

# DIGIT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

Number 99 2023 Issue 4

# The Digital Imaging Annual General Meeting 2024

Sunday 25 February 2024 - 1000 to 1600 GMT

To ensure that all DI members, wherever they are around the world, get a chance to enjoy the 2024 AGM we will be using Zoom

The day is split into two sessions

Session 1 (1000 to 1130) is limited to DI members

Session 2 (1200 to 1600) everyone is welcome

## Agenda for the day

Session 1	1000 - 1045	DI AGM
	1045 - 1100	Break
	1100 - 1130	Print Portfolio Awards*
	1130	Session 1 ends
Session 2	1200 - 1300	Nicholas Vreeland*
	1300 - 1400	lunch
	1400 - 1445	Fun with AI*
	1445 - 1500	Break
	1500 - 1600	Brooke Shaden*
	1600	Close

\*Denotes sessions that will be recorded

Booking arrangements and full information will be available in early January 2024, with a further announcement in the January edition of DI Online



Image by guest speaker Brooke Shaden



## DI PRINT PORTFOLIO 2024

In past years DI has held an annual Print Exhibition with a selection process which we used to hold live at each DI AGM. Since the pandemic this had to be held online and no physical exhibitions have been possible. This is due in part to finding suitable locations and the volunteers to physically make them happen. However, the DI Committee recognise the importance of maintaining a print selection for our members. Therefore, a new way had to be found to do things a little differently, whilst still respecting the importance and the art and craft of printing. How to find a 'new way' was the challenge.

### For 2024 we are introducing the new DI Print Portfolio

The outcome will be to produce a high quality book of 30 of the best printed images that represent a cross-section of the work our members produce. DI members, by the nature of being non-genre specific, produce such a wide variety of styles, genres, colour, mono, IR etc., and we want to select the very best prints we can to represent that eclectic mix.

The members who gain one of the coveted 30 places in the Portfolio will each receive a copy of the Portfolio 2024 book. All other DI members who enter will get a copy of the same content but in magazine format. Images will be shown and the winners announced at the AGM 2024.

For full information go to the DI web site [rps.org/groups/digital-imaging](https://rps.org/groups/digital-imaging) and click on the 'Competitions' tab.

## DI COMMITTEE

Janet Haines ARPS (Chair)  
[digchair@rps.org](mailto:digchair@rps.org)

Trevor Pogson LRPS (Treasurer)  
[digtreasurer@rps.org](mailto:digtreasurer@rps.org)

Jocelyn Edwards LRPS (Secretary)  
[digsecretary@rps.org](mailto:digsecretary@rps.org)

Melanie Chalk ARPS (Workshops and DI Online)  
[digworkshops@rps.org](mailto:digworkshops@rps.org)

Dennis Knowles (Accolade Editor)  
[digaccolade@rps.org](mailto:digaccolade@rps.org)

Kenneth Ness FRPS (DI Comp Sec)  
[digcompsec@rps.org](mailto:digcompsec@rps.org)

Jean Robson FRPS (Membership and eCircles)  
[digmemb@rps.org](mailto:digmemb@rps.org)

Holly Stranks FRPS (Accolade)  
[hollystranksphotography@gmail.com](mailto:hollystranksphotography@gmail.com)

Neill Taylor LRPS (Online Events)  
[digevents@rps.org](mailto:digevents@rps.org)

Martin Tomes (T-W-T development)  
[twt@rps.org](mailto:twt@rps.org)

Lois Wakeman LRPS (Web Editor)  
[digweb@rps.org](mailto:digweb@rps.org)

Rex Waygood (Events)  
[digexpo@rps.org](mailto:digexpo@rps.org)

## CO-OPTED

Gary Beaton (DIGIT Editor)  
[digiteditor@rps.org](mailto:digiteditor@rps.org)

Sylvie Domergue (International)  
[sylvieift@gmail.com](mailto:sylvieift@gmail.com)

Deborah Loth (Casting Director)  
[digcomms@rps.org](mailto:digcomms@rps.org)

Mark Stothard (DI Online editor)  
[dionline@rps.org](mailto:dionline@rps.org)

## DI CENTRE COORDINATORS

Southern  
Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS  
01425 471489  
[digsouthern@rps.org](mailto:digsouthern@rps.org)

Cover image Ysios by Mark Reeves FRPS



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## FROM THE CHAIR



As we start working on the 100th edition of DIGIT (out in April 2024) I have been trawling our DIGIT archive and it is fascinating. Starting in summer 1996 it documents the evolution of digital photography. The challenges and obstacles that those early adopters faced, both from established analogue photographers plus the limitation of computer muscle and software development. Assessing this evolution over the past 27 years made me think about how, I believe, being an RPS member helps our own personal photographic journey evolve and grow.

RPS Distinctions certainly is fundamental in providing the milestones for each of us to meet and then challenge ourselves on to the next level. The criteria are defined: there is oodles of support, both formal and informal, to help us develop our skills to thereby attain whatever level we aspire to. It isn't always a smooth elevator ride for many of us as often we get stuck on a landing as we climb that stairway. You hear

statements such as 'I've lost my mojo'. But the RPS is there, wanting to help you get going again, whether that turns out to be an inspirational presentation, a workshop or even a casual meeting with other members. By embracing all that the Society has to offer you can overcome that temporary pause and find new ideas, ways of working, a development of your own style, or a challenge you cannot refuse.

Life moves on. Life progresses. Everything evolves. As humans we should be open to new ideas and to experiment. As with new foods for a toddler - if you don't try it, you don't know what you might be missing out on. We might hate cabbage all our lives but at least we gave it a go. So it is with the changes in DI, or more broadly the RPS. If everything stood still, we'd soon be bored and likely we would end up leaving. Try to embrace the changes and see the positive side to experimentation. You might even find it opens a door for you to expand your creativity and take you down a new pathway to photographic success.

## EDITORIAL



As we will be in a festive period in many parts of the world when this issue is published, I'd like to start by wishing everyone who celebrates at this time of the year all the best for the season and for the future. And with those thoughts in mind, it's a reminder that another year has passed, it seems in no more than the blink of an eye.

As Janet has pointed out above, DIGIT has been around for more than a quarter of a century, another period of time that's passed very quickly! Perhaps the magazine's longevity results, in part at least, from the broad range of topics that it has covered over the years. And I'm pleased to say that we are continuing that tradition with this issue.

Mark Reeves explains how we can manage the bane of many an architectural photographer (and others), convergence. Amongst his sage words, he tells us how we can get the benefits of a tilt-shift lens without going to the expense of such a specialist lens.

Wendy North follows up her piece in the last issue with more information about creating hand-made photographic books, and Melanie Chalk tells us about the workshops that she co-ordinates where we can learn more practical skills. Joe Houghton was recently invited to judge at the Second Edinburgh International Salon and gives us a rare glimpse into everything that goes on behind the scenes.

Changing gear slightly, the Royal Horticultural Society has an annual Botanical Art and Photography Show, open now for entries for the 2024 show. We hear from some of the judges about what makes a winning entry.

Dan Jones, recently appointed CEO of the RPS, shares with us his journey to heading up the Society and some of his varied personal photography.

Last, but by no means least, we have three *Challenges* showcasing images and projects.

I wish you good reading.



# THE ART OF CONVERGENCE

MARK REEVES FRPS

Mark Reeves discusses the aesthetics of verticals in photographing buildings.

Back in the day when I first learned darkroom photography, I had an excellent tutor called Walter who was always telling us to “Make sure your verticals are vertical”. This maxim has stayed with me to this day, and has usually served me well as my photography progressed but there are, of course, times when an architectural photographer may wish to ignore the advice completely.

Walter was mainly trying to make sure that we beginners held our cameras level when shooting and that we correctly aligned negative and paper when printing. But there is much more than that to the consideration of verticals.

Simple physics - as well as everyday experience - tells us that parallel lines appear to get closer together the further away from us they are; just look along any straight road, pavement or railway track. But this convergence also applies to the parallel walls of buildings, which means that keeping the verticals vertical can sometimes be a bit of a challenge.

Photographing buildings usually implies working in a built-up environment and this often imposes limits on where we choose to stand when making images. Busy roads, private land, other buildings and people can all conspire against our attempts at producing photographic masterpieces. As a result, we’re often not able to stand exactly where we would like, nor to use the ideal focal length for the particular composition we have in mind. So, inevitably we have to compromise. But as soon as we tip our cameras upwards in order to include the top of a building in the

frame, then the camera’s sensor or film is no longer parallel to the face of the building. As a result, the building is closer to the bottom of the sensor than it is to the top, hence we lose our parallel verticals and get convergence.

How can we avoid this problem? Well, we have several options.

## Move backwards and use a longer focal length

By moving further away from the subject the convergence will be reduced, though not eliminated altogether unless we can move back far enough that we can get the whole building in the frame while pointing the camera horizontally. Of course, moving sufficiently far back is very often impossible when working in a town or city, either because there is no space behind us or because all kinds of stuff like street signs, street lamps, overhead cables and trees then enter the field of view.

The image below (figure 1) of the 110m-high Forth Bridge was taken with a zoom lens at 211mm. As can be seen, because I was around 1km away from the bridge, and despite the fact that I was standing at ground level, there is no noticeable convergence in the main vertical columns.

## Use a wider-angle lens

Although a wider-angle lens exaggerates convergence it can also mean that we may get the whole building in the frame without having to tip the camera upwards. The downside of this approach is that the bottom half of our frame will capture far more foreground than we really want. We then have to crop it out which means that we will have wasted a whole load of pixels.

In figure 2 we see an image taken with a 16mm lens on a full-frame camera. The wide angle meant that I could still get the top of the

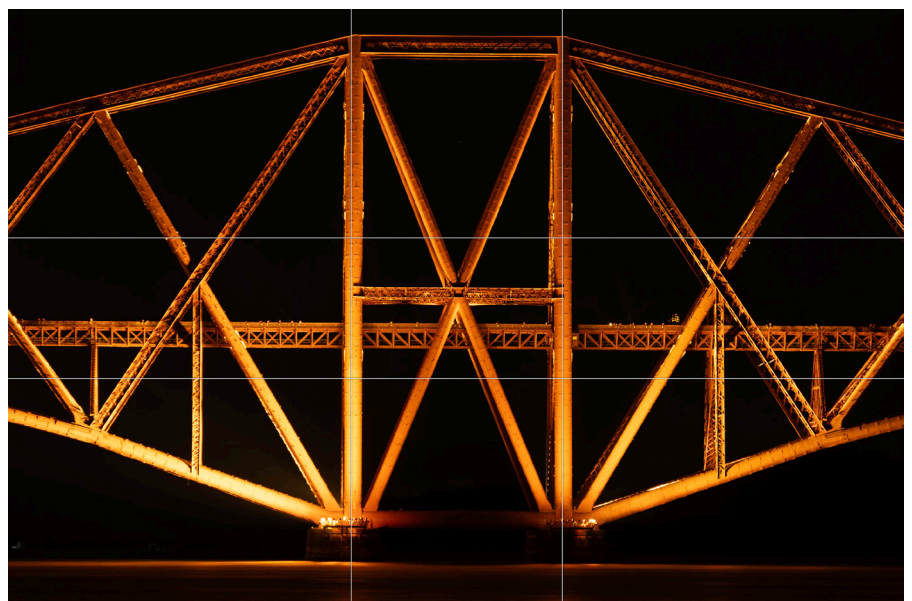


Figure 1 Taken at ground level, from approx. 1km away, with an effective focal length of 211mm, there is no noticeable convergence in the verticals of the Forth Bridge



Figure 2 Using a wide-angle lens allowed the camera to be held almost horizontal while still getting the top of the building in the frame. Many of the pixels needed to be cropped away to produce the final image

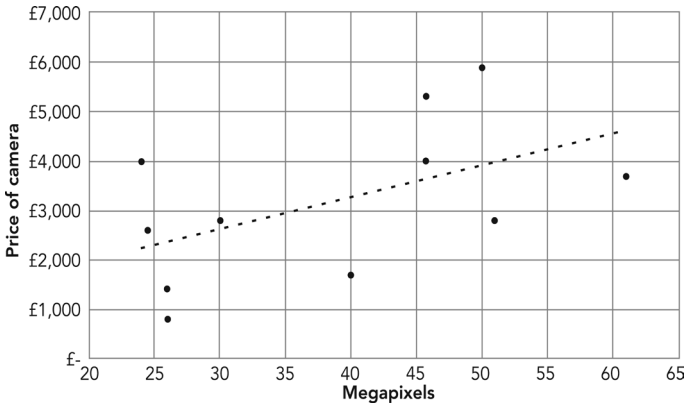


Figure 3 The price of pixels - camera price vs sensor size

building in the frame whilst holding the camera close to horizontal, thus avoiding converging verticals. To produce my final image, however, I had to crop away much of the foreground and other parts of the file, thus reducing my initial 60 megapixels down to just over 30MP!

This might seem like a small issue but pixels are expensive. Plotting a range of Fujifilm, Canon, Nikon and Sony cameras on a chart of camera price against number of sensor pixels (see figure 3), there is a reasonably strong correlation indicating an average price of around £60 per megapixel. So having a large sensor in order to then regularly crop away 30MP looks like an expensive option compared to some of the

alternatives!

**Correct the convergence in post-processing**

Often this is our only option but, as with every solution, it has its downsides. Not only does it require extra processing work but the processing itself also leads to a degree of quality degradation (because it involves stretching the top of the image) and wastage of pixels (because we then discard the top corners of the image). And the wastage of pixels can be more significant than we might expect as illustrated in figure 4.

It is true, of course, that many common image editors now feature tools to enhance the resolution of our images but, good though some of them are, the results are unlikely

to be as good as getting as much as possible right in the camera.

**Use a tilt-shift lens**

A tilt-shift lens is a specialist lens that can slide vertically (or horizontally) on its mount which enables it to 'look' upwards whilst the camera remains pointed horizontally. In this way building tops can be photographed whilst convergence is avoided. See figure 5.

If the subject is particularly close or particularly tall then using the shift function to create a vertical panorama may be required. But, because the alignment of the camera is not changed between frames, there is no change in perspective from one shot to the next and the successive images can

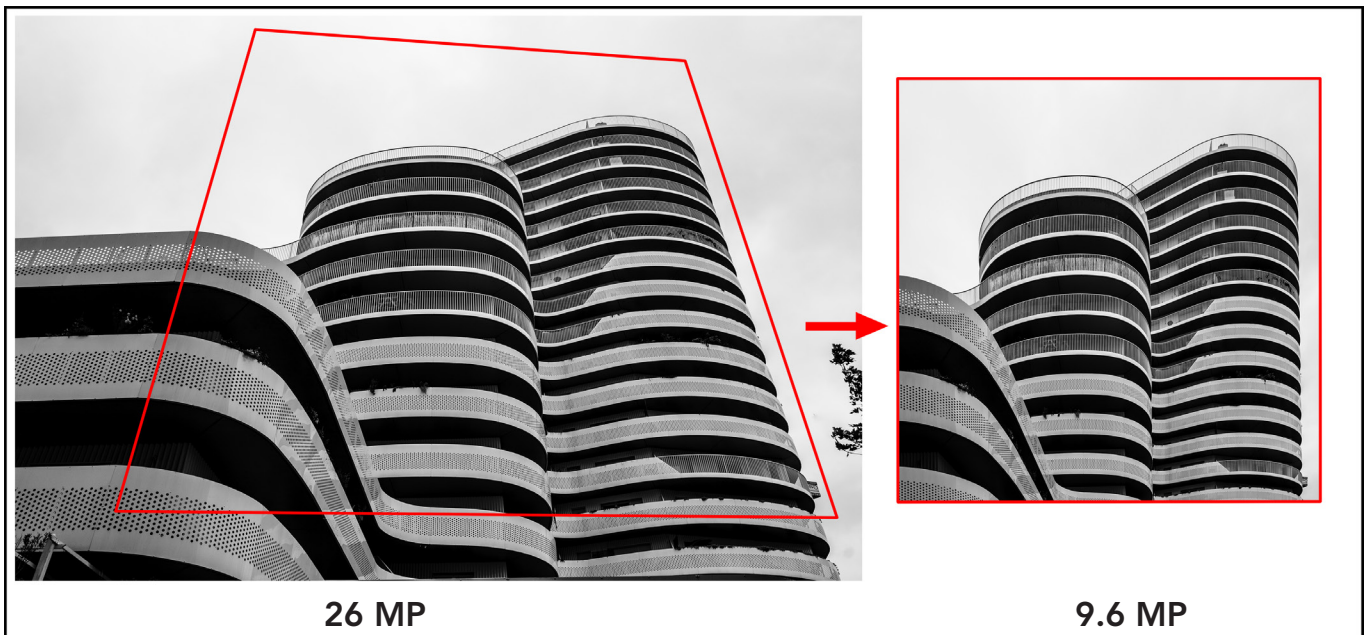


Figure 4 Correcting the verticals in this 26 megapixel file reduced it to less than 10 megapixels

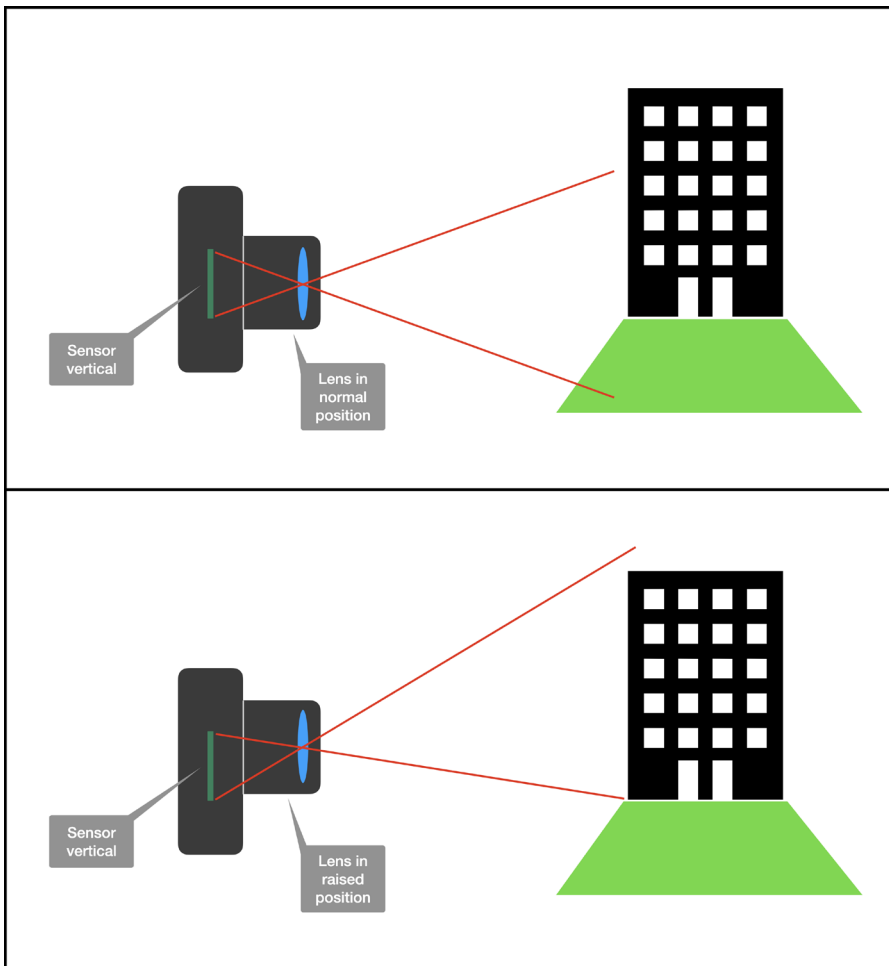


Figure 5 With a tilt-shift lens, the camera is able to 'look' upwards while the sensor remains parallel to the building.



Figure 6 A vertical panorama of two images taken using a shift adaptor

easily be aligned and combined perfectly for blending. The square image at figure 6 was actually created by a vertical panorama of two horizontal 3x2 images whose join is indicated by the dotted red line.

The downside of using a tilt-shift lens, of course, is that (yet) another piece of kit is needed - and these lenses aren't cheap. A less expensive solution is to buy a tilt-shift or a shift adaptor such as those supplied by Fotodiox (see notes at the end). These enable ordinary lenses to be used as a shift lens and can fit a wide range of lenses to a wide range camera mounts.

### A matter of perception

Just one more thing to be aware of when making images with vertical verticals; sometimes they will look wrong, even if they are technically perfect. Most of us see buildings (and perhaps other tall rectangles such as double-decker buses) every day of our lives and although we don't notice it most of the time, all their verticals converge. As a result, if we see an image of a building with true verticals our brains sometimes tell us that something is wrong. In my experience there is no rule about when this will happen so if correcting images in post-processing just be aware of it and perhaps don't necessarily tweak your verticals to be totally 100% true as allowing them to converge just slightly might look better.

### Embrace the convergence

Do we really always need to avoid converging verticals? Certainly not! Instead of avoiding them we can choose to exaggerate convergence to artistic effect. And the wider the angle of the lens that we use the greater that exaggeration and drama will be. It won't suit all buildings or compositions but it can work wonders with others, as in figure 7; a fairly unremarkable building seen with normal perspective but brought to life by a 21mm lens.

To see what the building looks

like with normal perspective, scan this QR code with your phone:



### Avoid verticals altogether

Finally, of course, there are some buildings which can be photographed very successfully with an almost total disregard to the verticals. This is because either they don't actually have any or many verticals - such as a lot of buildings designed by the likes of Frank Gehry or Zaha Hadid - or because the building can be photographed in such a way that the lack of verticals just doesn't matter. In my photograph of the V&A Dundee (see figure 8), the outer edges of the building are vertical in reality but, because of the strikingly unusual design of the building, there is no reason for most viewers of the image to know or suspect that. So most of us - even those who know the building well - quite readily accept the image without questioning its geometry ●

#### Notes on shift adapters

A tilt-shift lens or adaptor allows the lens to slide up and down relative to the camera and also to tilt up and down for other purposes. A shift adaptor only allows sliding movement.

I bought my shift adaptors from Fotodiox for around \$130 each including shipping from the USA. I use one with a used Canon FD lens which I bought for under £50 and the other with a used Nikkor AF lens which cost me £200. By way of comparison, at the time of writing a used Canon TS-E 24mm tilt-shift lens is for sale on the Wex website at £954.

#### See more of Mark's work

Mark Reeves is vice-chair of the Landscape Group. You can see more of Mark's work on his personal website at [markreevesphotography.co.uk](http://markreevesphotography.co.uk) or by following the link in the QR code.

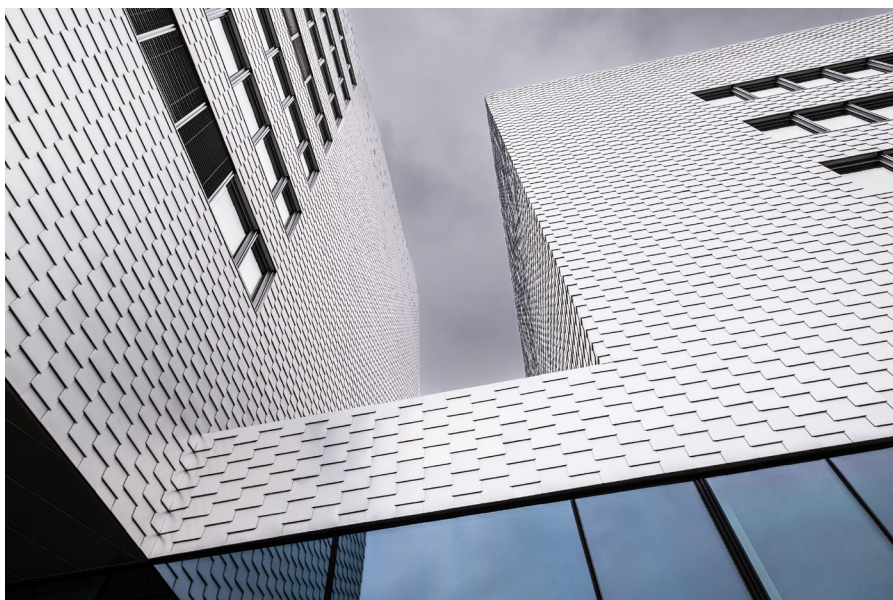


Figure 7 Seen with normal perspective, this building wasn't particularly eye-catching. This image was taken at 21mm equivalent.

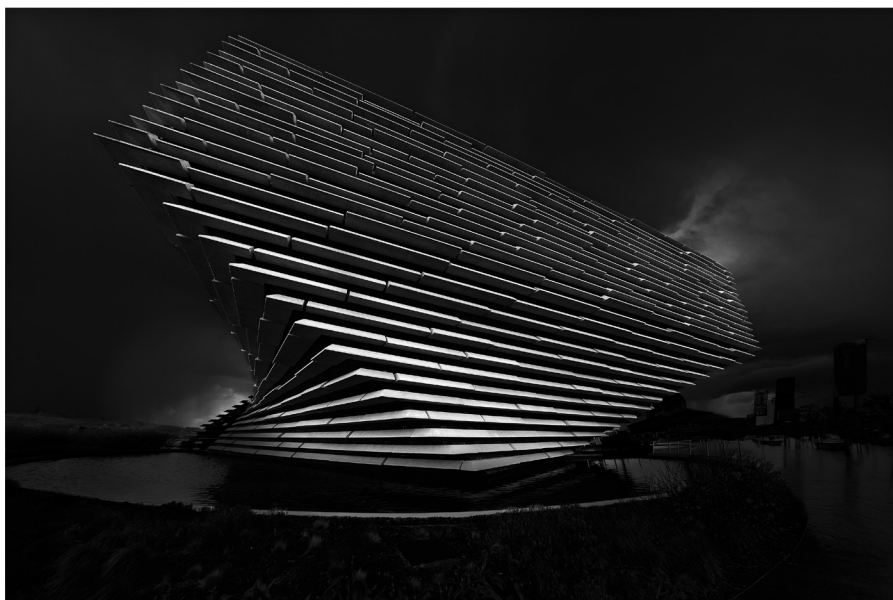


Figure 8 The V&A Dundee photographed with 15mm equivalent lens. The outer edges of the building are, in fact, vertical but it doesn't matter in this photograph - not to me at least!





San Francisco and the Bay Bridge photographed from Yerba Buena Island, 2014



## DAN JONES: CEO AND PHOTOGRAPHER

### DAN JONES

The last few years have been tumultuous for many of us and there has been much change. Similarly, the Society has gone through quite a few changes in the last few years including the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer. In addition to taking charge of the Society, Dan Jones is also an avid photographer as he explains here.

We weren't a family with any great artistic pretensions, but the Kodak Instamatic 126 camera I was handed down as a boy was a source of great enjoyment, as was the Polaroid 1000 we used as a family almost exclusively around Christmas. The way the disposable flash bar almost melted each time it was fired was a constant wonder - as were the tiny, square, and inevitably under-exposed prints that eventually emerged.

My real photographic journey began in 1986 however, when I received a Zorki 4 rangefinder together with an old enlarger and a set of darkroom equipment for

Christmas. To the uninitiated the Zorki was a Leica M4 copy made in the USSR - as heavy as a brick and built like a tank, but the perfect platform to learn the fundamentals of photography. To this day, at least 50% of the time I shoot in black and white which I put down to those early, obsessive days of stop bath and fixer.

Coming back to the UK in 2021 after twenty years in the consumer internet industry and ten years living overseas, I knew I wanted to take a new direction with my career and test myself in new ways. The opportunity to combine my passion for photography with my experience

leading and growing businesses, and the opportunity to work in the non-profit space and the arts meant I didn't have to think long before accepting the role at RPS. It is a huge challenge, and also a great responsibility to be overseeing such an historic and storied organisation during pretty tumultuous times, but it is something I am enjoying immensely.

I have been lucky enough that my career has taken me all over the world. Setting up to live in a new country can be daunting and stressful - as can long business trips on your own - and getting out with my camera became the way



Zane photographed at Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, 2018



Bicycle maintenance as a sandstorm blows through, Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, 2018 Canabal from Epic Diving



Men shelter from the sun, Kathmandu, 2018



Lunch break on the steps, Paris 2023. Portra 400 35mm



*Bonfire night in Lewes, East Sussex 2022*

that I familiarised myself with new places, met new people and began to understand my new home. I relocated to San Francisco in 2011 and was immediately beguiled by the iconic landmarks of 'The City by the Bay'. It's an amazing place, not to mention having Yosemite and the epic landscapes of Ansel Adams just a two-hour drive away - truly a photographer's paradise.

I love to travel and experience new things and over the last few years I've had the privilege of visiting some amazing places and events, including in Africa, Asia and Latin America. I made a particularly memorable trip to Argentina whilst I was working for Ancestry.com in 2014. Though it was primarily a private holiday, I had an additional agenda to visit the town of Gaiman in Patagonia, the centre of 'Y Wladfa' - the Welsh expatriate community established there around 1865, intending to solve a genealogical mystery.

There had long been rumours of

a connection between my wife's family and the historic expedition leaders, and armed with DNA testing kits, family trees and copies of parish records we made the long journey from Buenos Aires to meet the two granddaughters of the original expedition leader and their wonderful, ebullient, welcoming extended family. Initially cautious they eventually agreed to let me take a few photographs - their home an incredible fusion of Latin and Welsh cultures - precious reminders of a wonderful day.

A very different experience was the Burning Man festival in 2018. As you will probably know, Burning Man is an annual event focused on community, art, and self-expression held in the Black Rock Desert in Nevada, about 60 miles from the nearest civilisation. As much a radical social experiment as arts festival, over 100,000 participants arrive for an enormous party in a huge temporary city, bringing everything they need with them - and taking it away again. The

event is guided by ten principles including: gifting, radical self-reliance, radical self-expression, civic responsibility, and communal effort. There are no shops and no money - everything you experience there is gifted by participants to participants.

Temperatures are routinely over 100 °F during the day and a few degrees above freezing at night, and regular sandstorms require everyone participating to carry goggles and masks to combat the highly corrosive alkaline dust. I was certainly glad of my weather-sealed Olympus kit which, as always, performed incredibly well.

Benefitting daily as I did from the receipt of various commodities - from food and drink to a massage or a (much needed!) shower, I set up a service shooting portraits for people I met during my time at the festival and in my camp - later making gifts of the images as a memento of a truly unforgettable time together.



*Tega Roberts looks through old family photographs, Gaiman, Patagonia 2014*

Closer to home another unusual event I attended last year was the Lewes Bonfire - probably the largest, and definitely the strangest - bonfire celebration in England. Each year over 80,000 people descend on a town of not much more than 15,000 to watch as the entire town becomes host to an endless parade of fire, burning crosses and other dubious religious iconography in celebration of bonfire night and in the memory of 17 Protestant martyrs from the town burned alive for their faith in the 16th century. It was an incredibly busy, cold November evening with near incessant rain - which made for a challenging shoot with a manual focus Leica M10!

I am a self-confessed equipment geek with collection of old cameras and a home that, at times, can resemble the reception area of RPS House! I change equipment quite a bit, trading kit or even complete systems to try something new. Currently I shoot with three main platforms: the compact

and weather-sealed Olympus OM-D EM1 Mk II for adventure, a classic Leica M6 for film, and my latest acquisition, a Leica Q2, as an everyday carry in my trusty Billingham bag.

I think for me the joy of photography is mainly a personal one - the challenge of shooting and viewing the world with a creative eye. The moment you download your SD card and start to sort through the images to unlocking the potential of an image in post still holds magic for me and gives me enormous satisfaction and sense of achievement.

I still really enjoy shooting on film - especially for candid or street photography such as on a recent trip to Paris. For me it really changes the experience as there's no temptation to constantly review your work and re-prosecute every scenario; you shoot, you move on, and hope for the best. I also find the unique quality of good film stock like Portra 400 or Ilford HP5

impossible to replicate with the digital medium.

I think now I most enjoy the very attributes that were initially so superseded by the immediacy of digital photography; the limited shots per roll make you choose your moment, the comparative lack of dynamic range means you must get your exposure just right, but mostly I have grown to love the delayed gratification.

Sometimes it will be several weeks or months before I can get my film to the lab which makes the eventual reveal of the images even more exciting. Although viewing my negatives these days involves just clicking Dropbox link, that keen sense of anticipation takes me back every time to those formative, youthful days in my home darkroom ●



The Staithe Tunnel Book



## WHAT COMES FIRST THE BOOK OR THE PROJECT? WENDY NORTH

Wendy North explains more about the decision to display the results of a project in the form of a book.

In the last edition of *DIGIT*, I shared a project about the Huskar Pit Disaster. It culminated in a very sophisticated dual-narrative book which I called *Light and Dark*. I'll say a bit more about this project later in the article.

### Single images or collections of images

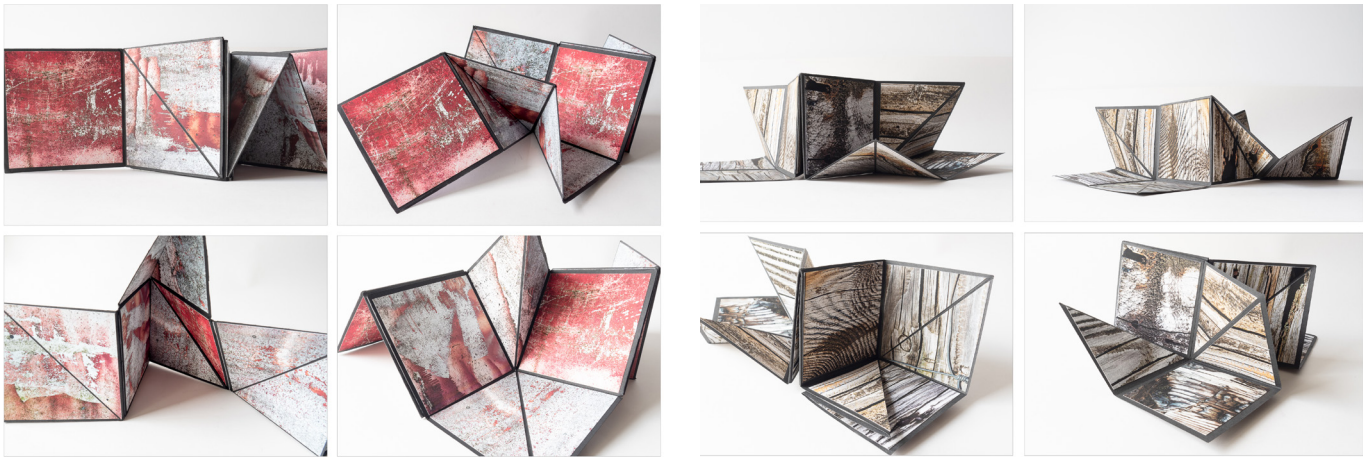
I recently found myself moving away from the camera club idea of 'single images' towards projects and

collections of images.

In 2020, just after the start of lockdown I sat on the stone flags, by the pond, on a beautiful May morning, with a *Lensbaby* attached to my old *Panasonic* camera and decided that in future I was going to make images for me. Images that would be more influenced by projects that interested me rather than images that fulfilled the rules set by someone else. It was a perfect time to pause and re-think

my approach to photography. The 'judging' route had served its purpose and had benefitted me personally in many ways, but it was time to move on. In 2020 the RPS Contemporary North Group decided to publish their response to the COVID epidemic and produced a book called *2020 Vision*. My contribution was *Memory and Loss*.

I think that this was my first experience of being published as



Explosion book - Red paint panel

Explosion book - Wooden sleepers panel

a photographer although I have had experience of making books that goes back to my time as a teacher. Some were experimental, and I produced a variety of 'tunnel books', which started with one on Staithes (see previous page) that I subsequently shared with teachers on a Primary Geography course I was running.

### Researching your project

When I created the *Staithes Tunnel Book* I was getting my information about making books from craft books, but today it is so much easier to discover what other people are creating using online sources. I particularly like and was influenced by the work of Shona Grant who is very imaginative in the way she presents her photographs. But I also came across the website of a printmaker who posts a blog under *The Curious Printmaker*, and it was there that I discovered the idea of 'explosion books'. You'll find them in many places on the web but Emily Harvey, *The Curious Printmaker* has produced an excellent guide to creating them.

Which brings me to another point, which comes first? The book format or the project.

### Explosion Books

For me the discovery of the 'explosion books' provided me with an ideal way of using the many images that I'd taken of close-up detail during my first visit to Harris on one of Iain McGowan's trips. What I love about Iain is that he's

as excited by this kind of close-up detail as I am. Whether it's red paint daubs on the outside of an ancient van or calligraphy marks on a crash barrier or beautiful patterns in the sand, his passion and enthusiasm for the subject shines through.

So in blogging about the idea of explosion books, Emily provided me with a book format that was ideal for sharing this kind of detailed observational photography. Because of the way it works, I decided to place images on the front and back. A link to a video of the red explosion book is available on my *Instagram* site so you can see how it works - there's a link at the end of the article.

### Planning and execution

This is not the only way to use the form. Glenys Garnett chose to use some of her *Google Map* project images to create a single-sided book. She also added cover pages to the small books, which makes the books feel finished and satisfying to hold. I see her design skills coming through in her work, and as a designer, she has brought an element of planning and execution to the project that is not as well-developed in my books. Her books are displayed on her website - again, there's link at the end of this article.

When we talked about this article, 'planning and execution' were very high on her agenda once she had decided on the content of the book.

### Which images will we choose for our book project?

I've always felt the need to display my work around me, whether I was painting, creating collagraphs, screenprints or photographs. In recent years my fridge cabinet, a neutral grey colour, has been an ideal place to display groups of my photographs. (It's empty at the moment, so what does that tell me?)

It seems to me that living with our work around us allows us to subconsciously evaluate whether we should do more with it. Whether that is about selecting images that might go in an online book website, like *ISSUU*, or that might go into a book, commercially produced or handmade. A thought that conveniently leads me back to the Wentworth Castle Garden images and the Huskar Pit Disaster.

Over a period of three months I'd gathered together several images taken at Wentworth Castle, a National Trust property, two miles from home. These nine were blue-tacked onto my fridge door. As I'd agreed to talk to the RPS Contemporary North group about the project I needed a vehicle to showcase the images and decided on a simple concertina book form that would contain five images on the front and five on the rear. I have to say that introducing the idea of bookmaking to the group sparked a good deal of interest and subsequently we have seen other members exploring this form.



*The Wentworth Castle concertina book*

However that might have been the end of this project if a member of my camera club, hadn't suggested a club project which made connections between ourselves and a past event or relationship. A few of the images of windows created by in-camera multiple exposure photos taken at Wentworth Castle made me think about the 'Pit' winding gear that transported men and coal up and down the shaft. So my thoughts moved to another event that is local to where I live now, The Huskar Pit Disaster.

*THE HUSKAR PIT DISASTER of the 4th of July 1838 Silkstone Colliery was the site of an accident when 26 children were drowned as they tried to escape from the Huskar Day-Hole*

With this idea in mind, the way I photographed changed from the experimental in-camera multiple exposure images that I'd been using at Wentworth Castle to actually using this technique to recreate images that would tell the story of the 'Disaster.'

As the project developed, I wanted to contrast the life styles of the people who lived in the 'Light' i.e., Wentworth Castle, with those who worked down the mine and lived in the 'Dark'. I needed a way of telling the story as a dual narrative. Initially my thoughts were that there would

be two concertina books that sat alongside one another but thanks to the creative problem solving of Glenys, a solution in the form of the flag book was born. She devised a design which involved mounting one concertina book above the other in such a way that by turning the bottom layer, the top concertina book also turned. We called them 'flag books', although this term is also used on bookmaking sites to describe a different kind of book form. A video of this book is available on *Instagram*

### **Making your own book**

So what do we need to think about when planning a book project?

- The type of book
- Choice of images
- Sequencing of images
- Overall design, which might include making a cover, choosing colour or size etc.

There are many examples of bookmaking projects on *YouTube* and individual blog posts as well as workshops offered by the RPS itself. All of these are worth exploring and should help you to decide the kinds of book projects you would like to explore.

I hope this article has left you feeling inspired and left you thinking you'd like to create your own book and it would be good to see some of them on the *DIGIT Facebook page* ●

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Wendy North Huskar Pit - Light and Dark video

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### **See more of Wendy's work**

You can find more of Wendy's work at [instagram.com/wendy\\_north\\_photography](http://instagram.com/wendy_north_photography).





Winter graze in northern country by Zhizhou Jiang - PSA Gold Medal (Open Monochrome) winner at the Second Edinburgh Photographic Society Digital Salon



## BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE SECOND EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL SALON

### JOE HOUGHTON AND DAVID GREER

Joe Houghton muses on his experience over two weeks in October 2023 being a judge for his first International Salon. David Greer, the Salon organiser, explains what goes on in the background to make it all a success.

I judged over 2,000 images, and it was a fascinating experience navigating the time constraints, software, and interacting with the other judges to award the medals and Honourable Mentions etc.

#### A surprise call

I've been a pretty regular judge for camera club competitions for the past few years, having learned and cut my teeth down in South Africa with my club down there the Hibiscus Coast Photographic Society ([hcps.org.za](http://hcps.org.za)).

But getting a call a few months back from David Greer at the Edinburgh Photographic Society (EPS) was unexpected. I'd judged the EPS end of year competition - a mammoth task comprising four boxes of prints and several hundred PDIs - a couple of years ago. David was calling to ask me if I would consider being on the judging panel for the Second Edinburgh International Digital Salon ([eps.myphotoclub.com.au](http://eps.myphotoclub.com.au)).

I'm a self-taught photographer. I've never done any of the distinctions, so all the Ls, As, Fs and Es that

adorn most judge's names are noticeably absent after mine. I've been told that my judging is clear, based on a solid and explainable approach and supportive. I've always tried to use club judging as a way to both rank images, but more importantly (for me anyway) to provide constructive and supportive feedback on how images might have been improved where weaknesses are found.

So this was a mental leap for me, with major imposter syndrome creeping in. Would I be up to the

job and would my lack of formal credentials mean I was even acceptable, as I understand that for FIAP and PSA certified salons the judging panels have to be approved.

Well, David wanted me, so I said throw my hat in the ring, and a few weeks later he let me know that I was approved. Yay! Followed by more worry about whether I was up to the job....

### The judging task

I ended up on the panel for three categories and had no real idea of what would be involved. I cleared a couple of days in the diary (just as well as it turned out!) and waited for David to send the link to the judging portal. It was all done online - no trip to sunny Edinburgh for me - but that made the whole process very accessible and straightforward.

Straightforward that is, if you read the judges' instructions properly. I didn't. And as David gleefully ribbed me afterwards, as a college professor I really should have known to read the question!

So on the Friday, three days before everything was due to be completed, I dived into the first category - Mono. 1075 images - a bit of a shock when I saw how many there were, but once I got into the

rhythm, each image popped up on screen and was scored by clicking on the number 1-5, whereupon the next image would appear. Very different from club judging where I spend time noting down comments before scoring out of 20 against 4 sets of criteria - here each image got 3-5 seconds.

At the end I also got a breakdown of how many images I'd scored for each number 1-5, and I was happy to see that my distributions were about right, not weighted too much in any one score. I clicked the button to notify David that my section was done, all very clear.

Say five seconds per image - I got through them all in about an hour and a half with breaks. Next it was Creative - another 470 - same process, feeling more confident now.

And finally, Photo Travel - well over 500 entries here! Another cup of coffee or two.

It had taken about five hours for me to go through all the images - a bit of a marathon. I breathed a sigh of relief, happy I'd got it all done.

The next day Creative had also been judged by the other two judges, and as a judge I could see where we had all placed images scoring high. Something didn't feel right - almost none of my favourites were in the high scoring placings.

I jumped back in to the judging portal, and to my horror, discovered that I had scored the images the wrong way around. So I'd given 1 to my top images and 5 to my lowest ranked ones - completely the wrong way around!

Have you ever done something really stupid and then gone through some time where you know that you have to 'fess up and tell someone, but you agonise about doing it? Well, in my case that was about five minutes of self-beration before I called David. He was very understanding on the phone - I can only imagine his internal reaction at my carelessness. We quickly figured out that the online system would allow me to go back in and review my scores as they hadn't been closed off yet, and as it turned out, all the 1s needed to be 5s, the 2s needed to be 4s and the rest were all 3s that needed no change.

The way the system segmented the scores, switching everything around only took a few minutes, as I continued to castigate myself - glad I had none of those old whips with knots in that monks used to use! They'd have got a workout that day, I can tell you!

Stage 1 complete - I was bruised and battered emotionally but hanging in there.

Stage 2 was shaking out the ►



Wild dogs hunting by Elisa Best - PSA Gold Medal (Nature) winner at the Second Edinburgh Photographic Society Digital Salon



*I am* by Henryk Tkocz - PSA Gold Medal (Creative) winner at the Second Edinburgh Photographic Society Digital Salon



*Sunrise at Cobbolds Point by Jay Hallsworth - PSA Gold Medal (Landscape) winner at the Second Edinburgh Photographic Society Digital Salon*

scoring so we had roughly the right number of acceptances across each category. We had a couple of rounds of looking at mid-range initial scores and re-scoring to achieve the target distribution of scores so that we ended up with the percentages falling within the acceptance range required by the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) and Photographic Society of America (PSA) - again, the software made this relatively easy with only the images in that band of scoring needing to be revisited - but still another few hours of time put in by each judge. Once all the judges had completed re-scoring, we had scheduled a two-hour Zoom call for the three category judges and David to award medals and Honourable Mentions, so I had three of these sessions to attend.

Back to the imposter syndrome, as in each category, the other judges each had more photographic letters after their names than I'd had hot dinners. But as we looked at the scoring, all of us had scored fairly

consistently - the medals fell out naturally as the top scored images, and then we each chose four Honourable Mentions from the next set of lower scores.

So by the end of the third session my heartrate was approaching normal levels again, David was still talking to me, and my judging work was done.

### **What else did it take?**

David, the Salon Organiser adds *"The whole experience of managing such a huge International Digital Salon was a great learning experience and required much more effort and time than anticipated."*

*Organisation for the Salon commenced in April 2023 and began with obtaining patronage from FIAP, PSA, GPU, PAGB together with support from the Scottish Photographic Federation. Then came the selection of the supporting software platform for the Salon which was kindly provided by Colin Woods at*

*MyPhotoClub and the drafting of competition rules, definition of photographic genres, identification and procurement of awards and of course the identification of judges for each photographic genre in the Salon.*

*All the judges were very supportive and eager to participate and for that, I was extremely appreciative. However, the best laid plans can often go asunder as they did in this case due to the sudden death of one judge and the resignation of another within weeks of judging starting.*

*I must say that all judges contributed greatly to the success of the Salon, which attracted over 4500 entries from 40 different countries. I also extend my thanks to all participants and award winners and to Colin Woods in Australia who helped me enormously with the slick running of the Salon software.*

*Of course the work doesn't stop after judging is completed, then follows the uploading of all*



*By the Light of the Silvery Moon by Carol Barry - PSA Gold Medal (Creative) winner at the Second Edinburgh Photographic Society Digital Salon*

acceptance and award data to FIAP, PSA and GPU, the generation of all participant scorecards, posting of awards around the world, production of the Exhibition Catalogue and finally the organisation of the Salon Exhibition. It has been a great journey for me and I would encourage all Salon participants to try their hand at organising or supporting a Salon so that they may better appreciate all the effort that goes into enabling them to achieve the Ls, As, Fs and Es that Joe referred to above that so many photographers aspire to attain."

### Looking back

What a fabulous experience. Being exposed to that number of high-quality images in a short period, finding that my judgement matched that of other far more qualified and experienced judges, and navigating a new milieu (albeit with that one major hiccup!).

Well done to all the winners and those who got acceptances - and well done to all the judges who put in two or three days of effort each, by my reckoning. No-one had asked for payment, but a little while later a modest Amazon gift voucher arrived in my Inbox - an unexpected but very kind gesture from David. I have a small wooden Staunton Chess set and board arriving tomorrow, and every time I play with this, I'll be reminded of my first foray (hopefully not my last) into the world of judging international salons.

Thanks David and EPS for the opportunity! ●

## THE RHS BOTANICAL ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW



The annual RHS Botanical Art and Photography Show gives both amateur and professional photographers the unique opportunity to exhibit a portfolio of work based on a common theme of plants, gardens and natural landscapes.

In the following pages, four of the RHS photography judges provide an insight into some of the key elements to consider when entering the portfolio photography competition and pick some memorable entries.

**Q: What do you look for in terms of the horticultural content of a portfolio?**

Paul Debois RHS Photography Judge

'Botanical or horticultural content is key to your image selection. And the identification of plant species or varieties in your photographs needs to be accurate.

But we want your interpretation or your way of seeing the world of plants, gardens, natural or wild environments and the people associated with these themes. It is not intended to be a plant directory.

You may well come across a national collection of plants in your travels. You could approach this in quite a stylised way, with formal portraits

of six different species. It could be in a studio. It could be on location. It could be in colour or black and white. Another way of approaching this scenario could be looking at the people involved with a garden. Watch them working. Do they propagate their own plants? How do they do it? Is it a small garden? Or a large estate or commercial enterprise? Indeed, we would love to see more people stories.

Use your imagination, but note that a connection with the botanical world is imperative. Vanda Ralevska's 2023 Gold Medal winning portfolio *Winter Sun* perfectly captures that connection with the botanical world and explores the resilience of nature, depicting with sympathy the ability of the natural world to overcome adversity.

Be mindful that you do not have to constrain yourself to technical plant portraits. You can use special techniques (think natural), if it adds to your theme.

Obviously look at gardens and wild landscapes. We would like to see more folios illustrating these too. Close-ups and vistas. With broad views, you would only have to name one or two focal point plant specimens in captions or simply name the specific location itself.

Whichever route you take, be strict with yourself. We want visual continuity, as you can only present six images.

But the possibilities are much wider than most people realise. Simply put, tell as a story about the botanical world.'



*Winter Sun* by Vanda Ralevska

**Q: What do you look for in terms of telling a story within a portfolio?**

Clive Boursnell RHS Photography Judge

'Photographically, there are countless ways to tell the story of a garden, an aspect of a garden, landscape or plant. There is no particular magic formula to follow, however, there are a few key points to consider.

Firstly, think of the process as storytelling through images. What is the story of the plant, person or place? What is it about your chosen subject that makes it memorable or special and why? What emotions do you seek to evoke?

Essentially, your portfolio should demonstrate an affinity with the chosen subject. Precisely

what is it that has captivated your imagination and what is it about that subject that you wish to resound with the viewer. Ask yourself, what is it about this garden/landscape/plant that sets me on fire? And, consequently, how do you seek to convey this in your presentation.

Christine Adams' 2023 Silver Gilt medal winning portfolio *The Quiet Unity Of Kyoto's Temple Gardeners*, poignantly captures that essence of story, demonstrating the synchronised dedication of the temple gardeners and the atmosphere of quiet contemplation as they set their hands to work.

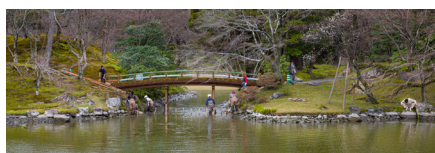
When illustrating your theme or story, coherency and consistency are absolutely paramount. Does

each individual image contribute in equal measure to the overall impression or feeling?

Once what you wish to photograph and why comes into focus, framing your picture comes to the fore.

If your skyline is weak, your viewer will escape your picture. Equally, if your background or foreground has too much distraction or noise, this will detract from the impact of the story.

And lastly, if you chose to adopt a particular technique or style, consider carefully, how do these elements add to and embellish the story being told? Beware not to allow the technique or stylistics to dominate the narrative or assume the starring role.'



*The Quiet Unity of Kyoto's Temple Gardeners by Christine Adams*

**Q: What do you look for in terms of the photographic qualities of a portfolio?**

**Polina Plotnikova** RHS Photography Judge

'Quality of your photography is extremely important. You have artistic licence to use various creative techniques, in camera or in post processing. Whichever your preferred technique is, it should not be used just for the sake of showcasing that you can do it, but rather to enhance your final picture. It's very easy to get carried away and use a huge range of creative filters, plugins or clever gadgets that have potential to elevate your photography to the next level. Intentional camera movement, multiple exposure, vintage lenses - there are no restrictions, but it's very important to remember that all these clever techniques are not taking focus away from the main

subject of your portfolio.

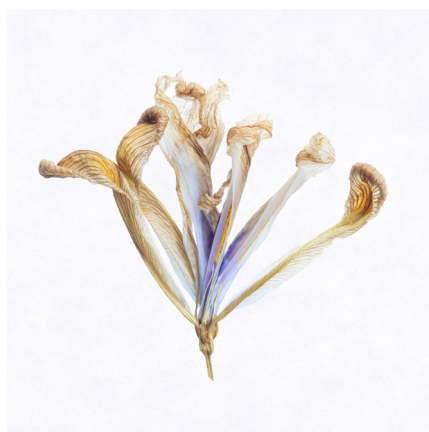
When we're looking at beautiful blooms, stunning landscapes, meadows with wildflowers it's very easy to admire them, but you need to be able to translate that into an image using your camera. We want to feel and understand what prompted you to focus on a particular theme.

There are, of course, the usual suspects to take care of - light, composition, camera settings. Whether you photograph in the studio or outdoors, take your time to compose your frame. Good composition is essential to every single image within a portfolio. We will be looking at your choice of what to include in your frame, how you lead viewers' eyes to your main point of interest in the shot, which part of the flower or scenery you decided to focus on.

The Best Portfolio Photography Exhibit 2023 was awarded to Irene Stupples for her entry *Faded Iris*. This portfolio demonstrated with incredible poise great control of light, well balanced composition on each image and sharp focus which suited the nature of the chosen subject.

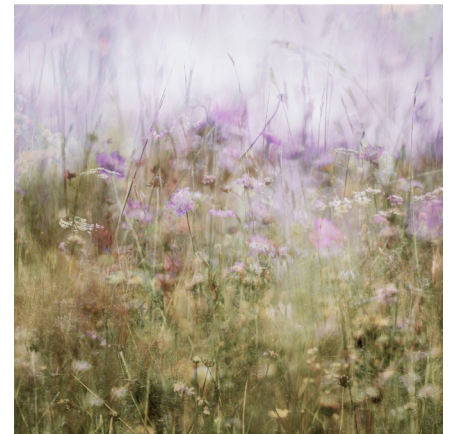
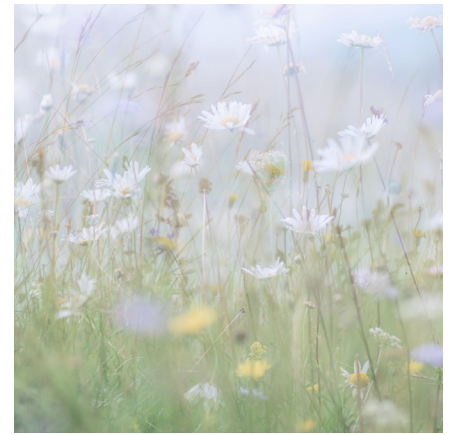
Light can, indeed, make or break a photograph. If shooting outdoors make sure you are taking advantage of good natural light, harsh direct sunlight can ruin your shot, make sure you are at your chosen location for the best light. Depth of field is one of the most important choices to make when photographing flowers, some would benefit from shallow depth of field, and others would require pin sharp focus throughout your image.

Whatever the case, we would expect perfection in all details.'



*Faded Iris* by Irene Stupples





*Dorset Downs* by Jo Stephen

**Q: What do you look for in terms of the overall impression of a portfolio?**

**Arabella St John Parker**  
RHS Photography Judge

'Each of the photographs in your entry may be a winner in its own right, but it is the panel form of your portfolio on which medal success ultimately depends.

The panel layout will reveal the strengths and weakness of your shoot planning and your picture selection. Have you covered the life story or familial characteristics of your plant subject in full, and are the images presented so we grasp that story clearly, as well as enjoy the panel as an image in itself?

We want to see a thoughtful

approach to the way in which your subject's colours and shapes affect the visual balance of your panel. Also, try not to overplay the background - marks can be lost if it is felt to be too distracting.

Think about the points of focus in each shot, and how these appear and flow within the panel. Also, be rigorous in checking every single detail within your images. The judges view them first in digital form, but final decisions are made while looking very closely indeed at the printed versions.

Is there attitude and dynamism in your panel, an irresistible sense of place, of environment and character? Jo Stephen's 2023 Gold medal winning entry *Dorset Downs*

evokes a delightful rural idyll with her camera deep down in the meadow grasses, and we hope for other original takes of gardens and landscapes this year. A variety of camera positions (details, mid-field, and distance shots) will create a sense of journey, while seasonality, lighting, and even some subtle styling can add layers of interest. Keep in mind the relationship between the shots when they are arranged within the panel, though.

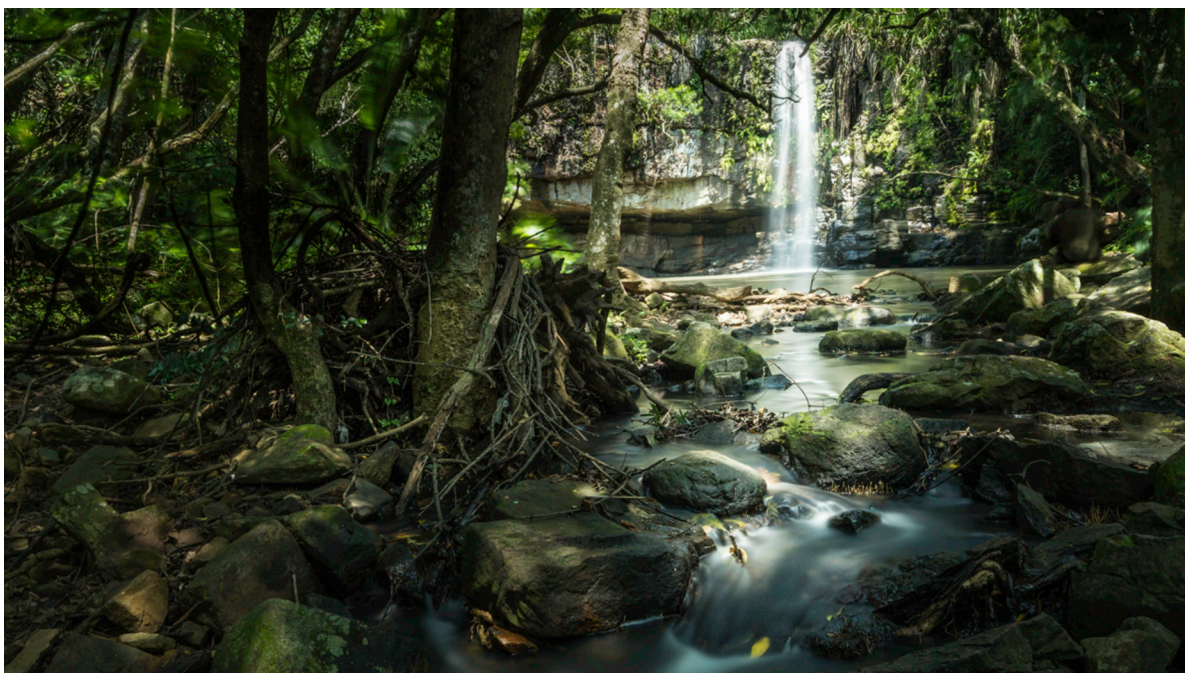
Last, but not least, the size of your prints, the scale of the subject, where and how it sits within the mount will also be marked, so plan with care; a stem rising from the mount edge in some frames, for instance, but floating in mid-air in others, could be marked down' ●

**Want to enter the competition?**

Details regarding the exhibition and entry requirements can be found on the RHS website at [rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-london-shows/rhs-botanical-art-and-photography-show](https://rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-london-shows/rhs-botanical-art-and-photography-show)

Please submit any queries regarding entry submissions to [photoportfolio@rhs.org.uk](mailto:photoportfolio@rhs.org.uk)

Entries for the RHS portfolio competition are now open - deadline for entries is 1000 (GMT) on Thursday 1st February 2024



*The Chairmen by Joe Houghton*



## DIGITAL IMAGING WORKSHOPS

**MELANIE CHALK ARPS**

**You may know Melanie as the editor of *DI Online*, but in addition to bringing you your monthly update on the Group's members and activities she also coordinates the superb programme of workshops that are available to us. Melanie introduces us to some of the leaders of these workshops.**

Before the pandemic, virtual meetings were already used by the DI Committee, so as a group we very quickly adopted and expanded this means of remote communication, as social distancing measures kept us all at home. We launched a wonderful programme of regular talks at 1600 on a Saturday afternoon, which still continues and goes from strength to strength!

It was RPS Southeast Region which first took what had been planned as an 'in person' workshop with Celia Henderson, and went online using Zoom. It was so well received so we have progressed from there to what is now a very full and varied workshop programme.

The concept of online workshops via Zoom not only provided a means of connecting with others during the pandemic but also opened up new possibilities for reaching wider audiences,

geographical constraints no longer mattered. Remote teaching was readily accessible, and learning about photographic processing, how to polish our skills and improve our images, continues to nurture a strong virtual community.

Celia Henderson was soon joined by Joe Houghton with his Lightroom journey, adding variety to our range. South East Region expanded their programme, encompassing printing workshops with Roger Crocombe, and working in collaboration with the RPS DI South East Centre, were able to reach a wider national and international audience. In October 2022 it was decided that all the workshops would be moved under the umbrella of Digital Imaging. So this is where we find ourselves today, and since 2022 to November this year we have facilitated some 150 workshops.

In September 2023 we made the

decision to start to use the ticketing platform Billetto, giving a better automated system and cutting down the volunteer hours needed to maintain it. This is a learning curve for everyone but does offer an improved user experience, with automatic reminders when new workshops are offered.

In the following pages we have a brief introduction to some of our workshop leaders and their work.

### Check out the programme

Check out the range available now by following this direct link to workshops from Digital Imaging. They have proved popular with many quickly selling out, but we are always adding new dates and topics.

You can find the upcoming programme at [bit.ly/RPSDIBILL](https://bit.ly/RPSDIBILL).

## Celia Henderson



Flowers and Photoshop - a match made in heaven for creativity and the art of flower photography. Celia Henderson is equally happy behind the camera capturing the beauty of flowers from her garden as she is in front of her computer absorbed in Photoshop filters and painting with digital brushes. Her second love is teaching and learning, and as an IT lecturer she enjoys being able to share how she takes and makes her images.

For Digital Imaging Celia offers a range of photography and



Photoshop workshops where she hopes you will be inspired, motivated, and entertained and will learn new techniques and how to use the tools that will provide you with the skills to create wonderful

images. Celia's sessions, like the majority of the DI Workshops, are for a small number of attendees to give everyone the opportunity to ask questions and interact with the group as a whole.

## Hannah Carter-Orton



Hannah Carter-Orton is a Family Photographer and Educator. Having been immersed in the world of photography for the last 23 years, with 15 of those in teaching both film and digital photography, alongside being a successful photographer, she loves nothing more than supporting people on their photography journey. Hannah encourages a full experience of connecting and creating with cameras through technical and visual know-how!

Hannah is renowned for her warm, fun and friendly teaching approach and has delivered photography



education through colleges, community and the private sector.

Hannah has recently joined the DI Imaging Workshop Team, and she has lots of ideas for new workshops

for 2024. She led a 'Walk and Talk' in the Midlands in August and completed a successful two-session workshop on Cyanotypes, which we plan to continue in the spring or early summer.

### Joe Houghton



Family guy, educator, coach and photographer - he wears a few different hats. Based in Dublin, Ireland for almost 20 years having grown up in the UK, he enjoys Dublin life with his wife Penny and his children.

He lectures on Project Management, does consultancy work on the topic, and when the time allows, loves photography, and specifically helping others develop their skills in this wonderful art form.



Joe is in constant demand by camera clubs, to judge and to lecture, but still finds time to give talks and run multi session workshops for DI. Joe illustrates live how to navigate Lightroom and all its intricacies, how to be organised in LR and how to get the most from this powerful software.

Joe is a prolific writer and has now published six books, all available on

Amazon, with more in the pipeline. Joe writes a regular column in our monthly *DI Online* publication, specifically on the AI developments and how we as photographers can introduce them into our workflow. Joe is an enthusiastic tutor, his relaxed teaching style is very engaging and informative, he has a great following and is always ready and willing to sign up for new courses.

### Jonathan Vaines



Jonathan is a creative photographer based in Bedfordshire and his creativity starts in camera, using techniques such as ICM and multiple exposure. The majority of his photographic time is spent thinking, he uses his time to plan the outcome and visualises the finished result before pressing the shutter release. Recording what the eye sees is not an option in his work, he uses the camera to create, paint and even manipulate an image using a number of in camera techniques.

Jonathan personally believes his practice helps maintain a healthy wellbeing and provides a creative release for him.

Jonathan enjoys sharing the techniques with others. He is a strong proponent of Photoshop and he shows how to use this software creatively in the workshops he runs for Digital Imaging. Jonathan has an approach that puts everyone at

ease and turns the learning process into fun. He has great plans for new workshops for 2024 and possibly to re-run ones using the Nik Collection, plus getting to grips with processing Infrared images taken in camera ●



# THE BANANA LEAF PROJECT

ASHOK VISWANATHAN

Many photographers have tried their hand at shooting the human form. Some with outstanding results and others with images leaving much to be desired. Shooting nudes is not as easy as the final image appears. There is a lot of thought and creativity involved and, of course, planning if it's going to be a successful shoot. The model is looking for direction from the photographer, who in turn has to be clear what pose and lighting he has in mind. Using a model with experience is preferable as he or she can contribute their ideas as well, and knows how to pose. I make sure to show the images on the camera LCD to the model so they have feedback on how the shoot is going.

Having shot nudes for several years I was looking to do something different using a large banana leaf as a prop. I wanted portraits, half length and full length images, and if possible some images with two models. Lighting was simple with a Elinchrome soft box and strip lights at the sides. The portraits were single light from one side. Cameras of choice are the Fujifilm X-Pro1 and X-E3 mirrorless with 18-55mm lens, using a Minolta Flash Meter IV to measure exposure settings.

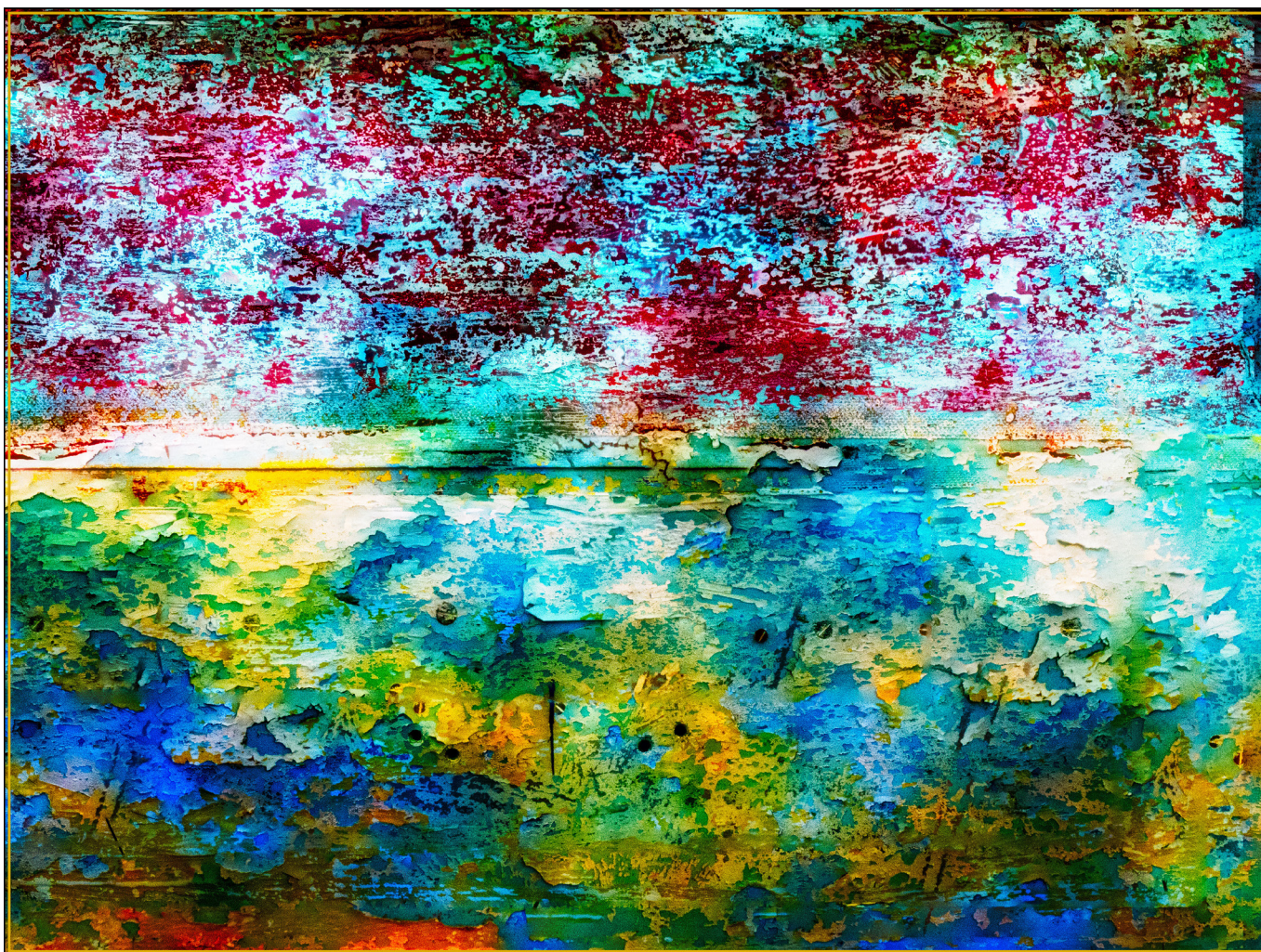
In order to keep the shoot moving fast the poses were noted down on paper so that we could get the best utilisation of time. There was very little exposure bracketing and all images were shot in RAW and processed in Affinity Photo and NIK software. Some monochrome film was also shot on my ancient Rolleiflex 3.5F using FP4 and HP5. The images here are a selection from different studio shoots.

This is a project that I would like to explore further with nudes in the landscape and perhaps by adding textures to create a few more such images.





Images from The Banana Leaf project



*Abandoned Boat*

## MY HOLIDAY EXPERIMENT

JOHN MOORE LRPS

Once seen, it couldn't be unseen. The look from my wife tells me that time is limited, after all this is a holiday, so speed is of the essence. I was reminded of the recent Zoom session I had attended by the excellent Jonathan Vaines called *Creative projects with Multiple Exposures*.

An upturned abandoned boat on the dunes behind Westward Ho! beach provided me with the subject. Not fully knowing what I might 'do' with it when processed, but understanding that I had already formed a relationship. Using one of Jonathan's ideas which is take the first image and then two steps and then another image and then another two steps etc. 20 images captured the whole boat on both sides with all its signs of wear, tear and textures gained from years of use.

I am not an expert in *Adobe* software (although I do subscribe) and as anyone who uses *Adobe* knows, there is always more than one way to achieve results. Looking at the images in *Lightroom Classic* (LRC) the exposures were not too good, so I used the auto adjust in the Basic Module and I added some adjustments to the 'dehaze' and added some 'texture'. The division of the upper and lower parts of the boat were obvious but the dividing line between the two colours was all over the place (image 1). Despite this, I could see a clear a line of masking tape which I used to straighten the images in the 'crop overlay' tool. When I now looked at the images in the library, grid view, there was a fairly good clear line passing through the two areas on all the images (image 2).

The images were then opened in the 'opened as layers in PS' (images 3 and 4). Each layer was then expanded as necessary using the transform tool to fit the canvas size of the top layer. All layers were then selected and I

# DIGIT CHALLENGE

used 'auto blend layers' selecting the 'stack images' option (image 5). The world was now my oyster, with many experimental possibilities. I used 'Multiply' blend and then backed off the opacity to about 30% (image 6). I then flattened the layers, created a layer copy and using layer masks increased the saturation, brightness and 'played in curves' to get what I liked. Finally, I saved back into LRC and exported using an add-on app called Mogrify 2 to added inner and outer borders selecting colours from the image.

We are all different and I suspect the image I developed to be a little 'marmite', in that some will like and others will not. I think there remains much that I can 'do' with these images but the concept as outlined by Jonathan Vaines remains the same; take images consecutively and then work with them to produce an image that you find pleasing ●

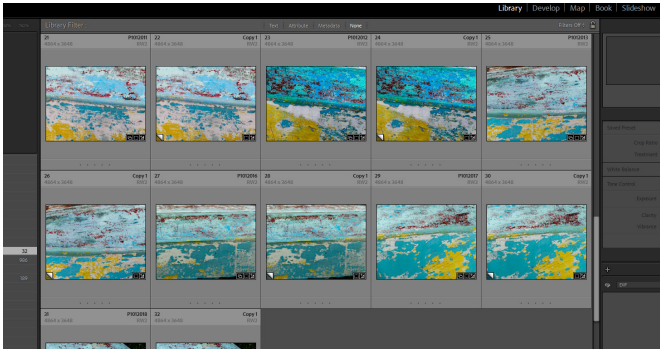


Image 1

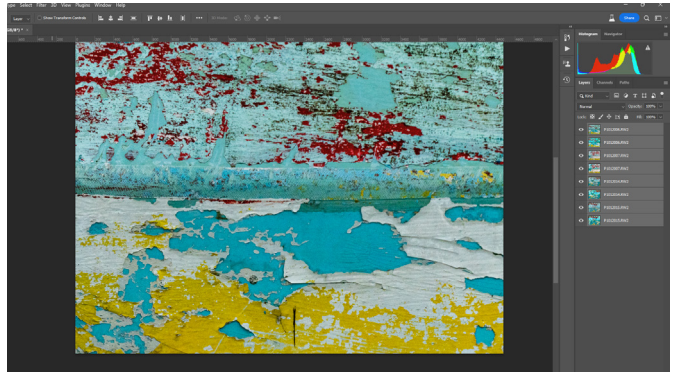


Image 4



Image 2

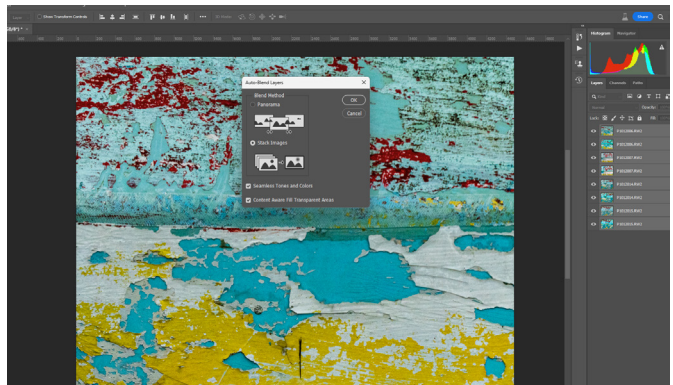


Image 5

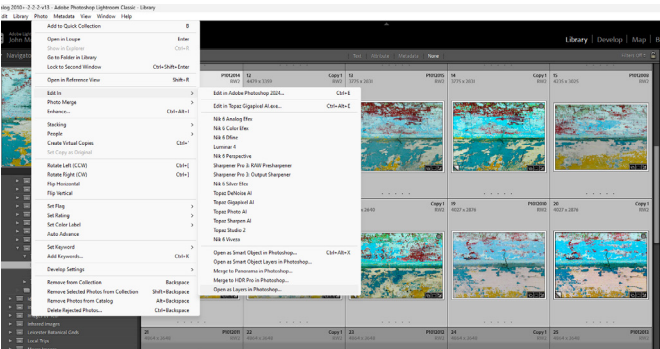


Image 3

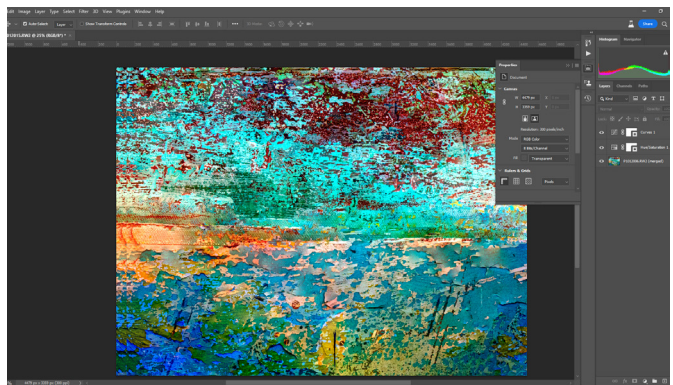
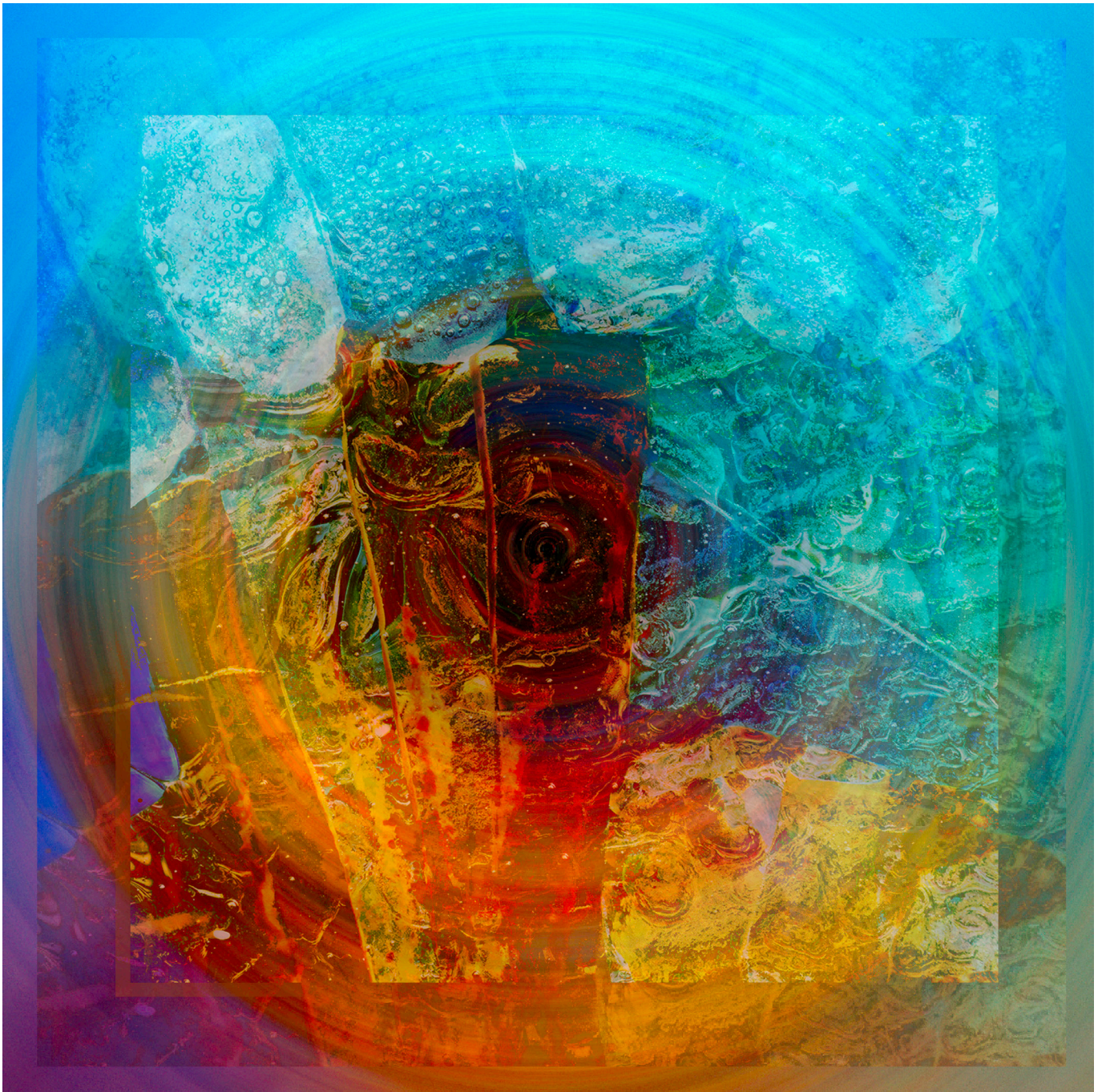


Image 6





## NIGHTMARES AND VISIONS

JANET LEE

Sussex Prairie Gardens, near Henfield, is one of many Royal Horticultural Society's partnership gardens. This style of gardening is apparently easy to manage on clay soil. There is also an emphasis to support a wide range of artists who run workshops in their varied creative skills. Events and workshops have been held there since its opening in 2008. Their sculpture exhibition included fused glass; it was the artist Clare Summons whose choice of colour combinations caught my eye. August sunlight enhanced her circular exhibits. She can be found on her Instagram page, [claresummonsglass](#). To capture these vibrantly sunlit colours, a recently bought 90mm macro lens for my Olympus OM-D1 Mk II camera captured my point of interest.

The original RAW shot (image 1), shutter speed 1/200s, aperture f/10, ISO 400, was taken hand-held. A section of

this circularly fused glass installation revealed appealing textures. The potential for creating my own interpretation emerged as I began to experiment in Creative Cloud version of Photoshop.

### A creative and therapeutic process

#### *Editing the foreground*

1. Making minimal changes to less than a third of another of Clare Summon's fused glass exhibits I imported macro image 1 into CC Lightroom and exported it into CC Photoshop before editing and cropping to a square .
2. Two more layers were duplicated, choosing blending modes - 'Exclusion' and 'Overlay' - at 50% opacity.
3. Using the eyedropper tool to select slightly darker colours to emphasise emerging facial features with the 'Cartoon-brush' on a new paint layer began to remind me of frequent nightmares I had experienced as a small child. The central burnt-orange, mask-like shape emerged.
4. To create more contrast I also darkened highlights and lightened shadows in the two duplicated layers, using a 77% fuzziness and 50% opacity. An embossed filter was applied to the central burnt-amber shape to increase the three-dimensional effect. I wanted to ensure that a viewer's eye would engage with the slanting eye-shape in my image.
5. Another six separate selections for each coloured shape, creating 'Luminosity Masks' gave depth to the overall effect. *Nightmare Vision*, image 2, emerged. My entry for Solihull Photographic Society's 1st Aggregate competition, given a wide brown border, gained a Commended recognition from judge, Bob Goode.

#### *Editing the background*

Twirl pattern creations have become sufficiently well known to be available on YouTube videos. Using my original square crop I applied these procedures to produce image 3

1. The twirl effect was flattened and duplicated and the 'Exclusion' blending mode was applied at 50%.
2. A flattened version of my first edit, added as a lower opacity texture layer and turned into a 'Smart Object', created an effect which had transformed my unpleasant memories into what I began to perceive to be a far more pleasing and visionary perspective for me.
3. I combined the two editing processes, using 'File-Place Embedded', reducing the size of image 2, thus creating a texture layer to add to the twirl background and also leaving a border by reducing its size. This became my background for final image 4

### The final image

Having flattened my background, and repeated the 'File-Place Embedded' step, used in the background edit, I positioned a reduced size copy of image 2 onto image 4, using 'Blending mode - Lighter Colour' at Opacity 73% and 60% Fill.

The final image, *Nightmares and Visions*, (see page 33), had been created and had also helped towards resolving my troubled recollections of night-time experiences in infancy. The creative process is indeed a most therapeutic one ●

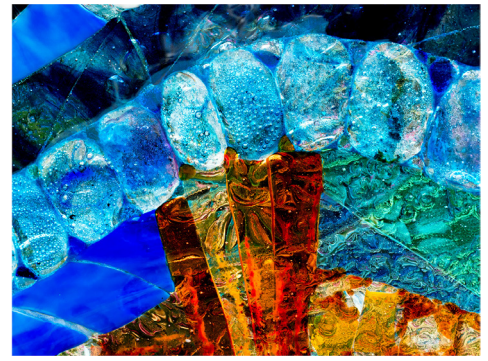


Image 1 A macro shot of a fused glass exhibit

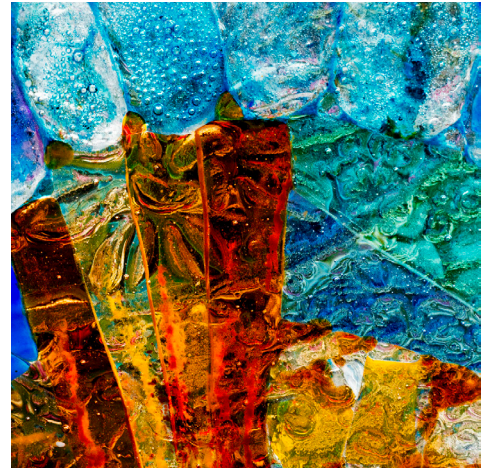


Image 2 A combination of selections from the original shot

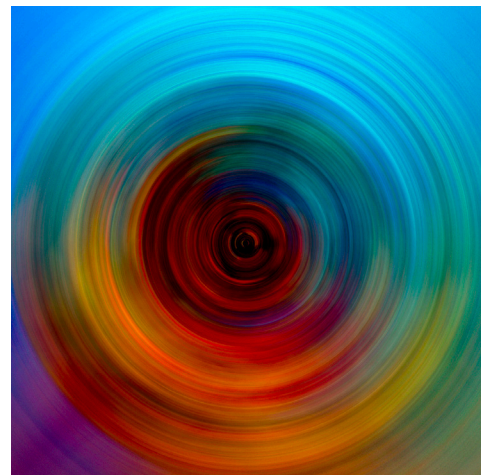


Image 3 A combination of selections from the original shot



Image 4 The completed background

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All previous issues are available from the DIGIT Archive at  
[rps.org/di/digit-archive/](https://rps.org/di/digit-archive/)



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