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VIEWFINDER INDEX

How To Shoot Stunning Silhouette Images

The Things People Say to Photographers.

How to Master Zoom Blur Photography

Astro Photography. August best dates

Decluttering Your Photographic Life

HKandao Raw+

Cartoon

Check it out!!

Cover Photo

Cover Photographer... Anita Pallas.

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How To Shoot Stunning Silhouette Images

Silhouette photos are unique because, well... they basically break the rules of what we have been taught about properly exposing our subjects!

For a silhouette, the goal is to have whatever or whoever you are photographing way under exposed, to the point they are blacked out. This means you will be exposing for the back lighting, rather than your subject.



If you have never attempted to take an image in this way, you should definitely consider giving it a try!

Not only will you be learning a few new things following some backwards rules, but you will also be left with some very interesting and unique images that will leave the viewer with something to think about. They will be drawn in because of the bright backlighting behind a somewhat mysterious subject.

☐ Choose Your Subject/Background Wisely

☐ Almost any lighting can be used with these types of images, however, the larger the source of the back-lighting, the more your blacked out subject will stand out. Different lighting will give you different results. It's best to work with a solid background with little distractions. Remember that the lighting is really the backbone to a silhouette. Remember that the lighting is really the backbone to a silhouette. So maybe find an open field, beach, or any location where the sky takes up the majority, if not all, of the background.

Also, make sure whatever you are photographing has a nice distinct shape. This is because the only detail of your object or subject you will be able to recognize in a silhouette is the shape. Obviously any subject (person) will work well because humans have a clear defined shape, regardless of the size.



If working with an object, make sure it has a unique distinct shape as well. This will draw the viewer in and leave them curious about the details of the subject matter. Any image that draws viewers in and leaves them intrigued is always a great image in my opinion. Silhouettes require creative thinking, but you are left with beautiful results.

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Australian Photographic Society - <http://www.a-p-s.org.au/>

Gurushots - <https://gurushots.com/>

Free Lessons with Serge Ramelli - <http://photoserge.com/free-lessons/all>

Placing Your Subjects

□ When taking a silhouette photo, placement of your subject is important. If working with more than one subject, make sure to separate them enough so they don't look like one big black blob. Each subject should be well defined by their size and shape. Remember everything in front of the backlighting will be blacked out, so the only thing(s) you want in the frame are what you want as your silhouette. So isolate these people/ things as much as possible.



□ Setting Exposure And Focus

□ Typically when we take a photo, we expose for our subjects, to ensure that they are properly lit. This way we see all of their details. However, since we want our subjects completely underexposed in this case, we need to expose for the lighting. This means when adjusting your settings, you will need to meter from the sky or backlighting and adjust your settings from that.

So point your camera towards the brightest area of the photo and set from there. If during the day, adjust the settings until the sky appears blue instead of blown out.

If during the late afternoon/evening when the sun is setting, adjust your settings until the sky is just as you see it, usually you get warmer tones this time of day. This may require you taking a few practice shots of just the backlighting to get it right. Once the backlighting looks as vibrant as you see it without being blown out, keep your settings there.



Now that you have the right [exposure settings](#), you can set your focus on your subject to make sure they are sharp. Working with a small aperture (large number) will help you with the depth of field and ensure more of your image is in focus. With silhouettes, the sharper everything in the image is, the more appealing it will be. This isn't the time to try to get a blurred background. So keep this in mind when adjusting your exposure for the background. This will require a little tweaking of your other settings.

Silhouettes take planning and preparing. The background lighting, location, placement of your subjects, and your camera settings all play major factors in getting results.

Put these tips to practice and you'll be shooting them like a pro in no time!

<https://contrastly.com/how-to-shoot-stunning-silhouette-images/>

The Things People Say to Photographers.

If you've worked as a photographer for any length of time, chances are you'll have heard a few of these gems over the years. Of course, I should stress that this piece is meant in a light-hearted way – particularly as most of my clients are an absolute delight to work with!

Most of these, heard by both myself and photographer friends, are from people we sensibly decided not to work with in the first place... ☐

'You have a really great camera'

Never mind the years we spent studying photography, learning about all the technical aspects and honing our 'eye' for a shot. It turns out it's all just down to using a nice camera!

'Can you make me look 10 years younger / 10 pounds slimmer?'

Well, for starters, it does help if anyone looking at your photograph can recognise you! And secondly, whilst we're good, we're not miracle workers!

'My uncle / friend / 2nd cousin once removed can shoot my wedding'

Good luck with getting great photos once your relative has consumed the free wine! More seriously, you may find that just because the person has got a good camera, it doesn't necessarily mean they can actually take great shots.

'Someone else says they can do it cheaper'

As the old saying goes, you get what you pay for! Of course, all pro photographers charge different rates but if someone's offering to do a full day shoot for £50, chances are that they don't necessarily know what they're doing. We're happy to negotiate but in reason!

'Can you do the shoot for the price you quoted, but throw in all the photos and some free wall canvases?'

Wall canvases cost money. Our shots cost money. We charge a reasonable and sensible amount for our shoots, but we can't afford to give away all the profit on products!

'Can you remove the watermark on your online gallery so I can use the photos on my site'

Yes, of course I can. Once you've paid the money for the licence.

'I only want one or two photos, so can you give me a much cheaper price for the shoot?'

Unfortunately, we still need to bring all our equipment, set up our lights and take a selection of photos for you to choose from. Meaning that we're still spending the same amount of time on a shoot whether you want one photo or ten.

'We want to do something really wacky!'

Normally said by corporate clients. N.B. – 'wacky' usually means that they'd like a grey background instead of a white one.

'Can you just take some pictures at my wedding?'

Normally said when you've only been invited to a wedding because someone knows you're a photographer. And the bride / groom certainly won't be offering any money for the job!

'It will be great for your portfolio'

You wouldn't walk into a shop and take goods for free, whilst promising the owner that you'll get them great 'exposure' by raving about them to your friends! And it's no different for photographers. Remember, exposure doesn't pay the bills or keep us fed and watered!

<https://contrastly.com/the-things-people-say-to-photographers/>

How to Master Zoom Blur Photography

by Jo Plumridge

Zoom blur (sometimes called zoom burst) is a creative photography effect where the shot appears to blur from the centre outwards. This creates a look as if the scene is bursting towards you, giving an abstract feel and adding movement and action to a photo.

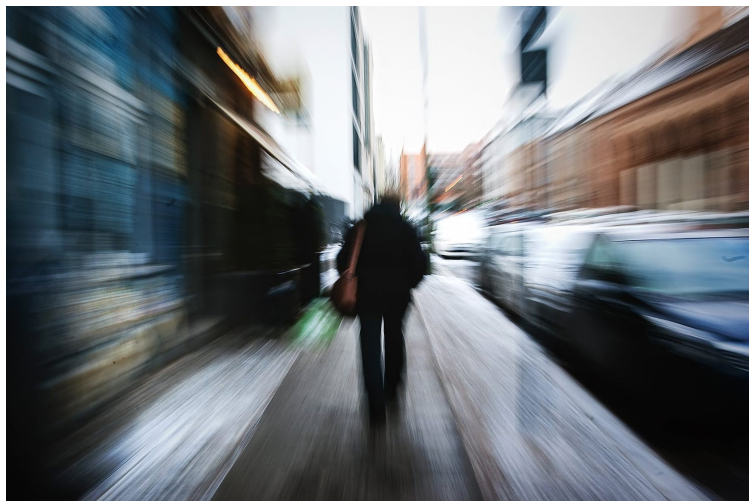


photo by ands78

Equipment

Despite the look of zoom blur photos, you actually don't need a lot of equipment to perfect the technique. All that's needed is your DSLR, a zoom lens and a tripod.

In addition you can use a remote release to trigger the camera, but if you don't have one of those the self-timer option on your DSLR will work pretty much as well. And you can also try a burst of light from a flashgun to help freeze your subject and sharpen the image.

Different zooms with different focal lengths will obviously give varied results; so do try with a variety of lenses if you have them.

Technique

Although you can photograph pretty much anything you fancy with the zoom blur technique, I'd recommend that you start with a static object to keep things simple! There are several ways of producing zoom blur shots, so let's start with the simplest and work our way up.



photo by Balamurugan Natarajan

Shutter Priority

To start with, it's a good idea to try out shots using the shutter priority mode on your DSLR (labelled either 'S' or 'TV' on your mode dial). Using this mode allows you to concentrate on mastering the technique by just setting your shutter speed, whilst the camera sorts out everything else for you. Start by selecting a shutter speed of 1 second, but bear in mind you may need anywhere around 1 to 5 seconds for your shot.

As this method requires a slow shutter speed, you'll need to put your camera on a tripod. This will

prevent camera shake and will also help to keep the zoom lines straight.

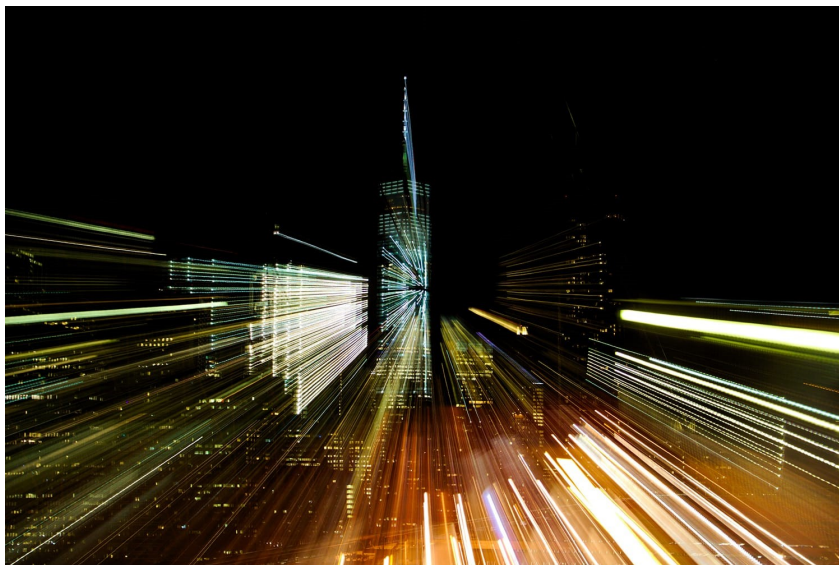


photo by Cassandre Derory

Now you need to zoom right in as far as your lens will allow and focus on your subject. Use the focus lock on your camera, so that the focus will be correct when the subject fills the frame. Use the focus lock on your camera, so that the focus will be correct when the subject fills the frame. Next you'll need to zoom back out to the widest angle you want in your shot. Set the self-timer on your DSLR and then, as the shutter is released zoom out as smoothly as possible, maintaining a constant speed as you do so. You want to aim to finish the zoom just before the end of the exposure (which takes a bit of practice or an accurate stopwatch!).

Alternatively, once the shutter opens you can wait for half to three quarters of the exposure and then zoom out in a far faster fluid motion. This can help to get definition into the subject matter and assists with keeping it sharp. Experiment with both methods to see which one you like the most. The great thing about this technique is the amount of scope it offers – there isn't a 'right' and 'wrong' really, beyond getting the zoom blur lines into the image.

Full manual

To really control your results, you will want to try one of the above two methods with your camera set on full manual. To get the best results, you will need to set your DSLR with a low ISO of 100 or 200. This will prevent your zoom blur being distorted by any noise. Choose a small aperture of around f16/22 for two reasons. Firstly, this will give you a large depth of field, which will help keep your subject sharp.

Secondly, a small aperture will let less light into the lens, thus helping to prevent over-exposure of your image. Then set the shutter speed again between 1 and 5 seconds and meter at your main point of focus. Obviously, as you're shooting on full manual, you'll be able to get a reading from your camera and can adjust the shutter speed accordingly. Remember though that you'll need at least a 1 second exposure to give yourself time to zoom.

Over-exposure

One of the problems with this technique is that you're liable to suffer from over-exposure in some situations. This is because the long shutter speed and the low ISO are both letting light into the camera and the small aperture isn't always enough to compensate for this. If you're shooting in bright sunlight or in a situation with strong backlighting you could find that all your shots are coming out over-exposed. Obviously, the first step in this situation is to use a shorter shutter speed or set a lower ISO.

But if this isn't possible, you can use a neutral density filter to reduce the exposure. Do remember though that **you'll need a normal full ND filter and not a graduated one!** ND filters come in different 'stops', so you can buy one that reduces by 2, 4, 6, 8 or even 10 f-stops. Personally, I find

the 2 and 4 stop varieties the most useful, but much of that is down to the fact that I live in the UK! If you can't afford a ND filter and already have a polarizer filter in your kit, you could use that to help. This is because most polarizing filters tend to stop down the aperture by one or two stops. Thus it will help prevent over-exposure.

Choosing your subject

Whilst you can choose any subject you want to try out the zoom blur technique on, those with bright colours and a pattern tend to work best. For example, you could try shooting autumn leaves or city lights at night.

Using flash

As mentioned briefly earlier in the article, you can also try using a speedlight to add a different dimension to your zoom burst images. This will freeze the subject in sharp focus, but still keep the blurry effect. As you'll be zooming out it's best to use the '*rear curtain*' setting on your flashgun. This will make the flash fire at the end of the exposure, when you are fully zoomed in. That way the zoom blur will not be affected, but the subject will be frozen. This can work very well if you're shooting a subject that isn't entirely static.

The main thing to remember when shooting zoom blur photos is to experiment. This is a creative style of photography that lends itself to having fun and trying out the various techniques to see what style you like best.

<https://contrastly.com/how-to-master-zoom-blur-photography/>

Astro Photography. August best dates

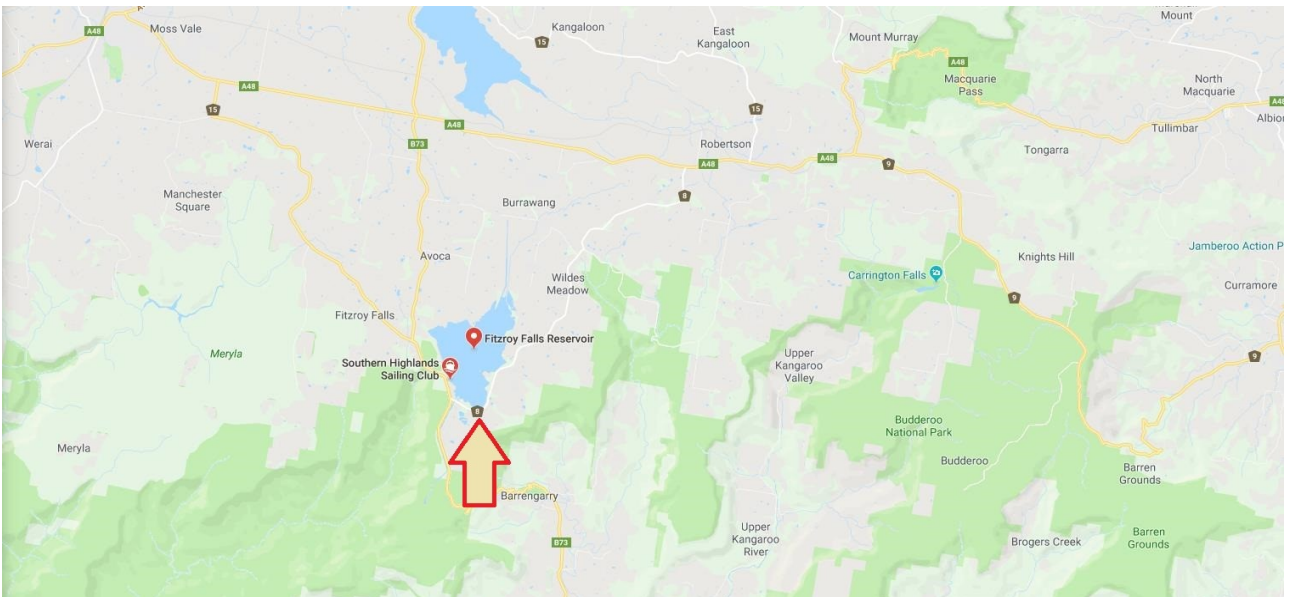
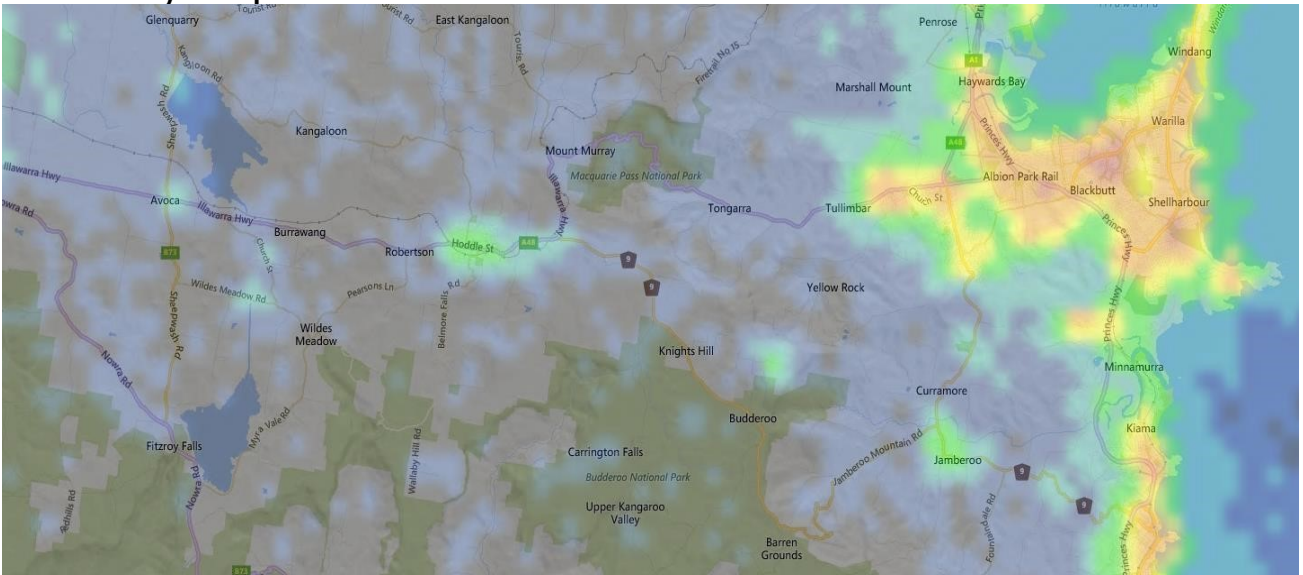
THURSDAY	2nd	Moon rises	10.09pm
FRIDAY	3rd	Moon rises	11.07pm
SATURDAY	4th	No Moon	————
SUNDAY	5th	Moon rises	12.08am
MONDAY	6th	Moon rises	1.10am
TUESDAY	7th	Club	Meeting
WEDNESDAY	8th	Moon rises	3.20am

.These are the best nights to get some incredible Astro Photos in August. You need to plan your trip and as you can see the Fitzroy falls fishing area is the ideal spot that is closest to us to get a dark sky without light bleeding from Wollongong.

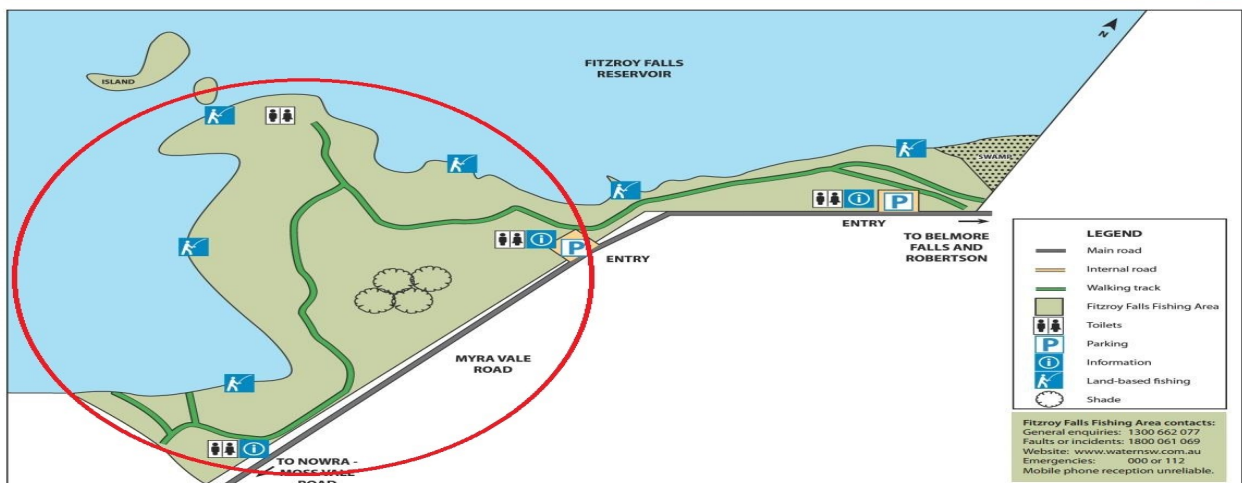
Please remember that Mobile Phone reception is unreliable here.

The section marked in red is open to the public 24/7, other areas are off limits. Please pick up your rubbish before you leave.

Dark Sky Map



Fitzroy Falls Fishing Area



Decluttering Your Photographic Life

by Jo Plumridge

I think most of us can relate to having too much ‘clutter’ in our lives! And photographers can be particularly guilty of having too much stuff around, creating a mess and disturbing our calm. So in this article we’re going to look at ways to declutter your photographic life and to make your creative pursuits a happy place to spend time.



Tidy up mess

Wherever you work from, be it in a studio or from a desk at home, make sure your workspace is neat and tidy. Modern photography doesn’t just stop when you’ve finished your shoot – much of your work will be done on the computer afterwards. A neat and tidy desk makes life a lot easier! Try and have a set place for everything so that you can find it when you need it. Try and have a set place for everything so that you can find it when you need it.

A filing cabinet is an essential for all the paperwork or, if you can’t run to that, an in-and-out tray. I find that a noticeboard to pin random post-it notes, business cards etc. on is also very useful. There’s no hard and fast rule to how you should set up your workspace but the important thing is to make sure it’s a space you’re happy to be in.

Be brutal with your gear!

First things first – make sure all your gear is in one place so that it’s easy to find when you need it. Keep all your kit in the right bags and cases. For instance, I have one main camera bag with my bodies, lenses, flashgun and other assorted accessories in it.

My lights are all in one bag, whilst stands and accessories live in another. Backdrops and background stands are all neatly stacked together. This means that I always know where various pieces of kit are.

Go through your kit and make sure it’s all clean and then sell anything you don’t use. There’s no point a lens gathering dust in a cupboard if you haven’t used it in 10 years! As I have discussed before, photographers are notorious for suffering from GAS (gear acquisition syndrome), so try not to buy new kit unless you really need it. Try and make the most of the gear you’ve already got.



Organise your online library

As a pro photographer, nothing makes me shudder more than seeing a cluttered computer desktop, filled with photography files, and being told that this is the only place someone is storing them! Computer hard drives are not infallible and you really must back up your work. I actually 'double' back up everything and don't leave anything on my computer's hard drive unless I'm currently working on those files. Besides which, having a lot of stuff on your computer slows it down.

There are several good options for backing up your work. Back up hardware is probably the easiest option, whereby you purchase an external hard drive to put all your files onto. I'm a big fan of the LaCie range, which has a good choice of sizes and styles to choose from. Get as many TBs (terabytes) as you can afford, otherwise you might run the risk of running out of space.

If you use a Mac, Apple's Time Capsule is also a good option. The Time Capsule can be set up as an automatic back up system, meaning it backs up your desktop and the files on it throughout each day. Cloud storage is also becoming more popular. Here, you purchase your chosen amount of storage and upload your files directly to the cloud. Some names to check out are Dropbox, iCloud and Google Drive.



Take advantage of software and apps

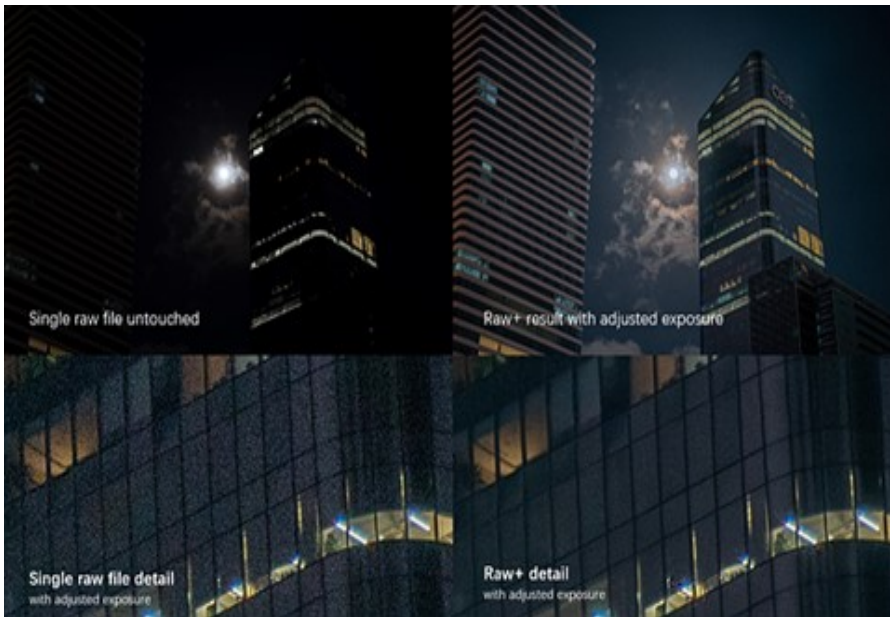
There's a wealth of software and apps out there designed to make life easier, and to help create a smoother workflow. For photographers, the big piece of software is your photo-editing program (for example Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom). Within these programmes you can set up the workflow to your liking and create Actions and Shortcuts to make editing smoother and faster.

You could use accounting software to keep track of your income and expenditure, or download an app to see what the weather will be like if you're shooting outside. The options are fairly endless but the important thing is to find options that are useful to you and help you save time and energy!

Hopefully these tips will assist you to streamline your photography life and help to make your life a little easier!

<https://contrastly.com/decluttering-your-photographic-life/>

Kandao Raw+ is an automated image stacking tool for Raw files



Kandao, a maker of professional-grade 360° cameras has launched a new software product called Kandao Raw+. The tool was designed to boost image quality of the company's own camera models Obsidian and QooCam, but also works with most DSLRs and other Raw-capable cameras that are supported by Adobe Camera Raw. Kandao Raw+ uses computational photography techniques, similar to what we are seeing in many high-end smartphones, to create images with increased detail and dynamic range, as well as lower noise levels. To achieve that it combines a burst of Raw images into one single DNG file that can then be further edited with a Raw converter of your choice.

The software aligns shots automatically which means there is no need for shooting on a tripod. It is also capable of minimizing blur on any moving subjects in the scene. You can import up to 16 frames images of a burst into Kandao Raw+. You then pick one image as a reference for the auto-alignment.

The rest of the process is fully automated and will get you a DNG file with a 16-bit color depth and dynamic range that (theoretically) has been increased by almost 4EV, offering much more latitude in post-processing.

Best of all, Kandao Raw+ is free to download and use. You can find more information, technical detail and download links on the Kandao website.

<http://www.kandaovr.com/en/newsroom/news/?id=38>



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<http://www.kandaovr.com/en/newsroom/news/?id=38>

MCHUMOR.com by T. McCracken



"Excuse me, sir. My strobe light is broken.
Would you mind standing in for
it while I take a few photos?"

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