

VIEWfinders

English-Speaking Photography Club of Brussels
Newsletter no. 173, March 2011

11.04.2011

Newsletter Deadline

16.03.2011
Next Meeting

Lofoten, Norway, by Jeroen van Gent



"Le voci di donne" by Stephen Johns



The Plight of the Small Business



Olivia De Vos



Richard Sylvester

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We look forward to seeing you all, old and new, at the British School of Brussels, Leuvensesteenweg 19, 3080 Tervuren. Doors open at 7.00 pm. For directions, feel free to contact Caroline Hendry at 067 876 469 or visit our homepage.



March Meeting Preview

At the March meeting, we are pleased to announce that eco and Amazon photographer Guido Sterkendries will be our guest speaker for the evening. Those of you who have been a Viewfinders member for a while, will probably remember him from the May 2009 club meeting, where he was also our speaker. At that meeting he regaled us with wonderful images and stories from his travels in the Amazon forest, where he lived very closely with several native tribes such as the Kayapo and Huaorani. It became clear that Guido is

not just a nature photographer. Rather he is extremely passionate about the conservation of rich ecosystems like the Amazon, which come increasingly under threat by industrial exploitation. This affects both human and animal inhabitants of the region, who fear the destruction of their natural habitat. Recently he has released the book "Pure Amazonia", containing unique images he took during his many expeditions in the Amazon jungle. So we thought this would be an excellent opportunity to invite him again!

Since his last visit Guido has received significant press coverage, both in Belgium as abroad, allowing him to explain his mission to the general public. One particular story involved the Panamanian golden frog. This very rare animal, native to one specific region in Panama was at one point declared extinct by the BBC Natural History crew, makers of David Attenborough's most recent series on reptiles and amphibians, entitled *Life in Cold Blood*. However, Guido was convinced that the golden frog could still be found in the wild. With his extensive knowledge of the region, he was able to snap some images of them in their natural habitat, thus proving that they were (luckily) not extinct.

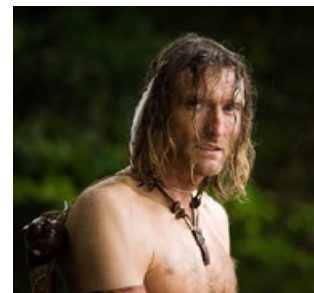
Videos of his recent appearances on Flemish TV can be seen here (in Dutch only):
<http://www.deredactie.be/permalink/1.906725>

<http://www.een.be/programmas/villa-vanthilt/natuurfotograaf-guido-sterkendries>

At the March meeting, he will give a talk on his recent travels, and also present his book "Pure Amazonia." This is the just released English version, which will also be available to buy at the meeting for the modest price of 30€. An ideal opportunity to get a (signed) copy of this amazing book!

Hope to see all of you there!

David



February Meeting Review

At the February meeting, we had a smaller than usual turnout of 32 people, but still a good crowd. President Alun did the usual announcements, previewing our Spring weekend photo trip to the Belgian coast at De Haan, and announcing another session of the popular food photography workshop given by Joris Luyten, scheduled for April. Details of our activities are elsewhere in this & other newsletters.

Then we had a talk/tutorial on a very important and sometimes confusing subject for photographers: Colour Management. Member Charles Henniker-Heaton works in the photographic printing business, and was therefore ideal to teach us. If you have ever wondered why the colours of your photographs look different on your computer screen than when printed, or when viewed on another screen, or why you can't get your colours to look "right", the Viewfinders meeting was the place to be. Charles explained that colour management isn't complicated or magic, it's about creating a standard for the colours, so they always appear consistent. The place to start is with your computer monitor – if your monitor isn't colour-calibrated, you are wasting your time making any colour adjustments, especially those who shoot their photos in RAW format, and adjust the colours later. There are hardware products available which will calibrate your own monitor, and create a monitor profile which it will apply to the monitor to correct the colours it displays so they display as standard colours. This doesn't change the colours in your image file of course, only the colours of the pixels on your monitor. There are many different products, from basic to advanced, which can be used on

laptop screens, LCD screens, CRT monitors (I'm sure some people still have one!).

Charles then showed us one product in action, the hardware is placed on the centre of the screen (laptop in this case), then the software displayed a series of 150 colours, and the hardware measured the colours displayed, for comparison with the colours sent to the screen. In this way, the differences can be corrected, and this correction information is contained in a profile, applicable specifically to that monitor. When the correct profile is applied, your monitor will display all colours as they should be seen, so you will know that



Alun Foster

your colours are "right". Then you can start adjusting your image as you like, and you can be sure that when viewed on another (correctly-calibrated) device, the results will be the same.

Printer and paper profiling is another subject, the same picture printed by the same printer on two different types of paper will show different colours! There are devices available for printer calibration too, and Charles mentioned that some printer manufacturers provide printer profiles on their websites, so take a look and you may be able to get better matching prints from

your printer.

After the break, we presented the results of our Photo Assignment. This was an idea to make the members go out and take photos on a specific subject, and think about how those photos could illustrate a (fictional) newspaper article: *The Plight of Small Businesses*. It may have been that we didn't give our members enough advance notice of the subject, or that everyone had been just too busy over the Christmas holidays and after, but only 4 people thought they had what it takes to be a photojournalist and presented images. However, we did see different viewpoints: the efforts made by people in poorer regions of Africa to make a living and create a business by selling things, actually selling just about anything, the efforts made to attract customers or takes the goods right to the customer etc. And then the images of hard times: shops & businesses closing down, a street full of shops for sale, nearly-empty shop windows, it was clear that we were seeing that a lot of businesses are in difficulty. The audience did profess itself keen on having another Photo Assignment in the future, so be assured that we will, and will work out the way of making it more attractive for more members to want to participate.

Richard Sylvester finished up the evening, giving us a tour of the Nikko national park in Japan, with some fabulously-decorated monuments, tranquil garden scenes, and views that most of us don't get to see every day. Very enjoyable. A big thank-you to all our contributors this month, it's always very interesting to see our members work.

Caroline

6 Questions For Simon Pugh

Simon was born in Coseley in the UK in 1968. In 1991 whilst working as a Programmer for an American Electronics company he was offered a job abroad and so left the UK at the age of 23 and moved to Namur where he lived and worked for 3 years. Eventually, he landed up in Brussels working in IT for a large Belgian pharmaceutical retail company. In 2000 he was diagnosed with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Repetitive Strain Injury in his hands and arms, inflictions not akin with working in IT and so following the rather vague advice from his doctors ("you have to change career"), he joined Viewfinders with an ulterior motive of getting serious with photography. In 2006, with a 40th birthday fast approaching and a realisation that in order to stand any chance of diminishing the pain in his hands he would have to follow the doctor's advice, he quit the day job and started as a professional photographer. And he's never looked back.



1) Let's begin at the beginning - how did you get started with photography?

Aged 7 I went on a day trip with my aunt and she handed me my very first camera: a Kodak 125 Instamatic. I took a couple of rolls of film that day, taking photographs of our trip to Boscobel House and visiting the Royal Oak tree there in which, reputedly, the future King Charles II hid from Oliver Cromwell's troops. I was hooked. That camera soon became my loyal friend and accompanied me everywhere on my childhood travels, recording images of things that I saw, people I met and places I visited. Soon, however, I began to feel a little disappointment upon receiving the photos back from the developers and finding them not exactly how I remembered the scene: They were sometimes too light, sometimes too dark and a lot of times, out of focus. And so, for my 10th birthday I received my first SLR: A Praktica MTL5. This was photography at a totally different level. I was faced with a multitude of dials and buttons of which I knew nothing about and so headed of to the local library for a book or two and helped set-up a camera club at my primary school.

2) Which of your pictures is your personal favourite? Can you tell us why?

I believe that a photo should evoke strong feelings, whether good or bad, happy or sad. The photo of my mom does all four at the same time. It was taken on my 40th birthday whilst we were on holiday together. A few weeks later she was diagnosed with cancer and, despite a valiant battle, died 12 months after that. When I look at the photo, it feels as though she's right there in front of me, looking straight back at me again. So, I guess, it's my rather unfortunate favourite.

3) What genre of photography interests you most?

All of it, I have no one particular favourite. Whether it's landscape, macro, portrait, street or anything in-between, I don't think there is any one particular area that I find more interesting than the other. I try to see a good photo for what it is - a good photo. It's only when you've tried to make a similar image (and I've usually failed) that

you can appreciate the time, effort, skill or just plain luck that has gone into making it.

4) If you had to pick just one camera to shoot with from now on, what would that be?

I'm not too fussed about what camera I use. My Nikon D200 suits me just fine at the moment although, from a professional point-of-view, I wouldn't mind upgrading to a D3S but that's just because it has an incredibly high maximum ISO setting (102,400 !) that allows you to practically



shoot in the dark with very little noise (something that is ideal when photographing conferences with speakers metres away in dark auditoria). I still love my Nikon F100 film camera, especially when it's loaded with Fuji Velvia slide film....

5) Why do you enjoy Viewfinders? Tell us about the most interesting experience you had with the club.

The social aspect of Viewfinders is great. Although I don't make it along to the meetings very often these days I always enjoyed them. The trips are also a particular favourite of mine. Sometimes as a (beginning) photographer you feel a bit self-conscious about being somewhere

3 6 Questions For ...

and pointing the camera at a particular scene (especially if it includes people) but in a group one tends to feel a little emboldened. They are also a fantastic opportunity to get to know other like-minded people a lot better.

For memorable incidents our trip to Antwerp a few years back springs to mind: first getting hassled on the Central Station by the security guards for using a tripod, then, whilst taking a shot of the cathedral, being offered to 'visit' someone's bedroom as the view from there was much better! I politely declined the offer...

6) Any (photographic) advice you'd like to share with your fellow viewfinders?

- Be your own worst critic.
- Don't forget to enjoy it.

Simon suggested that these questions go to Graham Ireland next.

Viewfinders @ Le 3émé Acte



On March 4th 2010, the next follow-on exhibition of the "You are [not] here" exhibition opened in the charming "Le 3émé Acte" restaurant in the Sablon area in downtown Brussels. The opening was accompanied by a very well attended vernissage, with much enthusiasm and acclaim from all those present. With the maybe not so original title "You are [not] here again", the exhibition shows 21 images by 14 club members on the theme of Asia and other exotic places. The images will be on display until the end of May. Drop in for a drink or a meal to admire them! ("Le 3émé Acte", 6 rue Charles Hanssens, 1000 Brussels).

Alun



Fotos: Alun Foster

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Medium Format

41
KODAK TRI-X



If you have ever thought about trying medium format photography but were held back by the cost of the cameras and lenses, I have some good news for you. With the complete domination of digital in all areas of commercial and wedding photography (two of the traditional domains of medium format), top quality kit which not too many years ago cost thousands can now be picked up for hundreds.

Back in the early 1990s, while living in the USA, I decided to try my hand at MF and invested in a new Hasselblad 500 C/M with the standard 80mm lens. At the time this was the most basic outfit in the Hasselblad line but, basic or not, it still set me back around \$2200, the equivalent of around \$3500 / €2500 in today's money. I later sold that camera to finance some other equipment, but some time in 2006 I decided to get a Hasselblad again. I was living in the Netherlands at the time, and for the grand sum of €650 a retired wedding photographer sold me the exactly same model Hasselblad that I had in the 1990s, along with the same 80mm lens but now also including a 50mm wide angle lens and an extra film magazine. This past December, I acquired a Fuji 690 rangefinder camera for \$300, perhaps ¼ of the price when it was new. And just this week, I see someone selling the last modern Fuji MF camera, the GA645 Professional, for €350. This for a camera that has all the modern conveniences: motorized film transport, autofocus, automatic recognition of film speed (at least with some film) and so on. Basically, any medium format camera that is not capable of taking a digital back (the prices of those of course are holding up much better), or is not a rare collectible (certain Rolleiflex models, for example) can today be had for roughly the same price as a garden-variety digital entry-level SLR, or less.

So, medium format equipment is cheap, but why bother? To me, there are at least

Medium Format in the Digital Age

three reasons why it may be a worthwhile addition to our photographic tool kit. First, it is fun to reconnect with the history of our craft and occasionally be forced to take a more deliberate approach demanded by film photography. With the most common MF film type, 120, you get between 8 and 16 images per roll, so machine-gun photography is definitely not an option. Second, while digital SLRs have surpassed 35mm film in image quality, the same cannot yet be said about MF film. And finally, for those of us who enjoy B&W photography, the fine tonal gradations of a large negative are simply unsurpassed.

would be impossible for me to obtain the equipment and chemicals here. A further complication is that many chemicals keep for a limited time only; therefore, as I do not shoot a lot of film, "outsourcing" processing to a lab is the cheaper and easier option for me. Of course, Brussels-resident Viewfinders members have access to darkroom facilities and so the possibility to follow the traditional process for both film development and for making prints.

My own workflow involves sending the negatives to a lab in Barcelona for development and then scanning the negatives. When I scan a 6x9 cm B&W negative with



The three most common sizes of medium format images are 6x4.5 cm, 6x6 cm (the square format used mainly by Hasselblad and Rolleiflex cameras and their clones such as the Yashica 124), and 6x9 cm like my Fuji rangefinder. Medium format film is available in two lengths: 120 and 220. The 120 length is much easier to handle and much more widely available (and the selection of films is far greater as well). A roll of 120 film will yield 16 images with a 6x4.5 camera, 12 images with a 6x6 square, or 8 images with a 6x9.

As with all film, the selection of medium format film has declined in recent years. However, many fine colour and B&W films are still available, including my all-time favourite slow B&W film, Fuji Acros, as well as classics such as Kodak's Tri-X. They can be bought online, or for those of you in Brussels, there are several shops where you can walk in and pick up some, for example Campion in Ixelles or Foto Guy near Place Ste-Catherine.

I only shoot B&W (when shooting film, that is!) so I could develop it myself as well, as I did before migrating to digital for most of my photography in 2004. But since Alicante where I live is a backwater when it comes to photo retailing, it

my Epson V700 scanner at its maximum optical resolution of 6400 dpi, the resulting image has about 280 megapixels. But my 2-year old iMac with 4 GB RAM has no problems handling the resulting huge files in Photoshop. Once in the computer, the film files live happily side-by-side with the majority of my images that are captured digitally. People keep telling me that they see something in my film images that is not in the digital ones, even when viewing them on the web. In many ways, this is the greatest time ever to be a photographer, with the abundance of traditional and digital options available to us.

Some recommendations:

Most of the cameras I mention above are no longer made, so you will be buying second-hand. A dealer like Campion will have a large selection of this kind of equipment, and if something is wrong it is easy to go back and complain and get your money back (well, maybe not easy but certainly easier than if you have bought it on Ebay from across the ocean). But of

Medium Format in the Digital Age

course you pay more at a dealer, so that peace of mind comes at a cost. When buying privately, consider that the risk is somewhat limited if you buy something like my Fuji 690 rangefinder—there is just not a lot that can go wrong with a solidly built, 100% mechanical camera that does not even have a built-in light meter. If you go for the more sophisticated models then of course more thorough pre-purchase questioning of the seller is in order.

There are three main types of MF cameras:

- Rangefinders such as the Fuji that I have, or similar models from Mamiya and Bronica. Those are available in all three formats (6x4.5, 6x6 and 6x9) and there is a wide range of options, ranging from the purely mechanical models like my Fuji 690 to cameras with motors, AF and multi-spot metering. What they all have in common is that you are not looking through the lens, and focusing is performed using a split image in the finder. All cameras of this type are subject to parallax error, although in most models the framelines in the viewfinder automatically adjust to compensate for this. The advantage of the rangefinder camera is simplicity, ease of manual focusing once you get used to it, and small size relative to the size of the image.

- SLR cameras such as the Pentax 6x7 (which basically looks and feels like a much heavier and larger version of a normal 35mm film SLR) or Mamiya RB or RZ67. There are also 6x4.5 cameras from Pentax and Contax that have autofocus and other modern conveniences, but of course those come at a price. The advantage of an SLR is that you look through the lens so what you see is what you get on film, but the cameras and lenses are big and heavy.

- TLR (twin-lens reflex) cameras, the most famous of which is the Rolleiflex, but other manufacturers, including Mamiya and Yashica, also produced them. All these use the square 6x6 format. As the name implies, these cameras have two lenses, arranged vertically; you look down on a focusing screen through the lens on top, while the lower lens actually takes the picture. Like all non-SLR cameras, there is parallax error but as is the case with the rangefinders, the framelines in the viewing screen usually adjust to compensate. If all this sounds a bit clunky—it is!—but these cameras are inexpensive (except for some collectible Rolleiflex models) and the image quality is superb.

Actually, there is a fourth type, the modular Hasselblad camera. Technically, it is a type of SLR, but it is distinguished from, say, a Pentax 6x7 by its modular construction. The camera itself is basically a box onto which you can mount a variety of lenses, viewing systems and other accessories, and the film is held in a separate magazine which is simply attached to the back of the camera. This makes it possible to carry two or more magazines, loaded with different types of film—changing from B&W to colour film then simply involves switching magazines in mid-roll, with no resulting wasted frames. It is one of the few companies still making MF film cameras, the V-system, in addition to the H-system cameras which are meant for digital backs and cost roughly the same as a car. Because the Hasselblad cameras are so durable and were so popular for so many years, there is a wealth of used bodies, lenses and accessories out there.

There is of course a wealth of information available on the web. A good place to start is <http://medfmt.8k.com/>.

Nathan Wajzman

On the Web

Nathan Wajzman has a whole host of extremely interesting websites for his photography. They can be found at the following links:

www.fotocycle.dk/paws : weekly photo blogs beginning in 2006

www.greatpix.eu : various ad hoc galleries

www.frozenlight.eu : travel photography galleries

http://www.greatpix.eu/Other/Sometimes-I-use-film/7590141_XFqsu#1159932454_x9hbc

Simon

Cartoon Capers

What The Duck



© 2011 Aaron Johnson, www.whattheduck.net

5 Exhibitions On The Web

Exhibitions



© Dimitri Tsykalov

A new exhibition has just opened at the Photography Museum of Antwerp. Entitled 'Hungry Eyes' the exhibition covers the work of three photographers and their individual interpretations of food photography. These are not photos along the lines of a plate of ravioli for the latest Jamie Oliver book, rather, using food and elements of food to form images, sometimes abstract, sometimes controversial, but with a strong underlying message about food and its importance in modern society.

See www.fotomuseum.be for prices, opening times and more information.

Simon

For those of you who might be heading across the Channel to London this year, a very interesting exhibition has just opened at The Museum of London. No prizes for guessing the subject matter when you hear the title; 'London Street Photography', the exhibition is showing over 200 images taken on the capital's streets from 1860 until the present day. The exhibition runs until 4th of September 2011, entrance is free.

Check out www.museumoflondon.org.uk for more details and to get a taster of the images check out the BBC website at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12464386.

Simon

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Workshop News Upcoming Events Committee Contacts



© Trevor Waldron

On the Web

Regular readers of this newsletter might recall my article about Vivian Maier that appeared in January (#171). Well, due to the wonders of global communications her story has become something of a phenomenon (or gone 'viral' as the kids say these days...). The local TV channel of Vivian's hometown, Chicago, picked up on the story and the film can be found by surfing along to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWEDOnBfDUl> (Caution! May cause goosebumps).

Simon

Workshop News

April 9-10 – **Compelling Composition: two-day workshop in medieval Bruges and the nearby countryside.** Learning to create powerful images with an in-depth review of the numerous principles of composition. Plenty of outside practical sessions, combined with classroom tuition and review sessions at a centrally-located hotel.

April 16-17 – **Taking Better Landscapes: two-day workshop demonstrates the key techniques for bringing home evocative images of the great outdoors - how to capture the space, grandeur, light and 'feel' of an inspiring scene.** Located in the lovely polder scenery around Damme near Bruges, with its tree-lined canals and patchwork Flemish farms.

Further details are linked to the calendar entries on the Viewfinder website in most cases, with more information on my own site www.trevorwaldron.com. Viewfinders receive the usual discount from the public prices indicated.

Trevor Waldron

Upcoming Events

16 March 2011	Club Meeting	Guest Speaker: Guido Sterkendries. See article in this newsletter.
27 April 2011	Club Meeting	Challenge 'Transport': 2nd challenge of the season with 'Transport' as the theme.
18 May 2011	Club Meeting	Details tba
15 June 2011	Club Meeting	Details tba
30 – 31 July	Club Weekend Trip	Wine tasting & walking trip in the German Ahrtal A weekend of hiking, wine-tasting and photography in the German Ahrtal. Watch e-mail and the club site for details.

You can see the complete Club calendar on the web: <http://www.viewfinders.be/calendar>

Viewfinders – Committee 2010/2011



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Any items from members for publication are welcome. Images are particularly welcome, please send them in as jpgs, with no less than 1400 px on the long side, and minimal compression. Please be aware that, in accordance with the layout, some cropping may occur. Please send submissions to the newsletter to newsletter@viewfinders.be