

# Newsletter, March 2020



## The fires are out but the images linger on in powerful testimony

We are well into March and the summer's horrendous bushfires in the Blue Mountains have all been officially declared out since the second week of February but there's no escaping the bushfires, and the recovery, it seems. Photographers, amateur and professional, have captured incredible images of all aspects of the bushfire season and beyond.

One photographer, Adam Stevenson, has caught the world's attention with his incredible shot of a kookaburra perched on a burnt branch, surveying the razed landscape against a background of a fiery red sky and heavy smoke (right).

Stevenson's image, shot on an iPhoneX, scooped the Australian national award in the Sony World Photography Awards. It was taken when Stevenson returned to his home at Wallabi Point, north of Forster, after being evacuated for about four days. He titled the photograph "That's Nothing to Laugh About".

"As I watched the sun set through the smoke, a kookaburra appeared and allowed me to walk right up to it. We shared a moment, watching the sun fade behind the apocalyptic scene ... he was laughing."

### From iPhone to film

During the fire season, social media was awash with images of



© Adam Stevenson Sony World Photography Awards



firefighters tackling blazes, many of them shot by RFS volunteers on mobile phones. We saw scores of press photographs of firefighters at work, at rest and occasionally at play. What a delight, then, to serendipitously come across the work of Woodford RFS brigade volunteer Stuart Skene, who took his camera, loaded with black and white film, on the truck into the firegrounds. At times the temperature in the truck locker went above 50C, and you can image what this does to film. The shots were taken at fast speeds meaning the prints are heavily grainy but, for me, this lends a gorgeous “gritty” feel to the shots. Skene has written an article titled “Humanity on the Frontline of Climate Change: the Australian NSW Bushfires on Film” for an online film buffs’ site called Emulsive (no further explanation needed, really), which you can read in full [here](#).

It’s part personal volunteer story; part political plea for action on climate change. There’s some technical detail about the difficulties, but the heart of the article – and why it’s so worthwhile reading and looking at Skene’s

photographs – is the story he tells about the RFS family. It’s enough to have you filling in the volunteer forms!

Closer to home, the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba pulled together an incredible show, at breakneck speed, called **Out of the Fire: Resilience in the Face of Natural Disaster**. It finishes on March 15.

This eclectic, moving and important exhibition showcases locals’ photographs of the bushfires. The show, in the centre’s foyer, is free. It comprises about 20 framed images hung on the walls; the remainder (perhaps almost 200 in total) are shown on two television screens. Each image bears the photographer’s name, a title, and the place, date and time when it was taken.

A slight criticism is that the images are shown a little too fast. The images cover the fires themselves (lots of flames and pyrocumulous clouds), fire tourists and other onlookers, Rural Fire Service crews, the firegrounds and the slow rejuvenation of the bush, with amazing red and green shoots emerging from blackened stumps.



Stuart Skene: *Mechanic*. Amongst volunteer firefighters were paid emergency services personnel like this mechanic, outside the immediate fireground.

It is emotionally challenging and oddly uplifting at the same time.

More than this, it is an important social record of the fires’ impact



through the eyes of those who experienced it first-hand, for months on end. The show ends soon, so grab yourself a coffee from the café, pull up an easy chair, and re-experience the fires from a safe distance.

And while you're there ... the **National Photographic Portrait Prize 2019** is on at the Cultural Centre until March 22. There are 39 photographs on view, chosen from an entry field of more than 3,000. The selectors had their work cut out, that's for sure. It's the tail end of last year's exhibition, run by the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. If you can't make it, you can see all 39 portraits [here](#)

If you happen to be in the ACT soon, you can see the 48 finalists in the 2020 prize at the National Portrait Gallery until May 10 before it goes on tour. The winner is to be announced in Canberra on March 13 and if you want to preview the entries and make your own winning selection, you can do by clicking [here](#).

**Liz Morgan**



Stuart Skene: *The Mistake*. This image is the result of the developing tank not being closed properly along with some aggressive stand development and hard water leaving marks on the film.



# Members' choice DPI – “Bubble Wrap Girl”



I am always on the lookout for interesting and challenging ideas for images.

Bubble Wrap Girl was a complex image as the focus and lighting had to cope with the bubble wrap.

The image was illuminated with a softbox and a snoot pointed at the talent's head and her hair, which just happened to be blue.

The overarching hue was achieved in camera by a white balance adjustment.

As for the meaning of the image, that is open to the viewer's consideration.

There are other images in this personal project that may be exhibited at other Club evenings, so watch this space.

A special thanks to Paige @paige\_tee\_creations for hair and make-up and being a gracious model.

Nikon D7500, Nikon 70.0-300.0 mm f/4.5-5.6 @75mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO 100.

**Mark Foley**

# Members' choice mono – “Emerging”

This image was captured on the morning of the camera club's excursion to Mt Tomah Gardens in October last year.

On this particular day it had been raining and it was foggy, so there was plenty of moisture to be found on most of the flowers and plants.

When I came across this wonderful Protea the light was soft and subdued, there was very little breeze, it was perfect for getting in close and capturing all the fine details of this big bright red flower.

Post processing was fairly simple. A little adjustment to the contrast and exposure was all that was required. My initial intention was to print in colour, then I had a thought, what would it look like in monochrome?

So into SilverEfex Pro for the conversion and well it just popped from the moment I applied the Fine Art profile. While the colour version is fairly impressive, it can't hold a candle to this black and white, IMHO.

Pentax K-1, D FA Macro 100mm f2.8 WR, f/8.0, 1/160s, ISO 100.

**Rob Skinner**





# Members' choice colour – “Two in the frame”

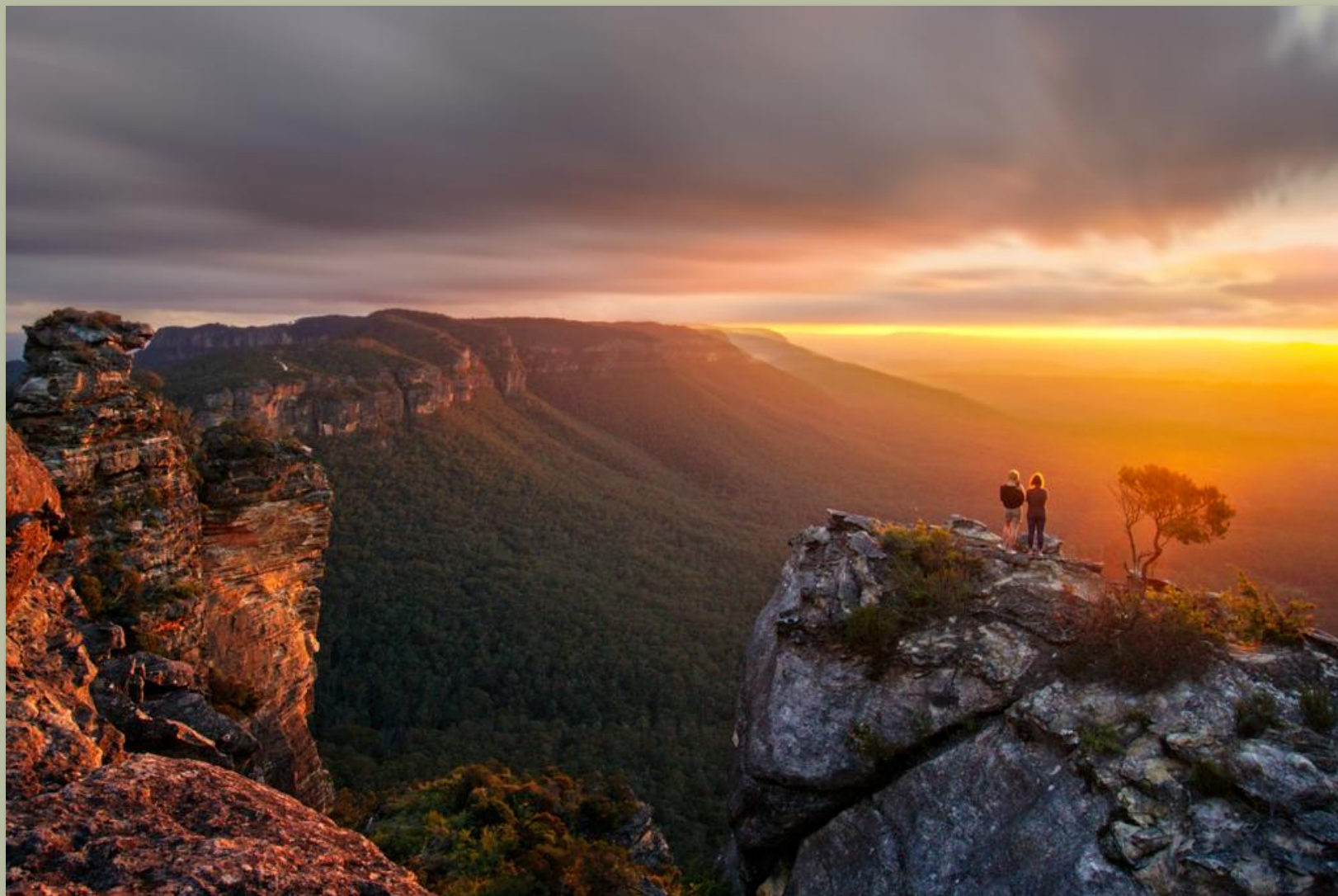
Sunset at Boar Head Lookout. I had watched these two brave people standing on the edge of the cliff for some time.

The opportunity for an interesting shot was there. It is so good to have a camera with you at the right time!

The light became very dim and I did not have a tripod with me. In order to produce a sharp image I lifted the ISO to over 300 and focussed directly on the pair. The camera and wide angle lens did the rest.

In post processing I added a motion blur filter to the clouds to create the long and smooth exposure effect.

Sony ILCE-6000,  
E 10-18mm F4 OSS  
@10mm, f/6.7, 1/60s,  
ISO 320.



**Andrzej Krawzyck**

# Diary



## National Photographic Portrait Prize 2019

This touring exhibition is on at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba until March 22.

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If you can't make it, you can see all 39 portraits [here](#). If you happen to be in the ACT soon, you can see the 48 finalists in the **2020** prize at the National Portrait Gallery until May 10 before it goes on tour.

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**Liz Morgan**



Chris Riordan: *Holly and Pebbles*, 2018. A finalist for the 2020 National Photographic Portrait Prize.

## Out of the Fire

**Out of the Fire: Resilience in the Face of Natural Disaster, Katoomba. Until March 15.**

The Blue Mountains Cultural Centre pulled together this eclectic, moving and important exhibition of locals' photographs of the devastating bushfires. It comprises about 20

framed images hung on the walls; the remainder (perhaps almost 200 in total) are shown on two television screens. The show, in the centre's foyer, is free. More on page 2.





## Regeneration exhibition at Gallery One88 in Katoomba

A specially curated exhibition of photographs of post-bushfire regeneration is happening at Gallery One88 in Katoomba later this month. Proceeds will go to a local fire brigade.

Federal member for Macquarie, Susan Templeman, will be a guest speaker. The theme of the exhibition would be close to Susan's heart as she was very unfortunate to lose her own home during the Winmalee fires in 2013.

The exhibition will run between 24 March and 5 April, with the opening on March 28. [Gallery One88](#), 186-188 Katoomba Street.

## The Mono Awards 2020

The Mono Awards were launched only last year. The competition is presented by Yaffa Media, the publisher of [Australian Photography](#) and [Capture](#), with major sponsor [digiDirect](#).

Entries are now open to amateur and professional photographers who are residents or citizens of Australia or New Zealand.

Entries close on **14 June 2020**. Currently the entry fee is \$25 per image, but this rises to \$30 after 24 May.

The awards are solely for monochrome images in three categories: People, Places, and Animals. Photographers can enter one or more categories and as many times as they like.

For more details, please click [here](#).

The top 40 photographs from last year's competition can be viewed [here](#).

Links to several interesting articles and videos on monochrome photography are listed on the Award website's main page [here](#).



Sharron Leppien: *Running with tyre*, winner in Places category, Mono Awards 2019.



# WWW

## 2019 International Landscape Photographer of the Year

A set of four images by Oleg Ershov from the Russian Federation has earned him the title of International Landscape Photographer of the Year 2019 (right: two of his winning images; view all four [here](#)).

The competition attracted entries from 840 photographers with 3,403 images being judged. Cash prizes of \$US10,000 were awarded for best Photograph of the Year (single image) and best Photographer of the Year (portfolio of four images). In addition there were five special subject awards: Wildlife in Landscape, Abstract Aerial, Snow and Ice, Lone Tree, and Heavenly Cloud.

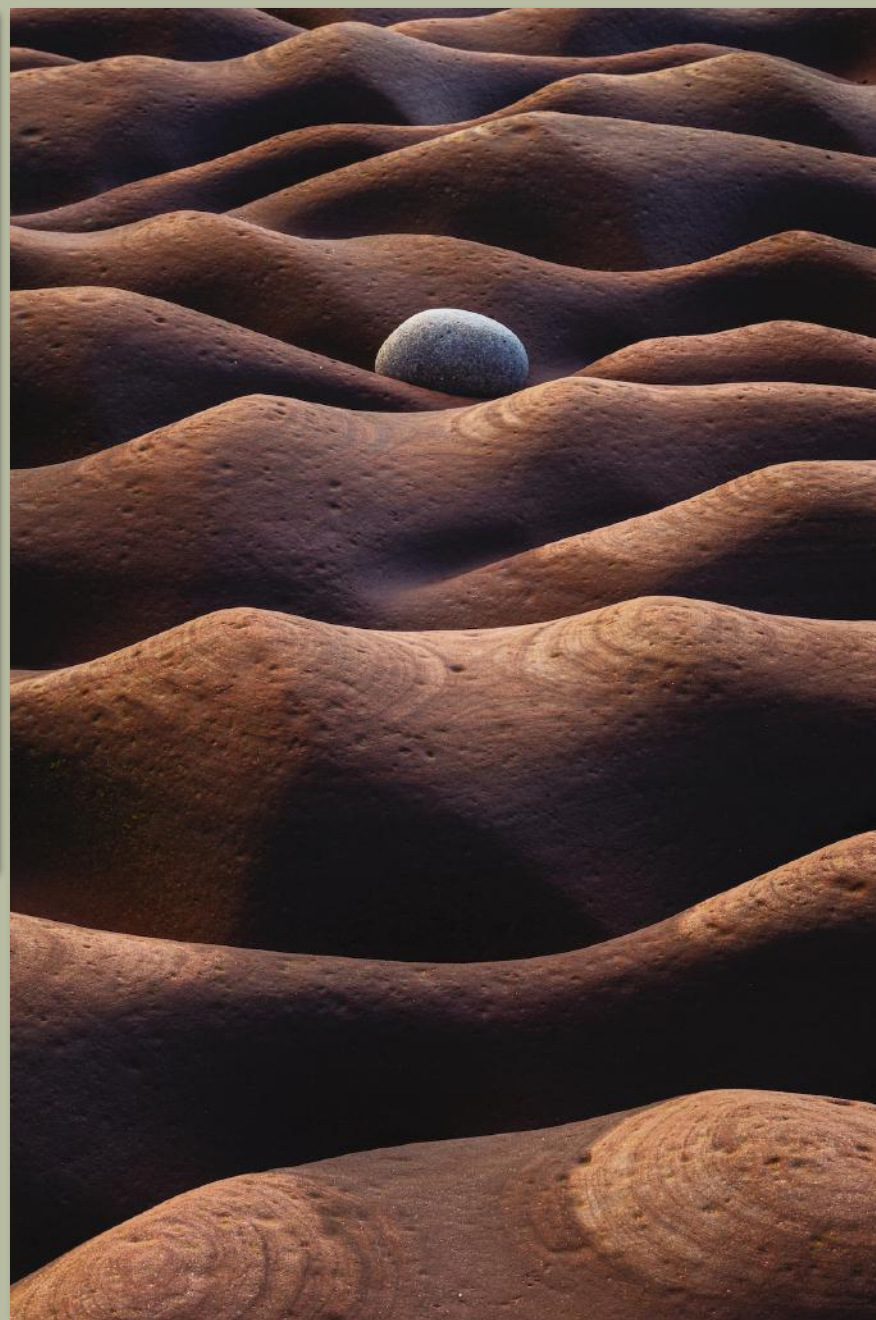
Australian photographer Ignacio Palacios took the Abstract Aerial Award for his extraordinary image (page 10) of Brazil's Lençóis Maranhenses National Park.



Fourteen other Australian photographers are in the top 101 images selected by the judges, including Benajamin Maze for his capture of a lightning strike near Lincoln Rock (page 11).

Their images can be viewed in the flip book [here](#). Some can be viewed in larger size [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

**Michael Peck**







Abstract Aerial Award: Ignacio Palacios (Australia): *Lencois Maranhenses, Brazil.*





Benjamin Maze: *Lincoln's Rock, Blue Mountains*

## Join a photo orgy!

In 1940 Ansel Adams captured the Horsetail Fall falls in Yosemite National Park. He did so free of the crowds of literally thousands of photographers who, thanks to social



Photo: Phil Hawkins. Over 2,000 photographers gathered at Horsetail Fall on 22 February.

media, now trek to the site in February to capture the moment the setting sun gives the Fall the striking appearance of fire or lava (right).

Full story [here](#).



Photo: David Gaiz. Sunlight hitting the Horsetail waterfall.

## New on YouTube: Photography Online

Club member and webmaster Greg Wood brings our attention to a new YouTube resource, [Photography Online](#), which, in about 15 months, has attracted more than 17,000 subscribers to its monthly show.

No bias on this writer's part, of course, but the channel's HQ is on the breathtakingly beautiful Isle of Skye, and the host is local lass Ruth Taylor, a radio presenter and amateur photographer.

Taylor and three professional photographers – specialising in landscape, travel and wildlife – share trade secrets and tips to help you improve your shots and perhaps earn some money along the way.

Four shows are already online and if you subscribe – for free – you'll get notifications of new episodes. Photography Online has a sleek, professional look and presentation (no advertisements) and each episode runs for about 45 minutes. Maybe tuck a note in your diary for something creative to watch one of those long winter nights to come?

**Liz Morgan**



## Independent Photographer: street photography competition

This European online magazine runs monthly competitions, with \$1,000 (we assume US dollars) in prizemoney and the promise of international publication for your work.

The organisers say that photographers retain full copyright over their work, which is a good sign.

This month's theme is street photography and the deadline for entries is March 31, so dig out those negatives now!

One of the judges is long-time Magnum Photos staffer Alex Webb, who has worked in some of the world's more challenging countries and cities.

It's a serious magazine, running a serious competition. Entry fees are \$US20 for a single shot.

For more details click [here](#).



Photo: Carlos Antonorsi ([carlosantonorsi.com](http://carlosantonorsi.com) and [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com)).

## Leica announces the "luxury class" S3

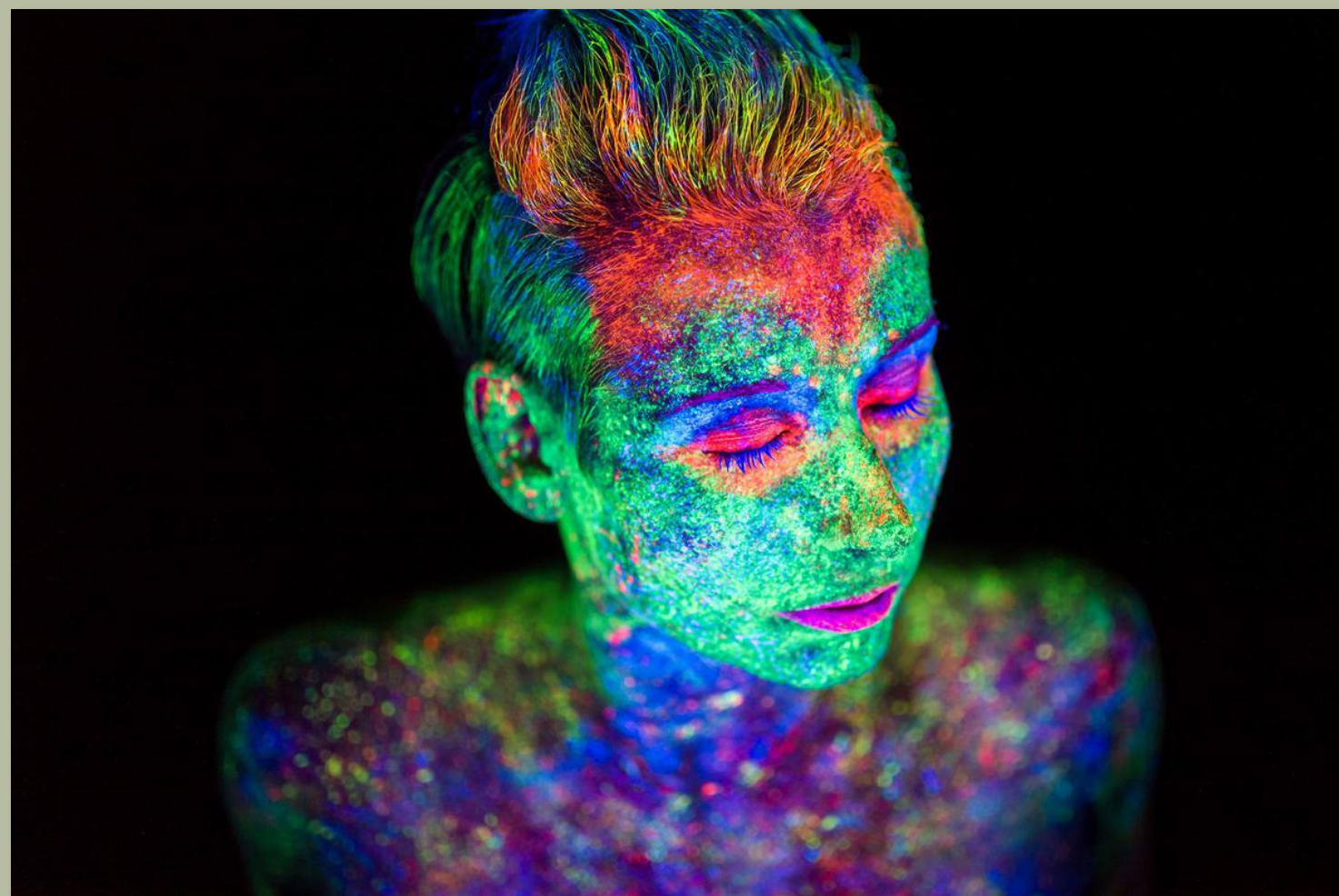
Have you had an unexpected legacy lately? Maybe you're thinking of cashing in that embarrassing old Roller? Perhaps that pesky Covid-19 is giving you second thoughts about that first class world photography tour you had planned to escape the harsh Australian winter? Well don't despair! You can splash your cash on a new camera instead.

At a mere \$AU29,990 the Leica S3 DSLR offers you a Leica ProFormat sensor, with 64-megapixel resolution, sensitivity up to ISO 50000, and medium format Cine 4K Video.

A key feature is the sensor. At 30 x 45mm, it has the same aspect ratio as the classic 35mm format, but offers a 56% increase in light sensitive surface area.

Before you get too excited though, perhaps you should read Digital Camera World's review:

"When we first saw the Leica S3 in 2018, the world was a very different place. In 2020, the Fujifilm GFX 100 is the new medium format



Sample image illustrating the delicate bokeh you can expect from a Leica S3 ([leica-camera.com](https://leica-camera.com))

measuring stick – and Leica's DSLR costs nearly twice as much for a much lower resolution sensor, which isn't even stabilized. Its 64MP output is almost outpipped by the full-frame Sony A7R IV, and

somehow it's still using motion JPG for its video (uncropped medium format 4K though it may be). It's beautiful, it's capable, but it's a camera out of time – and with a price tag more than a little out of

whack, even by Leica standards.”  
Ouch!

Full review [here](#). S3 details [here](#).



## Thief in the night

Annabel Dorrestein, a PhD candidate at Western Sydney University, has lost a very expensive camera on Christmas Island.

Thankfully not a Leica S3, but a \$6,000 thermal imaging camera she was using in her research on the Christmas Island flying fox.

The camera was set on a tripod under a mango tree to record the nocturnal activities of the flying foxes, but the following morning it was gone.

Extensive searching has not located the camera, but clues point to the culprit being a *Bigus latro*, otherwise known as the island's famously kleptomaniac Robber Crab or Coconut Crab..

These are the largest land-living crabs, weighing up to 4.1 kilograms with a lifespan of up to 60 years or more. They will drown within a day in seawater.

They are cunning: the “crab can take a coconut from the ground and cut it to a husk nut, take it with its claw, climb up a tree 10m high and drop the husk nut, to access the



Professor Brian Cox with a Robber Crab ([whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com](http://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com))

content inside. They often descend from the trees by falling, and can survive a fall of at least 4.5 metres unhurt. Coconut crabs cut holes into coconuts with their strong claws and

eat the contents, although it can take several days before the coconut is opened.”

So a camera lost, but could it be a

photographer gained? Full story [here](#). More on the crabs [here](#).

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## Submitting images



Apple Mail users: after attaching your images please ensure you select

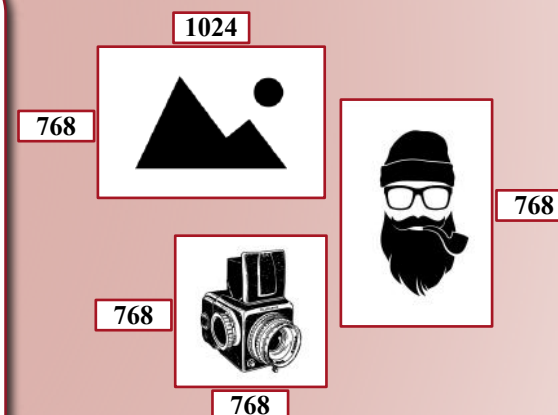
Image Size: Actual Size 

Whether submitting a DPI or digital images of your prints the required format to match the projector is a **maxium width** of 1024 and a **maximum height** of 768 pixels.

For a **landscape** image, set the longest side to 1024 ensuring shortest is no more than 768; for **portrait**, set the longest side to 768, and for a **square** image, all sides are 768.

Please name your image file in the following format: **[type] title\_initials.jpg** e.g. [DPI] Womblings\_JX.jpg.

The three image types are [DPI], [CP] and [MP]. Use an underscore, not a dash



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