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Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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Newsletter #25 - November 2013

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This newsletter goes out to many photographers in New Zealand and overseas - and to anybody who asks to go onto the mailing list. If you know anybody who would like to be on the mailing list, please get them to email me. It's free and they can unsubscribe at any time, of course.

1. NEW WEBSITE

I'm delighted to announce that I now have a new website up and running.
www.kimwesterskov.com Gerard Pollock did all the hard work - I just supplied the photos and stories. Thanks Gerard! We will be adding new photos and stories regularly, so I'd invite you to check it out now and then, especially the Blog which is where the interesting stories live.

2. FACEBOOK

I'm now on Facebook too: www.facebook.com/kim.westerskov



3. KIM TIPS – RULES: FOLLOW THEM OR BREAK THEM?

Some rules are meant to be followed. For example, if the photo is meant to be sharp [which is most photos apart from deliberately blurred photos] then the photo has to be sharp. Or at least the most important bits have to be sharp. If there's a person or animal in the photo, then at least the eye[s] have to be in focus and sharp.

But other rules can be broken. "The Rule of Thirds" is a "rule" you will all have heard of. And if you've been to any of my workshops, you'll know what I think of that rule – not much! The Rule of Thirds can be useful for beginner or even intermediate photographers who have little natural artistic ability, but it's a "rule" that has led to too many predictable [and therefore sometimes boring] photos over the years.

Looking at the winners in a recent BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, I was struck by how many times the "rules" were broken. When done well, usually by photographers who understand the "rules" in the first place, breaking the rules can lead to original, dramatic compositions. The main use of the "Rule of Thirds" is keeping the main subject away from the edges, and making sure that the subject isn't dead centre, though with some subjects dead centre can work just fine. So – don't be afraid to break the rules. Or – compose with "the rules" in mind, and then deliberately break the rules. Take both photos. Later on your computer you can see which works best, and then use the Delete button to get rid of whichever photo doesn't work.

4. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Originality houses many rooms, and the views from the windows are all different."

Guy Davenport



5. NZ GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY KEYNOTE SPEECH

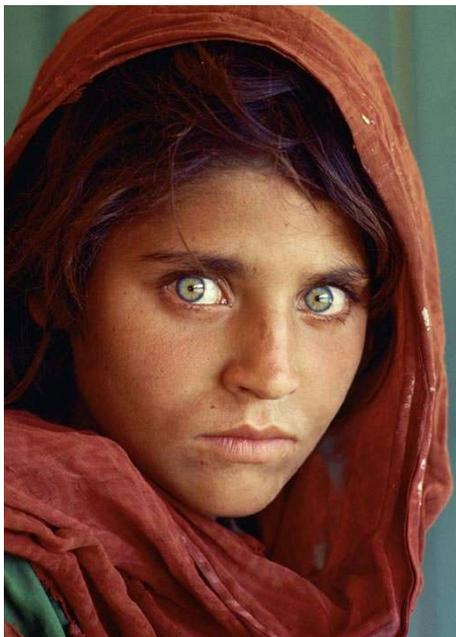
The New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year Competition has rapidly become New Zealand's biggest and most prestigious photography competition. I have been one of the four judges for the last two years, and this year I was delighted to be asked to give the Keynote Address at the awards ceremony in Auckland on October 24.

I think about photography 7 days a week, so this was a good excuse for some more research and thinking about the place of photography in our world, and the power of photography. The presentation was so well received that I thought I'd share the introduction with you.

The Light and the Darkness – The Power of Photography

So, we're all photographers now, aren't we? Everyone has a camera of some kind, even if just their mobile phone or I-thingy. 350 million – that's how many photos were uploaded to Facebook today – 4000 per second. Candid, instant, ephemeral – mostly of me, me and me, the dumb, the funny, the cute, the “my holiday was better than yours”, puppies and last weekend's party.

But there's another kind of photography too, always has been since photography was invented – created by serious passionate photographers.



Until recently, the best photos, those that stayed in your mind for years, were taken by professional photographers, typically on assignment: Afghan Girl, Napalm Girl, Lee Harvey Oswald being shot, Robert Kapa's D-Day landings ... Most if not all of the photos from conflict zones were taken by professional photographers.

But we're getting rid of professional editorial photographers, they are being laid off in droves. And the newspapers and magazines who commissioned them, and where the photos ended up being shown to the world, are disappearing rapidly. Those still with us are struggling.

Photo: “Afghan Girl” by Steve McCurry

Then again, professional or amateur – does it really matter? What does matter is that there are photographers who really care about photography. They are passionate about it. They tell stories, they ask questions, they sometime make us search our consciences. They remind us that the world can be a brutal, unforgiving place. But they also remind us that the world can be unbelievably beautiful. They show us the light and the darkness.

Some photos help stop wars [Napalm Girl and similar photos helped bring the Vietnam war to a close earlier than it might otherwise have], some photos help start wars [Ron Haviv's [photo](#) on cover of Time was one of the reasons why George Bush gave the go-ahead to invading Panama], and some help relieve the suffering that war always causes – Steve McCurry's "Afghan Girl" resulted in various organizations being set up to help alleviate the suffering in Afghanistan, and also inspired many volunteers to help in refugee camps.



Most photos don't have such big impact, obviously, but many of the good photos do make a difference. They help us to better know, understand and appreciate our world and the people in it.



Now most of us photographers aren't cut out to be Steve McCurrys – can't be, don't want to be – but many of us do try to make a difference, to help document the world, to help us all to better appreciate it and to better deal with the challenges we face. This happens quietly, mostly, but it does happen. Every day. In my case, my photos get used in many places from NZ Geographic magazine to conservation campaigns to the 18 [books](#) I've written and photographed that end up in classrooms and school libraries in many countries. Many of my colleagues in New Zealand and around the world tell similar stories. We try to make a difference.



So – don't underestimate the power of great photos, or the quiet power of good photos. Photos help us understand our world, our place in the world, our responsibilities and the possibilities for a better future.

Competition results: <http://www.nzgeographic.co.nz/photography>

6. “LANDSCAPES, SEASCAPES & WATERFALLS” WORKSHOP

Sunday 17 November

Always a favourite among photographers!
Landscapes is a big topic and there’s many ways of approaching it, so we cover a lot of ground. Topics covered include:

- elements of good landscape photos: composition, lines and layers, minimalism, colours ...
- dusk and night landscapes
- wide angle landscapes
- telephoto landscapes
- dealing with “scruffy foregrounds and blah skies”
- post-production [Photoshop, Lightroom]
- pre-visualization and serendipity
- good places to go
- “soul” in landscapes
- reflections
- forests
- geothermal areas
- mountains
- coastlines
- rivers
- waterfalls – including the lovely silky smooth slow shutter speed images
- and much more.



Part 1: Sunday 17 November 9.00 -5.00pm.

Workshop at Kim’s studio and field trip.

Part 2: Landscape assignment – in your own time over the following 2-3 weeks.

Part 3: Evaluation and critiquing of your photos.

We meet at Kim’s studio again for a few hours at a time that suits everybody, probably an evening.

Cost: Full course fee [which includes workshop, follow-up, hand-outs, and Vivienne’s yummy catering] \$295 [or \$245 Early Bird – if booked by 10 November]. Fulltime students \$150.

7. “FLOWERS” WORKSHOP Saturday 23 November

Finally! I’ve been looking for a long time for a great place to run a Flowers Workshop. The bad news is that I haven’t found anything near Tauranga. The good news is that the Hamilton Gardens are only an hour’s drive from Tauranga, and the 17 fulltime gardeners there make sure that every day there is a great day. With Leigh and Gerard I recently spent a full day there, and was very impressed. The timing of the workshop should see the extensive rose gardens at their very best, as well as countless other kinds of flowers.



You could be excused for thinking that flower photography was easy [after all, flowers just sit there, day after day, looking lovely] but GOOD flower photography needs a combination of right equipment, specific techniques and good timing. In this workshop I will share with you what you need to know to get great flower photos. Join me!



Part 1: Saturday 23 November. 9.00 – 12.00 noon. In my workshop studio, we will look at the techniques and approaches needed for great flower photos, including making your photos look their very best in Photoshop/Lightroom, and also turning them into “art” in post-production. 12.00-1.00 – Vivienne’s yummy lunch. We then travel to the Hamilton Gardens, carpooling, and spend the rest of the afternoon there.



Part 2: Flower **assignment** – in your own time over the following 2-3 weeks.

Part 3: **Evaluation** and critiquing of your photos. We meet at my studio again for a few hours at a time that suits everybody, probably an evening. The follow-up can be by email.



Cost: Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs, refreshments, Viv’s yummy lunch, and follow-up] **\$295** - or **\$245** for Early Birds [if you register before 13 November]. Fulltime students **\$150**. The price includes a contribution towards fuel costs.

Top photo by Leigh Nicholas. Second top photo by Lyn Yates. Third top photo of the Indian Char Bagh Garden at Hamilton Gardens. Bottom photo – Leigh at Hamilton Gardens.



8. IN-DEPTH PHOTO EVALUATION EVENINGS

Earlier this year a photographer asked me if I would run “in-depth photo evaluation evenings” – somewhat like the Tuesday “Photos & Coffee” evenings that I run every month, but with real in-depth photo critiques. We’ve run several so far, and they were great: enjoyable and definitely in-depth. **In-depth Photo Evaluation Evenings** will run on the **THIRD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH** except December. As the person who suggested these evenings said, both the frequency of the meetings, and seeing what others are photographing, should be motivating.

What to expect: You bring along some photos, ideally 3-6, that you’d like constructively critiqued/evaluated, primarily by me, but also by the others attending. If you bring only 3-4 photos, each photo will be given more time than if you bring a larger number. A good number of the photos will be brought into Photoshop or Lightroom to show different cropping, tidying or processing possibilities - how they could be improved in post-production.

Cost. \$55 for the evening, which will run from 7.00pm to 10.00pm. The next IN-DEPTH evening will be on **Thursday 21 November 2013**.



9. KIM'S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

These friendly, relaxed get-togethers are for those of you who have been to any of my workshops or field trips over the last couple of years or are thinking about maybe coming on one. There's no obligation of any kind. We meet on the first Tuesday of each month [every month of the year except January], chat informally about photography, and view some of the recent photos we've taken. No charge [free]. Supper is served. Please email me if you'd like to come and please only book up to one month ahead. **It's always fun and friendly.**

The last one for the year is:

Tuesday 3 December 2013 – starting 7.00pm

10. PRIVATE TUITION

I had a great day not so long ago, all day teaching three photographers [in two separate sessions] how to get the best out of their camera, and covering specific techniques they were interested in. A bit later I was teaching two more photographers, concentrating on the best organisation for their photo libraries, their workflow through Lightroom/Photoshop, and photography in general.

Topics covered can be anything from photography in general to specific techniques, computer workflow, Lightroom, Photoshop... Each photographer determines their own agenda, and so each session is unique. Most tuition so far has been one-on-one, but there's no reason why [if you'd like to bring a friend with similar questions] it couldn't be for two people at once [making it much less expensive for each person, of course]. Sessions are typically 2-3 hours. We cover a lot of ground every hour. **First 2 hours: \$80 per hour, after that \$70 per hour** [for those of you who qualified on the previous plan, don't worry, your bottom rates still apply – nothing has changed for you]

“What I learned in one evening with Kim would have taken me months to figure out by myself. Overall I found the session extremely worthwhile and consider it excellent value”.

Raewyn Adams