



CREATIVE
PHOTOGRAPHY
ACADEMY

Inspiration

The magazine for creative photographers

November 2021

*“Don’t shoot what it looks like,
shoot what it feels like.”*

– David Alan Harvey

Photo by Graham Elliott



“Don’t shoot what it looks like, shoot what it feels like.” – David Alan Harvey

In this issue

| | |
|---|----------|
| Guest Contribution | 2 |
| What to shoot | 3 |
| What to shoot (examples) | 4 |
| Shooting with a 35mm film SLR (Part 2) | 5 |
| Smart Phone Photography | 8 |
| Black and white photography (Part 2) | 9 |
| Upcoming events | 11 |
| Upcoming CPA courses | 11 |
| Fine Art Prints | 12 |
| An image from the collections | 13 |
| The Back page credits | 14 |

Do some photographs move you? Do you feel much more connected to some photographs than you do to others?

I prefer to think about what we as photographers do, as **Visual Storytelling**, rather than just photography and this quote from David Alan Harvey sums that up to some extent.

The photographs that have the biggest impact are those that resonate with us emotionally. We feel something when we look at them and that’s the power of great photography, that ability to create an emotional connection.

Why approach photography as a storyteller? There are a couple of reasons. The first is that it teaches us to take a good look at what’s in the viewfinder before we hit the shutter button. Every element of the photograph is there because we want it there.

The other is that it encourages us to think about how we feel about what we are about to shoot. And to think about what emotional connection we want viewers to have when they look at the result of our work.

What stories can you tell?

As always, you’re very welcome to share your photos in the **Creative Photography** Facebook group, or send them to me for inclusion in a future issue of ‘Inspiration’.

Enjoy this months’ helping of Inspiration!



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Guest Contribution



This month's photograph is by **Rebecca Pitt**

Instagram: [@everything_photogra_py](https://www.instagram.com/everything_photogra_py)

"I've chosen (this photograph) from my first surrealism pieces. It means a lot to me because it marked the beginning of my photoshop learning. It was the first time since I started photography that I actually felt like I was improving. I always saw myself photographing animals so I never ventured out. However, when it came to my A level course I had no choice but to experiment. I'm glad I did though."

I met Rebecca online last year.

She is only 17 and has an amazing talent, and had some of her work published in [Amateur Photographer](#) on the 14th August 2021.



What to shoot

In this issue's introduction, I spoke about visual storytelling.

My challenge to you this month is to experiment with visual storytelling and use it to create interesting photographs.

- Ask yourself what is it about this particular scene that makes you want to photograph it?
- What do you want the person who looks at it to see?
- What do you want them to think about when they see it?

This is a black and white version of a photograph I've explained in some webinars. To me, this story is about transitioning from home life to work life or vice versa. This person is using running as a means of transitioning from one part of his life to another.

Photo by Graham Elliott



The Challenge

If you're up for a challenge, take the **14-day challenge**, where I'll give you a subject or type of photograph to take every day for two weeks. [Click here](#) to start.

Learn how to take better photos

If you would like to know more about producing great results with your photography you can join my on-demand webinar by [clicking here](#).

What to shoot (examples)

Photo by Graham Elliott



Stories could be about how nature (and quite active and energetic nature at that!) can be right on our doorstep.

Or the story might be about renewal and rebirth, perhaps even the repeating, annual renewal that we see every year.



Photo by Graham Elliott

Shooting with a 35mm film SLR (Part 2)

Photo by Yang Deng on Unsplash



I hope you enjoyed part one which ran in the October 2021 issue. In this part, we'll look at some tips and tricks to use when exposing film.

Metering

Your camera may or may not have a built-in light meter. This might show as a small needle in the viewfinder, but however it's implemented you may find it better to

expose for shadows rather than highlights (usual in digital). Again, how things turn out will depend upon several factors but this is something to think about.

A built-in light meter is preferable in my opinion and more convenient. However, if you're into older cameras you're likely to need a stand-alone light meter to make sure you get the correct exposure.

Focusing

Later 35mm cameras could be used with auto-focus lenses, but for most of us, we would use a manual focus lens. Focusing systems vary and one option is the split-image system in the viewfinder. This would be a circle with either one or two lines bisecting the circle. The lines would be either horizontal or diagonal.



Using a split prism to focus

It is very simple to use; simply point your camera at a vertical or horizontal line at the correct distance from the camera (this might be the edge of a wall, a lamppost, etc.) and turn the focus ring on the lens until the two parts of the line lined up in the split prism.

Aperture

Most cameras required you to manually set the aperture (on the lens) and you may even have a small 'window' in the viewfinder to allow you to see the setting. Usually, you could set your aperture in thirds of a stop (this depended upon the specific lenses). Some zoom lenses had markings on them to allow you to calculate the depth of field.



Some cameras included a depth of field preview button. This stopped down the lens to the aperture setting on the lens (many cameras keep the lens stopped to the minimum f/ number to keep the viewfinder image bright – dropping to a smaller aperture (e.g. f/ 22) reduces the amount of light reaching the viewfinder which makes it difficult to see what's going on.

Tracking your settings

One really important thing to do, especially when you start, is to make a note of your settings. And I mean using a notepad and pen (well, you could always use the note feature on your phone). There will be a delay between taking your photograph and seeing the result and it's good to know what works and what doesn't. You'll need to manually record your metadata, so that means film stock used, shutter speed, aperture, exposure compensation and whether you pushed or pulled the film.

Power

Unlike digital cameras, film camera batteries can last for years. Usually, they're 'coin cell' but some use other types of battery (I had a struggle to find a battery for my ETRSi a few years ago). Motor drives were usually a screw-on attachment and would use a separate power supply (probably AA batteries but you'll need to check).

Flash

Most film cameras used an external flash gun rather than a built-in pop-up. Synchronisation was fairly basic compared to modern flashguns and your shutter speed options might be limited to 1/60th second.

Cross Processing

Something else to try is to request that your film is processed using the chemical process for a different film type. Typically these will be:

Processing positive (slide) colour reversal film in C-41 chemicals, resulting in a negative image on a colourless base.



Processing negative colour print film in E-6 chemicals, resulting in a positive image but with the orange base of a normally processed colour negative.

Other variations are possible.

This changes the colours and can create a particular 'look' in the same way that filters do in digital cameras. Be careful to use this with low-intensity colours such as pastels. Strong colours might bleed during processing.

Looking at your results

Professional photographers wouldn't always print all of their results (say 6 x 4 or 7 x 5) in the way you might usually expect to see photographs.

More often they would get a contact sheet which would usually have the complete film roll on 10 x 8 paper with each image at its 35mm (actual) size on the negative.

You might need a magnifying glass to check out the details but you could then shortlist the images you want to print.



Paper

While the film stock used plays a big part in the final look of your result, which is likely to be a photographic print unless you use slide film, the paper you print on will also play a part. If you have access to a good lab (or if you decide to do your own printing) you'll find there are a range of paper types available too. Once again, experiment with a few until you find a combination of film stock and paper you like.

Conclusion

When using a digital camera there is a huge amount of freedom and we can decide what we are doing (speed, picture mood, etc) on a frame by frame basis. With film, we are working much more on a roll by roll basis and certain decisions which determine the final result of the photographs have to be made before the film is even put in the camera.

If you're new to film I recommend experimenting with different film types and speeds (and blow up a few photographs to 10 x 8 size or larger to understand how the grain can be used on different film stocks).

My strongest recommendation is to find a good film lab for both processing (especially if you are pulling or pushing film or cross-processing) and printing. Ideally, they will have a choice of papers.

Having said that, once you change your approach to suit the medium you'll find there are a lot of creative opportunities with film. And, don't worry about accidents as this is where some very interesting results can appear!

If you're in or near London I can recommend Metro Imaging (Metro Imaging – Professional Photo Printing, Mounting and Framing).

Metrolmaging.co.uk

And The Print Space for high-quality printing and excellent customer service:

www.thePrintSpace.co.uk

For more tips and insights, you're welcome to join our on-demand webinar. It's available whenever you are, so just [click here](#) to join.

Smart Phone Photography

While the standard camera Apps do an adequate job, there are times when apps written by others can expand your photographic range.

This month I've put together a table of some of my favourite Apps for taking and/or adjusting your photos.

It covers both Android and Apple iPhones.

The PhotoPills App goes beyond phone photography and is useful for any photographer.



If your favourite camera App isn't listed here, send Graham an email and let us know why you like it, how much it costs and which phone you're using it with.

| App Name | Lightroom | Snapseed | Horizon Camera | ProShot | ProCam X | Halide | Footej Camera 2 | PhotoPills |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| App Store (Apple) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Google Play (Android) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cost A\$ | FREE/ Subscription | FREE | FREE/A\$2.57 | \$5.99 | FREE | FREE/ Subscription | FREE/A\$7 per year | A\$14.99 |
| Taking Photos | DNG, Lens choice | Very basic camera | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Manipulating Photos | ✓ | ✓ | Apply filters | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Best standard feature | Excellent 'level' guidance | Dynamic HDR, retouching, distortion, levels, | Dynamically straighten photos and videos | Full Manual, Light painting, Timelapse controls | Scene modes | Macro mode, AR | Manual focus | Various photography aids including Sun and Moon position. dof calculation, and star finding. |
| Extra paid features | Geometry, Selective adjustments | double exposures, curves etc. | Logo removal | | Increased resolutions | Focus peaking | Stabilization, better JPG, longer videos | |

Black and white photography (Part 2)



In part two we'll take a look at what to think about when shooting black and white. Obviously, your results will be strongly influenced by personal taste and it certainly helps to experiment. These suggestions give you a place to start.

Contrast

Do you want a soft gradation from black to white by using a lot of mid-tones, or does a higher contrast deliver a greater impact to the image?

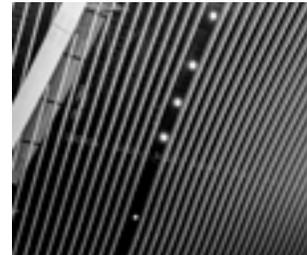
Having mid-tones will soften the image and give it a more natural appearance. Going for high contrast can lead to a more abstract result.



Use contrast to emphasise textures and shapes. Even quite ordinary subjects can be brought to life.

Patterns

Black and white photographs emphasise patterns. This might be a stack of chairs or a row of windows. Whether the pattern is part of your subject or the background, any patterns are likely to be emphasised. And remember that changing the contrast of the shot will change the emphasis of the pattern. We'll consider that next.



Once you start looking, you'll find patterns almost everywhere. These examples are from an airport terminal ceiling (this particular example is in Rome) and the structure of a medieval building..

Strong blacks and strong whites

One thing that can change the look of the image is to have at least one area of strong, 'clean' white and one of black. What I mean by that is to have one area that is as white as possible and another that is as black as possible.

These set the range of grey shades your image can potentially hold and the overall contrast of the shot.

Take a look at the histogram of your exposure and look for spikes at both ends.



Light and exposure

This is another important factor that can change the whole feel of the final photograph.

- How strong is the background light?
- How do the corresponding dark areas look?
- How do the two balance and work together?
- Start by looking at the sky – if you're outside.
- How does the light show between buildings or trees?
- How does it affect the shadows; are they soft or strong?
- How does this change the feel of the image?

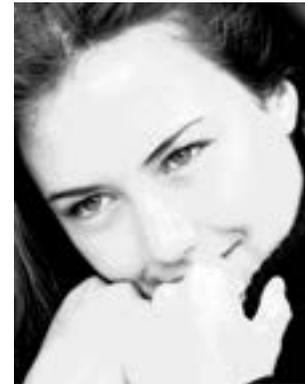
You might want to change your ISO or under and overexpose your subject to see what difference it makes to the results.

Use filters

This might be a polarizing filter on your lens (if you use filters) or a post-processing filter – I always like to start with a red filter in photoshop.

Experiment with the different results they produce (in combination with any other editing techniques you use) until you get the result you want. I often find that I can

produce several versions of the same image, each having its strengths.



Post-processing can be used to emphasise or reduce imperfections in the skin. These can easily become more obvious in black and white portraits. Lighting is very important.



A moving train. Black and white can make an image feel more abstract.

How to shoot

You might choose to use a black and white mode or setting on your camera (or black and white film if you're using film). Restricting my comments to digital photography, I tend to shoot in colour and always in RAW.

Through a lot of practice, I have a good idea of what the final image will look like when I look at it through my viewfinder. If you're not so practised you might like to shoot a test image in black and white on your camera, or shoot in colour and change it to black and white in the camera (always assuming your particular camera offers those options). This will give you a good idea of the kind of result you will produce and you can work from there.

Final thoughts

If you've never tried shooting in black and white I strongly recommend it. It will take your photography to another level and give you even more creative options.

All photographs in this article are copyrighted by Graham Elliott.



Upcoming events



PhotoTalks

I hope you've enjoyed the five PhotoTalks this year. PhotoTalks will be taking a break until the new year and I would like to thank *Shane Rozario, Sam Falconer, Connie Gurzeni and Colin Wynter Seton* for preparing and delivering the talks this year.

Webinars

I am in the process of changing the way webinars are presented. I will be changing them from live events to on-demand recordings.

There are a couple of reasons for this:

- People from around the world have been attending my webinars over the last few months and it is impossible to set times for live events that suit everyone.
- My internet connection suffers from stability issues because of where I live. Locating the recordings on an external platform allows will improve their quality.

I will be sending information about available webinars to my mailing list and they will also appear on [the events page of the website](#).

Video Blog

Short video blogs run from one to five minutes. They give quick hints and tips to help your photography. [See them here](#).

Podcasts

If you'd rather get your inspiration while driving home or walking the dog, podcasts might be for you. They run from 20 to 30 minutes and go out every Wednesday. They focus more on behind the scenes information and stories. [You can find them here](#).

Upcoming CPA courses



CPA courses are intended to help you to start producing images you're proud of as soon as possible. They assume no prior knowledge and take things in easily digested blocks that you can repeat as often as you need.

Smartphone

Ultimate Smartphone Photography is for you if you want to get more from your Smartphone. Almost everyone has one but I'm sure there are a few things it will do that are new to you.

Find out more about the course here:

[Ultimate Smartphone Photography](#)

DSLR and Mirrorless

If you're new to photography or haven't picked up a camera in years, the technical side can be quite daunting. Or it may be that you use your camera regularly but there are still gaps in your knowledge.

The good news is that this course is designed to teach you what you need to know to quickly start taking images you love.

The course is divided into technical and creative modules with lots of hands-on activities.

The only way to learn photography is to do it, so there are plenty of activities and projects you can do along the way to cement your understanding of each topic discussed.

Find out more about the course by clicking this link:

[Discovering DSLR & Mirrorless Photography](#)

Or you can experience the first module by [clicking here](#)



Fine Art Prints

“It seems to me that the natural world is the greatest source of excitement; the greatest source of visual beauty; the greatest source of intellectual interest. It is the greatest source of so much in life that makes life worth living.” – Sir David Attenborough

I believe that connecting with wildlife is a great way to step back from life’s day-to-day troubles. So, I plan on getting a little wildlife into everyone’s home without ruining the carpets!

More seriously, my fine art prints allow you to reconnect with nature whenever you need to. Personally, I find that when I get very stressed, the best thing that I can do is to reconnect with nature.

Sometimes that simply means going for a walk, but I have always enjoyed looking at photographs of animals and wild areas. They may be places I’ve already visited and bring back memories. Or they may be places I plan to visit. Either way, it’s a great way to step back and breathe.

The **WILD Planet fine art collection** comprises 75 images in three smaller collections.

You can download the new [Wild Planet Catalogue here](#).

Or go directly to the online store by [clicking here](#).



At least 10% of the proceeds from print sales will go to **EHRA** in Namibia and **HalfCut** in Australia.

Click on the logos below to visit their respective websites and find out more about what they do.

EHRA has some great resources if you want to learn more about the local population of African desert elephants.

EHRA’s “Conserving Namibia’s endangered desert elephant population” project has applied for funding from the European Outdoor Conservation Association. Although voting is now closed, you can find out more by [clicking here](#).

Graham Elliott Photography is a HalfCut Alliance contributor.





Graham Elliott
PHOTOGRAPHY

An image from the collections



Photo by Graham Elliott

This image is called **“Tiger”** and is in my **WILD EARTH Collection**. It was taken in the *Kanha National Park* (formerly *Kanha Tiger Reserve*) in January 2018. I was one of three photographers invited to spend ten days photographing them and I was very lucky to have several sightings.

Kanha is in the *Madhya Pradesh* region of central India. It is an amazing place to visit for many reasons. It is – apparently – where Rudyard Kipling was inspired to write the ‘Jungle Book’. It is also home to a variety of wildlife beyond tigers.

The thing I love most about it is that the park management has involved the local people in maintaining the park and the animals. This has greatly reduced poaching and tiger numbers there are recovering – the local tigers are Bengal Tigers.

It’s a great example of how to implement conservation in a way that supports both the human and animal populations in the area.

This was an afternoon sighting and you can see the bright sunlight breaking through the cover of the forest. I was completely absorbed by the experience of photographing this beautiful animal.

Shot on a Canon EOS 5DS with an EF 100-400mm zoom lens (mark I). You can [find out more](#) and order a print of this photograph [here](#).

The Back page credits

The image on the front cover was taken at the Kanha Reserve in India. This photograph was taken late in the afternoon as the evening Golden Hour began. I was struck by how still and serene everything looked and the Barasingha, or swamp deer, completed the scene. Thanks to Colin Seton for his **Smart Phone Photography** article. You can view more of his photographs via [his instagram account](#).

What can you shoot locally?

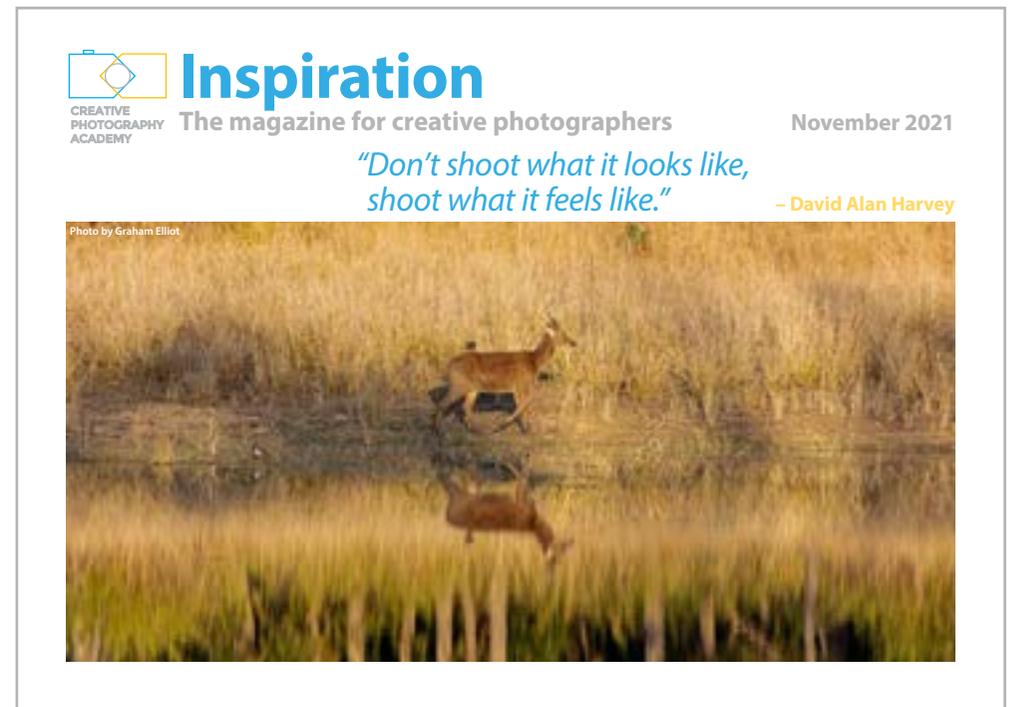
If you have any ideas, or if there is something specific you would like to see in a future issue, don't keep it to yourself!

Contact me at: graham@ge.photography

If you're not familiar with the Creative Photography Academy, please visit the website or check out our VIDEO.

Inspiration will be with you on the first Tuesday of each Month.

Kick back and be inspired!



www.CreativePhotographyAcademy.com

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