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Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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Newsletter #89 – October 2020

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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.



Buller's Albatross

1. WHEN COMPOSITION DOESN'T MATTER [as much as "The Moment"]

Yes, of course, composition matters. A lot.

But sometimes "The Moment" is much more important than the composition.

Sometimes "The Moment" is everything.

Imagine you're standing with your camera next to Neil Armstrong on the moon or looking out of your submersible's window at a colossal squid attacking a sperm whale. At times like this, "The Moment" is everything. Getting it onto film - or the camera's sensor - is what matters. No-one [well, hardly anyone] is going to say "Getting that colossal squid was good, but it's a lousy composition".

History, as well as the present, has countless special moments. Some are captured by photographers, many are not. Notable moments were captured on film when the Hindenburg zeppelin exploded in a ball of flame, and also when 9-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc ["Napalm Girl"] ran screaming from a napalm attack. Composition? Didn't really matter. Good enough. That one photo ["Napalm Girl"] was seen around the world and helped bring the Vietnam war to an end.

Back in what we like to call "The Real World", the moment your grandson kisses his new bride at their wedding, or your daughter proudly holds her newborn baby for the first time are moments to be cherished, and hopefully "caught on film" ["caught on sensor" doesn't have the same ring to it, does it?].

Life has many special moments for all of us, and our job as photographers is to catch at least some of them. A touch. A kiss. A smile. An embrace. A bird landing or taking off. A whale surfacing. Moments. Moments. Precious Moments.

Catch "The Moment" and worry about "The Composition" later. If there's enough time, catch the moment with reasonable composition, otherwise, just catch "The Moment".



Most of my photos are later cropped in Photoshop to create a better [tighter, simpler] composition. Sometimes I just straighten the horizon or make some other minor crop. Other times I'll make a big crop if it's needed.

That's the thing about our modern digital cameras. They are so good that you can crop out a lot of your original photo and the final image is still a perfectly good file: sharp and detailed enough for most uses except maybe a two-metre wide print on your wall. Then again, a lot of the photos we all take wouldn't be quite up to it as a two-metre wide photo on the wall, cropped or not.

I don't aim for a final composition when taking the photo. I typically leave a bit extra around each margin [top and bottom, left and right] and later crop carefully to achieve the final composition in Photoshop.

We all witness many special moments, sometimes with family and friends, sometimes wildlife, sometimes other stuff happening "out there" in the wide, wide world. If it's a moment that matters, catch it. Preferably get it sharp and at least "about right", but – most importantly – catch the moment. Worry about the composition later.

The albatross scratching the back of its head in flight [this newsletter's opening photo] was a special moment. Accompanying this article are some others.

Sometimes you'll miss the moment totally, or partially. It hurts but doesn't matter too much. You tried. I have a photo of the back half of a huge humpback whale rising almost totally clear of the water just next to our yacht in Tonga. I didn't know it was about to happen. I was quick, but not quick enough. So the closest I've ever been to a large breaching whale resulted in a reasonably sharp [i.e. focused] photo of the back half of the whale. C'est la vie.

There's three articles about capturing "The Moment" in newsletters #75, #76, and #77 at <http://kimwesterskov.com/newsletter/>.





2. THE MOST IMPORTANT PHOTOS YOU'LL TAKE

I've been photographing families and couples lately - which reminded me to remind you "Don't forget to photograph your families, your loved ones". As the years roll by, you'll realize that these were the most important photos you ever took.

So: take them, keep them somewhere safe [have good backup systems on your computer], then frame the best and hang them on your wall. Or create photo books [easy and inexpensive nowadays]. Or just put them on your favourite social media.

Writing this reminds me of a haunting [and sadly true] story I read some years ago about a young photographer. He wanted to be "a real photographer" So he did some research and concluded that "real photographers" [amateur ones, at least] take photos of landscapes and buildings.

So he photographed landscapes and buildings. He didn't really enjoy photographing landscapes and buildings, but at least he was heading towards being "a real photographer".

Then his mother died unexpectedly, aged only 43. Too late he realized he had few or no photos of his mother, or of his family. And photos of his mother and his family were what he really should have been taking. Photograph whatever you want to photograph, but don't forget to include your family and home and friends.



3. Some good [and free] LIGHTROOM RESOURCES

Lightroom is definitely the best photo management and photo editing program for most photographers. If I were starting out again, I would use Lightroom and do most of my post-processing there, moving into Photoshop only when certain images needed some fine surgery.

But, like many other professional photographers of a certain vintage [clue: not young], I've got used to doing everything I need inside Photoshop, Bridge, and Camera Raw [all part of the Photoshop family]. As I don't use it every day, I've decided to not run any more Lightroom workshops – I don't feel I know all aspects of it well enough. But I'm still happy to help photographers process their images in Lightroom's "Develop Module" [which is pretty much identical to the Camera Raw I use every day] – just ask.

However, I still have some good handouts from the Lightroom workshops I ran, and also some excellent resources [links and PDF books] from some of the world's best Lightroom tutors.

So I've decided to give these away to anybody who wants them. If you're using Lightroom, or about to start using Lightroom, just email me and I'll send you the resources. **Free, gratis, and no hidden fine print. Just ask, and I'll send 😊**

4. KIM'S PRESENTATIONS at the BAY OF PLENTY GARDEN & ART FESTIVAL 19-22 November 2020

If you're into flowers, ferns, forests, gardens, and/or art, the 2020 Bay of Plenty Garden & Art Festival will be a four-day highlight for 2020 as we near the end of a highly unusual – and difficult – year.

From the festival website: “A multi-day festival pass will allow you to see all gardens on all days of the festival, visit your choice of over 70 beautiful gardens and meet more than 100 magnificent artists. You will also experience fascinating landscape gardens, exhibitors, live music, tasty food and beverages, and the amazing Festival Gallery at our festival hub “Bloom in the Bay” at the Tauranga Race Course.....”

This year the Festival Hub will be at the Tauranga Racecourse, and I'll be giving four presentations there on photography and in particular photography of the plant world. Access to the festival hub is free with a festival pass [\$65 multi-day, or \$35 one day]

<https://www.gardenandartfestival.co.nz/>

<https://www.gardenandartfestival.co.nz/bloom-in-the-bay/kim-westerskov/>

1. Thursday 19th November 5.30 – 6.30 pm. “Behind the Lens – Capturing the Plant World”. In this workshop, I'll show how to capture the beauty of flowers, ferns, grasses, and forests. Plus, how to create “artworks” from these photos. Tips, techniques, and inspirational photos.
2. Friday 20th November 3.00 – 4.00 pm. “Behind the Lens – Capturing the Plant World”. A repeat of Thursday's workshop.
3. Saturday 21st November 11.00 am – 12.00 noon. “The Power of Photography - The Light and the Darkness” This illustrated conversation focuses on the power & importance of good photography: how it helps us understand our world, our place in it, our responsibilities, and the possibilities for a better future.
4. Sunday 22nd November 2.00 – 3.00 pm. “Flowers, Ferns & Forests”. An illustrated talk on the beauty of the plant world, from intimate “art photography” of flowers to the grandeur of forests.



5. Winding down for 2020 – only two workshops to go

OCTOBER

- **Saturday 31st October.** “More Exciting New Techniques” photo workshop. Full day plus follow-up.

NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 3rd November. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 15th November.** “Good Photos, Great Photos – Anytime, Anywhere” workshop. Full day plus follow-up.

DECEMBER

- Tuesday 1st December. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

6. "EXCITING NEW PHOTO TECHNIQUES" Workshop – Saturday 31st October

Is your photography in a bit of a rut? Would you like to create some new and different "Wow!" photos? Would you like some clever new ideas to get "Honours" at your camera club? Want to try some new techniques? Want to lift your photography to a new level?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then this is the workshop I've designed for you. In fact, I've been working on it for several years now: researching &, looking for new "Wow!" ideas that you might like. And then experimenting, testing the ideas, and their potential for a workshop.

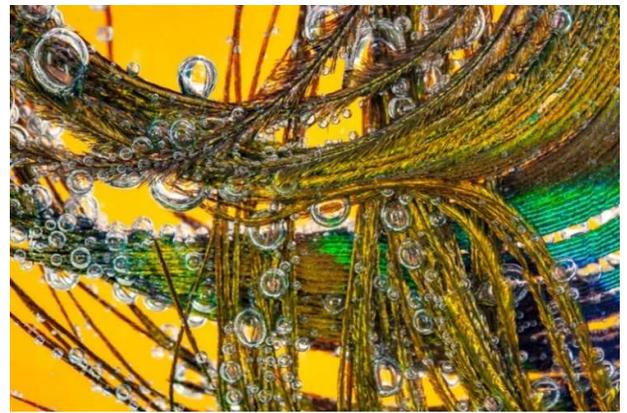
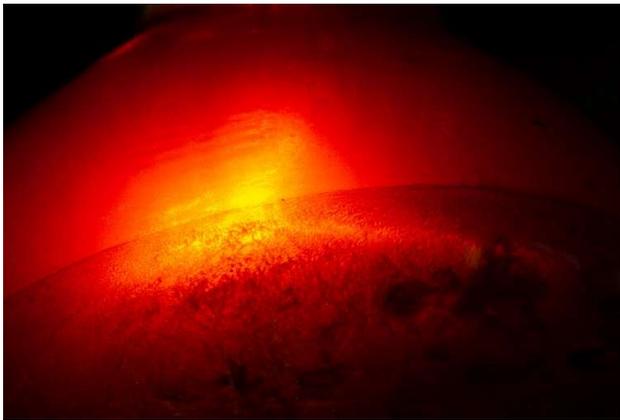
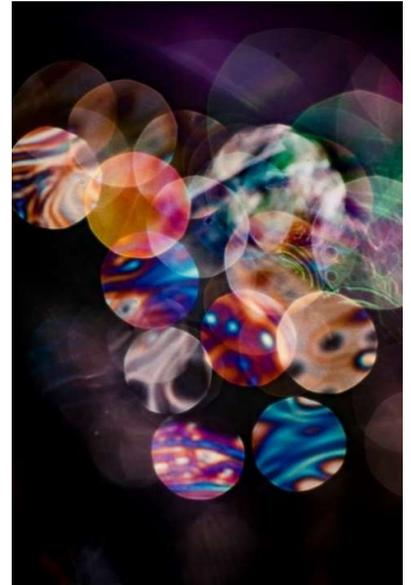
We'll explore the exciting possibilities of using mirrors [broken and unbroken], crystal glass balls, soap bubbles, effervescence, bokeh from fairy lights, and many more ideas. All you need to do is bring yourself and your camera. I've already got the fairy lights, prepared the broken mirrors [not as easy as it sounds] and gathered together the other stuff we'll need: the crystal glass balls [flown in from USA], a variety of mirrors [from local op shops and emporiums], special soap for bubbles [also flown in from USA], effervescence [from my local supermarket], feathers, and more. This workshop will be very different from my other workshops. We'll spend some time looking at a variety of good and great new ideas and techniques for you, and then - much earlier in the day than usual - **I'll set up the equipment and you'll bring out your cameras and get photographing.** You'll go home with your memory card full of exciting new photos. Promise!

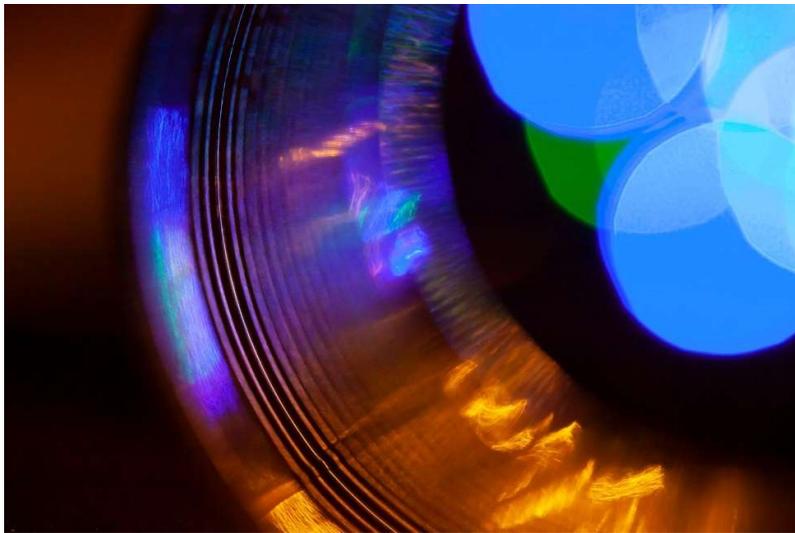
Saturday 31st October. 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Cost: Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs & yummy catering - **\$245**. Full-time students with ID **\$145**.



Have a good look at the photos on these three pages: I'll be showing you how they were achieved, and how they can be achieved by you.



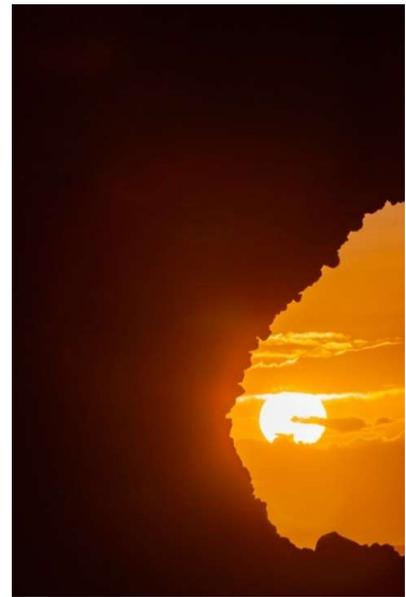


7. "GOOD PHOTOS, GREAT PHOTOS – ANYTIME, ANYWHERE" Sunday 15th November

Will that overseas trip to Africa or Europe – or anywhere – make you a better photographer? Probably not. You'll take more photos than usual, but will they do the trip [the expense, the time, the effort, the early starts] justice? Those big trips are precious, so you owe it to yourself to bring back the best photos you can. The best approach is to become the best photographer you can BEFORE you leave on your big trip. A new camera or lens may or may not make much difference either, but a collection of new skills definitely will. And that means getting to know your camera better, the principles of photography better, and – most important of all – developing your vision – being able to "see" photos everywhere. There is no simple "secret setting" for this but it can be learned. That's what this workshop is about – "seeing" photos wherever you are. "Finding" photos wherever you are, whatever the light.

This workshop will explore the idea that you can find and take [or create] good photos wherever you are. Right where you are at the moment! Right here, right now will do just fine. Or within walking distance or 30 minutes' drive at the most. Or anywhere else. We will dispel the myth that "I would get great photos if only I could go to Paris or Africa or Antarctica or somewhere interesting". We explore the idea of "seeing photo possibilities", seeing and getting good [and sometimes great] photos wherever you are. LOTS of techniques, approaches, tips, ideas, inspiration, lists of "get yourself going" ideas for you to try.





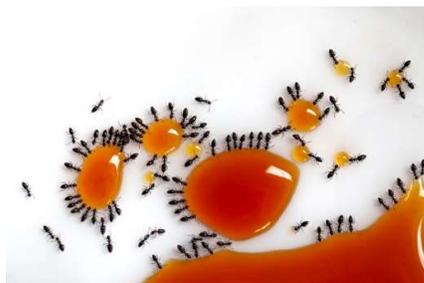
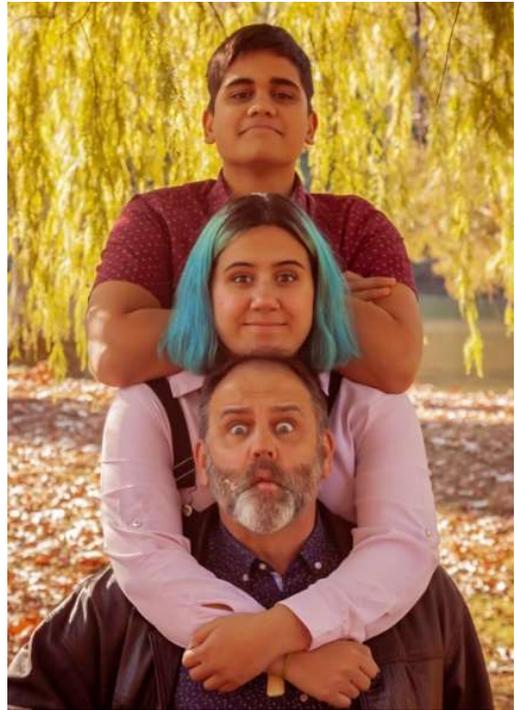
Assignment [“homework”]. At the end of the workshop, I’ll give you some “homework” [or you can choose your own], a series of assignments that will help consolidate what you’ve learned. Photographers report that they find this really useful.

Follow Up meeting. We meet again [at a time that suits everybody, probably a weekday evening 2-3 weeks later] to look at and evaluate your assignment photos. This evaluation can be done by email if you’re from out of town.

Sunday 15th November. 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Cost: Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs, yummy catering, assignment, and follow-up evening] \$295 or **\$245 Early Bird** if you register before 5th November. Full-time students with ID **\$145.**





8 INVITATION TO CAMERA CLUBS & GROUPS

If your club or group might be interested in hosting one of my presentations - or workshops - or “Field Trip + Photo Critique” days, please get in touch.

9. KIM'S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month [except January], chat about photography, and view some of the recent photos we've taken. It's **free [no charge], supper is served**, and there's no obligation of any kind. **Please email me if you'd like to come** [it's not a big room so I need to keep an eye on numbers]. These evenings are always fun and friendly - there's usually many smiles and laughs. It's a great way of meeting up with like-minded people, **being inspired by the creativity of our group of photographers, and coming away with new ideas and tips**. There's a wide range of interests and abilities – so you're very unlikely to feel out of your depth. Bring photos if you wish, but there's no obligation to. Some people do, some don't. **The next one is on Tuesday 3rd November starting at 7.00 pm. 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga.**

10. PRIVATE TUITION

Yes, like you I'm usually busy doing “other stuff” too, but I can nearly always fit private tuition in, and I am very happy to do so. Two hours \$150.

Or – for just the cost of a full-day workshop [with Early Bird discount] - \$245 – you get my full attention - one-on-one - for 4 hours. This can be out in the field or at my studio, looking at your photos on my computer, going over your camera functions, looking into specific techniques, or all of the above and more – whatever you want to do. I'm here for you. For only \$475 I'm yours for the whole day.

Think not just about cost, but “value” – it's one-on-one with an experienced photographer and teacher and we cover a lot each hour. Bring a friend if you wish - no extra charge.

ABOUT KIM

- **Passionate about photography and passionate about inspiring, guiding, and supporting photographers.**
- Over 30 years as a professional photographer and teaching photography for 13 years now
- Five First Prizes in the BBC “Wildlife Photographer of the Year” competition, the Olympics of nature photography worldwide.
- 18 books published [international distributions] – written and photographed by Kim.
- <https://www.sunlive.co.nz/news/220936-kim-westerskov-award-winning-photographer.html>
- http://kimwesterskov.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/f11_Magazine_March-2015_Westerskov_2_4MB.pdf