caring about features and learnt to love the camera.

Stanley Kubrick wanted the colour of the War Room table in the movie *Dr Strangelove* to be covered with a green baize, to give the actors the impression that they were "playing a game of poker with the fate of the world." This would have been a fine example of a director's quest for perfection, had the film not been entirely in black and white.

Conversely, you have the Sigma DP Merrill lineup, a series of cameras that has done everything in its power to perfect only one thing, the quality of the image, and let everything fit around it, as it would.

Features

The Sigma DP3 is the 50mm f/2.8 (75mm equivalent) variant that uses Sigma's 14.8MP APS-C Foveon X3 CMOS sensors. Instead of recording red, green or blue on adjacent pixels like most sensors, the Sigma layers three photosites on each pixel. This means that each pixel can record red, green AND blue effectively, making it a 14.8 x 3 sensor that creates 46MP images out of the RAW files.

The DP3, like the DP1 and DP2, is a camera that is going to make you jump through hoops, many, many hoops to get the shot right. But when you are finally done jumping, it delivers an image that is simply astounding for a camera of its price tag.

Imagine the image size and quality of a Nikon D800E at Rs. 36,000 (one-sixth the price) with certain (many?) limitations. But then, the final image is so addictive that you will find yourself making excuses for the limitations and lack of features. I'll go so far as to say that the Sigma can compete with a medium format camera.

But that is only at ISO 100 and 200. Beyond ISO 400, the image quality deteriorates faster than you can exclaim, "Hi THERE!" ISO 800 can be used to make some high-quality grainy B&Ws though.

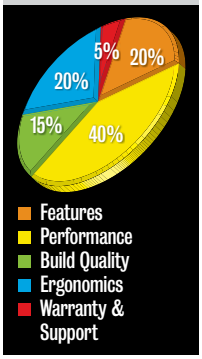
There are no 'creative' filters or art modes on the camera, which is a good thing. At the same time, there is also no Bulb mode, image stabilisation (given the camera's poor high ISO performance, why would you exclude this?) or an AF assist lamp.

Handling

The aluminium alloy body is quite sturdy. It is designed like a lightweight brick while

The DP Merrill's set a new high on image quality at low ISOs and a new low of image quality at ISOs beyond 400.

WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



WHAT'S IN THE BOX

- Sigma DP3 Merrill
- Battery charger
- Two lithium ion battery packs
- Lens cap
- Shoulder strap
- Hot shoe cover
- USB cable
- AV cable
- Owner's manual
- Sigma Photo Pro software download instructions



The DP3 delivers extraordinary detail and colours. There is also almost no visible distortion in the images.
Exposure: 1/25sec at f/9 (ISO 100)
Aditya Nair

Test Shots



K Madhavan Pillai

Accurate Rendering of Colours
The tonal variation and detail in the midtones are pretty incredible, and rather reminiscent of the latitude and tonal curve that certain kinds of film provide.



Aditya Nair

Focusing is Critical
The 50mm lens, 1:3 magnification and the 46MP file size makes sharpness critical for the DP3. Even the slightest shake or focusing error looks jarring.

PLUS

- Pathbreaking image quality at lower ISOs
- Superior glass
- Priced well in India

MINUS

- Quite slow in many regards
- Lacks features
- VGA video recording

being compact. I was pleasantly surprised how easy it was to hold even when shooting for long periods of time.

A minimum focusing distance of 0.22m and a 1:3 magnification makes this camera an ideal choice for close-up photography as well. The manual override with AF magnifies the subject on the LCD when you need to fine tune the focus. While this is useful when shooting with a tripod, it is almost unusable when shooting hand held. The lack of IS means that the image on the LCD can shake, not allowing you to get critical focus.

The battery life is amazingly bad. You can get only about 80 shots (RAW + JPEG) on one charge! That's probably why Sigma provides a spare battery. If you intend on shooting a lot, invest in several more batteries. The camera sorely needs a viewfinder and flash. While both can be bought separately as accessories, you can use only one of them, at a time.

Performance

The sensor and lens combination is simply superb. It is extremely sharp even when fully wide open. With no anti-aliasing filter, the images are sharper still and the Foveon sensor itself doesn't produce moire. The lens, while superbly sharp, isn't as sharp as the one found in the Sigma DP2. There is no flare, fringing, vignetting to speak of. Distortion is virtually absent.

The RAW files have a fantastic dynamic range and can recover a lot of details, it is imperative that the image is shot at the right exposure. The images can get noisy when you try to correct the exposure. This is where the camera's separate histograms for R, G and B come in handy.

Since the DP3 uses a leaf shutter it can sync a flash at all shutterspeeds. The downside with this kind of shutter is that the fastest shutterspeed varies. At f/5.6, it is 1/2000sec, but at f/2.8, it is 1/1250sec.

Always keep a tripod on standby. You may end up needing, even when you would think otherwise.

ERGONOMICS

Front



The camera has an all metal body that is very well built. There are no controls or buttons on the front barring the MF focus ring. I particularly like that it is not a camera that attracts attention.

Top



The accesory shoe can either be used for the flashgun or an OVF (Sigma has no EVF currently available). The MF ring and control dial are well designed and not oversensitive.

Rear



The 3-inch 920k dot LCD panel can be problematic in bright sunlight. Overall, the layout of the controls is simplistic and you can achieve a high level of customisation, saving different banks of settings.

Noise Test



Slight noise can be seen even at ISO 200 in X3F files, but is easily correctable for almost perfect results. Noise increases steadily after this point and images become almost unusable at ISO 1600, unless you downsize the image, but that's negating the most significant highlight of the camera's performance.

I was slightly disappointed that the widest aperture is f/2.8 only. Especially considering that the lens' focal length is ideal for portraits, a faster lens would have been ideal.

The DP3 has a small buffer of only seven RAWs but can manage a decent shooting speed of 4fps. After that, however, the camera takes quite a while to write the images on the card. You can't view any of the images while the camera is writing them either. The autofocus is slow, whimsical and inaccurate in anything but good light.

I think we have established that you need zen-like patience when using this camera. Keeping up with that masochistic tradition is Sigma's proprietary snail paced software Photo Pro 5. You need to use it to open the X3F RAW files. The X3F files are not supported by Adobe Camera RAW, which is why you are stuck with SPP5. The software allows a fair bit of adjustments. The file sizes can go up to 350–400MB for a single full-res TIFF. You are going to need a computer with really good specs to handle these images.

Conclusion

When my editor asked me if I was up for a challenge before offering me the camera, he wasn't kidding. Using the DP3 Merrill can be like using film. Limited to ISO 100–400, photographers managed to produce some fantastic photographs. And like film cameras today, the DP3 is meant for a very niche audience.

It is the patient photographer's camera. It is the camera you take out rarely, when you want to spend some quiet time, thinking and carefully making pictures. On the other hand, the sensor, optical quality, leaf shutter and price make it a very good camera to have in a studio.

The DP3 Merrill can be frustrating and the software even more so. But if you can overlook that, and I am willing to bet that you will, at its Rs. 36,000 price tag, no other camera comes close. BP



The grain structure at higher ISOs is usable for gritty B&Ws.
Exposure: 1/50sec at f/5.6 (ISO 800)
Aditya Nair

SPECIFICATIONS



Better Photography RECOMMENDED

Model name	Sigma DP3 Merrill
MRP	Rs. 36,000
Sensor size, type	Foveon X3, APS-C, CMOS
Effective pixels, max. image size	14.8MP (46MP effective pixels), 4800 x 3200 x 3 pixels
Lens focal range	50mm (75mm equivalent)
Lens construction, magnification	Leaf shutter, 8 elements in 6 groups, 1:3 magnification
Aperture range	f/2.8–16
Shutterspeed	30–1/2000sec
Metering modes	Evaluative, Spot, Center-weighted Average
LCD	3-inch, 920k dots
ISO range	Auto, 100–6400
File formats	Still: JPEG, RAW (X3F); Movie: AVI
Hot shoe	Yes
Battery	Li-ion
Storage	SDHC, SDXC
Dimensions, weight	121.5 x 66.7 x 80.6mm, 400g

FINAL RATINGS

Features 75mm equivalent sharp f/2.8 lens, Foveon X3 sensor, no other significant features	13/20
Performance Slow in most ways, 1:3 magnifcation, exemplary image quality at low ISO	35/40
Build Quality Sturdy aluminium body	13/15
Ergonomics Blocky, but easy to use, customisable	17/20
Warranty & Support One-year warranty	3/5

OVERALL 81%

Who should buy it? Advanced photographers looking for a inexpensive alterntative to a medium format camera.

Why? The DP3 Merrill offers incomparable image quality, for its price and compact size.

Value for Money ★★★★½



Pentax SMC-DA* 16–50 f/2.8 ED (IF) SDM

The Dream Kit Lens...

... until reality struck. The **Pentax SMC-DA* 16–50mm f/2.8 ED (IF) SDM** has a lot going for it but didn't quite impress **Aditya Nair**.

With heavy monsoons, dusty roads, clumsy waiters and ice cream spills, the weathersealed Pentax SMC-DA* 16–50mm f/2.8 ED (IF) SDM survived a lot in the month that it was in my possession. Believe me when I say this lens can handle abuse. When I first got my hands on this lens, it felt like the perfect companion to the K-3, a camera I absolutely adore. However, I quickly began noticing some obvious problems with the lens and the price tag at which it comes.

Features

The 16–50mm (24–75mm equivalent focal length) is one of only two ways to get a fast wide angle proprietary lens on a Pentax APS-C system. The other is the 14mm f/2.8 (21mm equivalent) lens. From third party manufacturers, you have the Tamron 17-50mm f/2.8 XR Di-II LD Aspherical (IF) and the Sigma 17-50mm f/2.8 EX DC HSM (25.5–50mm equivalent).

The AF is fast and accurate. The Quick Shift system lets you manually override AF.

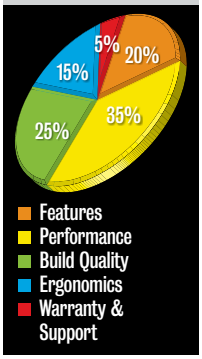
The Supersonic Dynamic Motor (SDM) offers near silent AF which the Tamron and Sigma do not do. In a quiet environment, the noise difference between these lenses is stark. It also offers the traditional screw drive AF to support legacy cameras as well.

Other features include a min. focusing distance of 0.3m and a distance scale.

Handling

Weathersealing sets this lens apart from the Tamron and Sigma versions as well as

WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



The Lens Hood Conundrum



The lens hood wasn't able to minimise flare in instances where it should have (image on the left). As seen in the image on the right, I was able to cut the flare by rotating the hood. This caused the hood to appear in the image, but it should have been able to reduce the flare when fixed the right way. That said, the hood has a removable slot that lets you adjust a polarising filter without having to remove the hood. I wish other lens hoods had this.

similar proprietary lenses offered by Canon, Nikon and Sony.

I can't begin to explain the joy of shooting in the rain and not having to constantly worry about your gear. It uses a high density foam rubber to make the system weather, dust and coldproof. On a side note, a Pentax press release on the weathersealing reads, "As hardy as the photographers that use them..." I'm not going to lie. That made me grin.

The lens uses a Super Protect (SP) coating to repel dust, water and grease. This makes cleaning the front of the lens a lot easier. The metal bayonet and high quality plastic make it a sturdy lens. It is slightly heavier and larger than the Tamron but balances well on the Pentax K-3.

The lens has large zoom and focus rings that are convenient. Zooming in, though, feels jerky and I wish it didn't push out the front element.

The lens has faced a fair amount of criticism for quality control issues like the SDM failing and back focusing problems. But this seems to have been resolved now.

Performance

The optical quality of the lens wasn't as good as I would have wanted, given the K-3's 24MP sensor. While the centre sharpness at f/2.8 is good, it deteriorates as you move to the edges. Sure, all lenses suffer from some corner softness wide open, but I expected this lens to be a little better, given its price. The sweet spot for the lens is between f/5.6 and f/8.

The lens uses two ED elements and three aspherical elements to compensate for chromatic and spherical aberration. Yet, fringing is evident when shooting high contrast scenes. It is noticeable throughout the zoom range but is the most at 16mm. Slight vignetting is seen throughout the zoom range, when shooting at f/2.8.

There is a fair amount of barrel distortion at 16mm but reduces quickly as you approach 24mm. At 50mm, you can see slight pincushioning.

Conclusion

The Pentax has many useful features, its weathersealing and silent focus. But is it worth the Rs. 95,995 price tag? The lens is well priced if you compare it to similar lenses from Canon and Nikon. But the Tamron 17–50mm f/2.8, which I found to be slightly optically sharper is a bit more than one-fourth the price (Rs. 27,800).

As a fellow photographer pointed out to me, if you want weathersealing, you can buy the Pentax 18–55mm kit lens (Rs. 15,995) and the Tamron. It will cover almost 90% of scenarios that you would use this lens in and still cost only a little over half the price of the 16–50mm.

Something doesn't quite add up. For this reason and because of the overall image quality, this isn't the lens for me. BP



The lens shows a lot of barrel distortion at 16mm but reduces rapidly as you approach 24mm.

All photographs by Aditya Nair

SPECIFICATIONS



Better Photography RECOMMENDED

Model name	Pentax SMC-DA* 16–50mm f/2.8 ED (IF) SDM
MRP	Rs. 95,995
Lens construction	15 elements in 12 groups
Min. focusing distance	0.3m
Diaphragm blades	9
Filter diameter	77mm
Dimensions	83.8 x 99.1mm
Weight	565g

PLUS

- Weathersealing
- Silent focusing

MINUS

- Very expensive
- Optically underwhelming

FINAL RATINGS

Features Silent AF, fast f/2.8 aperture, slightly wider than other lens in this category	18/20
Performance Good center sharpness, edge sharp could have been better, noticeable fringing and flare	26/35
Build Quality Weathersealed, sturdy build	24/25
Ergonomics Large zoom rings, well balanced	13/15
Warranty & Support One-year warranty, limited service centres	3/5

OVERALL 84%

Who should buy it? Pro photographers looking for a fast, silent wide-angle zoom lens with weather sealing.

Why? There isn't another lens available for the Pentax system that meets all these requirements.

Value for Money ★★☆☆☆





Nissin i40

Utility Unlimited

The **Nissin i40** is an incredibly small flashgun, considering the features that it manages to pack in. **Shridhar Kunte** puts it to the test.

With sensor technology surging ahead at an astounding speed, a lot of photographers believe that they do not need flash anymore to shoot in the dark. Has high ISO killed the flashgun? With the right use of lighting technique and a feature-filled tiny flash like the Nissin i40, I would answer that with a resounding NO.

Features

This TTL flash has a guide number of 40 (in metres, at ISO 100, when the zoom head is extended to 105mm). That may not compare to some of its larger-sized but similarly priced competitors, but I don't think that's a problem. Increasing the ISO is an easy option to increase the power, especially as modern cameras perform well at higher sensitivities.

The flash comes with a diffuser dome to soften the light, but there are no gels included herewith. The flash's zoom range is 24–105mm. So you can use the flash easily with a standard zoom lens, and also get creative with tricks like shooting at a wide focal length but zooming the flash to 105mm for a more concentrated throw of light. A built-in wide angle diffuser lets you use the flashgun with a 16mm lens too.

It can be used wirelessly, but it is not possible to use this flash to command other flashguns. The flash allows Slave operation with both film and digital SLRs. In the Digital Slave mode, the flash ignores the preflash emitted by the built-in flash and it fires when the built-in flash throws the light for the final shot. In our tests, the Slave Film mode worked well with the Vivitar 285HV and Nikon FM2 combo. But with relatively newer film cameras that have AF (like the F80, for instance), you need to use the Digital Slave mode to duck the preflash.

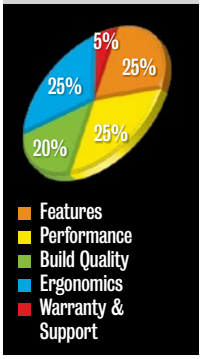
This is the first third party dedicated flash that has video light. Nikon users (who don't have a proprietary flash with video light) and Sony users (whose video flash is way more expensive) can consider the i40. The output can be controlled in 9 steps to achieve the desired effect.

Handling

The flash head is able to tilt upwards 90° and can rotate 180° in both directions, giving you complete 360° coverage. There is no locking mechanism to prevent the accidental movement of the head. But even while shooting in crowded places, the head never shifted from its normal position.

The amount of light being emitted can be adjusted on the fly, by simply moving the concerned dials. It's the easiest way to get quick and complete control over lighting, ideal for a street photographer.

WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS





This tiny, nifty flash is ideal for travellers. It produces consistent illumination without any cast.

Exposure: 1/60sec at f/22 (ISO 100), flash fired in TTL mode

Shridhar Kunte

Performance

I powered the flash with 2000mAh NiMh batteries; the flash was ready to fire in approximately 3 seconds. I could manage to get about 250 shots at full power, but after 200 full power flashes, the recycling time increases to more than 5 seconds.

The illumination is consistent and without any colour cast. Additionally, as you lower the power setting, the flash's strobe duration gets shorter (1/800sec at full power manual, down to about 1/20,000sec at lowest power), so the low-power Manual modes are great for stopping really fast action like balloons bursting or water droplets falling.

In the TTL mode, the flash exposure compensation dial works in conjunction with the setting in the camera body. So if you have set the dial on the flash to 0EV and the setting in the camera to -1EV, then the effective setting is -1EV. But if the camera and flash are both set to -1EV, then the effective output is -2EV.

As a standalone video light, the i40 has a moderate output. It can illuminate one person standing closeby, but does not make much of a difference when there is sufficient ambient light around.

Conclusion

For the still photographer, the i40 is well worth the price tag of Rs. 19,500. With no LCD menus to step through, it is the first advanced flash which is easy to navigate. It took me back to yesteryears in the precalculator era, when complex calculations were done with the help of slide rule. Just twist the dials and you are set.

If you have been wary of learning how to balance flash and ambient light, the i40 is one of the best flashguns to learn on. It is tiny, versatile enough to interest the video enthusiast and while it may not have as much power as the flagships, it gives far easier and quicker control over the final photograph. BP

SPECIFICATIONS



Model name	Nissin i40
MRP	Rs. 19,500
Guide Number	40m at ISO 100 (at 105mm)
Exposure Control	Manual/TTL/Auto
Bounce Head	Yes, 0° to +90°
Swivel Head	Yes, 360°
Coverage	24–105 mm
Dimensions (W x H xD)	85 x 61 x 85mm
Weight	203g

Better Photography RECOMMENDED

PLUS

- Slave mode
- Video light
- Great control in a small size

MINUS

- Small guide number
- Firmware update not possible

FINAL RATINGS

Features Slave works with digital camera, video light with variable output, output not very powerful	22/25
Performance Good colour balance, fast recycling time	23/25
Build Quality Metal shoe, feels sturdy, tilt-and-swivel mechanism lever that is built of metal	17/20
Ergonomics All control can be done by easy to use dials	24/25
Warranty & Support Limited number of service centres	2/5

OVERALL 88%

Who should buy it? Street and travel photographers who appreciate simplicity, but still want maximum control.

Why? The i40 is one of those rare flashguns that can be adjusted in very subtle ways, very quickly. It may not have the horsepower of larger flashes, but will suffice for general work.

Value for Money ★★★☆☆



Light Blaster

Project Your Imagination

The **Light Blaster** is a strobe-based image projector. **Shridhar Kunte** checks out the intricacies of this rather strange, but unique light modifier.

The Light Blaster is quite a strange device. When combined with a lens and a powerful shoe-mount strobe, it lets you project different patterns onto your subject or on the background. It's a niche product—one that you would especially appreciate if you have old 35mm slides lying around.

Let's Understand How it Works

The lens is used to project the pattern of light induced on the rear element by the slide inserted in the holder. The slide is not a source of light, so it is necessary to add the strong light source behind the slide which is taken care of, by the flash attached at the back of the Light Blaster.

It is the same principle that is used in a projector, where the lens is used to focus the image and the projector lamp helps project. Here the projector lamp is replaced by a strobe and the 35mm slide is being replaced by creative kit slides or stencils.

Handling

The main body of the Flash Blaster is made up from strong plastic shell. There are three main parts that fit together, to make the Flash Blaster. One is the slide holder that comes from the manufacturer. The other two parts (which you have to use your own) are a lens and a Strobe.

The lens mount is made up of stainless steel. When you mount the lens, you have to remember that there is no lens locking mechanism. You have to align the dot on the lens and dot on the mount and rotate it till it stops.

The Choice of Lens Matters

The Flash Blaster ships out from factory with Canon EF/EF-S mount. Similar to the camera body there are two dot—red for EF and white for EF-S. If you need to mount a Nikon lens, than you need to buy a converter.

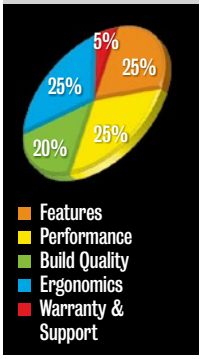
Here, one must understand that the lens choice (type and focal length) matters quite a bit. If you want a wider pattern to be projected, use a wide angle lens. Telephoto lenses work better for concentrated designs.

Since EF-S lenses form a smaller image circle as opposed to their full frame counterparts, this affects the final image being projected as well. I found that prime lenses work best as there is very little light loss that takes place.

The Impact of the Strobe

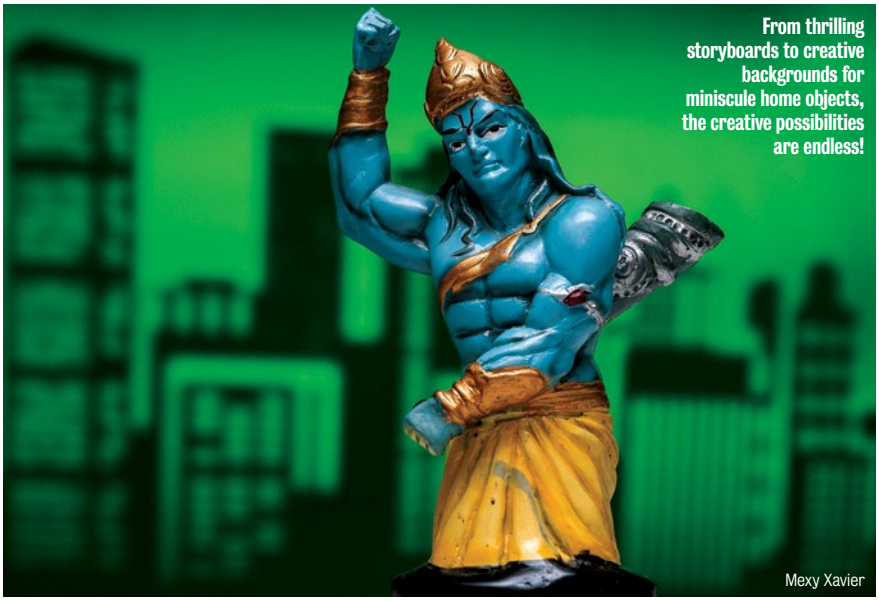
While testing, I found that the power of the strobe as well as the size of the strobe head play a big role in the quality and size of the projection as well. In fact, even the alignment of the flash head affects the

WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS





Apart from regular 35mm slides, you can buy five different sets of Creative Kits which includes Creative Backdrop Kit, Creative Effects Kit, Creative Wings Effects Kit, 35mm Slides Kit and Pro Gobo Set 1.


From thrilling storyboards to creative backgrounds for miniscule home objects, the creative possibilities are endless!

Mexy Xavier

projection. If the flash head is smaller than the designated chamber for it, you will need to stuff some kind of padding from all sides to align the head.

The tripod mount is closer to the lens mount and when I assembled the Light Blaster the centre of gravity was well maintained. But the strobe attaching arrangement feels less secured, as compared to the lens one.

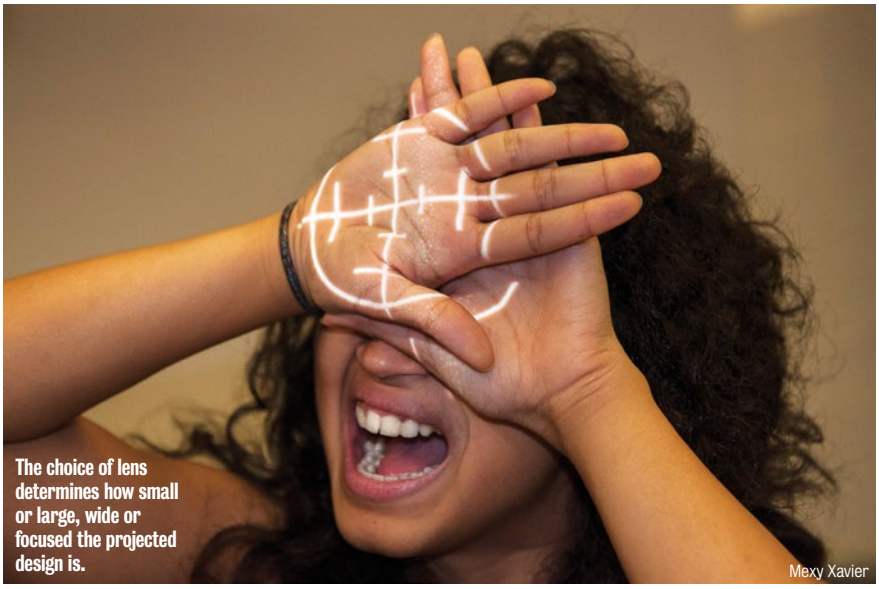
How Well Does it Work?

It will take quite some time to get used to a device of this nature. The difficult bit is to hold the device, focus and simultaneously get the required size of the projection. It is advisable to mount the Light Blaster on a light stand or a tripod to get sharp projection. I tried using a modelling light to get the idea of the projection. But as the intensity of the modelling light on shoe mount strobes is lesser, it difficult to get an exact idea. It does work as a good enough starting point.

You need a lot of practice to get the best placement of the projected image, your model and the camera. Before capturing the final image you might need to take multiple photographs and make small adjustments each time.

Toy or Tool?

This is not a single unit standalone light modifier. You need a shoe mount strobe and an appropriate lens to make it a complete package. At a price of Rs. 6000, it can be a passing fancy or a serious creative tool, as long as you are willing to invest some time in understanding it and practising. BP


The choice of lens determines how small or large, wide or focused the projected design is.

Mexy Xavier



Model name	Light Blaster
MRP	Rs. 6000
Lens Mount	EF (Nikon lenses with adapter)
Available Slide Kits	Creative Backdrop Kit, Creative Effects Kit, Creative Wings Effects Kit, 35mm Slides Kit and Pro Gobo Set 1

PLUS

- Innovative
- Inexpensive

MINUS

- Not easy to get used to

FINAL RATINGS

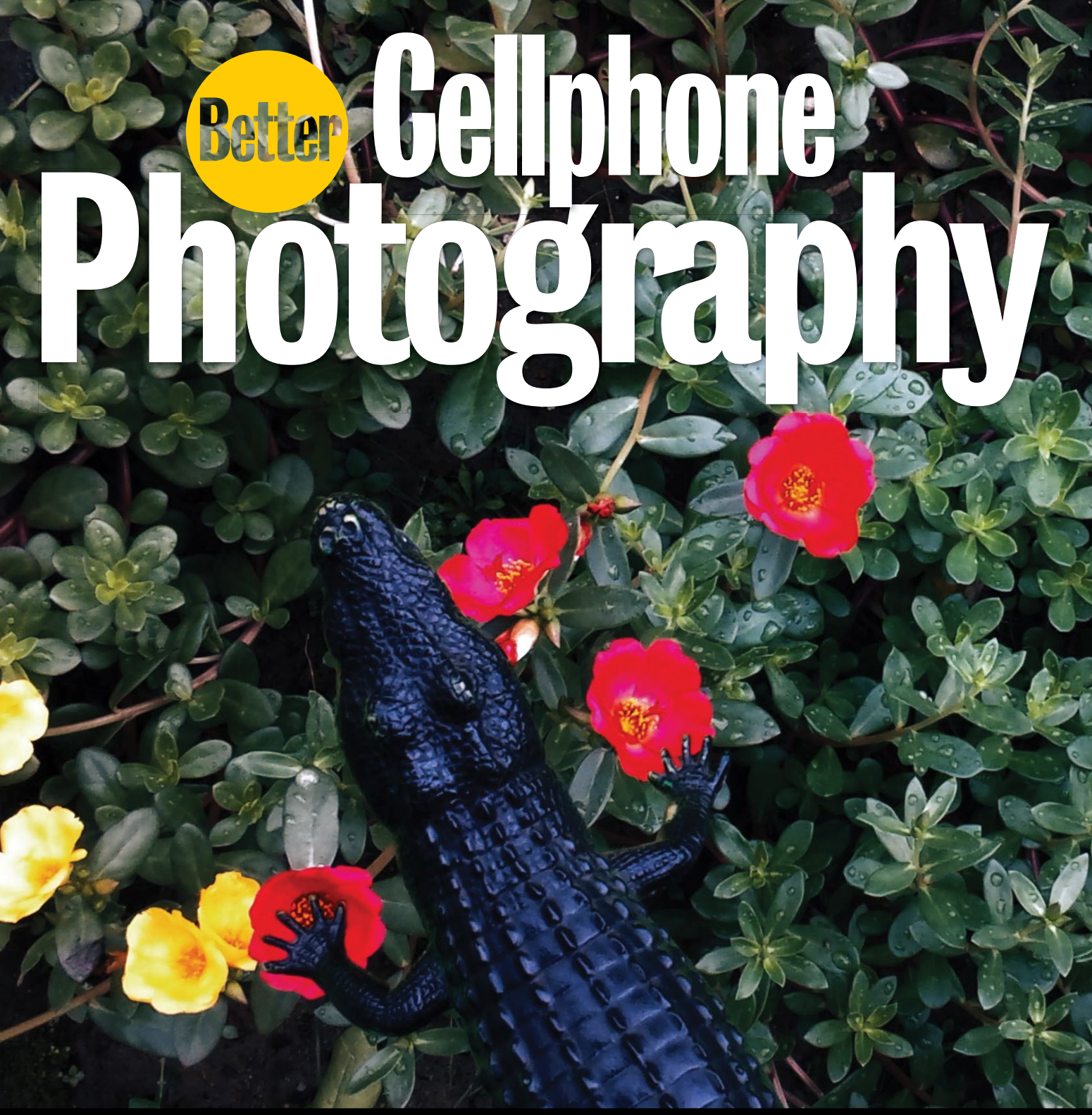
Features Strobe-based light projector	21/25
Performance Looks fantastic, but there is a lot of trial and error involved	20/25
Build Quality Quite a sturdy construction	18/20
Ergonomics Difficult to get the hang of, initially	20/25
Warranty & Support Very little support in India	2/5

OVERALL 81%

Who should buy it? Portraitists and creative photographers who want to have some fun.

Why? The Light Blaster can be addictive once you get the hang of it and can inspire some crazy ideas as well!

Value for Money ★★★½☆



Better Cellphone Photography

TALES FROM THE NORTHEAST

19-year-old Prince Sarmah's simplicity-filled visuals from Tezpur, Assam

- Is the new Instagram the only app you will ever need?
- How to use your phone to make gorgeous nature photographs
- Amit Mehra on editing, associations and cinema

"Maybe you have. Or maybe you haven't."



Have You Ever...?

... switched on your Instagram and been flooded with photos? Have you ever seen a bunch of images and been inspired to make your own? Have you ever made a photo that you are proud of? Have you been proud of something you've shot, but wondered where the next picture would come from? Have you wondered and then wandered, into the throes of your photographic journey? Have you started your journey and wanted to give up at the very beginning? Have you given up on something, and then started all over again?

Have you started all over again, promising yourself thirty-six attempts like a roll of film, thirty-eight with some luck? Have you ever shot film and lost the moment as the roll got over? Have you lost a moment because you saw it but your cameraphone's battery died? Have you ever killed the Camera app because you would rather savour the moment without a gadget in the way? Have you ever had a camera come in the way of a beautiful conversation with a kind stranger? Have you ever conversed with a stranger and wished you had brought your camera along? Have you ever lugged around a large camera, only to realise that you would rather Instagram the memory? Have you Instagrammed a memory and realised that you are in love? Have you ever fallen in love through the viewfinder? Have you gazed through the viewfinder and found someone staring back? Have you held eye contact and not said a word? Have you experienced silence, but heard a million voices in your head? Have you heard voices in your head and realised that they are actually ideas, brimming to the top of your consciousness? Have you ever had an incredible photo idea, but not executed it? Have you given fruition to an idea, but then messed it up? Have you messed up an attempt, and then given up trying? Have you given up on something, and then started all over again?

Have you restarted your journey and repeated the cycle? Have you repeated the cycle and felt a sense of déjà vu? Have you ever felt déjà vu, seconds before you press the shutter? Have you ever felt déjà vu, seconds before...

Raj Lalwani
raj.lalwani@betterphotography.in



Prince Sarmah

Untitled

by Prince Sarmah

"Just imagine that no one's watching you, and that you are on your own, shooting by yourself." This young 19-year-old from Assam shot his first photos on a cellphone, and almost overnight saw a huge increase in the numbers who viewed his work, courtesy a feature by the official Instagram blog. What he lacks in experience, he makes up with simplicity and honesty.

To make lovely photographs while on nature's trail — In the Lap of Nature
Turn to page 64

Cover photograph by Prince Sarmah

"I don't believe in reality really, it's a bluff. But I believe in a kind of reality that exists because of all the longing, dreams, secrets, nightmares, mostly longings. I think no picture is without longing."

ANDERS PETERSEN

Petersen is one of the most important photographers of our times, with his characteristic use of dark, grainy black and white leading to an aesthetic that manages to tread a tightrope between shockingly raw and tenderly intimate.



Oppo Joy

Devoid of Any Joy

Natasha Desai puts the **Oppo Joy** to the test and finds out how well the budget phone's camera stacks up.

A phone with a 3MP camera in 2014, is confusing to say the least. While cellphone camera quality is moving ahead, the Joy seems to be stuck in the past.

The Oppo Joy marks the company's foray into the budget cellphone segment. On paper, the Oppo Joy's camera specifications are mediocre at best with a 3.1MP rear and 0.3MP front camera, but it got me curious about the kind of images to expect.

Devoid of Colour

The 4-inch screen is pretty good even in bright light. Unfortunately, the colour representation is another matter. Images can appear punchy on the 800 x 480 screen, but were much more muted when viewed on a computer screen.

Moody Focus

This is a fixed focus cameraphone. However, despite that, there were times when the lens-focus mechanism would go wrong, and the screen would go blurry. This could be rectified only by rebooting the camera app.

The meagre 0.3MP front camera makes extremely low quality pictures, so selfie enthusiasts would rather look elsewhere. The phone has a 1.3 GHz Dual Core processor and 512MB RAM. The result of this is some noticeable shutter lag. The low light performance of the camera is really nothing to speak of. However, it does have a flash which some phones at this price don't. The panorama function is pretty handy too.

Not a Cameraphone

As a phone the Oppo may be a good buy at Rs. 8990, considering that the battery life is excellent and it runs the Android 4.2 ColorOS. As far as design, build quality and ergonomics go, the phone holds up pretty well. However, cellphone photographers have nothing to look forward to in the Oppo Joy. Phones like the Moto E and Nokia Lumia 520 have better specifications and cost about Rs. 2000 less. BP



While the images turn out decently sharp, other phones at the same price point feature far better sharpness.

APPS YOU CAN TRY

KaleidaCam is an iOS app that shoots images like you would through a kaleidoscope. The app lets you choose the number of repetitions, the shapes and the sizes too.

AT A GLANCE

SPECIFICATIONS	3MP, Android 4.2 ColorOS, 4-inch 800 x 480 TFT screen, 1.3gHz dual-core processor, 512MB RAM, 4 GB storage, Rs. 8990
WHAT WE LIKE	Easy to navigate UI, good build and ergonomics
WHAT WE DISLIKE	Sluggish focusing, shutter lag, 0.3MP front camera
WHY BUY IT?	If you need a budget smartphone with a good battery life and are not going to use it primarily for the camera.

FINAL RATINGS 67%

CAMERA FEATURES Panoramic mode, continuous shooting up to 20 shots, 3MP	9/15
IMAGE QUALITY Average quality images, disappointing front camera	22/35
VIDEO QUALITY Average quality with 720p video	12/20
HANDLING Simple camera interface, good build quality	12/15
SPEED & RESPONSIVENESS Fairly fast but with sluggish focus	12/15

Network 18



SUBSCRIBERS GET EXCLUSIVE COLLECTOR'S EDITION COVERS
NOT AVAILABLE AT NEWS STANDS



1 YEAR Subscription
1:12 SCALE SUPERBIKES
ASSORTED MODELS – WORTH ₹600



2 YEAR Subscription
1:24 SCALE LAMBORGHINI REMOTE
CONTROL CAR – WORTH ₹1600



3 YEAR Subscription
1:18 SCALE MERCEDES-BENZ
SL CLASS CAR – WORTH ₹2100

PERIOD	COVER PRICE	YOU PAY	YOU SAVE	GIFT MRP
1 YEAR	₹ 1800	₹1499	₹301	WORTH ₹600
2 YEARS	₹ 3600	₹2999	₹601	WORTH ₹1600
3 YEARS	₹ 5400	₹4499	₹901	WORTH ₹2100

MAGAZINE • WEB • TV
OVERDRIVE
India's Largest Auto Media

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Yes, I would like to subscribe to ..... Offer for ..... Year.

Name: Mr./Ms.:.....

Subscription No. (For Renewal)..... Organisation: .....

Please send my copy to ☐ Residence ☐ Office (kindly tick on any one)

Mailing Address: .....

.....

City:..... State: ..... Pin:.....

Tel: (O) ..... (R): ..... Mobile: ..... E-mail:.....

I liked to read OVERDRIVE becasue .....

Please find enclosed cheaque/DD no. ..... drawn on (name of bank) .....

dated ..... for ₹ ..... favouring Network18 Media & Investments Ltd - Publishing.

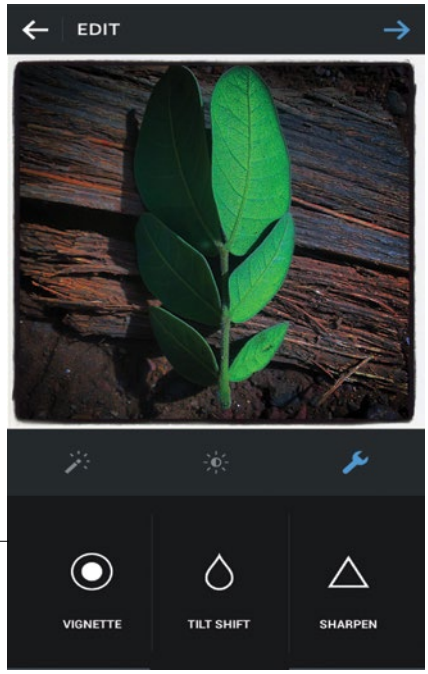
Or charge my ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD (kindly tick on any one)

Card No.: ..... Card Expiry Date: .....

Date: ..... Subscriber Signature: .....

Subscription Department: Network18 Publishing: New Era House, Mogul Lane, Matunga (W), Mumbai 400 016.
Call: 022-43484760 • Email : customercare@network18publishing.com

Terms & Conditions: Your subscription will start from the next available issue. No cancellation will be entertained after commencement of the subscription. Network18 Media & Investments Ltd. reserves the right to extend, cancel or discontinue the offer.
Though Network18 Media & Investments Ltd. will take utmost care to dispatch the copies safely Network18 Media & Investments Ltd. does not take the responsibility of any postal delays and damaged copies dispatched.
Gifts will be dispatched after 6 - 8 weeks after processing of your subscription. The image is for representation purposes only. Actual model, colors may vary. For more information contact Network18 Media & Investments Ltd. subscription department.
The company at its absolute discretion and without further notice may discontinue, publication of the magazine and in the event of such discontinuation, we shall refund the subscription amount for the unexpired term only, without any interest, cause and consequence.



The decluttered interface of the app lets you makes edits without being overwhelmed by too many options.

Instagram 6.0

The Only App You Need?

Instagram has struck a fine balance between simplicity and control. **Aditya Nair** wonders if he'll ever need another editing app.

Since Instagram first launched almost four years ago, numerous companion apps have cropped up. These let photographers fine tune their pictures before sharing them on the internet, particularly Instagram.

Apps like VSCOCam and Litely were born to cater to the niche created by the Instagram-conscious cellphone photographer. But Instagram's latest update may change all of that.

Unfortunately, you still can't add more than one filter to an image, unlike with apps like VSCO. You still need reupload an edited image to add a second filter in Instagram

Taking Back Control

With the 6.0 upgrade, Instagram has added new tools like Brighten, Contrast, Warmth (White Balance), Highlights, Shadows, Vigenette and Sharpen.

Traditionally, Instagram had stayed away from adding these features to avoid complicating their layout. But 6.0 manages to do it, while still maintaining the app's ease of use by dividing the layout into three tabs—Filters ( ), Lux ( ) and Edits ( ).

Each of the features has a slider that ranges from 0–100. With most phones, you can see the changes happen in real time as you scroll from one end of the spectrum to the other.

The Auto adjust function, now called Lux, gets a slider as well. When you click on it for the first time it automatically jumps to 50, from where you can increase or decrease the amount.



All photographs by Aditya Nair (@dial1800shrink)

How Good is It?

The amount of detail the tools can recover is pretty amazing. While it most certainly won't hold its own against desktop software, it's as good as every competing app I have used.

Sharpen works well for mobile screens but images may look oversharpened when you view them on a PC. Once you are done making your edits, you can tap and hold the image with your finger to see the before and after previews. Unfortunately, the maximum image resolution has not been increased and still remains 2048 x 2048px.

What's New With Filters

The app doesn't see any new filters this time. But, filter controls have improved

RE-EXPLORE

The Explore function of Instagram has been updated too. It now shows you popular images on the basis people you follow and images that you have liked in the past. Earlier, only trending images would show up.

Instagram spawned a generation of companion apps for editing and may now make them redundant.

dramatically. And by that, I mean you finally have filter control. Double click on the filter to adjust the intentsity using the 0–100 slider. This is similar to the control offered by apps like VSCOCam, Snapseed and others.

To add the filter's border, you need to select the grey square near the slider. Earlier borders had a dedicated buttonon the main screen. While this doesn't change your workflow much, finding the new location for the option can be a bit difficult the first time around.

iOS Continues to Get the Special Treatment

Every filter on iOS devices has a border assigned to it. However, the same filters, for



This image was shot in contrasty light, but the Highlights and Shadows tools managed to recover a lot of detail.

When You Need to Go Back & Retweak the Edit

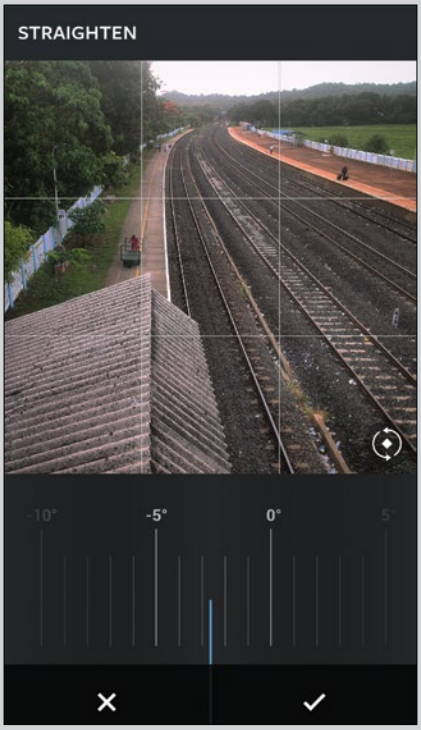


When you use one of the editing tools, a thin grey line appears below it. This lets you identify the tools you have already used.

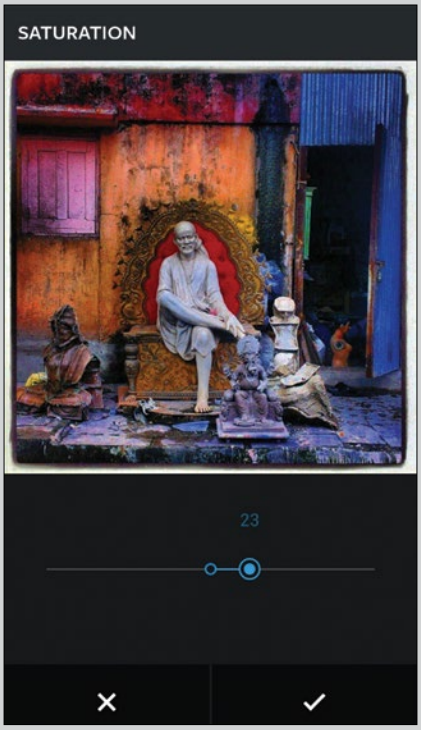


Using the Shadows slider I was able to remove any detail in the silhuotte without boosting the overall contrast of the image.

The New Image Editing Features in Action



Tweaking with the Straighten tool
Existing features like Straighten (the Rotate function can be found within this feature) and Tilt Shift are now under the Edits tab.



Maximise Colours
With the Contrast and Saturation tools, a lot can be done to enhance colours. However, use the Saturation tool sparingly as it can look overprocessed very easily.



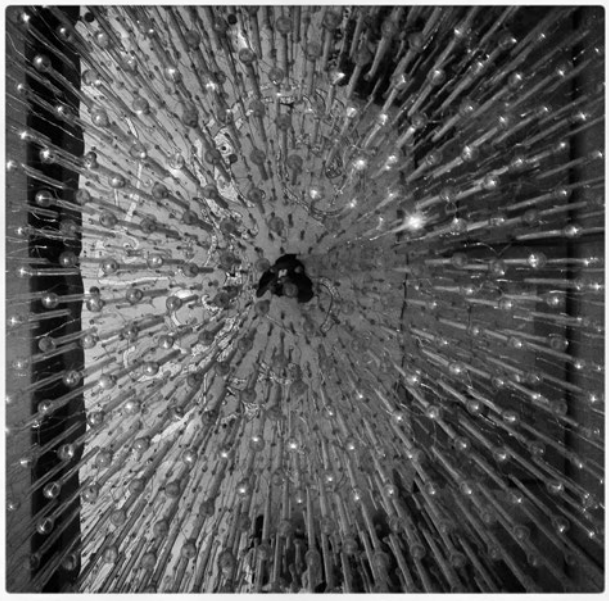
Mix and Match Filter Borders
You can now apply a border of a random filter without changing the overall look. Just select the filter's border and drag the intensity slider to zero.

example Valencia and Rise, on the Android version of the app don't have any borders.

I was hoping this would have changed but sadly it hasn't, especially for filters like Amaro that have interesting borders on iOS.

On iOS, Straighten is called Adjust and lets you crop the image as well, in addition to straightening and rotating. With Android devices, you will only be able to crop the image when you import it.

Slight sharpening helped make the image more graphic. But avoid going beyond 20–25.



But Will It Be the Only One You Use?

Quite frankly, while I love VSCO, I don't find myself using it to edit pictures as often now.

That said, Instagram still doesn't compete with VSCO or Hipstamatic in terms of sheer number of filters. For collages or adding text, you are still going to have to rely on third party apps. The same goes for uploading rectagular photos using apps like SquareIt.

But, if you are happy with the Instagram filters or use no filters, the other editing apps on your phone are going to be gathering digital dust for a long time. BP

The final image is still limited to 2048 x 2048px.

AT A GLANCE	
SPECIFICATIONS	Needs Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich or higher; iOS 6 or higher, optimised for iPhone 5 onwards
WHAT WE LIKE	Addition of editing tools, amount of detail recovered
WHAT WE DISLIKE	No new filters, iOS and Android disparity
WHY GET IT?	It is an extremely easy way to build up a global audience. Plus, now all your photos can be edited within the app.

FINAL RATINGS	93%
FEATURES Basic editing functions, control over intensity of filters	22/25
PERFORMANCE Good image quality but still limited to 2048 x 2048px	29/30
EASE OF USE Extremely easy to navigate	34/35
SPEED & RESPONSIVENESS Doesn't lag or hog up too much battery	8/10

What Happens When Two Single Images Meet Each Other?



Amit Mehra





Amit Mehra

Photography as a medium has always been about the single image. With a cameraphone, I think this is emphasised a little more. The cellphone, in today's day and age, is a constant companion, wherever we go and whatever we may be doing. And there's a picture lurking everywhere. After the picture is made, we move on to the next moment. And then, the next. The beauty, of course, is that every moment is unique, standing by itself.

But what happens when these moments begin to interact with each other? Over the past few months, while I have been photographing my cellphone musings, I have come across threads that seem to intermingle, events that seem to connect, photographs that seem to strike a conversation.

So what really happens when one single image meets another? I think it is extremely relevant that we take stock of our work from time to time, to see how our visual language is talking to itself.

The editing process, for me, is one of the most rewarding aspects about photography. I have always tried to subconsciously remember what I have shot before, and whether the new moment that is in front of me, connects with the older visual or not.

The two photos above, for instance... on their own, they are both reflections, with multiple elements that are layered over each other. Graphically and contextually, I feel that the images, when placed beside each other, make an interesting diptych. The position in which my daughter is sitting, and the way it mirrors the pose of the doll, seems to reflect their companionship.

Personally, I always look towards cinema when I am trying to make an edit of my work. The idea is to convey the overall story, frame by frame. Does one scene add to the other?

Cellphone photography, or all of photography, may be in the moment, but there is no harm in pausing a few moments to look back and analyse your own vision. There are several ways in which you can edit your work, several ways in which you can create pairs, triads or a sequential series. The flow of images may be chronological, contextual, graphical or even metaphorical.

There is no one rule. Every photographer needs to find his own way. Editing one's photos is not easy, especially in the beginning. It's a neverending quest, after all. BP

Constantly trying to walk on a tightrope between commercial and documentary photography, Amit describes himself saying, "I'm like an octopus who likes to deal with different things at the same time. You can call me a schizophrenic photographer." The moments in this monthly diary are excerpts from his ongoing work titled 'Roznaama'.



The inherent wide angle nature of a cellphone's camera is perfect for making landscape photographs.
Shot with: Xolo Q800

In the Lap of Nature

Your cellphone is the biggest asset for making great nature photographs. **Supriya Joshi** elucidates.

Photographing the beauty of nature can be a very meditative experience. Wide open vistas, pristine water bodies or even colourful flowers are just a few things you can make images of. However, let's escape from the purist's approach to nature photography and think about it from a cellphone camera user's point of view. It can yield fantastic results.

Go Closer

With a cellphone camera, what you lose is the ability to zoom into your subject. Do not use the cellphone's digital zoom function, as it will heavily pixellate the image. Instead, turn this limitation into an advantage by going physically closer to the subject. Be careful, though. We don't want you accidentally falling off cliffs!

Use it as a Secondary Documenter

If you are on a trek or a safari, use your cellphone as your camera's companion. Supplement images of a tiger with its pug marks shot with your cellphone. These intermingling shots can then become a unique series.

Use backlighting to create silhouettes and halos around your subject.

INSTAFOLLOW NOW

Jason Robertson (@low_key_loki)'s Instagram feed is filled with soft, faded images of his everyday life. Follow now for inspiration on how to capture everyday life with flair.


Ambarin Afsar

Patterns on the beach are endlessly fascinating as they are in a constant state of flux.
Shot with: Gionee Elife E7

Convey Scale and Proportion

With the concept of scale, you can convey the position and size of the subject. For example, when you are on a mountaineering expedition, make a photograph which includes the base camp as well. This stark juxtaposition will give the viewer a sense of the massive size of the mountain.

Employ Minimalism

Sometimes, a singular being of a massive whole can make for a very striking image. For example, you can photograph a lone leaf against a colourful background. In essence, it is a tribute to the beauty of a small part of what makes planet earth.


Myrthe Sahd

You can find reflections that create wonderful mirrored illusions in still waters.
Shot with: Samsung Galaxy S5

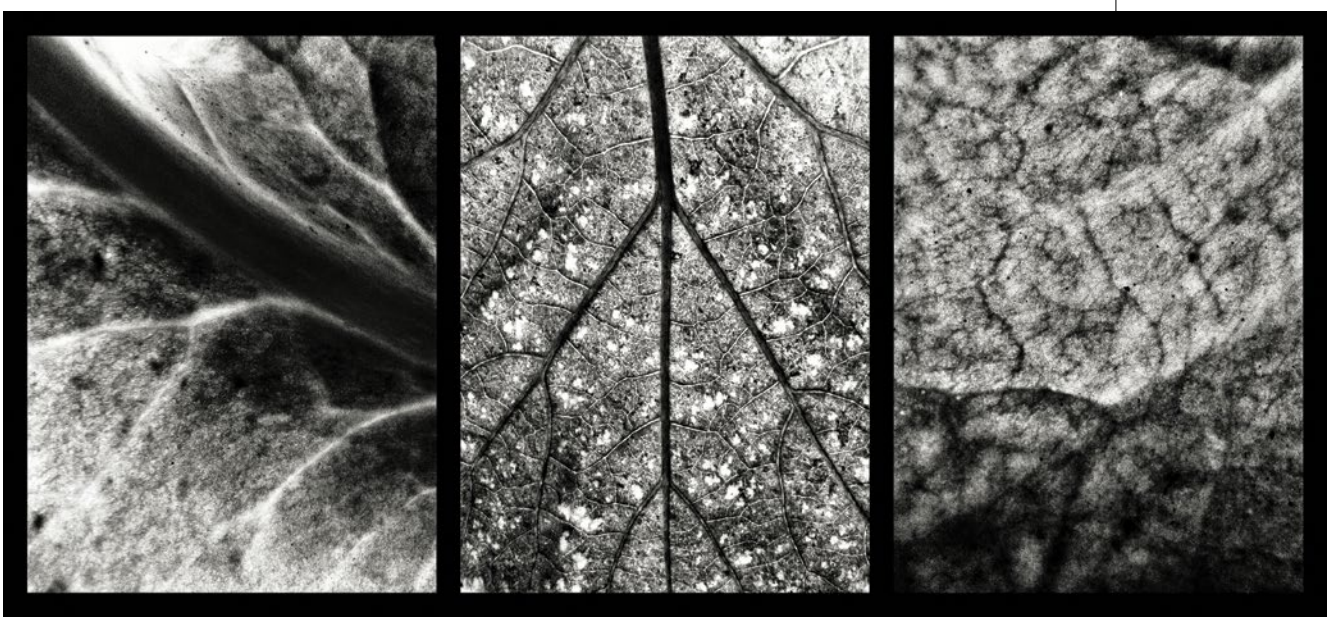
Look Up!

Take a look upwards in an area thick with trees. Their leaves and branches create the most intricate patterns. You can create a whole series of images focusing on these nature's ornate designs. A cluster of thin trees can also form converging lines giving the illusion of a vanishing point.

Use Clichés Unconventionally

There is a reason why clouds are one of the most photographed subjects on Instagram. No cloudscape is ever the same, and you can use that to your advantage. Photograph them at different times of the day... you can even create a collage out of the best images! BP

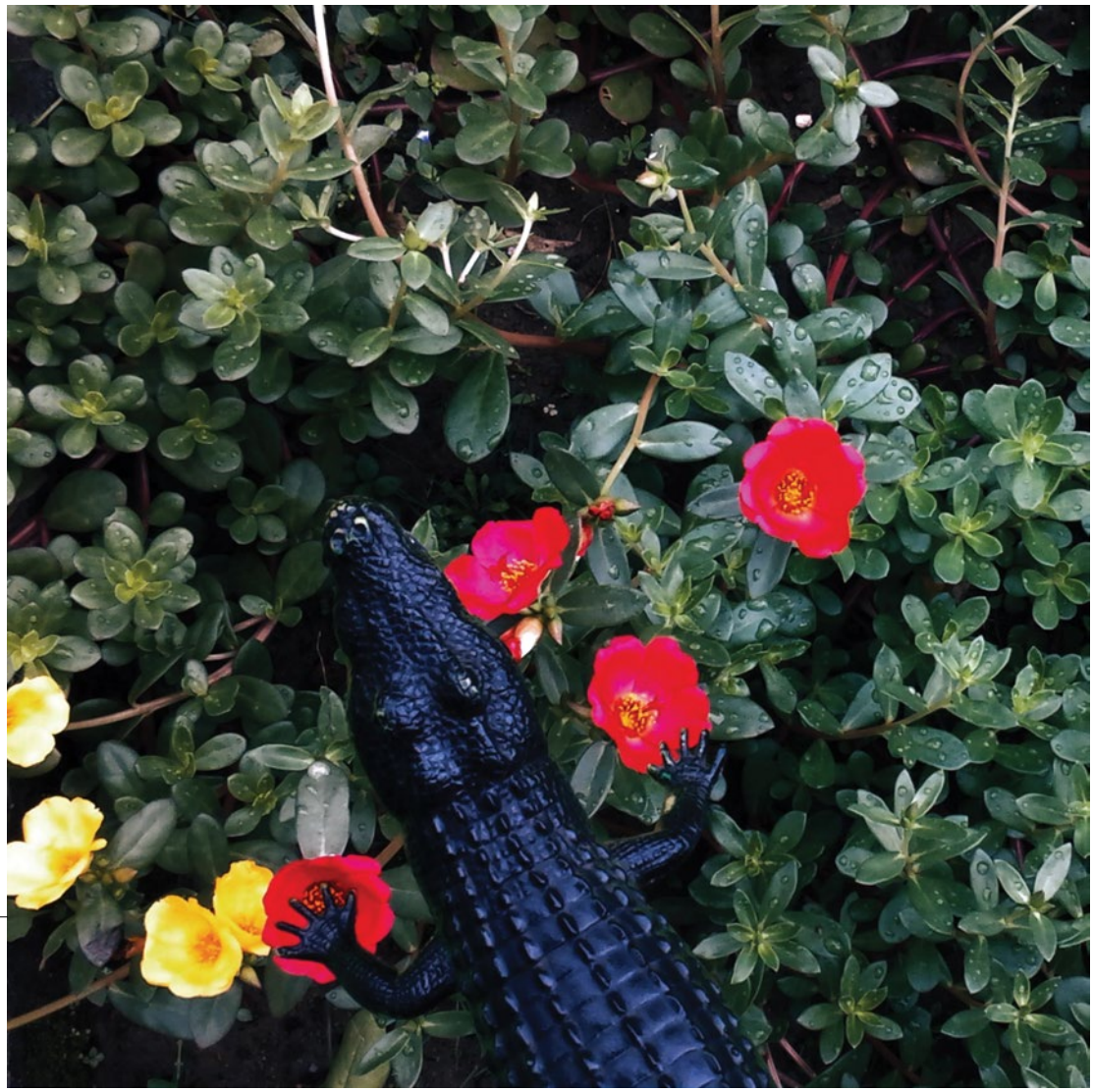
Showcase your subject in a unique manner by creating triptychs. Feature different areas of the subject in each section.
Shot with: Samsung Galaxy Win I8550


Sarang Naik



Prince Sarmah

- A 19-year-old Assamese boy, Sarmah is currently a student of chemical sciences.
- He likes to paint and sketch and often makes artworks for Instagram on a chalkboard.
- He enjoys reading books, viewing contemporary art and listening to music. His favourite bands include Mumford & Sons and Foster the People.



At first, he wanted to photograph just the flowers, but since they seemed uninteresting to him all by themselves, he decided to add a toy crocodile.

Tales from Tezpur

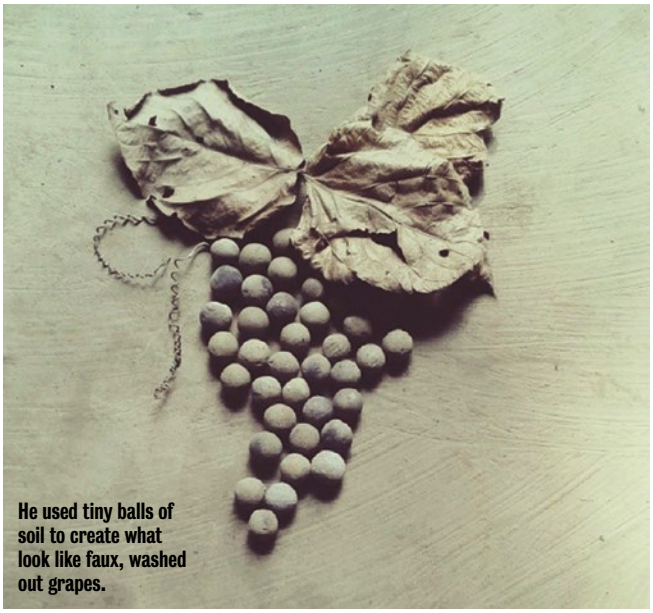
Prince Sarmah, a young photographer from Tezpur, Assam, talks about exploring his hometown in a conversation with **Ambarin Afsar**.

About a week ago, the Instagram Blog featured a young artist from Assam. Prince Sarmah was inundated with follows, likes, a request for a party from his friends and his mother's phonecalls to his relatives. It was a tremendous occasion. And why not, it is joyous to hear that photography is a cause for celebration instead of it being the other way around. Prince's clean, minimalist images of his hometown, Tezpur, made people sit up and take notice of the quiet, everyday scenes. Suddenly, the daily life of Tezpur was on the global map.

The reason why Instagram is so powerful is because it can help photographers publish their own edits and work. If it reaches out and touches a chord, someone's personal vision can be a matter of a global discussion within a wonderfully short period of time. But, to achieve this sort of success, consistency and creativity are key, something that is evident in Prince's images.

FIND PRINCE HERE!

- Instagram: @prince_sarmah
- VSCOCam: rollsmind.vsco.co



He used tiny balls of soil to create what look like faux, washed out grapes.

An Affinity for All Things Minimalist

"I like how a simple street scene can influence one's mood. There's just something about clean frames that draws me," he says. For him, the other factor that adds to the charm of minimalist scenes is, "You don't need to look for a variety of elements to make an image. I also like using light to make my frames appear clean. It goes without saying that creative thinking also helps."

On the Way Home from College

You might have noticed that if you are not actively setting out for a photo walk,

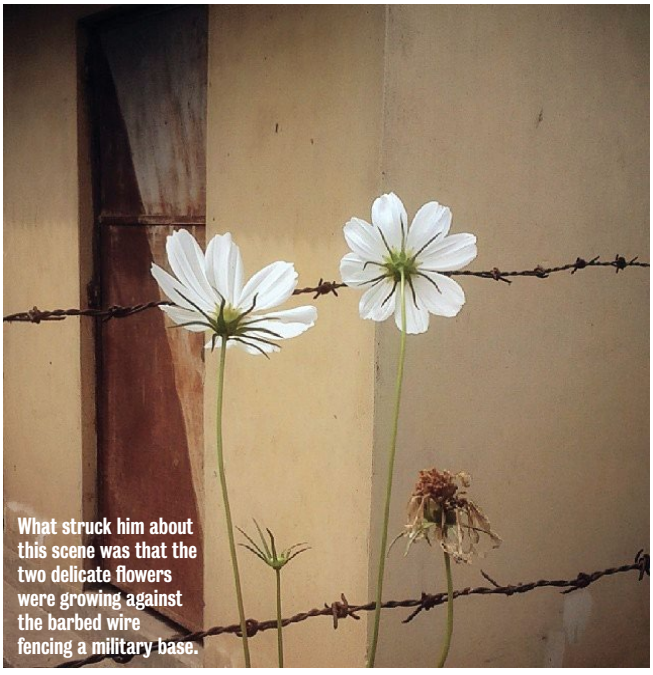
Titled Vogue, he made this image to signify a summery theme. Quite a few photos on his Instagram feed feature animals in quirky, fun situations.





"An interesting scene that does not have a striking subject just ends up looking bland and boring."

Prince was drawn to this scene because of the contrast between the dark shadows of the undergrowth and the bright, colourful flowers.



What struck him about this scene was that the two delicate flowers were growing against the barbed wire fencing a military base.

a majority of your images might be made during a daily commute—either to work, college or even while running an errand.

It isn't much different for Prince. "I don't think you need to go to a photogenic place to make a good piece. Every place is beautiful, you just need to make an effort to see it. I don't get a lot of time to myself, so I choose to shoot on my way home from college. Assam is an extremely green state, and so, I end up shooting a lot of nature. I also make it a point to visit the Brahmaputra river. One can find something new in each visit to the riverside."

The Cellphone Shootist

While Prince hasn't used a DSLR and hence cannot compare the experience of both the mediums, he believes that most phones these days offer a decent enough sensor and focusing capabilities. "I make all my



It was going to rain just before he made this photo, and so the outstretched tree seemed to signify thirst to him.

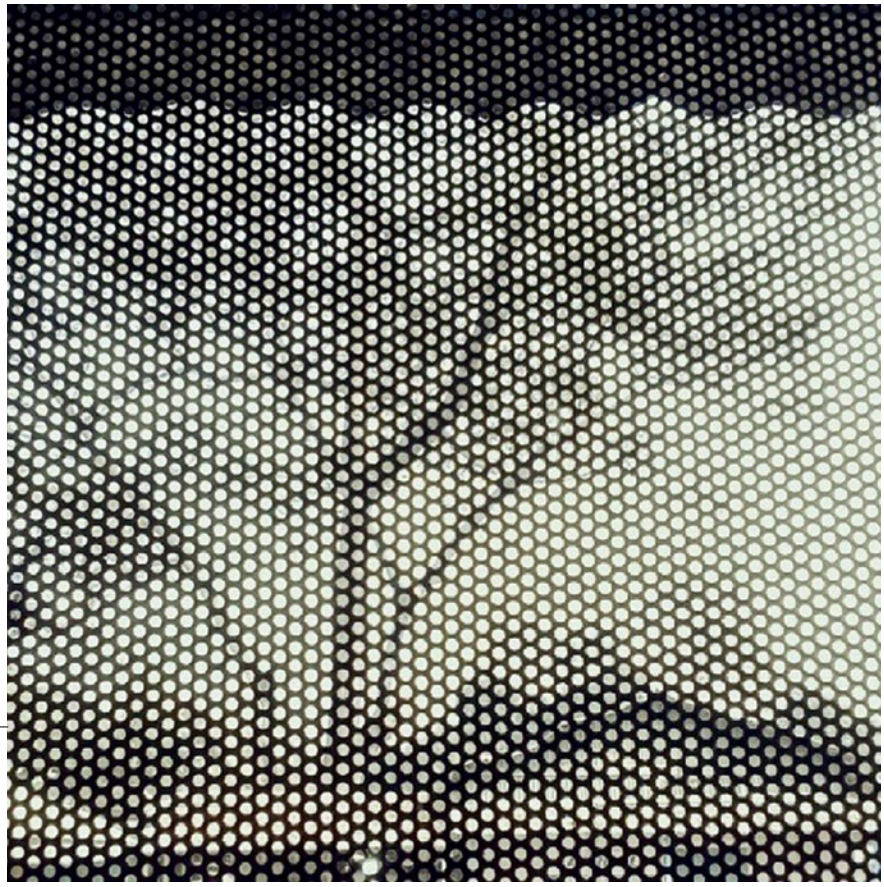
pictures with a budget XOLO phone with a 5MP camera. While it isn't the best in the market, it allows me to do what I want to do the most. And so, the nature of the device does not matter to me. The scenes that catch my fancy are fairly simple street scenes, and my fixed focus cameraphone does all that I need."



For this photograph, he was inspired by the theme of being eaten by nature.

The Golden Mantra

Prince mentions how he felt shy while shooting in public spaces. "Once, I was shooting in a marketplace with the shutter sound switched on, and the person I was photographing came up to me and asked me to delete the photos. I got really nervous, but I gathered my



He accidentally stumbled upon this view of a tree through a screen. To him, it looked like a painting made of dots.



He enjoys the earthy colours that he sees on the street, and a similar, warm colour palette is what appealed to him about this frame.

wits, showed him the photograph and explained what I was doing." Since then, he has made it a point to establish some sort of a contact with his subjects. He also lives by the mantra of 'Wander, wander, wander!' He says, "I love old streets, daily markets and bazaars, and quite often, I take photo walks with my friends so that I can make portraits of them as well. The more I wander around my own city, the more I discover new things about it."

Want to Document Spaces in Your Hometown?

- **Always Look for a Good Background:** It can handle any sort of foreground element. While walking around, you can simply make note of interesting surfaces.
- **Shoot at All Times:** Make pictures in the morning, shoot in the evening and don't stop during the afternoon either. All light is good light.
- **Show People their Pictures:** Agreed that cellphones are less intimidating, take this casual rapport a little bit further and show people what you have shot.

The Weightlessness of a Cellphone

The fact that cellphones are discreet and inconspicuous plays an important role in the kind of images that Prince shoots. "A cameraphone allows me a lot of freedom. I don't have to worry about carrying it around, and it is the best camera for street captures." He also feels that the main deterrent to good images is the fear of approaching strangers. "Just imagine that no one's watching you, and that you are on your own, shooting

"The more I wander around my own city, the more I discover new things about it.

by yourself for a project. Switch off the shutter-release sound and figure out a comfortable working distance from the subject, which will not intimidate you."

Balancing Minimalist Frames

Having clean, empty spaces in one's frames sounds appealing, but balancing all that space is not an easy task. "What I do is, simply change my frame such that the subject is on one side, while the other side stays empty. I also try to follow the Rule of Thirds to a certain degree."

Over 300 images strong, Prince's feed is growing steadily, but surely, with interesting collaborations on the horizon. Here's to new works and ways of seeing! BP



While making this image, he imagined that the leaves were headed to the river to drink water.



The slight shadow of the net, reflected on the surface of the river, is his favourite bit about this image. To him, it exemplifies a subtle play of light.

READERS' GALLERY

Better Cellphone Photography's readers put their smartphone photography skills to the test with this month's 'Landscape' theme.

Winner



Monsoon City
Kirat Mundle, Nagpur

What made me shoot this: The scene reminded me of an aerial view of a rainforest. The heavy rain and mist added to the spectacle before me.
What I learnt: I had to be careful while composing and cropping the image as I wanted to get rid of anything that would reveal that it was shot in a city.
Shot with: Apple iPhone 4s

Grand Prize
The winner, Kirat Mundle, gets *Better Photography's* Collector's Edition Secrets of Shooting 12 Pocket Guide set.

Take a look at all the nominees for this contest visit: http://betterphotography.in/?p=30385

Honourable Mention



Fish Tales
Subhankar Dutta, Purulia

What made me shoot this: The image was made at an abandoned reservoir that villagers use for fishing. The dazzling sun reflecting off the surface of the water drew me to the frame.
What I learnt: Since I was shooting against the light with a cellphone it was imperative that I got the exposure right... that, and not dropping my phone in the water.
Shot with: Samsung S8530 Wave 2

To be featured on these pages, participate in our contests by logging on to betterphotography.in/contests and win exciting prizes!

Honourable Mention



Going Beyond the Obvious

Mayank Bhatnagar, Jaipur

What made me shoot this: The image was not a traditional grand vista. It was more of a personal connection with nature.
What I learnt: My cellphone doesn't represent colours accurately enough. I had to be careful to capture enough detail to be able to enhance the image in Lightroom without making it look overprocessed. Flipping the image made it seem more intriguing.
Shot with: Nokia Lumia 520

Honourable Mention



Far Over the Misty Mountain Cold

Akshay Samarth, London

What made me shoot this: I was trying to capture the essence of the Swiss Alps, 1600m above sea level.
What I learnt: I had to fit in a lot of elements such as the lake, rivers, snow, mountains, fog, clouds and the greenery within one frame. All of these elements came together well to recreate the spectacular scenery before me.
Shot with: Apple iPhone 4s

Learn to Observe

If you play by its rules, the forest can be the most fascinating and thrilling even miss out on a giant opportunity to photograph an animal in action.

Most of us have only had the chance of appreciating wildlife through the pages of books and magazines. But imagine being present in the midst of the forest and gazing at a herd of *chitals* prancing freely in the wild. But to get to this point, there's a lot more that goes into preparing for a wildlife expedition.

Being an Inconspicuous Spectator

Animals have the sharpest senses. If they spot you, you can bid farewell to all your chances of observing their behavior in their natural habitat. So observe them from a safe distance and do not make sudden noises or movements that will startle them.

Upholding the Sanctity of the Environment

When you arrive at the spot, make sure that you do not leave obvious trails by breaking twigs and leaves or bruising the bark of trees. Animals are quick to pick up on this and will avoid the area you are in.

Do Not Use Food as Bait

It is unethical to lure an animal with food for the sake of a photograph, or even to reward it with food. You are doing nothing apart from intruding its space and disturbing the natural order of life.

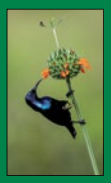
Understanding Behavioural Patterns

Research why an animal behaves in a particular way. For instance, when a group of deer stop grazing abruptly, chances are that they have sensed a predator and are being alert. Paying attention to their behaviour will help you capture the action that follows.

Never Go Close to the Young Ones

Animals are quick to detect an intruder that has entered their territory, especially their nesting areas. It is best that you stay

SHOOTING TECHNIQUE
Capturing Winged Beauties
15 simple, but essential tips to make great pictures of birds
76



SHOOTING TECHNIQUE
All of Creation
Go beyond the obvious & see wildlife differently
84



ON ASSIGNMENT
Street Prowl
High contrast B&W animal portraits
94



the Code of the Jungle

place to be in. However, one wrong move and you could either injure yourself or
To make your experience joyful, **Conchita Fernandes** lets you in on a few tips.

away because if you end up anywhere close to their young ones, the mother might reject the child to be its own and leave it to die. Also, even the smallest of animals will attack if they are threatened while in the company of their young.

Keep Your Expectations in Check

Patience is the key. Remember that it takes months and sometimes years for a photographer to have a single sighting. Don't expect to see a tiger and make a good picture of it during your four-day safari.

Try to be Anonymous in the Wild

The only way that you can maintain anonymity in the wild is by blending in with the surroundings. This is why you need to ensure that everything that you wear and carry does not have any distinct smell that will make the animals wary of your presence. Make sure that you are dressed in camouflage clothing. Don't forget to cover your hair with a grey or green cap.

Also on the day of the safari, make sure that you wash yourself with plain water and avoid synthetic soaps or shampoos, so that you don't give off any unnatural scent.

Question Every Move You Make

When you are out in the wild, question every step that you take. Ask yourself whether what you are doing is necessary and if it is helping the environment in any way. For instance, disposing your waste in the forest is just detrimental to the animals' habitat and also disrespectful to nature.

Most importantly though, remember that you are in someone else's home. Don't prolong your stay such that you are a burden on the environment, and thus end up exploiting their resources for the purpose of making a photograph. BP



Avoid imitating birds to attract their attention. This can cause distress to certain species of birds, especially during their breeding season. H Sathish



Striated heron: This small species of heron has very interesting feeding habits. They stand still at the water's edge, sometimes for hours, waiting to ambush prey. To photograph birds, you must learn to become like the Striated heron. Patient, still, but always alert.



Capturing Winged Beauties

Photographing birds gives us the opportunity to observe, study and be inspired by these majestic creatures. Supriya Joshi shares 15 bird photography tips.

Making images of birds is a challenge. However, it can also be a very rewarding experience. In fact, birds are the only wildlife subjects that are accessible easily. You don't have to look far and wide in order to find and photograph them. Simply take a look outside your window, and you will see at least three different types of birds.

With a lot of practice and a whole lot of luck, you can make some fantastic images of these splendid beings. Here are 15 tips to get you started.

Rajendra Dhage



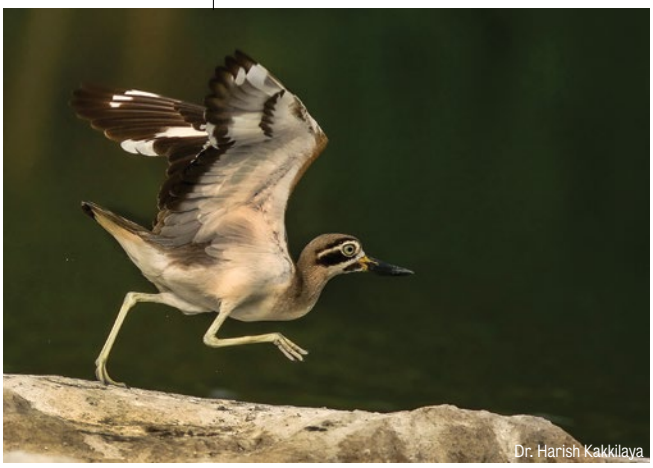
Rajendra Dhage

Superb Starling: Here's an iridescent member of the starling family, cooling off in a swimming pool. If you install a bird bath in your vicinity, you can use it to observe the birds who visit. Think about what settings you can use and then compose accordingly.

1. Study Your Camera Inside Out

Birds are flighty creatures—no pun intended—and a delay of even a few seconds could mean you missing your shot entirely. To make sure you are prepared for any situation on field, you have to make sure you know the workings of your camera thoroughly. Also, if your camera allows it, dedicate camera buttons to specific purposes, such as switching between focusing modes. If your camera allows you to do so, you should assign a button other than the shutter-release for AF activation for added precision.

Eurasian stone-curlew: This bird has very striking markings on the underside of the wings and looks beautiful when in flight. Make sure you study a particular bird species thoroughly before you photograph it, so that you can previsualise your frames and know exactly what you want to photograph.



Dr. Harish Kakkilaya

2. The Cropped Sensor Advantage

Do you need a full frame camera to make great bird photos? Not necessarily. In fact, a cropped sensor might serve you better because of the crop factor that comes into play. So, a 70–300mm lens on an APS-C camera will give a field of view equivalent to a 105–450mm lens (for Nikon cameras) and 112–480mm (for Canon cameras). In effect, you will get much closer to the subject, without having the need to invest in additional lenses.

This aside, there are superzoom cameras that allow you to shoot RAW, have responsive AF systems and are quite fast overall.

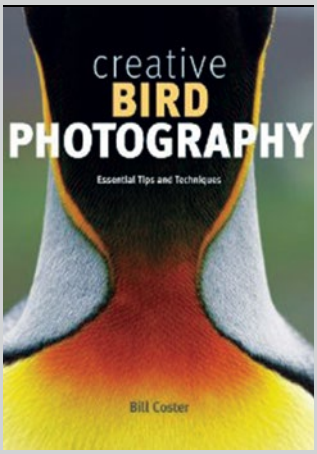
3. Study as Much as You Can

If there is a particular species of bird you want to photograph, study them in depth. Learn about their mating and migratory patterns, speak to expert birders and draw your own inferences. You could also simply observe your subject with a pair of good binoculars.

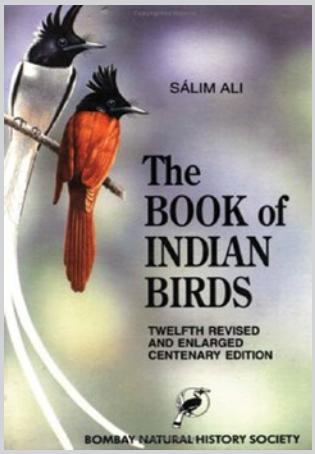
Can I Photograph Bird Nests?

As exciting as the premise may sound, making images of bird nests is looked down upon by many photographers. In fact, it is an illegal activity in many places. Your intrusion can disrupt natural processes, including the birds abandoning the nest entirely. Be an ethical bird photographer.

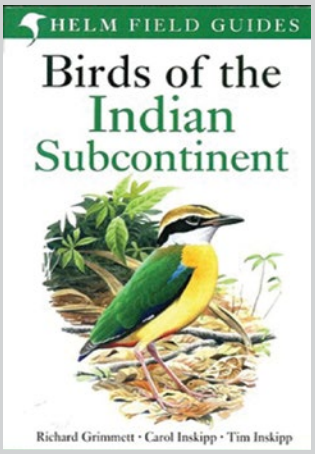
Four Essential Bird Photography Books You Must Own



Creative Bird Photography
Learn the secrets of creating memorable images of birds and their complex, fascinating lives.



The Book of Indian Birds
This book has been a close companion to both amateur and expert birders for the last 50 years.



Birds of the Indian Subcontinent
An essential guide for the identification and summaries of the birds in the Indian subcontinent, this book is a must-have.



Handbook of the Birds of the World
Find out all you all you need to know about the various kinds of birds in the world with this multi-volume series.

4. Start Small

When you are just starting out in this genre, begin by photographing birds that are easily accessible and accustomed to human presence. City birds like pigeons, crows and mynas can be your ideal first subjects. This will help you hone your technical skills as well as allow you to get a broader understanding of bird behaviour.

You can also install a bird feeder in your backyard or outside your window. It will allow you to observe them without disturbing them.

5. Keep Calm

When you spot a bird, don't rush towards it. Take a moment and observe the creature. Pay attention to what it is doing at the moment, and decide your



Lesser Whistling Duck: This duck species is found in flocks around lakes and wet paddy fields. Shooting in the Burst mode during intense action scenes can give you several momentous frames.

Jayant Sharma



Blue-tailed bee-eater: This is a richly coloured bird with a widespread occurence in India and feeds on insects. A bird's feeding time is one of the best times to photograph it, as they are the most active at that time.

photographic approach accordingly. Rushing towards a bird will most likely startle it and cause it to fly away. The legendary Salim Ali had once said that the secret to getting close to a bird is to take one step in several minutes, or even hours. If you slow yourself down, the bird will consider you a part of the environment, and not fly away.

6. Choose the Right Time

Most birds are active about three hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset. At both these times, they are looking for food, or are settling down for the day. While mornings are best for spotting various kinds of birds, the diffused evening light will help you create moodier images like silhouettes.

Photograph a bird in its surroundings, to give a better sense of story.



Common Kingfisher: This beautiful bird is an important member of several ecosystems and acts as a good indicator of freshwater health. When making close-ups, be mindful of the background of your photograph. Even the slightest out-of-place element could act as a disturbance to the frame.

When shooting at extreme focal lengths, every possible technical skill gets tested, with subjects that will never stay still.


Santosh Jana

Barn Owl: Besides illuminating low-light situations, flash also reveals texture and detail in a starker, but more ornate way.

7. Focus on the Eyes

Use Single Point AF for better precision. To prevent any front or back-focus problems, use a feature like AF Fine-tune before the shoot.

8. Use Continuous Focus

You do not want to miss crucial moments when you are photographing birds, especially when they are in flight. Switch to continuous focus, so that once the camera ▸

Indian Birds and Where to Find Them

The Indian landscape is home to a wide variety of birds, each more unique than the other. Here is a rough guide on where you can find them.

If you wish to catalogue birds, you must learn to be migratory yourself.

India is populated by some very remarkable birds. Some of these can be seen quite easily in urban areas, others will require you to travel to the many sanctuaries across the country. Let's take a look at some Indian sanctuaries, and the birds you can find there.

Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary, Haryana

Situated in the Jhaijar district in Haryana, Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary is best visited during the winter months, between December and January.


Parvinder Anand

Hoopoe: These colourful birds can be identified by their distinctive crown of feathers. They feed on mainly larvae and pupae and nest in tree holes.

The resident birds here are Black Francolins, Purple Swamphens, Spotted Owlets and Bronze-winged Jacanas. Migratory birds like Greater Flamingos, Green Bee-eaters and Northern Pintails visit the sanctuary as well.

Desert National Park, Rajasthan

One of the largest national parks, the Desert National Park is a haven for migratory birds. You can find the endangered Great Indian Bustard, Short-toed Eagles and Laggar Falcons here. The best time to visit is between November and January.

Silent Valley National Park, Kerala

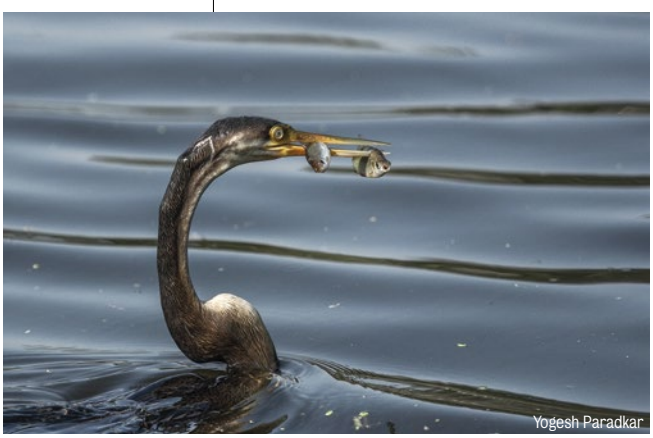
Some of the birds you can find here are Malabar Pied Hornbills, Crimson-backed sunbird and the vulnerable Nilgiri Woodpigeon.

Rajaji National Park, Uttarakhand

This national park is spread across Haridwar, Dehradun and Pauri Garhwal in Uttarakhand. You can spot Black-chinned Babblers, Fire-capped Tits and Jungle Prinias here.

Darter: This tropical bird impales fishes with its thin beak. Include the environment to give the species context.

has locked onto the subject, it will keep tracking it. If you are using a low-end camera and the AF can't keep up, preempt a bird's movement and focus manually.



9. Take Care of the Light

Frontal or sidelighting can work best for portraits where you want to show detail. It will also allow you to capture the intricate feathers and plumage of the bird.

10. Use Flash

In low light conditions, you may not be able to get a sharp photograph of a bird in motion. If your subject is close enough, fire your camera's flash in order to freeze any movement.

11. Experiment with Shutterspeed

Using a faster shutterspeed is encouraged when photographing birds in flight. However, you can use a slightly slower shutterspeed than required to blur the bird's wings. Smaller birds like

Short-toed Snake Eagle: This species of eagle is a handsome bird, which feeds on snakes. Explore symbiotic relationships and actively look for moments no book or guide can tell you about.


© Kiran Poonacha

hummingbirds look stunning when their wings are a beautiful blur.

12. Watch the Background

If the background is too cluttered, the beauty of the bird itself will get lost in translation. Position yourself in such a way that you get a clean background, in order for the bird to be the centre of attention.

13. Be Careful of the Corners

Before you hit the shutter, take a look at all corners of the frame. Do not cut off the bird's tail or its talons. You can make a tight close-up, but if you want to photograph a bird in its entirety, make sure there is enough breathing space in your frame.

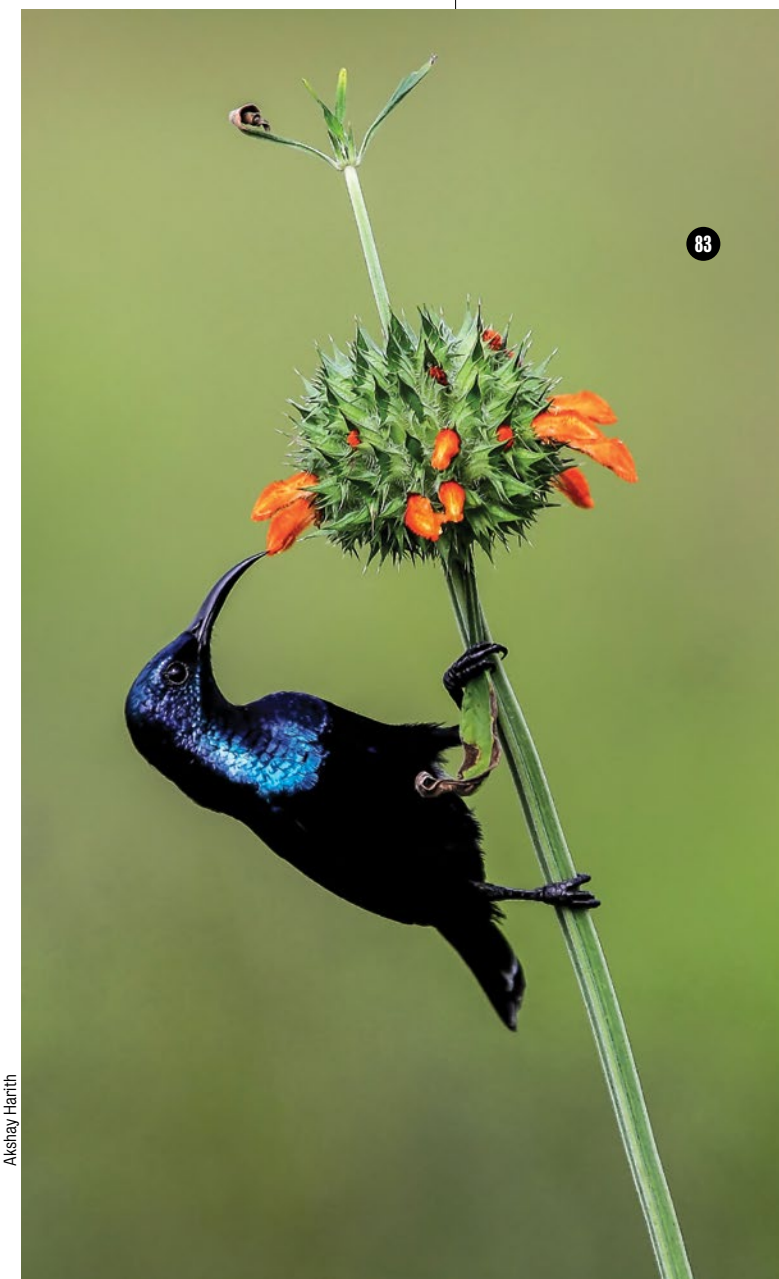
14. Be Prepared to Think on Your Feet

Become so intuitive that you can predict a bird's next move. The best of bird photographs are shot after hours, days and weeks or persistence, and not in a one-off half-hour shoot.

15. Be Persistent

Be patient, tenacious and keep practising. Make different plans around the year, as each sanctuary will pose its own share of challenges. It's easy to say you need a better lens. Use what you have and make a progress report by comparing how you've shot a particular bird on different occasions. BP

Purple Sunbird: These tiny birds are very fast, and feed on nectar. Use Single Point focusing on small birds to be extremely precise.


© Akshay Harith

All of Creation

What happens when beauty combines with wildlife and creativity? Ambarin Afsar explores an aesthetic that might just be the answer to this question.

Wildlife has been explored in a number of ways, most of which include a somewhat conventional, documentary approach. But what do you do when a particular species has turned into an oft-recorded, extensively documented creature? Besides, how do you portray your interaction and association with the animals in front of you? There is a widespread and strangely limiting assumption that good wildlife images are formulaic. There is nothing wrong with being conventional, or following a tried and tested set of compositional rules, but it is also healthy to challenge an aesthetic that has turned into a trend.

Should You Always Tell it Like it is?

Documentary photography is perceived as a genre that shows things as they are.



For all their rarity, the big cats are one of the most photographed subjects in all of wildlife. But, what does the king of the jungle feel? What fears assail this big predator? What does the future hold for him? How do you say all of that in one image? This is what creativity is all about.

Debiprakash Dass

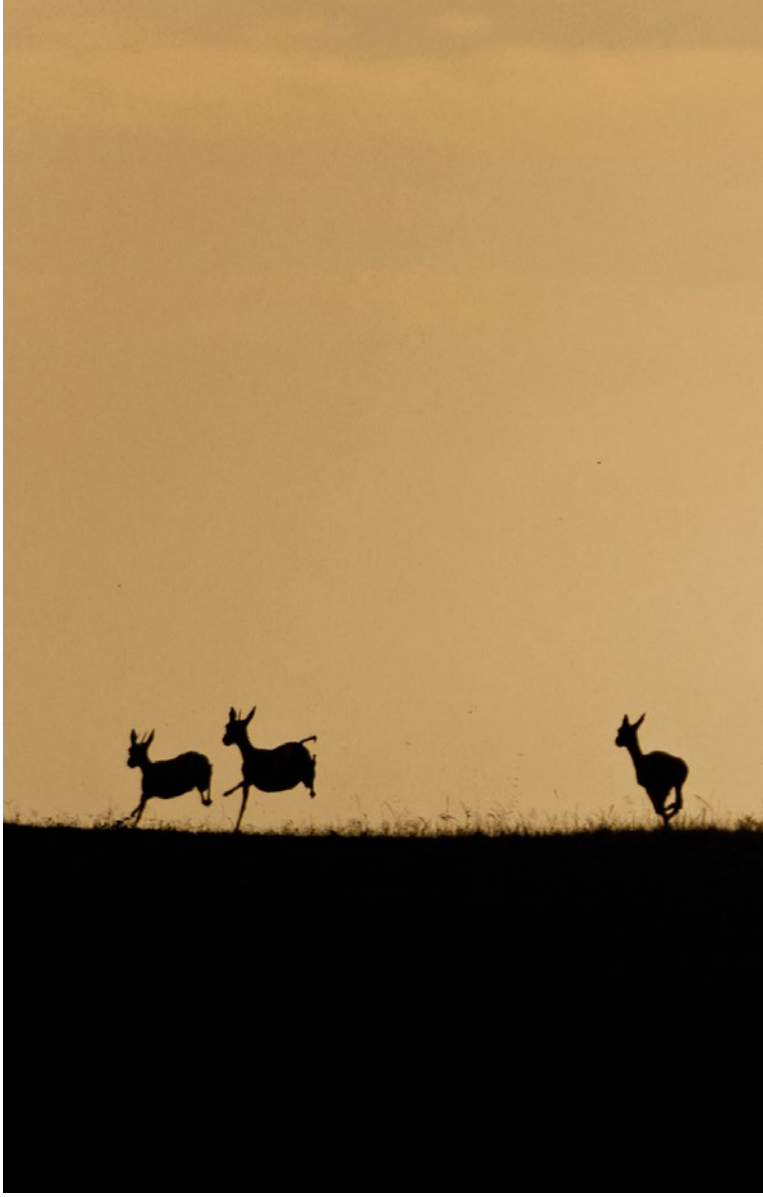
Birds hunting their prey, predators lurking in tall grasses, animals settling in for the night, or just about waking up. We believe that a fairly straightforward aesthetic is enough to show these activities. While this is true, what we also need to understand is that documentary photography is also about knowing a particular subject, its various facets. This understanding can help us translate these same activities in a manner worthy of the majesty of the wild.

Just as there is certain kind of grace in exploring unusual portraiture, and moving away from tried and tested poses and sittings, there is undeniable beauty trying to capture the ephemeral spirit of the wild.

How Do You Start?

There are no formulae to creativity. You need to ask yourself how can you potray this particular subject or species in a different manner. Look up the most popular images of the creature, and see how it has been portrayed by a majority of people. When reading up, identify specific habits, quirks and characteristics that offer you possibilities to be creative.

For instance, a kingfisher frozen mid-leap or just when it hits the water are



You do not need to see the front half of the leopard to know that it is one. This unusual image of a leopard making a getaaway brings to mind many things, speed, elusiveness and the near threatened status of the species.

Arati Rao



Kalyan Varma

This image looks almost like a woodcut or even something out of shadow theatre. When you pay careful attention to the fitures, you realise that a big chase is taking place.

examples of conventionally good shots that have turned into clichés. Ask yourself how else can you explore the personality of the bird—what does it look like under water, what if you rendered the bird into an iridescent blur of blue wings?

What Feelings Does Your Subject Evoke?

It is anthropomorphic to associate human emotions with animals, especially since they have a completely different response system. However, one cannot deny the fact that certain kind of behaviour is a very obvious sort of response to a given situation. For instance, when an animal is walking with its young, or cavorting with a herd or a couple of young companions, the feelings of warmth, joy, exhilaration and companionship are quite evident. Similarly, solitude and loneliness are the predominant things one senses when one sees a lone creature foraging for food, or simply taking a breather on a branch.

You can try emphasising these feelings by controlling your frame and by planning the sort of postprocessing you wish to do, well in advance. A relatively slow shutterspeed can help you turn tall, moving grasses into soft blurs, lending the overall frame with a certain kind of tenderness. Throwing a certain part of the frame out of focus intelligently can also evoke a similar mood.

How Do You Relate to Your Subject?

Researching or trailing a certain creature also creates an affinity between you and the animal, which, while incommunicable, is very strong. It is almost as if a link has been established between the both of you. Enough knowledge also hones what most people call intuition or a gut feeling. This makes you feel as if you are in sync with the creature, and can identify with it, or can predict what it is going to do. The elation a bird feels when it soars, or the effortless ease with which langurs leap from tree to tree, or the grace of the mating dance—all of these become contact points between you and your subject. These are ▸

Creativity is as much about the things you do not say, as it is about being obvious.

Equipment Does Not Matter, but Can Help

A lensbaby or tilt-shift lenses can help you achieve a softening of planes that is a lot more artistic and aesthetically appealing. On the other hand, ND filters can help you get slow shutter shots in broad daylight.


Arati Rao

This image of a young crocodile, photographed one early morning by a river, a wonderful portrait of the shy, lonely creature that was trying to hide.

not physical contact points, but mental or emotional ones, and ones that you can tap into for poignant images.

What are the Real Moods of Nature?

We often talk about the moods of nature, but we simply end up relegating these to either the times of the day or the changing seasons. Nature can be many mothers to its creatures—it can be kind, warm and protective, or cold, harsh, cruel and relentless. Each of these are evident in the lifecycle of all the creatures that share an environment. It is evident in birth and death, in dewy elephant calves and bleached skeletons, in the gossamer of


Clinton Dsouza

Be creative, but don't be disruptive. The same rules of respecting nesting creatures and young ones, apply here.

Creativity is not simply about being artistic for the sake of art. A cleverly made image can make a strong statement, besides being aesthetically engaging. Here, besides being a portrait of one of the most defining features of a stag, the image also makes a comment about the manner in which their heads are used as trophies.



Titlted A Call Unheard, the image is symbolic of the piercing calls of solitary birds and how their voices become one with the great unknown.

Ganesh Shankar





Animals in captivity have distinct moods and personalities than those who have only ever known the abandon of the wild. Freedom versus relatively assured survival and a certain degree of carefreeness—you can explore a whole range of issues and in various contexts.

Subhashish Karmarkar



The part of the frame that you choose to throw out of focus can create a very specific mood. Here, the foliage in the foreground has created a beautiful, soft frame for the elephant, symbolising the mammoth creatures enduring through the clouds of time. Nirvair Singh



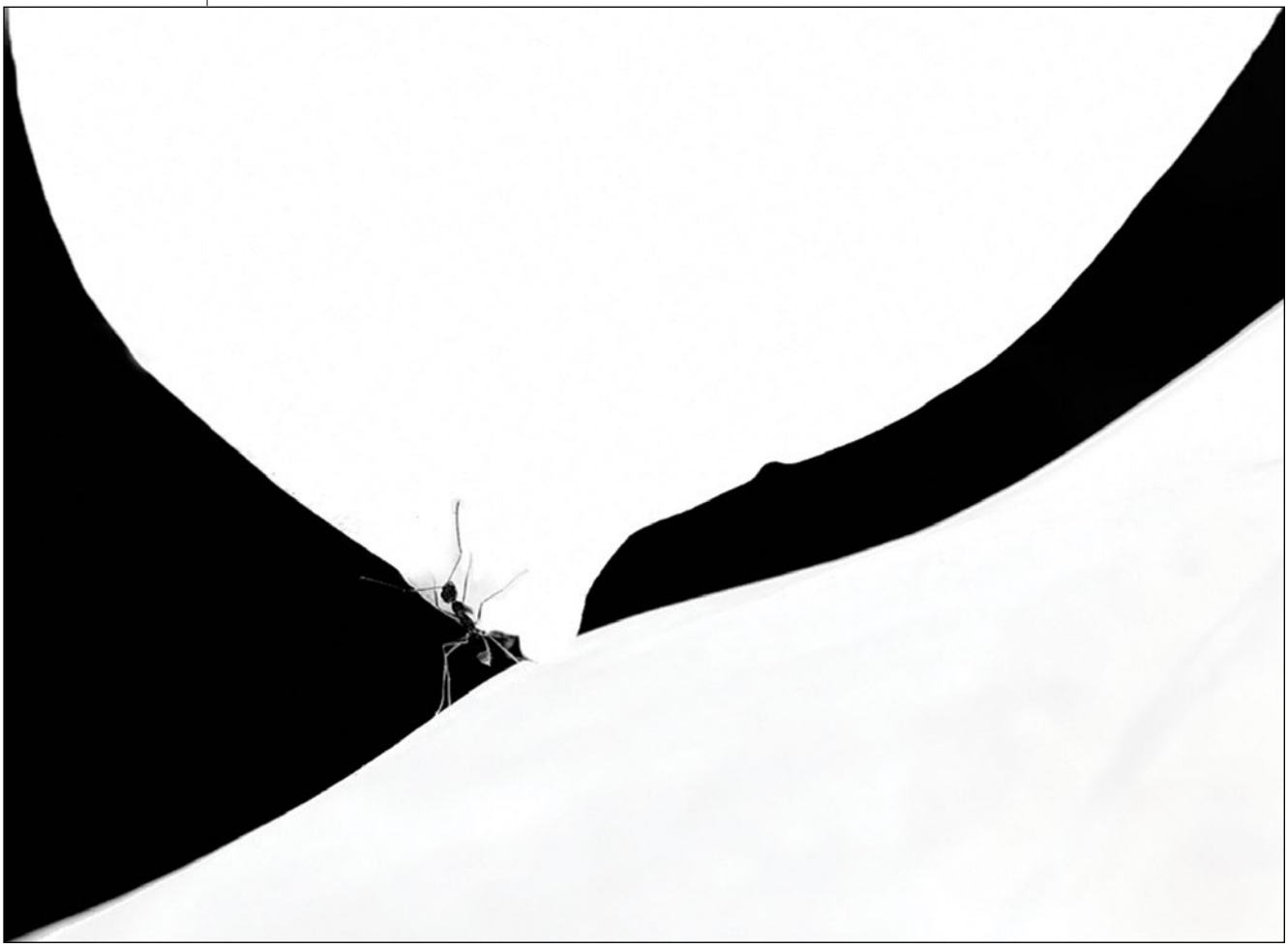
Prasenjeet Yadav

The close relationship that we share with all primates has been shown quite aptly in this image. The photographer seems to ask, what if these creatures start asking questions of us about poaching and the loss of their habitats.

Ant photographs usually explore nest building or leaf stitching. However, this image is a wonderfully graphic representation of the tiny creature navigating its way through a large macrocosm.

the spiderweb and the dragonfly, and the brittle elegance of barks and frost. Understanding these moods and the cycle of life will help you observe the quieter workings of nature.

Try not to be literal. If you want to show the fragility of something, don't do it in the most obvious manner. Poetry lies in showing the beholder a hundred different forms in one swift stroke. BP



Adithya U N



Some of the birds I came across would get aggravated if their young were around. This is one of the rare instances where I didn't face that situation.

ON ASSIGNMENT

Street Prowl

Giacomo Brunelli revisits his childhood love for animals by making quirky, unusual photographs of them on streets.

Growing up, I was surrounded by animals. I love animals. As a child, I would actually collect them, adding to our family pets much to the chagrin of my family. This series was a way of reconnecting with animals—just as I used to play with them as a child, aiming my camera at them is a way of playing with them as a grownup.

My Perspective

Animals is the first series I ever did, it was also the most spontaneous. After finishing a photography course, I was looking for a subject. I had shot other subjects like landscapes, but I had a certain mood in mind that needed to fit something in particular. The series started when I first photographed a cat jumping off a tree in Italy. That is when I noticed that my

My Assignment

Description
To photograph the reactions of animals as a result of my direct interaction with them.

Duration
From 2005 to 2012.

Notes
Walking or driving and coming across an animal was the most enjoyable part of the project.

I combined unpredictability of the animals with the charm of street photography.



The images are dodged and burned a little in the dark room, just enough to highlight certain areas.



This dog had blue eyes and was probably partially blind. As he couldn't see me he was scared by my presence, even though I was standing far away from him.

camera is very noisy. When I press the button, the shutter makes a noise that the animals react to. This response is my way of photographing my interaction with them.

As for my approach, I have always been a fan of street photography. I find it to be a very versatile approach. With the series, I was able to combine the unpredictability of the animals with the charm of street photography.

The Process

The first part of the series was shot in Italy and the second part was shot in

My cat brought me this mouse. I juxtaposed it with something pretty, as I wanted to depict life and death in one frame.



A lot of times, you have to have a sense of space and light. You have to be prepared for anything to happen.





Usually I try to get reactions from the animals. However, in this case I waited for 20 minutes for the horse to get up. That is probably what makes this photograph so quiet.

My Equipment

I used a Miranda Sensomat with a 50mm lens and Kodak Tri-X 400 film. For the prints I used standard chemicals, paper and a very old enlarger.

the UK. I would wake up at dawn and drive or walk until I found an animal. I would then compose the frame such that the background and light fit the mood I was in. Sometimes I would come across a situation where an animal would scare me or people would chase me off their property. But then, this is something I strongly feel about... you have to be willing to take risks to make good photographs.

Considering how different these images are from the conventional animal photographs, I was surprised at how well the series was received in different countries. I think this is because the love for animals is universal. BP

To view more images from Giacomo's work, you can visit his website www.giacomobrunelli.com

On Photographing Animals Differently

- **Trust Your Equipment:** Animals are fickle and unpredictable, so if you plan to use a different aesthetic, you need to know your technicals perfectly before you begin.
- **Distance Matters:** Most people photograph animals from afar, with telephoto lenses. But work like this is a delicate mix of intimacy and confrontation, and needs you to get physically closer.
- **Love Comes First:** No matter how you shoot animals, you have to love them. You need to be comfortable around them, know their habits and characteristics.



The mountains at Chota Dhara ascend in stark relief against the fantastic night sky, the likes of which can never be seen anywhere but in the Himalayas. The 'clouds' of light are actually much denser clusters of star systems.

All photographs by K Madhavan Pillai

Starstruck in the Abode of the Gods

On a Himalayan drive with the ***OVERDRIVE*** magazine team and **Mercedes-Benz**, **K Madhavan Pillai** describes his spiritual tryst with the mountains, photographing the brilliant night skies, incredible landscapes, and, of course, good-looking cars.

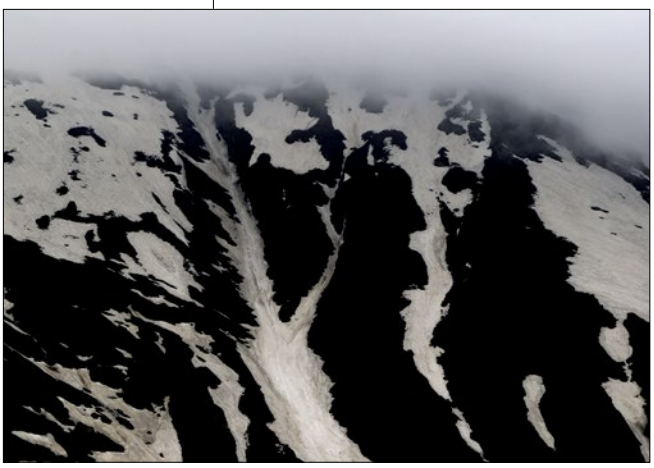
Scarcely can one begin to describe what the night skies look like from a high altitude Himalayan valley. The moment the campfires and generators died down at our Chota Dhara campsite, about 12,000 feet above mean sea level, the new moon night sky came alive in a breathtaking, astonishing display of celestial fireworks. Thousands upon thousands of mighty suns, acquiesced into tiny specks by unimaginable distances, dotted the heavens.

On one horizon, plainly visible to the naked eye, was the omnipotent Galactic Center... the eye that observed the absolute beginning of all time as we know it... within the iris of which nestles a 'supermassive' black hole four million times the mass of our beloved Sól, our Sun. Arcing from this center to the opposite horizon, stretched one of the mammoth arms of our galaxy's spiral—the Milky Way, or, more poetically described in Hindi—*Akashganga*, swift mother river in the sky.

No two mornings in the mountains are ever alike, and every one of them is profoundly beautiful.

As my mind grappled with my emotions and the sheer enormity of what I was witnessing that night, all sense of irony was lost upon me. The insignificance of my existence that I felt, confronted by that incredible, immeasurable vastness, was intensely complete. In fact, every member of the *OVERDRIVE* Mercedes-Benz Starstruck Drive felt this in some measure. After all, what place does a fragile stain of humanity really have, with all its political boundaries and inflated sense of world worthiness, against the vastness of creation in its most primal forms?

Drifts of snow compete with black rock at Rohtang Pass. The word 'Rohtang' literally translates to 'a pile of corpses'.



And on cue, almost as though to mark the presence of humans amidst it all, a man-made satellite signed off on the long-exposure shot, with what looks like a faint, mocking scratch on a photographic emulsion, seen on the top half of the 'S' of the main title of this story. At the beginning of the drive, we were told we would be lucky to spot a satellite orbiting Earth, if we looked hard enough. That night, we counted twelve!

Our story actually begins with ten lucky participants getting to accompany the *OVERDRIVE* team into the Himalayas, and drive across some of the toughest terrain in the country, in ML and GL-class cars.

The insignificance of my existence that I felt, confronted by that incredible, immeasurable vastness, was intensely complete.



If you ever encounter a Himalayan standoff—sheep versus Benzs—the sheep, numbering in the hundreds, and sometimes, thousands, always win.

Though I was a part of the group as a photographer, I could not help but wonder what it would be like to drive into the mountains in some of the most powerful, advanced SUVs in the Mercedes line-up. And luxurious it certainly was.

The participants got the chance to drive the cars, for the most part of the journey. The exceptionally skilled *OVERDRIVE* team took over on the most treacherous stretches, which included driving through waterfalls, by the edges of sheer precipices, and roadless mountainsides where landslides had occurred just a few hours before.

As we crossed Manali and Rohtang, and the convoy of Benzs moved towards Chota Dhara, the lack of any cellphone reception signalled that we had truly left civilisation



The ML and GL-class decide to show off their brawn in a unique boulder balancing act. The evening hues added drama. The Chandra river nearby provided long drumrolls.

It is amazing to see microcosms within macrocosms in the Himalayas. A 4x6-inch patch of rock offered a veritable palette of colours and textures, as fascinating as the incredible night skies.



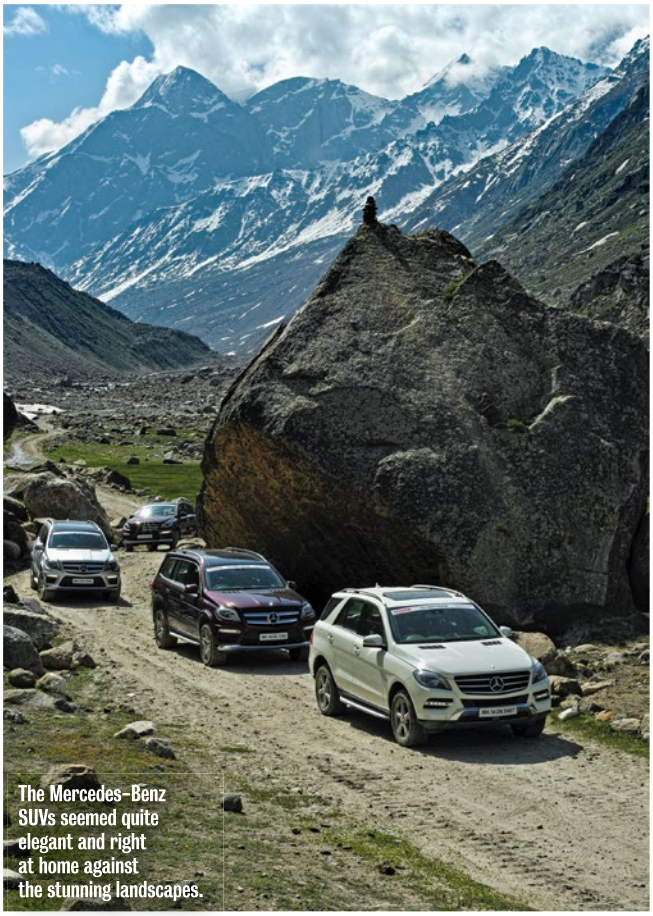
As the morning sun parted these seas like magic, far into the gorge, river tendrils glinted back—veins of silver lifeblood of the Himalayas.

behind... no more calls, internet surfing, emails and WhatsApp for the next two days.

The stupefying magnificence and grandeur of the mountains lay before us. Snowclad peaks towered above us like silent sentinels. Below us, valleys over a thousand feet deep hid their secrets beneath quiet seas of clouds. As the morning sun parted these seas like magic, far into the gorge, river tendrils glinted back—veins of silver lifeblood of the Himalayas.

At Chota Dhara, we camped beside the tumultous Chandra river. Fed incessantly by the sun-drenched, melting glacial ice, the river swelled and then ebbed as night fell. That night, we were treated to our first view of the Milky Way.

Time and again, I could not help feel belittled by what can only be described as one of the greatest art shows on the planet. For those of you who have not been to the Himalayas yet, you must plan for it. Of course, going with the *OVERDRIVE* team, in Mercedes-Benz SUVs, is a bonus. There is absolutely no experience like it. BP



The Mercedes-Benz SUVs seemed quite elegant and right at home against the stunning landscapes.



The mountains defy any conventional sense of scale. Our convoy stands testimony to this even as it heads into our campsite at Chota Dhara.

Want to share your ideas and tips? Write to
The Editor, Better Photography,
Network18 Media & Investments Ltd,
New Era House, Opp Shamrao Vithal Bank,
Mogul Lane, Matunga-West,
Mumbai-400 016, Maharashtra, India.
Email: editor@betterphotography.in



Raj Lalwani

LIGHTNING AND BEYOND

Get the Basic Technicals Right

A relatively long exposure, a tripod and turbulent weather—the first step to getting an innovative lightning photograph is to first get its basic technique right. While setting your exposure, remember that you shouldn't choose your settings only on the basis of the ambient light. When the lightning strikes, the scene is going to be a lot brighter. In a way, this is like flash photography.

This was a rare occasion when a not-so-slow shutterspeed of 1/15sec worked, and that's something that can happen in particularly turbulent storms.

Lightning always seems to look better with a relatively cool White Balance setting.



Kajla Sarjeet

Not Just the Effect

A common mistake made by most photographers is to concentrate all energies on getting the lightning. That is the first step towards the image, but it's not everything. How is your picture different from the thousands of lightning photos shot by others? The foreground activity and the composition are equally important. Ask yourself, does this frame look good without the lightning? If it does, the lightning strike will elevate it from a good photo to a great one.

Combine Other Long Exposure Techniques

From flash pumping to light trails to motion blurs of people moving across the frame, slow shutterspeeds allow you a variety of effects. Imagine combining one or two of these effects along with the lightning!

Make Your Own Luck

Fortune plays a role, but by observation and anticipation, you can see that the luck goes in your favour, on more occasions than not. Lightning, when frequent, tends to follow patterns. Keeping your frame ready with the shutter being pressed repeatedly (or by

SONY



TECHNOLOGY FOR CREATIVITY

Discover how science helps you in adding a creative touch to your photography through Sony's range of technologically advanced cameras. α

setting up a remote) will go a long way in getting the shot.

FILLING THE FRAME, BIT BY BIT

Simplicity is Key, But...

Sometimes, just one subject may not tell you the entire story. You may want to revel in the visual chaos, you may want to layer the story... or you may simply want to connect multiple threads to each other.

What's the First Thing You See?

Ask yourself what is the first thing your eye catches. Is it your intended subject? Or is something else distracting attention? Change the frame and vantage point accordingly.

Trace and Connect the Elements

Do the various elements connect with each other, visually and geometrically? Things don't just fall into place, you need to have plenty of patience. And after hours of prowling the streets and waiting, when the moment comes, you need to be ready!



Raj Lalwani

Keep a close watch at the corners of your viewfinder. Even one distracting element can ruin the picture.

QUICK TIP

Format your memory card every time you start a new shoot.

Wide Lenses Help

They force you to go closer, right into the heart of action. Wide lenses usually have a larger depth of field too, allowing you to keep multiple elements sharp, thus establishing a conversation that runs between them.



Senthil Kumaran

Even chaotic photos often need one visual element that binds the image together, or they may just look too careless and cluttered.



Manipulating the flash's light with a gel or filter is a key technique, when combining flash with fire or light trails.

Raj Lalwani

FUN TRICKS WITH FLASH

Light Only the Foreground

Did you know you can adjust the on-camera flash's intensity, such that it only illuminates what is immediately in front of the camera? This is a good trick to use if you want to light something that is in shade, but want to maintain the ambient light that is there in the rest of the frame.

Blow Out the Subject

Remember those bad party photographs where the person in the group who is closest to the camera looks like a ghost? Now, think of doing the same thing, but with a creative twist... blow out the subject deliberately.

This can be done by firing the onboard flash at full power (though it shouldn't affect the rest of the shot) or by placing an external flashgun, such that it fires at the subject, but not elsewhere in the scene.

This can create a stark and disconcerting feeling, but can also make the image graphic and attractive. It can particularly look interesting in black and white. Australian photographer Trent Parke has used this technique several times too.

QUICK TIP

Avoid staring at your LCD for too long. Review your images only when you go back home.

Colouring the Flash

The light emitted by the flash may look odd when combined with ambient light, so experiment with the use of gels or filters. If there is no gel around, use a coloured gelatin paper, or even a coloured-glass beverage bottle. These can give some interesting results!



Subjects that receive flash will be comparitively sharper, while the background can be nicely blurred in frantic panning shots like these.

Raj Lalwani



If you are faced with a glass or reflective surface, either bounce the flash or change your shooting angle. The light reflecting off the surface will do so at an angle that is equal to the angle of incidence (basics of physics laws!).

Raj Lalwani

Just a Hint of Sharpness

If there are a lot of moving subjects or you are moving the camera to pan or track, flash can momentarily freeze movement and give some much-needed sharpness.

Revisit Your Dreams

Long exposures with flash can look eerie. Also, if there is a lot of dust in the air, it shows up as surreal circles in the frame, if you fire the flash in the dark. BP

Participate in the 'Reader's Tip Contest' on *betterphotography.in/contests* to win a chance to be featured in the magazine and win exciting prizes!

READER'S TIP

Rain as Supplementary Lenses

Almost everyone shoots raindrops and water droplets. As subjects, they are almost clichés, but perhaps, one cannot run away from certain visuals as they are so symbolic. Droplets in the monsoon are all around us. They are beautiful and represent the season in a quiet, romantic way. The cliché exists in the first place for a reason.

While we are all attracted to these obvious visuals, I wanted to play with them, so that I could make them more interesting. That's when I noticed that when viewed from certain angles, every water droplet seems to reflect a world of its own. It's like a secondary lens, one that shows an image of its own, twisted and distorted by the shape of the droplet.

Once the observation was made, it was about finding the right composition, such that there are no distracting elements and the viewer's attention can directly go to the inside of the water droplet. Focusing can be a bit of a challenge, but the use of Single Point AF, or better still, manual focus can help you get the shot.

— Kumar Mangwani



Kumar Mangwani

Once you have noticed the supplementary lens phenomenon, you must wait for an interesting frame to play itself out from within the droplets, and then trigger the shutter accordingly.

Q&A

Want your doubts cleared? Write to
The Editor, Better Photography
Network18 Media & Investments Ltd
New Era House, Opp Shamrao Vithal Bank,
Mogul Lane, Matunga-West,Mumbai-400 016,
Maharashtra, India.
E-mail: editor@betterphotography.in

BRIEFLY

Can I shoot macro photos with my 18–55mm kit lens?

The 18–55mm does allow you to get really close to your subject, but it is not 1:1 lifesize macro. A close-up filter will help you get even closer, but focusing and keeping the frame steady are major challenges, so keep a tripod handy.

Manual Focus in Video

I plan to use my DSLR to shoot video at live events. How do I ascertain manual focus, while shooting on the move?
Akhilesh Sinha, *Pune, via email*

Magnifying to confirm focus and using AF before starting video are effective ways to focus accurately when shooting static video, but for moving subjects, the only effective solution is a lot of practice. Invest in a monopod or a small video rig if you plan to do a lot of handheld video.



Accessories like LCD loupes and external monitors help you see the Live View in a larger, clearer way and thus help change focus on the fly.

White Borders

I recently met a friend who was using prints to make an edit. Each print had a white border. Considering these were work prints and were not going to be mounted in a frame, what use did the borders serve?
Devika Parekh, *Ahmedabad, via email*

Most consumer labs use paper that is not of the exact size that they advertise. So a 6 x 4 inch print may actually be 6.1 x 3.8 inches. It looks virtually identical, but your final resultant print may get cropped or may have a thin white line at the side that will look shoddy.

White borders also make it easy for you to handle the prints, giving you a grip, while ensuring that you do not get any fingerprints on the actual image. Finally, you may not realise it immediately, but the border does give some breathing space to the photograph. This can be helpful while browsing through multiple photos and making an edit that can be paired, sequenced or arranged carefully.

HOW TO

Use the Onboard Flash to Photograph Rain

Rain can look peaceful and romantic, but with some ingenious use of technique and lighting, it can be made to look surreal and mysterious, as well. If you are wondering how this can be done, let's first warn you that this breaks most conventions that you may have learnt so far.

Light Up Those Raindrops!

The flash helps illuminate the raindrops, and depending on the power of the flash and the choice of WB/flash gel, they will either look like blown out blobs or like white or yellow patterns.

Not Just the Raindrops

A photograph of flash-illuminated white streaks of rain becomes more interesting when there is more activity happening in the frame. So first think of an interesting enough moment and composition, not just the technique and its look. Without an effective setting and activity in the background, the technique may come across looking gimmicky.

Where to Focus

The frame can be a long winding road that disappears into the distance or it can be a bunch of people enjoying the rain. Set a wide aperture and then use either AF or manual focus and ensure that the background activity is in focus. What this will do, is that any raindrops near your lens will be thrown out of focus. Now, once the flash lights them up, they will appear like foreground bokeh.

Choice of Camera Settings

Your choice of ISO and shutterspeed are crucial as well. Increasing the ISO makes the flash stronger. A slower shutterspeed will allow more ambient light to enter. Too slow a shutterspeed (1/8sec or slower) may actually show the movement of the drop falling, which can look good at times, but this may involve a lot of trial and error.



The right combination of flash power and shutterspeed will help you decide the right ratio between the ambient light and the flash light that pierces through the raindrops.

Equipment and Vision

I have heard several photographers say that the camera does not matter and it is all about the photographer's capability. If that's really the case, why do professionals use high-end cameras? Does the choice of equipment have any influence on vision?
Sanjana Thakkar, *Mumbai, via email*

A professional can, in most circumstances, get the same results with far lesser equipment, but if he is on assignment, he would obviously want something that also makes his job easier and faster. That's the main reason why pros often want to buy the latest and best, and of course, the fact that the images that they shoot help them recover the investment they've made in the camera, quite easily. If you are not shooting for a living, you may want to invest money elsewhere, like travel, education, a bunch of photobooks or to do a new project.

Aesthetically, you may want to use one camera over the other. If you need to make large, square prints, you may want to use medium format film; if you need extra reach, you may prefer an APS-C or Micro Four Thirds camera. Certain kinds of work demand small, nifty cameras, while others need you to slow down. A better camera will not help you get better photos, but every piece of equipment urges you to see differently, and in turn, influences the kind of photos you will make.



Question of the Month

Send in your queries to *Better Photography*. If your letter wins Question of the Month, you stand to win a *Lexar 8GB 100x SDHC media card!*

Full Frame AF Issues

I recently bought my first full frame camera. While I love the quality, I am finding that the number of out-of-focus images I'm shooting has increased. Why?
Radhika Mehra, *New Delhi, via email*

If your new full frame is one of the high-resolution 20–30MP bodies, it's probably the fact that you need to be far more critical with these cameras, as opposed to some of the older 10/12MP entry-level DSLRs. The larger sensor also means that depth-of-field is potentially shallower, which again needs a far more disciplined approach.

Finally, it could be that your full frame camera's AF system is not as good as your older camera (though it's price is definitely higher). Focusing points also cover a smaller area in the viewfinder in full frame cameras sometimes. But again, a change of approach and better understanding of your gear should easily solve that.

USB Charging

A lot of new cameras seem to allow USB charging, instead of the conventional charger that is usually packed in the box. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the same?
Ranbir Khanna, *Jaipur, via email*

The advantage is obvious. If you lose your charger, the ubiquitousness of the USB port means that you can find an inexpensive replacement easily. Also, if there is no plug point around, you can use a laptop or even a car to charge the camera.

However, USB, that is, in-camera charging is often a lot slower. Also, when you are charging, the camera is stuck. So you cannot charge one battery while you use your camera with a spare, something that is possible with cameras that have dedicated chargers.

Blown Out Highlights

When shooting in harsh light, at around two or three in the afternoon, the bright areas in my photos go completely white. How do I avoid this?
Hormuz Ranji, *Mumbai, via email*

Underexpose the image. This may cause the shadows to go much darker, but it is easier to retrieve details from shadows in post, if you are using a digital camera. Alternatively, you can set the exposure such that the highlights don't blow out, and then pop up the camera's flash, such that the shadows get illuminated as well. BP

BRIEFLY

Some of my JPEG images have more noise towards the corners. The RAW files are fine. Why?
You must have switched on the Automatic Vignetting Correction function. This removes any darkening towards the corners, and may, consequently, introduce noise in these areas.



Some cameras tend to blow out highlights in contrasty situations. In this example, the picture on the right needed to be underexposed by a stop.



River Adventure

Natasha Desai tries to understand what drives **Karen Glaser** to make her way through the waters of Florida, photographing it all.



Karen Glaser

- She is drawn to subjects in and around water bodies and swims in a freshwater spring every morning in Florida, USA.
- Her work has been exhibited in The Art Institute of Chicago, The Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American Art, and has appeared in publications like *Harper's* and *BBC Wildlife*.

The first time I went snorkelling, I was completely mesmerised. Watching underwater life swim by was an unparalleled experience. I remember noticing the colours and textures of reefs being richer than I thought they were. The translucent, almost ethereal nature of a jellyfish passing by, is etched in my memory.

This awe and wonder I had felt about the underwater kingdom tumbled back as I viewed Karen Glaser's photographs. Her images take you to the part of the earth that is yet to be explored in its entirety. She has photographed a wide variety of water bodies, from oceans to freshwater springs, and their very diverse life forms.

Love for the Underwater World

In 1983, Karen was gifted a Minolta Weathermatic, a watertight pocket camera that marked the beginning of her fascination with making images underwater.

She first photographed children in a pool and has come a long way since then to photographing sharks, manatees, alligators, and other fascinating wildlife that dwells in Florida's water bodies.

Intimate and Involved

Karen was able to pursue her projects *Swamps* and *Springs* after being awarded Artist in Residencies from both the Everglades National Park and the Big Cypress National Preserve, in the early 2000s. At first glance, you may not even realise that these images were made underwater. But then, you begin to notice the softer quality of the light, the roots of the plants and the small particles floating around. Karen tends to get so involved in making her images



GREATMASTERS
Ganesh Shankar
On his constantly evolving aesthetic
116

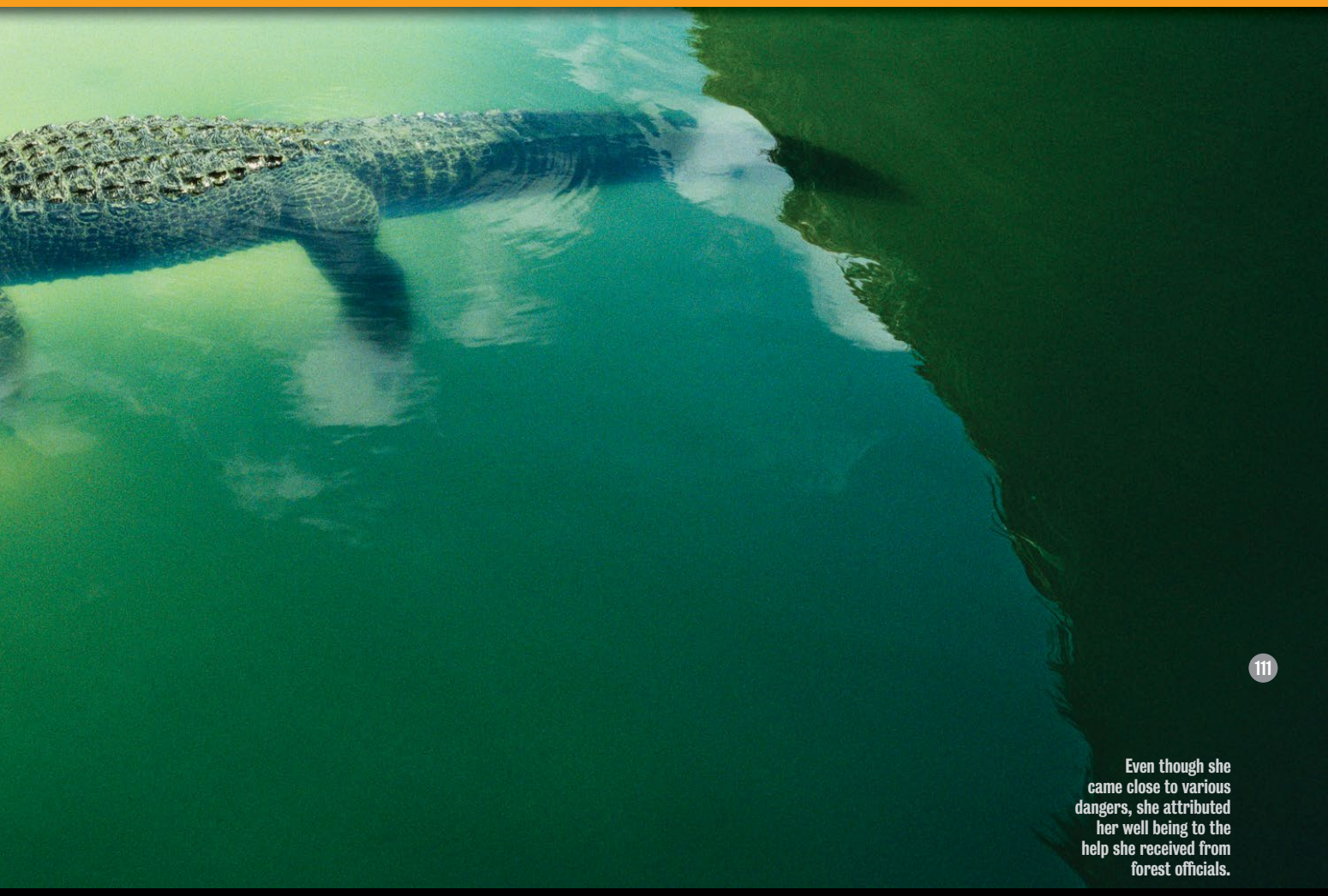


SPECIAL FEATURE
Our Beautiful Earth
A breathtaking view of Earth from outer space
124



PHOTOFEATURE
Stop and Look
The brutality behind the trade of rare animals
130





Even though she came close to various dangers, she attributed her well being to the help she received from forest officials.



Before photographing any area, Karen spends months researching the wildlife and the characteristics of the region.



Karen is constantly trying to bring out why she is enticed by water through her images.

that she needs to take someone along, so as to not lose her way. She does not alter or manipulate her images in any way, wanting the water to be depicted in the state of flux that it is. "This layering of mud and muck, although it may appear to interfere with the water's clarity, is in fact its lifeblood—the living, and breathing matter that reflects, refracts and bends the light to create its complexity," she says.



"The mystery of these waters and the complicated puzzle of their continued existence inspires these pictures."

Karen and her husband snorkelled in the winter when it was 4°C to photograph the spawning of the Garfish shown here.



Some of the images from her series *Swamps* look like they are made above the water until you notice the bubbles.

TIPS BY KAREN

- Don't get so involved with your equipment that you miss the whale shark swimming by you!
- When diving underwater, be sure to follow the buddy system, where you take someone along, in case something goes awry.

Suffering Ecosystems

She believes that Florida houses very unique ecosystems in its water bodies, and they face the danger of large scale development. "These photographs were made in a geographical location that is both seductive and sickening. Although it has remarkable environments, it is screaming with out-of-control development. I am not interested in making pictures of what created this mayhem; I want to show what you haven't seen," she says.

Difficult to Define

A curator once said, "Karen Glaser photographs the other 70% of the Earth's

Karen does not use any kind of flash or other source of external light that will disturb the life of the underwater creatures.





The aim of her images is to show people what is worth saving in these diverse ecosystems.

surface," which probably sums up what Karen does. Trying to slate her images in a particular genre proves futile. She does not call herself an underwater photographer, nor an environmental one.

Art, Not Politics

Being a ceramics and photography major in college, Karen draws from a strong background in art. She prefers shooting with film over digital for these projects. However, she does not hold a purist view towards film. She says, "I don't get all stringent about it, technology will keep evolving. But I personally don't feel the need to change the look of the project when it is working for me successfully."

Karen Glaser does not aim to make her images a political statement nor does she make them from a scientific point of view. Her images are all about the seductive



Karen likens the palette of her images to American artist George Inness, who painted beautiful landscapes in the 1800s.





Karen says, "Water is life's stage and for as long as the stage door has been open to us, it has excited our creative and spiritual expression."

GADGETS & GEAR

- While making underwater images, Karen uses a Nikonos V, an underwater SLR.
- For everything else, she uses a Hasselblad XPan, a panoramic camera.

quality of water, the mystery that it holds and the life that it carries. "These places are powerful and visceral. To show the essence of these remarkable areas, the photographs try to be as layered and rich as the environments are."

Yet, I find myself thinking about how precious these waters are. Development everywhere has its tragic side effects. With images such as Karen's, the fragility of ecosystems, not only in Florida, but around the world come to mind. BP

Critics have called her images messy. Karen, however, takes that in a positive light as she remains honest to the environment.





***Shadows*: Ganesh likes to relate instrumental music to nature photography as an art form.**



Ganesh Shankar

Ambarin Afsar speaks to **Ganesh Shankar**, who has inspired and mentored a whole generation of wildlife photographers, about his evolving aesthetic.

This foray into Ganesh Shankar's mind is best introduced by a quote by one of his favourite poets, Dr G S Shivarudrappa, paraphrased from Kannada, "I sing because I need to, not because there are others to listen to." It is hard enough to find your own voice, as it involves journeys that make you earn your way of seeing, and then it is even tougher to stay on a path that constantly demands radically different things from you. Ganesh's way of seeing has gone through a similar evolution, yet still is in a state of metamorphosis that may never be complete.

"Someday, I would like to associate twigs or blades of grass with nine different emotions."

From Formulaic Postcards to Nature as Art

Born and brought up in a small village close to the Western Ghats, Ganesh Shankar entered professional life as an engineer. A nature and wildlife photographer for the last 20 years, he now lives in what he calls the 'concrete jungle of Bengaluru.' His time in the Western Ghats is among his most memorable, and he recounts using a Kodak Kroma, a point-and-shoot camera, for his nature trips. A friend of his introduced him to SLRs, and he hasn't looked back since.

"For about ten years, I was a photo-scientist more than a photographer. I mastered all the formulae and followed textbook rules. After a point, I realised I wanted to be different, and I needed a signature." The reason also changed with time, and soon, it was about more than creating individualistic images.

What is Art?

He spent a lot of time pondering over this question and then came across a similarly



A Portrait of an Indian Vulture: **He says that of late, his images are not based on a particular concept and are simply an expression of feelings triggered by a subject seen in the viewfinder.**



***Impressions, Flamingos*: Ganesh's images have characteristic blurs, soft focus and a play of depth of field. Yet, these are not whimsical tools impletement for art's sake. Each effect says something specific, for instance, here, the multitudes of the flamingos have been emphasised.**

titled book by Leo Tolstoy. "The book taught me that art has three attributes—it conveys feelings or emotions, it is novel, and most importantly, the artist is sincere to his creation. While these factors might seem limiting, they prevent just about anything from qualifying as a work of art. On the other hand, art for art's sake tends to be far more accomodating... and perhaps, more meaningless."

The Primary Purpose of an Artist

For Ganesh, the reason why anyone should create art is not to hang a frame on the wall of a gallery. "It is a truthful expression of the inner self, and that the image becomes a work of art is secondary." He also believes that the difference between documenting natural history and turning nature into art is, "With the former, we photograph what is outside, and with the latter, we photograph what is inside our heart. And so, our emotions, feelings or our value system take the shape of a image."

Mentoring Young Minds

Ganesh's critiques and the guidelines on a forum started by him and his friends called Creative Nature Photography also introduced me to the term 'bird-on-a-

"For the documentation of natural history, factual representation is important. In photography that is pursued as an art form, subjective reality takes precedence."



stick photography'. This basically refers to images where a bird is perched on a branch or a stick. While the shot is conventionally good, sharp and with the requisite shallow depth of field, it doesn't say anything else besides the fact that the bird, however rare, is on a stick. "My friends and I wanted to create a place where everyone could share their own creative visions and after six years, the forum has also evolved into the exploration of abstract perspectives."

Any photographer will know the value of constructive, informed feedback. And this is what Ganesh provides, almost on a daily basis, to the people who post on the forum.

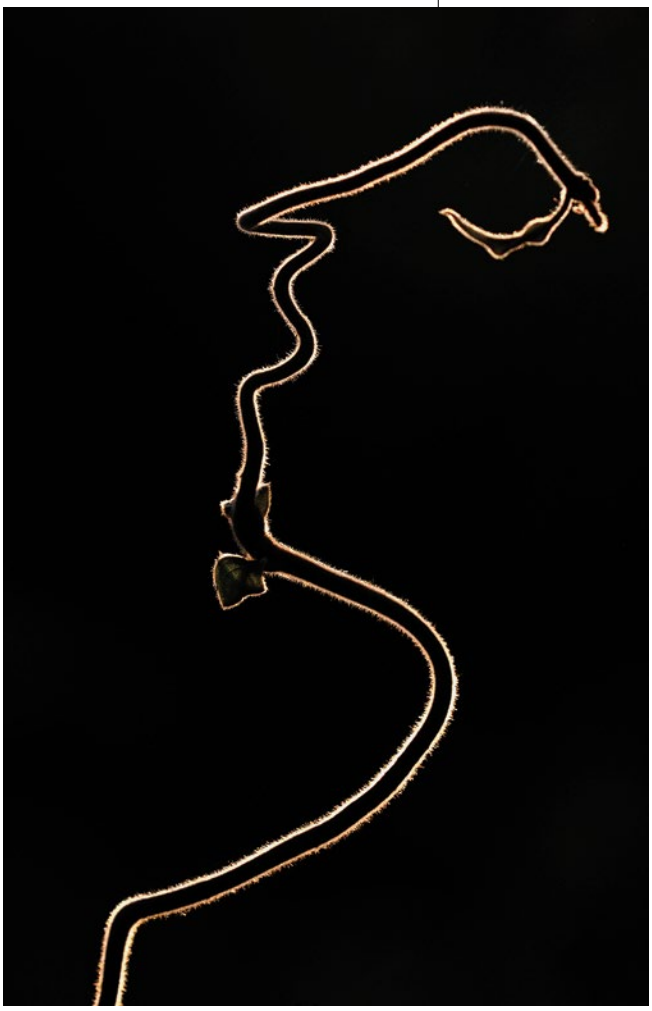
Lending a Voice to the Intangible

The reason why Ganesh finds nature and wildlife photography stimulating is because the medium and the subject itself are a challenge. It is difficult to lend intangible concepts like emotions and feelings to natural elements.

"All photographs of nature are described as being beautiful. On the other hand, an image of a child with a tear rolling down her face evokes so many more reactions. This makes me ask, can I relate to the emotions of animals? Can I make my viewers relate to the emotions of a spider, ant or elephant?"

Letting Go of the 'I'

And he succeeds on all accounts. Not only is his work aesthetically provocative and engaging, it is also soft and subtle.



Nature's Cartoon: **An exemplary minimalist image, it shows the power of Ganesh's keen, intuitive and completely unique way of seeing.**



***A Forest Path*: When asked what makes a good image for him, Ganesh countered it saying that if images are the translation of emotions, then is there any way of quanitfying them?**

"Creating abstractions is tough. Often, such expressions are born dead, even to my own senses."



***Alarmed*: If not a photographer, Ganesh feels that he would have been a poet or a painter. He envies painters because they start with a blank canvas.**

Departure: A professor of mine who is also an eminent photographer is fond of the phrase 'point of departure', the point where you depart from the obvious. Ganesh's images are the very embodiment of that.

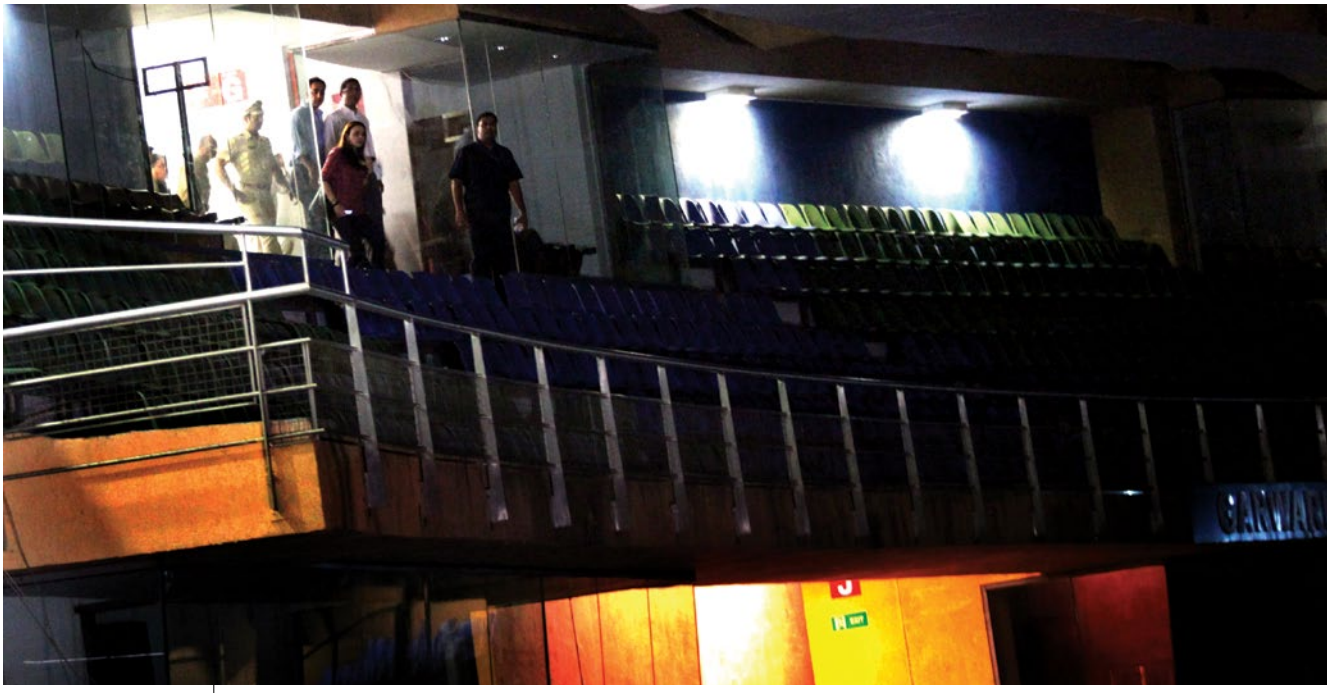
"Some time ago, I wondered whether I should share my work at all, since it is comprised entirely of my emotions. Can I let go of the 'I'? But then I think that if people manage to identify their own selves in these extremely personal images, then it may be that these images are worth sharing. But, I am yet to reach a resolution."

Nature teaches humility in its barest, simplest form. It teaches us to be close to our roots, to know our true selves and to always remember our mortality. Ganesh's images and his approach are almost like little snowglobes, encompassing a fragile, ephemeral moment in the wild, brought to a standstill... a moment that reminds us that there exists a great beauty within us.



1000 Words

A selection of some of the best images from the Indian mainstream media



Pradip Das,
The Indian Express

Revisiting the Trauma

Preity Zinta enters Wankhede stadium with the Mumbai police to record her statement and reconstruct the sequence of events, that led to the alleged assault by Ness Wadia. This was one of the few photos that provided context to a moment and setting crucial to the case.







Sanjay Hadkar,
The Times of India

Restored Glory

The Khada Parsi statue of Seth Cursetjee Manockjee was unveiled in Mumbai on 20 June. The celebration surrounding the restoration of one of the city's iconic structures has been well captured.

The Colour of Courage

This is a sensitive portrait of the 20-year-old in Sirsa, Haryana, who filed a sexual exploitation case against her husband and 16 others.
She has been photographed such that one can associate the person behind this courageous story, without revealing her identity.

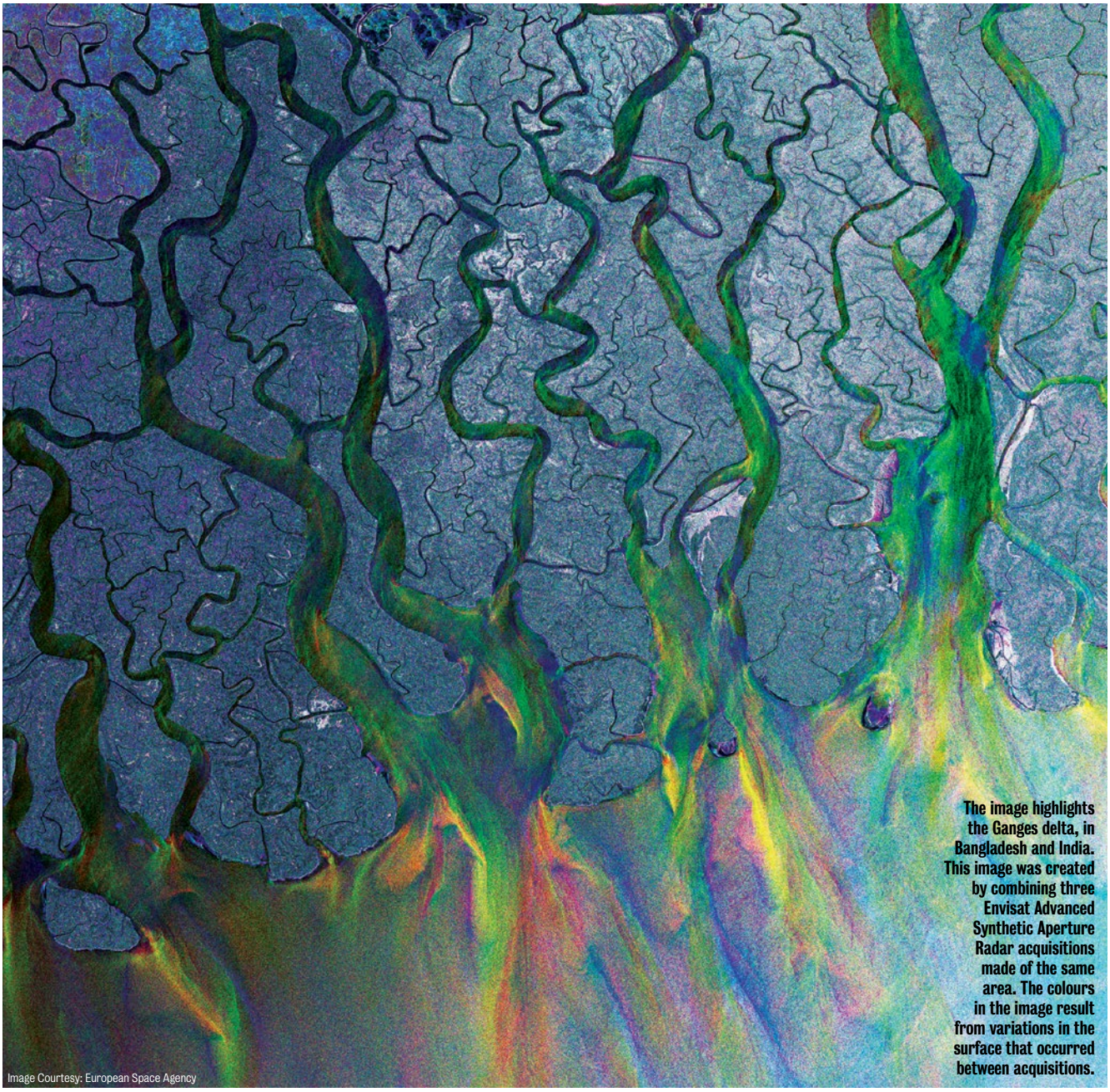
Praveen Khanna,
The Indian Express





Our Beautiful Earth

Our insatiable hunger to explore has allowed us to cross through several frontiers. With advancements, we have also seen planet earth from space. **Supriya Joshi** takes a peek into the complexities and intricacies of the planet we call home.



The image highlights the Ganges delta, in Bangladesh and India. This image was created by combining three Envisat Advanced Synthetic Aperture Radar acquisitions made of the same area. The colours in the image result from variations in the surface that occurred between acquisitions.

Image Courtesy: European Space Agency



Image Courtesy: Korea Aerospace Research Institute / European Space Agency

The rolling hills of a farmland in the northwest United States are pictured here. The area is an agricultural zone and produces wheat and legumes, and the landscape has sometimes been compared to Tuscany in Italy.

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."
—Rachel Carson, *The Sense of Wonder*.

The late astrophysicist Carl Sagan once wrote an iconic piece of work called *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space*, inspired by the photograph of the same name. The photo was made in 1990 by the Voyager 1 space probe and it features the earth photographed from six billion kilometers away. Against the infinite space, planet earth features as a mere fraction of a pixel.

But for this fraction of a pixel, Sagan said, "the aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilisation, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every 'superstar,' every 'supreme leader,' every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there—on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam."

However, if you take a closer look, you will realise how beautiful earth. Space agencies like European Space Agency (ESA) have been meticulously documenting planet earth. While the purpose of their study is scientific, for photography lovers, each image is a veritable treat. They get us that much closer to understanding the enigma that is our home, our planet earth.

View all the stunning images from ESA's collection on http://bit.ly/1pZ8see

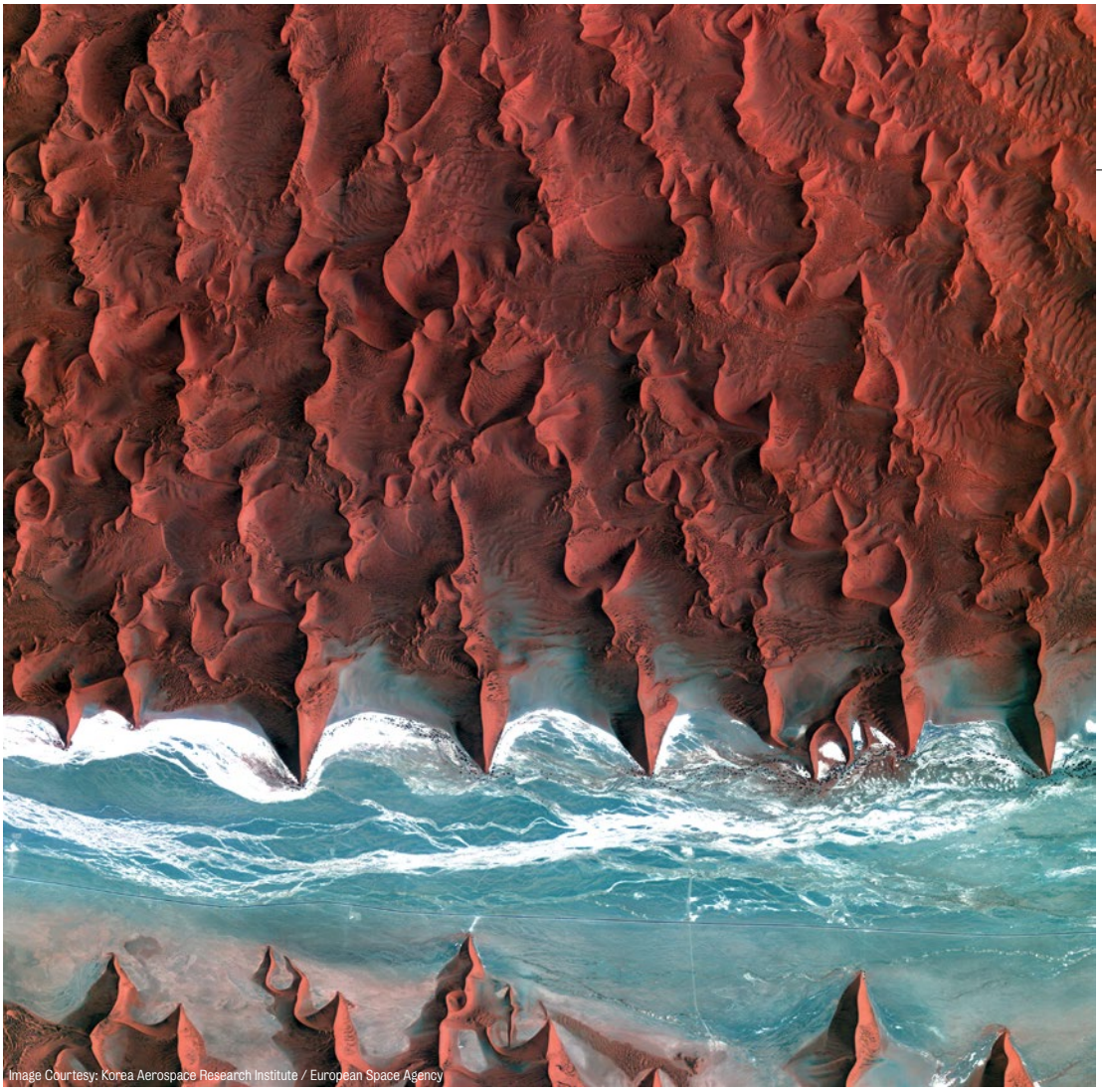
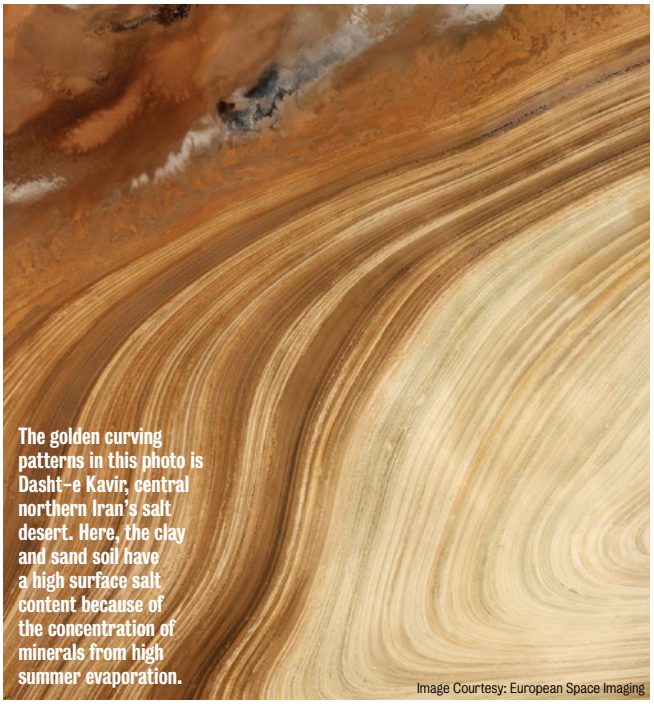


Image Courtesy: Korea Aerospace Research Institute / European Space Agency

The Kompsat-2 satellite captured this image of the sand seas of the Namib Desert. The blue and white area is the dry river bed of the Tsauchab.

Here we see the Xingu river that flows in Brazil. The image shows the contrast between the rainforests of Brazil with sprawling urbanisation.



The golden curving patterns in this photo is Dasht-e Kavir, central northern Iran's salt desert. Here, the clay and sand soil have a high surface salt content because of the concentration of minerals from high summer evaporation.

Image Courtesy: European Space Imaging

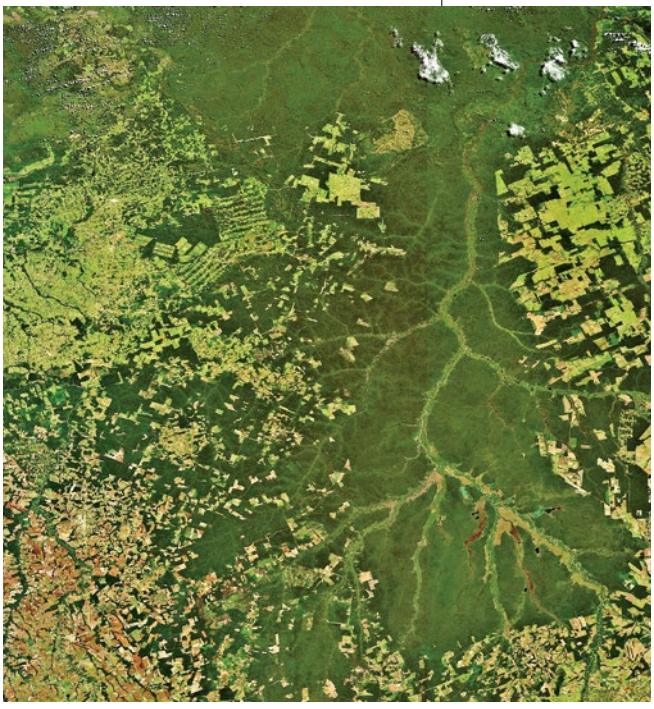
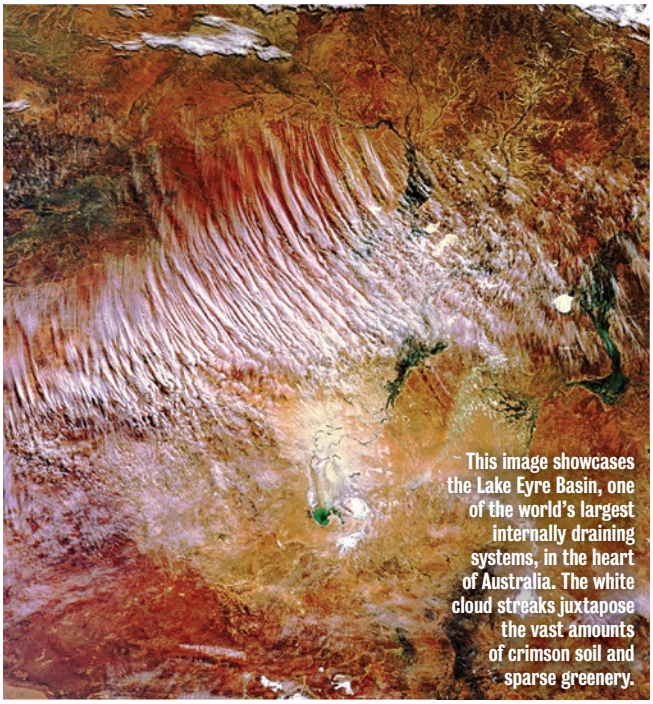


Image Courtesy: European Space Agency



Image Courtesy: European Space Agency

This satellite image shows Ubari and Murzuq sand dune seas in the Fezzan region of southwestern Libya.



This image showcases the Lake Eyre Basin, one of the world's largest internally draining systems, in the heart of Australia. The white cloud streaks juxtapose the vast amounts of crimson soil and sparse greenery.

Image Courtesy: European Space Agency

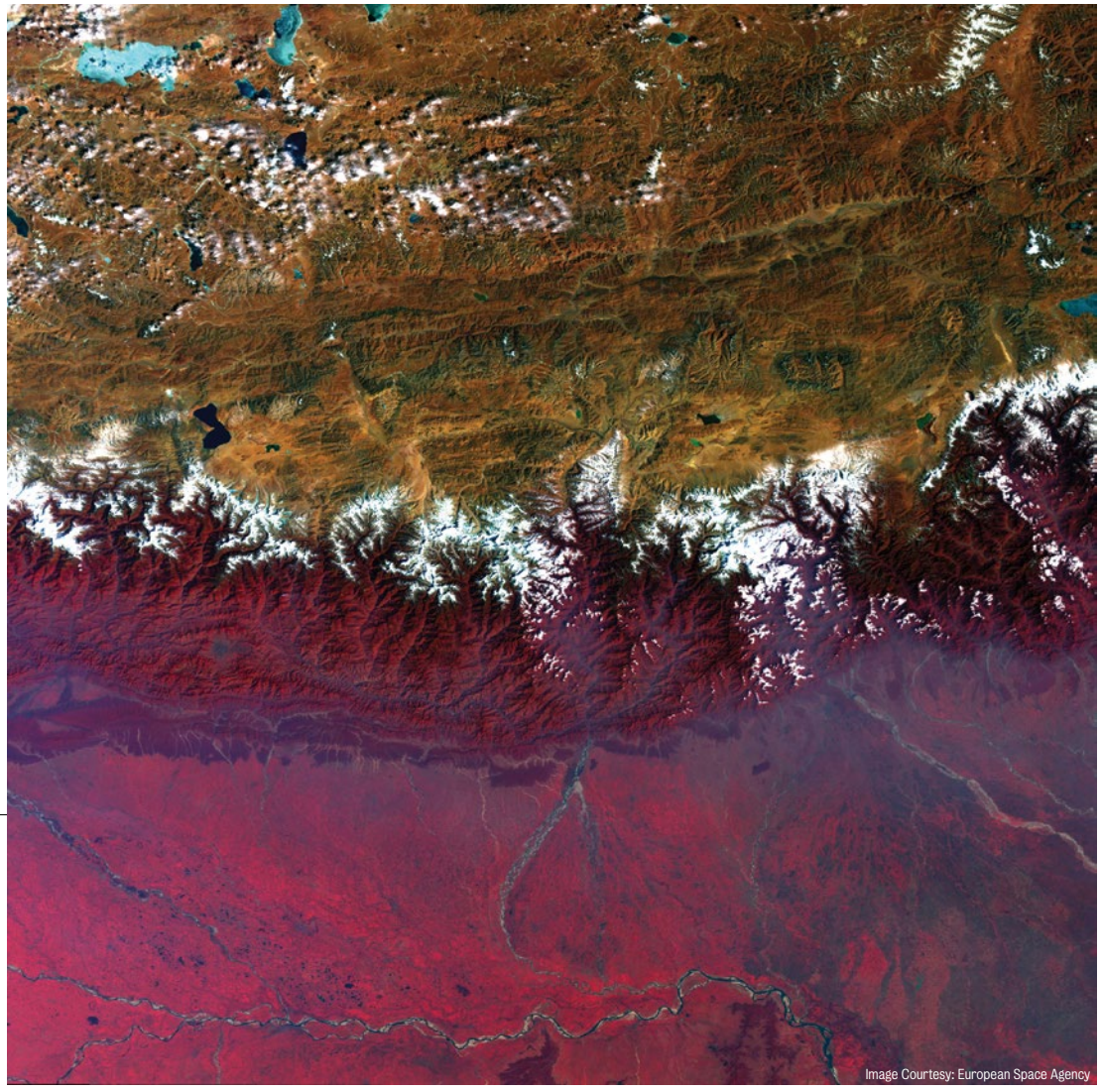


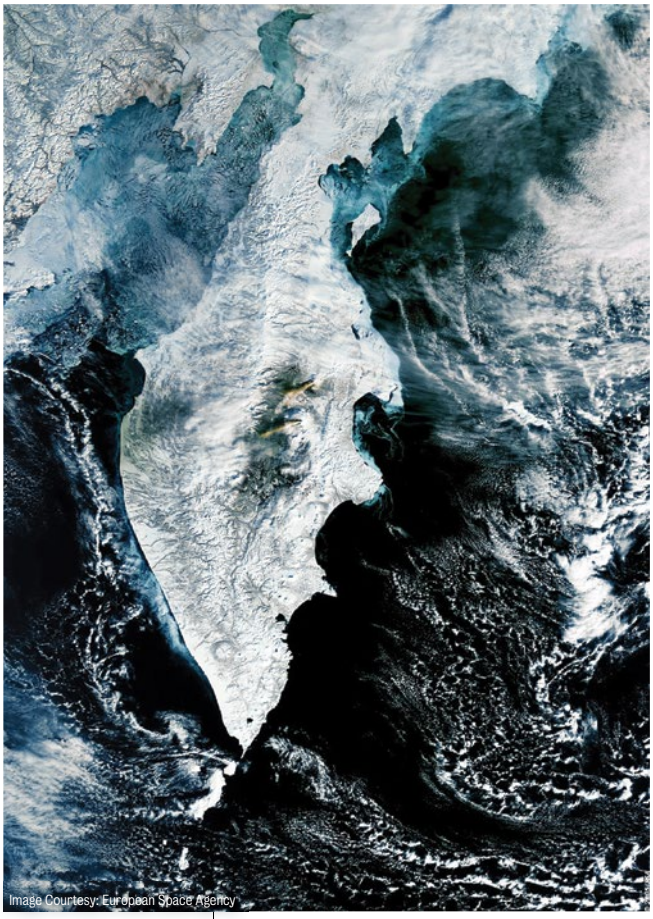
Image Courtesy: European Space Agency

You are looking at the very top of the Himalayas. The mountain range also acts as a barrier between the peaks of the Tibetan Plateau and the plains of Nepal, Bhutan and India. The reds in the image symbolise lush green vegetation.

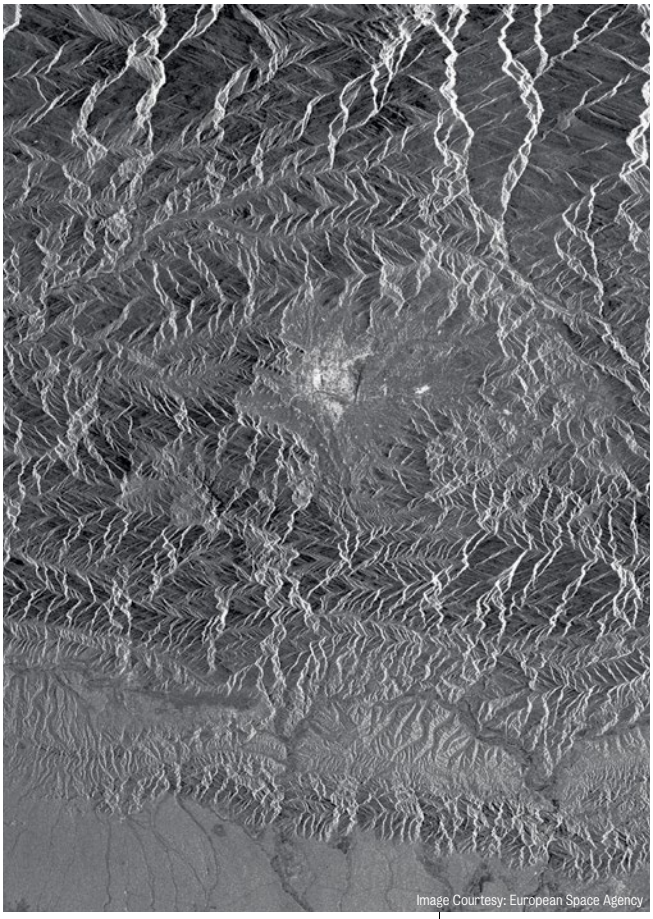


From the Himalayas all the way to Sri Lanka, this expanse of land contains the most unique and versatile ecosystems in the world.

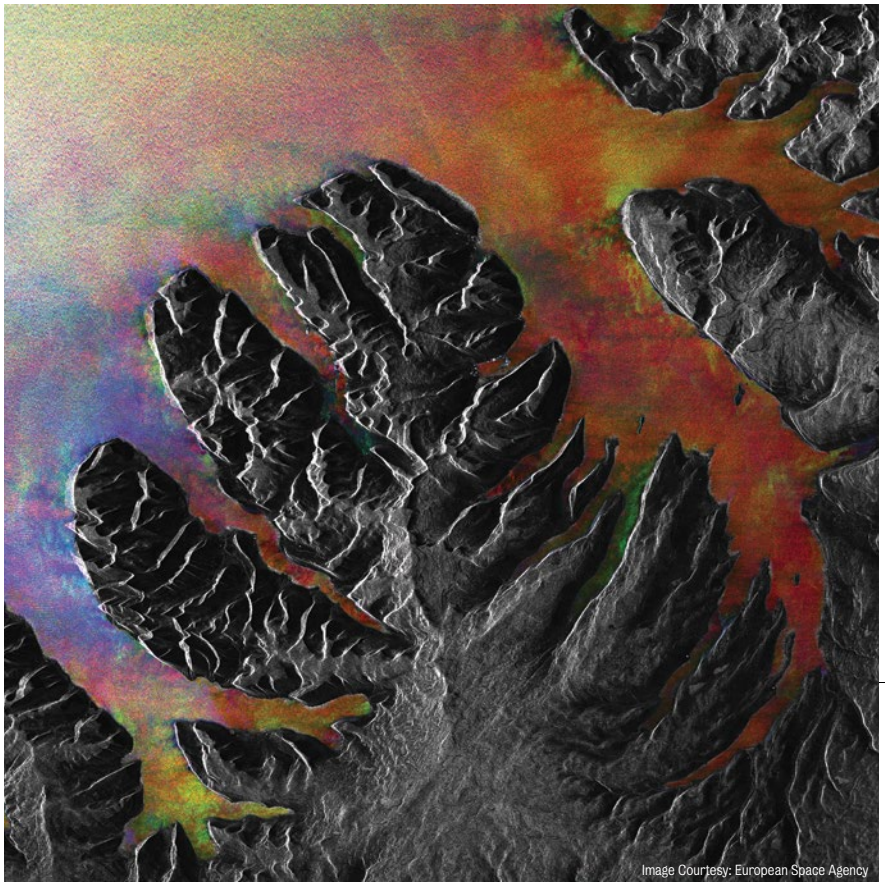
Image Courtesy: European Space Agency / VITO



The unusual phenomenon of the simultaneous eruption of two stratovolcanoes, Kliuchevskoi and Shiveluch on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula is captured in this image. The lava from such eruptions tend to be explosive, but from space, the occurence has a strangely calming effect.



Pictured here is Kathmandu, Nepal's capital city. It is almost surreal to imagine a city in such an abstract manner. However, this abstraction is, in fact, our reality. And in its own way, it dwarfs our inconsequential everyday worries.



Shaped like a Christmas tree, seen here is the Westfjords peninsula in northwest Iceland. This image was created by combining three radar acquisitions between 2004 and 2008.

PHOTO FEATURE



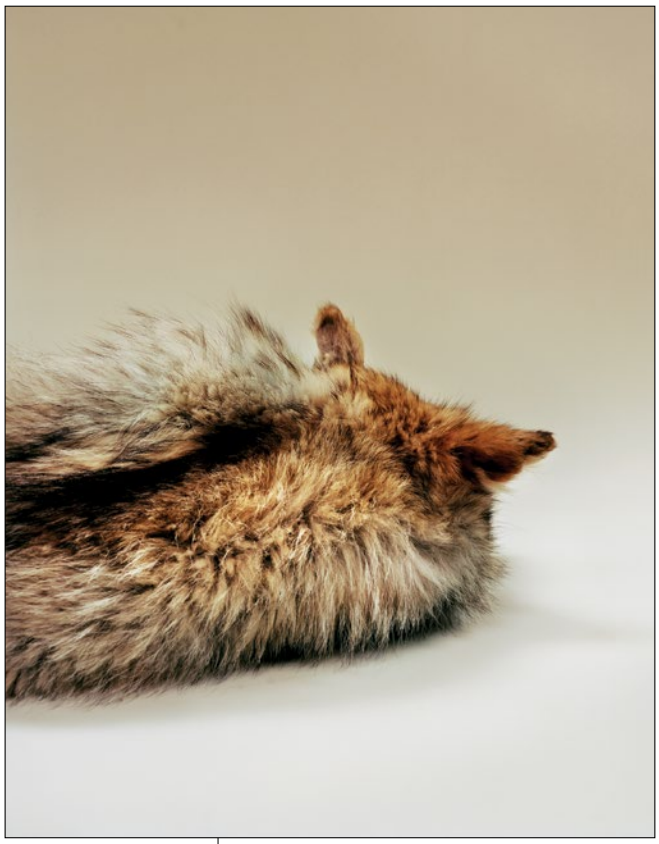
Asmita Parelkar *explores the relationship between animals and humans in her photographs. In the past, she has been commissioned by 'The New York Times', 'Motherland' amongst other publications.*

Stop and Look

With the help of her thought-provoking series on illegal wildlife trade, **Asmita Parelkar** confronts you with the brutality that goes behind the trading of endangered and exotic animals.



Panthera Tigris **(Tiger): At the time that I made the photos, I was a student at the International Center of Photography in New York. I had come across a report that estimated the value of illegal wildlife trade to be between USD 7.8–10 billion per year.**





***Canis Lupus* (Wolf): Initially, I had sent out several emails contacting owners of exotic pets, in the hope of making photographs. But most of them were reluctant to give me permission.**

The shocking discovery of the huge billion dollar illegal wildlife trade industry prompted me to explore the issue. When I contacted the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, they granted me permission to photograph their confiscated specimens. However, no amount of research could prepare me for what I was going to see.

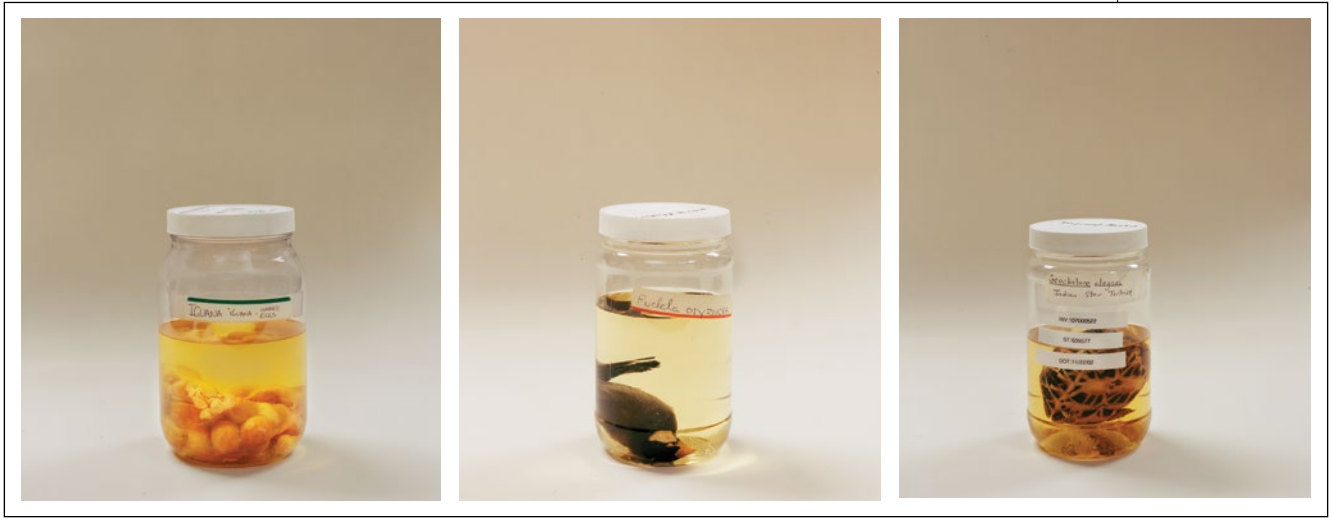
After talking to the officers, I realised the extent of the brutality. It took me a while to digest the reality that behind every lifeless skin or artefact made using ivory or rhino horns, was an animal that was once alive. My aim was to spread awareness about this heinous practice, which I chose to do with the help of the provocative remains of these beautiful creatures.

***Canis Lupus* (Wolf): Due to time constraints, I decided to keep my gear minimal by using a large format camera and a single light source to illuminate the subjects.**

From left to right—*Iguana Iguana* (Green Iguana Eggs), *Padda Oryzivora* (Java Sparrow) and *Geochelone Elegans* (Indian Star Tortoise): Most of these species are either killed or sold as exotic pets.

How to be Your Project's Strongest Advocate

- The lack of permissions or difficult time periods must not deter you from pursuing your photographic project.
- Don't just stop at photographing issues that concern you. Make prints and put up posters to promote your cause. It can make a big difference.



Pan Troglodytes
(Chimpanzee Skeleton):
By using a plain background, I was able to retain the integrity of the animals without causing any distractions.



Rhinocerotidae
(Rhinoceros Horn):
It holds great importance in Asian medicine because it is believed that the horn can cure major illnesses. The amount of money it fetches in the market has led to a rampant poaching of rhinos in different parts of the world.



Carcharodon Carcharias
(Great White Shark):
Often, confiscated specimens are kept in custody and are used for identification purposes, Otherwise, they are usually burned.



Aquila Chrysaetos
(Eagle):
The unfortunate truth is that if the animals do not perish during the journey, they are treated unethically, thus causing them immense pain and suffering.



***Panthera Leo* (Lion):** The macabre bit about poaching is that these animals end up decorating living rooms. This series helped me bring out the manner in which these animals are defiled even after they have passed away.



YourPictures

Starting on World Environment Day, we set our readers on the challenge of representing this month's theme 'For the Love of Nature'. Here are the winners and honourable mentions.

Winner



Family Ties
Riju Ray, Bengaluru
"This bonnet macaque's family reminded me of the bond that I share with my own family, with my wife and infant son. The picture was a realisation that it isn't just us humans that share intimate bonds and social ties."

Camera: Canon EOS 1000D
Lens: Sigma 150–500mm f/5-6.3 APO DG OS HSM
Aperture: f/6.3
Shutterspeed: 1/320sec
ISO: 800





Auto cut off LCD Charger with Bad Cell detection
Can charge 1/2/3/4 AA/AAA sizes at a time



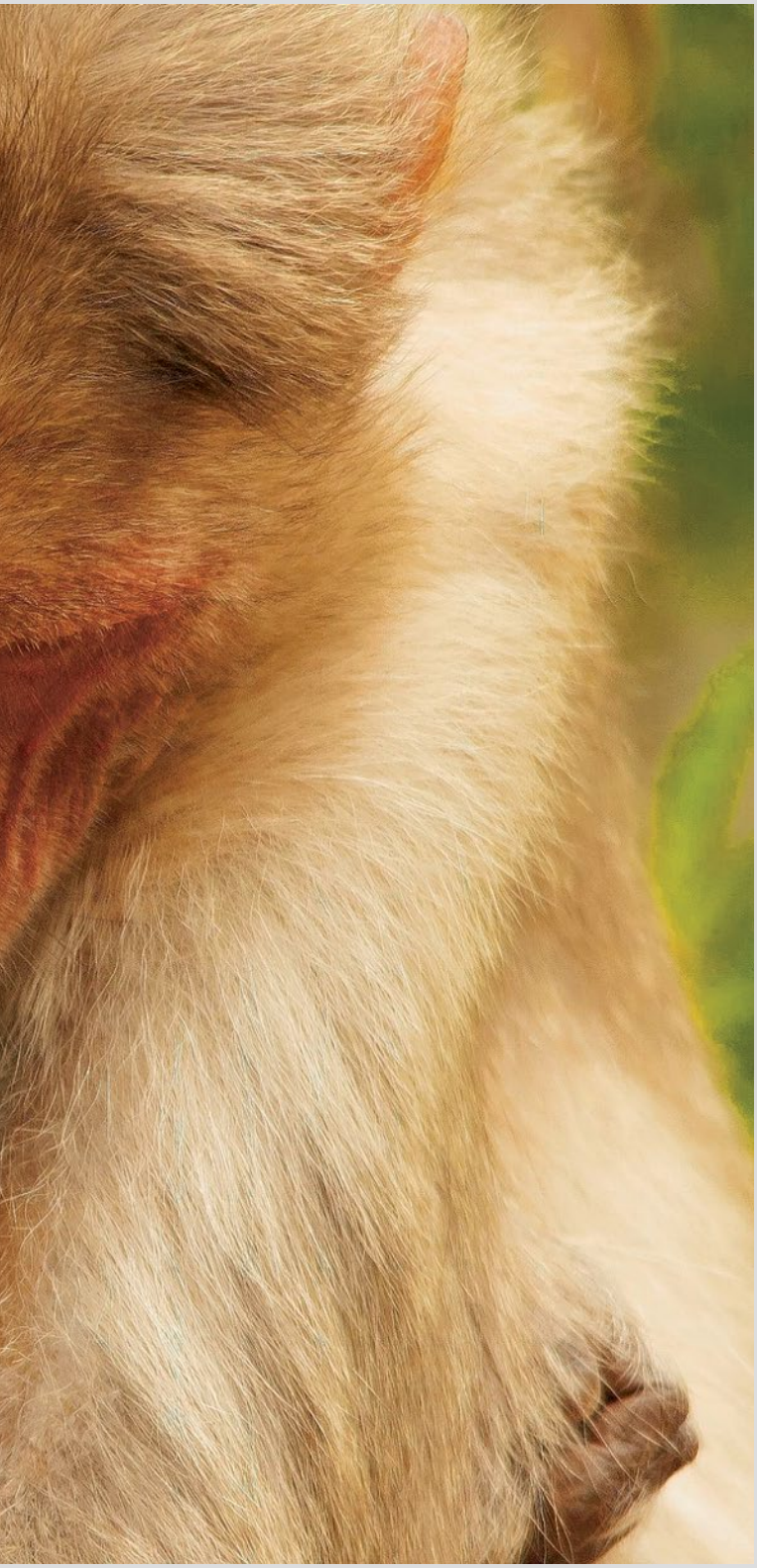
Auto Cut off Charger for multiple charging
Can charge 2/4/6/8 AA/AAA sizes at a time



Ready to use & Rechargeable Batteries
Low Self Discharge Rate

envie
Rechargeable Batteries & Chargers





Honourable Mention



Hideaways in the City

Bharat Baswani, Indore

"I document these hidden treasures in Indore to make people aware of them. My hope is that people will then keep them litter free. By sticking around for a while, I managed to capture the setting sun. This resulted in the dramatic skies and the golden light on top of the trees."

Camera: Canon EOS 550D
Lens: Canon EF-S 18–55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II (with a variable ND filter)
Aperture: f/20
Shutterspeed: 10sec
ISO: 100

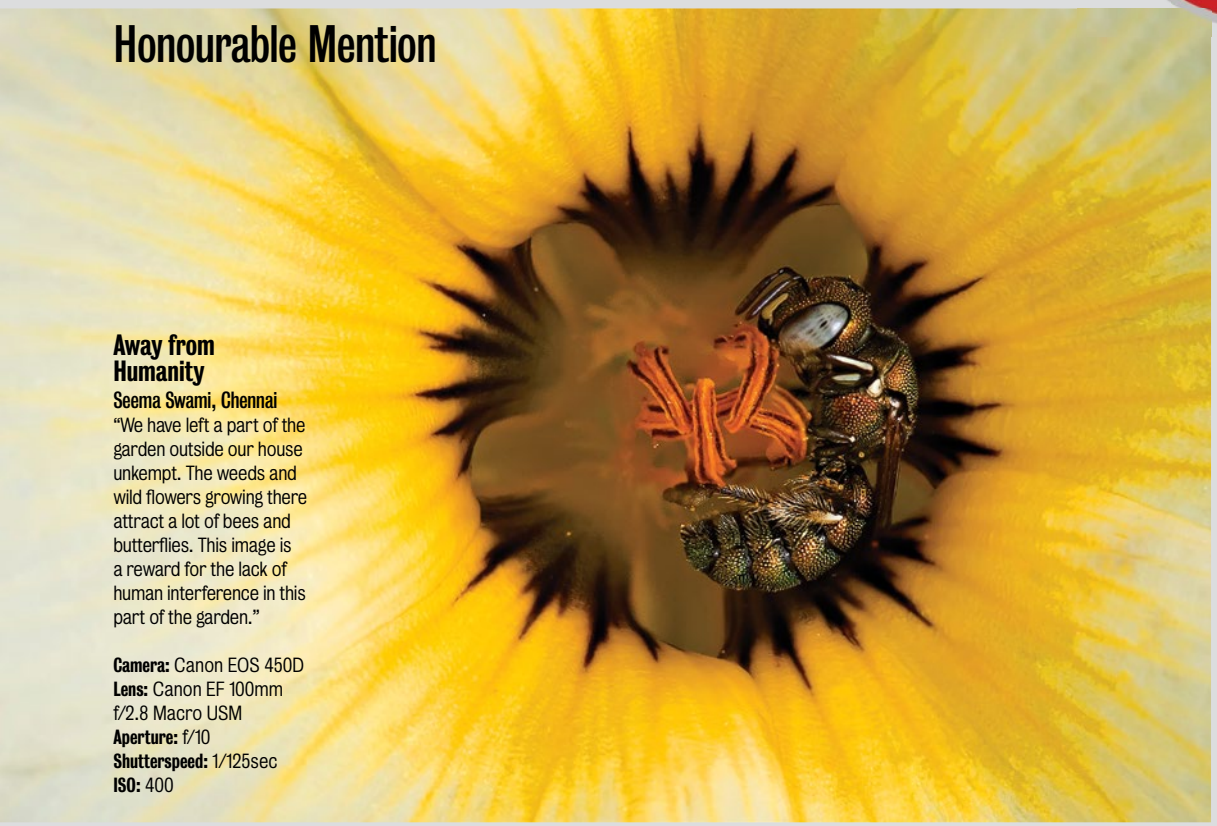
Our Judge: Soumitra Pendse



Whenever he needs reprieve from commercial assignments, Soumitra rushes out into the wilderness. Though an accomplished nature and landscape photographer, he considers himself to be an amateur.

Participate in the 'Your Pictures Contest' on betterphotography.in/contests to win a chance to be featured in the magazine and win exciting prizes!

Honourable Mention



Away from Humanity

Seema Swami, Chennai

"We have left a part of the garden outside our house unkempt. The weeds and wild flowers growing there attract a lot of bees and butterflies. This image is a reward for the lack of human interference in this part of the garden."

Camera: Canon EOS 450D
Lens: Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro USM
Aperture: f/10
Shutterspeed: 1/125sec
ISO: 400

The Essence of Nature

Pranab Basak, Kolkata

"The leaf, mating frogs, reflections and various shades of green in the pond tied this image together. I chose a tight composition to remove distracting elements from the frame."

Camera: Nikon D3100
Lens: Nikkor AF-S DX 18–105mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR
Aperture: f/18
Shutterspeed: 1/200sec
ISO: 400



Honourable Mention

The Prizes

Grand Prize Winner: The winning image gets Rs. 5000 worth of vouchers and free participation in **BP's** *Secrets of Shooting Workshops.*

Editor's Choice Winners: These special winners get free entry to one of **BP's** *Secrets of Shooting* workshops.

To check out all the nominees, visit betterphotography.in



Miniature Jungle
Hemant Dixit, Chennai
"A close-up filter is a great way to try macro photography without spending a lot of money. But even the slightest shake would have ruined the details seen on the underside of the mushrooms. A tripod is extremely handy in these situations."

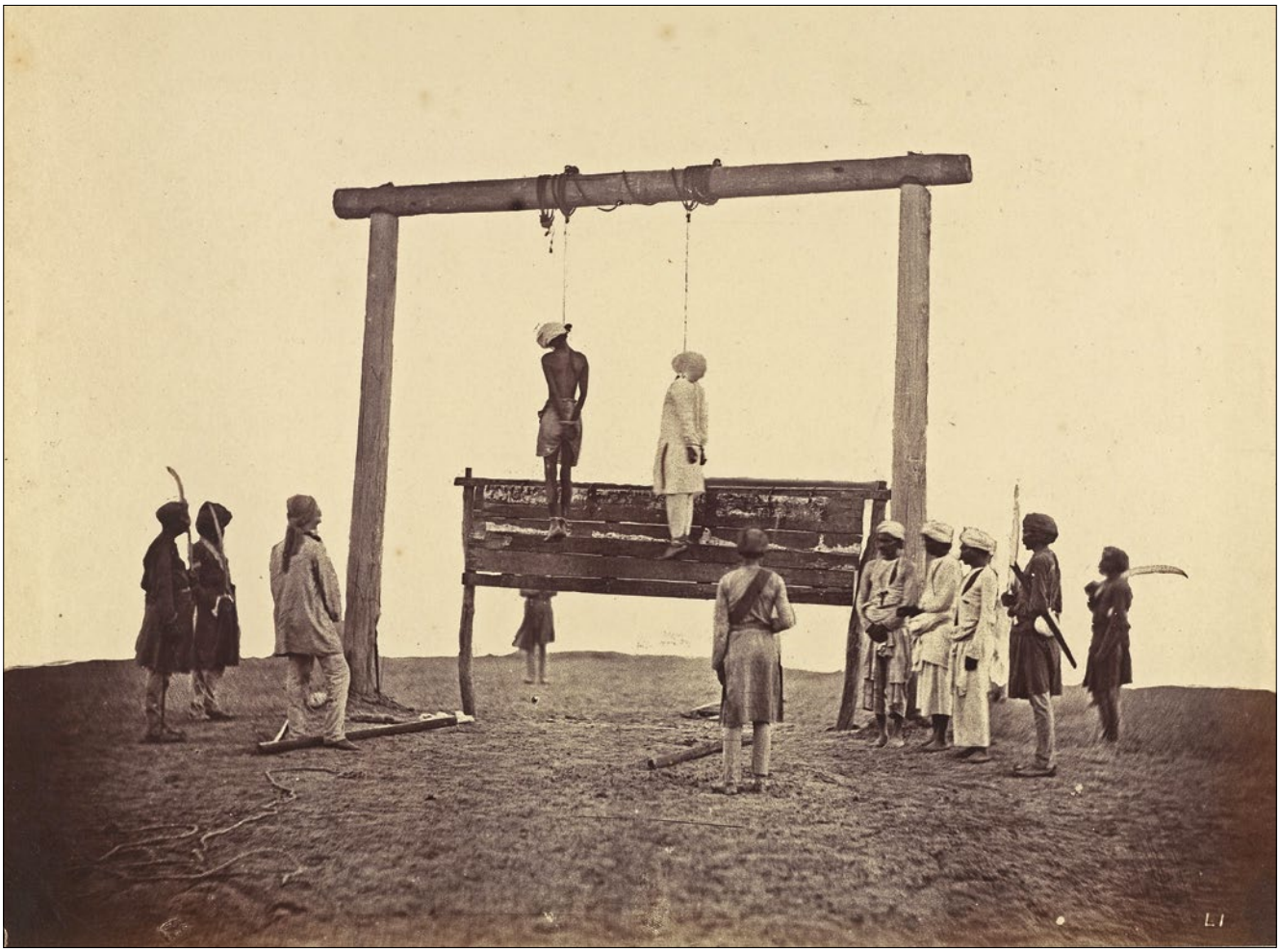
Camera: Nikon D3100
Lens: Nikkor AF-S DX 18–55mm f/3.5-5.6G VR (with a close-up filter)
Aperture: f/13
Shutterspeed: 1/60sec
ISO: 100



The Spider Circus
Rizwan Ashraf, Hazaribagh
"The background, from which the spider was walking away, looked liked tents. I was fascinated by the idea of a carnival for these mini monsters."

Camera: Canon EOS 350D
Lens: Canon EF-S 18–55mm f/3.5-5.6
Aperture: f/5.6
Shutterspeed: 1/100sec
ISO: 100

The Story Behind the Picture



Photograph by:
Felice Beato
Image Source:
The J Paul Getty Museum

Disputed Photograph from the Indian Mutiny

Titled *Mutineers Hanged*, the image was made during the aftermath of the Revolt of 1857. It was shot by Anglo-Italian photographer Felice Beato in 1858. The location of the image is contentious, with the Google Cultural Institute calling it Lucknow, while The J Paul Getty Museum mentions it as Delhi. Another topic of debate is the identity of the two men being hanged. According to Getty's records, they were sepoys belonging to the 31st Native Infantry. However, the book *Felice Beato: A Photographer on the Eastern Road* mentions that the 31st Infantry did not participate in the revolt. Incorrect documentation might have caused the error and the men may have only been villagers. Also, it is interesting to note that the photograph seen above (from Getty's collection) is not the original photograph. The original image featured a stretch of blurry hills in the background. However, it is unknown if it was removed to make the men appear prominent and increase the impact of the photo.

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 was India's first war of independence that challenged the rule of the British East India Company. After learning about the uprising, Beato had arrived in India eager to capture the aftermath of the rebellion. He travelled along with the British troops and this allowed him to make photos of the main areas of the mutiny—Lucknow, Delhi and Cawnpore (present-day Kanpur). BP