



Art Wolfe  
with Rob Sheppard

# PHOTOGRAPHS

FROM THE EDGE

A MASTER PHOTOGRAPHER'S INSIGHTS ON  
CAPTURING AN EXTRAORDINARY WORLD





Light Filters Through the Glacier, Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina

Canon EOS 5D, EF16-35mm F2.8 lens, f/13 for 3/10 sec., ISO 4000



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Overgrown Orchards, Oregon, USA

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/20 for 1 3/10 sec., ISO 50

In recognition of all the guides and fixers who have made these photographs possible









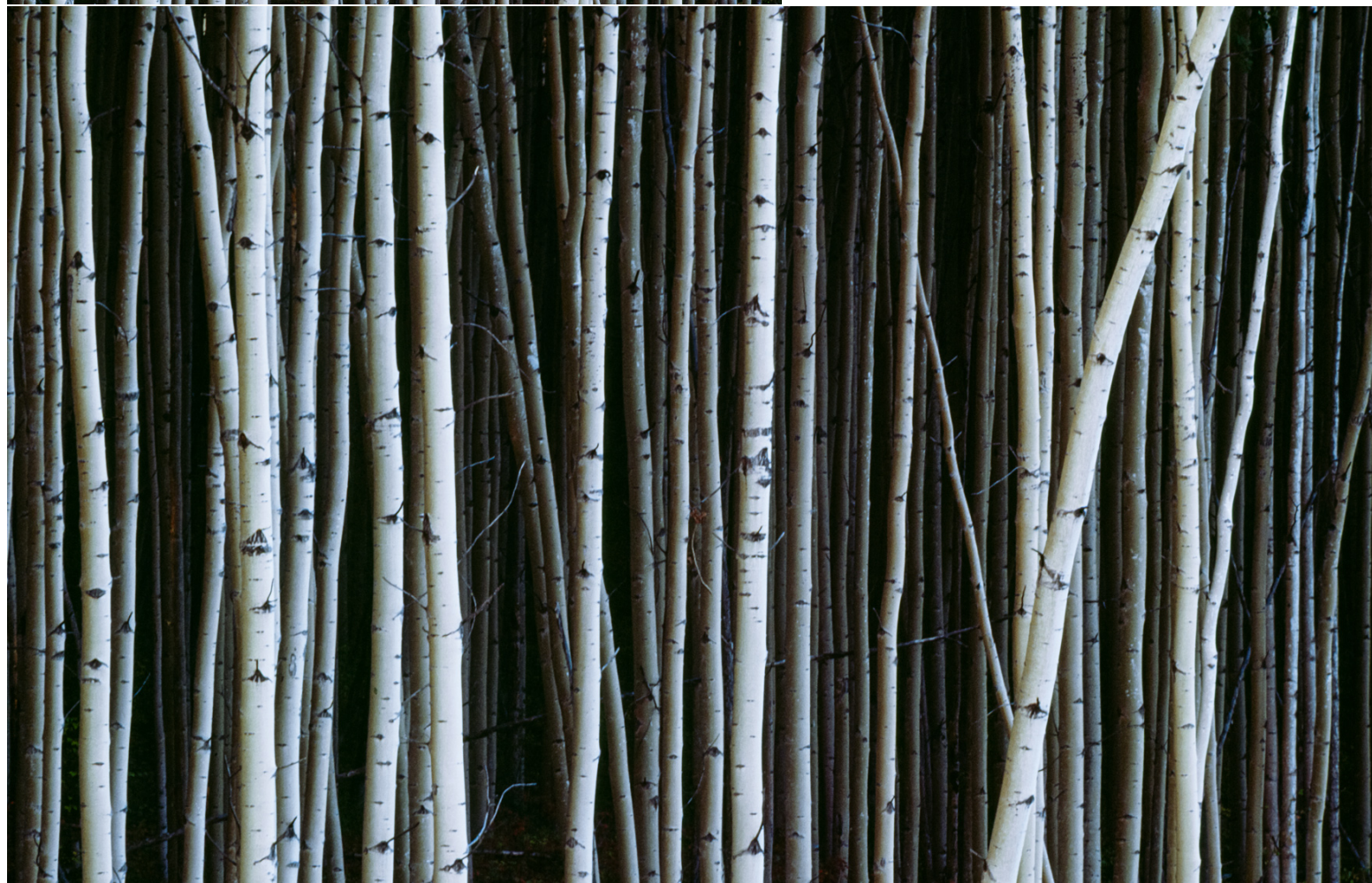
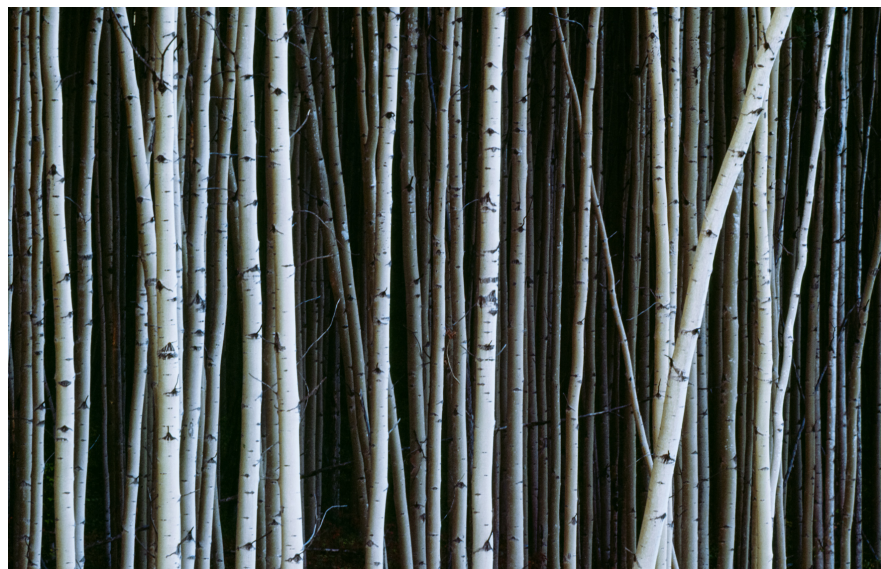


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[Credit prf.1](#)

Aspen Grove, Tanana River Valley, Alaska, USA

Nikon F3, Nikkor 200-400mm lens, f/16 for 1/8 sec., Kodachrome 64 film

Preface

Rob Sheppard

I have admired Art Wolfe's work for a long time. I first met Art in person when I was editor of *Outdoor Photographer*, and that meeting was one of the joys of my time as editor of the magazine. When Vicky, my wife, met him, she really liked spending time with this fascinating man and wonderful artist. She will never forget having to rescue him from an overly enthusiastic female television star at a benefit we all attended. (But that is another story.)

It has been my great privilege to help Art put this book together. I have quite enjoyed getting inside his head over the months we worked on this project, helping him distill and clearly tell some great stories about his photography. We started this process when we collaborated on *The Art of the Photograph*. There we included stories about specific photos, which seemed like a great idea for a complete book.

Of course, we all know that Art's photography is brilliant and always beautiful. Working on this latest book has helped me see how hard he strives to create images that are in a class by themselves. He consistently seeks out unique and lesser known peoples, places, and parts of nature to explore and share with us all. He then finds unique ways to portray them in forms that honor his fine arts background.

You will not find Art at any common or popular natural or cultural destination. He loves to use photography to connect viewers with the wonders of the world that few have seen.

I first knew Art as a wildlife photographer, but that was just a part of who he was even at that time. Then he shared his stunning book *Tribes* with me. It was a revelation, not only to discover this terrific body of Art's work, but also to learn a whole new way of seeing our world. He puts us in touch with people we often do not know. And as you will find in these pages, he has made this a key part of his photography for all of his career.

For each of Art's photographs, we have included a section on the nature of the photograph, a short piece inspired by the subject matter of the image. To do each image justice, I often learned something new, especially about cultures and out-of-the-way places.

As a photographer, I enjoy learning how other photographers handle their way of seeing. Exploring another person's approach to this art and craft can even illuminate your own pieces by way of both contrast and empathy with the work.





[Credit prf 2](#)

Altocumulus Clouds, Torres del Paine National Park, Chile

Canon EOS 5D, EF17-40mm F4L lens, f9 for 1 sec., ISO 100

For example, Art loves using soft, gentle light in ways that many other photographers, including me, would not do because such light can be boring if not used well. *Art's photos are never boring!* He uses light to reveal things about places and subjects that cannot otherwise be seen.

I thought about this approach and realized that Art has an advantage over most of us in his unique use of light. He grew up with it! Raised in Seattle, where he still makes his home, Art constantly saw cloudy days without dramatic sun. He learned how valuable that experience could be to help one see into scenes that would be difficult to discern in bright sunlight. You will find some splendid examples of this throughout the book.

Another fascinating area of difference in Art's work is his affinity for deep depth of field. He uses small apertures more consistently than any other photographer I know. That is not always easy to do. Shallow depth of field can help isolate and emphasize subjects. Deep depth of field can mean that everything from front to back in a scene is visible and connected, all important. With the wrong approach, that can lead to a distracting, confusing photo. Art's method brings the viewer into the scene, showing connections, relationships, and dynamic visuals. He sometimes even does so to challenge his viewers to stay with the photo and look more deeply.

He does this much more often today because of the high ISO settings available from modern digital cameras. In the days of film, photographers were usually limited to ISOs of 100 or slower. That meant that using a small aperture for deep depth of field resulted in very slow shutter speeds, often too slow to stop even slight action. So everyone would compromise on the side of faster shutter speeds.

As you make your way toward the end of this book, you will note that many of Art's latest images are shot at ISOs of 1000 and above. That was unheard of for quality work in the days of film, but ISO 1000 is common now for all top cameras. Art will commonly shoot at ISOs of 2000, 4000, and even more so that he can get shots with both deep depth of field and a fast shutter speed.

I am sure you will discover so much more about what makes good images as you read through this book and look at Art's photos. He will take you places you might not ever have been—visually, geographically and culturally. You will travel from Alaska to India, visit people from monks to dancers, enter temples and mosques, discover wildlife from polar bears to flamingos, and so much more. Have fun!





Tsechu Dancers, Paro Valley, Bhutan

Canon EOS-1DS, EF70-200mm F4L lens, f/13 for 1/13 sec., ISO 100

## Introduction

Art Wolfe

All my life I have let my photos tell stories for me. After many years as a professional photographer—sometimes feeling more like a professional traveler—I have come to realize that many people are more interested in the *when*, *where*, and *how* of my photographs than the photos themselves. Question-and-answer sessions in my presentations sometimes feel nearly as long as the presentations themselves.

Quite simply, we humans love being told stories, being entertained by others' exploits (good and bad) and that is what this book is all about.

I have always loved nature, and was an environmentalist and conservationist long before I knew there were words for such things. I spent every spare moment exploring the wooded ravines around my childhood home in West Seattle. When I grew into my teens and had my own car, you couldn't keep me out of the mountains on the weekends. When I climbed peaks, I would rename them in my own mind, even planting little flags at the summit as if I were the first to set foot there. I explored deep forested valleys, joined climbing clubs, and eventually became a climbing guide, leading clients to the summits of notable peaks around Washington State.

From a very young age, I knew that I would be an artist and earn my living as such. I grew up experimenting with a variety of mediums as a painter; however, I was also very impatient. On more than one occasion, my parents would come home to find me "drying" my oil-on-canvas works in the oven, overwhelming the house with the stink of oil paints.

Attending the University of Washington in pursuit of an art degree, I imagined I'd be an art teacher while continuing to do my work on the side. At that time, in the 1970s, photography was not considered "art" and classes were off-limits to all but journalism majors. During my time out in nature, climbing and backpacking, I would take a camera with me on my outings simply to record the landscape as a reference point to then paint from later. With an ingrained drive to work fast and some ever-improving photographic skills (gained through trial and error), I soon realized that the photograph could be my artistic statement and I could create a dozen compositions in a single day with my camera rather than trying to paint them back at home.

It was only natural, then, that my early subjects were the beautiful mountain landscapes of the Pacific Northwest. Early in my career, I tried every angle I could to get my photos out into the world. I went to retail stores selling climbing clothing and outdoor gear and lobbied them to display my photos on their walls. They eventually agreed, and years later I would even have my first gallery in the flagship REI store in Seattle. REI (short for



Recreational Equipment, Inc.) is a major outdoor clothing and gear retail outlet and was founded in Seattle.

Many of the locations I have visited have come from reviewing photo and art books I’ve collected in my library over the years. If I feel a location has only barely been covered and there is a lot more left to explore, I’ll make a note to head there. But if it looks as though other photographers have captured the best the area has to offer, I’ll look elsewhere. Many people are surprised I have not been to some of the classic locations, such as the pyramids of Egypt or the city of Prague with its beautiful architecture. Instead, I’ve tried to open up new areas, exploring the tundra outside of Churchill, Canada, long before there were tundra buggies or spending three years waiting to get a permit to penetrate the jungles of Venezuela, the home to the Yanomami people. I photographed along Brooks Falls in Alaska some time before there were boardwalks, overlooks, and railings in place. My favorite location is honestly the last place I’ve been. I get energized and fill my soul with creating art and being in the field. Of course, I do have favorite locations for various subjects. India is so full of culture and color one could spend a lifetime exploring it. The Pantanal in Brazil has such a density of tropical birds that it is a birder’s paradise. South Georgia Island is a wonderful destination as the animals there have only seen the occasional photographer and as a result have little fear of humans.

## Equipment

I have no sentimental attachment to my equipment—I’ll use whatever I can afford or get my hands on at the time. I use a tripod whenever possible, especially when shooting landscapes. (For that I turn to Gitzo and Kirk ball heads.) The tripod has to be light enough that you won’t hesitate to take it with you into the field, but also stable enough that it’s still an asset once you get there.

As you start to acquire the tools of your trade, invest in the best quality lenses you can buy and a slightly lesser quality camera than you can afford. Quality glass will last you years, a decade even, before you want to upgrade. Whereas, the camera you buy today will be obsolete in a year or two, as they come out with improved models all the time.

I still shoot with a traditional Canon DSLR; however, don’t overlook the mirrorless systems, as they improve the lenses that are offered in these systems. My coauthor Rob Sheppard only shoots mirrorless for his work.

Truthfully, it’s all about the camera you have in your hands: I’m not above shooting with my iPhone while walking through a market square and, yes, these images have found their way into my archives as well.

## Style

My style has evolved over the years and continues to change as I grow as an artist, learn more, evaluate my work, and try new techniques and new approaches. I suspect my style will be forever evolving as long as I am alive. The roots of my style are firmly grounded in my experience as a painter with watercolors and oils, as well as those fundamental art courses I attended while in college.

Initially, my lens was turned toward wildlife, first in the Pacific Northwest, later the western United States, and then around the world. I love to travel to photograph more and more of the amazing species with which we share the planet.

Later in my career, I began photographing indigenous cultures around the world (many of which have since been strongly influenced by the West). Here I used a more cinematic approach, choosing to shoot up close with a wide-angle lens to allow my subjects to really dominate the composition while still showing the locations in the backgrounds. Another style I have played with and enjoyed was that of emphasizing the movement and energy in running animals. This approach was partly encouraged by the slow transparency film of the time that simply did not allow for tack-sharp images stopping the motion of a bear running in a river. Lately, I have been enjoying the opposite extreme, using today’s digital cameras and extremely high ISOs to fully stop every drop of water in the frame as a bear rushes a salmon in an Alaskan river.

All of these elements, from my art classes to my continued experimentation, have made up my “style” over the years. From a marketing point of view, it’s great if you have one style and one look. Then people can define who you are. Well, I have made it tough on people by having a broad range and many interests. I suppose the one common thread is that as an artist, I try to create beautiful images, not just document the world as I have seen it. I’ll use different lenses to compress or stretch a landscape, to change the relationship between a foreground subject and background. I’ll use filters to darken a sky and balance the overall exposure in an image. I photograph as if I am painting the scene before me.

## Working with a Team and for Yourself

The work of photographers tends to be independent in nature. You don’t really need anyone alongside you to take good photographs; however, I find that can be very lonely. Whenever possible, I’ll travel with a friend or colleague to pass the time and share in the adventure.

I have a small team of people that works for me at my Seattle studio. They help organize photos, sell prints and books, and license images for advertising. They also help by coordinating my extensive travel schedule, making sure all of the arrangements are made, bills are paid, and that I get where I’m going, as well as back home again. That’s not easy considering I can be gone for four weeks at a time traveling to several different countries in one trip.

When you are an artist making a living, it is up to you to create, to paint, to sculpt, to take the photographs that are sold and put into books. If you add up all the days I am “home” in Seattle, it amounts to only about three months in a year. The rest of the time I am flying around the world—from the Arctic to Antarctica—taking new photos, teaching workshops, giving speeches, and doing shows.

I love that I have the freedom to pursue my passions wherever they may take me around the world. I made a conscious decision early on in my career not to follow the traditional path of working for a large company such as National Geographic as a staff photographer. Instead, I wanted to control my own destiny, choosing where and what I wanted to photograph. Though it was a lot riskier going out on my own and starting my own small business, I’ve never regretted my decision to do so.

I am hardwired to create, to be an artist, to inspire and give joy to others through my art. I love that I get to do this every day and I love it when people look at my work and it touches them on an emotional level. That is the best compliment I can receive, and it keeps me going even forty years later.



1980s



[Credit p01.1](#)

Humpback Whale, Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska, USA

Nikon F3, Nikkor 200-400mm lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

In the 1980s, Art launched his photographic career in earnest. He started traveling to some remarkable locations with his camera. He would follow up his travels with slideshows in his home city of Seattle. From these presentations, he began to become known locally for his photography. He had his first solo museum exhibit at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, furthering his reputation. At this time, he also worked to find publications that would use his photos. He began to have success in getting his photographs published in major magazines such as *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, and *Audubon*. He started to be nationally known for his wildlife work, especially.





[Credit 1.1](#)

Arctic Fox, Ellesmere Island, Nunavut, Canada

Nikon F3, Nikkor 300mm F2.8 lens, f/5.6 for 1/60 sec., Kodachrome 64

November 1983

Arctic Fox

Ellesmere Island, Nunavut, Canada

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 300mm F2.8 lens, f/5.6 for 1/60 sec., Kodachrome 64**

Though this image of an arctic fox was shot with a film camera nearly twenty-five years ago, it still remains one of my favorites, simply because of the uniqueness of the situation. The image comes from the northernmost place I've photographed, a small Canadian weather station on the north side of Ellesmere Island, which reaches as far north as land can in the Northern Hemisphere.

In the shot, an arctic fox comes close to the weather station and stands on a little rise, catching the setting sun in the month of November. November that far north is basically winter, with temperatures well below zero. I suspect the people at the weather station tossed food scraps toward this little creature, which brought it close and kept it unafraid of human contact.

In his winter coat, the fox caught the pink glow of the setting sun. I love the contrast of the deep blue hues around the fox with the pastel pinks, which resulted in a memorable color palette. The scene and colors were very calm and relaxed, and I tried to capture that in the photo. I manually metered my exposure by reading off the muted pinks of the fox's winter coat.

A pack of arctic wolves also hung out near the weather station and had killed the weather station's dogs over the previous six months. But this little arctic fox had successfully negotiated living in a world of larger canines. That gave me a lot of respect for this little fox.

The nature of the photo

The arctic fox is a little smaller than the common red fox of the continental United States and is close to the size of a large cat. It is highly adapted to the harsh cold of the Arctic with fur on the bottom of its feet, short ears to lose less heat, and a short muzzle for the same reason. It changes color in the summer to a brown or gray to blend into the tundra.

Photo tip

This photo is as much about color as it is about the fox. Art could have shot a tighter image and shown much less of the bluish colors around the fox, but he wanted the color. If you really want to learn to work better with color, try going out and photographing color first, subject second.









[Credit 2.1](#)

Ultima Thule Everest Expedition, North Face of Mount Everest, Tibet, China

Nikon F3, Nikkor 400mm F4 lens, f/16 for 1/8 sec., Kodachrome 64

June 1984

Ultima Thule Everest Expedition

North Face of Mount Everest, Tibet, China

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 400mm F4 lens, f/16 for 1/8 sec., Kodachrome 64**

This shot was very carefully previsualized and planned. This Ultima Thule expedition was the first Western climbing team allowed into Tibet through China since the Cultural Revolution. Before that, Tibet was closed to outsiders because Tibet is not one of China's shining glories.

In this image, expedition members are silhouetted against Everest's North Face. I wanted to combine my team with the location in a dramatic way, and the idea of silhouetting them against the big North Face seemed perfect. To get the shot, I had to remain at a distance from the climbers and shoot with a long telephoto lens (400mm) to compress that distance. I used a walkie-talkie to guide the group and let them know when I was actually taking the picture. I had to stop down to f/16 to make the climbers and Mount Everest sharp, but I was far enough away from the climbers for this telescopic effect that the distance also helped my depth of field. The image accomplished what I was after—climbers at the North Face of Mount Everest, with the distance compressed via the telephoto.

Even though my team spent three months at sixteen thousand feet and higher, no one made the summit. This was not a problem for me as I had a grand experience that tested my mettle and got me to China and Tibet for the first time.

The nature of the photo

Mount Everest's North Face on the north side of the mountain is one of its best-known aspects. At 29,029 feet, Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world. While its standard climbing routes are not technically difficult, the altitude and changeable weather always make this a challenging mountain.

Photo tip

Telephoto lenses can compress distant scenes so that objects appear closer than they really are. This is a perspective effect that comes from the combination of telephoto focal length and distance, which is why Art put on a telephoto *and* backed up to get this shot.





[Credit 3.1](#)  
Yak Train, Rongbuk Valley, Tibet, China  
Nikon F3, Nikkor 400mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/125 sec., Kodachrome 64







[Credit 3.2](#)

Villager, Xigazê, Tibet, China

Nikon F3, Nikkor 80-200mm lens, f/4 for 1/60 sec. Kodachrome 64

June 1984

Yak Train

Rongbuk Valley, Tibet, China

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 400mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/125 sec., Kodachrome 64**

Villager

Xigazê, Tibet, China

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 80-200mm lens, f/4 for 1/60 sec. Kodachrome 64**

I was with the first Western expedition allowed into Tibet. China gave us permission largely because at the time, in 1984, Boeing was selling jets to China and opening up all sorts of relations.

The expedition used yaks instead of porters to carry supplies to the twenty-one thousand foot Camp III on our 1984 Everest expedition to the Northeast Ridge of Mount Everest. Surefooted and tough enough to endure snowstorms, yaks are the perfect choice in such rugged terrain. The sounds of their bells often precede their arrival.

The "Yak Train" image was shot at the entrance to my tent because I was suffering from cerebral edema (a swelling of the brain in the brain case) due to the altitude. Nevertheless, when I saw these yaks come in covered in snow with their bells chiming, I pulled out my camera and mustered enough energy to shoot right by my tent entrance. Even though I was sick and really out of it, it occurred to me at the time that if Marco Polo had been in this valley hundreds of years before, he could have experienced the identical scene. There would be nothing that would speak of modern times. I was deeply moved and affected by that moment.

Though I was there to photograph mountain scenery and the expedition, the cultural elements of the yaks and the Tibetan mountain people really affected me. I vowed when I came off the Everest expedition that I would travel extensively to document traditional cultures before they inevitably changed.

The nature of the photos

The yak is a long-haired relative of the cow, commonly raised in the Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau. Yaks are well-adapted to cold, high-altitude locations, with larger lungs and hearts than other members of the cow family, plus a layer of fat under their skin. They tend to overheat at lower altitudes.

Photo tip

A famous Louis Pasteur quote is "Luck favors the prepared mind." This could not be more relevant to photography. When your camera is accessible, batteries charged, memory card prepared, lenses nearby, plus you know your gear well, you can take advantage of serendipitous events as Art did with the yak train.





[Credit 4.1](#)

Wall Mural, Rongbuk Monastery, Tibet, China

Nikon F3, Nikkor 28mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/60 sec., Kodachrome 64

June 1984

Wall Mural

Rongbuk Monastery, Tibet, China

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 28mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/60 sec., Kodachrome 64**

When the Chinese invaded Tibet in October 1950, they destroyed many of Tibet's remote monasteries, including this one in the Rongbuk Valley, below Mount Everest. This monastery was one of the highest in the Himalayas at one time. During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Red Guard came and bombed the monastery of the Buddhist Tibetans and the monks never came back.

At first glance, the monastery here was basically a pile of rubble with just a few walls exposed to the harsh elements found at sixteen thousand feet. You could barely make out what must have been beautiful murals. On my third trip down to the monastery from base camp, I discovered a tiny hole near the bottom of a wall. I pulled a few rocks away and discovered an inner chamber that had not been completely annihilated.

I crawled in with a flashlight and discovered two murals on the inside that were largely intact. I was amazed to see actual human art with full color here because outside the monastery was a study of gray rock, blue sky, and white snow. To see such color and artistry was great for my psyche.

With a flash mounted to my camera, I illuminated the mural. I spent three months on Mount Everest stopping off at about nineteen thousand feet. Discovering this hidden treasure was one of the highlights of the expedition for me.

The nature of the photo

Tibetan Buddhist art was often made to visualize the possibilities of the enlightened mind. Sadly, thousands of Tibetan temples were destroyed, along with their wall paintings and sculptures by the Chinese Red Guard. It is likely that Western museums and private collections now hold more of this art than presently exists in Tibet.

Photo tip

Cultural details like this mural are common throughout the world. Simply backing up and taking a picture is no better than buying a postcard. Find a way to make the image your own, even though the subject is strong and obvious. Do this by using your composition to emphasize something important to you.





Moai, Easter Island, Chile  
Nikon F3, Nikkor 28mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 8 hours, Kodachrome 64  
March 1986  
Moai  
Easter Island, Chile

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 28mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 8 hours, Kodachrome 64**

Taken on Easter Island, this line of moai statues recalls a disturbing moment in my history. That night, I dreamed so clearly that the spirits of the people that carved these statues were very much around me.

The evening started when I set the camera for what would be a very elaborate, long exposure. I wanted to show these statues against a night sky with star trails streaking behind them. With my camera solidly on a tripod, I locked open the shutter, then took my headlamp and walked around each moai, illuminating the statues with my light. This image was shot with a film camera, nearly thirty years ago. Film allowed for exposures that could be hours in length.

After giving light to each of these statues, I went to my sleeping bag where I slept alone—ten miles from the nearest person. Over the course of the evening, the stars painted their movement across the sky while I dreamed of spirits. Then I felt something touching my shoulder. So vivid was the feeling of touch in my dream that I hesitated for the longest time before sitting up.

When I did, of course, nobody was there. It spooked me so badly that I was unable to sleep the rest of the night. It's amazing how a suggestion or a thought can become so real and vivid. In my travels around the world visiting many cultures, I am often surprised at things I see and feel that don't always make sense to my "scientific" Western mind.

The nature of the photo

Easter Island in the southeastern Pacific is a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its remarkable head statues, called *moai*. These sculptures were carved from igneous rock, mostly from soft tuff but some from hard basalt. They do show whole bodies, though the heads are strongly emphasized.

Photo tip

Part of the photographer's toolbox for a long time, *light painting* is simply using a light, such as a flashlight or flash, to "paint" light onto a night subject. It allows you to show off the subject by continuously moving a light across it over a period of time. With today's digital cameras and a strong light, you can get often great effects in thirty to sixty seconds.





[Credit 6.1](#)

Mount Everest and Nuptse, Khumbu Region, Nepal

Nikon F3, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/2 sec., Fujichrome 50

November 1986

Mount Everest and Nuptse

Khumbu Region, Nepal

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/2 sec., Fujichrome 50**

In this shot, Mount Everest at the left and Nuptse to the right are bathed in the soft light of the post-sunset glow. This scene was photographed from Kala Patthar, a small rocky peak that juts up from the base camp of most expeditions that try to climb Mount Everest's West Ridge.

To get there, we trekked for two weeks up the Khumbu Valley in Nepal. The high point for my trek was the 18,500-foot Kala Patthar. I love this shot, simply because I remember every element of taking it.

I had the foresight to haul up a sleeping bag, knowing I would be shooting late into the evening and that temperatures would drop drastically. Had it not been for my sleeping bag, warm gloves, and warm clothes, I would've been miserable and would not have taken the time to get the shot.

All day long there was a harsh, contrast-y light at this altitude that required you to wear sun protection. But in the post-sunset glow of twilight, everything became soft and quiet. I think this image conveys that. I composed the image with these two great mountains on either side of the famed Khumbu icefall, which lies in the middle. In the bottom of the frame, darkness is creeping up toward the very tops of the highest mountains in the world.

The nature of the photo

The Khumbu icefall sits at the top of the Khumbu Glacier between Mount Everest and Nuptse. This glacier moves fairly quickly down the mountain at speeds of three to four feet per day. That makes the icefall area a dangerous and unpredictable place for climbers trying that route.

Photo tip

Often photographers leave a location as soon as the sun sets. That can be a mistake because there is often beautiful light after the sun goes below the horizon. Digital cameras can find great color and light even twenty to thirty minutes after the sun has gone down.









Ama Dablam, Khumbu Region, Nepal

Nikon F3, Nikkor 200–400mm F5.6 lens, f/11 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome 100

November 1986

Ama Dablam

Khumbu Region, Nepal

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 200–400mm F5.6 lens, f/11 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome 100**

While not the highest mountain in the area by a long shot—at a little over 22,300 feet (compared to nearby Mount Everest at 29,029 feet) Ama Dablam is still one of the most dramatic features of this Himalayan landscape. This beautiful mountain is passed by many climbers and trekkers on the way to Mount Everest, including my group as we headed in that direction.

It is an extremely vertical mountain known for its strongly fluted slopes. The fluting comes because its slopes are so steep that they have constant avalanches.

In this image, Ama Dablam pokes its head out of low clouds that swirl at its base. I love the image because it shows a distinct contrast between the etched detail of the fluted slopes and the soft textures of the swirling mist. A low, late sun gives an oblique quality to the light so that it skims the surface of the slopes. It then picks up and highlights the textural qualities of the mountain. The low sun also creates strong shadows to the left that produce a highly dimensional feeling for the mountain.

I framed the mountain tightly with a 400mm focal length because I wanted to emphasize the light, color, texture, and dimension of just the mountain peak. The soft darkness behind the mountain peaks adds a dramatic effect to the image.

The nature of the photo

An avalanche is the cascading of masses of snow down a snow-covered mountain. It occurs when the weight of the snow combined with the steepness of the slope causes the snow to break free and head downhill. Avalanches sculpt the snow on mountains to create strong textures and shapes.

Photo tip

Photography can be challenging because you are trying to make a flat, two-dimensional photograph look like it has depth. Light is key to giving the impression of dimension because viewers understand a three-dimensional object will have both highlights and shadows.





[Credit 8.1](#)

Agricultural Tapestry, Andes, Ecuador

Leica R series, Leica 300mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/25 sec., Kodachrome 64





Andean Farm  
Leica R series, Leica 300mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/25 sec., Kodachrome 64  
April 1987  
Agricultural Tapestry  
Andes, Ecuador  
**Leica R series, Leica 300mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/25 sec., Kodachrome 64**  
Andean Farm  
**Leica R series, Leica 300mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/25 sec., Kodachrome 64**

Almost thirty years ago, I traveled in the mountains of Ecuador near Quito and came across this beautiful rural scene, with its fields of grass and flowers alternately lit by light and shadow. The irregular geometric shapes of the various greens and beiges, as well as the bands of light and shadow, create an interesting design on this agricultural landscape, almost like a tapestry.

Many amateurs get trapped into seeing light as only illumination (that is, is there enough for a shot?). They also get caught up in ways one "should" photograph a landscape like this (that is, up at dawn for the first light or out just before sunset for last light). They are not the only conditions for photographing a landscape—something that is clear when you look at the dramatic lighting seen here. Clouds create a pattern of light and shade.

In the initial image, the light and shade create bands of visual interest that contrast nicely with the agricultural fields. They give extra the image a feeling of depth. If the light were pure sunlight on a cloudless day, the shot would not be as effective. For the vertical shot, I wanted to show the farmland in context with the mountainous terrain nearby.

The nature of the photos

Agriculture is a big part of the Ecuadorian economy. While subsistence farmers mainly till small plots of food just for their families, larger farms raise everything from bananas and cacao to crops like strawberries, asparagus, and flowers. Indeed, Ecuador has become one of the largest suppliers of flowers to the United States.

Photo tip

When clouds move rapidly across the sky in front of or behind a storm, the light on the landscape will keep changing as the shadows and highlights change. Usually, that means you should continue to shoot, even when you think you've "got the shot," because you never know what might happen next.





[Credit 9.1](#)

Boats, Lake Baikal, Siberia, Russia

Nikon F3, Nikkor 600mm F4 lens, f/22 for 1/8 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

November 1987

Boats

Lake Baikal, Siberia, Russia

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 600mm F4 lens, f/22 for 1/8 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

In the winter of 1987, I was invited by the Soviet government to photograph Siberia and its natural history, with the intent of increasing international tourism to this relatively unknown region. I traveled on horse and sleigh across the frozen Lake Baikal, and I flew via helicopter into the mountains on the border of Mongolia and Siberia.

Along the shore of Lake Baikal, I found this group of overturned boats in the town of Irkutsk. The boats are stored this way to ride out the long winter months without damage. I noticed from a distance this grouping of color, whose faded pastels were remarkable to me. Each boat was metal and each was uniquely colored.

Bright overcast light provided enough contrast between the sunlit sides of the boats and the slightly shaded sides to give volume to the image. When I saw the scene, it immediately brought to mind Pablo Picasso's Cubist period. An education in art history provided inspiration for my modern photographs. I placed a 600mm lens on my camera so as to isolate and emphasize the pattern of these well-worn aluminum rowboats. Showing any of the snow surrounding the boats would have disrupted the pattern. The scene has always reminded me of a serigraph painting (artwork produced through a multiple silkscreen process).

The nature of the photo

Objects spending years in harsh sunlight are affected by elements of the sun such as UV light. This can fade things and cause sunburn, but if you are open to the possibilities for photography, the light-caused aging of things can be beautiful.

Photo tip

When you show the edges of any large group, from boats to flowers to a herd of animals, you emphasize the context and the group's overall shape. By deliberately using the edge of the image area to cut into the group, you force the viewer to focus on the patterns and design of the group itself.





[Credit 10.1](#)

Rising Mist, Alaska Range, Denali National Park, Alaska, USA

Nikon F3, Nikkor 200–400mm F5.6 lens, f/8 for 1/250 sec., Kodachrome 64

August 1988

Rising Mist

Alaska Range, Denali National Park, Alaska, USA

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 200–400mm F5.6 lens, f/8 for 1/250 sec., Kodachrome 64**

Years ago, I spent time crisscrossing Alaska gathering photos for a book entitled *Alakshak: The Great Country*. As part of my journey, I wanted to get some aerial shots of mountains in the Alaska Range. So I found myself in a small plane above the mountains working in the hours between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m.

In the summer in this region, those hours are key because the light is most dramatic then. During summer solstice in Alaska, most of the day is bathed in bright sunshine, and you only have a few hours of twilight with bold light and color. I had to use the shortest hours of the day to capture the most radical light.

In this image, the light of the sun on the Arctic horizon illuminates a few misty clouds sweeping up a slope at around eighteen thousand feet. While I like this image and I have long loved photographing mountains, it is not the photo itself that brings back memories of this moment. Shot over twenty-five years ago, I remember it all this time later because of the extreme turbulence that our plane encountered as it flew along the lip of the ridge.

I fly a lot, and I have been on planes around the world in some very remote locations. However, I'm not a happy camper when the plane drops twenty feet in an instant as it did here. When shooting aerial images, I often circle in ever tighter loops around the subject with my mind so focused on the task at hand that being scared is not part of the equation. But, when a plane drops and rises with rising currents of warm air or thermals as it did here, it is uncomfortable at best and usually frightening.

This shot shows off the ephemeral nature of clouds and light. I remember spot metering the brightest part of the frame, which was the wispy cloud near the top. I compensated for the brightness by exposing to make that cloud bright with detail. By contrast, the surrounding mountains and distant valley remained fairly dark. Within seconds of shooting this, the sun dropped below the horizon, and the entire moment was gone in an instant.

The nature of the photo

Mountains are well known for the fast rising and falling air along their slopes. Glider pilots in mountainous areas will fly directly at a mountainside when the thermals are right, and then catch a fast-moving ride going up with the air. They often describe this as being like running and jumping onto an elevator that is already moving upward.

Photo tip

Spot metering can be helpful when the light is dramatic and you have to be sure you get the brightness values right. *Spot metering* is a type of metering that measures a very small area, a "spot" in the frame. In this shot, spot metering determined the exposure for the bright cloud, but it would have meant the clouds were dark and the rest of the scene even darker. The exposure had to be adjusted to make the clouds bright, not dark. Exposure is added to what the meter shows.



1990s



[Credit p02.1](#)

Samburu Warriors, Kenya

Canon EOS-1N, EF70-200mm lens, f/11 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

The 1990s were an extremely productive decade for Art. He published eight books in 1997 alone. He also got his start in television with *American Photo's Safari* on ESPN. With changes in Russia, the "fall of the Iron Curtain" and so on, the world truly opened up for exploration—something that Art absolutely loves. So many areas of the world were new and offered fascinating possibilities for photography. This time was definitely the heyday for film and stock photography. It was also the time of Art's well-received *Beyond the Lens* exhibit, traveled by the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in the United States and Mexico.





[Credit 11.1](#)

Elk Shadows, National Elk Refuge, Wyoming, USA

Nikon F3, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome 50 pushed to ISO 100

February 1990

Elk Shadows

National Elk Refuge, Wyoming, USA

**Nikon F3, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome 50 pushed to ISO 100**

This image was inspired by the work of M. C. Escher, the Dutch artist who had a whimsical and clever way of portraying positive and negative space.

For this project, I previsualized an idea based on a herd of elk. My idea was to photograph not just the elk but the shadows of the elk from above. I contacted the manager of the National Elk Refuge outside of Jackson, Wyoming. He indicated I would be able to do this as long as I brought a park biologist along to monitor the behavior of the elk. I found a helicopter company that would get me up above the herd and then it was a matter of finding the right timing.

An earlier January cold spell provided the conditions I needed. I decided to wait until one hour before sunset in order to get the best shadows. Then we all went up above the herd. Thankfully, the herd stayed relaxed and calm while I worked to fill the frame with the patterns of their shadows.

This image was shot from several hundred feet above the herd just as the sun was about to set. The shadows cast by these elk were exactly what I was after. Never have I executed an image so clearly previsualized as this situation with these elk. From a compositional point of view, I aimed my camera toward the densest part of the herd, trying to fill the frame with similar shapes and patterns.

The nature of the photo

The National Elk Refuge is easily overlooked by photographers in favor of the Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks in the same area. Those parks are definitely dramatic and worth the visit, but the National Elk Refuge is worth a visit, too. This refuge was established in 1912 to provide winter habitat for one of the largest elk herds in the country.

Photo tip

Light in photography is always about how the light interacts with a subject, resulting in both light and shadow. Shadows themselves can be interesting and important subjects. It is easy to get so caught up in the subject that you miss its shadows. Look for shadows that tell you something about your subject or that provide abstract patterns in themselves.





Polar Bears, Churchill, Manitoba, Canada

Nikon F4, Nikkor 500mm F5.6 lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome 100 pushed to ISO 200

October 1990

Polar Bears

Churchill, Manitoba, Canada

**Nikon F4, Nikkor 500mm F5.6 lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome 100 pushed to ISO 200**

Today, I have many, many shots of polar bears standing and fighting or otherwise engaging with each other, and so do a lot of other photographers. These amazing bears have become well admired by so many people, all because of photography.

This particular image is special to me. I love it for the way it depicts these beautiful bears coming together. The bears are communicating with each other, mouthing each other in a very gentle, caring way. There's such a beautiful symmetry to their bodies, especially the pointed noses. The soft, gentle light adds to the mood of the shot. A bright sunny day would not have worked so well. I've long liked this photo, but haven't used it in a book until now.

It was shot with a 500mm lens, late in the day, with just enough light to stop the motion. We really were limited in the ISOs available to us at that time. Fortunately, the bears were not moving much, so I was able to get the shot. The photograph was taken from a tracked vehicle, as I was looking down slightly on the bears, but it is not a bad angle. The shot represents a great memory for me.

The nature of the photo

Polar bears are exceptional swimmers. They do not hesitate to get into the water and start swimming. Bears have been tracked swimming for sixty miles straight. Their big front paws stroke through the water, propelling them dog-paddle style. The hind feet are not used for forward progress but as "rudders" to steer the bear.

Photo tip

Moments like the one relayed here can be important as a photograph and as a memory. Photographing wildlife should not be simply about framing up an animal inside your viewfinder. Sure, that can be exciting, but stay with the animal, watch its behavior, keep shooting, and you will start to find these moments, too.





Polar Bears in a Snowstorm, Churchill, Manitoba, Canada

Nikon F4, Nikkor 500mm F5.6 lens + 1.4x, f/11 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome 100 pushed to ISO 200

October 1990

Polar Bears in a Snowstorm

Churchill, Manitoba, Canada

**Nikon F4, Nikkor 500mm F5.6 lens + 1.4x, f/11 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome 100 pushed to ISO 200**

Early in my career, I was privileged to travel to Churchill, Manitoba, before it was popular. The great number of people now photographing polar bears were not in the area then. It was still a small, sleepy town.

A couple of my friends and I flew to Churchill, rented a track vehicle that was in the town at the time, hired a driver and off we went over the tundra to photograph polar bears. It wasn't until a few years later that the first tundra buggies were built and a lot of photographers journeyed to Churchill. Today, tundra buggies are the only way to go out over the ice looking for bears. They are a terrific way of doing that.

In this image, two polar bears playfully fight with each other. They're basically killing time, burning off energy. There's no serious territorial display going on here, just harmless fun. Bears tend to do this a lot while they're waiting for Hudson Bay to freeze over. Once that happens, they're gone, off over the bay looking for seals. That's how they hunt. Without the ice, they can't catch seals.

I love that there is a lot of snow throughout the image. Shooting with a telephoto tends to emphasize any atmospheric condition, and this image was shot with 500mm lens plus a 1.4x extender. The wide composition conveys a sense of place, capturing the polar bears in their landscape.

The nature of the photo

Polar bears are uniquely adapted to life in and around ice, which makes climate change particularly threatening to them. An amazing four inches of blubber along with dense, thick hair keeps them warm. These are big bears and stand over four feet tall at their shoulder while weighing on average nearly one thousand pounds. Their native range is largely within the Arctic Circle.

Photo tip

Focal lengths can be chosen to emphasize or deemphasize any atmospheric conditions. Because telephotos compress distance and shoot through a lot of air, atmospheric conditions tend to become stronger in a photo shot with a telephoto lens. Wide-angles mean you are closer to your subject, therefore shooting through less air and showing less of an atmospheric effect.





[Credit 14.1](#)

Herders, Pamir Plateau, China

Nikon F4, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome 100

November 1990

Herders

Pamir Plateau, China

**Nikon F4, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome 100**

For this photograph, three of my friends and I traveled to the Taklamakan Desert in central-west China. We got into a Jeep and trekked along the desert's northern reaches all the way to the Khunjerab Pass on the Pamir Plateau. It is a place with few people and extremes of both weather and topography.

Along the way on this adventuresome trip, we encountered this man, his brother, and a donkey and a fully laden camel. They were coming out of the Himalayas late in November, just ahead of the falling snow. Having spent the summer months in the high mountain valleys, herders bring their goats, sheep, and yaks down out of the mountains this time of year to better winter conditions.

These herders had their goats ahead of them, and on the two Bactrian camels was their entire summer camp—or maybe all of their belongings. What struck me at first glance was the man riding a donkey not much taller than his dogs. On the other camel out of view were the man's wife and children.

It occurred to me that this was a sight out of the past, a sight still happening in 1990 and, I suspect, still happening today. (Although now there might be a TV bound up among those bundles on the camel.) I love the scene, the dust kicked up in the background by the camels, the man and his brother, all coming together as a sight most people would not normally see.

The nature of the photo

Pamir Plateau sits in the far eastern part of China. It is a sparsely populated area, just northeast of the Himalayas, bounded by some of the tallest mountains in the world, including the Pamir Mountains. The plateau sits at an altitude of eleven thousand to fifteen thousand feet and ranges over parts of Tajikistan, China, Afghanistan, and northern Pakistan.

Photo tip

You may notice that Art often goes to the 70/80–200mm zoom. It truly is a workhorse lens for him. But it would be a mistake to think that it would automatically be a workhorse for you. We all see the world differently. Base your lens kit on your specific needs—that is, how the lenses solve the challenges of photographs you want to take, not the photos Art or any other photographer wants to take.





[Credit 15.1](#)

Beluga Whale, Somerset Island, Nunavut, Canada

Nikon F4, Nikkor 600mm lens, F8 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome 50

July 1992

Beluga Whale

Somerset Island, Nunavut, Canada

**Nikon F4, Nikkor 600mm lens, F8 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome 50**

Somerset Island in the high Canadian Arctic is an amazing place with unique landscapes, remarkable native sites, and extraordinary wildlife. One summer, a friend and I were scouting the area for later aerial work when we arrived at the mouth of the Cunningham River. This location is where beluga whales come into the river for their summer molt. At this time, they scrape away their old skin on the soft pebbles of the river bottom.

About eleven whales had swum into this small river and were stranded by the tide. They were perfectly healthy, but they were stuck in shallow water—now too shallow for them to get back to the ocean.

As we watched, a polar bear came and started going from one whale to another, clawing and killing them. Polar bears live where food can be abundant some times and in short supply at others. So when there is food, the bears are conditioned to take as much as they can.

This was a natural thing, but we still found it disturbing. We fired a rifle into the air to scare off the bear. Then we stayed with the whales until the tide came in. The bear kept circling at a great distance out over the ice, staying away from us. A very cool thing happened when the whales went out to sea. They came in close and a couple of them stuck their heads out of the water and looked at us. I got a shot of that. These whales have kind of funny-looking lips, and they're sometimes called sea canaries because they chirp. I swear that one of the whales, and I'll never forget this, stuck its head out and said, "Thanks, Art."

The nature of the photo

Beluga whales are small whales with rounded heads and large foreheads. They live throughout the Arctic. A five-inch layer of blubber helps them survive in these frigid waters. These whales are the only whales that are completely white as adults.

Photo tip

In the preceding text, Art tells a great story about the beluga whales and the polar bear with words. However, his photo also tells a story, and the story is complete in the photo. So often photographers take a picture of something and the story is in their head, not in the photo. A storytelling photo needs emphasis and context to help the viewer understand what is important and how they should look at what is presented in the image.









[Credit 16.1](#)

Emperor Penguins, Weddell Sea, Antarctica

Nikon F4, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

November 1992

Emperor Penguins

Weddell Sea, Antarctica

**Nikon F4, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

I had been approached by friends of mine, Shirley Metz, the first American woman who actually ventured to the South Pole on foot, and Peter Harrison, a renowned ornithologist and explorer, to join an exploratory trip to the Weddell Sea. We flew up and down the coast looking for emperor penguin colonies, and eventually found one. We spent five days there photographing these emperors. We had very bad weather; however, one evening the weather cleared in the middle of the night. I was the only one that got out of his sleeping bag and marched the two kilometers across the ice to the emperor penguin colony. I was rewarded for my effort with two hours of sublimely beautiful golden light and ten thousand emperor penguins all to myself.

During the session, I had to monitor light and weather conditions. Should clouds or fog have developed quickly, I could have become rapidly disoriented. If I missed where my camp was, there was a good chance I would perish.

In this photograph, a pair of emperor penguins arch their heads and their necks over their single offspring. For this shot, I lay on my belly so that I could fill the frame with just the adults and the baby. One of the most difficult things about photographing these penguins was their curiosity. Often I would be shooting and suddenly the entire frame would go white. I would pull my head away from the viewfinder only to find an emperor penguin towering over me, pressing its feathers into the front of my lens.

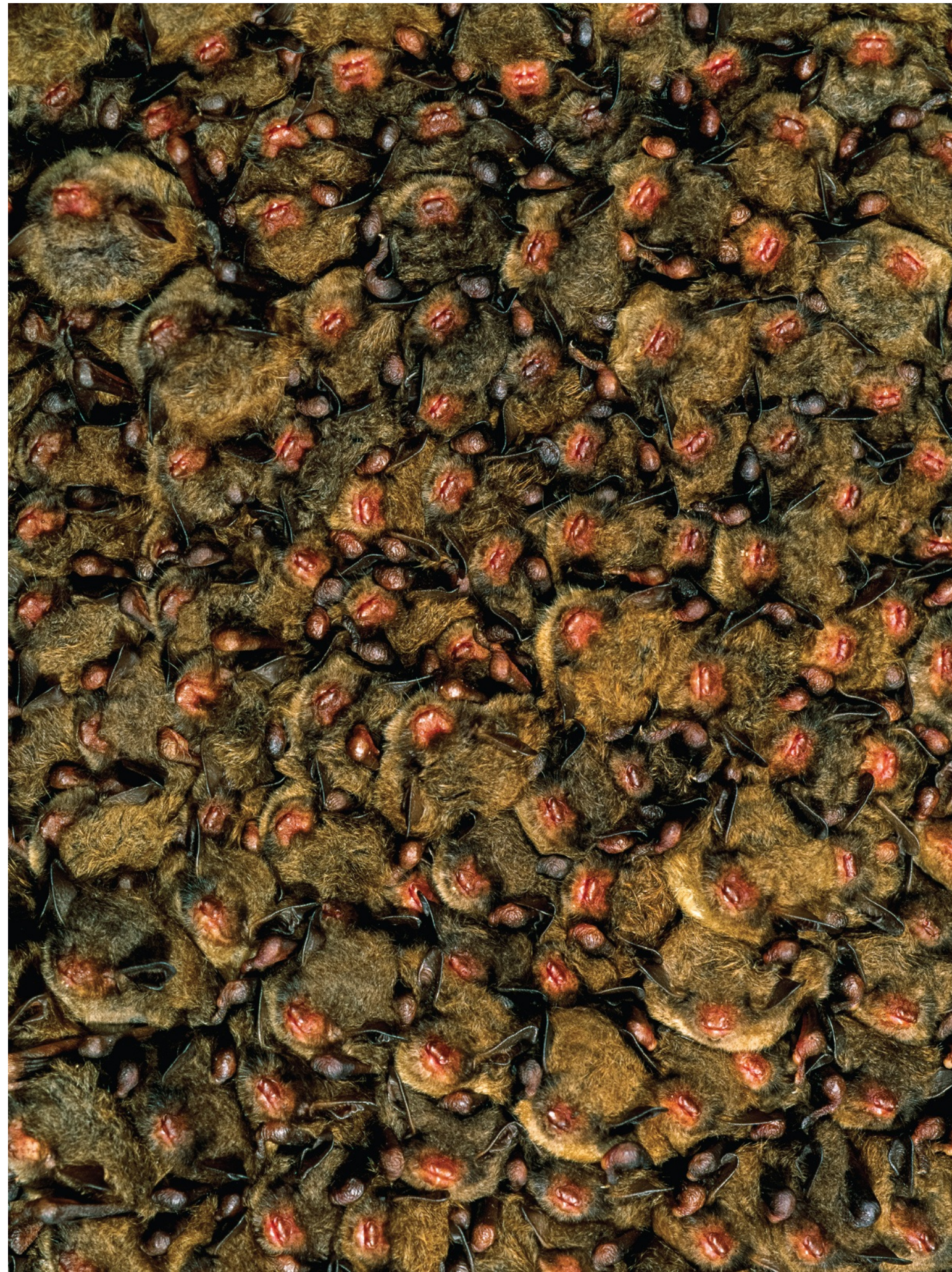
The nature of the photo

One thing that can't be captured in a still photo is the beautiful forlorn call that adult emperor penguins make over their babies. They put their heads straight up and then slowly arch down toward the baby with a trumpeting call. With ten thousand identical-looking birds, it's the individuality of the call that allows the baby to know which are its parents.

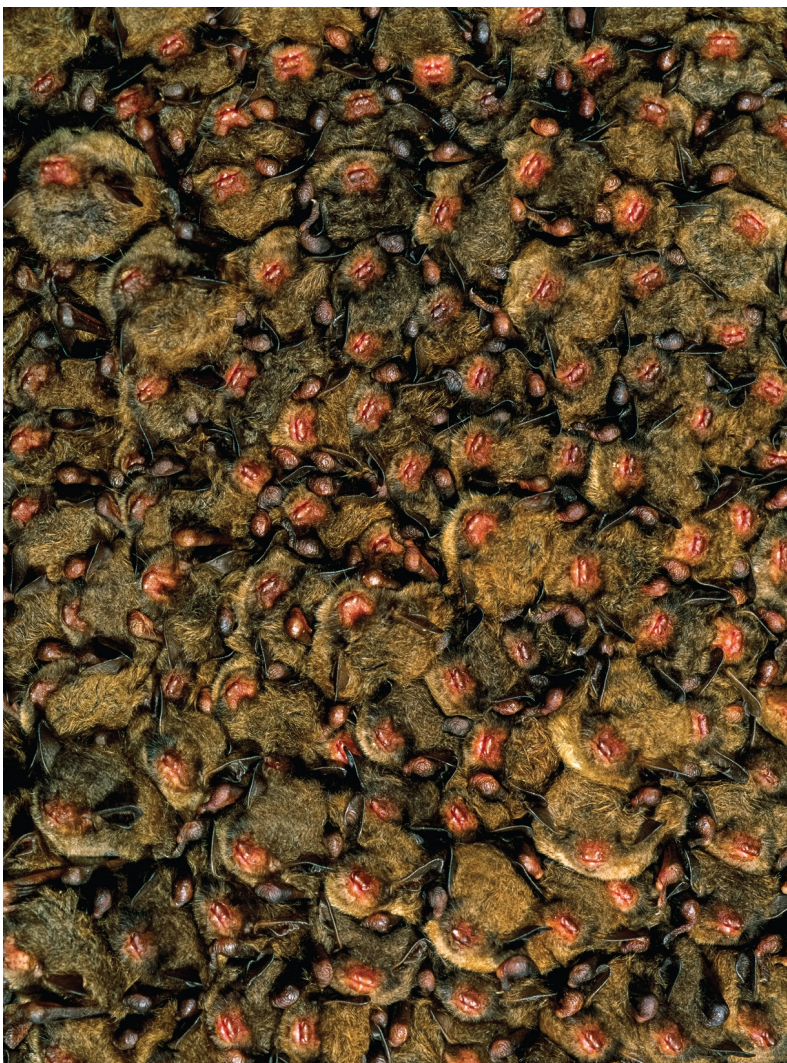
Photo tip

Ground animals and plants are frequently photographed from a 45-degree downward angle. This is easy to achieve because it means the photographer can shoot standing up, or at most, kneeling. However, it might not give the best photos. Animals and plants both often look their best when you shoot at their level, not yours.









[Credit 17.1](#)

Indiana Bats in Hibernation, Ozark Mountains, Arkansas, USA

Nikon F4, Nikkor Micro 55mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

January 1993

Indiana Bats in Hibernation

Ozark Mountains, Arkansas, USA

**Nikon F4, Nikkor Micro 55mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

I connected with a bat specialist at the University of Arkansas, and he invited me to accompany him on his team's annual winter census. We went into an endangered Indiana bat colony inside a protected cave.

Much of the cave was no higher than three feet, which meant I had to crawl on hands and knees through a very cold environment with a tripod, cameras, a flash, a flashlight, and headlamps. These bats are so tiny that there are hundreds per square foot.

If I lingered longer than fifteen or twenty minutes in the chamber, the bats could wake up from sensing the warmth of my body. If that happened, I would put these tiny bats in danger because of the amount of calories that they would burn just from waking up. That could mean some of them would not last throughout the winter.

I worked alone in the pitch-black cave, holding the flashlight in my mouth to focus. Once I heard any squeaking from the bats, I quickly packed up my stuff and crawled out.

The nature of the photo

Bats represent about 25 percent of all mammal species. They are diverse, remarkable, and gentle animals that over the years have gotten a bad rap. They are the only mammals that can fly, but since they come out to feed at night, they are rarely seen. Most cave bats in the eastern United States are greatly endangered because of white-nose syndrome (caused by a fungus that wakes bats during hibernation, depleting their resources for surviving in the winter) and the destruction of their caves. Bats are very important for keeping insect populations in check.

Photo tip

Being prepared when the photography is challenging is critical for getting the shot. (And in this case, keeping the subjects safe.) When conditions are difficult, you must know how to quickly set up and shoot with your camera and other gear. This means becoming totally familiar with your gear *before* you need to use it.





[Credit 18.1](#)

Dani, Baliem Valley, West Papua, Indonesia

Nikon N90s, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia pushed to ISO 100

April 1993

Dani

Baliem Valley, West Papua, Indonesia

**Nikon N90s, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia pushed to ISO 100**

One of the first books I ever worked on was *Endangered Peoples*. In the course of shooting the book, I made my way to Irian Jaya (now Papua) the western half of the larger island of New Guinea, and into the remote, often cloud-covered mountains where the Dani people live.

I wanted to photograph them because the Javanese at the time were colonizing these islands and not necessarily treating the Dani well. I wanted to showcase these people and give them visibility that they did not have.

I flew into Jayapura, the provincial capital of Irian Jaya and caught a small bush plane up into the Baliem Valley in the mountains of western New Guinea. From there I found a guide, and he suggested that one of the ways to photograph the Dani people was to buy a pig and offer it to the village. I bought two pigs and offered them to a large village. From that action, I was greatly welcomed into their community.

In this image, you can see the Dani people roasting one of the pigs. They dug a pit, lined it with leaves, put the pig in, then covered the whole pit with superheated rocks to slowly cook the pig. When the pig was cooked, there was a big feast for the village which, of course, I was able to photograph. The Dani people put on their celebratory regalia, including headdresses made out of bird-of-paradise feathers.

The mountains of this area are a high-altitude rainforest with constant clouds. With the cloud cover you get a soft light, which I prefer when I have a complex subject in front of me. I love that the Dani people are fully engaged in preparing the feast, and that they're wearing virtually no clothes really says volumes about their adherence, at the time, to tradition. I'm sure that if I were to travel back to this area today, these same people would be wearing baseball caps, T-shirts, and shorts.

The nature of the photo

The Dani people are considered one of the oldest agricultural societies on the planet, with thousands of years experience cultivating vegetables such as wild yams. The Dani people weren't even known to the outside world until World War II when American pilots spotted cultivated fields through the broken clouds of the rainforest. Prior to that, nobody really knew what was going on in those mountains, nor did they care.

Photo tip

Photographing people involved in day-to-day activities is one of the best ways to capture candid photos. This makes people much easier to photograph because their attention goes away from you, which can result in interesting, very real photographs.





[Credit 19.1](#)

Lesser Flamingos, Lake Magadi, Kenya

Nikon F4, Nikkor 80–200mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/500 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

June 1993

Lesser Flamingos

Lake Magadi, Kenya

**Nikon F4, Nikkor 80–200mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/500 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

Lake Magadi is in the Great Rift Valley near the border of Tanzania and Kenya. It resembles what you might think of as a Martian landscape. It's an alkali environment—a no man's land. If you tried to cross this shallow lake, you would get stuck in the mud and its deposits of salt, and probably die.

Lake Magadi is austere, yet startlingly beautiful. I wanted to capture an impression of the vastness of this lake. This is difficult to do from the shoreline, so I flew in an ultralight aircraft—a small, open aircraft that has no real body to it, only seats, a wing, and an engine—to gain an aerial perspective. From that vantage point, I was able to get an incredible view as a flock of flamingos took to the air. This provided a wonderful sense of scale to the image of lake that could not be shown in any other way.

I like this photograph because it presents an interesting combination of texture, pattern, and perspective. I used a polarizer (a filter that controls how light is seen by the camera) to remove reflections and intensify the redness of the minerals as well as the contrast of the birds against the lake. While it definitely communicates that these are large numbers of flamingos, the shot also creates an interesting abstract composition. The patterns within this image are created by both the movement of the birds and by how the polarized light brings out the lake's forms.

The nature of the photo

Lake Magadi sits in an area of volcanic activity (typical of the Great Rift Valley). Saline hot springs around the lake, caused by the heat of the underlying volcanic activity, pump hot, salty water into the lake. Because the lake has no outlet, the water has become a dense sodium carbonate brine.

Photo tip

A polarizer is one filter that cannot be replaced by processing an image in the computer. Polarizers can remove glare from subjects to reveal color and pattern that could not be captured otherwise. They do require an increase in exposure, which may mean you need to shoot at a higher ISO.





[Credit 20.1](#)

Cape Buffalo, Amboseli National Park, Kenya

Nikon F4, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/500 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

June 1993

Cape Buffalo

Amboseli National Park, Kenya

**Nikon F4, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/500 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

In this photograph, a herd of Cape buffalo runs across a dusty plain in Amboseli National Park. A layer of dust is kicked up by their stampede. That element gives the image its strength. The combination of the soft dust and clearly defined horns and heads transforms a rudimentary shot into something more elegant and memorable. The late afternoon light, the similarity of shapes, and the dust that envelops each individual animal all add to the majesty of this image, making it one of my favorites.

For this shot, I was flown by a crazy Frenchman who had been hired by the national park to monitor the one remaining black rhino there. He piloted a two-seat motorized ultralight, a great platform from which I could photograph herds of African wildlife. For this shot, I was traveling at the same rate of speed as the herd of buffalo charging across the plain.

Flying in an ultralight meant that I had a giant fan right behind my head and few places to put the film I was shooting with then. The pilot had a small bag of film between his legs, and we practiced the transfer of the film between us. If we dropped the roll of film, it would have flown into the fan and come back at us in pieces. It was dangerous, so we had to be very focused.

The nature of the photo

Stampedes are common to certain groups of animals, including African buffalo, bison, cattle, and even humans. A stampede occurs when the group panics and starts running with no clear sense of purpose or direction. This seems to be an evolutionary behavior designed to help protect the group by confusing predators.

Photo tip

One of the biggest challenges of aerial photography is stopping the movement of the camera during exposure (especially when flying in an ultralight). Depth of field is less important than a fast shutter speed, so if you have to make a choice, always choose the fast shutter speed even if that means using a wider f-stop.





[Credit 21.1](#)

Upper Xingu Indians, Mato Grosso, Brazil

Nikon N90s, Nikkor 80-200mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome VelMa pushed one stop





[Credit 21.2](#)

Kikuro Man

Nikon N90s, Nikkor 80-200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/30 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

August 1993

Upper Xingu Indians

Mato Grosso, Brazil

**Nikon N90s, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome Velvia pushed one stop**

Kikuro Man

**Nikon N90s, Nikkor 80-200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/30 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

Xingu National Park in Brazil's Amazon Basin was largely formed to protect the native peoples and to keep miners and loggers out. Every seven years, the many Xingu tribes within this vast area come together for a big celebration.

For photographing the line of dancers, I leaned against a hut, trying to avoid being conspicuous. By staying out of the activity, I could remain discreetly out of view and shoot this image.

It was a challenge to maintain deep depth of field. Because these were the days of film, I simply didn't have the camera nor the ISO to get a fast shutter speed. I used 1/125 sec. at f/16, too slow a shutter speed to handhold and get sharp images without some stabilization. However, leaning on the hut helped me brace my camera.

The [photo](#) represents one of my favorite memories. In the years since I shot this, many of these same people began wearing shorts and T-shirts. Not that it changes the integral part of who these people are, but the trappings of Western civilization look inappropriate when photographed in a tribal situation.

The nature of the photo

The Xingu people of Brazil represent fifteen tribes of native Amazonian Indians living near the Xingu River, all with similar belief systems and ceremonies.

Photo tip

When you can't use a tripod, watch that your shutter speed does not drop too slow for sharp images. Telephotos generally need 1/250 sec. or faster to stop camera movement during exposure. If you must handhold slower, look for ways to brace yourself and your camera against a solid support that offers some stability.





[Credit 22.1](#)

Simbu Dancers, Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea

Canon EOS-1N, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/30 sec., Fujichrome Provia shot at ISO 200

August 1994

Simbu Dancers

Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea

Canon EOS-1N, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/30 sec., Fujichrome Provia shot at ISO 200

During the month of August, there is a celebration of tribes and culture in the Papua New Guinea highlands known as the Mount Hagen Sing Sing. During this week, hundreds of tribes come together from all four corners of the country. The tribes of New Guinea historically decorate themselves during ceremonial occasions—from the birth of a child to the death of an elder or a marriage in a village.

In this particular image, the tribe members adorned themselves on one side with white clay from a bank of a river and soot mixed with pig fat to create black on the other side. I was so enamored by this unique style of adornment that, without the aid of an interpreter, I boldly started grabbing these men as they were preparing themselves and lined them up into an abstract composition of positive and negative space.

Though I could not speak their language, somehow they were willing to let me do this. It's often best to be decisive. In this case, being decisive in my actions translated into the men complying with my wishes and I was able to get the shot. Often it is nonverbal communication that is most effective. Even light enabled me to showcase the details of both the dark and bright side of their bodies. This image was created purely from a sense of design. I enjoy working with the tribes of New Guinea; they are interesting and engaging people.

The nature of the photo

Historically, many Papua New Guinea tribes warred with each other, so years ago the government decided to channel their aggression into a friendly competition. Rather than throwing spears at each other, they directed their aggression into dance and costume.

Photo tip

Harsh sunlight can make images like the one featured here impossible. You have to recognize what your camera is or is not capable of doing for the conditions, then photograph within its limitations, rather than simply photographing any subject you see.





Deer Dancers, San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico, USA

Nikon N90s, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome Velvia pushed one stop

August 1994

Deer Dancers

San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico, USA

**Nikon N90s, Nikkor 80–200mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome Velvia pushed one stop**

Along the Rio Grande just south of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the Rio Grande Valley are pueblos. *Pueblo* is a Spanish name that refers to communities that include apartment-like buildings made of adobe mud and other local materials.

The Pueblo Indians—residents of these communities—have their traditional history and beliefs, but these are also mixed with Catholicism. The early Spaniards came in from Mexico and set up Catholic missions all up and down the Rio Grande. They then made converting the natives a priority.

As a result, the Pueblo Indians adopted many of the beliefs of the Catholics. Throughout the year, many of the Pueblo people have ceremonial dances; the dates sometimes coincide with traditional Catholic feast days, but most are determined by Pueblo leaders. In this particular community, the young men wear antlers, white shirts, eagle feathers, and elaborate dress, to dance. After obtaining my photography permit I photographed these elements as part of a book about cultures throughout the world called *Tribes*.

I like the simplicity of this image. It clearly features the dancers in all their glory, set against a simple background. I also quite like the interesting visual shape of the dancers as a group, a shape that allows the dancers to have some depth and form.

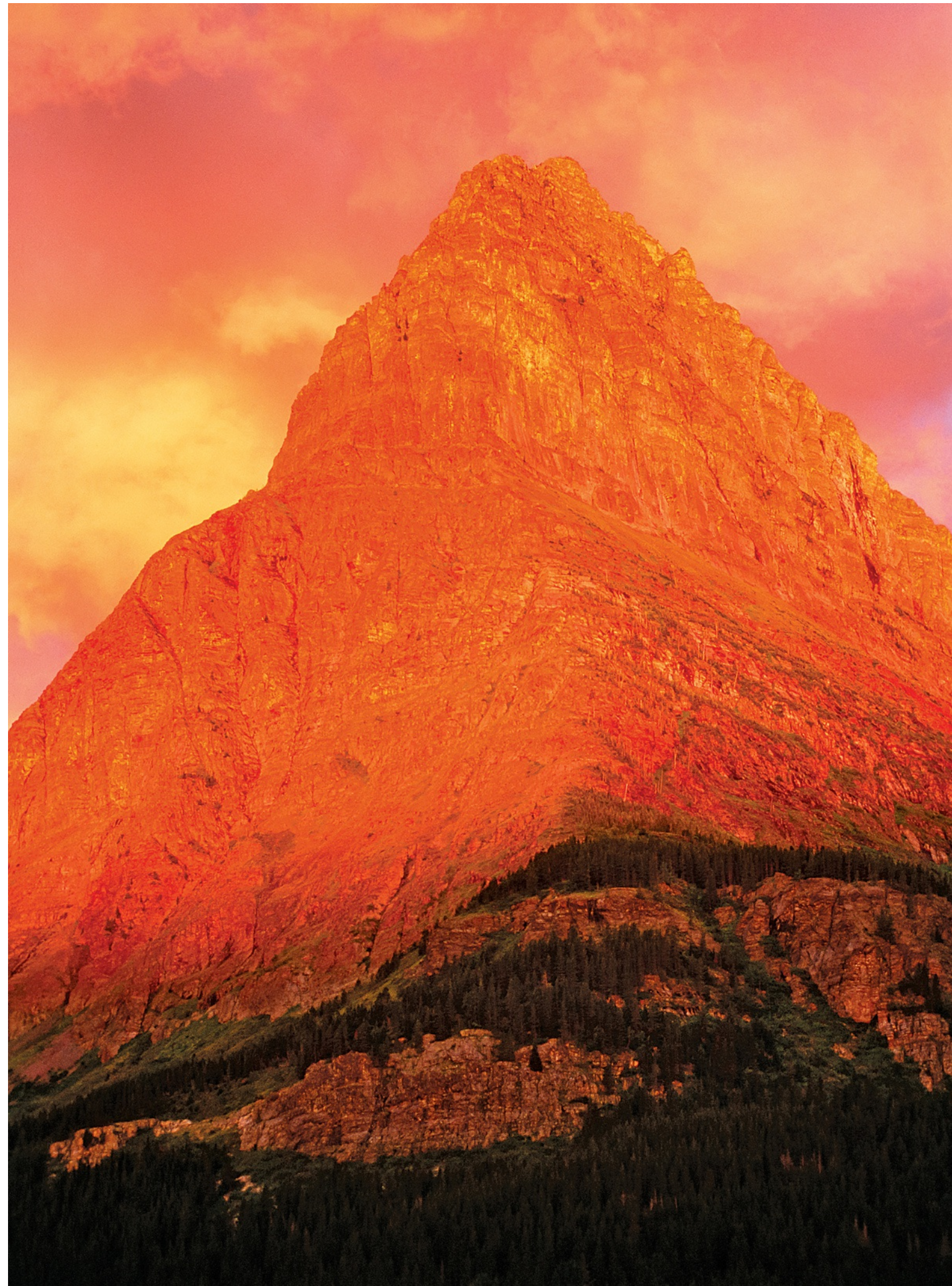
The nature of the photo

The Pueblo people had well-developed communities long before the Spanish found them. They usually lived in villages or pueblos built on top of mesas, rocky, flat-topped rises in the landscape. The relationship between humans and nature is an important part of their culture, and their myths explore the connection of people, plants, and animals.

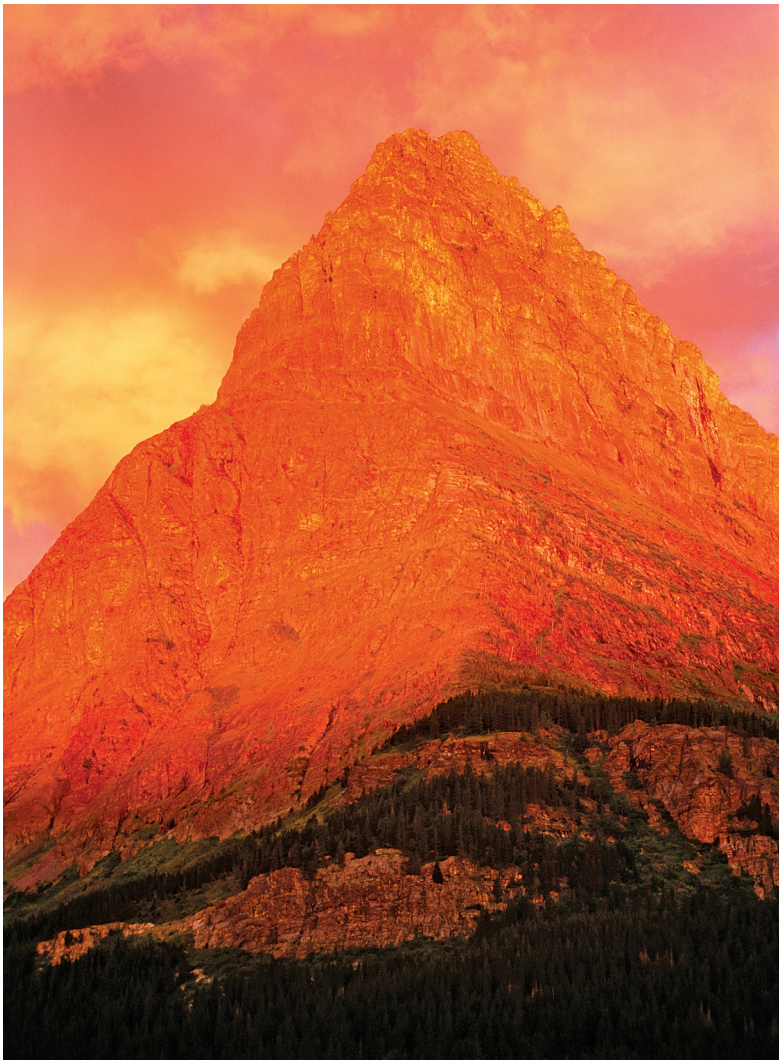
Photo tip

Photographing different cultures can be fun and exciting, but not all traditional cultures want photographers around. However, most cultures have events and holidays where they proudly show off their heritage and photographers are welcome to take pictures of them. Photography then is much easier because it is accepted as part of the event. Check ahead of time to be sure there are no restrictions on photography in controlled situations or locations like the Pueblos (where a permit is required).









Grinnell Point, Glacier National Park, Montana, USA

Nikon N90s, Nikkor 20mm F2.8D AF lens, f/11 for 1/15 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

August 1995

Grinnell Point

Glacier National Park, Montana, USA

**Nikon N90s, Nikkor 20mm F2.8D AF lens, f/11 for 1/15 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

The glacially carved spire of Grinnell Point, illuminated by warm morning light, thrusts upward from the wind-whipped waters of Swiftcurrent Lake. All the mountains, lakes, cirques, and valleys show the powerful effects of the ice sheet that once covered the region.

Along with an assistant, I was in Glacier National Park in Montana to photograph fall landscapes. I wanted to photograph this beautiful pyramidal-shaped mountain at dawn. We were up early, well before sunrise. From this area, there are hills to the east so you can't actually see the sunrise. The sky was cloudy, and we could not see the stars. Still, we got up to see what might happen because there had been broken clouds the day before.

When we got to the lake, it was still dark, but I saw a little bit of a pink cloud overhead. Quickly, I got my camera ready. Before long, the entire Grinnell Point lit up like a candle from the first light of dawn. For a while, it was the only thing that was lit in the entire scene, but then mountains beyond it started getting hit by the early light.

In this photo, I love the way the cloud in the sky above meets the terminal shape of Grinnell Point in all its glory. The contrast of light and dark is stunning. These are the instances that photographers live for, unexpected serendipitous moments when light and circumstance all come together in a miraculous way.

The nature of the photo

Grinnell Point is part of Mount Grinnell, an 8,851-foot mountain in Glacier National Park. It rises boldly and dramatically from the shores of Swiftcurrent Lake, and from that lake, blocks the view of the rest of the mountain. It is named after George Bird Grinnell, a naturalist and writer and early supporter of protecting Glacier National Park.

Photo tip

Nature and outdoor photography is always full of surprises, which is why, if you are serious about landscape photography, you should never write off the conditions if, at first, they do not look ideal. Wait and see what happens. If nothing occurs, enjoy the view, take some close-ups, and be glad you can be outside!









Les Aiguilles and Lac Blanc, Savoy Alps, France

Canon EOS-1N, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/4 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

October 1995

Les Aiguilles and Lac Blanc

Savoy Alps, France

**Canon EOS-1N, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/4 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

This photograph features Lac Blanc in the Savoy Alps of France. In the distance is Mont Blanc, on the upper right on the horizon just under the cloud. At over fifteen thousand feet, it is the highest point in the Alps.

My assistant, Gavriel Jecan, and I traveled up a path to this lake in cloudy weather. By the time we got there, it was raining and blowing miserably. We couldn't see anything more than a few feet in front of us. We hunkered down out of the wind under a rock and discussed abandoning this location and going back down to a dry room.

However, the rain grew lighter. Then there was a tiny, tiny patch of blue in the cloud cover. I suggested that we should wait around for another hour. After an hour, there was more blue sky. After three hours, there was 50 percent blue sky.

Right at sunset, all the clouds dissipated and the wind dropped to a dead calm. Then, miraculously, we got our beautiful light. I used a graduated neutral density filter aligned with the horizon of the lake because reflections tend to be about two stops darker than what is being reflected. By darkening the area above, I could bring the entire exposure into balance.

The nature of the photo

Savoy is a geographic region in southeastern France and includes the Savoy Alps, a northwestern spur of the Graian Alps. The whole of the Graian Alps are in France, Switzerland, and Italy. The summit of Mont Blanc is a thick, perennial ice and snow dome that befits its French name, meaning "White Mountain."

Photo tip

Graduated filters were commonly used by photographers in the 1990s as they were the only way to balance an image with one area that was brighter than another when using film. Unfortunately, not all scenes fit the straight gradation line in the filter and using it can give a dated look to the photograph because of that. Today, photographers often balance the light a camera can't handle properly in programs like Lightroom. Lightroom includes local controls that allow you to affect one part of a photograph, such as the sky, apart from others.





[Credit 26.1](#)

Southern Cross, Namib-Naukluft National Park, Namibia

Canon EOS-1N, EF17–35mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/60 sec. and 8 hours, Fujichrome Velvia

September 1997

Southern Cross

Namib-Naukluft National Park, Namibia

**Canon EOS-1N, EF17–35mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/60 sec. and 8 hours, Fujichrome Velvia**

DeadVlei is an old lake bed, now dry. The trees that thrived on its margin have died, and now they are silent testaments to the past. I wanted to shoot the Southern Cross there but, unfortunately, was not allowed to stay overnight with my camera that particular year. Instead, I set up the camera with a tripod and aimed south and left, not knowing if the Southern Cross would be in the middle of the frame or left or right when the image was developed.

This photo was taken in the days of film. This particular Canon body had a programmable computer that would enable it to shoot multiple exposures. I set the first exposure to grossly underexpose the twilight scene using a polarizer and a neutral density filter so that there would be a little red on the horizon and most of the image would be dark.

I set second exposure for eight hours to capture the Southern Cross and the rest of the stars rotating around it. All of the collective light from the stars brought the overall image to its proper exposure. I didn't know for sure whether or not I got the shot until a month and a half later when I got back to Seattle.

The following morning my assistant, Gavriel Jecan, and I had to race like heck to get back to it before any tourists got to it. I remember coming over the dune just as a tourist was approaching the camera and grabbing it. I got my camera and my film—a lot of stress for an image that at the time was very different than anything I'd shot before.

The nature of the photo

The Southern Cross is a small constellation located deep in the skies of the Southern Hemisphere. The cluster of stars looks like a cross. It has long been used for navigation in the Southern Hemisphere, much like the North Star in the Northern Hemisphere. Other stars appear to circle around it because of the movement of the earth.

Photo tip

With film cameras, one could leave a shutter open many hours to capture star trails. This is not possible with digital cameras. Instead, most photographers now shoot multiple, thirty-second (or so) exposures and combine them, using Adobe Photoshop (and other programs) to stack multiple files into one photograph.





[Credit 27.1](#)

Iceberg, Jökulsárlón Lagoon, Breiðamerkursandur, Iceland

Canon EOS-1N, EF17–35mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 4 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

July 1998

Iceberg

Jökulsárlón Lagoon, Breiðamerkursandur, Iceland

**Canon EOS-1N, EF17–35mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 4 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

My assistant, Gavriel Jecan, and I had been photographing in Jökulsárlón Lagoon in southern Iceland. It was a particularly cold, wet, and misty day. We set up a tent and went to sleep in the drizzle and the mist. But I kept on poking my head out periodically.

Late that evening, I noticed that the sun was slowly descending to a gap in the clouds. I guessed that the sun would provide some interesting light around 1:00 a.m. So I got up and started walking the edge of the lake.

I saw a piece of very clear ice, which represents the hardest and oldest layer of ice within a glacier. Tiptoeing out into the shallows of the water and using an extended tripod leg, I fished it ashore and pulled it up so that I could shoot through the ice toward the sun. This piece of glass-like ice almost resembled a primitive soapstone carving from the Inuit carvers, an abstraction of a human form with a head and two legs on a chubby body.

I simply took an exposure through the ice and used a 2-stop graduated neutral density filter to balance the light. I also set a small f-stop to get not only the ice in the foreground but also the distant glaciers in focus. I had a great time photographing this beautiful rendering of ice along the shore. Indeed, this is one of my favorite images from that evening. I love the way the ancient ice glows and how the light diffracts through it.

The nature of the photo

When glacial ice is new and not compressed, many tiny air bubbles in the ice pick up the light and make the ice look opaque and white. Years of compression under the massive weight of a glacier forces tiny air pockets out between the ice crystals, making glacial ice denser (and therefore clearer) over time.

Photo tip

Be prepared to take advantage of changes in the weather, especially in the clouds. Don't assume that a particular weather pattern will stay the same. Watch for breaks in the clouds that can offer dramatic light or, at least, more interesting skies. Take advantage of small details in a scene that visually change in response to altered conditions.





King Penguins in Snowstorm, South Georgia Island

Canon EOS-1NRS, TS-E 90mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome Astia





King Penguin Chick  
Canon EOS-1N, EF70-200mm lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia  
December 1998  
King Penguins in Snowstorm  
South Georgia Island  
**Canon EOS-1N/RS, TS-E 90mm F2.8 lens, f/16 for 1/125 sec., Fujichrome Astia**

King Penguin Chick  
**Canon EOS-1N, EF70-200mm lens, f/8 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

South Georgia Island is an extremely remote island in the South Atlantic that is difficult to get to. While working on my book *The Living Wild*, I was able to get onto the island and camp for six days.

During our stay, we faced all sorts of weather conditions, but primarily wind and snow. I love atmospheric conditions, and blowing snow is one of those conditions that convey a sense of the primordial and a timelessness to the resulting image. Still, it made for difficult shooting.

In the larger shot, the penguins are hunkered down to withstand the turbulent weather. We were trying to shoot videos as well as stills. The wind meant we had to stabilize the image with a heavy tripod. A small f-stop of f/16 kept all the penguins in focus. One thing a still photo doesn't convey is the sounds and smells of a moment. Certainly, the smell of hundreds of thousands of penguins is something I'll never forget. The sound of the birds, the trumpeting of the adults, is a sound that is forever etched in my brain.

The nature of the photos

King penguins are second only to emperor penguins in size. They mostly live on islands north of Antarctica, such as South Georgia Island, rather than on the continent itself. They feed on fish and squid from the ocean.

Photo tip

If you suspect challenging weather, be sure you are prepared for it with the right clothing, boots, gloves, hats, and so on. If you are too uncomfortable, you are not going to stay outside for the unique possibilities that the weather might bring. When conditions get tough, dramatic and unusual photographs are often possible.





[Credit 29.1](#)

Giant Panda, Qinling Mountains, China

Canon EOS-3, Canon EF70–200mm F2.8, f/8 for 1/250 sec., Fujichrome Astia pushed to ISO 200

February 1999

Giant Panda

Qinling Mountains, China

**Canon EOS-3, Canon EF70–200mm F2.8, f/8 for 1/250 sec., Fujichrome Astia pushed to ISO 200**

An important book for me was *The Living Wild*. I photographed iconic animals around the world for that project. Of course, that meant getting shots of wild pandas in China. That was all too easily said, but much more difficult to do. Almost all photos of giant pandas in what look like wild situations are actually photographed at the Wolong Nature Reserve. There the animals are actually kept in captivity and released into enclosures that look wild.

I soon learned that true wild pandas live in very steep valleys in remote mountains in China and are extremely shy. Another challenge was the bamboo, one of the pandas' main food supplies. The bamboo forests are littered with years and years of dead leaves that are very noisy to walk across.

The pursuit of this photograph became very frustrating. I could hear a panda munching on a bamboo stalk a short way off the trail, yet the minute I ventured toward it, even if I tried to tiptoe through the dry bamboo leaves on the forest floor, the panda would stop making noise and disappear.

Around the sixth day of this frustrating game, I saw a panda up on a mountain slope through a gap in the bamboo. It looked like it was heading down the slope toward a mountain stream. I was so anxious to get the shot that as the panda disappeared into the vegetation on its way to the stream, I rolled up my pant legs and plunged into the stream. There was a lot of snow within the bamboo forest, so the stream was frigid.

I started wading up the stream, trying to intercept the panda when it lumbered out of the forest on the edge of the stream. With a lot of luck, I saw it slowly come down through the forest and emerge at the edge of the stream, at which point I got two shots. The panda looked at me, turned around, and disappeared again. Sometimes it's not the quality of the image but the moment and the nature of it that is important.

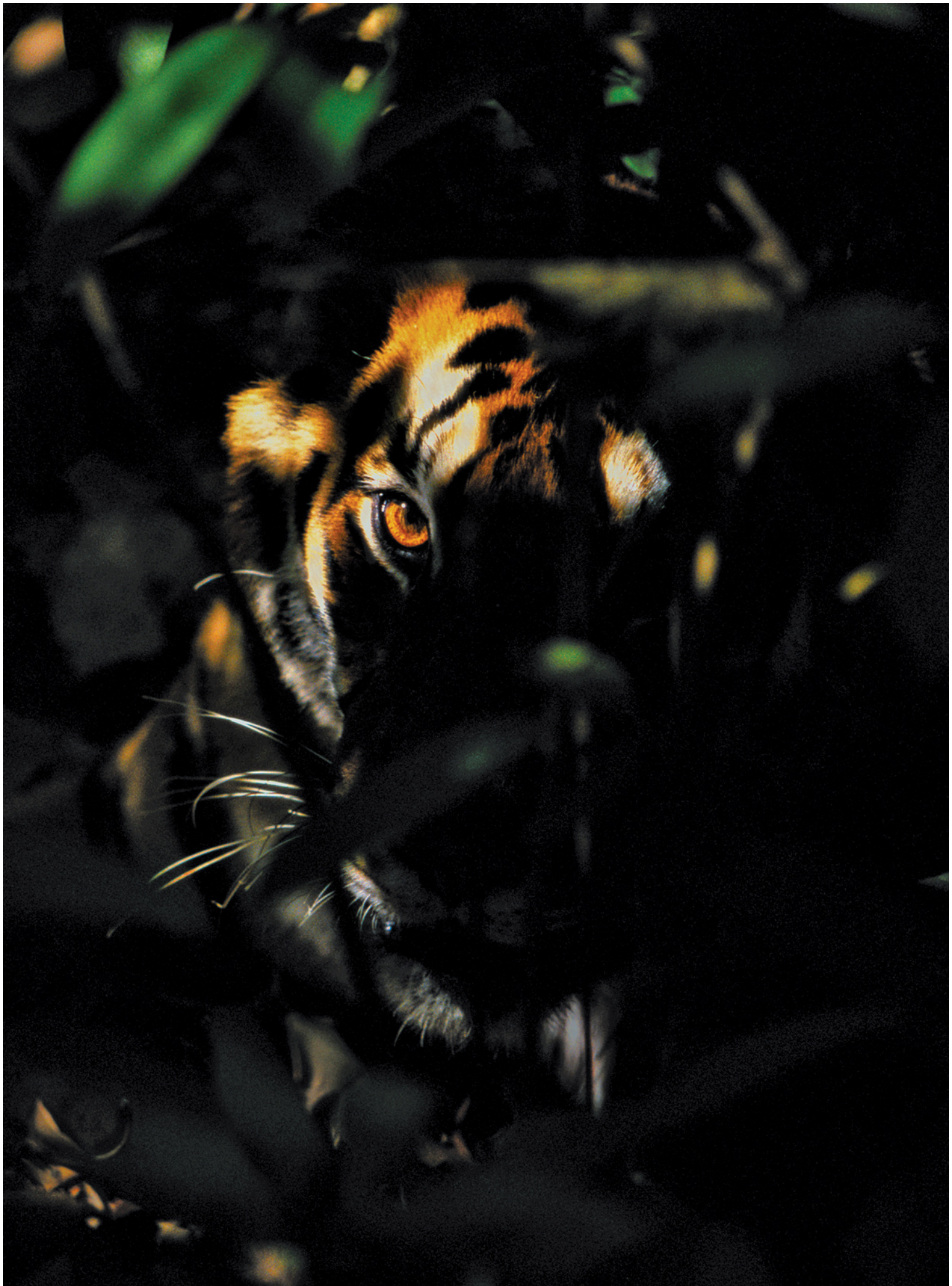
The nature of the photo

Pandas share traits with both bears and raccoons, so there has been debate as to which group they belong in. Today, scientists consider these endangered animals to be part of the bear family. Even though pandas are carnivores, they mostly eat bamboo, which is abundant in the central China mountain forests where they live.

Photo tip

Nature does not always cooperate with photographers. We have to deal with the conditions we get, including the temperament of shy subjects and noisy leaves. Rather than dwelling on what you can't get and trying to make a situation something it isn't, go with what you have and work with it, not against it.









[Credit 30.1](#)

Tiger Eye, Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

Canon EOS-3, EF600mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

March 1999

Tiger Eye

Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

**Canon EOS-3, EF600mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/60 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

While working on my book *The Living Wild*, I traveled to central India to photograph tigers. I hired an elephant with its driver, or *mahout*, so that my assistant and I could shoot from an elephant. This is much safer than being on the ground in tiger country. Deep in a forest on a sunny day, we found a large male tiger approximately forty feet away from our location, just barely visible in the darkness of the shaded forests. I kept my camera on the tiger, and from one specific angle, I was able to focus in on the one eye that was catching the dappled light coming through the forest.

Of the images I've shot of tigers, this is one of the more powerful, simply because it conveys a sense of environment and mystery. It also speaks volumes for how this top predator has been able to survive in the second-most-populated country in the planet. This particular tiger was not happy with our close proximity. It growled and spit. I think the anger of this tiger was easily sensed by the elephant. Acting apprehensive, the elephant spun around and we lost sight of the tiger. Observing the depths of the vegetation, it was obvious that the tiger had moved on...or so we thought.

My assistant tapped me on the shoulder, and I turned around to see this big male tiger had climbed a tree and was looking down at us. I quietly tapped the mahout. He saw where the tiger was and instantly we were off and running. One does not want to be below a tiger, especially an angry male tiger in his environment.

The nature of the photo

Tigers are the top predator anywhere they live. They are the largest of the big cats. Adults live alone except when mothers have cubs. A full-grown male can weigh up to six hundred pounds, yet can still leap over thirty feet in a single bound.

Photo tip

When using dramatic light, you have to see the light on the subject and not simply the subject. The camera does not see the subject, only the light on the scene. Respond to how the camera is seeing the light, not simply to how *you* are seeing the subject.



2000s



Street Children, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Canon EOS-1DS, EF70-200mm lens, f/20 for 1 3/5 sec., ISO 400

The first decade of the twenty-first century was a time of great change. Digital cameras became practical and affordable for all photographers. Most pros, including Art, made the shift to digital. In fact, Art went to Antarctica in 2004 with both film and digital cameras, including four hundred rolls of film. He didn't shoot a single roll, and instead fell in love with digital photography because of its capacity for instant feedback. In 2006, Art embarked on his biggest project yet, the filming of his award-winning television series *Art Wolfe's Travels to the Edge*.





[Credit 31.1](#)

Spiritual Journey, Ganges River, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS-3, EF17-35mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

January 2001

Spiritual Journey

Ganges River, Uttar Pradesh, India

**Canon EOS-3, EF17-35mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

I conceived of this shot the evening before, when I saw a pilgrim crossing the Ganges and thought how that might look with the sun rising as a perfect red orb early in the morning. The sun only lasted for a few seconds with the right color and brightness as it came up through the smoke and haze typical of a morning in India. As soon as it rose more than a couple of degrees above the horizon it was too hot to include in the frame.

I had arranged to have this person, a pilgrim, arrive thirty minutes before sunrise at a great spot I had picked out. By prearranging to have this person and boat arrive early, I knew that I could get this shot as long as I stabilized it. I had to pull the boat into the mud to keep it from moving and have the person remain motionless. Otherwise, this is an image that would have been unattainable because of subject movement and slow shutter speeds.

I used a polarizer to darken the water in the foreground, plus a graduated neutral density filter lined up with the horizon to balance the exposure of the sky. I asked the person to remain as still as possible, so that during the long exposure I could expose the sunrise well while attaining a great depth of field. I wanted the boat to be as sharp as the sun. All that remained was to wait for the sun.

The nature of the photo

The Ganges River is considered by Hindus to be a most holy and sacred river. The river originates in the Himalayas and flows through one of the most fertile and most populated river basins in the world. It was named after the goddess Ganga, the daughter of the mountain god Himalaya.

Photo tip

Timing can be critical when the sun is at the horizon. Within minutes, the sun can change color and brightness as well as position. And if you want a very specific color and tonality, even seconds can make a difference. You have to be prepared for the fast changing light.





[Credit 32.1](#)

Full Moon over Summit Vent, Mount Etna, Sicily, Italy

Canon EOS-3, EF17-35mm F2.8 lens, f/5.6 for 1 sec., Fujichrome Velvia







[Credit 322](#)

Volcanic Burst

Canon EOS-1N, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 30 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

July 2001

Full Moon over Summit Vent

Mount Etna, Sicily, Italy

Canon EOS-3, EF17–35mm F2.8 lens, f/5.6 for 1 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

Volcanic Burst

Canon EOS-1N, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 30 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

In July 2001, I turned on CNN and discovered that Mount Etna in Sicily was once again exploding. Rivers of lava were heading down the slope toward a small mountain village. I looked at the dramatic scene and quickly mobilized. I called a friend in southern France and asked him if he could pick me up in Rome. And off I went on what would be a grand adventure for me—trying to get a great shot of the eruption.

We drove down the boot of Italy, crossed over to Sicily, and then used four-wheel drive vehicles to get to Mount Etna in order to photograph this great event. In the "Full Moon over Summit Vent," I used a wide-angle lens to capture not only the main explosion of the volcanic eruption, but also the full moon rising above and beyond the two thousand-foot plume of ash and mist. In the lower right, a river of lava heads south and down the slope.

The second shot of the volcanic burst is very different. I had leaned back against a tiny *cinder cone* (a cone of fragments thrown out of a volcanic vent) not more than ten feet high during the middle of the day to watch the larger explosion down the slope. It was only when the light turned to dusk that I became aware that all of the little flies around my face earlier in the day were actually little pieces of pumice coming out of what I thought was a dormant cinder cone. A long exposure made the cinder cone look much more active than it really was. The 30-second exposure shows multiple overlapping little tufts of floating pumice illuminated by the glowing embers below, and it gives a somewhat distorted view of the reality to the scene. Both photographs are beautiful in their own ways. One gentle and small, the other enormous and loud.

The nature of the photos

The largest active volcano in Europe at nearly eleven thousand feet high, Mount Etna towers over its surroundings, including the city of Catania, Sicily. It is continuously active at some level. The lands surrounding Mount Etna benefit from rich volcanic soil and support extensive agriculture, including orchards and vineyards.

Photo tip

Not everyone can travel to an erupting volcano for dramatic shots, but nature offers compelling, ephemeral events nearly everywhere. Don't discount the awe inspiring thunderstorms of Arizona and New Mexico, the fast-changing floods of spring, the bold lightning strikes of summer, and so on, as great representatives of the power of nature, each beautiful in its own way.





Cape Buffalo, Okavango Delta, Botswana

Canon EOS-1N/RS, EF600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x, f/22 for 1/500 sec., Fujichrome Provia

August 2001

Cape Buffalo

Okavango Delta, Botswana

Canon EOS-1N/RS, EF600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x, f/22 for 1/500 sec., Fujichrome Provia

Traveling through the Okavango Delta of Botswana in Africa, my small group and I decided to pause for a lunch break after a morning spent traversing open grasslands and dense forests looking for wildlife and photo opportunities. We stopped by a small pond that had several wading birds in it, giving us a chance for some casual bird photography during lunch.

Soon after settling in, we saw an approaching dust storm in the distance. It looked to offer some unusual atmospheric conditions, so I grabbed my camera to photograph the storm. But as we watched, we discovered that this was not caused by local wind conditions. It was dust kicked up by several hundred Cape buffalo stampeding across the dry savanna.

They came right toward us and then plunged directly across the water in front of us. Quickly, I grabbed my camera and started shooting. Because of the size of the group, I could shoot some variations on the action, so I shot a number of exposures, starting with exaggeratedly long ones and then changing to fast exposures, as short as I could get under the lighting conditions.

With the image here, I love the explosion of muddy water and the cloud of water drops between my position and the buffalo. It gives the buffalos outline an abstract quality. This image was my favorite of the day.

For what seemed like a long time, I photographed the buffalo as they crashed through the shallow water before disappearing into the forest. When I turned to put my camera away, someone yelled, "Lions!" On the edge of the pond, we saw several adults that were panting and drinking water. It was now obvious why the buffalo had been moving so quickly.

This photograph was shot at 1/500 sec., which sounds pretty fast but really was only marginally fast enough to stop the extreme motion of the water. The longer exposures simply had too much blur—there was no point for the eye to rest on. In long exposures, I look for contrast of sharp focus and motion blur. In this case, I think the rendering of the Cape buffalo works quite nicely.

The nature of the photo

The Cape buffalo (also called the African buffalo) is a true buffalo, unlike the American "buffalo," which is actually a bison. Both are members of the cattle family, but are distinctly different animals. Two strong visual differences are the bison's smaller horns—the buffalo's are fused at the base, forming a heavy shield across its crown—and its more pronounced hump.

Photo tip

Blurs are always tricky. (A photographic blur occurs from a slow shutter speed that blurs action.) There is no single shutter speed that can be used for all situations. This is why it is always hard to recommend a shutter speed for blurs. You have to experiment. The great thing about digital photography is that you can try different shutter speeds and instantly evaluate your results on the LCD monitor.









Spotted Hyena, Okavango Delta, Botswana

Canon EOS-1N/RS, EF600mm F4 lens, f/8 for 1/250 sec., Fujichrome Provia

August 2001

Spotted Hyena

Okavango Delta, Botswana

**Canon EOS-1N/RS, EF600mm F4 lens, f/8 for 1/250 sec., Fujichrome Provia**

The *sundowner* is a tradition of the private lodges of the Okavango Delta. Basically, it is a time to pause and celebrate the day's activities by having a cocktail in the bush.

On one unusual and memorable sundowner, our group was startled by the sudden appearance of what could only be described as a crazed hyena. It started running around us in circles, surprising everyone. The hyena was not aggressive nor was it frightened. It simply ran around crazily.

Upon closer inspection, we saw the animal was carrying the lower leg of a young giraffe. It probably came from a lion kill because giraffes are not hyena prey. Finally, after several circles around our small group, the excited hyena disappeared into the surrounding scrub.

Given the dwindling daylight and the fact that I was using film, I was hard-pressed to use a shutter speed that would stop the animal in crystal-clear sharpness. But I think the combination of the slight blurred motion with the strangeness of a hyena carrying a giraffe's leg and running straight toward the camera conveys the mystery of the moment.

This image was shot with Fujifilm Provia at ISO 100. I used a 600mm lens to get in tight on the animal and giraffe leg. Since the sun had already set, the entire scene was bathed in fairly even light, with no harsh shadows or bright highlights to confuse a rather complex subject.

The nature of the photo

While hyenas look somewhat like dogs, they are more closely related to cats. There are three species of hyenas in the hyena family. All are very intelligent animals and live in family groups. The spotted hyena is the largest of the hyenas and will prey on antelope and wildebeest, though it will eat everything from birds to lizards to insects.

Photo tip

Don't think that the only way to photograph wildlife is to shoot it crisp and sharp. A slight blur can add an element of character to an image that a sharp photo won't have. However, this is always dependent on how your subject is rendered. Sometimes it looks great, sometimes it looks like a mistake.





[Credit 35.1](#)

Lions, Okavango Delta, Botswana

Canon EOS-1N/RS, EF600mm f/5.6 lens, f/22 for 1 sec., Fujichrome Velvia

August 2001

Lions

Okavango Delta, Botswana

**Canon EOS-1N/RS, EF600mm f/5.6 lens, f/22 for 1 sec., Fujichrome Velvia**

Early in my career, I tried to connect the various painters I had studied in college with my photography. One of the movements that I really studied closely was Impressionism. During the Impressionist era, many painters such as Monet, Manet, and Renoir used a lot of movement in their paintbrush strokes. As a result, their images had a sense of fluidity and blur.

To pay homage to that, I started experimenting with exaggeratedly long shutter speeds on such things as trees blowing in the wind, snow falling, water flowing, and animals moving. This body of work first became a story for a magazine and ultimately made up the content of my book *Rhythms from the Wild*.

In the image here, a slow shutter speed of 1 second captures a young male lion, probably three years old, walking across an open savanna with a female. The blurred motion of their legs is a nice contrast to the fairly sharp focus on the eyes and the heads of the cats. I panned the camera with the speed of the cats so that I was able to attain a fairly sharp focus on the male cat's face, while the rest of the bodies of both cats were left much more in a state of blur. The camera was on top of a beanbag on a Land Rover, and I used a Canon camera with a fixed pellicle mirror so I could pan the image and follow the male cat's head. (A pellicle mirror is a semi-transparent mirror that splits the light to the viewfinder and the film plane so it does not move like a normal SLR mirror.)

This impressionistic technique gives the image depth and a uniqueness that would not otherwise be obtained with a very sharp and focused exposure of the cats frozen in time. For me, it conveys a much greater sense of mystery and motion.

Of course, trying this technique has its pitfalls. There a lot of times I have experimented with long exposures and the net result was a lot of useless images. There was no confirmation of what I was getting until I returned home to Seattle and had the film processed. Only then could I discover if I had a winner or not.

The nature of the photo

This photo shows a male lion actively courting a female. During courtship, the territory's dominant male rarely permits the female to venture more than a few meters from his position. Lions live in family groups called *prides*, consisting of five to six females, cubs, young males, and a dominant male (or at most, two).

Photo tip

Long exposures for blurs always involve guesswork. What any shot looks like will depend on the speed of the motion, both of subject and camera. You have to experiment. Digital cameras really help because you can try a shutter speed and immediately evaluate its results on the LCD.









[Credit 36.1](#)

Aurora Borealis, Brooks Range, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1N, EF17–35mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 30 sec., Fujichrome Provia 400

March 2002

Aurora Borealis

Brooks Range, Alaska, USA

**Canon EOS-1N, EF17–35mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 30 sec., Fujichrome Provia 400**

I don't think you can view the aurora borealis without experiencing a sense of wonderment and mysticism. It remains one of the most dazzling sights in the natural world. This image comes from one of my first trips to photograph the aurora borealis in Alaska. To get this image, I flew to Fairbanks, then drove north for eight hours to the Brooks Range on the famous pipeline road that goes to Prudhoe Bay. The Brooks Range lies within the Arctic Circle and thus provides better odds for seeing the aurora borealis.

At night, I traveled the road looking for any signs of the aurora. In this image, you can see the aurora rise above and beyond the peaks of the Brooks Range. The peaks are illuminated by the half moonlight. A full moon might have provided too much light to balance with the more subdued colors of the aurora.

As I took this shot, I could not perceive red. Red light waves are short waves not easily picked up by the naked eye in the pale green aurora. When I got home and had the film processed, I was delighted to discover how the film had rendered the color red as part of the scene. I also discovered that without focusing prior to sunset, it was very difficult to find my focus point because there was very little light. From that point on, whenever I photographed stars, I always set up and doublechecked my focus before nightfall.

The nature of the photo

The *aurora borealis* (northern lights) is an atmospheric phenomenon that occurs as electrically charged particles from the sun interact with geomagnetic forces from the earth to make gases glow in the upper atmosphere. They are most visible in the far north (and also the far south, in the Southern Hemisphere).

Photo tip

When your lens is focused at infinity, at the distance of mountains and sky, depth of field is also infinite, regardless of the f-stop used. There is little need to stop down to small apertures, so when you need all the light you can get to the sensor for long night exposures, don't be afraid of shooting with your lens wide open.





Humpback Whale, Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1N, EF500mm F5.6 lens, f/5.6 for 1/250 sec., Fujichrome Provia

May 2002

Humpback Whale

Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska, USA

**Canon EOS-1N, EF500mm F5.6 lens, f/5.6 for 1/250 sec., Fujichrome Provia**

Being close to a whale is always a thrilling experience. I shot this humpback whale as it began its dive in the deep Frederick Sound in Southeast Alaska. I had been following a group of these whales with a small zodiac boat for several days as they traversed the icy fjords of Southeast Alaska.

I was able to predict the shot because I knew that when a humpback whale reaches the surface, it will breathe with a dramatic blow of air and water three or four times as it moves across the surface. Then on the fourth breath, it typically dives. Before it dives, the whale usually arches its tail, and it becomes very evident that it's going to dive. Taking the photo became a matter of placing myself in the right position to take advantage of the very symmetrical nature of the dive.

There is a moment when the tail is perpendicular to the water, as the whale starts to go straight down. I shot many, many images of these whales and their tails, looking for the right combination of gesture of tail and angle to the camera. I prefer this image because of the amount of water seen draining off the tail in the moment that it comes out of the water. I also like the angle of the tail, which gives the shot a certain symmetry that works well within the frame. I shot from an angle close to the water to really emphasize the tail and falling water.

The nature of the photo

Humpback whales typically winter in the warm waters around Hawaii. Then, every spring, they make their migration north to the Alaskan coast and proceed through the isles to Southeast Alaska where they feed in the krill- and herring-rich waters. They return back to the waters of Hawaii in late fall.

Photo tip

If you are interested in wildlife photography, it is extremely important to know your subject. Knowing an animal's habits, habitat, and behavior can be far more important to getting a great shot than any camera or lens. Check with rangers and naturalists at parks and refuges to learn about the wildlife there.





Elk, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA

Canon EOS-1N, EF500mm F5.6 lens, f/11 for 1/250 sec., Fujichrome Velvia pushed to ISO 100

November 2002

Elk

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA

Canon EOS-1N, EF500mm F5.6 lens, f/11 for 1/250 sec., Fujichrome Velvia pushed to ISO 100

What you see in this photograph is the result of a pack of wolves circling a vast herd of elk in Yellowstone National Park. I shot it from a hillside above them. You don't see the wolves, but you can sense their presence in the area. The elk were concerned and alert, milling around, trying to determine where the wolves were at the moment I took the picture.

I love this shot because it conveys the vastness and density of the elk herd. In addition, it shows the effects of the wolves' presence, even though they are not in the shot. You won't find this same massing of elk today. They are much lower in number in this region of the park. They simply moved out because it became too dangerous a place for them to forage.

As a result, willows and other trees have now started growing back along the rivers and the streams in Lamar Valley, which has brought in beavers. Beavers could not live there before because the elk had stripped so much of the vegetation that the beavers needed in order to live. The entire ecological zone is changing in a very short time. Herds of bison have now replaced the elk, and wolves are now learning to hunt the bison instead.

This image was photographed with a 500mm lens. A long lens like that compresses the scene, making the elk look very dense. I like the flatness of the light, which permits a very complex shot with multiple subjects to be easily processed by the viewer because there's not a lot of contrast or distracting shadows.

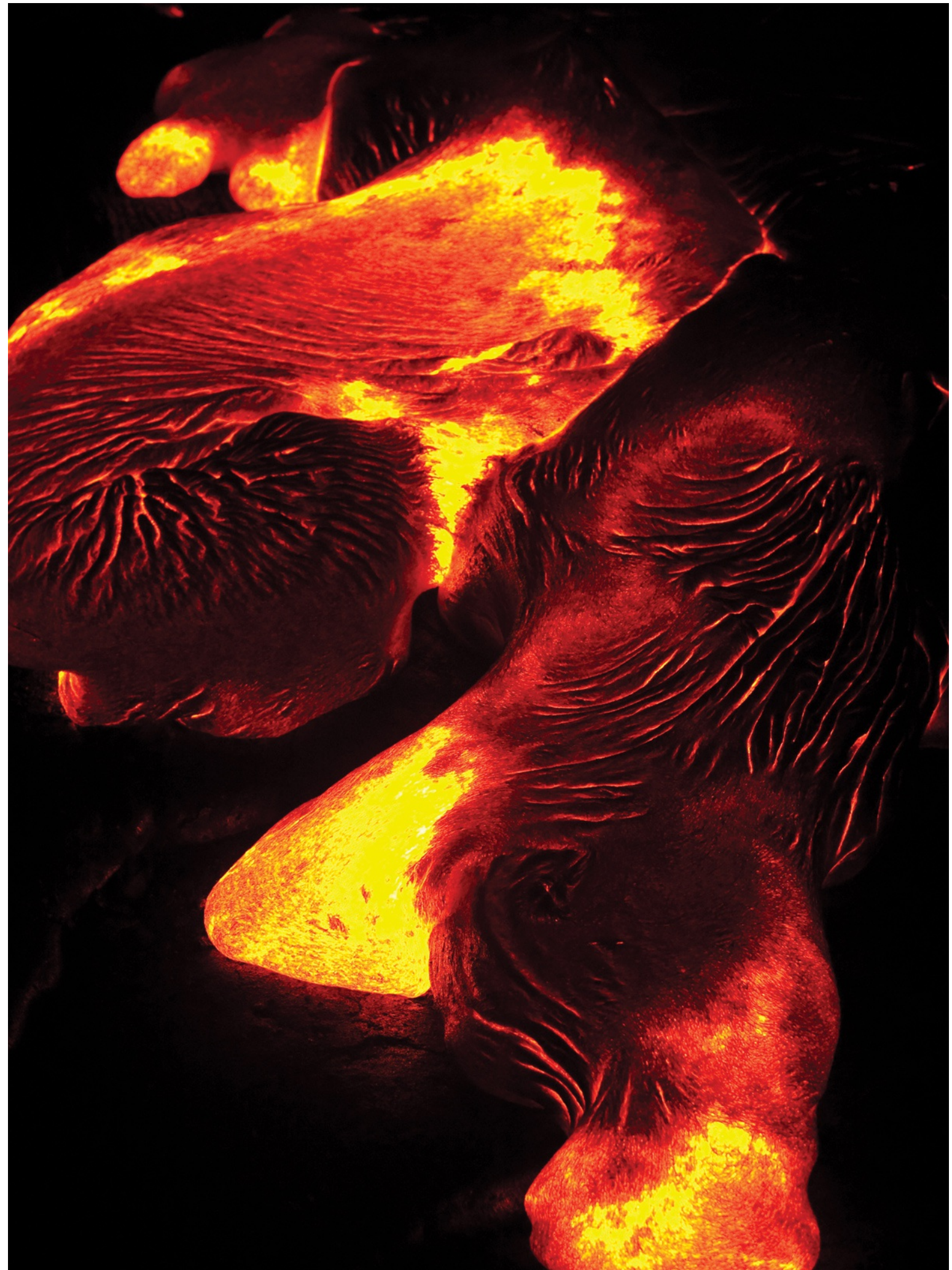
The nature of the photo

Gray wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone starting in 1995. Elk had overpopulated many areas, especially Lamar Valley. As the wolves grew in number, they began to reduce the elk population to what the ecosystem could actually handle. This has allowed native plants to grow where they had difficulty surviving before.

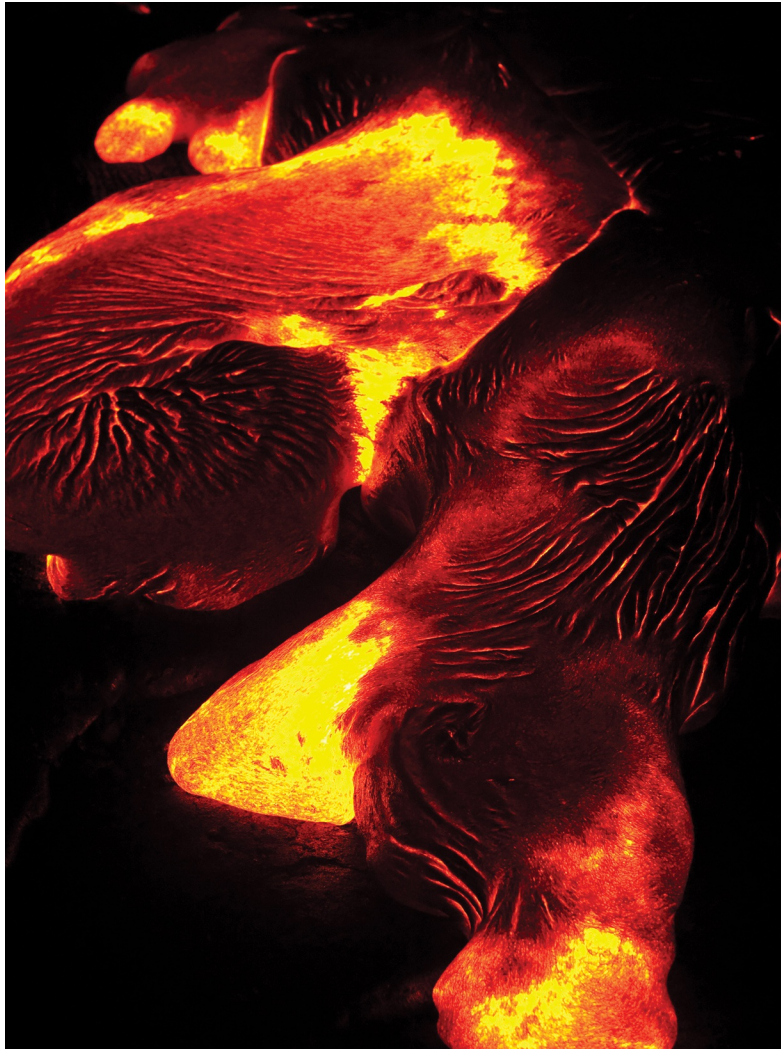
Photo tip

The edges of this composition cut into the herd of elk so that you cannot see how big it actually is. This is a technique that you can use for any large group of subjects, from flowers to wildlife. By cutting into the group and not allowing the viewer to see its edges, you imply that the group goes on and on.









Lava, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Hawai'i, Hawaii, USA

Canon EOS-1Ds, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/4.5 for 1/20 sec., ISO 400

June 2004

Lava

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Hawai'i, Hawaii, USA

**Canon EOS-1Ds, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/4.5 for 1/20 sec., ISO 400**

While photographing for the book *Edge of the Earth, Corner of the Sky*, I traveled all over the earth seeking dramatic landscapes. You'd be hard-pressed to find a more dramatic landscape than the land-forming process of lava flowing on the Big Island of Hawaii.

During one shooting occasion, I crossed hundreds of yards of newly formed land made from recently dried and cooled lava. Occasionally, spurts of lava would emerge as a new flow began. As the day wore on, the contrast of the light and dark became stronger. I stopped looking at an image like this one in terms of lava flow and started seeing it more from the abstract point of view. As I become more mature in my intellect and as a photographer, I find myself becoming more and more attracted to the abstract.

In this instance, it was as though I was with a samurai warrior doing battle with some unknown creature and not just photographing lava flowing out of the earth. The temperature of the lava coming out of the earth is around 2000°F. From the distance I was photographing, the temperature was still several hundred degrees. I could only stand for a few seconds, take the shot, and then move back to cool down.

That scene was constantly changing as lava piled up and flowed down the slope. So virtually every couple of seconds, I had a new composition and a new abstract to compose.

The nature of the photo

All Hawaiian islands were formed by volcanoes coming up from the ocean floor. The Kilauea volcano in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is still active and has continuously flowing lava, but what is open and not open to the public changes depending on the flows.

Photo tip

The exposure of an image with a lot of black such as this one can be tricky. The camera will see the black and "want to" increase exposure so the resulting image isn't black. That would harm the color of the lava here, and can hurt any important colors surrounded by black (including dark shadows) that you might find. Typically, you will need to reduce the exposure given by the camera's metering system.





Rickshaw Roundup, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Canon EOS-1Ds, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/13 for 1/8 sec., ISO 100







Rickshaw Drivers Wait for Fares

Canon EOS-1Ds, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/20 for 2/5 sec., ISO 200  
December 2004

Rickshaw Roundup

Kolkata, West Bengal, India  
Canon EOS-1Ds, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/13 for 1/8 sec., ISO 100

Rickshaw Drivers Wait for Fares

Canon EOS-1Ds, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/20 for 2/5 sec., ISO 200

During my years as an art major, I took a lot of classes with a design focus. As a result, a sense of design is an important part of much of my work. Photographing rickshaw drivers in the old city of Calcutta, now called Kolkata, is easy. They are everywhere as seen in the line-up waiting for passengers on the [this page](#). Creating a design with them is not so easy. For "[Rickshaw Roundup](#)," I got together a group of rickshaw drivers and arranged them into a circle that I could photograph from above, from my hotel room. I basically hired these drivers to work for me. For a small investment, people who are underemployed will do a lot for you.

Over the years, I have played with this practice in different cultures, creating compositions that would not normally occur. I like toinker with the sense of design—circles, squares, whatever it might be—in order to create an interesting and impactful photo of people that grabs your attention. It actually makes you see the people in a new way.

Yet these created compositions must, for me, honor and respect the people I am photographing. In this case, these men were truly rickshaw drivers and these rickshaws were in the location where they normally would be, outside a hotel. The location and the people are authentic; the only thing that's different is that I have created the composition. Using a 70–200mm zoom, I was able to fill the frame with the rickshaws top to bottom.

The nature of the photos

The rickshaws of Kolkata, India, are among the last in the world. Some people in the government call them inhumane and want to phase them out. The drivers have protested because they would lose their livelihood, though their income is not high—typically the equivalent of \$8 a day.

Photo tip

Street photography requires working with whatever is in front of you, but that can sometimes result in chaotic scenes. By setting up a shot, you can control all of the compositional elements of the photograph, from the subject placement to the background, which can create a strong design for the image.









Workers, Panjim, Goa, India

Canon EOS-1Ds, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/14 for 1/250 sec., ISO 400

December 2004

Workers

Panjim, Goa, India

**Canon EOS-1Ds, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/14 for 1/250 sec., ISO 400**

You never know what you will find when wandering around a city with a camera in hand. While culture and tradition are important to me, I am first and foremost a photographer, so I simply look for interesting photos as well. When light and subject and circumstance come together, magic can occur.

In this particular case, the facts behind the shot are nothing special. Workers had been putting gravel onto the parking lot of a restaurant, which kicked a lot of dust into the air. Pedestrians were simply going about their business. However, when backlit by a late sun, the scene became street art—performance art. The act of putting gravel down created an amazing atmosphere for a nicely layered image.

Standing back from the scene, I used a 70–200mm zoom, which enabled me to take a series of shots without interfering with the people so that they would not pay attention to my presence. I positioned myself so I was looking directly into the late afternoon light so that the dust being kicked into the air would be filled with light. I was not so much concerned about capturing details and faces of the people as much as I was with capturing the positions of the bodies within the frame. I kept shooting and reframing the shot as the scene changed every couple of seconds when the workers threw on the next load of gravel and different people came through the scene. I love the layering effect of the light and dust that comes from the backlight.

The nature of the photo

Goa is a very small state in India, both in terms of physical size and population. It sits on the west coast of the country, with its coastline on the Arabian Sea. This area is well-known for its beaches and a laid-back beach culture. It is also one of the wealthiest of India's states.

Photo tip

Dust, rain, humidity, fog, and haze all add dimension to a scene when shot with *backlight*, light behind the conditions. It creates atmosphere and interesting changes in tonality and light, as well as layers in depth. Be careful that bright atmospheric conditions do not cause your camera to underexpose the scene.





New Year's Celebrations, Labrang Monastery, Gansu Province, China

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/18 for 1/60 sec., ISO 400





Monks and Unfurled Thangka

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, 1/25 for 1/2 sec., ISO 400

February 2005

New Year's Celebrations

Labrang Monastery, Gansu Province, China

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/18 for 1/60 sec., ISO 400

Monks and Unfurled Thangka

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, 1/25 for 1/2 sec., ISO 400

Gansu is a region of the eastern Tibetan Plateau, though it is in China and not technically a part of Tibet. The Labrang Monastery is one of the largest monasteries in the area and sits high in a mountain valley.

I traveled there several years ago to photograph the New Year's celebration that occurs every year toward the early part of April. Buddhists hold New Year's celebrations at different times depending on the culture and tradition of the area. Here, it occurs on the day of the first full moon of April.

In the [horizontal image](#), monks carry a very large tapestry called a *thangka* uphill to place above the monastery. I love the colors, as the red interplays with the yellow of the tapestry and the blues of the shaded snow. The composition also creates a dynamic look for the action because of the way the straight diagonal of the monks carrying the tapestry through most of the image interacts with the other monks at the bottom of the image.

In the [vertical](#), you can see part of the tapestry now hung for display. I framed up the monk in the foreground to give context to the tapestry as well as create some interesting color contrasts.

The nature of the photos

Labrang Monastery was founded in 1709 and includes six institutions of learning. At its peak, four thousand monks lived here, but the Chinese Cultural Revolution forced them out and into the villages they came from in order to work. The monastery was reopened in 1980, and now about fifteen hundred monks live there.

Photo tip

High angles can help the photographer in three ways: (1) restricting foreground emphasis, (2) gaining a perspective on a scene that shows relationships among pictorial elements, and (3) simplifying a composition by reducing or removing background distractions.





[Credit 43.1](#)

Monks Rise from Prayer, Labrang Monastery, Gansu Province, China

Canon EOS-1DS Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, 1/25 for 1/2 sec., ISO 400





Monks Debate

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens + 2.0x, f/22 for 1/13 sec., ISO 400  
February 2005

Monks Rise from Prayer

Labrang Monastery, Gansu Province, China

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/25 for 1/2 sec., ISO 400

Monks Debate

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens + 2.0x, f/22 for 1/13 sec., ISO 400

*Losar* (Tibetan New Year) is a time of celebration for the Buddhists who live on the Tibetan Plateau. I traveled there to photograph this wonderful cultural event.

In the first image, monks stand after a two-hour prayer session. Technically, Buddhists don't pray to a god like other religions, but they do have meditation practices that are very similar to prayer, which is what they were engaged in here.

I took a series of sharply detailed shots of the monks, as seen in the vertical image. However, I wasn't fully satisfied with what I was getting. Yes, I could have everything sharp from foreground to background, plus show every texture of the clothing. But I wanted *more*.

So I experimented with longer exposures and finally found an exposure that gave me a beautiful contrast of both blurred motion and sharp delineation. Some monks are shown moving in "Monks Rise from Prayer," while others stoically stand still.

The nature of the photos

The Tibetan Plateau is a huge area of land bounded by the Himalayas, Karakoram, and Pamir mountain ranges. It is bigger than all of Europe.

Photo tip

Color is not an absolute. It changes based on the other colors around it. Our impression of color is also influenced by how sharp it appears to us. A blurred color will look different to us than the same color in sharp detail. An out-of-focus color will also look different than a sharp color. Understanding this can give the photographer more creative control.









[Credit 44.1](#)

Kecak, Bali, Indonesia

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–70mm F2.8 lens, f/3.2 for 1/200 sec., ISO 400

March 2005

Kecak

Bali, Indonesia

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–70mm F2.8 lens, f/3.2 for 1/200 sec., ISO 400**

Years ago, I saw a film entitled *Baraka*. It was a very cerebral film that showcased some of the great natural wonders around the world plus beautiful vignettes from different cultures. It was from that film that I first became aware of the Kecak dancers on the island of Bali in Indonesia.

I decided to abstract the image. To that end, I previsualized a photo based strongly on design. I wanted to render these dancers in a way that no one else had done before. I always look to find ways of evolving my work, so that it doesn't look derivative of photographers that preceded me.

Working with a guide and a *fixer* (a person of influence who can arrange things) in Bali, I built a platform above an open field. I hired some two hundred dancers to come and sit directly below me. In this image, the dancers form an abstract pattern with their bodies—particularly their shoulders and their heads. I lay on my belly, shooting straight down from what looked like a high-dive board at a pool.

I wanted every dancer clearly in focus. To achieve this result, I shot a series of positions where they changed how they used their hands and heads, such as looking straight up with their hands next to their heads, leaning back, and so forth. This photograph is one of the shots that I liked best because it has such a strong abstract nature to it. It almost looks like a net.

The nature of the photo

Kecak dancers combine music and drama into performances that typically feature one-hundred fifty dancers or more. Originally based on a male exorcism, trance-inducing dance, the dance was adapted by a European artist in the 1930s as a dramatic piece to be played to Western audiences.

Photo tip

The area of sharp focus for a camera is based on a plane parallel to the back of the camera. For this shot, Art was forced to shoot at a wide aperture in order to keep a fast shutter speed, which was needed due to the unstable camera platform; however, by keeping the camera parallel to the dancers, he was able to keep them all in focus.





[Credit 45.1](#)

Holi, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

(1) Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f7.1 for 1/200 sec., ISO 400







Holi, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

(2) Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/320 sec., ISO 400

March 2005

Holi

Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

(1) Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/7.1 for 1/200 sec., ISO 400

(2) Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/320 sec., ISO 400

I had gone to one of the ancient Hindu temples of Mathura, birthplace of the Lord Krishna and where the first Holi festival took place. During this festival, dried, powdered paint is thrown into the air by thousands of revelers. People then splash water so the paint becomes liquid. Before the end of the festival, everybody has paint everywhere on their bodies, in their nostrils, in their mouths, and so on. It's also on the cameras of people like me.

The "Holi" image of what looks like a colored fog presents a wonderfully chaotic moment in a chaotic holiday. People were throwing colored paints and water at each other; women were whipping the men and pulling their shirts off. It seemed like an atonement for all their bad behavior of the past year. By the end of the day, paint powder was embedded in my clothing, nostrils, hair, and cameras. It was two days before I could get it all off.

When I photographed this image, I had my assistant with me from Seattle; two Japanese people were the only other foreigners at this ancient traditional festival. After all, this particular place is a long ways away from anywhere.

But it was the authenticity of Mathura and the original Hindu temple that I was after. I shot from the rooftop of the temple, looking down into the courtyard below. I thought it was a place far enough away to avoid being splattered by the paint; however, the paint waited its way up on the air currents, stirred by the conglomeration of people...and eventually found its way to me.

The second shot of the crowd shows the aftermath of the activity. Everyone is left colorful and wet.

The nature of the photos

The Hindu Holi is a spring festival often held in March. It is also known as the festival of colors or the festival of love. While best known as an Indian celebration, it is celebrated anywhere Hindus live. The festival comes near the vernal equinox and is a celebration of the arrival of spring.

Photo tip

One thing that professional-level cameras and lenses usually offer is a high level of dust and water resistance. This feature can really help keep your gear in good shape when conditions include a lot of dust (or dried paint) and water. Use a zoom of the appropriate focal length and fresh batteries so that you don't have to open the camera body.





Lions Stalk Buffalo, Okavango Delta, Botswana

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF400mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/400 sec., ISO 400

September 2005

Lions Stalk Buffalo

Okavango Delta, Botswana

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF400mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/400 sec., ISO 400**

Throughout Africa, lions have become specialists. Some lions, for instance, have learned to take down elephants by hunting by the light of the moon. Others have mastered methods for taking down large hippos.

In this part of the Okavango Delta, the lions have developed a technique for taking down buffalo, a difficult challenge. It can be quite dangerous. Many lions are speared, gored, or trampled in the process. Often the predators become the prey, if they are not careful.

In this shot, you see two lions testing the water, walking along the periphery of the herd, as the buffalo watch them. It's quite photogenic as the buffalo kick up dust while the cats nonchalantly cruise the herd looking for the weakest—that one individual that might be taken down. Like wolves hunting elk, lions tend to look for the animal that is moving a little slower.

Once they have made their selection, they typically grab it from behind and attack the tendon on the leg. They injure the animal, since a hobbled buffalo is much easier to take down. For a while, the other buffalo then challenge the cats. But eventually the others go away, when they see that defending the injured one is futile.

I never show much blood and guts in my wildlife photography. I find it inappropriate for my audience. I love the hunt—the timelessness and beauty of predator and prey. But as soon as the animal is knocked down, I pick up the cameras and leave. It's the behavior that trumps the carnage.

The nature of the photo

Female lions, or lionesses, as seen in the photograph here, do most of the hunting for a group or pride of lions. Males do hunt, though not as much. They often help with more difficult prey such as buffalo and elephants. Also, young males have to hunt if they have no pride of their own.

Photo tip

Nature photography only becomes dangerous when you don't pay attention to possible hazards connected to a specific subject. If you know the animal's habits, habitat, and behavior, you are more likely to make wise decisions when photographing it. Never go after an animal to get its photograph without understanding how it might react to you and what your relative safety level may be.





[Credit 47.1](#)

James's Flamingos, Laguna Colorada, Eduardo Avaroa Andean Fauna National Reserve, Bolivia  
Canon EOS 5D, EF400mm F4 DO IS II USM lens + 1.4x, #14 for 1/400 sec., ISO 400

April 2006

James's Flamingos

Laguna Colorada, Eduardo Avaroa Andean Fauna National Reserve, Bolivia

**Canon EOS 5D, EF400mm F4 DO IS II USM lens + 1.4x, #14 for 1/400 sec., ISO 400**

One of the last places you would expect to see flamingos, a bird associated with the heat of the tropics, is in the frigid air at twelve thousand feet in the Andes. These James's flamingos are in the Laguna Colorada, one of several alkaline lakes in the Altiplano, the high plains region of the Andes.

The briny, alkaline lakes here are home to a rich growth of algae and phytoplankton that absorbs the minerals in the water. That algae and other small lifeforms attract the flamingos because they are what the flamingos thrive on. They're also what give the birds their color. These flamingos become redder and redder the more of this tiny life that they eat.

There are only six species of flamingos on planet Earth, and three of them live in Chile. The James's flamingos are a particularly beautiful species. In this shot, bright light came over my shoulder, directly onto the birds, as I got the capture. Front light can be important when you need rich, solid-looking color.

To get this image, I hunkered down at the spot where freshwater leaches into the lake, a place where the flamingos come to drink. As long as I was really low to the ground among the tussock grass that flourishes at the edge of the lake, the birds came close. They were always moving, looking for predators like foxes or anything else that might attack them.

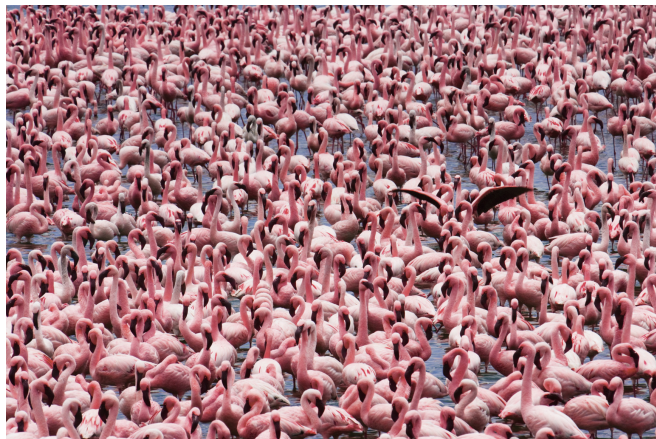
The nature of the photo

The Altiplano (Spanish for "high plain") is a high-altitude desert between two branches of the Andes. It covers parts of Chile, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina. It is also sometimes called the Bolivian Plateau and is the largest plateau outside of Tibet. The Altiplano is an area of inland drainage, which is the reason for its salt lakes. A number of active volcanoes are among the mountains that surround it.

Photo tip

A simple way of dealing with light is to remember that front light makes solid colors strong and color patterns visible; sidelight will help give both dimension and texture to a scene; and backlight is dramatic, makes translucent colors glow, and helps separate elements of a scene.





[Credit 48.1](#)

Lesser Flamingos, Lake Naivasha National Park, Kenya

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF400mm F5.6 lens + 2x, f/32 for 1/160 sec., ISO 400







Hippopotamus amidst Flamingos

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/2000 sec., ISO 400

April 2006

Lesser Flamingos

Lake Naivasha National Park, Kenya

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF400mm F5.6 lens + 2x, f/32 for 1/160 sec., ISO 400

Hippopotamus amidst Flamingos

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/2000 sec., ISO 400

The Great Rift Valley is a fault line that runs for thousands of miles north and south along the eastern third of Africa. Much of the rift is a depression that includes a series of alkaline lakes containing millions and millions of tiny brine shrimp that support millions of flamingos.

The first photo of lesser flamingos shows an edge-to-edge composition of hundreds of flamingos. I stood on top of a Land Rover so that, with my tripod, the camera was about eleven feet off the ground, in order to shoot across the top of these flamingos. I shot with a long telephoto at f/32 to increase the likelihood I'd get all my subjects into focus. This is because telephotos have inherently shallow depth of field.

I love taking pictures that show the scale and vastness of herds of animals. I like this shot simply because its soft light allows the richness of the pattern of the birds to be emphasized. I used a polarizer to further take the shine off of the birds' plumage.

One thing I particularly like about this image is that one single bird out of all the hundreds in the frame is stretching its wings. This is the sort of moment that you seek and wait for as a photographer. It gives a point of reference and scale to the image. Capturing such a thing takes patience and attention to the scene as you photograph it. That one bird gives a lot more life to the image because of its distinct contrast within the frame.

The second images was taken from the air, while I was in an ultralight aircraft. The shot is unusual because of the hippo in the midst of the flamingos. It's very interesting to see how the birds give space to the hippo.

The nature of the photos

Baby flamingos are born gray. Their adult coloring comes from their feeding habits. The algae and tiny brine shrimp that they eat hold carotenoids, the red-to-orange pigments found in nature, which then get incorporated into the flamingos' plumage. In Africa, they mainly feed on shrimp, but in other areas of the world, algae becomes more important.

Photo tip

The edges of a photograph are critical to a composition. By using them to cut into a group such as these pink flamingos, you force the viewer to study the pattern of the group rather than to look at the group as a whole. It also creates a visual impression of great numbers within the group.





[Credit 49.1](#)

Black Bear and Cubs, Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF400mm F5.6L lens, f/8 for 1/200 sec., ISO 400

June 2006

Black Bear and Cubs

Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska, USA

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF400mm F5.6L lens, f/8 for 1/200 sec., ISO 400**

I love traveling in Southeast Alaska. It's an environment rich with diverse landscapes—from the glaciers that flow down the mountain valleys to the fjords where these glaciers terminate to the beautiful forested slopes all the way to the water's edge.

Within Glacier Bay National Park, the fifteen thousand-foot Mount Fairweather dominates the horizon. When it was discovered two hundred fifty years ago, the entire bay was one giant glacier. Today, most of the glaciers have receded into the deepest recesses of the inlets.

One of the hallmarks of Glacier Bay and Southeast Alaska is the rich range of wildlife there, from humpback whales and orcas to sea lions and sea otters to moose, mountain goats, and bears. Bears come in two forms here: increasing numbers of brown bears, which are now moving into the most remote inlets, and the smaller black bears.

In this image, a black bear has brought two cubs out to the water's edge in June. At that time of year, there are very few food sources for the black bear—the salmon aren't running in the streams, the berries aren't ripe in the forest. As a result, the black bear is hungry coming out of hibernation. The bears scraped their teeth along the rocks at low tide, which exposed both the mussels and the barnacles that thrive at the pristine water's edge. The mother and cubs then fed upon this tough sea food.

This image was photographed from the bow of a small boat that I had rented while I was teaching a workshop. I love taking people places that I know can deliver great photo opportunities, and Glacier Bay is certainly one of them. My travel partners and I all got great shots of this bear family as it was undisturbed by our presence thirty feet away in the boat.

In this photograph, the mother pauses to look at and interact with us while the second youngster eats barnacles. It was a great vantage point and the light was perfect for the situation. One of the most difficult subjects to photograph is dark animals, such as black bears, in sunny situations. The overcast light here provided a soft light to keep the contrast within range of my camera's capabilities.

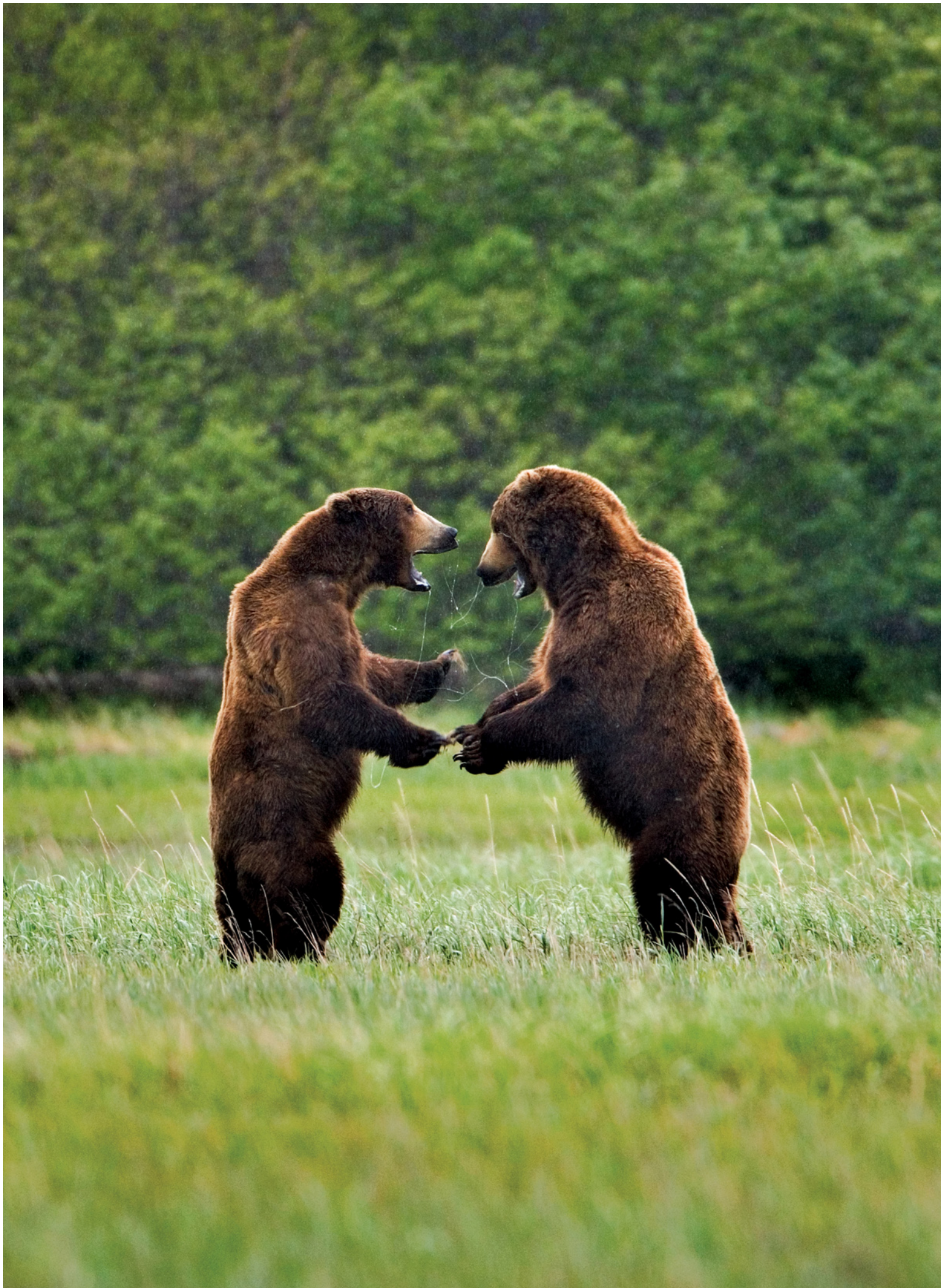
The nature of the photo

When people think of Alaska and bears, brown bears and polar bears usually come to mind. Yet, black bears actually live throughout most of the state. The black bears in Glacier Bay appear in the traditional black form as well as a gray variation, called the glacier bear.

Photo tip

Digital cameras do not always handle dark areas well, due to limitations in how their sensors work. If detail is important there, it is vital that your exposure captures enough to render the detail properly. That means exposing in such a way that any bright areas in the image are exposed to be bright rather than allowing the camera to underexpose the scene.









[Credit 50.1](#)

Fighting Brown Bears, Katmai National Park, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF500mm F4L lens + 1.4x, f/5.6 for 1/250 sec., ISO 400

June 2006

Fighting Brown Bears

Katmai National Park, Alaska, USA

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF500mm F4L lens + 1.4x, f/5.6 for 1/250 sec., ISO 400**

I had traveled to Hallo Bay in the Alaska Peninsula to photograph bears. This wild bay is on the east side of Katmai National Park and is a great place to find brown bears.

The bears pictured here are not playing. The larger male bear on the right was attacking the smaller male bear on the left. Male bears can be grumpy and short-tempered. Bears like these compete with each other over females and territory. This was a very serious altercation. They postured at each other, chased each other around, and finally the smaller bear stopped and tried to fight the bigger bear. For several minutes, they stood hitting each other, pawing each other, and biting each other. The bears are so agitated in this image that you can even see the saliva fly around their mouths.

The whole incident happened very quickly. Almost as soon as it began, it ended—the smaller bear took off and disappeared into the alders beyond. I am sure that bear got nailed hard several times. I had my camera set up with a 500mm and a 1.4x extender on a tripod, ready to go, when these bears appeared. You have to be prepared for anything in places like this.

I like this shot because many of my images in the past were of bears playing and very much looked like playing bears. But in this case, there was no play. This is a very different depiction of bear behavior. Additionally, I like the environment around them, which gives the photograph a sense of place.

The nature of the photo

Brown bears are closely related to grizzly bears, both possessing the scientific name of *Ursus arctos*. They are considered subspecies with variation in size and hair color. The brown bear is one of the largest land predators and ranges all across the north in the Northern Hemisphere, including North America, Europe, and Asia.

Photo tip

Space can be an important part of a composition when used deliberately. Space is often used to show an environment around a subject, to give



the image a sense of place that cannot be shown any other way. It is also a way of giving a subject some breathing and moving room in your image.





[Credit 51.1](#)

Surma Donga Fighters, Omo River Valley, Ethiopia

Canon EOS 5D, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/125 sec., ISO 200

August 2006

Surma Donga Fighters

Omo River Valley, Ethiopia

**Canon EOS 5D, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/8 for 1/125 sec., ISO 200**

The Surma are isolated from the cities of the region by mountains and distance, so their traditional culture remains somewhat intact.

In this image, two Surma stick fight in a sport of sorts called the *donga*. Fights like these occur at the end of the harvest season, when there's plenty of food and many celebrations. The donga takes place between members of different tribes. It's a way for young men to channel their energy and aggression in a fierce, but usually nonlethal way (though most people that I encounter here have scars on their heads, shoulders, and legs from previous donga fights). The donga is very important to the men, as they are very competitive, and winning can be especially important when seeking a bride.

I like the simplicity of this shot, with the opposing groups on either side while the combatants are in the middle. The wide-angle perspective conveys a sense of the mountainous environment and the clouds above. This image tells a complex story in a single frame. It was shot with a 16–35mm wide-angle, which meant I had to be fairly close and sometimes had to run away when the sticks were flying. I used a neutral density filter to take down the brightness of the sky plus a polarizer to enrich the colors.

The nature of the photo

The area where the Surma, a tribal group living in southwest Ethiopia and South Sudan, live has become dangerous due to the Sudanese civil war. That war has made automatic weapons available to tribes throughout the area, often resulting in bloody skirmishes between them. The police allow no foreign travelers into the area without a hired, armed guard.

Photo tip

You can call a wide-angle focal length used close the environmental focal length. It allows you to feature a subject while keeping the background small yet strongly visual as a part of the subject's environment. This is effective at many distances, and can help you get up very close to a small subject.





Oustalet's Chameleon, Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, Madagascar

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/32 for 1/6 sec., ISO 400

September 2006

Oustalet's Chameleon

Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, Madagascar

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/32 for 1/6 sec., ISO 400**

In this photograph, the chameleon is camouflaged among the lichen-covered branches of a tree in the Euphorbia forest of southwest Madagascar. When I saw this chameleon, my first thought was to play to its strength, its cryptic camouflage coloration.

The very fact that the chameleon was embedded in the complexity of the thick brush was perfect. I wanted a deep depth of field so that I wasn't giving away its location in the image. I love challenging my viewers in this way.

The task was to showcase the animal and not claim that it was hard to see simply because it was tiny in the frame. I worked to maintain a fairly prominent position for the subject in the frame and then tried to conceal its presence by how I framed the image. In this particular case, the chameleon peers around a branch covered with lichen, and it's off-center. I am not pointing it out by selective focus because every branch is clearly in focus.

The nature of the photo

Chameleons are in the reptile family and have unique eyes that can move and focus separately from each other. This vision helps them be better predators. According to local legend in Kenya and other parts of the chameleon world, they are regarded as sorcerers (or simply as animals not to be messed with).

Photo tip

Photographers are taught to make the subject stand out clearly in the composition, and knowing how to do that is an important element of the photographer's craft. However, once you master that, it can be fun to use the subject carefully in the composition so that it blends in with its surroundings.









Sifakas, Barenty Reserve, Madagascar

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF500mm F4.5 lens, f/4.5 for 1/125 sec., ISO 400

September 2006

Sifakas

Barenty Reserve, Madagascar

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF500mm F4.5 lens, f/4.5 for 1/125 sec., ISO 400**

The lemur is a member of the primate order of mammals. Lemurs are what I consider “friendly monkeys.” Macaques and baboons are aggressive animals, fully capable of biting people that come too close. (And they often do.) But lemurs are polite monkeys. I have literally had ring-tailed lemurs climb my tripods, crawl on my shoulder, and give me wet kisses behind the ear.

In this image, three sifaka lemurs in the Barenty Reserve in southwest Madagascar huddle at twilight. During the day, they are like windup toys, moving all day long with high energy—literally bouncing from tree to tree. That can make them difficult to photograph. Nights in this arid region bring a big drop in temperature, so when the evening comes, the lemurs wind down, cuddle up, and become balls of fur. These three stare straight back at my presence. I like that connection they have with me, which translates into a connection with the viewer.

I think the calmness of the group along with the way they collect and cuddle is part of the image’s charm. By using a 500mm lens on a tripod at about thirty feet away, I was able to get the angle you see here. If I were using a less powerful telephoto, I would have had to be closer and the angle would have been from directly below, which is less pleasing. The softness of the light enhances the gentle calm of the group. The fact that the eyes of all three individuals are fully engaged adds to this image.

The nature of the photo

Lemurs are primates that are native only to the island of Madagascar. One of the largest types of lemurs, sifaka can reach twenty inches in height. They will cross open ground by standing on their two hind legs and running with a skipping-like motion, using their “arms” for balance.

Photo tip

Many photographers are afraid to shoot with their lenses wide open at maximum aperture. Your maximum aperture can be an important tool when the light is low or when you want a strongly out-of-focus background.





Succulent Forest and the Milky Way, Madagascar

Canon EOS-5D, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 40 seconds, ISO 1600

September 2006

Succulent Forest and the Milky Way

Madagascar

**Canon EOS-5D, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 40 seconds, ISO 1600**

Madagascar contains an amazing variety of plant life, but most people visit for the unique wildlife that exists on this special island. Its isolation from Africa has sent it on its own evolutionary journey since separating from the continent millions of years ago. Few places match its diversity of animals and plants. It was the plants I wanted to focus on for this image.

I set up my camera to look up at the complexity of the succulent forest in southwest Madagascar. A little bit of dwindling campfire light gave texture and light to the plants in the foreground without competing too drastically with the light of the stars above.

The clear nighttime skies allowed the glow of the Milky Way to shine brightly. In this image, the sky's clarity is largely a result of the fresh ocean breezes that sweep across, removing the clouds. No large cities exist within a thousand miles of this site, which means there is no air pollution or light pollution that would limit the view of the sky.

A 40-second exposure captures the galaxy well. It was a long enough exposure to record the light, but short enough to limit movement of the stars when using a wide-angle lens. In recent years, the introduction of ever-more sensitive ISOs on digital cameras has allowed shots of stars that we would never have been able to capture just a handful of years ago. In the film days, I would've shot very long exposures—hours long—that resulted in lines of star trails representing the stars' movements across the skies. You could not really do much else in those days. Today, a 40-second exposure with a wide-angle lens stops the motion of the stars enough to make them still look like stars and yet provide enough light for illumination.

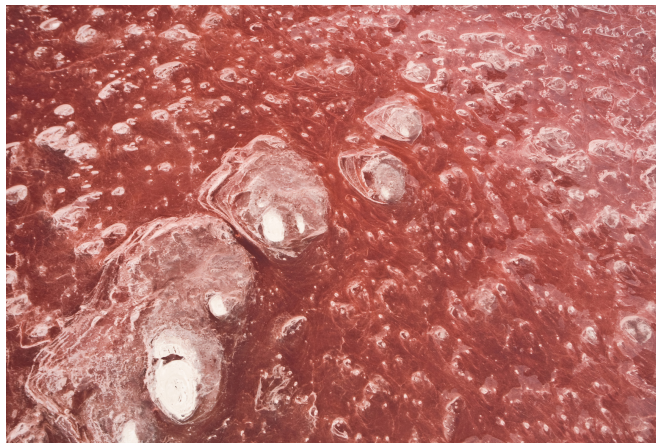
The nature of the photo

Scientists think that there may be as many as twelve thousand different species of plants on the island of Madagascar, and most of them are endemic, meaning they only grow here. In the southwestern part of the island, nearly 95 percent of the plants are considered endemic.

Photo tip

Night photography used to be a major challenge with film, but any modern digital camera can do a terrific job with a night sky. Be sure the sky is clear, lock your camera to a tripod, then try exposures of 20 to 40 seconds at f/2.8-4 with ISO 1600 and above.





[Credit 55.1](#)

Aerial, Lake Natron, Great Rift Valley, Kenya and Tanzania

Canon EOS 5D, EF24–70mm F2.8 lens, f/5 for 1/320 sec., ISO 160

September 2006

Aerial, Lake Natron

Great Rift Valley, Kenya and Tanzania

Canon EOS 5D, EF24–70mm F2.8 lens, f/5 for 1/320 sec., ISO 160

This aerial shot shows a large area of Lake Natron in Africa's Great Rift Valley, which straddles the border of Kenya and Tanzania. From this perspective, the vastness of the lake is conveyed. Flamingos live here and raise their young here, but the lake's alkalinity is so strong that no predators will venture into it to threaten the birds.

As noted in [James's flamingos](#), the red color of these birds comes from what they eat. Algae thrive in the alkaline waters and provide food for shrimp, both of which are red and in turn feed flamingos. In low water often common in late summer, the alkaline waters can become as caustic as pure ammonia, which even the flamingos can't tolerate.

As the rains come down the slopes surrounding this vast lake, minerals wash down the hillsides into the lake. With no outlet for the lake, water evaporates and more water flows in from the surroundings. The process makes the minerals denser and denser. Lake Natron is basically a shallow lake filled with accumulated salts and minerals. And yet it's startlingly and austere beautiful. I used a polarizer to cut the glare from the water in order to reveal the water's redness. Doing so created an abstract composition that also showed the reality of the lake.

The nature of the photo

Alkaline lakes are also sometimes called soda lakes, and have a pH of well over 7 (numbers below 7 are acidic). They are usually formed from a lake with no outlet in a dry area. The lake keeps evaporating, concentrating the minerals, which often include salt. In the United States, the best-known alkaline lake is Mono Lake in California.

Photo tip

Many photographers enjoy creating abstract images from close-ups, which can be a lot of fun. Landscapes also make for dramatic and effective abstracts, but to capture them, you have to look beyond the subject and find the abstract hidden in the reality of the scene.









Weddell Seal, Antarctic Peninsula, Antarctica

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF16–35mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/125 sec., ISO 640

November 2006

Weddell Seal

Antarctic Peninsula, Antarctica

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF16–35mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/125 sec., ISO 640**

I have been fortunate to be able to travel to remote areas where animals are unaccustomed to humans. There's a natural curiosity in wild animals when they have not been hunted, and they often exhibit no flight-or-fight instinct. They are simply *curious*.

I enjoy using wide-angles up close for these situations. It helps that many animals will become extremely inquisitive because they can see their own reflection mirrored in the front surface of my lens. This juvenile Weddell seal is coming close in this image, as it investigates its reflection. It helped that my camera was the main thing the seal saw at this point in the photograph.

I chose a moderately small f-stop so that, when combined with the wide focal length, I would get enough depth of field to pick up some of the detail of the ice behind the animal. In the distance, you can see a couple of Adélie penguins.

I love this low point of view because it puts the viewer into the seal's environment. This creates a beautiful connection between animal and viewer. I handheld the camera simply because a tripod would have gotten stuck in the water and would have been obtrusive. I held the camera away from my body and moved as close as I could while using the focus button on the back of my camera. This way I could get in those last few inches that significantly change the perspective.

The nature of the photo

Weddell seals live all around the Antarctic continent and range farther south than any other wild mammal. They are deep-dive specialists and commonly dive under the Antarctic ice shelves. They prefer ice that is attached to land to icebergs and other floating ice.

Photo tip

With a telephoto focal length, you can adjust the distance between you and the subject several feet without changing the perspective of the shot much. When you get in close with a wide-angle focal length, perspective constantly changes the closer you get, even if you raise or lower the camera. Try different distances and heights to gain different looks for your photograph.





King Penguins, South Georgia Island

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–70mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1/50 sec., ISO 400

December 2006

King Penguins

South Georgia Island

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–70mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1/50 sec., ISO 400

South Georgia Island is a beautiful, wild, and remote landscape with engaging wildlife, much of which has never been historically hunted by man.

The beautiful king penguins on this island are very easy to approach with a wide-angle as long as you remain low. I was able to crawl up to within five feet of these three-foot-tall subjects by moving carefully, keeping my head down, and trying to be nonthreatening. Ethically, it is important that you are careful not to stress or disturb wildlife that are not comfortable with a close approach.

The 24mm wide-angle used here, combined with the low camera angle, allowed me to incorporate the distant mountains, giving a feel for the location the photograph. The clouds above the mountains were brighter than the subdued light in the foreground on the penguins, so I needed to use a graduated neutral density filter to balance out the exposure. Doing so brought the entire composition into correct exposure.

I also chose to use a small aperture (f/22), which enabled the closest king penguins to appear as sharp as the distant mountains. For shots like this—where the entirety of the image is as important as the individual components or elements—deep depth of field matters.

I love the fact that the close penguins are embracing each other in an anthropomorphic way. The fact that they're not paying attention to my presence also enables the viewer of the image to be absorbed in it. Shots like this are important because they convey that the animals are engaged in behavior that would happen whether I was there or not.

The bright overcast light was perfect for the situation because it allows the viewer to see that there are various penguins doing different things throughout the image. Some are in repose, others walking, some standing, some grooming, but none are paying attention to me—the photographer.

The nature of the photo

The only penguin bigger than a king penguin is the emperor penguin. King penguins are amazing divers that will hunt fish to depths of six hundred feet below the surface. They live on islands such as South Georgia near Antarctica, but not on that continent itself.

Photo tip

A graduated neutral density filter is one that is half dark gray and half clear, with a graduated blend through its middle. That design allows you to position the dark part of the filter over the bright part of the scene so that it will balance that area with the rest of the image that is visible through the clear part.





Tigers Feed on Sambar Kill, Bandhavgarh National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF400mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/800 sec., ISO 400

January 2007

Tigers Feed on Sambar Kill

Bandhavgarh National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF400mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/800 sec., ISO 400**

India has several national parks that offer great chances to view one of the world's greatest predators—the tiger. I have been fortunate to be able to hire an elephant and mahout (driver) a number of times to take me into the forests of these parks. From an elephant, you can follow a tiger into the forest and photograph it doing a number of different activities.

In this image, two adolescents dine on a sambar that their mother had recently killed. Sambar are part of the deer family and are the preferred food source for most tigers in India. What I love about this image is that it's not a clear shot free from obstructions. The angle of view through the out-of-focus branches and leaves conveys a truly wild situation.

Sometimes open shots of a tiger in the field are what are needed; however, in this case, this image conveys a sense of the wild better than an open view would have. This image was shot with a handheld camera because it was very difficult to use a tripod, even on the platform attached to the top of the elephant. Though the elephant is a stable animal, it does breathe and sway. Bright overcast light and a moderate ISO allowed me to use a fast shutter speed to keep the image sharp in less than ideal conditions.

The tigers were far enough away to allow the angle of view to remain somewhat parallel to the subject rather than being atop the animals looking down from an aerial perspective. The yellow leaves and orange color of the environment around the tigers complement their tones and colors.

The nature of the photo



The density of the vegetation in India’s national parks is one reason that the tiger has been able to survive in the second-most populated country on the planet. The stripes of the tiger have evolved to enable it to blend in naturally with the dense vegetation.

Photo tip

Shutter speed can be critical for image sharpness when you are handholding a camera. Camera movement during exposure is the number one cause of unsharp photos. It is better to use a higher ISO and a wider f-stop to get a faster shutter speed than to handhold a slower shutter speed, which softens your image.





[Credit 59.1](#)

Cowboys, Pantanal, Brazil

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/4 for 1/40 sec., ISO 400

June 2007

Cowboys

Pantanal, Brazil

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/4 for 1/40 sec., ISO 400

A strong cowboy culture still exists in the vast reaches of the Pantanal, the greatest wetland area on the planet, located in south-central Brazil. This is an area of natural beauty with incredible wildlife as well as large *haciendas* (estates) and *fazendas* (cattle ranches). Cattle drives there can last over a month as cowboys bring brilliant white cattle to market.

I was staying at one of the fazendas while photographing giant river otters, hyacinth macaws, and other animals of Brazil when a cattle drive came in. The cowboys made camp near the ranch house where I was staying. I spent some time with them, making photographs during the course of the afternoon and evening and then into the next morning while they were in the vicinity.

For this wide-angle shot, I silhouetted two cowboys and a tree; in the distance is an early-morning mist. The tree holds clothing, saddles, and other parts of their outfits. I like this image because I'm almost an invisible witness—the cowboys are not looking at me, they are going about their usual business. The cowboys are not that large in the frame, creating a feeling of place with a nice candid moment. The scale of the cowboys within the image plays to the wide-open spaces of this fantastic region of Brazil. The exposure features the color of the sunrise and keeps the cowboys in silhouette.

The nature of the photo

Whenever people think of South American wild areas, they often picture the Amazon. Yet because of the dense forest of that region, wildlife can be hard to find. The Pantanal is a much better place to see wildlife because of the wetlands and the open spaces. Plus there are cowboys!

Photo tip

Wide-angle lenses have inherently deeper depth of field than telephotos. That means you can shoot with wider apertures and still have everything in focus when you are at moderate-to-far distances from your subject. This allows you to choose a faster shutter speed to deal with action, such as the movement of people.









[Credit 60.1](#)

Vodun Fire Ceremony, Atakora, Benin

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–70mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/60 sec., ISO 800

October 2007

Vodun Fire Ceremony

Atakora, Benin

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–70mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/60 sec., ISO 800**

This fire ceremony in Benin, a small country in West Africa, not only provided some terrific opportunities for photography, but it also challenged me and my fellow travelers to consider a mystery beyond our normal experiences.

During this trip, I had the opportunity to photograph a nighttime fire dance. Today's digital cameras allow you to shoot with firelight; however, I needed more light in order to truly show off what was happening. I added a flash attached to the camera, balancing the flash light with the firelight to better define the image and illuminate what was going on.

As I worked, I was startled to see a man enter a trance, dance around then promptly throw himself onto the fire. My first thought was, *Oh, my God! I have just witnessed a self-immolation, a person killing himself with fire.*

In fact, this man was not burning alive but simply sitting in open flame on top of burning embers without any apparent pain or fear. After I took a moment to settle my mind, I started photographing in both horror and intrigue.

But nothing rational can explain the fact that, after sitting in this flame for well over a minute, the man simply stood up and walked out with nary a burn on his body! Certain things that one witnesses over a lifetime will remain mysteries. In fact, this happens more often than not when you are in the presence of things that are so extraordinarily different from your personal experiences.

The nature of the photo

Many people think of voodoo as something from the Caribbean, but it actually started as a religion in West Africa, where it is typically called Vodun. Nearly one out of five residents of Benin practice Vodun.

Photo tip

To balance flash with existing light, you need to understand that essentially you are creating a double exposure—one for the existing light and one for the flash. The flash is so fast that shutter speed has no effect on its exposure, only the f-stop does. As a result, you set your f-stop for the flash. Then you set the existing light exposure with that f-stop combined with the shutter speed.









[Credit 61.1](#)

Dogon Shaman, Mopti, Mali

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/14 for 1/13 sec., ISO 400

November 2007

Dogon Shaman

Mopti, Mali

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/14 for 1/13 sec., ISO 400

Certainly, one of the more fascinating aspects of my work throughout my life has been traveling to remote destinations and visiting different cultures around the globe. In fact, I don't really enjoy going to the well-known locations that everyone else visits. I want to see and experience cultures and lifestyles that are not like my own. I gain much from my visits to these places.

In this image, you see the living quarters for a couple of shamans in a remote part of West Africa. They live high above a Dogon village in the highlands of Mali in the southern portion of the Sahara. These shamans have covered this structure in stuffed skins of mammals and birds, and with shell casings, and embedded everything in to the adobe walls. The men themselves wear ochre-colored hooded robes, which mirror the colors of the location.

I don't presume to know at all what these men believe nor how they practice their craft. All I can speak to is the location, which was in the recesses of an overhanging wall way up in the highlands. It looked truly out of this world. One does not run across this kind of structure nor people every day in travels—even if you are like me and go to remote locations all the time.

I set my camera to look across the face of their building, but from a low angle to show the texture of the overhanging wall. I included one of the shamans in the foreground of the image. The wide-angle shot helped set the stage for the people and the location.

The nature of the photo

Mali's Dogon country has become a popular tourist destination. The Dogon people have long followed their own religion, a traditional African religion that puts a high value on nature. They follow a patriarchal system where one male elder is the leader of each village.

Photo tip

The most common shooting angle is eye level because it is simple and easy. But it doesn't always result in the best photographs. Look for angles that show off your subjects in unique ways and that include special elements of their surroundings that would not be seen otherwise.





Dogon Village, Bandiagara Escarpment, Mopti, Mali

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens + 1.4x, f/16 for 1 second, ISO 50

November 2007

Dogon Village

Bandiagara Escarpment, Mopti, Mali

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens + 1.4x, f/16 for 1 second, ISO 50

As it is known today, the Dogon culture started in the highlands of Mali one thousand years ago when invaders came into the area wanting to convert the people there to a different religion. By moving into the mountains, the Dogon could better defend themselves.

Then, during the days of the slave trade, people from the coast would sweep through remote villages, stealing the women and the men out of villages to be put on boats and shipped off to the Americas. The Dogon responded by hiding in the mountains, making it a bit more difficult for the slave traders to reach them.

The Dogon culture became unique in its use of ornate structures, including the elaborately carved shutters of their windows and doors. Their buildings are made out of adobe brick and have triangular-shaped thatched roofs. The Dogon village itself looks like a piece of art, from my point of view.

In this image, I zoomed in with a telephoto lens to isolate and highlight the main beauty of this village, including the repeating triangular shapes present in the image. You may notice that I often gravitate toward even light for many of my shots. Even light allows me to show off the pattern and shapes of my subject without having dark shadows obscuring them. This image establishes a sense of place and shows the uniqueness of the culture.

The nature of the photo

Dogon are well known for their sculpture, yet most of it is not for public display, so their homes are the sole expression of their artistic culture to the outside world.

Photo tip

Art could have easily gotten close to these buildings and shot with a wide-angle. But by keeping a distance from the scene and using a telephoto focal length, he was able to maintain a perspective that showed off the buildings at their true size.





Villagers Wash Sheep, Niger River, Mopti, Mali

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/14 for 1/13 sec., ISO 400

November 2007

Villagers Wash Sheep

Niger River, Mopti, Mali

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/14 for 1/13 sec., ISO 400

On a Sunday afternoon, young men in Mali wash their short-haired sheep. I think it is like young men in America washing their cars on the weekend. It is a long-held tradition that these native people take their sheep down to the river's edge and then individually take them into the river for a wash. It is a participatory sport where multiple men and young boys gather to scrub each animal clean, after which the next sheep is brought in. This goes on until all the sheep are done.

I deliberately shot into the brightness of the afternoon sunlight, from an angle on the riverbank that put me above the activity. Doing so allowed me to simplify the scene by putting the men and sheep against a simple background of bright water. The water surface essentially reflects the bright sky. It became a good way to work with the conditions of bright sunlight and the bright reflection on the water.

I exposed, keeping the water bright and the people and sheep dark, in order to render the scene into something of a silhouette. This decision allowed the shapes of the people and animals to take precedence over the details of the garments and the individual expressions. Because the conditions were bright, I was able to get a faster shutter speed to stop the motion and activity, while maintaining great depth of field and shooting with a telephoto lens. I like how the shapes of the people and animals are complex, yet the composition is simplified because I shot against the bright water.

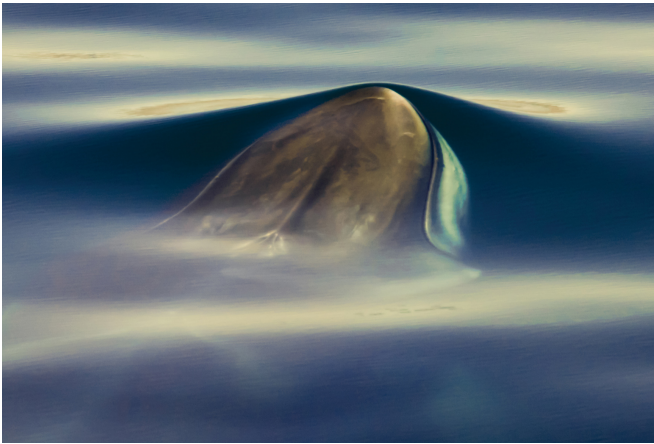
The nature of the photo

Short-haired sheep are not as well-known in America as the long-haired sheep grown for wool. Short-haired sheep, considered part of the group of domestic sheep known as "hair sheep," are largely grown for meat. Most hair sheep from around the world came originally from Africa.

Photo tip

Camera meters tend to overreact to bright water as seen in this photograph. They will try to make it darker than it should be. Bright areas should be exposed to be bright if they need to give a feeling of brightness (as they did here). However, prolonged exposure would have emphasized too much detail in the activity itself.





[Credit 64.1](#)

Fin Whale, Gulf of California, Mexico

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF70–200mm F4 lens + 2x, f/8 for 1/400 sec., ISO 800

April 2008

Fin Whale

Gulf of California, Mexico

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF70–200mm F4 lens + 2x, f/8 for 1/400 sec., ISO 800

A fin whale, the second largest animal living on the face of the planet (only the blue whale is bigger), comes to the surface from beneath the deep waters of the Gulf of California in Mexico. During the winter months, the gulf is home to many species of whales and thousands and thousands of dolphins.

I often try to previsualize images, but sometimes an unimagined opportunity arises, such as occurred with this incredible whale. I had gone to this location specifically to photograph whales and dolphins. As my assistant, the boat handler, and I moved through the area in our Zodiac craft, we suddenly saw this huge whale coming to the surface near us. The water was clear so we could see it coming up. I quickly swung my camera around to take advantage of having this amazing creature coming so close. I shot a whole sequence of images of this whale as it came to the surface, but this one is my favorite.

In this image, the whale is on the verge of surfacing, pushing a fold of water seconds before it breaks the surface, and displacing the water in a delicate arc. That fold of water bends the light waves and distorts the shape of the whale. The surface of the water appears very calm. This condition enabled me to look into the water as the whale created that fold. It gave the image a special quality, a unique view of a whale in its home, the ocean. It's a very simple, elegant shot.

The nature of the photo

The fin whale is a baleen whale like humpbacks and blue whales. In place of teeth it has a huge baleen, which is like a bristly plate through which the whale filters krill, small fish, and zooplankton. The fin whale typically grows sixty to seventy feet in length. Fin whales are streamlined and fast, cruising at 18 mph with bursts up to 30 mph. They are also gregarious and frequently swim in groups of up to six.

Photo tip

Modern zoom lenses are very good. In the past, photos like this one needed long, fast telephoto lenses to work with slow film speeds. Now, high ISO settings allow the use of more compact telephoto zooms, which can be combined with a tele-extender for a small, easily transported lens package.





[Credit 65.1](#)

Horse Race, Naadam Festival, Renshinikhümbe, Mongolia

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF400mm F4 lens, f/8 for 1/640 sec., ISO 400







Saddle and Athletic Shoes  
Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF70-200 F4 lens, f/6.3 for 1/50 sec., ISO 400  
July 2008

Horse Race, Naadam Festival  
Renchinkhümbe, Mongolia  
Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF400mm F4 lens, f/8 for 1/640 sec., ISO 400

Saddle and Athletic Shoes  
Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF70-200 F4 lens, f/6.3 for 1/50 sec., ISO 400

The image of the horse race shows youngsters racing horses at a summer celebration in the backcountry of Mongolia. The celebration is an annual summer tradition called a naadam, a festival that includes wrestling and other equine sports done by the adult men. In this particular case, the event was specifically for the children.

Horses are so important to the culture of the people here that, as a rule, children of Mongolia learn to ride horses before they learn to walk. Because kids love to be free, they ride bareback, without a traditional saddle. Frankly, that seems to come naturally to these kids.

When these kids started to race, I was struck by the fact that they were riding without any hesitation across this vast stretch of Mongolian steppe. The kids ranged in age from ten to sixteen, and they obviously enjoyed themselves quite a lot as they rode across the landscape.

It was a very simple and traditional scene, and I wanted to record it that way in order to honor the tradition and the kids. I cropped the original image into a panoramic format to emphasize the movement across the flat grassland. I love the sweep of the action and the variety of expressions on the young people's faces as they ride and race with each other. I used a 400mm lens, in part for its reach across the landscape and so I could emphasize the expressions. It also worked to simplify the scene by compressing distance and bringing the background visually closer to the riders.

The second shot—a detail of one of the horses—is also fascinating. It showcases the mix of cultures and history. A modern pair of shoes are attached to a traditional saddle and its accessories.

The nature of the photo

The naadam occurs in July in the north, central, and southern parts of Mongolia. It has now become a popular tourist destination and is no longer difficult to get to. *Naadam* means "three manly games," which refer to the archery, horse-riding, and wrestling events of the yearly festival.

Photo tip

In the days of film, all photographers tended to be restricted in our ability to crop images into new proportions. This was nearly impossible with slides, and standard print sizes made it less feasible in a print, too. Now computers allow us to crop an image to whatever proportion best fits the subject and the scene.





Huangshan, Anhui Province, China

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens + 1.4x, f/14 for 1/13 sec., ISO 100





Karst Spire

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens + 1.4x, f/14 for 1/13 sec., ISO 100

October 2008

Huangshan

Anhui Province, China

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens + 1.4x, f/14 for 1/13 sec., ISO 100**

Karst Spire

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens + 1.4x, f/14 for 1/13 sec., ISO 100**

I first visited Huangshan, or the Yellow Mountains of China, in 1984. I had been in the first Western expedition to Tibet and the slopes of Mount Everest. On our return, several of us stopped in eastern China to visit Huangshan. This is a sacred place for the Chinese people. In contrast to the grayness and the ice of Mount Everest, it is like being inside a giant sumi brush painting.

I had studied the sumi brush masters of both Japan and China during my college years in art history, and I remembered the imaginative landscapes of those artists. I long thought that they imagined these scenes, maybe from trips to the opium den! When I traveled to Huangshan, I discovered they were much more literal landscape paintings than I had thought. There were indeed landscapes of vertical granite faces, contorted pine trees, and swirling mists.

Since that first visit, I have returned to the area on three distinct trips. Each time I renewed my fondness for this landscape and photographed new formations of the land. What I love about these shots is the scale. Pinnacles of rock rise out of the swirling mists, while tiny pine trees cling to the windswept slopes. The mist and the landscape formations provide a balance of positive and negative space, of light and dark areas.

The nature of the photos

Huangshan has long been a popular location for artists because of its spectacular granite mountains and cliffs. The pine trees growing on the rocks are endemic (exclusively native) to the area and so have gained the name "Huangshan pine."

Photo tip

Fog and changing weather can provide unique views of any landscape. Don't be afraid of the clouds. Just avoid using large areas of blank clouds in your composition.









Adélie Penguin, Antarctic Peninsula, Antarctica

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1/160 sec., ISO 500

December 2009

Adélie Penguin

Antarctic Peninsula, Antarctica

**Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1/160 sec., ISO 500**

I shot this Adélie penguin in its natural habitat from the vantage point of a Zodiac boat. I had the boat drift up slowly to the bird so that I wouldn't scare it off into the water. I deliberately framed it in the foreground with the beautiful, snow-clad glaciers in the distance. In one glance, you see a picture of the animal in its Antarctic habitat on a bright, sunny day.

Since the light was so strong, I had the Zodiac driver approach the penguin with the sun at the left and a little behind us so that there would be no distracting shadows on the penguin's face. A polarizer was used to deepen the sky, take a little bit of the glare off of the ice, and make the saturation of the colors as strong as possible. There's a nice visual relationship between the Adélie penguin and the other elements in the way its flippers stick straight out and its eye is illuminated by the sun. In addition, there is an attractive rhythm to the foreground ice in relation to the vertical rugged mountains in the background, which are in fact islands along the Antarctic Peninsula.

The nature of the photo

Penguins are highly adapted to the harsh conditions of the Antarctic. They have short, densely packed feathers covering downy feathers underneath that trap air for insulation against the cold. A layer of fat under their skin provides even more insulation. Additionally, the tips of the feathers are greasy and waterproof to keep the downy underlayer dry underneath.

Photo tip

Light is often a key part of the environment where you shoot, and it can be used to help the viewer understand more about a location. For example, a shot in India may have soft light ruling the day, but in Antarctica, it's really about crisp, harsh light in a land where there are no cities to create pollution. These conditions become part of the story as well.





Maasai, Losh Village, Kenya  
Canon EOS-1D X, Zeiss Distagon T\* 2.8/15 ZE lens, f/22 for 1/1000 sec., ISO 4000

Now in the 2010s, Art is transitioning more and more to being an educator. When he was in college, he thought he would be an art instructor—his teaching today connects him to those educational roots. He continues to travel and shoot images around the world, especially images of the visual aspects of varied cultures. Art has always been an innovator with his imagery, and this shows in his work today, which consistently pushes the boundaries of what it means to be an image creator.





Monks Cross the Irrawaddy River, Myanmar

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F4 lens + 1.4x, f/7.1 for 1/800 sec., ISO 400

February 2010

Monks Cross the Irrawaddy River

Myanmar

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F4 lens + 1.4x, f/7.1 for 1/800 sec., ISO 400

What first caught my eye in capturing this image was the soft backlight on the bright red umbrellas. They really stood out against the neutral color of the water (which actually reflects a light cover of clouds in the sky).

This boat was transporting a group of Buddhist monks across a river in Myanmar. The monks were simply using the umbrellas for shade on a bright day. Buddhist monasteries usually either adopt red or orange as their main color for clothing and accessories. Here in Myanmar, this particular monastery adopted the red color, so not only were the robes red but also their parasols, and that made for some great color possibilities. The soft backlight also allowed me to hold detail in the shaded faces of the monks.

I quickly found a vantage point above the boat so that I could keep my composition simple and emphasize the colors. I chose to frame the shot symmetrically because I loved the way the oars looked coming out on each side of the boat. I also like how the boat and monks come straight toward the viewer. I emphasized that symmetry and the forward movement by putting the boat directly in the middle of the shot. I based my exposure on the faces of those monks in the shade to get the proper overall exposure.

The nature of the photo

Buddhist monks of Myanmar typically wear reddish-maroon robes, which are an interesting contrast to those worn in nearby Thailand, where the most common color is yellow-orange. In Japan and Korea, robes are often more neutral tones of black, brown, and gray.

Photo tip

Backlight makes translucent colors glow. While bright sunlight will make such colors really pop in a scene, it can also create too much contrast in the image so that you can't really see anything else. Even a soft light will do nice things with translucent colors, and will allow more parts of an image to be seen.





Prayer Flags Stream at Tsechu, Paro Valley, Bhutan

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70-200mm F4L IS lens, f/25 for 1/80 sec., ISO 400







Tsechu Gathering

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F4L IS lens + 1.4x, f/20 for 1/100 sec., ISO 400

March 2010

Prayer Flags Stream at Tsechu

Paro Valley, Bhutan

**Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F4L IS lens, f/25 for 1/80 sec., ISO 400**

Tsechu Gathering

**Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F4L IS lens + 1.4x, f/20 for 1/100 sec., ISO 400**

Buddhism is very much a part of the culture of Bhutan. Buddhist traditions and culture permeate almost everything people do there. While traversing a ridge from one valley to another, I saw all these prayer flags attached to the large coniferous trees—deodar cedars—that live at this elevation. There were hundreds of people in and among all of the flags. In addition, there was a large fire made from juniper. The smell of the burning juniper is part of the Buddhist tradition. It is holy smoke.

In “Prayer Flags Stream at Tsechu,” flags all converge at an angle in the upper center of the frame. It was a cold, windy day in the Himalayas, and within those strong flag diagonals you can see people hunkered down against the conditions. They were chanting. Subdued light allows the colors of the flags to stand out clearly against each other. A sunny day would’ve brought so much lighting contrast that it would’ve been hard to understand the entire image. The overcast light also allowed the details of the people huddled down to clearly register.

In “Tsechu Gathering,” you see monks in the foreground feeding the fire and the people on the reverse side of the fire distorted by the heat of the flames. It gives a distinctive feel to the image. If everything were clearly distinguished and perfectly delineated, it might be a nice shot, but it would not be as mysterious as the image here.

The nature of the photos

Colors of Buddhist prayer flags have symbolic meaning. Tibetan Buddhism divides the world into five basic energies: earth, water, fire, air, and space. Prayer flags use five colors to reflect this. Each color symbolizes an element and an aspect of an enlightened mind.

Photo tip

Both of these shots were taken with a tripod. It can be tempting to just start shooting when you come upon a scene like this one. But with the conditions and the need for a slower shutter speed, a tripod was the only way to guarantee image sharpness. Where elements appear sharp in these scenes, they need to be absolutely sharp.





Sadhus at Kumbh Mela, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70-200mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/250 sec., ISO 640





Haridwar Ghats, Site of the Kumbh

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f9 for 2/5 sec., ISO 800

April 2010

Sadhus at Kumbh Mela

Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f11 for 1/250 sec., ISO 640

Haridwar Ghats, Site of the Kumbh

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f9 for 2/5 sec., ISO 800

The naga *sadhus*, or naked holy men, are part of the Hindu faith in India. Most of the year, sadhus stay in caves along the tributaries of the Ganges River in the foothills of the Himalayas—chanting and showing asceticism through deprivation. They demonstrate to their gods that they are willing to undergo hardship in order to eventually reach Nirvana, their version of heaven. These holy men are rarely seen in public.

Every twelve years, though, the sadhus come in great numbers to the Kumbh Mela to be part of this event, bathing in the Ganges River. In this particular case, their bathing day happened right in front of my camera. All of these sadhus charged into the really cold waters of the Ganges in Haridwar, India, right at the spot where the Ganges leaves the Himalayas. The river here is very turbulent and is filled with glacial meltwater. These naga sadhus are likely high on hash because marijuana is often used as a part of sadhu rituals.

Bathing in the cold water is just one more way of showing that they can withstand any kind of discomfort. I like the way the frame shows the sadhus charging into the water in the foreground, while behind, you get a sense of the great number of people present. Visually, there is an interesting contrast between the looser grouping of sadhus in the lower half of the image and the tighter grouping at the top of the composition.

The second shot, taken at dusk, gives a feel for the actual setting. The Haridwar *ghats* or steps can be seen at the top of the image. To say this place is crowded is a big understatement. I shot from a platform that had been erected for viewing the area.

The nature of the photos

In India, you will find a variety of *sadhus*, or holy men, showing a great multiplicity in their traditions and what they consider to be important. The Hindu culture tends to suggest an infinite number of paths to the gods, so the sadhus translate that idea into unique forms of spiritual contemplation and practice.

Photo tip



The edges of the composition on [this page](#) are extremely important to how the viewer sees this scene. At the bottom, space around the radius in the water helps you see them as individuals. At the top, the dense mass of color and light creates a pattern that is more important than the individuals, and provides a literal backdrop to the people in the water in the foreground.





Woman with Marigolds, Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico

Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/7.1 for 1/100 sec., ISO 400

October 2010

Woman with Marigolds

Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico

**Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/7.1 for 1/100 sec., ISO 400**

The Day of the Dead is an important Mexican tradition. It is an homage to the past for Mexican families. I traveled to a mountain town southwest of Mexico City in late October to be on site for the ceremony in Pátzcuaro, Mexico. It's a great time of celebration. Graveyards are cleaned and spruced up because families spend the night at the gravesite of a loved one to honor that person. They light candles, share food, and talk about the past with the person that they're honoring. It's quite a lovely ceremony and tradition.

In this image, a woman carries a bundle of flowers to a gravesite. She stands in front of an adobe structure, which helps simplify the design of the composition. From an artistic point of view, I love the simple combination of her shawl, her long black hair, and her beautiful flowers, all standing out against the adobe-colored wall.

I chose to shoot her from behind so that her features were not part of the story. I wanted to convey a sense of design as opposed to creating a traditional portrait of a woman. I liked the converging lines toward her shoulder—the entire sweep of the photo points to the upper right corner in a very balanced way.

The nature of the photo

The Day of the Dead celebration and ceremony remind Americans of Halloween, but the two holidays have little in common. The Day of the Dead is a time to honor the dead, not to dress up and be scared. The marigold is a traditional flower used for this event because it symbolizes the sun and represents life and hope.

Photo tip

Backgrounds are important in every photo, yet subjects can so capture our eye and mind as we photograph that we see only the subject and not the background. Remember to use the background very deliberately to help define your subject and composition.





Graveyard, Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF24mm F1.4 lens, f/7.1 for 1 sec., ISO 800

October 2010

Graveyard

Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF24mm F1.4 lens, f/7.1 for 1 sec., ISO 800

Mexicans do not consider graveyards bad places to be at night and will spend nights there during the Day of the Dead. In this photo, people sit at night beside their loved ones' gravesites near a small Catholic church. The graveyard is filled with participants honoring the dead, with candles providing illumination.

This image is a very simple, timeless shot that demonstrates how another culture pays homage to their loved ones. Whenever I can share something like that from different cultures, I am really quite pleased. I love and enjoy this shot because it clearly shows off what is happening with simplicity and in a strong graphic fashion. The black sky helps define the composition and is more than simply sky—it adds contrast and shape to the scene because it becomes a dark background.

The two people in the foreground are dressed in black and were shot from behind so that they became just elements of the overall composition and design. I am very deliberate in how I use faces in my images. If a face is important to show, to connect the viewer with the individual(s) pictured, or if there is some design element in the face, then I want to show it. But sometimes a face can be a distraction to your larger design because viewers tend to want to look closely at faces.

The nature of the photo

While the Day of the Dead has become a part of Catholic spiritual life in Mexico, it is actually a celebration started long ago by the indigenous people of the country. Like the Catholics, they believed that the soul was eternal, so ancestors' souls might come back and visit them during the Day of the Dead.

Photo tip

This image was shot with a fast 24mm F1.4 lens. Fast lenses, meaning lenses with large maximum apertures, can help with low-light situations. You can shoot wide open to get more light to the sensor. They also help you see and focus better with your camera when it is dark.









Street Scene, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF17–40mm F4L lens, f/10 for 1/200 sec., ISO 400

January 2011

Street Scene

Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF17–40mm F4L lens, f/10 for 1/200 sec., ISO 400**

Sometimes I like to challenge my audience with dense compositions like the one shown here. These require a bit of additional thought on the viewer's part. I feel that the longer I can keep the attention of my audience, the more effectively I can communicate what I am trying to say.

Here I intentionally compressed the subjects visually in order to make a more demanding and less obvious composition. The people had just gotten off a boat from the other side of the great Ganges River.

I quickly positioned myself so that the pilgrims were aligned with the painting behind them. The flat light, the depth of field, and my positioning all helped create a somewhat ambiguous view. Where humans stop and where painting starts is left unclear. If you simply *get* the image right from the minute you see it, you're more likely and willing to move on. But I want the audience to work a little harder and stay with the subject pictured.

Great depth of field enabled the sharp focus—from the closest element of the composition to the painting in the distance. Even light helped create some ambiguity in the image. If there were bright sunshine, the resulting shadows would create volume, which would make it much more obvious where the humans stopped and the painting began. In the light here, you have no such additional information. The use of a tripod ensured that the image was as sharp as my gear could provide.

The nature of the photo

Varanasi is one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in the world. For Hindus, it is considered the spiritual capital of India, the holiest of Hinduism's seven sacred cities. It also has a very tight connection to the Ganges River, which runs through it.

Photo tip

If you care about getting the most from your gear, you need to invest in a solid tripod. A tripod automatically ensures your images will be as sharp as the gear can provide because it locks down the camera to prevent camera movement, a real killer of sharpness. A tripod is an investment that can do more for your image quality than a new camera that costs much more could.





Ganga Aarti, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/10 for 1/13 sec., ISO 800

January 2011

Ganga Aarti

Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/10 for 1/13 sec., ISO 800

Though I first established my name and reputation as a wildlife and nature photographer, a strong interest in culture has long been embedded in the core of who I am. This is the reason I have returned again and again to India. The cultural component of this great country shines through in so many different ways.

Examples of many of the great religions of the planet can be found within the country. These traditional religions and their practices provide endless opportunities for a curious photographer. In this image, Hindu priests perform a nightly ceremony on the ghats that go right down to the Ganges River. These unique flights of wide stone steps lead people down to the river where they can take a holy dip.

The Hindu believe the Ganges represents the Hindu gods, since it originates in the sacred Himalayas about a hundred miles away. Because that river runs right through Varanasi, Hinduism is very important to the daily life of the people here.

I photographed this scene at night, using the light of the city. I used a small aperture with a wide-angle focal length so that each Hindu priest would be clearly in focus and therefore of equal interest and value to the image. I chose a position that gave me an angle of view where all the priests could be clearly identified.

The nature of the photo

Varanasi has multiple *ghats*, or riverbank steps, along a roughly four-mile stretch of the Ganges River as it flows through the city. Most are used for sacred bathing and prayer, though several are designated as places for cremation of the dead. A number of temples are situated by the ghats and people come here to be cleansed physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Photo tip

Digital cameras provide a remarkable capability for photographing at night, using the light of a city. Excellent quality via high ISO settings plus controllable white balance enable anyone to capture scenes that were difficult to photograph just a few years ago. Yet most photographers still don't photograph night scenes. *Give it a try!*





Restaurant, Yuanyang, Yunnan, China

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/30 sec., ISO 500

March 2011

Restaurant

Yuanyang, Yunnan, China

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/30 sec., ISO 500

When I travel, I intentionally place myself into photo-rich environments. Then I just start observing and shooting. These locales include markets, outdoor restaurants, or anywhere else where people naturally gather and engage in their activities.

Typically, the people in these places are so involved in their own activities that they pay little attention to me, even when my presence is perfectly obvious. This allows me to capture candid moments, such as this scene from southern China. I simply become part of the environment, and I'm able to photograph with confidence, not disturbing the people at work.

This fairly complex image of a restaurant in the small town of Yuanyang shows a cook as he dishes up steaming soup for lunch. The rich and moody natural lighting gives a touch of mystery to the scene. I also quite liked the atmospheric condition of steam coming up from the pot of cooking noodles. The background is quite important: a patron in the medium background is mostly visible, while others farther into the restaurant become mere silhouettes.

I love this image because of the sense of depth and the candid moment pictured. None of the individuals within the frame are paying attention to me, and so are not aware that I'm taking the picture. It's a very simple shot of a complex scene: the worker working, the customers active, and the photographer taking the shot unobserved. The quality of the light allowed for a clear composition. Such simplicity is key for involving the viewer.

I shot this with a 100mm focal length, which meant I could remain about twenty feet away without being noticed as I took the picture. From this short telephoto focal length I was able to get in tight to the scene and eliminate distracting elements that might've interfered with the simplicity of my subject.

The nature of the photo

Restaurants are very different around the world, as cultures deal with food preparation quite unlike we do in the United States. Asian countries, especially, often have a totally divergent arrangement between the kitchen and diners. This can make for some unique and unusual photos if you are willing to go inside.

Photo tip

Many photographers who travel to wonderful locations would love to photograph the people there but are afraid to do so. Parades, fairs, markets, and other events can be great locations for photographing people. They will be actively involved in the event and pay less attention to a quiet, unobtrusive photographer.





Lion Mother and Cubs, Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF500mm F4L IS lens, f/4 for 1/250 sec., ISO 400

January 2012

Lion Mother and Cubs

Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, EF500mm F4L IS lens, f/4 for 1/250 sec., ISO 400**

I was on safari in Tanzania, exploring the Serengeti and viewing the amazing wildlife that lives there. On this day, I was out looking for herds of wildebeest, but had found very few. When that happens, it's likely because of lions in the area. My safari crisscrossed the open savanna looking for the lions. After twenty minutes, I found this mother huddled with her three cubs, dealing with an unwelcome rainstorm.

What stands out to me in this image is the fact that the cats are wet. Many times photographers will avoid shooting in such conditions, which is exactly why such images can be so unique. This family group appears somewhat miserable, as cats often do when caught in a rainstorm.

We discovered the mother and the cubs just after they had finished munching on a carcass of a wildebeest. We found the half-eaten carcass nearby. After eating their fill, lions typically spend time resting, grooming, and licking each other. As a result, I was able to capture a photo of a nice pile of wet cats in very subdued, late afternoon light.

I photographed the family with a 500mm on a full-frame DSLR, using ISO 400 to deal with the low light levels. At the moment of the photograph, a shower passed through, providing a primordial aura to the entire scene—I love the atmospheric conditions that the shower provided, which also gave me the subdued light I liked here.

I've found that with multiple cats, especially those with very long snouts, bright sunshine casts shadows on the faces, a condition that the camera has difficulty with. With overcast light, the contrasts are well within the range of my camera's capabilities. Shadows are filled in by the even light of the clouds, making this kind of shot much more engaging and worthwhile for me.

The nature of the photo

Lions don't need a kill every day and will feast for several days on their prey until all the meat is gone. Lions are not successful on every hunt. In fact, most of the time, the prey gets away.

Photo tip

Subdued light can give an even and revealing light, but it must be exposed properly so that it does not appear dark. It is also critical that your white balance does not give your image a blue cast—Auto White Balance (AWB) has a tendency to add a slight blue cast to photos shot under these conditions. A specific white balance such as Cloudy will produce more accurate results.





Beach Scene, Zanzibar, Tanzania

Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/22 for 1/160 sec., ISO 400

January 2012

Beach Scene

Zanzibar, Tanzania

**Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/22 for 1/160 sec., ISO 400**

Zanzibar, a semiautonomous island off of Tanzania, can be quite hot, but strong sea breezes keep conditions comfortable even at the peak of summer. The culture there is interesting—a mix of different ethnicities because of its ties to the ocean—and it is primarily Muslim.

At sunset near the capital of Zanzibar City, people come to the shore to play, to relax, and to watch the sunset. This is the kind of location I love to photograph because it features many people doing many things. They are usually relaxed, not paying too much attention to me, the photographer. In this image, the people in the foreground discuss the day's politics (which is very common there), while the people on the beach play soccer. Still farther back, others enjoy a walk beside the water, and even farther out there's a sailboat. I love the layering of this image, as it offers a rich texture of culture.

I tried to take the design of the abandoned fountain and incorporate that half circle in the foreground, the conversation in the middle ground, and, of course, capture the people at the beach as the background. All those elements make for a very complex and yet easily read composition.

The nature of the photo

Sunset at the beach seems to be universally appreciated by people throughout the world. It is common for people to walk along a beach, enjoying the ocean waves and drama of the setting sun, no matter what their culture or location is. It can be a relaxing and inspiring time.

Photo tip

Using silhouettes is a dramatic and effective way to create an image with impact. However, you do have to pay attention to overlapping dark areas that can blend in confusing ways. For example, if your silhouette is in front of a dark hill, then the silhouette will start to disappear against it. Notice how Art has carefully arranged the visual elements of the composition here so that the silhouettes are clearly understood.





Cape Agulhas, Arniston, South Africa

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F4 lens + 1.4x, f/36 for 5 seconds, ISO 100

April 2012

Cape Agulhas

Arniston, South Africa

**Canon EOS 5D Mark II, EF70–200mm F4 lens + 1.4x, f/36 for 5 seconds, ISO 100**

The southernmost region of Africa, Cape Agulhas, features a jagged coastline with tiny rocks jutting out into the sea. For this image, I wanted the sharp delineation of the rocks as they stood out against and contrasted with the blurred motion of the overlapping waves during a long exposure. The result is this abstraction of the land. I love altering what I actually see with my naked eye by my choice of position and shutter speed.

I waited for a post-sunset light when a long exposure is required to expose the scene properly. I knew that timing would enable me to capture the motion blur I was after from the waves. I put the camera on Bulb, and using a cable release, I locked the shutter open until I calculated there was enough light to illuminate the scene properly.

Taking a shot like this one is not just a matter of aiming at rocks and hoping a long exposure will capture it. It's also about previsualizing, squinting and looking to see where the dark rocks will work against the waves. The entire idea for this photograph was to use the overlapping motion of the waves to create a light mist, separating one rock from another from another. A balanced composition was critical for this image. The land formations provide balance on either side of the composition.

The nature of the photo

Cape Agulhas is at the southernmost tip of continental Africa and is the official dividing line between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Cape of Good Hope, north and west of Cape Agulhas, is the more dramatic, better known southern point of South Africa, but Cape Agulhas is the true winner as the true most southern point.

Photo tip

Previsualization is about visualizing what the final image might look like, before you create the actual "visualization" or rendition of the scene with your camera. Squinting, as Art mentions, can help you better see the light and dark areas of a scene.





[Credit 79\\_1](#)

Brown Bear Sow and Cubs, Lake Clark National Park, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1D X, EF500mm F4 lens, f/18 for 1/320 sec., ISO 1600





Brown Bear Cub at Attention

Canon EOS-1D X, EF500mm F4 lens + 1.4x, f/13 for 1/1000 sec., ISO 800

July 2012

Brown Bear Sow and Cubs

Lake Clark National Park, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1D X, EF500mm F4 lens, f/18 for 1/320 sec., ISO 1600

Brown Bear Cub at Attention

Canon EOS-1D X, EF500mm F4 lens + 1.4x, f/13 for 1/1000 sec., ISO 800

In the spring, brown bear mothers come out with their cubs to feed upon the luxurious succulent grasses along the Alaska coastline at high tide. As the tide recedes, the bears go out onto the mud flats and look for razor clams.

In the shot with her three cubs, the mother was in the tide flat munching grass while I photographed her. She was fully aware of my presence and comfortable with it. This area is one where fishermen have gone for years, so bears understand the humans present are not a threat.

Moments before this picture was taken, the babies were about fifteen to twenty feet behind the mother, playing and chasing each other. Suddenly mom let out a bark, and instantaneously, the three cubs stopped playing and ran directly to her. I love the shot here because I had never seen this behavior before, never seen three cubs stand with their paws right in alignment.

The second shot is a simple image featuring one of the cubs.

The nature of the photos

Brown bears are what is called *sexually dimorphic*, meaning that the males and females are different sizes. Males are typically about 30 percent heavier than females, which makes them very dangerous to the even smaller cubs. Brown bears are essentially loners, except for females with cubs.

Photo tip

Understanding wildlife behavior is an important part of wildlife photography. While it can help to do a little research on your subject, it also helps just to be observant and really watch what the animals are doing. Notice what they pay attention to, how relaxed or nervous they are, and be alert to unique behavior you can capture in an image.





Lake Detail, Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/22 for 2 1/2 sec., ISO 100

October 2012

Lake Detail

Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia

**Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/22 for 2 1/2 sec., ISO 100**

I have long loved the art of the Impressionists. I have a whole book, *Rhythms of the Wild*, strongly influenced by these painters. I was drawn to this particular image because it reminded me of a Seurat painting from that period. This detail of a lake surface was shot through foreground trees while I was looking steeply down a hillside.

I could have shot only traditional sorts of landscape photos at this fascinating Eastern European national park. This spectacular park deserves those shots. And I did shoot them. But this image grabs me on a more personal level.

I used a polarizer to take the shine off of the lake and to make the water darker to contrast and showcase the lighter color of the leaves on the surface. Doing so gave depth to the image that I could not otherwise have attained. A shutter speed of 2.5 seconds was a long enough exposure to convey the motion of the leaves. I used f/22 both for its depth of field and to allow for a long shutter speed.

A slow shutter speed captured the wind currents as they transported leaves across the surface of the lake. The slow shutter speed also allowed me to capture some movement to the tree that, combined with the leaves moving on the lake surface, gives the image a bit of life contrasted with the sharp branches in the foreground.

The nature of the photo

Plitvice Lakes National Park sits in the mountainous karst region of central Croatia. A karst landscape is literally a place of hole-filled rocks. It is formed as rocks like limestone and dolomite dissolve from the water that runs over them for many years. A karst area typically has many caves and underground rivers.

Photo tip

Often when photographers try long exposures for blurs, they end up disappointed or feel they have to accept the results because "that's what the pros do." Actually, what the pros do is take many photos, changing exposure until they get the right combination of shutter speed and speed of the movement. LCD playback lets them see what they get as they shoot.





Bengal Tiger, Bandhavgarh National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

Canon EOS-1D X, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens + 1.4x, f/4 for 1/320 sec., ISO 800

January 2013

Bengal Tiger

Bandhavgarh National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

Canon EOS-1D X, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens + 1.4x, f/4 for 1/320 sec., ISO 800

Bandhavgarh National Park is renowned for its tiger population and its myriad habitats—from vertical mountains to open woodlands to lakes and marshes. It's one of the most beautiful national parks in which to photograph tigers. On one occasion, I saw sixteen different tigers in a five-day period. On the day that I photographed this tiger, it was the only tiger that I saw over a five-day period. With tigers, it is feast or famine.

I was resigned to not seeing tigers, after having spent four days looking for them. But as we were coming back to camp, a tiger crossed the road, paused, and looked back at us when we stopped our vehicle. I had a shot of a beautiful animal with a full-on gaze under perfect light. Often I photograph animals in situations where they're not aware that I am there. These candid moments feature uninterrupted behavior on the animal's part. In this particular case, I was hoping the tiger would look back simply because the face of a tiger is so compelling.

The strength of the gaze and the eye contact it establishes between the tiger and the viewer is unnerving at best. After all, tigers are one of the top predators on the planet. Capturing such a face was one of my goals if I ever got near a tiger. The other, earth colors of the surrounding bush in late winter complement the colors of the cat itself. The fact that the tiger is in a fairly dense area means that the surrounding vegetation also conveys the fact that this tiger could easily disappear in a matter of seconds.

The nature of the photo

Bandhavgarh National Park is a large national park near the center of India in the state of Madhya Pradesh. It covers over one hundred seventy square miles of country in the Vindhya Range. It is believed to have the highest density populations of tigers in the country, and has become a prime destination for people wanting to see these animals in the wild.

Photo tip

There is no rule as to whether wildlife should look at your camera or not. Either approach is valid, as long as you make a conscious decision. Make sure your choice is appropriate to both the animal and the situation. This choice will influence when you squeeze the shutter, how you compose the shot, and how you affect a viewer.





Pilgrims at Kumbh Mela, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/16 for 1/125 sec., ISO 400

January 2013

Pilgrims at Kumbh Mela

Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/16 for 1/125 sec., ISO 400

As of this writing, I've traveled to India on four different occasions to photograph the Kumbh Mela. This huge pilgrimage of faith is an occasion when Hindus gather and bathe in a sacred river such as the Ganges (one of the great spiritual rivers of India).

The Kumbh Mela occurs every twelve years. Tens of millions of Hindus travel to one of four locations designated for the Kumbh Mela along the Ganges River. I love traveling to big gatherings of people like this one because there are just so many opportunities to take candid shots of people engaged in traditional cultural activities.

The Hindus also celebrate lesser Kumbh Mela events every six years. During one of these occasions, I found an old man who had created a phallic sculpture with sand and clay. He even adorned it with marigold blossoms and surrounded it with other things he had found that day.

I was photographing the man as he put the final touches on his sculpture when three pilgrims walked up to him. Suddenly they all erupted in a spontaneous greeting and dance. I had and still have no idea what was going on; I simply reacted with my camera. I love the simplicity of this image from the open bank of the Ganges. The image has an authenticity that one could not get elsewhere. It's one of my favorite shots.

The nature of the photo

The Kumbh Mela is a huge gathering of people, estimated to have reached over eighty million attendees in 2013. The event spans a month and a half, so not all of the people are there at once, though as many as thirty million have been estimated to bathe in the river at peak times. The event rotates among four locations in India.

Photo tip

Even candid shots can communicate clearly and directly with your viewers. The key is to watch the background, as Art did here. He used the bank of the Ganges to simplify his photo. Find a good location that has a strong relationship to your subject, then start shooting.





Mahouts Parade Painted Elephants, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS 5D, EF15mm F2.8 lens, f/4 for 1/40 sec., ISO 2500

January 2013

Mahouts Parade Painted Elephants

Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

**Canon EOS 5D, EF15mm F2.8 lens, f/4 for 1/40 sec., ISO 2500**

The Kumbh Mela is really one big, giant Hindu party as far as I'm concerned. With the millions of people there for the event, you can expect the unexpected. Each time I attend, I know I will see and photograph things I have never seen before. I've been to four of these events thus far and to see them—to photograph them—is a delight for me. There is no question that, as an American photographer, you go through a culture shock. Nothing in the States will prepare you. But I don't find culture shock a bad thing. I feel it stimulates the imagination and creates for me a drive to shoot new and more exciting photos.

This particular image shows an elephant coming in at twilight. It is not dark because there are so many lights here diffusing into the hazy, smoky air. The smoke comes from all of the cooking fires in the tent camps. This condition creates a very nice balance in the light so that you can see the elephants, the people all around, and the buildings in the background.

As these elephants came through, I used an extreme wide-angle lens up close and handheld. The craziness of this image represents, for me, the craziness of the time.

The nature of the photo

The Kumbh Mela has become the world's largest gathering of people. Hindus consider bathing in the sacred waters of the Ganges during the occasion their chance to literally wash away karmic debt. Because so many people attend, it is an experience broadly shared by Indians, an event where caste and class don't matter.

Photo tip

Wide-angle lenses allow you to shoot handheld at slower shutter speeds while still getting sharp photos. The wider the focal length, the slower the shutter speed you may be able to get away with before camera movement during exposure causes problems. Practice with the focal lengths you have, at different shutter speeds, to discover what is possible with your gear and your technique.





Pilgrims in Tent City, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS SD Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/18 for 1/50 sec., ISO 800

January 2013

Pilgrims in Tent City

Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Canon EOS SD Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/18 for 1/50 sec., ISO 800

Some of the people at a Kumbh Mela gathering stay in nearby towns, some stay at little motels, but most stay in tents they bring along for the event. Vast cities of tents appear and remain standing for weeks when this Indian event is held (typically earlier in the year, depending upon the astrological positions of the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter). You can see thousands of fires used for warmth and cooking. The entire area is layered in smoke, conveying a sense of timelessness and tradition.

I love shooting cultures from three different points of view: (1) abstracting the culture, (2) shooting candid moments, and (3) taking formal portraits. All three call for different styles of shooting, and I embrace all three. This shot fits the more abstract style. You see a mother with a child as they approach people at the entrance of the tent. The fact that I could remain fairly far away, not interfering or being noticed, was all for the best.

The amount of color and variety of fabric in the frame almost allows the pilgrims in the foreground to blend in with the background. This image does not provide an obvious view because all the fabric and colors blend together. The viewer is challenged to isolate the pilgrims from the background.

The nature of the photo

On February 10, 2013, an estimated thirty million people bathed in the sacred waters of the Ganges River at Allahabad. This day's event is considered to have been the largest human gathering on a single day anywhere and anytime on Earth.

Photo tip

Sometimes photographers feel they have to have a simple background that contrasts with their subject. That can be effective, but sometimes a more complex background will suit your subject and goals better. Be sure to plan for and watch out for your background regardless of the type needed.





Istiqlal Mosque, Jakarta, Indonesia

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/5 for 1/60 sec., ISO 160

January 2013

Istiqlal Mosque

Jakarta, Indonesia

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/5 for 1/60 sec., ISO 160

I traveled to this giant mosque in Jakarta on prayer day (Friday in the Islamic religion). I asked to be placed up on the second platform within the mosque. The Indonesian version of Islam is far more open to outside viewers, and I had heard that this place was one of the more open mosques. As long as I took off my shoes and went upstairs to a viewing place, I was welcome—complete with tripod, camera, and no hiding. My intent was to photograph the religion in action and the patterns that the people took as they sat and rose, kneeling and praying during the noon-hour sermon.

In this particular case, the Friday prayers provided the shots I wanted. I wanted to share the immensity of the place, to convey that I was looking down upon a very crowded room. I worked to capture a certain beauty from the scale of the scene. Here is another case where the new digital cameras really helped: they allowed me to use an ISO of 2000 that made it possible for me to shoot inside and still have a shutter speed that could stop movement.

The nature of the photo

The Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta is the largest mosque in Southeast Asia. First opened to the public in 1978, this giant religious structure is as large as a football stadium and can hold up to one hundred twenty thousand people. It serves the Sunni branch of the Muslim faith.

Photo tip

The angle you choose for a shot has a big impact on what is seen and what you convey to the viewer. Don't simply accept the first height you discover as you face your subject. Look for places higher and lower that might better express your perception of the location.





Monks at Lessons, Yangon, Myanmar

Canon EOS-1DX, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/13 sec., ISO 1000

February 2013

Monks at Lessons

Yangon, Myanmar

**Canon EOS-1DX, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/11 for 1/13 sec., ISO 1000**

When in Myanmar, I love to photograph the Buddhist culture there, including its impact on the people involved in their daily activities. Monks in a monastery provide an easy example of an exotic photo subject for anyone traveling from outside Asia.

In this image, five young monks diligently study their Buddhist books in a monastery in Yangon, Myanmar. I had traveled there with a small group on a photo tour. We gained access to this monastery only by promising not to disturb the young students. The headmaster also told them to show discipline in their studying by not looking at the camera.

These parameters were perfect for photography. I loved photographing these young monks because they paid no attention to my presence or that of anyone else in the group. I was able to move throughout the classroom, quietly and respectfully photographing them. That made the resulting images appear natural and very *real*.

One thing I love about the image shown here is the lack of direct sunlight on the students' bodies. In other words, the entire scene was shot with reflective light. I think it is the subtleties of this particular light that make this moment. For some monks, the light reflects from the books they are reading, throwing a nice light on their faces (especially the boy who's placed highest in the photo). Others remain in deeper shadow. This unique combination of light and dark, highlight and shadow, gives this image depth. I think the light is extremely important to expressing a sense of the setting. It also supports the idea of young monks in a monastery studying Buddhism as a very quiet and thoughtful subject.

I shot this with a 24–105mm zoom set to its widest focal length of 24mm. That particular focal length gave a nice perspective to the space that a longer focal length would not give. I shot at f/11, which, combined with the wide-angle focal length, offered enough depth of field to bring all the monks into sharp focus. Since the monks were paying no attention to me, I could get close with my wide-angle and even use a tripod.

The nature of the photo



Myanmar (formally known as Burma) has the highest percentage of practicing Buddhists of any country in the world, with a Buddhist population of nearly 90 percent. Monks are very important to society in Myanmar and have long had a big influence on every aspect of it.

Photo tip

So often photographers will simply set up for a scene like the one shown here and zoom in and out to get the shot they want. When doing so, the photographer misses an opportunity for creative control of the visual space. When shooting the same framing of the scene, a 24mm lens up close gives a very different look than longer focal lengths farther away.





Canyon Wall Reflection, Kimberley, Australia

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/1250 sec., ISO 2000

June 2013

Canyon Wall Reflection

Kimberley, Australia

**Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/1250 sec., ISO 2000**

The fine art world has long been important to me, since that was what I studied in college. Many painters have influenced my own work. The image here reminds me of the work of Gustav Klimt and his homage to the pointillist painters of his time, including a series of paintings of women with very ornate dresses.

As I traveled by boat through the inlets and canyons along the coast in the Kimberley area of northwestern Australia, I found that the reflections of the canyon walls in the water reminded me of the color palette and design of Klimt's dresses. In this image, you can see the ochre-colored cliffs reflected in the disrupted surface of this saltwater inlet, along with the blue sky above.

I love these moments where the abstraction takes on all sorts of forms that remind me of other things. I can get lost looking at the details of this image, seeing "faces" and other shapes. I find that these abstracted pieces with embedded images draw the viewer into them.

In the center of this photo, I see the eye and ears of a goat. Other people will see something entirely different. That's how an image like this one can engage people on a very different level than simply one of recognition.

The nature of the photo

The Kimberley region of Australia sits in the far northwestern part of the continent. The area is known for its sandstone and limestone gorges and steep cliffs. The land has a maximum height of a little over three thousand feet, but the terrain is so steep that the country is difficult to move through except by boat along the coast.

Photo tip

Water is a wonderful reflective surface in nature and offers so many opportunities for the observant photographer. Look for reflections, both on still water and on water that is disturbed and creating unique patterns and rhythms. Be careful of using a polarizing filter with reflections because it can remove key elements of those reflections on water.









Bald-Headed Uakari, Rio Negro, Amazonas, Brazil

Canon EOS-1D X, EF500mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/125 sec., ISO 500

July 2013

Bald-Headed Uakari

Rio Negro, Amazonas, Brazil

**Canon EOS-1D X, EF500mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/125 sec., ISO 500**

One of the most colorful mammals on earth, perhaps the most colorful, is the uakari, a small monkey that lives in the South American rainforest of Brazil. With long, rust-colored fur and a bright red, bald head, this primate almost recalls an old man as it peers out through the vegetation.

I photographed this image at a preserve along the Amazon River. The wary little monkey would not come into full view. It was curious enough to stay around, but it always kept branches and leaves between itself and me. Occasionally, it would peer through those obscuring branches and leaves at me and I was able to get some shots. This animal looking right at the camera creates a strong impression that connects effectively with the viewer.

I like this image for a couple of reasons. First, the monkey is obviously peering through the branches of a lichen-covered rainforest tree, which gives the image a strong sense of place. Even though the uakari is large in the frame, the tree branches tell a story of a very specific location. They also give the animal an impression of wariness to my eye. Additionally, the muted colors under the soft light allow the redness of the monkey's face to really appear clear and strong in the image. It contrasts well with the more neutral gray tones around the animal.

The beautiful uakari are threatened with extinction. While I've seen tribes in the Amazon keep these animals as pets, their biggest threat is loss of habitat. It is a consistent challenge that wildlife face around the world, but it is especially a problem in the rainforest.

The nature of the photo

Uakari are unique primates in many ways. Their strongly colored faces are obvious, but in addition, these monkeys have relatively short tails. Their red faces change in intensity with the health of the animal and may be attractive to mates. Living in large groups, or "troops," these are very social monkeys.

Photo tip

Patience can be one of the best tools of a wildlife photographer. If you sit and wait without appearing threatening, animals will often stay nearby, though they may take their time moving into an opening for your shot. Move slowly and deliberately with no sudden movements so that the animal does not grow frightened.









Amazon River Dolphins, Rio Negro, Amazonas, Brazil

Canon EOS 5D Mark II with underwater housing, EF16-35mm F2.8 lens, f/5 for 1/200 sec., ISO 800

July 2013

Amazon River Dolphins

Rio Negro, Amazonas, Brazil

**Canon EOS 5D Mark II with underwater housing, EF16-35mm F2.8 lens, f/5 for 1/200 sec., ISO 800**

In the past, when I did books on the rainforests of the world, I only gained slight glimpses of the very elusive dolphins that live in the Amazon River. Then I heard about an area where local fishermen occasionally fed fish parts to the dolphins. Dolphins are extraordinarily smart animals and will adapt to the encroachments of humans into their habitat.

I originally went to this location to see if I could get an underwater shot of the dolphins for my book *Earth Is My Witness*. When I entered the water with my camera in its underwater housing, I was shocked and surprised when these dolphins came out of nowhere and careened right into my body. They acted like big, friendly dogs that wanted to be petted.

To get shots of these amazingly friendly animals, I had to push them in their chests to move them far enough away so that I could get a picture of them with the underwater housing and an extreme wide-angle lens. Otherwise, I would've just had shots of teeth and long snouts. With the amount of teeth these dolphins had in those snouts, I was a little reluctant to get *too* friendly with them. Yet even when I shoved them away and took pictures, they came right back. I'd shove them away again, take some pictures, they'd come right back, and so on. I was able to get a handful of shots in the turbid water. The water was somewhat clouded because of all the nutrients brought down river from the thousands of streams and tributaries of the Amazon basin.

The nature of the photo

The Amazon River dolphin is also called the pink river dolphin and is the largest of the freshwater dolphins. It has been threatened by habitat loss, river degradation, and damming. An interesting feature of the animals, besides their long snouts, is that their necks have unfused vertebrae that allow them to turn their necks 90 degrees.

Photo tip

Underwater work often requires a wide-angle lens for two reasons. First, it allows you to get closer to your subject so that you are not shooting through a lot of cloudy water. Second, if the housing has a flat port, the image is magnified slightly because of the way light passes through water and air to get to the sensor.





Leopard Siblings, Mashatu Game Reserve, Botswana

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200-400mm F4L IS lens, 1/4.5 for 1/2000 sec., ISO 4000







Leopard Family

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4L IS lens, f/7.1 for 1/640 sec., ISO 4000

September 2013

Leopard Siblings

Mashatu Game Reserve, Botswana

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4L IS lens, f/4.5 for 1/2000 sec., ISO 4000

Leopard Family

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4L IS lens, f/7.1 for 1/640 sec., ISO 4000

The two images here show the same family of leopards, and demonstrate how important it can be to stay with your subject. The two shots work almost as one, telling you about this mother leopard and her two adolescent offspring.

I photographed them in the Mashatu Game Reserve in southern Botswana. This reserve is known for its large mashatu trees and for being a very wild area because so few people travel here. It's a giant ranch that has been transformed into a game reserve.

Leopards are quite common in the area. In this case, the mother was out alone, separated from her offspring until the end of the day when all three of them came together again. At this point in their lives, the offspring are being forced by the mother to be on their own so that they can develop their own hunting instincts and survival skills. But they're not yet old enough that she can totally abandon them.

When they came together, there were greetings, licking, and other forms of reconnecting. In the image with all three, the mother lies in the center of the frame with the cubs around her. In the second image, the male offspring puts his paws around his sister, interacting as part of a family group. I shot these with a 400mm lens and 1.4x tele-extender at ISO 4000 because it was late in the day and I needed that additional sensitivity.

The nature of the photos

Leopards and cheetahs are sometimes confused because they both have spots. Leopards are larger, more solid cats, compared to the long-legged and speedy cheetahs. Leopards are powerful animals that often drag their prey into trees to protect it from other predators.

Photo tip

Don't be afraid to change your ISO settings as needed for the conditions you're facing. Note that Art never simply chooses one ISO and sticks to it. He changes his ISO to give him more control over shutter speed and f-stop choices. You can do the same. Today's cameras are so good that you will have a range of high-quality possibilities on your camera.





Elephant Startles Lions at Waterhole, Mashatu Game Reserve, Botswana  
Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF70-200mm F2.8L IS II lens, f/13 for 1/500 sec., ISO 1600







Elephant Herd Converges on Waterhole

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF70–200mm F2.8L IS II lens, f/13 for 1/400 sec., ISO 1600

September 2013

Elephant Startles Lions at Waterhole

Mashatu Game Reserve, Botswana

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF70–200mm F2.8L IS II lens, f/13 for 1/500 sec., ISO 1600

Elephant Herd Converges on Waterhole

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF70–200mm F2.8L IS II lens, f/13 for 1/400 sec., ISO 1600

The climate of the Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana is very arid. By the month of September, waterholes have largely dried up except for a few small depressions in the riverbed. Elephants come to this water source and dig in the dirt until they reach water below the surface.

Many animals then come to the waterholes created by the elephants. In the [first shot](#), a pride of lions is startled by the quiet approach of an elephant. Originally, I was photographing the lions drinking, and I was amazed at how unobservant they were of the approaching elephant. Elephants have large padded feet that enable them to walk all but silently across the landscape. Lions are the top predators, so they typically aren't wary of anything. But this elephant definitely caught them off guard!

In the [second shot](#), the elephant from the previous photograph is followed by well over forty of his companions in a large, thirsty herd. They would remain at the waterhole for approximately forty minutes, while they drank and mud bathed, before moving on. Soft light in late afternoon made the entire complexity of a herd of elephants easily recognizable. I prefer to photograph elephants in soft overcast light.

The nature of the photos

Waterholes are a critical part of any location supporting a lot of large animals. Small animals get their water in a number of ways, including from plants, but large animals need waterholes. Any waterhole can be a place where a great variety of wildlife visit, though they often do so in staggered groupings.

Photo tip

Simply having enough light is not enough if the light does not work with your subject. Watch how shadows and highlights play off your subject and try to find a scene and composition that works with the light rather than using light in an arbitrary way.





Impala at Waterhole, Mashatu Game Reserve, Botswana

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4 lens, f/18 for 1/125 sec., ISO 1000

September 2013

Impala at Waterhole

Mashatu Game Reserve, Botswana

**Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4 lens, f/18 for 1/125 sec., ISO 1000**

Since water can be scarce in this part of Botswana, the Mashatu Game Reserve managers have built waterholes to help support the wildlife there. Pictured here is one such waterhole created by the reserve. This location is very attractive to animals and there is a place for photographers, making it a great location for photographing all sorts of animals without really disturbing them as they come to drink.

This location provides an extraordinary opportunity and a great access to wild animals; however, that can also be a disadvantage if you are overwhelmed by the animals and just start shooting without thinking about what your shot should be. For this shot, I took a low position that gave a unique perspective to the shot.

Impala are extraordinarily vulnerable, especially when coming to a waterhole. Because of that, it can take a very long time for them to gain the confidence to spend any time in the area. They are often attacked by leopards and lions that take advantage of their prey's focus on the water to attack.

I love this shot because the ears of the impala face forward, as they are catching any slight noise that I might be making as I expose my shots. It's "I'll watch for you while you drink, then you watch for me while I drink" for these impala.

The nature of the photo

The impala is a true antelope of the African plains, and an important food source for the big cats that live there. True antelopes live mainly in Africa and never shed their horns or any part of them. The pronghorn "antelopes" of North America are not true antelopes. Pronghorns do shed the horn sheath.

Photo tip

Wildlife photography can be so exciting, especially when you find unique animals, that you forget you are a photographer and start being a snaphooter with expensive gear. Remember to pay attention to the image, not just the animals. A quick way to ensure better photos is to make sure the animals are not centered in the frame.





Dead Elephant Visited by Herd Members and Lions, Ongava Game Reserve, Namibia  
Canon EOS-1D X, EF200-400mm F4L IS Extender 1.4x lens + 2x, f/11 for 1/5000 sec., ISO 3200







Jackals Swarm Dead Elephant

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200-400mm F4L IS Extender 1.4 lens + 2x, f/13 for 1/1600 sec., ISO 4000

September 2013

Dead Elephant Visited by Herd Members and Lions

Ongava Game Reserve, Namibia

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200-400mm F4L IS Extender 1.4x lens + 2x, f/11 for 1/5000 sec., ISO 3200

Jackals Swarm Dead Elephant

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200-400mm F4L IS Extender 1.4 lens + 2x, f/13 for 1/1600 sec., ISO 4000

Elephants will mourn a dead member of their herd for weeks. This is very much in evidence in the first image. In it, you see two large elephants that have driven off two lions who were feeding on the dead elephant on the ground. The two elephants are glowing white. That's because they had taken a bath in the soda-rich water and mud of a nearby waterhole. The mud dries to a very light color, so it results in a ghostlike image.

After a while, the elephants moved off and a very large number of jackals came to the carcass. They climbed up on the body of the elephant and started pulling off tiny bits of meat.

The difficulty in photographing these two images was in the distance I had to shoot from. Our safari group could not drive off the road, nor could we get any closer to the scene. I ended up using my 200-400mm lens plus a 1.4x tele-extender plus a 2x tele-extender. I had to shoot across the heat of the earth coming up into the air even as the heat waves distorted the view. These were less than stellar conditions for sharp images. Nonetheless, I was able to get an interesting series of shots, showcasing behaviors of the elephants, lions, and jackals.

The nature of the photos

Elephants always need to be near water. While their skin is tough, they need regular mud baths. The mud dries and acts like a barrier to insect bites and protects the skin from being damaged by the sun. The light gray color of the mud on these elephants may also help keep them cooler.

Photo tip

Sometimes photographers won't take a shot because they don't have "good enough" gear or because they have been told that they can't use certain gear, such as two tele-extenders with a zoom. Yet, sometimes unique situations like Art found here cannot be photographed any other way. The shot becomes more important than any arbitrary judgment of gear quality.





Maasai Men, Losho Village, Kenya

Canon EOS-1D X, Zeiss Distagon T\* F2.8/15 ZE lens, f/20 for 1/1600 sec., ISO 4000

December 2013

Maasai Men

Losho Village, Kenya

**Canon EOS-1D X, Zeiss Distagon T\* F2.8/15 ZE lens, f/20 for 1/1600 sec., ISO 4000**

I have been privileged to photograph the Maasai people for many years, starting in the early 1980s and throughout my career. This is a proud and distinct African culture that in many places contains people who cling to their traditional dress and way of life. One of the traditions is the circumcision of young men as they pass into sub-adulthood. It's a time of celebration and reverence. I wanted to approach my subjects respectfully, keeping that attitude of celebration and reverence in mind.

However, I approached this particular shot not as a cultural portrait but as more of a sculptural composition. I was struck by the way the men's head shapes played against the stark blue of the sky. I love the candid positioning of the men. I did not arrange them, but rather reacted to what was happening before me. Another plus is the way the reds of their traditional robes contrast boldly against the deep blue of the sky.

I shot up close with a very wide-angle lens, which emphasized the perspective change from foreground to background, giving the image its pyramidal shape. I lowered my position so as to bring in the sky behind, and further form the shape.

The nature of the photo

The Maasai are a well-known tribe of nomadic people living in Kenya and Tanzania in west-central Africa. They have retained many of their traditions in spite of pressures to adapt to the modern world. Maasai villages are often near or even in popular wildlife parks of the region.

Photo tip

You may have been told to never use a wide-angle lens up close with people. Following that "rule" would never allow for a shot like this one. The change in size from foreground to background is controlled because Art got close to his subjects and used a wide-angle lens to increase the feeling of depth.





Maasai Villagers Prepare for Emorata Ceremony, Loshio Village, Kenya

Canon EOS-1D X, Zeiss Distagon 15mm F2.8 lens, f/3.5 for 1/40 sec., ISO 6400

December 2013

Maasai Villagers Prepare for Emorata Ceremony

Loshio Village, Kenya

**Canon EOS-1D X, Zeiss Distagon 15mm F2.8 lens, f/3.5 for 1/40 sec., ISO 6400**

This interior shot shows the home of a youth circumcised in the Maasai emorata ceremony. Here, the mother and other relatives prepare food for the people that have come to their village to pay honor to the circumcised boy.

The boy who was circumcised was about sixteen years old. He's lying in the dark in the distance, healing from the circumcision. I was permitted to come into the room only if I used natural light. That was not a problem because I liked the shaft of natural light that came through the window of the adobe structure.

In the image, you can see the small open fire where they cook their meals. You can see the reflected light of the fire on the mother and her relatives. The diagonal shaft of light catches the smoke and dust in the air. All of these elements give a sense of heavy atmosphere to the image, endowing it with a feeling of timelessness (which was exactly what I was after).

With the low light levels, I had to use ISO 6400 to get a useable exposure. Even then, the f-stop was wide and the shutter speed slow enough that if the people moved during the course of exposure they would appear somewhat blurred. That's okay because that's all part of capturing a scene in a closed interior. A flash would have overwhelmed the space, creating a very harsh environment, which was not in keeping with what was going on in the scene.

The nature of the photo

Circumcision changes young men from low-status children to the status of men—warriors even. The ceremony represents moving into a new life and is typically done when males are between the ages of fourteen and sixteen.

Photo tip

When the light is low and you must use a wide aperture, but you want depth of field, use a wide-angle focal length. It's an old trick of the photojournalist who had to get the shot in the days of ISO 400 film. The wide-angle gives good depth of field, especially when you are not right on top of your subject.





Meghwal Women Gather around Fire, Dasada, Gujarat, India

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/30 sec., ISO 4000

January 2014

Meghwal Women Gather around Fire

Dasada, Gujarat, India

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/4 for 1/30 sec., ISO 4000

One of the more significant contributions of digital cameras to photography is higher ISOs. This shot would not have been possible without a high ISO setting. Here, desert people gather around the fire in the Ram of Kutch, the vast seasonal salt marsh and desert in Gujarat in northwestern India. The scene is lit solely by the reflective light of the fire. Because I was able to shoot at ISO 4000, stop the motion, and gain depth of field.

For the shot, I stepped away from the fire and hunkered down in order to silhouette a line of people in the foreground, while still looking across the fire to the illuminated faces of the unique desert tribespeople. I quite like the lighting effect that resulted here. Members of these tribes were not accustomed to being photographed, even in 2014. They are transient and constantly on the move. Whenever forage for the animals is depleted, these tribes simply pack up their tents and move. They frequently travel along the border of Pakistan and India, an area often considered by other people as a "no-man's-land." India and Pakistan are not the best of neighbors, but these people call this area their home.

It was a great privilege to be able to go out into this vast desert area, find some tribes, and be permitted to photograph them. I used f/4 with a wide focal length to permit great depth of field while the high ISO let me still maintain a shutter speed of 1/30 sec. That setting was fast enough to freeze the slow motion of anybody milling around the fire. I enjoy using natural light, including firelight, as seen here.

The nature of the photo

The Meghwal women of northwestern India are noted for their amazing, extravagant jewelry and intricate dress. In fact, when they pause long enough near settlements, they often sell their jewelry to travelers as well as to local inhabitants.

Photo tip

Depth of field is affected by f-stop, focal length, and distance to a subject. In this image, Art was able to gain deep depth of field by using a wide focal length and keeping himself a slight distance away from his subjects. Wider focal lengths have more inherent depth of field than telephoto focal lengths.





Theyyam Dancers, Kerala, India

Canon EOS-1DX, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/14 for 1/15 sec., ISO 4000

January 2014

Theyyam Dancers

Kerala, India

Canon EOS-1DX, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/14 for 1/15 sec., ISO 4000

In this image, three performers are elaborately adorned with precise painting details that create masks of sorts over their faces. I had hired these performers to travel several hours by bus from their small town in order for me to photograph their extraordinary face paintings.

When they arrived for the shoot, I discovered a great tragedy had befallen them the day before. One of their seven members burned to death during a performance; nobody realized the incident was not part of the show. I was unaware of this tragic occurrence until they arrived.

In spite of this event, they still came because they believed it was important to keep their commitment to me. In fact, keeping their agreed-upon meeting was a matter of honor. I paid these performers, and I believe the money they earned helped their families (another compelling reason for them to fulfill our agreement). Despite losing a member of their very tight group of performers, they still allowed me to photograph them as previously planned. You can detect a sadness in their expressions, as the reality of the tragedy the day before sinks in.

I illuminated their faces with the open light of a window, carefully positioning them in the shadows of a dance hall. I like the primitive aspect of their designs. These include a preciseness not commonly seen in face decorations of other tribes throughout the world. While I love the uniqueness of the designs here, it's the sadness in their faces that is undeniable. The result is a memorable image because of the haunting and unusual circumstance in which my subjects found themselves.

The nature of the photo

Theyyam dance is a highly refined folk art of Kerala, India. For the people there, it represents art as part of life. It is a synthesis of music, dance, painting, and sculpture. Face painting is an integral part of the event as it stylizes both the dances and the dancers. This form of dance is considered sacred, bringing well-being to the participants, their families, and communities.

Photo tip

This image almost looks like a studio shot, yet it was totally done on location via window light. Window light can be a beautiful light when used deliberately. Place your subjects into the light, using that light with its shadow for *effect*, not simply for illumination.





Blue Courtyard, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India

Canon EOS-1DX, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f9 for 1/320 sec., ISO 4000

January 2014

Blue Courtyard

Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India

**Canon EOS-1DX, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f9 for 1/320 sec., ISO 4000**

When I am at a location working on a specific project, I often have time to explore the surrounding local areas. I love to walk through places where different people live and discover new visual representations of these places and cultures. On those occasions, I travel simply, often with just a camera and a single zoom lens.

This photograph was captured in exactly that sort of situation. I was walking down a road in a rural community in western India when I saw this amazing scene of blue—a woman and child as they paused before entering a building. I quickly framed up the shot before the moment passed.

I enjoy composing images using a *frame-within-a-frame* effect in a single photo. The blue connecting the walls and the woman's dress brings everything into alignment for such an effect. I like the soft light that reveals so much. The framing of the outer perimeter door draws your eye into the inner courtyard and ultimately to the woman. It was just a serendipitous moment where color, light, and event all came together. I shot with a wide focal length and moderate f-stop so that the closest lines in the foreground would be as sharp as the woman carrying the baby in the background.

The nature of the photo

Madhya Pradesh is a state in the center of India. It is often called the "heart of India" because of its geographical location. The state is second in physical size of India's states and sixth in population. It has some of the richest mineral deposits in the country.

Photo tip

*Composition* is about how you organize the world seen by your camera into something that connects with a viewer. Color can be a strong unifying and connecting element of composition. To use it for this purpose, use it boldly and don't be afraid to fill your frame with it.





Sweatshop, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24–105mm F4L IS lens, f/6.3 for 1/20 sec., ISO 4000

January 2014

Sweatshop

Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

**Canon EOS-1D X, EF24–105mm F4L IS lens, f/6.3 for 1/20 sec., ISO 4000**

In Mumbai, there is so much activity and there are so many people that every bend in the road provides a new photographic opportunity. There will be street mechanics tearing apart cars or repairing bicycles. There will be streets where earthenware jars are being made as you watch.

I like to wander the back streets of this city, ready to photograph whatever I encounter. This very unstructured way of shooting is something I quite enjoy. There's a lot to be said for planning a shot and executing it, but there's also something to the fun and spontaneity of shooting street scenes.

There are streets where men manufacture garments, as you see in this photo. There will be booth after booth of little stalls going back away from the street, filled with these men, young and old, all sewing. It's a startling sight to see so many men behind sewing machines. In Western traditions, one would expect women in these roles, but in India, it's the men who are employed in this industry.

For me, this image represents a jolt to what traditional perceptions might be. These men were so fully engaged in their work that I was able to stick my camera in and shoot. I used ISO 4000 so that I could use just the lights of the stalls for illumination. There was enough illumination then that I could get away with a moderate f-stop and a reasonable shutter speed.

The nature of the photo

Mumbai is home to single-room "factories." It has been estimated that there are fifteen thousand of them in the city. These sweatshops often keep people working twelve to fourteen hours a day, usually with no artificial light. India has cracked down on children being forced to work in these places, but it still happens.

Photo tip

Shooting at slow shutter speeds increases the possibility of camera movement during the exposure, which will cause sharpness problems. Combat that with good handholding technique: support the camera with your left hand under the lens, the right hand gripping the right side of the camera, elbows in. Then squeeze the shutter—never punch it—for the shot.





Dhobi Ghat, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24-105mm F4 lens, f/10 for 1/200 sec., ISO 4000

January 2014

Dhobi Ghat

Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24-105mm F4 lens, f/10 for 1/200 sec., ISO 4000

One of the reasons I keep going back to India to photograph is the tremendous diversity in how people live there. Every time I visit, I seem to find something totally new and unexpected—though by now, the unexpected is really the expected.

In Mumbai, I came across the world's largest laundry. This isn't simply some outsized dry cleaner in a big city. This is a place where thousands of men live for weeks at a time. They sleep here, they eat here, and they work all day long cleaning linens for hotels, corporations, and government offices. There's never a lack of clothing to wash in India.

The men stand in little cement cubicles and use a combination of applying soap and water and then beating the fabric to clean the clothes. Many people think of me mainly as a nature and culture photographer, yet I quite enjoy capturing working scenes I find on the street with my camera. The largest laundry in the world provided an interesting interlude for my street shooting. The techniques are the same inside or outside, but here the action is less chaotic.

This image supports my admiration for modern cameras and their high ISO settings that still retain high image quality. Even though this was taken early in the morning and the light levels were not bright, I was able to push my camera to ISO 4000. Doing so gave me the capability to choose a faster shutter speed to stop the motion of the beating of the clothing and to use a smaller f-stop to gain depth of field.

The nature of the photo

India has a huge disparity of wealth from its poorest to its richest citizens. The poor include the over five thousand men at this huge laundry facility who wash and iron clothes by hand. They often work fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, and only earn enough to survive. It is, however, often the only work available to them.

Photo tip

While India certainly is unique in its photo opportunities, you can find interesting and unique businesses in any area to photograph, including your own. Many unusual small businesses would love to have a photographer come in so that they can show off what they do. Be sure to offer prints and copies of the images you capture.





Goat on Scooter, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/20 for 1/160 sec., ISO 4000

January 2014

Goat on Scooter

Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

**Canon EOS-1D X, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/20 for 1/160 sec., ISO 4000**

I love going out into a new part of a city like Mumbai, into a new culture, and shooting whatever comes my way. There's no agenda. So whatever I come upon or whatever I pass, I try to take its picture. It's an invigorating process and there's no pressure to get a particular shot.

The cities of India offer amazing sights for anyone. There is always a visual cornucopia to be found there. In this instance, I came across a goat sitting quite comfortably atop the seat of a motorbike. Almost anywhere else in the world, you would think this odd and quite unusual. Sure, you don't find a goat on a scooter very often, but finding the unusual is expected here.

I set my zoom to its widest setting and got in close. The goat studied me as I positioned myself for the right shot, the right composition. The goat had as much attitude as anybody else in a crowded metropolitan city. It was obviously very used to people being in close proximity to it. It seemed to be quite confident that whatever I was doing was going to be okay. I composed the image in a way that conveyed a sense of place by using a small aperture for deep depth of field in order to bring in detail behind the subject.

The nature of the photo

Goats like the one seen here are the oldest domesticated animals in the world. Originally bred from wild goats in Asia, these domesticated creatures have long been common in India. They are found everywhere—from cities to farms—and are generally kept for their milk. (Though finding a goat on a scooter is unique, even for India!)

Photo tip

A wide-angle up close to a subject like this goat gives strong emphasis to the subject while also showing its environment. When you are this close, you need a small aperture for deep depth of field, even with a wide-angle. A high ISO will help you by allowing a faster shutter speed even when the light source is not bright sun.





Bison, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA

Canon EOS-1DX, Canon EF70-200mm f/2.8 lens, f/18 for 1/250 sec., ISO 2000

January 2014

Bison

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA

**Canon EOS-1DX, Canon EF70-200mm f/2.8 lens, f/18 for 1/250 sec., ISO 2000**

The process of capturing this image of bison in Yellowstone National Park really began when I co-lead a rafting trip down Alaska's Taku River a number of years before. On that trip, I met Robert Bateman and his wife, Birgit. Robert is an outstanding Canadian artist who spent time on our trip photographing details of rocks along the river's edge and details of the forest. When I asked what he was doing, he simply responded that he was photographing details that he could later render accurately as elements in his paintings.

At the time, I had been fixating on getting closer and closer to animals. I was treating getting a classic portrait of an animal like a trophy. I was like a hunter with the camera as my weapon of choice. Bateman was less concerned about portraits of animals and more concerned about capturing an animal within the context of its environment. I looked at my own work and started realizing there was something to his approach.

Bateman showed me that by creating atmospheric conditions and a sense of place, the resulting compositions became more nuanced, more intricate, and more engaging for the viewer. In the years since I met Bateman, I think my work has become infinitely more interesting because I am now more inclusive of the environment. I always look at storms and similar conditions where the atmosphere is so thick that it is obvious, as opportunities rather than as distractions.

For example, in this image of bison in Yellowstone, I worked to carefully include the animals' environment. With the advent of higher ISO cameras, I can shoot with both a smaller aperture and a faster shutter speed. Here, I was able to capture a herd with great depth of field, and use a fast enough shutter speed to stop the movement of the snow. As a result, you can see tiny points of white snow suspended in motion as well as individual animals clearly in focus. To me, this photo recalls some of the great paintings of Robert Bateman.

The nature of the photo

Snow is extremely variable in size and shape, which has a strong impact on how it appears in a photo. Very cold conditions can create tiny snow crystals that will appear more as fog than snow in a photo. Large snowflakes can be a bold part of a winter photo.

Photo tip



For falling snow to show up in a photo, you need contrast to set the snow apart from the rest of your scene. For this image, both the dark trees in the background and the dark fur of the bison help bring this contrast to the image. The falling snow behind the bison also lends a strong sense of atmosphere to the shot.





Bighorn Sheep, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA

Canon EOS-5D Mark III, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1/400 sec., ISO 2000

January 2014

Bighorn Sheep

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA

**Canon EOS-5D Mark III, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/22 for 1/400 sec., ISO 2000**

I like traveling to Yellowstone National Park during the winter months for two reasons. First, the animals are in their full winter coats and look great. Second, the extraordinarily clean snow provides simple backdrops for these perfect subjects. I work to shoot both candid and more formal portraits of any given subject. When I photograph an animal directly into its face, I try to capture the relationship between subject and photographer, to record the undeniable connection, and bring that impression back to my audience so that they feel connected to the animal as well.

This bighorn sheep, photographed in the Lamar Valley of Yellowstone, shows all of the elements just mentioned, from the winter coat to the simple background, plus the connection between photographer and subject. What I like about the shot is how the elements around the animal are as important as the animal itself. I shot this at 70mm and f/22, in order to get great depth of field. This helped me bring in the detail of the grasses, the sagebrush, and the trees beyond.

There's enough of the environment shown around the bighorn to give a profound sense of place. The light is key to this image because the soft overcast allows the animal to stand out without harsh contrast-y conditions around it. The intricacy of the environment is not overpowered by light and dark contrasts.

I love the way this particular animal boldly faces me, almost challenging me in its unwavering glare toward the camera. I was close enough to the animal that the 70mm almost has a wide-angle effect. We usually see wildlife shot with more of a telephoto focal length. The fact that there are no tracks in the snow in the foreground tells you that this animal is coming toward me rather than backing up. As far as I'm concerned, this is always a good sign because you don't want it to appear that an animal is trying to escape from you, the photographer. You want wildlife to appear confident and unaffected by your presence.

The nature of the photo

The horns of a bighorn sheep ram are large and heavy. They can reach thirty inches in length and curl into a circle of up to fifteen inches in diameter. Ewes have relatively short horns that don't curve so much. The ram's horns can weigh thirty pounds, which can be 10 to 20 percent of its body weight.

Photo tip

Depth of field is affected by much more than f-stop. In this image, the 70mm focal length of a 70–200mm lens was used in order to gain maximum depth of field. Wider-angle focal lengths offer more depth of field than telephoto focal lengths, even on a telephoto zoom like this lens.





Snow Leopard and Cubs, Hemis National Park, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Canon EOS-1DX, EF200–400mm F4L IS Extender 1.4x lens + 2x, f/11 for 1/800 sec., ISO 4000

February 2014

Snow Leopard and Cubs

Hemis National Park, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, India

**Canon EOS-1DX, EF200–400mm F4L IS Extender 1.4x lens + 2x, f/11 for 1/800 sec., ISO 4000**

I have photographed animals across the planet. Some are easy subjects and some are more difficult. Among the most difficult and elusive of any wildlife are the famed snow leopards found throughout the Himalayan range. On two occasions in the 1990s, I traveled to Mongolia expressly for snow leopards, but I was stymied both times. On a recent trip, I traveled to the Himalayan region of Ladakh to photograph these animals in the heart of the mountains.

Once I reached the end of the main road into Hemis National Park, an additional two-hour trek brought me into base camp. From there my group would spiral out on a daily grind, looking for these elusive cats in the heart of their winter territory. On two different occasions, we saw a mother with two second-year cubs—an amazing sight! Unfortunately, they were only seen through the telescopes of our trackers.

Finally, I was able to get a shot of a mother with her two cubs in tow as they traveled across a slope at least four miles away from my position. I had never photographed an animal that I couldn't first see with my naked eye. However, in this case, I could only see them through the supermagnification of a 1120mm lens. I could only reach that focal length with the 200–400mm lens and a built-in extender I carried, combined with a 2x tele-extender.

Even with all of that magnification, I cropped one third of the frame. It's in that one third of the frame that you see the tiny cats. I really wanted to see a close-up, but I settled for this shot for the time being. This was largely because the resulting photograph conveys in many ways a greater sense of what these cats are and how they live in the Himalayas. They're so perfectly adapted to the colors of the rock that their warm-gray color replete with spots totally disrupts their outline against the icy, rocky background.

The nature of the photo

The snow leopard is extremely difficult to see in the wild. This cat lives in areas that are hard to get to, plus it is very shy and solitary in its habits. It hunts the wild sheep, goats, deer, and marmots of the mountains, occasionally preying on domesticated sheep of the mountain people. Hemis National Park is a high-altitude park in northern India, and its high density of snow leopards makes it the place to go to see them in the wild (though that can still be difficult).

Photo tip

The preceding photo info might be confusing. Even on a tripod, such a long focal length required a fast shutter speed to minimize problems with camera movement. The tele-extendors cause the lens to lose light to the sensor (three f-stops for a virtual f/32), which meant a high ISO was needed.





Deer Dancers, Likir Monastery, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Canon EOS-1DX, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/22 for 1/320 sec., ISO 2000

February 2014

Deer Dancers, Likir Monastery

Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Canon EOS-1DX, EF24–105mm F4 lens, f/22 for 1/320 sec., ISO 2000

While traveling to India to photograph snow leopards, I visited a monastery in the mountains of Ladakh. The Likir Monastery is a small, beautifully situated place set on a rocky hill overlooking the Indus River. While there, I witnessed a ceremony only held once a year. My group had not planned for the ceremony—it was serendipity. Luck allowed us to be there on that given day.

Those who have been fortunate enough to attend a Buddhist monastery dance celebrating some sort of event know that while the sights of the celebration are great, the sounds and the smells are an equally compelling part of the performance. The cold, rarefied air of the Himalayas is part of the experience; the smells of the juniper smoke that waft through the monastery are part of the experience; the profound and deeply moving music that is performed is part of the experience. I wish I could have captured all those elements, but I'm limited by what a camera can and cannot do.

I've been in monasteries throughout the Himalayas, in lower Thailand, and in Myanmar. Virtually every time I have photographed Buddhists in ceremonies or in monasteries, I have come away with a newfound respect for this culture. The people accept you without a lot of drama, and I've never felt unwelcome in these locations. When you are at ease shooting a subject, I think it translates into the very images you capture. There's a calmness, a serenity, and a timelessness conveyed through photos like this one.

The nature of the photo

The Likir Monastery is a very old one, probably established around AD 1050. It is situated on a hill and built like a fortress, offering shelter for local farmers from war and other fighting. The present version of the structure was built in the 1700s.

Photo tip

Front light is often rightfully avoided because it can lead to flat, uninteresting photos. However, low front light in the right place can be quite effective for illuminating the color and pattern of clothing and buildings, as seen in this image.





Asaro Mudmen, Eastern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea

Canon EOS-1D X, EF14mm F2.8 lens, f4.5 for 1/50 sec., ISO 4000

April 2014

Asaro Mudmen

Eastern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea

**Canon EOS-1D X, EF14mm F2.8 lens, f4.5 for 1/50 sec., ISO 4000**

Different cultures and their artistic expressions have been an important part of my work as a photographer for most of my career. I love exploring places where old cultures still display the characteristics of their past. Here you see the Asaro mudmen in the mountains of Papua New Guinea, seemingly warming themselves around a fire.

Mudmen are one of many fascinating cultures found in Papua New Guinea. What is interesting to me is how their masks have evolved as I have photographed them over time. Years ago, one tribe from the area started to create masks out of clay. When I was first in the region in the early 1990s, the mud masks were quite primitive, basically just eyeholes and a mouth per mask.

Today, the noses are also important and the features have become more and more sophisticated. The art of the mask is evolving in interesting ways. In part, this change is due to tribes competing with each other for more elaborate adornments. Each tribe shows something unique through their masks. They compete for awards in originality, dance, and composition at events called *sing sings*, gatherings of tribes or villages in an area.

I positioned these men around the fire with the post-sunset glow behind them so that the fire would accentuate the spooky nature of the masks. I feel this gives a timeless, almost primordial feel to the scene. I exposed for the reflective light on the adobe-colored masks. The light of the fire was clearly the appropriate light for the scene because it gave a very real, authentic look to the men and their masks.

The nature of the photo

The Asaro mudmen were unknown to the Western world until the mid-twentieth century. There is a legend that says the Asaro had fled an enemy and hid in the Asaro River. When they came out, they were covered in mud and looked like spirits, which scared off their enemy. That encouraged them to make these mud masks.

Photo tip

Getting close to a group with a very wide-angle lens will keep the group large and the background small. By staying low, you can use the sky as your main background, like Art did here. This positioning also creates a strong perspective effect from near to far for your subject matter.





Bald Eagle Takes Flight, Point Adolphus, Chichagof Island, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4 lens, f9 for 1/3200 sec., ISO 2000

June 2014

Bald Eagle Takes Flight

Point Adolphus, Chichagof Island, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4 lens, f9 for 1/3200 sec., ISO 2000

Recently during a trip to Glacier Bay, I traveled aboard the *Alaska Story*, a boat that friends of mine operate for tours. I love to take a small group out and tour through Southeast Alaska and Glacier Bay, looking for wildlife and landscapes to photograph, which is what I was doing here.

Along the way, the group saw sea otters, bears, orcas, whales, sea lions—and also bald eagles. After declining to seriously low numbers in the 1960s, bald eagles are now a ubiquitous part of the Alaskan wildlife. In this image, the eagle is flying low over the beautiful green waters off of Point Adolphus, Alaska. Point Adolphus is part of the bigger Chichagof Island, one of the largest islands in America. This island is part of the Tongass National Forest, a place located in an area filled with inlets, bays, and points. This variety gives you an ever-changing visual trip through the waters beside the forest.

With the digital cameras I use these days, autofocus is so good that it is not that difficult to lock focus on an eagle like this one as it flies low across the water. I love clean, sharp shots of birds in flight. Today's Higher ISO cameras permit shooting images that photographers only dreamed about a handful of years ago. You can shoot faster shutter speeds with smaller apertures even on cloudy days, such as the one here. This type of shot can be very interesting as it freezes action to show what the naked eye can't see.

The nature of the photo

The recovery of the bald eagle from dangerously low numbers back in the 1960s is an environmental success story. The return happened because DDT (an organochloride pesticide toxic to people and wildlife) was banned (it caused thin eggs), nesting sites were protected (many forested areas had been cleared), and the United States prohibited the killing of eagles (previously they were shot because some people thought they threatened livestock, but they didn't).

Photo tip

When panning with birds in flight, start your pan before you begin to shoot and continue to pan after you feel you have the shot. This allows the pan to be smooth, allowing for more stable photography. If you try to stop your camera right as you get the shot, you may introduce an undesirable jarring motion to the camera for that image.





Sea Otter and Pup, Dundas Bay, Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska, USA

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200-400mm F4 + 2x III lens, f/10 for 1/500 sec., ISO 4000

June 2014

Sea Otter and Pup

Dundas Bay, Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska, USA

**Canon EOS-1D X, EF200-400mm F4 + 2x III lens, f/10 for 1/500 sec., ISO 4000**

As mentioned previously, I love going up to the area around Glacier Bay National Park. This location cannot be seen well except by boat. By boat, you find stunning mountains rising right up from the ocean, glaciers calving (or breaking at the front) as you watch, along with whales, birds, and so much more life.

This life includes sea otters. Those pictured here were found in the giant Dundas Bay, which is part of the park. Otters are very compelling subjects. Their faces are so inviting, almost comical to a degree. However, they require some work in order to get close enough for photographs. These are inherently shy animals and can therefore be elusive subjects.

You have to work with otters, let them get used to your presence. Like other wildlife that are prey to other animals, otters are very sensitive to fast and sudden movement. By slowly drifting up to these curious mammals in a small boat, without the motor running, I was able to move within photographic range. Since these are not large animals, I still needed a long lens with a 2x tele-extender. All of these elements are required to get a shot of an Alaskan sea otter in the wild.

By setting my camera to ISO 4000, I was able to shoot at 1/500 sec. and f/10. That shutter speed helped with stopping the movement of the boat. To me, the baby looks like a spitting image of the mother, only smaller.

The nature of the photo

Sea otters live in the cold waters of the northern Pacific Ocean. They are the only marine animal without a layer of blubber for insulation. Their fur is extremely dense.

Photo tip

Camera movement during exposure can be a challenge when shooting a telephoto from a boat. While a fast shutter speed helps, try setting your camera to continuous shooting even if the animal is not actively moving. Because nothing is moving but the shutter and mirror on the camera, this will often result in optimum sharpness for at least a few images.









Rufous Hummingbird and Chick, Seattle, Washington, USA

Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4L IS Extender 1.4x lens, f/20 for 1/125 sec., ISO 4000

July 2014

Rufous Hummingbird and Chick

Seattle, Washington, USA

**Canon EOS-1D X, EF200–400mm F4L IS Extender 1.4x lens, f/20 for 1/125 sec., ISO 4000**

I have spent thirty years developing and cultivating a Japanese-inspired garden around my house in Seattle. It has filled in nicely, creating a wild space outside my home. I planted some black pines in this garden early on to provide year-round structure and color. These trees have also become a refuge for birds and other wildlife. I have steadily shaped and pruned these trees bonsai-style to help them fit into the space of my garden.

In 2014, as I was working on my trees, I found a bird staring me in the face. As I looked down past the bird, I discovered its nest. A female rufous hummingbird had chosen to nest in my beloved black pines! That sort of discovery still excites me, even after so many years spent connecting with nature.

A hummingbird nest is so tiny—no more than two inches across. The bird covers her nest with lichen, so it is easy to miss in the lichen-covered black pine. But luck was with me in this case, so I quickly descended from my stepladder and forgot about pruning the trees that day. Instead I got my photography equipment.

I wanted to photograph the mother as it raised its young, so I set up my camera approximately ten feet away from the nest. Even at that distance, hummingbirds appear really small, so I still needed to use a 200–400mm lens at 400mm plus a 1.4x extender. I could then take pictures from my lawn chair without being so close to the nest as to disturb the mother. I had a field day for the next two weeks, photographing this hummingbird as she raised her young.



The nature of the photo

All hummingbirds are remarkable due to their amazing flight abilities. However, the rufous hummingbird, a bird about three inches long and weighing about a tenth of an ounce, has the longest migration of any US bird its size. It may go the distance from Alaska to well into Mexico, and some scientists think it may go as far as Panama!

Photo tip

Wildlife photography is rarely about just capturing the animal in a photograph. Timing can be critical to getting a remarkable, striking shot. You have to keep shooting, always paying attention, to be sure you do get the shot you need. Shooting your camera continuously will not necessarily get the shot though because you may miss the key moment between frames.









Milky Way over Mount Rainier and Little Tahoma, Washington, USA

Canon EOS-1D X, 15mm Zeiss Distagon T\* F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 20 seconds, ISO 4000

August 2014

Milky Way over Mount Rainier and Little Tahoma

Washington, USA

**Canon EOS-1D X, 15mm Zeiss Distagon T\* F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 20 seconds, ISO 4000**

Mount Rainier has long been my go-to place for wilderness photography. It is readily seen from Seattle on clear days. Growing up as a young boy there, I looked often toward Mount Rainier for the sheer majesty and beauty of this great volcano of the Northwest.

On a moonless night, I traveled with friends up to around seven thousand feet on the east flank of Mount Rainier to Sunrise, the highest point that you can reach by car. From there, I shot a single exposure of about 20 seconds of the Milky Way as it rose over Mount Rainier and Little Tahoma. I chose to include some trees for perspective. However, the photo really is about the mountain and its connection with the heavens. In this image, you see subtleties of the Milky Way that you would not find when viewing it from the lowlands, where light pollution often rules the day. On the horizon, you see the western sky with the last lingering light of the sun as it descends over the Pacific.

I love this image not only because it represents the wonder of Mount Rainier against a beautiful night sky, but also because it connects me to my past. This image was simply impossible to capture just a few years ago. Digital technology has changed photography in many ways. I love being able to create images like this that could not be made before. Doing so helps fulfill my need to grow and find new, fresh ways of connecting to our world through photography.

The nature of the photo

People are rediscovering the Milky Way, this amazing part of our skies, with fresh eyes because it is now easily captured in a photograph. Digital images reveal colors and nuances to the night sky that we often miss with the naked eye. Of course, you do still need a very clear and light pollution-free sky to capture the Milky Way well.

Photo tip

The real trick to photographing an image like this one is prefocusing before darkness sets in. Often people wait until dark to set their camera up, to see where the stars rise, before setting their camera up; however, by that time, it is very difficult to focus with a wide-angle. Instead, prefocus, then take a little bit of tape and tape the lens down so that it cannot be bumped out of focus.





Lion and Cubs Photographed Remotely, Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/160 sec., ISO 1600

September 2014

Lion and Cubs Photographed Remotely

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya

**Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF16–35mm F2.8 lens, f/11 for 1/160 sec., ISO 1600**

Today, technology offers some remarkable opportunities for new and unique images. This image comes from a camera attached to the top of a battery-operated rover device with four wheels.

I was in the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya with a film crew from Australia. We knew that there were three lions and a handful of cubs playing in the bushes, but we could not get to them. You can't just go crashing through the bushes to see lions in a national park like this one.

So instead, we sent the rover in with the camera atop it, the lens prefocused, and the exposure preset. I used a moderately small f-stop and a wide-angle focal length so that no matter the distance the camera was to the cubs, there was a reasonable chance of the image being in focus. I held another device that allowed me to look through a monitor and see what was going on, then take the exposure remotely.

When we sent in the rover, we could no longer see the little vehicle, but we could hear the cats reacting to it. I asked the remote control driver to back up the rover to see what would happen.

The resulting shot shows all the cubs fully engaged with the camera because they are watching the vehicle back out. They're all staring right into the camera and therefore into the viewer's eyes. This shot offers a perspective that would be dangerous to obtain if you had to be with the camera. The camera is lower than the cubs' height, which, when combined with the wide-angle lens, gives an unusual look to the scene.

The nature of the photo

Lion cubs are quite vulnerable when they are first born, so the pregnant lioness goes off alone to have the cubs in dense vegetation. Lions typically have litters of two to three cubs, but litters can be as large as six. To protect the young lions, the mother will keep cubs hidden from her pride for a month or two until the young gain some size.

Photo tip

Low, wide shots of wildlife have rarely been captured until now. While a rover-type remote vehicle helped Art get this shot, many cameras now link with your smartphone so that you can set up a camera on a tripod near where wildlife go and trigger the camera from a distance with your phone.













Bárðarbunga Volcano, Vatnajökull National Park, Iceland

Canon EOS-1D X, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/2000 sec., ISO 1000

December 2014

Bárðarbunga Volcano

Vatnajökull National Park, Iceland

**Canon EOS-1D X, EF70–200mm F2.8 lens, f/2.8 for 1/2000 sec., ISO 1000**

I have been fortunate to observe and photograph some striking examples of volcanoes and lava from around the world. However, this image is one of the most amazing things I've seen in my career. Here you see a river of lava flowing out of the Bárðarbunga Volcano in the central mountains of Iceland. What amazed me was the sheer amount of lava coming out of the earth. It was like the earth was bleeding lava.

I would never have expected the speed at which the lava was flowing. I had seen lava flow on the edge the Big Island of Hawaii, but the speed of this lava matched to the fastest rapids of any river I have ever seen. The spectacle of this river of molten rock was frightening and yet also alluring and beautiful.

What made the image better for me was the fact that there was snow around the periphery of the lava flow. The blue snow in twilight against the orange glow of the lava creates a contrast of complementary colors that form a bold color composition for the photograph.

It was challenging to frame this scene from the helicopter I was in. The helicopter was constantly being buffeted around by thermal air pockets coming up from the lava. The outside temperature was -120°F, though, so the pockets of warm air were not unwelcome. It actually felt good to get a shot of warmth when the air in that open helicopter was so cold.

The nature of the photo

Lava flows at many speeds depending on its volume, its viscosity, and the landscape it flows through.

Photo tip

Even if the plane or helicopter ride is not bumpy, camera movement is a problem when shooting aerial images because of vibrations and the speed of the aircraft. A fast shutter speed is a necessity, even if you have image stabilization. At a distance, depth of field is the same for all f-stops, so choose a wide aperture that will give you the fast shutter speed needed.





Green Sea Turtle Hatchling, Mnemba Island, Tanzania

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24-70mm F4 lens, f/22 for 1/160 sec., ISO 4000

January 2015

Green Sea Turtle Hatchling

Mnemba Island, Tanzania

Canon EOS-1D X, EF24-70mm F4 lens, f/22 for 1/160 sec., ISO 4000

My traveling group was headed to Mnemba Island off the coast of Tanzania to photograph green sea turtles. However, we had to delay going because one of our traveling party had injured an ankle. We waited to ensure that the injury was nothing more than a sprain. As a result, it began to look like we had lost a day of shooting.

Finally, we landed on the island as the sun was setting, and were quickly ushered up the beach to where the last of a batch of sea turtles were heading out to sea. I grabbed my camera, put on a 24–70mm set to the wide-angle, and started following the rhythms of over twenty-four young turtles going out to sea.

This image represents one of my favorite experiences, witnessing the wonder of nature with this little turtle going off into the sunset and an uncertain future. I'm hovering just over the top of the turtle, who is completely focused on getting to the sea. Threatened by aggressive seabirds and hungry fish, this little creature has one-in-a-thousand chance of ever reaching adulthood. If it does reach adulthood, twenty-five years later it may come back to this very island to lay a clutch of eggs. Once a sea turtle lays its eggs and heads back to sea, it will never see its offspring.

The little turtle seen here was about four and a half inches long. You can see the reflection of gulls hovering over the shoreline in the wet sand in front of turtle. The image here seems to convey a visual metaphor for the potential dangers this little creature will face. In the upper part of the image, you see the color of the last light of the day.

The nature of the photo

If the little turtle seen here survives to adulthood, it can weigh up to seven hundred pounds with a shell about five feet long. Unlike freshwater turtles, green turtles cannot retract either their head or legs into their shells. As adults, green turtles are vegetarians, feeding on sea grasses and algae. However, the young eat animals like crabs, jellyfish, and sponges.

Photo tip

It can be easy to get discouraged when a long-planned photo excursion goes awry. You can start thinking that you have lost your opportunity. But as Art shows here, sometimes the best photos come when you take advantage of whatever appears in front of you, even when the day seems to be going against you.



# Conclusion

Art has had some epic photographic adventures through his career. This book highlights some of his favorites. Art's work is always about finding fresh ways to photograph the wonder and beauty of the world, both its nature and its cultures. As you will have discovered in this book, Art also loves to share his experiences, both for cultural and nature photography. He feels that doing so can only help improve photography and continue to highlight important parts of our world. He continues to explore the edges of the world, bringing images to all of us that share important insights into the planet on which we live.



# Credits

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# About the Authors

**ART WOLFE's** photographs are recognized throughout the world for their mastery of color, composition, and perspective. He is a recipient of the Photographic Society of America's Progress Medal, the coveted Alfred Eisenstaedt Magazine Photography Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the North American Nature Photography Association. Wolfe's award-winning television series, *Art Wolfe's Travels to the Edge*, airs on PBS stations throughout the country and worldwide. He is a popular educator and speaker for such companies as Microsoft, IBM, and Sheraton Hotels, and is the author of many books, including *The New Art of Photographing Nature* and *The Art of the Photograph*. For more information, visit [artwolfe.com](http://artwolfe.com).

**ROB SHEPPARD** is the author/photographer of more than forty books, as well as a well-known public speaker, an accomplished photography instructor, and a fellow with the North American Nature Photography Association. He was formerly the long-time editor of *Outdoor Photographer* magazine, where he is presently editor-at-large. He resides in Lomita, California. Visit him at [robsheppard.com](http://robsheppard.com).





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