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<https://www.ndps.info>

In FOCUS

Keeping you up to date with what's happening at Norwich & District Photographic Society

Issue 07/2023

From The Chairman Astonishing Numbers



Monthly Competition
Artificial Intelligence
Letter From Japan



The Chairman

Dear Members,

Welcome to this latest edition of In Focus.

This month, as well as the usual articles, we have been given permission from the Royal Photographic Society to reproduce their interim guidelines on artificial intelligence. This is a subject that should be of interest to all photographers and indeed photographic judges. Because this is such a 'cutting edge' area the RPS are keen to point out that these guidelines are only interim. For those who want to extend their knowledge, page 4 has a hyperlink to the RPS website.

NDPS continues to raise its visibility - 800 clicks over 28 days. A new record (astonishing numbers below).

Congratulations to Steve de Roeck, for his photograph "Grass" which was chosen as best picture in the latest monthly challenge. Steve's brief outline of how he came to take the shot



should be compulsory reading for every budding photographer - Steve demonstrates how the apparent ordinary can become extraordinary. He also gives a good explanation about how he decided on a title!

Congratulations to the two Daves, Balcombe and Turner, who both had pictures accepted for the annual print exhibition of the

Digital Imaging Group of the Royal Photographic Society.

Thanks also to our globe trotting secretary, Adrian, for his pictures and tips from Japan.

We are now in July, our summer break from the Academy studio. But we have a full programme of events lined up over the next nine weeks on Tuesday evenings. All the events are outside so are subject to weather and all the events cover a wide geographical area from the North Norfolk coast to Norwich City. These evening events should provide an opportunity for everyone to spend an enjoyable evening with friends, take some interesting photographs and even perhaps get some answers to those technical questions that have cropped up with your camera. Just what is 'back button focusing'?

Don't forget Ken's exhibition, details page 8.

Tom Watson

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How to Contact Us

1. ndps.infocus@gmail.com

An 'all purpose' email address.
Ask a question about anything.

2. ndps.talk@gmail.com

For technical questions and queries concerning the Society

3. competitionsecretary.ndps@gmail.com

Messages for the competition secretary.

4. ndps.membership@gmail.com

Membership questions.

5. ndps.secretary.mail@gmail.com

Questions for the Secretary.

92.5%

of photos are now taken with smartphones

7.5%

of photos are taken on cameras!

800 clicks

New NDPS record over 28 days!

Monthly Competition, June 2023



'Grass' by Steve de Roeck



'Happisburgh Beach' by Des King



'Hanging By A Thread' by Patricia Wilden

I was delighted to be asked to judge the Monthly Image competition for June. I have chosen the top three based on my interpretation of the brief and I have also been subjective in selecting images that stand out for me. The brief was, "Minimal - When you approach minimalism look for elements of light, shadows, colours, textures, lines and space. The focus of your subject will be isolated and projected with minimal detail".

Out of a field of twenty-five entries covering quite a few different genre, it was a difficult choice with a number of potential finalists. However my winner is Grass.

This is a simple image with very interesting lighting. I'm not sure if the centrally placed subject is a reflection of the main subject or just a copy. Either way I think the use of light on the main subject is superb, bringing out a range of colours and textures on a black background. The secondary image then appears softly lit from behind. The use of a key line around the borders finishes the image of beautifully.



Steve de Roeck, the photographer explains -

Strolling through the park one day, I noticed half a dozen different types of grass heads, all individually quite attractive in their way. I thought several of them might take a nice picture, in isolation.

Several markedly different strands of grass were taken home. Hung upside down in a blacked-out box, lit with a miniature, focussing torch and with all extraneous light excluded, I discovered subtle hidden colours in each head of grass. I managed to get some interesting pictures, but felt, even with those unexpected colours, the pictures were a bit bland. So I adjusted the light and

the camera position to include the shadow on the back of the box. But then the shadow seemed a bit too sharp, so I added a touch of gaussian blur to it in post processing.

Little did I know when I investigated for a title for the pic, just how many types of grass we are blessed with. Creeping bent, crested dogs tail, purple moor grass, sweet vernal grass, tufted hair grass, velvet bent, Yorkshire fog..... I couldn't identify this grass, so choosing a title became simplicity itself, "Grass".

Canon 5D Mk IV; 24-105mm at 67mm; f5.6; 1/40; ISO200, manual focussing.

Steve de Roeck.

My second choice is *Happisburgh Beach*. I love the tones in this one, particularly in the sea and lower cloud. There is also quite a bit of texture in the higher cloud which could probably be brought out slightly more. The subject (submerged sea defences) is well placed in the image and with respect to the horizon skyline. The texture in the sea is nicely soft which gives the impression of movement in the water.

My third choice is *Hanging By a Thread*. This is a well seen subject, presumably isolated from its surrounding by desaturation. I like the detail in the leaf, the way the light shows through it and the overall leaf structure can be seen. The tones in the leaf are also pleasing. The main stem is quite soft but there is enough detail to make it interesting. There are a few dark marks in the background around the overall image which are distracting but could easily be tidied up.

Paul Cowcher

Artificial Intelligence



The Royal Photographic Society has kindly given us permission to reproduce their interim guidelines on this important topic. There will be no escaping the conundrums of Artificial Intelligence in the years to come and debate and understanding now will, hopefully, make solutions easier.

We all remember the Sony World Photography Awards 2023:

SONY WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD WINNER REVEALS ENTRY WAS AI-GENERATED, REJECTS PRIZE

German photographer Boris Eldagsen, who won the Creative category of the prestigious Sony World Photography Award, has refused the prize on the grounds that he used an artificial intelligence image generator to create his submission. The prizewinning "photo," titled *Pseudomnesia: The Electrician*, depicts what Eldagsen characterized in his submission as "a haunting black-and-white portrait of two women from different generations, reminiscent of the visual language of 1940s family portraits." In fact, Eldagsen made the work by supplying prompts to the image generator DALL-E 2, which was developed by OpenAI, the Bay Area company responsible for AI chatbot

It seems like every day the news media carries yet another warning of the impending demise of humankind at the hands of our AI overlords - and yet some of the first practical applications of this revolutionary technology are being seen much closer to home, within our very own photographic community.

From the controversy at the Sony World Photography Awards to the launch of new image editing and generating applications and features (including in the ubiquitous Adobe Photoshop suite of products) it is clear that, whether the potential of AI excites or intimidates us, photography will never be quite the same.



These are interim guidelines only, to be applied for the remainder of 2023, and do not constitute an agreed or fixed position, but should help our creative community explore the application of this revolutionary tech, whilst preserving the

heritage and fairness of our established processes. They should also provide the RPS and the photographic community with some much-needed breathing space to properly investigate, understand and adapt to the long-term implications of AI on our world.

RPS position on AI

- AI image processing and manipulation has been part of camera and post-processing software for several years.
- The recent development of advanced generative AI tools,

where entirely new images or image elements are built at a pixel level using non-photographic processes, moves image-creation from photography to illustration.

- The RPS believes images generated solely via AI are not photography as defined in its Royal Charter.
- The RPS considers AI-enabled algorithmic automation of basic imaging processing (including exposure optimisation in-camera, the cloning of a background, or removal of subject elements), as being under the control of the photographer and represents an on-going evolution of long-standing capabilities.
- The RPS does not endorse the way some AI tools have been trained with datasets of photography without the permission of the rights owner. As part of a vibrant creative community, the RPS will continue to support the artistic, commercial and moral rights of all photographers, artists and creators.
- Establishing exactly what is and isn't the product of AI will become increasingly hard to discern and will require ongoing consideration, transparency and discussion when reviewing work for Distinction submissions, exhibitions and competitions.

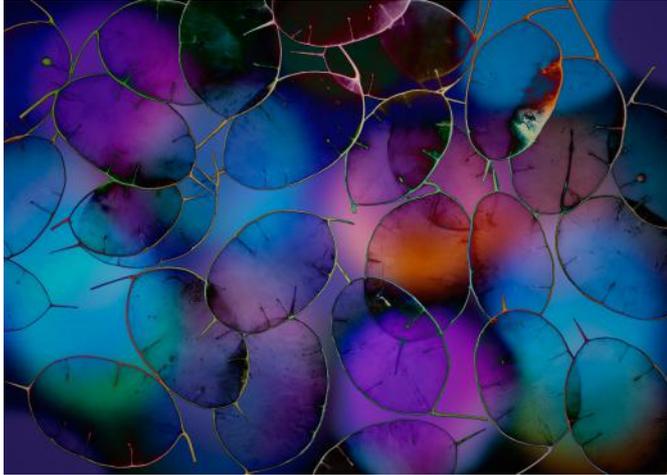
RPS guidelines on the use of AI for members

- The RPS remains committed to the principle that photographs should be the original work of the creator(s), so entirely generative images, or images with material elements entirely generated by AI will not be permitted for Distinction submissions, exhibitions and competitions. What constitutes material in this context is a grey area, and something the RPS will continue to explore with its creative community.
 - The RPS will continue to accept the use of algorithmic processing in-camera or in post-processing software, which supports digital photography for Distinction submissions, exhibitions and competitions, on the condition that photographers are clear and open where such tools have been used. The RPS will trust in the integrity of its community but in certain circumstances may request further evidence in the form of RAW files or EXIF data, data, accepting that such evidence may itself not be definitive.
 - These principles and guidelines are effective for the remainder of 2023 only and do not constitute a final, fixed position; they will evolve as AI capabilities change and understating increases.
- 19 June 2023

Yes, you would be welcome to reproduce parts (retaining context of course) and we would ask that you link back to <https://rps.org/AI>

You May Have Missed . . .

RPS Digital Imaging Print Exhibition success
for Dave Balcombe & Dave Turner



Honesty



Sea Defence

As a member of the RPS DIG group I have the opportunity to enter their annual competitions as well as the monthly competitions.

For the 2023 print competition I entered 4 prints and one of them was selected for the exhibition.

Honesty was inspired by a photo I'd seen on social media.

I had kept some *Honesty* seed heads from the garden, if you carefully peel away the outer casing you are left with a beautiful translucent centre part that makes a great subject. I placed the seed heads on an LED panel to get them on a white background. I photographed a bunch of Christmas lights out of focus and started to blend the various layers. The most important layer in term of the final colours was to use a difference blend mode on the seed head and I finished off in Colour Efex Pro

Dave Balcombe

It seemed like an age that I had to wait for the old sea defences at Caister to reappear from under the sand. Then I saw a pic online of them and phoned Dave Balcombe to arrange a trip over to the coast.

We weren't disappointed, the sand had washed away revealing the old sea defence in all its glory. I shot using a long exposure time of two minutes to blur the sea and simplify the photo. Although the image worked well in colour, in this instance I decided to process in mono and blend the horizon with the sea resulting in a more ethereal look.

The image was selected for the RPS Digital Imaging Group print exhibition and will hopefully be in my RPS ARPS panel of prints when submitted.

David Turner LRPS

Letter From Japan . . .



For some reason I am really drawn to nighttime photography. I find night scapes of big cities very interesting. I have been lucky to be able to visit Japan twice this year and indulge my interest by spending evenings wandering the streets of Tokyo and Kyoto capturing the vibrant nightlife there. Not everyone is drawn to street photography but recently one of my shots won a round of POTY which was very gratifying. Japan in summer and Autumn is quite hot and very humid so carrying a lot of equipment around is not very comfortable. Plus I have worn vertebrae so heavy lifting is not recommended so, for that reason, I use a lightweight camera and a small lens selection. On my first trip I used the Fujifilm X-T3 a very slim APS-C camera and the Red Badge Fujifilm XF 16-55 f2.8 LM WR zoom. A very sharp and flexible lens but a bit heavy. I also carry a Fujifilm XF 23mm f1.4 LM WR wide angle for low light street.

Although many of my night shots are taken with the lower speed zoom and are quite acceptable even handheld. I have taken a tripod but never took it out of the room so for my next trip I plan to take my Platypod Ultra, a very small footprint camera stand which is very lightweight. For my second trip I used the slightly larger and heavier Fujifilm X-H2 camera with 40.2 mp sensor. This is also an APS-C sensor but I don't

find the images really have any more noise than my Canon full frames. However, both Fujifilm cameras are lighter and smaller. Also the APS-C lenses are much smaller so this helps reduce the weight of my carry on luggage a lot. Even with this reduced lightweight kit if you add my work computer and an iPad, the backpack still weighs around 8 kilos. This is manageable but heavy to wear for long stints. For that reason I take a smaller shoulder bag in my luggage into which I can offload the cameras for photo walks. A small Peak Design camera strap complete the kit.



Of course I don't restrict myself to night shots and also take the usual tourist images, sights, food and of course the people.

Top tips:

- Remember spare batteries.
- A charger (I spent a lot buying one in Japan)
- Power adapters always needed but sometimes the hotel can help if you forget.
- Spare cards for the camera.
- Alternatively if you take a computer you can use an SSD storage device and offload your images to folders each day onto it (The 'Sandisk Extreme' is a good option small and lightweight).

Another tip is to keep your phone charged and ready. I have a good quality phone camera and for food etc. this is a perfect tool to capture a quick image. Also it is an essential tool for finding your way around a foreign country. Google Maps and Google Translate are a constant companion of mine. As even though I speak Japanese sometimes I need some help finding my way.

Adrian Richmond



Photoshop Tip - Jim Massy

In an Wilson's Photoshop course last year described a method for the removal of the very narrow white edges sometimes found round darker areas of an image after manipulation. For instance they may be noticed where sky meets hillsides, flowers or trees. These white edges can be formed by colour modifications or by over sharpening, but in any case they are considered undesirable. However, their elimination is very easy:

1. Select the clone tool (S) and set the mode to 'Darker'.
2. Sample the pale area adjacent to the white border
3. Brush the clone tool along the border.

Try it. It's magic!

Dates for Your Diary

04 July	Summer Programme event Riverside Norwich
11 July	Summer Programme event Sea Lavendar, Stiffkey
18 July	Outdoor shoot with a model

25 July	Summer Programme Whitlingham Country Park
01 August	Summer Programme Wells-next-the-Sea
08 August	Summer Programme Norwich, City Wall
15 August	Summer Programme Norwich, Lion Wood

Full details on the website.



Three Eyes EXHIBITION

INTELLIGENT PHOTOGRAPHY

The Crypt Gallery
The Close Norwich NR1 4DD
Tuesday July 25 - Saturday Aug 5

Three ways of seeing the world

All Exhibition details
www.3eyes.uk

NO A 

David Morris : Ken Newlan : The Third Eye

Open 10.00 am to 6.00pm except Sunday.
The photographers will be at the gallery to talk about their work, especially on Friday 28 July and Wednesday 2 August.
We are interest to see what people think the future holds for the Arts and Humanity with the coming of Artificial Intelligence.

Technical Tips Foreground shots

Kit: 35mm lens
Mini tripod

Settings: Try these first:
f/16 ISO 100 1/4 second

Top Tips ~

- Get low to the ground, this is an effective way to introduce a strong background to your scene. Use the small tripod for stability.
- Keep your ISO low. This prevents digital 'noise'. Narrow your aperture to capture a greater depth of field.

For an even more dramatic close-up foreground shot, try putting your camera on the ground.

